



The Scale of Our Investment in Social-Emotional Learning

A Working Paper By
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Note that the views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect those of the members of our National Advisory Board. Any errors in fact and interpretation are our own.

About Our Working Papers

Transforming Education is pleased to issue a series of working papers that are meant to distill information of value to educators, policymakers, and others in the field of Mindsets, Essential Skills, & Habits (MESH) in a form that can be readily updated as knowledge continues to emerge and be refined. Our working papers summarize the current state of knowledge and evidence about which skills matter for success in school, college, career, and life; how we can responsibly measure and build those skills; and which supports are needed for districts and schools to implement best practices. Because the MESH field is constantly evolving, we expect to revise our working papers periodically. Moreover, we hope educators, researchers, and policymakers will share additional research and effective practices related to MESH skill development.

If you have feedback on *The Scale of Our Investment in Social-Emotional Learning* or want to share your own approach to incorporating MESH in your district or school, please e-mail info@transformingeducation.org.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Prior Survey Results: Teachers Value SEL and Schools Support It	5
Current U.S. Investment in Building Students' Social-Emotional Skills	5
Teachers, Principals, and District Leaders Identify a Variety of Reasons for Implementing SEL	9
Conclusion	11
Appendix A. Survey Development Method and Sampling	13
Appendix B. Market Size Calculations	14
Sources	16
About Transforming Education	17
About the Authors	18

The Scale of Our Investment in Social-Emotional Learning

Executive Summary

A growing body of research shows that social-emotional skills impact high school and college completion rates, adult employment and earnings, and lifelong well-being outcomes such as physical and mental health.¹ Billions of dollars are spent annually on K-12 curricula, professional development, and instructional materials to help children build knowledge and skills in school, but little is known about how much is spent specifically on developing students' social-emotional skills.² To answer this question, Transforming Education (TransformEd) conducted a nationally representative survey of teachers, principals, and district leaders to ascertain the amount of time spent in classrooms on social-emotional learning (SEL), the amount of money spent on products and resources related to SEL, and the motivations of various stakeholders for investing in students' social-emotional skills.³

As a nation, we are making considerable investments in SEL. Based on our calculations, **U.S. K-12 public schools devote a total of approximately \$21–47 billion per year to SEL in terms of: (1) expenditure on SEL-related products and programs and (2) teacher time focused on SEL.** More specifically, our survey data reveals that schools and systems spend about \$640 million per year on SEL-related products and programs, and teachers invest approximately \$20–46 billion per year to SEL through their own time. While the direct spending on products and programs is significant, the investment of teacher time on SEL is particularly striking. We find that teachers spend about 4.3 hours per week on SEL, or approximately 8% of their total working time inside and outside of the classroom.

We also asked teachers, principals, and district leaders to identify why it is important to implement SEL in their schools and districts. Respondents indicated that they want to develop students' SEL to help with classroom management, reduce negative behaviors including bullying, and address the needs of students who have social-emotional skill deficits.⁴ Yet, as we detail below, teachers, principals, and district leaders all offer distinct motivations for implementing SEL.

To conduct this survey, we selected a random sample of teachers, principals, and district leaders from across the United States. The questions we asked these respondents fell into two major categories: (1) resources spent on SEL (both money and time) and (2) goals for implementing SEL in their school or district. We acknowledge that this survey had limitations. The sample size was relatively small, totaling 112 respondents, comprising 56 teachers, 45 principals, and 11 district leaders. However, this group was representative of schools and districts in the U.S. based on district size and geography (see Appendix A).

We also acknowledge that results for the monetary value of teacher time are approximate and broad (\$20–46 billion per year). We employed multiple methodologies, which included such figures as average teacher salary and average per-pupil expenditure in schools, to arrive at our total (see Appendix B). Despite the broad range, however, the results are clear: teachers invest tens of billions of dollars per year in SEL through both in-class and out-of-class time.

Based on the findings from this survey, we provide the following recommendation: **education policies should encourage the systematic measurement of students’ social-emotional skills to determine whether existing investments in SEL are building students’ skills effectively and to inform data-driven decisions about instructional approaches for SEL.**

Prior survey results: Teachers value SEL and schools support it

Teachers believe in the importance of developing students’ social-emotional skills. One survey of more than 20,000 public school teachers found that 99% of teachers believe that quality teaching must include not only academics but also SEL competencies such as social skills and effective study habits.⁵ These findings were consistent with another national teacher survey in which 93% of teachers said they believe it is important for schools to promote the development of social-emotional skills, and 95% of teachers said they believe these skills are teachable.⁶ In addition, 99% of teachers reported having at least one student in their classroom who needs assistance or intervention for a social, emotional, or behavioral challenge.⁷

Existing efforts to build SEL skills are prevalent in schools, with 88% of teachers stating that their school is working to support students’ development of these skills; however, only 44% of teachers say such efforts are being implemented systematically in their schools.⁸ Teachers express a desire for SEL to be more institutionalized within the structure of schools, with 62% of teachers stating that their state standards for education should include the growth and development of students’ social-emotional skills.⁹ Given these attitudes, it is not surprising that teachers seek to prioritize SEL for professional development, with 82% percent of teachers stating that they are interested in additional SEL training in their schools.¹⁰

Current U.S. investment in building students’ social-emotional skills

In total, we calculate that, nationally, K-12 public schools spend approximately \$21–47 billion per year on SEL, which includes (1) spending on SEL-related products and programs (approximately \$640 million), and (2) teacher time focused on SEL. In terms of teacher time, we find that teachers are spending over 4 hours per week on SEL, and the monetary value of this time translates into approximately \$20–46 billion per year. We describe our findings in greater detail in the following section.

