

Educating for Character,
Leadership, and Service :
No Alibis. No Excuses. No Exceptions

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No Alibis, Excuses, Exceptions

- How we treat children in all aspects of our contact with them -as parents, teachers, policy makers or advocates -matters, including many small things that add up to make a big difference.
- What matters most is the extent to which we act with respect, challenge, caring, safety, civility and encouragement of opportunity and resilience.
- All children can succeed. Do we really believe it, and are we ready to act on that belief with no alibis, no excuses, and no exceptions?

How Would You Like ***Your*** Children to be
Treated in School?

How about your
Grandchildren?

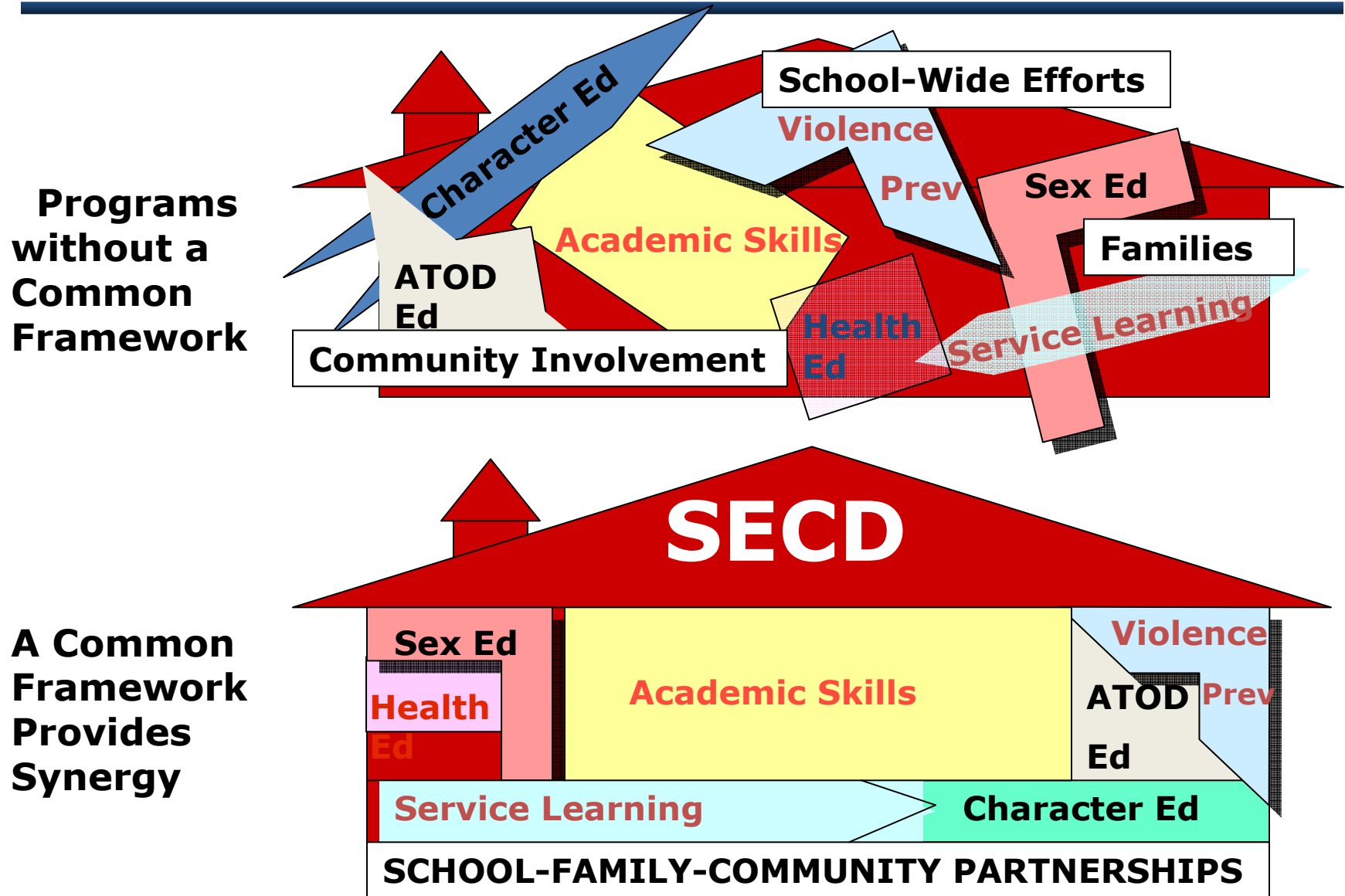
From John W. Whitehead

*Children are the living message we send to
a time we will not see.*

So.....

