

The Center for Social-Emotional Learning
Schools, Demographics, Programs, Summary Evaluations, SEL Research
Robert E. Kelly, Director

Witness background: Robert E. Kelly

- Director of the Center for Social-Emotional Learning since November 2015
- Principal of Ohio Catholic and Public Schools, 1974-2011; retired from Mt. Healthy City Schools December 31, 2011
- Founder of St. Peter's Montessori School, 1976
- Founding Trustee of the Richland County Children's Theatre Foundation and the Msgr. Edward Dunn Foundation for Education
- President of Mohican School in the Out-of-Doors, 1985-1991
- Recipient of the 1982 *Sohio Foundation Teachers In American Enterprise Award*, the 1980 *Toledo Diocese Educator of the Year Award*, and the 1988 *National Catholic Education Association Distinguished Principal's Award*.
- Developed and implemented the 2000 Ohio BEST Practices Award-winning *People Against Violent Environments (PAVE)* Peer Mediation Team in two schools and trained several other schools
- Principal of New Burlington Elementary, a 66% poverty level school, which progressed from Continuous Improvement to an Excellent Rating on the Ohio Report Card in 2010, after implementing five best practice programs over six years, including PBIS, PAVE Peer Mediation, the *Effective Schools Model*, *Stiggins' Assessment for Learning Model*, and *Safe and Civil Schools Champs and Foundations Models*.

Testimony Outline re: SB 246

- It is critical that schools adopt a PBIS model and pair it with a social-emotional learning model in order to successfully provide students with the SEL skills that will enable them to develop the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
- Suspension and expulsion of K-3 students are counterproductive; students need to learn the self-discipline and communication, cooperation and conflict management skills in order to behave appropriately, which will result in less anxiety about social interaction and more focused learning.
- Teachers and staff need to learn SEL skills and how to teach and model those skills to order to have the classroom environment focus on self-management and effective communication. As teachers and students create productive learning climates in their classrooms, the school culture will reflect that climate.
- Students who disrupt should be assigned to an instructional SEL area in order to practice the skills with a trained professional, so that they can return to the classroom with those skills and monitored by the SEL trainer for a defined period of time.
- SEL and PBIS approaches in schools reduce discipline infractions, and, if SEL training is available for students who do not respond to the SEL skills in the classroom, then they can learn and practice those skills in an alternate environment and return to the classroom with more skills, rather than being suspended or expelled and returning with no additional skills.
- Comments referenced to data below.
- Data related to the Ohio BEST Practice PAVE Peer Mediation Program.
- Personal story about a student traumatized by a violent event.
- Other student stories if time permits.

Background Information in

The ***Center for Social-Emotional Learning (CSEL)*** is the successor to the Center for Peace Education (1979-2009). CSEL was initiated in 2014 and worked in one elementary school and one high school in 2015. During 2016, we expanded to three elementary schools and one high school, including two summer bridge programs. CSEL provides interactive experiences in prosocial skills, cooperation, communication, bias

awareness/appreciation of differences and conflict resolution for youth and their teachers. Our facilitators, most of whom hold advanced degrees in education, psychology, and counseling, are committed to cultivating the skills necessary for success in school and the workforce. During the 2016-17 school year CSEL worked in five high poverty urban schools, serving over 1000 students in 47 classrooms. In the current school year, we are facilitating SEL classes in six high poverty urban schools, serving 42 classrooms and approximately 1000 students. In addition to facilitating social-emotional learning classes, we also offer the Best Practices of student goal-setting, student-centered conferences, and peer mediation training, based on the **People Against Violent Environments** program, winner of the **Ohio School Conflict Management Award**, the **Nestle' Very Best in Teaching Award**, and the two-time **Ohio BEST PRACTICES Award winner**.

Mission

The Center for Social-Emotional Learning uses interactive and engaging experiences to build personal skills and create school cultures that are supportive, respectful and nonviolent.