Figure 1: Total Annual Spending on SEL Products in U.S. K-12 Schools

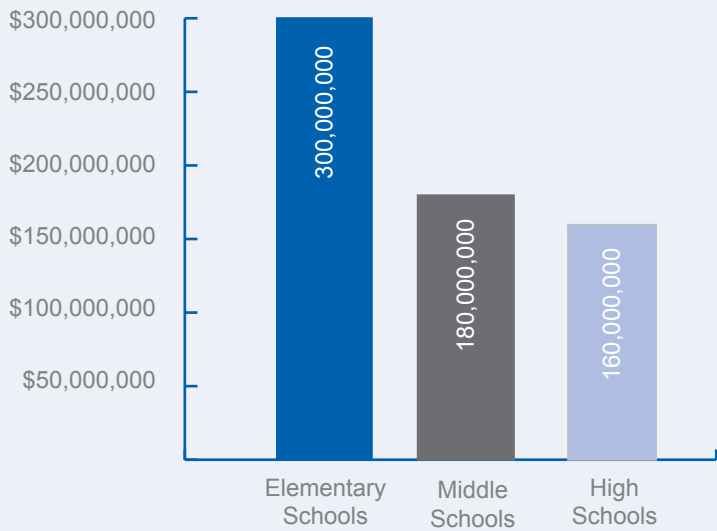
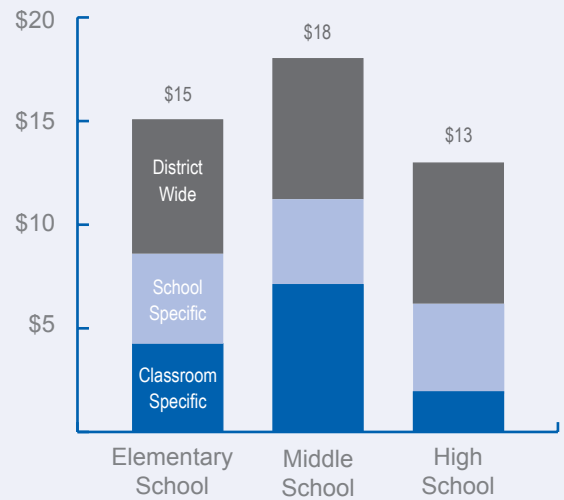


Figure 2: Per Pupil Spending on SEL Products in U.S. K-12 Schools



Schools and districts are spending \$640 million annually on SEL products and programs

We asked teachers, principals, and district leaders to tell us how much money they spent on SEL products, using the budgets that they directly controlled. SEL products include program curricula, professional development sessions, and outside speaker fees. Based on these results, we estimate total spending on SEL products to be \$640 million annually. Because approximately 70% of all K-12 public school students are at the elementary level, most of the product spending occurs in elementary schools, which invest \$300 million in SEL products per year.¹¹ Middle schools spend \$180 million, while high schools spend \$160 million annually. See Figure 1.

We then categorized product expenditure per pupil according to classroom, school, and district levels across school levels (see Figure 2). “Classroom-specific” expenditure includes the amount teachers spent on products for their classrooms. “School-specific” expenditure includes the amount that school leaders spent on school-wide programs and supports (excluding dollars that teachers controlled directly). “District-wide” expenditure includes the amount that district leaders spent on curricula, professional development, and other resources out of the district budget (excluding dollars that principals or teachers controlled directly). As Figure 2 shows, middle schools have the highest per pupil spending on SEL at \$18 per student. This high per pupil spending is driven mostly by higher spending by teachers at the classroom level in middle school, at around \$7 per student, compared to \$4 per elementary student and \$2 per high school student. Per pupil spending for elementary schools is \$15, while per pupil spending for high school students is \$13.

Note: Classroom-specific, school-specific, and district-wide spending categories are intended to be mutually exclusive and, therefore, additive.