What messages are we sending when we send
children into less than optimal schools?

Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD): *A Coordinated Framework Provides Synergy*

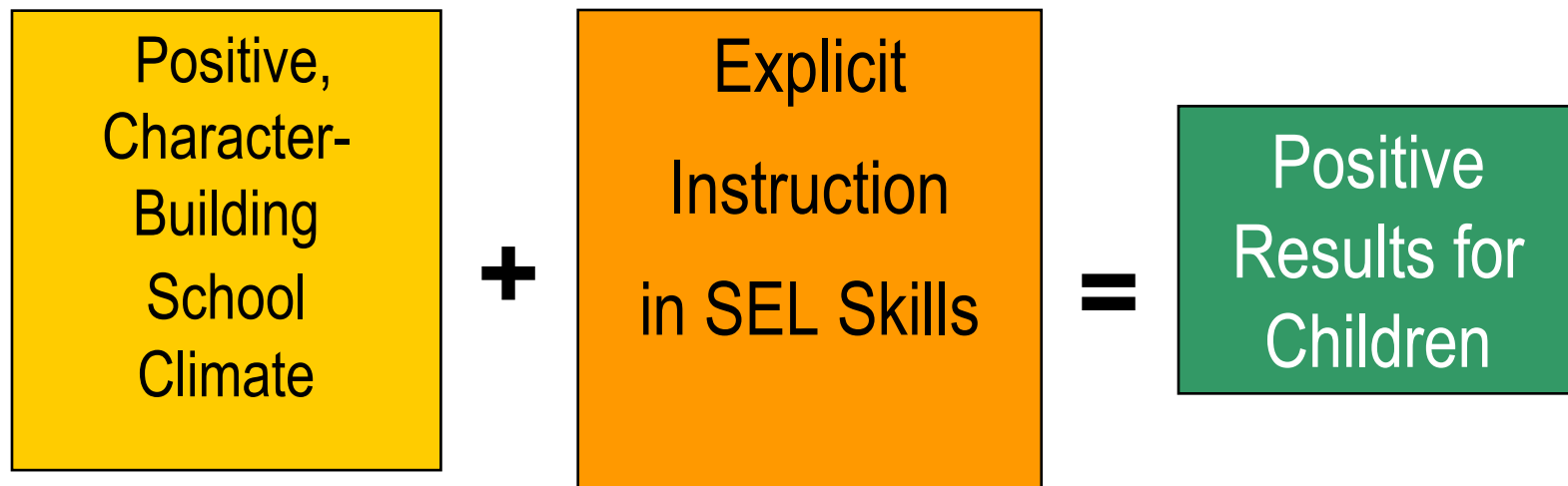


What is Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD)?

- a set of **skills and dispositions/essential life habits**
- that can be **built developmentally** if we do so with intentionality, focus, and continuity, and
- **schools are the place** where most children can be reached systematically,
- because the same set of skills and habits ultimately **mediate academic, civic, and workplace success**
- and it relates to moral and performance character!

