



**Jill Merolla, Supervisor of
Community Outreach and Grant Development**

105 High St, Warren, Ohio 44481
330-841-2321, x7220
Jill.merolla@neomin.org

To: Finance Committee-The Ohio State Senate
From: Jill Merolla, Supervisor of Community Outreach and SEL (Social and Emotional Learning)
Director for the Warren City Schools
Re: S.B. No. 246

As a long time educator- teacher, principal, central office administrator, I would like to share my views on the use of SEL-Social Emotional Learning as a District wide approach to reducing student suspensions and expulsions. The Warren City Schools has been a part of CASEL's (Collaborative for Academic Social Emotional Learning) Collaborating District Initiative that joins large school districts around the country in promoting systematized SEL within the learning frameworks. From this collaboration and focus using SEL in our classrooms we have seen a reduction in student suspensions and expulsions at the K-2 level by 40% over the past six years. This SEL approach trains staff to teach appropriate social behavior using an evidenced based curriculum that is embedded into the daily classroom practices. Continual staff development on SEL is the key and the Warren City Schools has trained all PK-12 staff on a year basis. Our next steps are to align SEL instruction through an "Equity lens" to further review if our practices are continuing to exclude students in minority groups and with students with disabilities.

Through our own District experience, we support SEL/PBIS training at the university level and the continuation of such training at the school district level. This type of training will always be a work in progress but the outcomes of improved student social skills, growth mindset, and confidence to take on life's problems is worth the investment.

Please feel free to contact me with additional questions at 330 841-2321 ext. 7220