What New Research Tells Us About the Connections Between Social-Emotional Learning & the ABCs of Student Success

A Research Brief from Panorama Education
How Is Social-Emotional Learning Linked to Key Student Outcomes?

Schools and districts across the country have long focused on measuring and improving students’ social-emotional learning (SEL) — the skills, behaviors, and mindsets that are critical to success in school and life.

At Panorama Education, we’ve seen hundreds of districts prioritize SEL to offer a different lens on academic performance, chronic absenteeism, graduation rates, and college-career readiness.

This led our research team to ask: How does social-emotional learning link to the ABCs of student success (attendance, behavior, and course performance)?

For the first time, Panorama is releasing research that can help educators understand the connections between SEL and the ABCs with the goal of better supporting students.

In this brief, you’ll get a look at which SEL skills correlate most strongly with attendance, behavior, and course performance. You’ll also get inspiration to take action on these findings with strategies from districts that combine data across SEL and the ABCs to support every student.
Methodology

The data in this brief covers the 2017-2018 school year. The source of the data is Panorama Student Success, a platform that combines student background information with academic, attendance, and behavioral metrics, as well as student responses to Panorama’s Social-Emotional Learning Survey.

Our national sample for this research included:

112,670 Students
192 Schools
26 Districts
16 States

Meet the Panorama Research Team

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Attendance + SEL

With 8 million students chronically absent from school every year, attendance is one of the most critical issues facing schools today. Students often miss school for reasons outside of our control, but schools and districts can influence factors such as school climate and social-emotional learning that are linked to chronic absenteeism. Leading organizations like Attendance Works suggest taking a comprehensive, data-driven approach that addresses the causes of chronic absence.

Panorama’s research shows that student attendance is most correlated with:

1. Engagement
   How attentive and invested students are in school

2. Self-Management
   How well students manage emotions, thoughts & behaviors in different situations

3. Self-Efficacy
   How much students believe they can succeed in achieving academic outcomes

Spotlight on Attendance:
Ogden School District (UT)

- As one lever to increase K-12 literacy and graduation rates, Ogden is focused on boosting attendance; 24.4% of students in Ogden are chronically absent.

- For Ogden, the path to decreasing chronic absenteeism starts with improving relationships. Only 29% of students in grades 6-12 reported that they feel connected to adults at school.

- In addition to running monthly attendance campaigns, school and district leaders use an early warning system to monitor attendance data alongside student SEL data on self-efficacy, sense of belonging, and more. This allows administrators to take proactive, data-driven action to resolve attendance problems at the student, school, and district levels.

DID YOU KNOW?
Highly engaged students are 57% less likely to be chronically absent in school than students who report low engagement.
Behavior + SEL

As educators, we already know that growing students’ social-emotional learning skills can lead to improved classroom behavior, fewer conduct problems, and better social skills. Many researchers have studied the relationship between behavior and SEL — but we wanted to probe a bit deeper. What are the specific SEL topics that educators should consider focusing on if they hope to promote positive behavior in the classroom?

Panorama’s research shows that student behavior is most correlated with:

1. **Self-Management**
   How well students manage emotions, thoughts & behaviors in different situations

2. **Social Awareness**
   How well students consider and empathize with the perspectives of others

3. **Teacher-Student Relationships**
   How strong the social connection is between teachers and students

**Spotlight on Behavior:**

**Olathe Public Schools (KS)**

- After learning that 50% of Olathe students observe bullying behavior on a regular basis, the district began monitoring the areas of school climate and SEL that connect to behavior and discipline.

- Olathe administers a universal SEL screener to understand students’ skills and perceptions around social awareness, school safety, and belonging.

- School and district leaders use the screener data to inform SEL instruction provided through the Second Step program. They also use the data to target supports for specific student groups, such as English-language-learners and students in special education programs.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Students who report low Social Awareness are 2.5x more likely to have one or more behavior incidents than students who report high Social Awareness.
Coursework + SEL

Today, high-performing schools and districts see SEL as core to students’ academic success — and the research backs it up. A 2017 meta-analysis from CASEL found that students participating in SEL programs performed 13 percentage points higher than their non-SEL peers when it comes to academics. In Panorama’s research on the correlation between academics and SEL, we looked at “course performance” as indicated by student GPA.

Panorama’s research shows that student GPA is most correlated with:

1. **Self-Management**
   - How well students manage emotions, thoughts & behaviors in different situations

2. **Self-Efficacy**
   - How much students believe they can succeed in achieving academic outcomes

3. **Engagement**
   - How attentive and invested students are in school

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Students who report high Self-Management are **75% less likely** to face **failing grades** than students who report low Self-Management.

**Spotlight on Coursework:**

**Fresno Unified School District (CA)**

- Fresno’s [SEL survey](https://www.panoramaed.com) results across 106 schools showed that girls’ perceptions of their self-efficacy—or confidence—**plummeted in middle school** compared to boys’ perceptions.

- Realizing that students with high self-efficacy are more likely to achieve academically, district leaders added staff to its counseling offices, created school-based **“climate and culture teams,”** and developed interventions specific to girls.

- By targeting students’ social-emotional needs—especially those of girls—Fresno has made significant progress in **educating the whole child.**
Taking Action on This Research

With this research, educators can make informed decisions about what to target if they hope to impact attendance, behavior, and course performance. Although our analyses cannot determine the causal links between SEL topics and the ABCs, intervention literature presents strong evidence that all of these topics affect student outcomes. We recommend focusing on specific SEL topics based on your district’s key goals in addition to these and other research findings.

**Attendance**
1. Engagement
2. Self-Management
3. Self-Efficacy

**Behavior**
1. Self-Management
2. Social Awareness
3. Teacher-Student Relationships

**Course Performance**
1. Self-Management
2. Self-Efficacy
3. Engagement

**Key Takeaway:** Self-Management, one of CASEL’s five core SEL competencies, can be a powerful SEL skill to prioritize, measure, and grow in students.

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**PANORAMA STUDENT SUCCESS**

Monitor SEL and the ABCs in one platform

✓ View “on track” and “at risk” indicators for every student across SEL and the ABCs
✓ Proactively identify students in need of additional supports
✓ Understand key trends across student groups
✓ Create student support plans and evaluate the impact of tiered interventions over time

**LEARN MORE**
Learn more about Panorama’s tools for educators

Panorama Education helps educators act on data to improve student outcomes. Panorama has supported more than 9 million students in 11,500 schools across 46 states, including those in the New York City Department of Education, Dallas Independent School District, Seattle Public Schools, and San Francisco Unified School District.

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