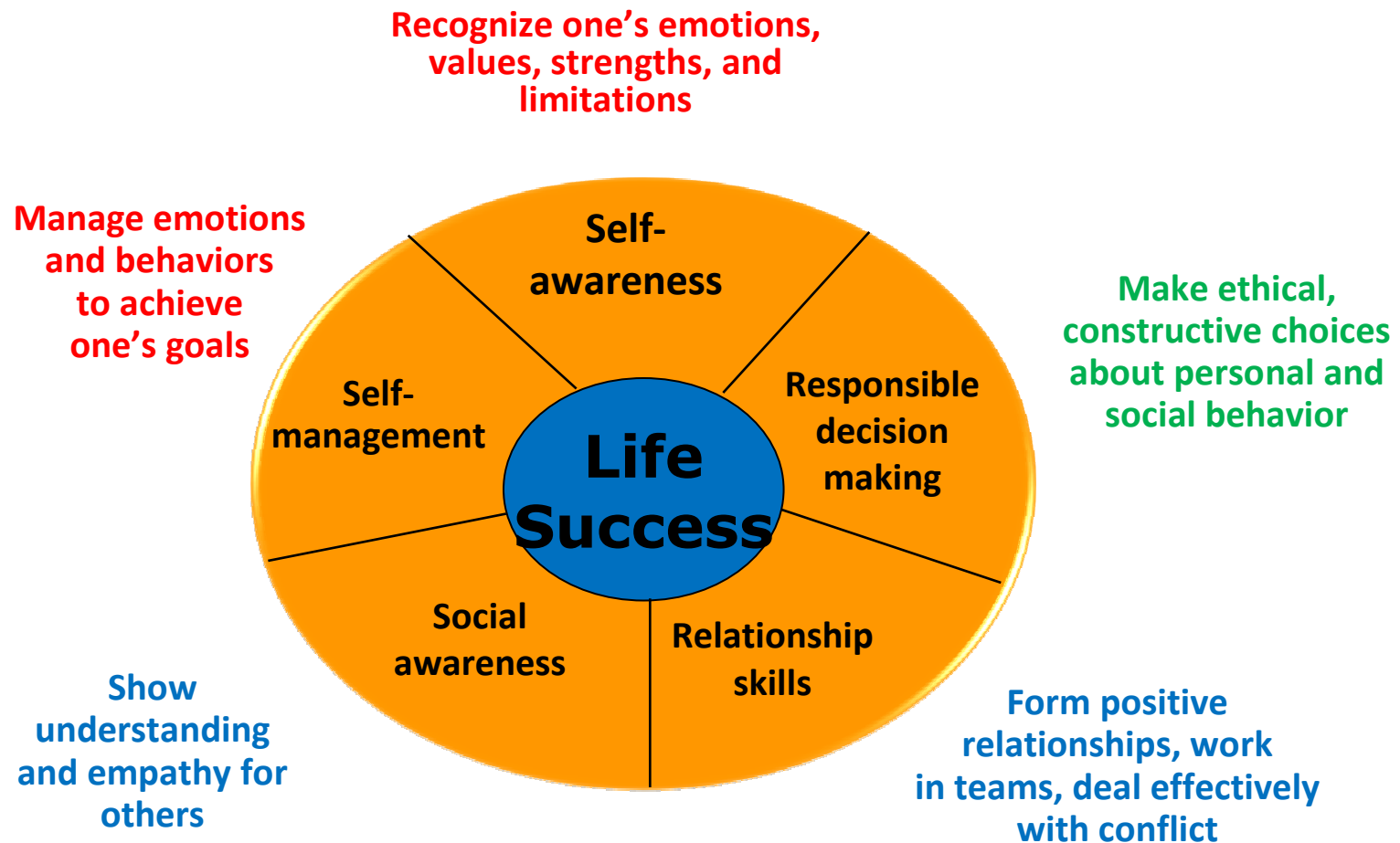
How Does SECD Work?

SECD is an evidence-based strategy that integrates the intellectual, emotional, and social facets of learning. It works through two related approaches:



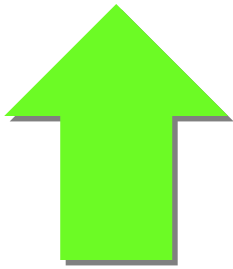
Source: *SEL and Academics: Research Brief*, Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, 2007.

What Skills are Needed for Success in School and Life/Participatory Competencies?



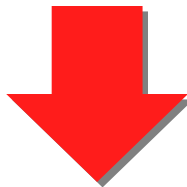
Benefits of SECD

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

Source: Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., & Schellinger, K. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development*. (available at www.casel.org) and M. Berkowitz & M. Bier, *What works in character education*. (Washington, DC: Character Education Partnership, 2006) (available at www.characterandcitizenship.org.)

If You Had a Magic Wand, What Values Would You Wish Your Children Would Internalize Forever?