Figure 3: Time Spent on SEL-Related Activities

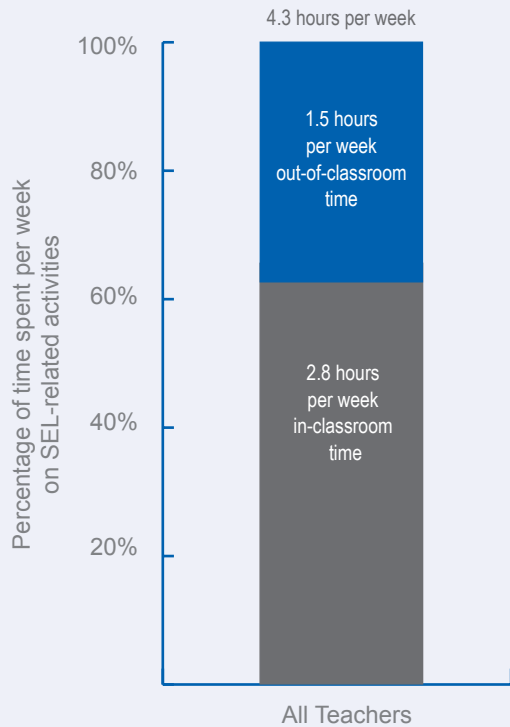
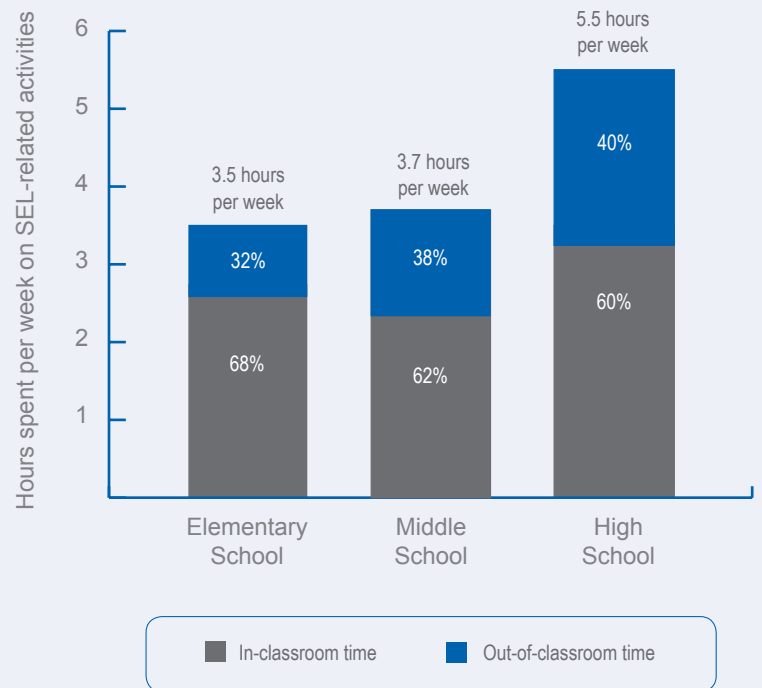


Figure 4: Time Spent on SEL-Related Activities



Teachers are spending over 4 hours per week on SEL

National surveys of teachers indicate that teachers work between 50 and 53 hours per week.¹² Our survey results show that teachers are spending a significant amount of their work hours on SEL-related instruction. Teachers who participated in our survey were asked to report the total amount of time they typically spend on activity related to SEL, both within and outside the classroom. Our survey results show that teachers spend an average of 4.3 hours per week on SEL—approximately 8% of their total working time (based on a 53-hour work week). They spend 64% of that time (2.8 hours per week) in the classroom, which amounts to about 30 minutes of in-class time per day spent on SEL. While some of the in-class time is spent on highly structured activities, such as teaching lessons on social-emotional skills and assessing students’ growth in these skills, much of the work is less formal, such as “engaging in conversations about related behaviors, attitudes, and skills,” assisting in students’ practice of social-emotional skills, and responding to “teachable moments” related to SEL.

The remaining 36% of time spent on SEL (1.5 hours per week) occurs outside of the classroom. Out-of-classroom time includes planning lessons, developing assessments or class assignments, and participating in SEL training or professional development sessions (see Figure 3).

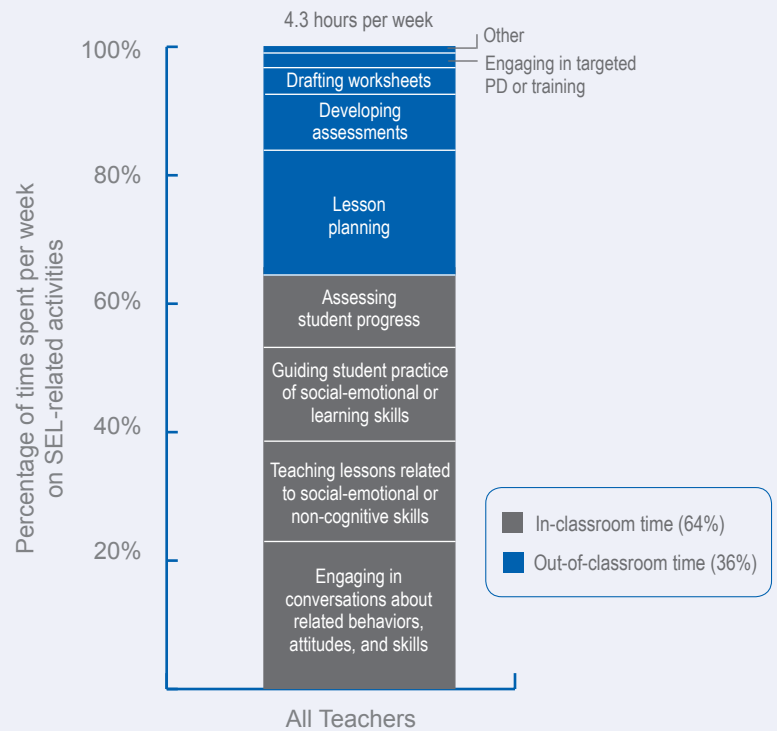
We also found differences in the average amount of time spent on SEL among teachers by school level (p. 7). According to our survey data, elementary school teachers spend an average of 3.5 hours per week on SEL, while middle school teachers spend 3.7 hours per week and high school teachers spend 5.5 hours per week. On average, high school teachers spend 3.3 hours per week on SEL in the classroom and 2.2 hours per week on SEL outside of the classroom. The ratio of in-class to out-of-class time spent on SEL was relatively consistent across teachers of all grade levels (see Figure 4).