Primary Programs:

1. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) classes that focus on Affirmation, Cooperation, Communication, Bias Awareness/Appreciation of Differences, and Conflict Management in order to develop the SEL Competencies of Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making.
2. Peer Mediation Training - based on the Ohio BEST Practices program People Against Violent Environments.
3. Student Goal-Setting and Student-Centered Conferences.

Shroder Paideia High School: This program is a continuation of a process that CSEL began implementing in January 2016 and has been developing and improving since then. The program participants are students attending Shroder Paideia High School, part of Cincinnati Public Schools. The student body is currently 782 students in grades 7-12, 51.5% male and 48.5% female, with a poverty level of 89% and 40 students in foster care. Racial distribution is 91.4% African-American, 4% Multi-Racial, and 4.6% white. 27% of the students are identified with disabilities. Students live within the City of Cincinnati, covering 33 zip codes, though 57% of the students live in zip codes 213, 227, and 237.

Barriers identified by the school staff and CSEL facilitators include lack of appropriate use of technology, ineffective communication and interview skills, lack of conflict management skills, difficulty understanding self, exercising self-control, goal-setting, and working as a team.

Data from Social-Emotional Learning classes at Shroder High School (9th graders/2nd semester 2015-16; 7th and 9th grade Summer Bridge; 8th and 10th graders/1st semester 2016-17): 254 Student Survey Summaries indicate that 92% of students responded STRONGLY AGREE OR AGREE that "I learned things that will be helpful to me at school, home or with friends" and 89% STRONGLY AGREE or AGREE that "I like how I am treated and feel respected (by other students) in the program." 97% of teachers/staff indicated SIGNIFICANT or MODERATE IMPROVEMENT in ten categories, including PROBLEM BEHAVIORS, SOCIAL INTERACTION, PROBLEM-SOLVING & DECISION-MAKING SKILLS, FEELINGS ABOUT SELF WORTH/SELF ESTEEM, POSITIVE ATTITUDES, SKILLS TO RESIST NEGATIVE PEER INFLUENCE, COOPERATION, AND ABILITY TO MANAGE ANGER.

61 Shroder Ninth Graders (14-15 year olds), when asked to name something helpful they learned during their 15-week group program in 2016, shared dozens of comments, a sampling of which are written below: "I learned..."

- To control my anger.

- How to handle a problem.
- To be respectful, responsible and caring.
- To talk to someone when you feel like committing suicide.
- That I can count on anyone in our group and to embrace who you are and never change for anyone.
- How to defuse a problem in a situation.
- How to respect people and how you should tell people how you feel about something that's hurting you.
- How to solve problems without using violence.
- How to communicate with others, solve problems, and learn listening skills.
- About different ways to handle conflicts.
- That without communication your point will never get across. I love this program and want to become a leader and branch out.

Mt. Healthy South Elementary: Mt. Healthy South Elementary is located in the center of the City of Mt. Healthy and is part of Mt. Healthy City Schools. The school serves 1093 students, 566 males and 527 females, in grades kindergarten through sixth grade, 100% of whom receive free lunch and free breakfast. Racial distribution: 798 Black/AA, 167 White, 90 Multiracial, 19 Asian, 18 Hispanic and 1 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Other demographics include 33 homeless, 49 in foster care and 204 students with disabilities/on Individualized Educational Plans. Almost all students are in zip code 45231.

During the 2016-17 school year at Mt. Healthy South Elementary, we facilitated 14 classes and 460 students, ages 6-9, in grades 1-3 in the first semester and 22 classrooms and 624 students, ages 7-11, in grades 2-5 in the second semester.