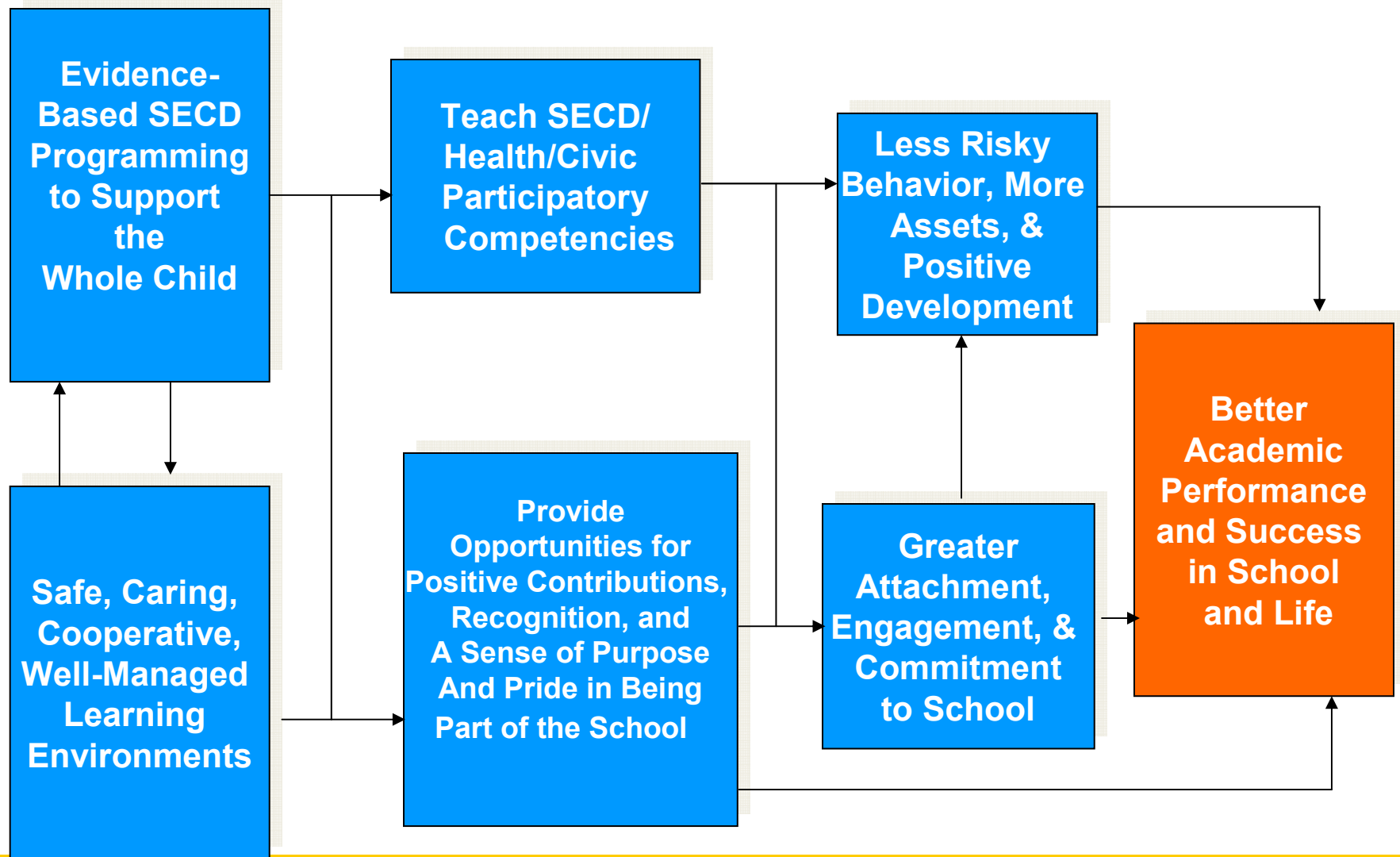
- Friendship
- Peace
- Wisdom
- Beauty
- Long Life
- Riches
- Popularity
- Family

CHALLENGES OUR YOUTH CARRY AROUND WITH THEM EACH DAY

- **Increased pace of life**
- **Greater economic demands on parents**
- **Alterations in family composition and stability**
- **Breakdown of neighborhoods and extended families**
- **Weakening of community institutions**
- **Unraveling of parent-child bonds due to work, school demands, time, drugs, mental health, and economic burdens**
- **Climate of war, terror, and societal bullying and intimidation**
- **Ongoing exposure to an array of digital media and pervasive advertising that encourage violence as a problem-solving tool and other health-damaging behaviors and unrealistic lifestyles**

Paths to Success in School and in Life:

Success Requires a Confluence of SECD and Classroom and School Environment



Successful 21st Century Schools Understand and Emphasize That:

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



The Choice is Yours

- UNITED
 - OR *UNTIED* ?
-
- The difference is where you choose to put the “I”

How to Get Unjumbled and Move towards Schools of Character and Academic Accomplishment: Six Lessons Learned from DSACS

- ***Climate and Culture Assessment, Feedback, Planning***
 - Climate Assessment of Students, Staff, Parents
 - Identification of other indicators and data gathering procedures to contribute to assessment and ongoing evaluation
 - Data Review and 8-week Planning Cycle Worksheets
- ***Infrastructure Development and Support***
 - Work from and with existing climate, discipline, character, SEL, etc. teams
 - Help teams learn how to work and problem-solve, obtain administrative support, and achieve and celebrate success

More Lessons Learned

- ***School Identity Clarification, Integration, Social Marketing***
 - Identify core values, essential life habits, themes, what the school stands for; consider Laws of Life-based interventions
 - Unjumble the school house developmentally in support of the core; prune before you plant
 - Integrate core elements throughout the curriculum and report cards
 - Articulate the role of SECD in reaching goals and the scope and sequence in assuring all students will improve SECD skills in systematic, continuous, coordinated ways
- ***Promote Student Voice and Engagement in Learning and the Life of the School and Community***
 - Systematically build and provide SECD skills, service learning, student government, participation opportunities
 - Set powerful norms for respectful relationships in classrooms and elsewhere
 - Greet students, recognize absences and life events, and ensure all have a positive connection with staff or peer mentors

More Lessons Learned...

- *Connect to Existing Mandates*
 - Show how SECD is essential to meeting existing mandates, including:
 - Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying/Violence Prevention Policies, ATOD Policies, etc.
 - School and District Goals
 - Effective implementation of Core Curriculum Content Standards
 - Expected/Mandated Behaviors of School Professionals and their Accountability Systems
- *Connect to Those Who Are Walking the Walk*
 - those implementing other whole school models (CASEL/SEL; CEP/NSOC; Responsive Classroom; Social Norms)
 - value your SECD colleagues and share and steal shamelessly

Key Recommendations to Guide Policy

- Every school should undertake a systematic **assessment of staff and student perceptions of school climate**, including school safety/bullying and student engagement/participation/voice, at least once every two years and use that feedback in a staff-wide data review for systematic improvement of SECD competencies and school climate in schools that have a clear sense of meaning and purpose. (In Middle and High Schools, students should be involved in the data review and planning process.)

Key Recommendations to Guide Policy

- Each student should receive a minimum of **one-half hour of explicit instruction per week in skills related to social-emotional and character development (SECD)** as part of a comprehensive prek-12 scope and sequence (see Anchorage, Alaska, public schools for an example of such a framework, as well Appendix C of CASEL's *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators*).
- Every teacher, student support services provider, and administrator should have **demonstrated competence** in implementing evidence-based SECD programming and positive climate promotion at the classroom and/or school level (as appropriate).
- Schools require implementation support systems for long-term sustainability of effective innovations.

Best Practices for Fostering Youth Engagement and Building Students' SECD

- **Meaningful, Participatory Student Government**
- ***Service Learning-- Lions-Quest International***
- **Feedback/Sharing Opportunities**
- **Open Forums for School Problem Solving**
- **Staff/Student Committee Involvement**
- **Having a Voice/Diversity Monitoring**
- **Buddies, Mentors, and Tutors**
- **Opportunities for Reflection**
- ***Opportunities for Identifying and Developing one's Laws of Life***

Implications of SECD and Service Learning for Success in School and Life

- Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD) consists of essential life skills/participatory competencies and the values needed to use these competences for positive, constructive purposes.
- Vocational success is inextricably interconnected to SECD (www.EIConsortium.org elaborates the research and practice case for emotional intelligence in the workplace)
- Service is a vital source of self-definition, positive identity, and bonding to school and community and afford authentic opportunities for skill building
- The skills developed in service-learning transfer to academics and the workplace

Service-Learning and SECD

- Service learning has a positive effect on students' interpersonal development and the ability to relate to diverse groups. They were better able to trust and be trusted by others, be reliable, and accept responsibility; develop positive bonds with adults, show greater empathy with others, and greater acceptance of cultural diversity, showed increase awareness of cultural difference and attitudes toward helping others; and felt more comfortable communicating with ethnically diverse groups (Bradley, 2006).