Teachers spend in-classroom and out-of-classroom time to plan and implement SEL

Educators are spending significant time and resources toward specifically building social-emotional competencies in their students. 64% of teacher time spent on SEL

is dedicated to in-classroom work, such as guiding students through the practice of SEL skills and teaching direct lessons on these skills. Teachers spend the bulk of their out-of-classroom SEL time developing lesson plans to use in their classroom, more than the time devoted to developing assessments, drafting worksheets, and professional development combined. See Figure 5 for a complete breakdown of teachers' time devoted to SEL.

Figure 5: Breakdown of Teacher Time Spent on SEL



The time teachers dedicate to SEL represents \$20–46 billion annually

There are a variety of methods to derive a total estimate of the cost associated with teacher time spent on SEL, based on the relatively small set of teachers who participated in our survey. To establish a range of spending estimates, we used four methods, with each method using calculations based on, respectively: (1) average teacher salary and total number of teacher hours dedicated to SEL (equating to approximately \$20 billion); (2) average teacher salary and classroom instruction hours dedicated to SEL (equating to approximately \$27 billion); (3) average cost of all resources that go into the classroom, school, and district per public school student, and classroom instruction hours dedicated to SEL (equating to approximately \$33 billion); and (4) average cost on resources spent only on classroom instruction and classroom instruction hours dedicated to SEL (equating to approximately \$46 billion).

Therefore, the total national spending on SEL—including both (1) SEL-related products and programs and (2) teacher time—is between \$21 and \$47 billion annually, after factoring in the additional \$640 million that schools spend annually on SEL-related products and resources. This figure represents approximately 3–8% of the total annual spending on education in U.S. K-12 public schools.¹³

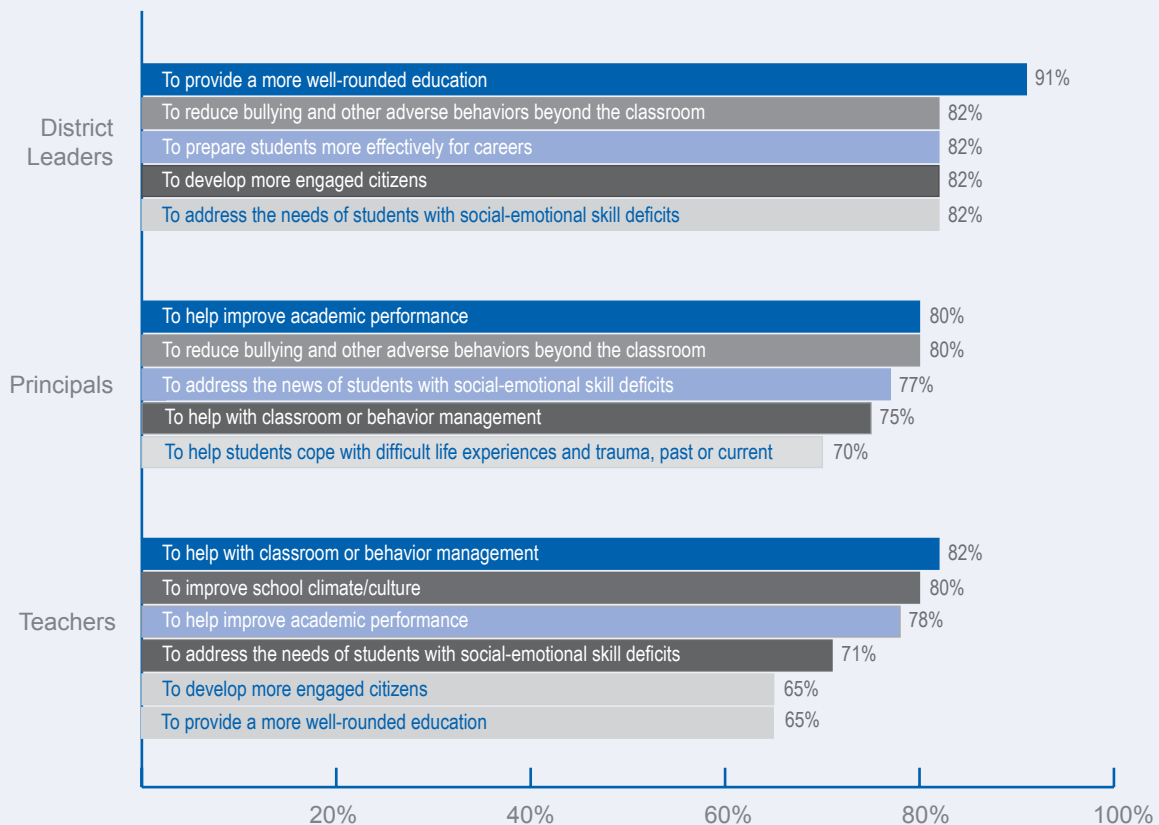
Please refer to Appendix B for a deeper explanation of each method, including the full equations used.

Teachers, principals, and district leaders identify a variety of reasons for implementing SEL

In our survey, teachers, principals, and district leaders offered a variety of reasons for why it is important to implement SEL in their schools and districts. The most common reasons included: helping with classroom management, reducing negative behaviors including bullying, and addressing the needs of students who have social-emotional skill deficits. We detail these findings below.

