

Social-Emotional Learning: Essential to Students' Success in School and Life



What Is Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)?

Social-emotional learning (SEL) captures the mindsets, skills, attitudes, and feelings that help students succeed in school and life. Other names for these skills include “non-cognitive skills,” “soft skills,” “21st century skills,” and “whole child.” [Research shows](#) that students who participate in SEL programs demonstrate 11% gains in academics, improved classroom behavior, better stress management, and higher attendance.

How Are Districts Addressing Social-Emotional Learning Today?

As the body of research on social-emotional learning grows, district and school leaders are focusing on infusing SEL into the classroom through different programs and activities. Some districts have even written visions for social-emotional learning into their strategic plans.

For many schools and districts, however, measuring social-emotional learning remains a challenge. Without clear and actionable data on how students view their SEL skills, it's difficult to answer questions like “which social and emotional supports do our students need the most?” and “how effective is our SEL programming?”

How to Get Started Measuring and Improving Social-Emotional Learning

At [Panorama Education](#), we've worked with over 400 school districts and 6 million students nationwide to develop a survey-based approach to SEL measurement. Here are the five keys we've found to assessing social-emotional learning:

- 1. Choose which topics to measure.** Which SEL skills, mindsets, and behaviors matter most to your district? Panorama's research-backed, customizable survey instrument contains [22 SEL measures](#) to choose from.
- 2. Gather baseline data with an SEL assessment.** Whether done online or by paper, SEL surveys take students 10-15 minutes to complete in class.
- 3. Analyze the results.** What are students' strengths and areas for growth? Panorama's reports display results at the school and district levels—as well as at the individual student level, if requested—with national benchmarks and subgroup analyses.
- 4. Take action to improve SEL.** Design a plan for improvement based on the data. Then, begin implementing the plan across your school or district.
- 5. Evaluate and adjust.** Did the interventions and supports work? Conduct another round of surveys to examine the effectiveness of your school or district's SEL efforts.

To learn more about Panorama's 22 survey topics, download our full Social-Emotional Learning User Guide.

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On the next page, learn how one school district is focusing on **growth mindset** to improve student outcomes.



Growth Mindset

Students who believe they can grow their abilities and intelligence are more likely to succeed academically

Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey Questions

In school, how possible for you is it to change:

- Being talented
- Your level of intelligence
- Behaving well in class
- Liking the subjects you are studying
- Putting forth a lot of effort
- How easily you give up

Adapted from [Panorama's SEL Measures](#)

WHY DOES GROWTH MINDSET MATTER?

The term “growth mindset” refers to the belief that you can develop your talents and intelligence through hard work and dedication. When it comes to the classroom, [research from Dr. Carol Dweck](#) shows that students who self-report higher levels of growth mindset tend to **do better academically** and **are more confident** when confronting challenges than students with fixed mindsets.

Panorama’s research on survey responses from over 36,000 students shows that students’ growth mindset [decreases as they progress from elementary school to high school](#)—suggesting that cultivating a growth mindset is important at every step of a student’s journey to graduation, not just in the early years.

Focus on Growth Mindset to Improve: Math and English Language Arts (ELA) Achievement



DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

Growth Mindset Improves Academic Outcomes in Long Beach Unified School District (CA)

- In an SEL survey, MacArthur Elementary found that only **5 out of 10** students believed they had a strong growth mindset.
- In response, educators taught students and families about the malleability of the brain and helped students practice applying a growth mindset in their daily lives.
- Students’ growth mindset scores **increased by 33% points** over the next two years. MacArthur also saw a **19% and 17% point increase** in ELA and math achievement, respectively.



Key Takeaway:

Make a targeted effort to develop growth mindset in students to boost academic results.