Components of Service Learning

- Preparation
- Action
- Reflection
- Demonstration

- Formal Evaluation
- Celebration

Background:

The Laws of Life Essay Journey

- What is the Laws of Life Essay Journey?
- Case example: Plainfield Public School District, Plainfield, NJ and the book, *Urban Dreams*
- Extending the effects into everyday interactions, homes and communities: Learning to live one's Laws of Life (not really a paradox....)

Values-Linked Goal-setting Contracts

- Step-by-step exercise to help youth identify a goal and make effective plans for goal achievement
- A promise people make to themselves
- Includes a “buddy” for mutual accountability/responsibility

Worksheet.doc (Preview) - Microsoft Word

File Format Tools Table Window Help

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Laws of Life Contract

I, _____, pledge to live my life by the law of _____

Over the next five months, I plan to live out my Law of Life by accomplishing these specific goals:

Goal 1: _____

In order to achieve this goal, I will go through the following steps:

I plan to have achieved this goal by: _____

Problems I might face in reaching my goal	How I plan to solve them

LO A057 In 1 Of 3 REC TRG EXT OVR

P_Presenta... Presentation3 CEF Outlined... LOL Contract...

Small Things That Matter Because They Build Character

- *Greeting matters.* *Greet all youth by name when they enter the school, program, classroom, etc. Consider morning meetings.*
- *Reflection matters.* *Begin and/or end individual classes/the school day/the program with brief periods of time for students to reflect on what they have learned recently and what they might want to learn next. Consider youth legacy cards.*

- *Collaborative Rules Matter.* *Create rules that recognize positive behavior, such as cooperation, caring, helping, encouragement and support. Be sure that all conduct/ discipline rules and procedures are clear, firm, fair and consistent.*
- *Caring Matters.* *Acknowledge and engage children's strengths, interests.*

- *Past Success Matters.* Ask students what kinds of environments, classrooms, work, etc. have been most and least successful for them in the past and use this information to guide instruction.
- *Having Voice and Responsibility Matters.* Give students a voice and responsibility via project-based learning, meaningful service-learning, mentoring, tutoring, etc.

Summary of Research Evidence on the Impact of School Climate/Belonging on Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying, and Academics

“There is ... powerful evidence that school climate affects students’ self-esteem and self-concept. School climate also colors school-based risk-prevention efforts. Effective risk-prevention and health-promotion efforts are correlated with a nurturing school climate. It also promotes academic achievement. As a result of these findings, fostering socially, emotionally, and physically safer schools has become a primary focus of the U.S. Department of Justice and virtually all state education departments.” (Cohen, 2006, p. 212-213.)

HIB is a school organizational/values problem that requires strong policy and follow-up for prevention and response. It can be addressed effectively.

From Cohen, J. (2006). Social, Emotional, Ethical, and Academic Education: Creating a Climate for Learning, Participation in Democracy, and Well-Being. *Harvard Educational Review*, 76 (2), 201-237.

DSACS Data on Bully-Climate- Voice Connection

- Data from Years 3 and 4 of the DSACS project, the first years in which we collected anonymous data on students' perception of bullying.
- We examined the relationship between the degree of bullying in school and the extent to which students felt they were being given useful strategies to handle bullying, and their perception of the school climate. The overall data set represents 115 schools and 48 districts, and 48,000 students, across the full range of DFG's in NJ, across the entire state geographically.
- Across all data sets for both years, for disadvantaged schools vs. others, and for elementary, middle, and high schools, the findings were remarkably consistent.