Figure 6: Top 5 Reasons for Offering SEL, by Position

Why do you currently offer programs and activities related to social-emotional and/or non-cognitive skills? Please select all that apply:



Reasons for offering SEL differ by role within system or school

We asked survey respondents to identify from a list of sixteen options their reasons for offering SEL programming and activities.¹⁴ Possible options included academic reasons (e.g., “To help improve academic outcomes”), behavioral reasons (e.g., “To help with classroom or behavior management”), and skill-based reasons (“To prepare students more effectively for careers”), as well as other options that extended beyond purely classroom-based reasons (e.g., “To improve school culture/climate”). See Figure 6 for a chart that depicts the top five reasons that respondents gave, categorized by role within the school or district:

While the responses differed by position, a few key takeaways emerged from the results:

- **Respondents identify a broad range of reasons for offering SEL.** Responses reflect both specific, functional goals (e.g., helping with classroom management and addressing a bullying problem) as well as broader aspirations for learning to be more well-rounded and for students to become more engaged citizens.
- **Respondents all identify addressing the SEL-related needs of students as a reason for offering SEL.** In total, 82% of district leaders, 77% of principals, and 71% of teachers selected “[t]o address the needs of students with social-emotional skill deficits” as an important reason to offer SEL.¹⁵ This finding reflects data cited earlier: 99% of teachers have at least one student in their classroom who needs assistance or intervention for a social, emotional, or behavioral challenge.¹⁶
- **District leaders and principals identify SEL as a possible approach to reduce bullying and other adverse behaviors beyond the classroom.** 82% of district leaders and 80% of principals indicated this goal as a reason for offering SEL, the second-highest rated reason for both groups.
- **Principals and teachers also identify SEL as a possible approach to help improve student academic performance.** This finding is supported by research indicating that social-emotional skills are linked to better academic outcomes.¹⁷
- **Only a small segment of respondents are “obligated” to implement SEL in their schools.** Fewer than 20% of district leaders and principals offer SEL because of a grant requirement, and fewer than 20% of teachers and principals offer SEL because of a state or district mandate. These findings, when grouped together with the statistics above that show widespread use of SEL programs, reinforce the notion that educators and school systems are making a deliberate choice to implement SEL.

Respondents want students to have the skills to prepare them for the future

Survey respondents were also asked to describe, in their own words, their goals for implementing SEL in their districts, schools, and classrooms. Their responses fell into a few overarching categories, including improving teacher-student relationships; teaching how to form good habits and make good decisions; and preparing students for college, careers, and successful futures.¹⁸

The most common categories of responses were that SEL prepares students for a successful future, builds character skills, and improves students’ relationship skills and interpersonal skills.

One teacher wrote, “In teaching non-cognitive skills, my goal is to develop kind, thoughtful, reflective, gritty young people who, equipped with these characteristics, will be successful in life no matter what they might end up doing.” A district leader wrote that the goal of developing students’ social-emotional skills was to “help students develop coping mechanisms and learn how to interact socially and solve interpersonal problems.” These goals are largely aligned with some of the reasons that educators identified for offering SEL, including developing engaged citizens.

Additionally, teachers and principals repeatedly cited the goal of “giving students the tools to deal with problems that arise.” One principal stated that “students in our neighborhood deal regularly with stressful and traumatic events, so we provide our services to assist them in overcoming these challenges.” Many comments indicated that educators see SEL as a way to provide students the knowledge and skills to succeed in life.

Respondents want students to develop communication skills, self-management, conflict management, and respect for others

Survey respondents were also asked to list or describe the specific social-emotional competencies that they thought were most important for their students to develop. District leaders cited communication—followed by empathy, perseverance, grit, persistence, and resilience (the last four of which are all overlapping)—as the most important competency for students to develop. Principals cited self-management, followed by respect for others, empathy, and responsibility. Teachers cited conflict management and respect for others, as well as empathy, interpersonal relationships, and responsibility. Across all three groups, empathy, respect for others, and responsibility were common themes. Different language was used to describe similar competencies, reflecting an ongoing challenge to the SEL field: articulating a consistent and coherent terminology.

Conclusion

This study shows that schools and districts are already investing significantly in helping students build social-emotional skills, which research shows can impact students’ academic, college, career, and life trajectories. Approximately 8% of teachers’ time is devoted to SEL, which translates to \$20–46 billion worth of time spent on SEL annually in U.S. K-12 schools. An additional \$640 million is spent annually on products and materials dedicated to SEL.

Additionally, this study reinforces the notion that many teachers, principals, and district leaders value and seek to implement SEL Their reasons for doing so include functional and aspirational responses, including to bolster academic outcomes, to improve classroom management, and to develop more engaged citizens.

The survey results support our position that the field should systematically measure students’ social-emotional skills. In addition to the findings of this study, we know that research indicates that SEL matters to students’ academic, career, and life outcomes. However, we do not yet know which programs or

interventions can best develop SEL-related skills and mindsets or how systems can best allocate resources to support students' SEL. **Measuring these skills will enable education leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of existing investments of time and money in social-emotional skill development, just as we use academic test scores to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional strategies and supports offered by schools.** The field has not yet come to a consensus about which SEL measures provide the best and most accurate data, but the existing SEL measures will undoubtedly continue to improve with time and use. We should leverage the resulting data to inform a dialogue about best practices in teaching social-emotional skills and about which investments are yielding the greatest improvements in students' social-emotional skills. We hope this study will catalyze conversations about the importance and scale of existing efforts to build students' social-emotional skills and competencies, and advance additional research and policy efforts in this area.