CSEL has been working at Mt. Healthy South Elementary for the past three semesters, and, as I reviewed the most recent end of semester surveys, in response to "Suggestions for improving the program" the majority of students asked if we could come more often or come back next year. Data from the two surveys of 2016-17 (grades 1-3/grades 2-5): 92%/84% of students Agree or Strongly Agree that the SEL program "helps me with my problems"; 95%/92% "learned things that will be helpful at school, home or with friends"; 94%/92% said that "I like being part of this program". Teachers indicated that 92% of students showed Moderate to Significant Improvement in the following: PROBLEM BEHAVIORS, SOCIAL INTERACTION, PROBLEM-SOLVING AND DECISION-MAKING, FEELINGS ABOUT SELF-WORTH/SELF-ESTEEM, POSITIVE ATTITUDES, RESISTING NEGATIVE PEER INFLUENCE, COOPERATION WITH OTHERS, and ABILITY TO MANAGE ANGER. As one third grader stated, "it helps me to be a bucket filler."

Roll Hill Elementary: Grades 2, 3, 4 and 4-6 Intervention (first semester 2016-2017) and Grades K, 1, 2, and 4-6 Intervention (Second Semester 2016-2017). Student Survey Summary: 95% Strongly Agree and Agree on six positive areas, including "The group helps me with my problems" and "I learned things that will be helpful to me at school, home or with friends." Teachers indicated that 92% of students showed Moderate to Significant Improvement in the eight areas mentioned above.

After School programs at Pleasant Hill Academy (grades K-6) and Bond Hill Academy (grades 4-6): 80% of Students at PHA strongly agreed or agreed with the six positive statements on their survey; 90% of BHA RESPONDED ACCORDINGLY. PHA STAFF RESPONDED THAT THEY OBSERVED MODERATE TO SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT FOR 84% OF THEIR STUDENTS IN THE TEN AREAS OF STUDENT BEHAVIOR EVALUATED; BHA STAFF OBSERVED MODERATE TO SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN 100% OF THEIR STUDENTS.

Evaluation/Data Collection

1. Pre-tests and Post-tests completed by teacher and student participants to provide insight on skills, concepts, and attitudes acquired.
2. Satisfaction Surveys completed by program participants (students and school staff). A minimum goal of 85% of Students will **Strongly Agree** or **Agree** to six statements of program success on the survey. A minimum goal of 90% of teachers/advisors will **Strongly Agree** or **Agree** that **Significant or Moderate Improvement** has occurred in ten categories of behavior, skills, and attitudes.
3. Documentation of student participation, pre/post-test completion.

Research Sampling: Social-Emotional Learning, goal-setting, and peer mediation are directly related to the societal interests in the health, education, cultural experiences and social welfare of children. In order to be successful in school and in life, students must be able to communicate effectively, listen reflectively, plan, prioritize, organize, manage time and conflict, and problem-solve. According to the ongoing research studies documented by the Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) in January 2017, these prosocial skills must be learned in order to develop the Social-Emotional/Executive Function Competencies of Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills and Responsible Decision-Making. CASEL's classes enable students and teachers to practice the SEL skills that will stimulate a school culture which reinforces affirmation, cooperation, effective communication, bias awareness/appreciation of differences, and creative conflict management.

According to a 2013 review of research by CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) and other studies, the outcomes associated with the five SEL competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) are:

- Increases in Positive Social Behavior
- An 11% increase in academic performance
- Decreases in conduct problems
- 10% less emotional distress
- Enhanced ability to communicate and cooperate with others
- Enhanced leadership skills
- Reduction in violence due to a greater sense of community and increased constructive responses to conflict.
- Positive spillover into family and community interaction

Gresham, F. (2015). Evidenced-based social skill interventions for students at risk for EBD. *Remedial and Special Education, 36* (2), 100-104.

Riney, S. S., & Bullock, L. (2012). Teachers' perspective on student problematic behavior and social skills. *Emotional and Behavior Difficulties, 17* (2), 195-211.

Shediak-Rizkallah, M. C., & Bone, L.R. (1998). Planning for the sustainability of community-based programs: Conceptual framework and future directions for research, practice and policy. *Health Education Research, 13*(1), 87-108.

The Positive Impact of Social and Emotional Learning for Kindergarten to Eighth Grade Students:

www.casel.org

The Missing Piece: A National Teacher Survey on How Social Emotional Learning Can Empower Children and Transform Schools: www.casel.org□