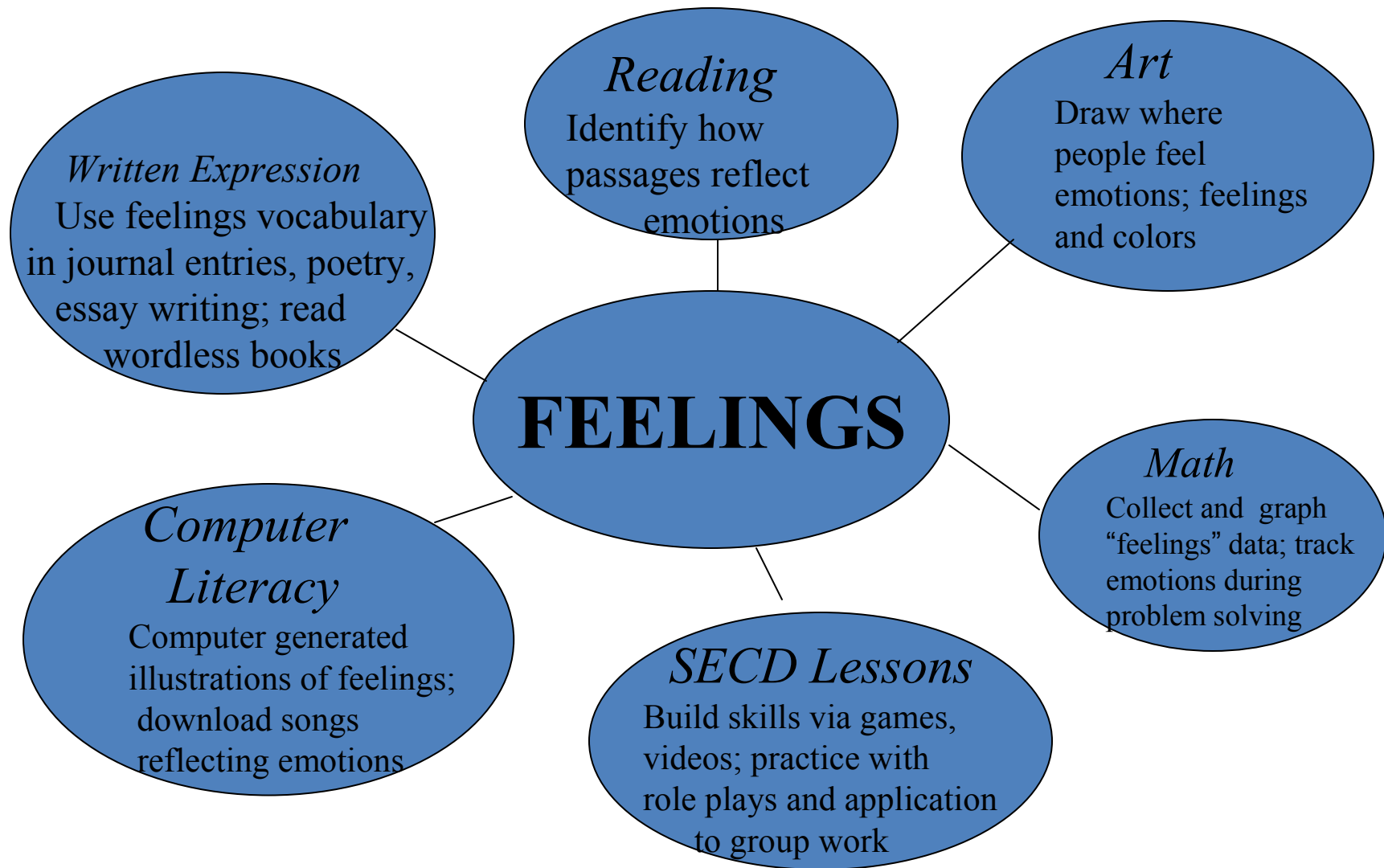
Key Findings

- Bullying is related to the climate of the school and is most strongly and significantly related to the **respect that students feel in the school**, especially among their peers.
- Where there is a respectful environment, bullying is less likely to exist in schools.

Key Findings

- The extent to which students feel they are truly learning strategies to cope with HIB in their schools is most strongly related to the:
 - extent to which they perceive teachers as being *caring and supportive to students and to one-another*, and
 - secondarily to extent to which students feel they are *involved in shaping their school environment in positive ways*.
- Students appear to find HIB prevention and intervention messages valuable when staff members are seen as genuinely caring and when students are engaged in the school.

Integration of SECD into Lessons



Integration of SECD into Lessons: Fill in the Blanks



Research Confirms Long-Held Good Sense

- *To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.* -- Theodore Roosevelt
- *We are going to ask our children not just to talk but to act, serve, and live in accordance with a set of higher values and with a buoyant optimism.*-- R. Sargent Shriver
- *Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.* -- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Small Steps Toward a Great Journey:

How Shall We Proceed to Get to Where We
Know We Must Go?



You Cannot Effectively Advocate for What You Do Not Show: The Courage of your Character Convictions

*"Don't let what you
cannot do interfere
with what you can do."*

John Wooden

"The children are waiting."

Ted Sizer