While this study elucidated key themes related to SEL spending and motivations, it also raised several other questions that necessitate further inquiry. Conducting a similar survey on a larger scale could provide a more complete picture of how SEL is implemented in schools, why educators believe in this work, and how much time and money is already being invested in SEL. The survey could explore such areas as how much work time teachers spend on SEL across various grade levels and student population subgroups, as well as how social-emotional skills are assessed across schools and districts. To this end, TransformEd is helping to lead an Assessment Work Group with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, Harvard University, the RAND Corporation, and others to better understand SEL measures that are currently used in practice and deemed effective by their users. The group has surveyed principals across the U.S. to gather their views on SEL assessment and will release those results later in 2017. Case studies that explore districts' SEL spending, instructional approaches, and teacher time spent inside and outside of the classroom could also complement these survey results.

This kind of large-scale research undertaking would require a substantial investment to ensure that it is comprehensive, statistically valid, and adequately representative. Such research would inform school practices and assist educators, researchers, and policymakers in better understanding the scope of existing investments in SEL.

Appendix A: Survey Development Method and Sampling

We conducted in-depth interviews with five district-level officials and five SEL program providers to identify general themes about SEL instruction and expenditure, which informed our development of survey questions. The survey questions span topics such as:

- motivations for bringing SEL into the classroom
- spending on SEL programming
- the amount of time teachers spend on SEL work both inside and outside of the classroom

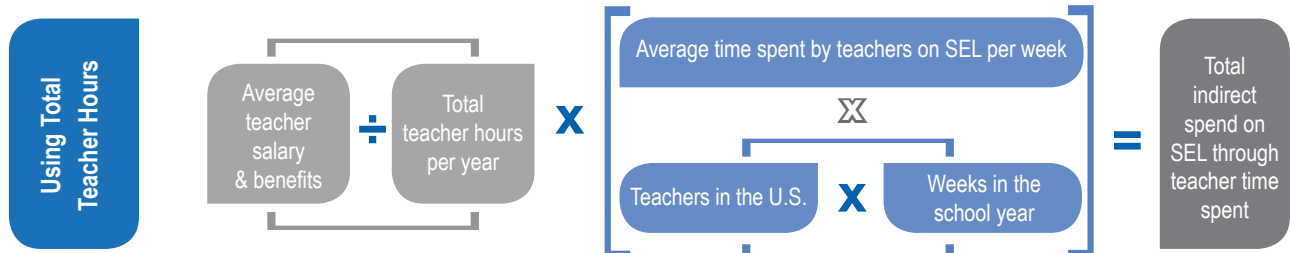
Principals and district leaders were asked additional higher-level questions, including:

- their involvement in purchasing decisions
- whether their schools or districts have staff members designated for SEL programming and development
- the distribution of money and resources for SEL across the student population

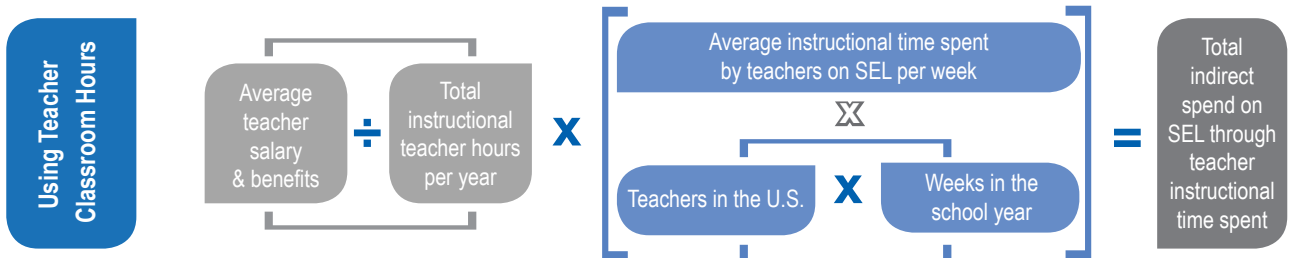
Using databases from the National Center for Education Statistics, our team randomly selected a subset of schools and districts across the United States to survey. In order to get a large enough sample size with minimal error, we randomly selected a set number of teachers, principals, and district leaders from our generated list. While 104 teachers, 75 principals, and 53 district leaders initially responded to the survey, not all of them were eligible for inclusion in our results because their schools or districts did not offer SEL programming, or they were unable to provide information about their own or their schools' money or time spent on SEL programming. Ultimately, we analyzed responses from 56 teachers, 45 principals, and 11 district leaders, which was a nationally representative sample.

Appendix B: Market Size Calculations

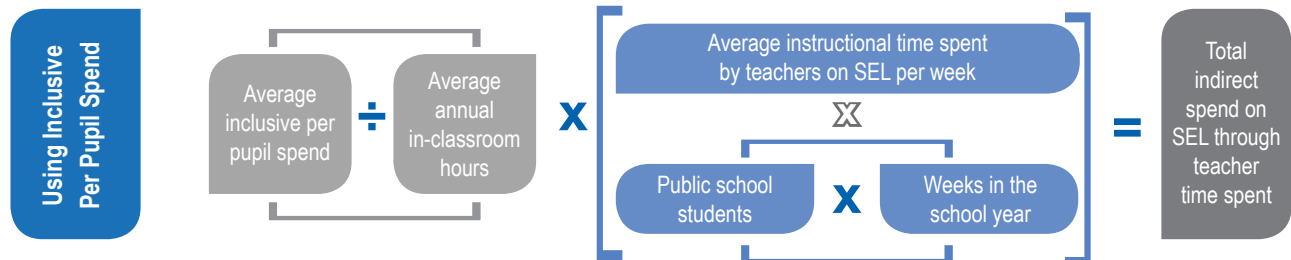
Method 1: Based on Average Teacher Salary and Total Teacher Time



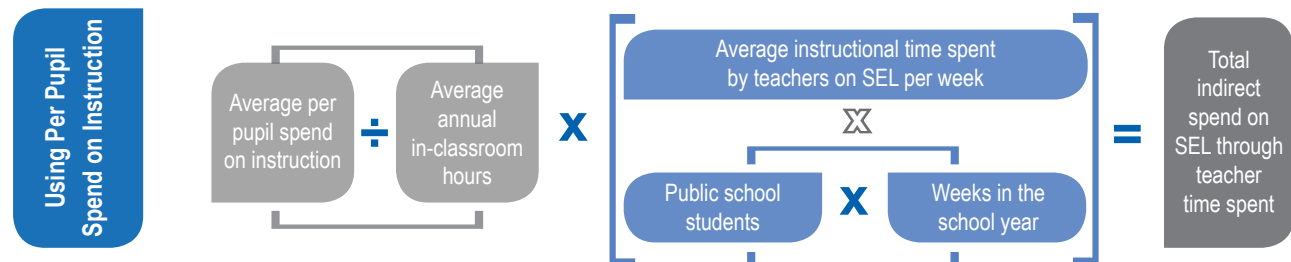
Method 2: Based on Average Teacher Salary and Instructional Teacher Time



Method 3: Based on Per Pupil Spend and In-Classroom Time



Method 4: Based on Per Pupil Spend on Instructional and In-Classroom Time



Method 1 was based on average teacher salaries, the average number of hours teachers reported spending on SEL, and the total number of teachers in the workforce, which gave us a total of \$20 billion.

Method 2 slightly modified the first: rather than use total working hours and total time spent on SEL, we used teachers’ total in-class work hours and total in-classroom time spent on SEL. Using this calculation, the cost associated with instructional time spent on SEL was \$27 billion, slightly more than the first calculation. This indicates that the proportion of instructional time devoted to SEL is greater than the proportion of total working time devoted to SEL, which is additionally denoted by the fact that 64%, nearly two-thirds, of SEL time is in the classroom rather than outside of the classroom.

Method 3 was based on the average inclusive per pupil expenditure, or the average cost for all resources that go into the classroom, school, and district per public school student. Using that figure, we calculated a “fully-loaded” cost per hour of time in school, or the average per pupil expenditure on education divided by the average number of hours a student spends in the classroom. We then multiplied that figure by the amount of in-class time that teachers spend on SEL per year and the total number of public school students. This gave us a total amount of \$33 billion associated with teacher time devoted to SEL.

Method 4 used a similar approach to Method 3 but started with the average per pupil spend only on instruction, which yields a total estimated cost of \$46 billion for teacher time spent on SEL.

Calculation Method	Market Size
Method 1: Based on Average Teacher Salary and Total Teacher Time	\$20 billion
Method 2: Based on Average Teacher Salary and Instructional Time	\$27 billion
Method 3: Based on Per Pupil Spend and In-Classroom Time	\$33 billion
Method 4: Based on Per Pupil Spend on Instructional and In-Classroom Time	\$46 billion

Sources

1. See, e.g., Moffitt, T. E., Arseneault, L., Belsky, D., Dickson, N., Hancox, R. J., Harrington, H., Houtes, R., Poulton, R., Roberts, B., Ross, S., Sears, M., Thomson, W.M., & Caspi, A. (2011). *A gradient of childhood self-control predicts health, wealth, and public safety*. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 108(7), 2693–2698.
2. Schweinhart, L. (2002). *How the HighScope Perry Preschool study grew: A researcher's tale*. Phi Delta Kappa Center for Evaluation, Development and Research (32). Retrieved from: <http://www.highscope.org/content.asp?ContentId=232>
3. Heckman, J., Stixrud J., & Urzua S. (2006). *The effects of cognitive and noncognitive abilities on labor market outcomes and social behavior*. Journal of Labor Economics 24(3), 411–482; Mischel, W. (2014). *The marshmallow test: Mastering self-control*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company; and Northeastern University (2014). Business Elite National Poll, 3rd Installment of the Innovation Imperative Polling Series. Topline Report, Telephone Survey conducted February 3–19.
4. TransformEd refers to social-emotional skills as the “Mindsets, Essential Skills, and Habits” (MESH) that students need to succeed. However, in the survey, we used the terms social-emotional learning (SEL) and non-cognitive skills. Throughout this paper, to be consistent, we will refer to social-emotional skills or SEL.
5. Interviews were conducted between October and December of 2014.
6. We use the term “social-emotional skill deficit” because it was used in the original survey. However, TransformEd believes in using SEL measures to help identify student strengths, and we believe that all students benefit tremendously from greater school and system attention to SEL.
7. Scholastic and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. (2013). *Primary Sources: America's Teachers on Teaching in an Era of Change*. 2. An online survey was emailed to and completed by 20,157 Pre-K-12th grade public school teachers from all 50 states in July 2013. Four focus groups were conducted in November and December of 2012 in each of the following three cities: Las Vegas, Nevada; St. Louis, Missouri; and Stamford, Connecticut, with 80 public school teachers participating.
8. Bridgeland, Bruce & Hariharan. (2013). *The Missing Piece: A National Teacher Survey on How Social and Emotional Learning Can Empower Children and Transform Schools*. 5.
9. Scholastic Inc. and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. (2013). *Primary Sources: America's Teachers on Teaching in an Era of Change*. 23.
10. Bridgeland, J., Bruce, M., & Hariharan, A. (2013). *The Missing Piece: A National Teacher Survey on How Social and Emotional Learning Can Empower Children and Transform Schools*. 5.
11. Ibid. 8.
12. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. (2014). *Teachers Know Best: Teachers' Views on Professional Development*. 3, 13. 1,300 teachers, professional development directors and providers, principals, and other leaders in education were interviewed and surveyed between January and March of 2014. 1,600 additional teachers completed a separate survey.
13. (35.2 million students anticipated to be enrolled in prekindergarten-8 in fall 2015)/(50.1 million students anticipated to be enrolled in public schools in fall 2015) = 70% (see <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372>)
14. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. (2015). *Teachers Know Best: Making Data Work for Teachers and Students*. 8. A nationally representative sample of 4,600 public school teachers completed an online survey. Interviews were then conducted with 54 educators in traditional schools and 30 educators in “tech-forward” schools. See http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/survey-teachers-work-53-hours-per-week-on-average/2012/03/16/gIQAqGxYGS_blog.html
15. Total expenditure on U.S. K-12 public schools is \$621 billion per year according to NCES data from 2013–2014. Total expenditures include instruction, student support, instructional staff services, operation and maintenance, administration, transportation, food services, capital outlay, and interest on school debt See http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cmb.asp.
16. Respondents were able to “select all [reasons] that apply” and, therefore, could provide multiple reasons.
17. See comment in Footnote 4.
18. Scholastic Inc. and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. (2013). *Primary Sources: America's Teachers on Teaching in an Era of Change*. 23.
19. See, e.g., Durlak, J., Dymnicki, A., Taylor, R., Weissberg, R., & Schellinger, K. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development* (1), 405–432; Mischel, W. (2014). *The marshmallow test: Mastering self-control*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company.
20. Categories included: academic achievement, character skill building, college and career readiness and preparation for futures, skills to deal with problems and issues, goal-setting skills, teaching good habits and decision-making skills, teaching that mistakes are okay, relationship and interpersonal skills, improved school culture and climate, and improved teacher-student relationships

About Transforming Education

Transforming Education (TransformEd) advances research, policy, and practice to support students in developing the social-emotional or competencies they need to succeed in college, career, and life. TransformEd has coined the term “MESH” (Mindsets, Essential Skills, and Habits) to encompass the subset of social-emotional skills that research has linked most clearly to student success and that are, therefore, of the most immediate importance to educators and education policymakers.

TransformEd’s work is grounded in compelling, longitudinal research on the importance of MESH competencies and informed by our on-the-ground experience as:

- **The lead strategic advisor to the CORE Districts:** Six school districts (serving over one million students) that have chosen to integrate MESH competencies alongside academic outcomes in their federally approved accountability and continuous improvement system; and
- **The facilitator of the Boston Charter Research Collaborative:** A collaboration between six high-performing charter management organizations and researchers at Harvard and MIT to develop and pilot innovative ways to assess and develop students’ cognitive and MESH skills.
- **Partner to NewSchools Venture Fund:** A multi-year collaboration to support a growing portfolio of new district and charter schools in expanding their definition of student success. Together, we prioritize and design metrics for a shared set of competencies and skills, address pressing questions about how to track student progress and make meaning from this data, and facilitate knowledge sharing.

Through our relationships with researchers, policymakers, and education system leaders, TransformEd is uniquely positioned to translate lessons learned from our on-the-ground research and practice work into changes in education policy and systemic practices that will help ensure that all students have opportunities to build the MESH skills they need to succeed in school and beyond.

Follow our latest work through the TransformEd [website](#), [newsletter](#), [twitter feed](#), and [blog](#).

About the Authors

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Sara Bartolino Krachman serves as the Co-Founder & Executive Director of Transforming Education, a nonprofit that translates the latest research on social-emotional skills into actionable policies and practices that support student success. Prior to founding TransformEd, Sara was a Senior Associate within The Parthenon Group's Education Practice, where she worked with leading national foundations, large urban school districts, and state departments of education on strategic planning and implementation of systems change efforts. Before joining Parthenon, Sara served as Vice President of Operations for INeedAPencil, a provider of free online SAT preparation to low-income students. Sara earned her A.B. in Government from Harvard University, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. In 2015, she was named a Finalist for the Young Professional Excellence Award, which honors an emerging nonprofit professional who has made a significant contribution to their organization through their effectiveness, dedication, perseverance, innovative thinking, and interpersonal skills.

BOB LAROCCA • Director of Policy and Communications

Bob LaRocca is Director of Policy and Communications at TransformEd, where he is responsible for collaborating with policymakers and crafting the organization's policy and communications plan. Prior to joining TransformEd, Bob was Director of Strategic Collaborations at Primary Source, where he worked with education leaders to advance global education in K-12 schools. Bob has also been a teacher at multiple Boston-area schools, including Nativity Prep, a middle school dedicated to serving low-income students of Boston. As an attorney, Bob helped run the Community Business Clinic at Northeastern School of Law, where he provided legal services to urban entrepreneurs and small business owners. And, he has served as a campaign manager and senior adviser on many Massachusetts political campaigns, developing policy positions and providing strategic communications advice to candidates. Bob holds an undergraduate degree from Georgetown University, a master's degree from the London School of Economics, and a law degree from Boston College Law School, where he received a pro bono excellence award for his service to nonprofit and government organizations.