The Role of Leadership in Social-Emotional Learning Implementation: One District's Approach to Professional Development

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THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION: ONE DISTRICT'S APPROACH TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Dissertation in Practice by

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by

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Abstract

One mechanism for supporting teachers during the implementation of school and district reform is the provision of professional development. By offering meaningful professional development opportunities, leaders can influence teacher efficacy, thus potentially improving teacher practices. As social-emotional learning (SEL) becomes more prevalent in public schools, it is incumbent upon district and school leaders to understand how professional development opportunities can support teachers during SEL implementation. This qualitative study explores one district's approach for professional development in the area of SEL, with the goal of understanding how professional development may influence teacher efficacy.

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, and a document review. Findings revealed a variety of professional development activities occurred during SEL implementation. However, district and school leaders, as well as teachers reported their dissatisfaction with these professional development offerings. Without the presence of satisfactory SEL-related professional development, teachers could not relate the influence of the professional development to their efficacy.

Teachers described their most meaningful professional development experiences as those including the opportunity to collaborate with each other. Therefore, one recommendation of this study is to increase the amount of collaborative opportunities provided to teachers. In addition, leaders can promote the use of SEL practices through professional development experiences that introduce techniques directly related to teachers' classrooms and context. This type of professional development also has the potential to increase teacher efficacy.

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DEDICATION

Josh Shipp is credited with saying, “Every kid is one caring adult away from being a success story.” While some kids do not have any, as a kid I was blessed with many. My three grandparents have had an indelible influence on my life, therefore, I dedicate this work to my grandmother, Laura Caira and to the memory of my late grandfather, Aldo A. Caira and late grandmother, Helen McCabe.

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DISSERTATION DESCRIPTION & LITERATURE REVIEW

For the last 20 years, educational reforms have focused on implementing learning standards and increasing accountability (Cohen, Fuhrman, & Mosher, 2007; Hargreaves & Ainscow, 2015). While these reforms led to gains in student achievement (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003), the definitions of student readiness and success are expanding. Educators, legislators, and researchers have recognized the importance of non-cognitive skills for school success and longer term functioning (Zins & Elias, 2007). These constellations of 'soft' skills are commonly referred to as social-emotional competencies (Elias, 2013). In school, students develop these competencies through social-emotional learning (SEL) (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). SEL is the process through which people gain and apply skills that allow them to understand and regulate their own emotions, to apply empathy in interactions with others, and to successfully negotiate social problem solving (Zins & Elias, 2007). As such, SEL is increasingly considered essential to every child's education (Slade & Griffith, 2013).

While the concept of SEL is not a new one (Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer, 2004), in recent years federal legislation, such as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) brought SEL instruction to the forefront for educators and administrators. This national policy codified the requirement for educators to provide students with a well-rounded education and a school environment that enhances learning by attending to

[1] This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach of this project: Michael A. Caira, Jr., Sarah J. Hardy, Deborah Langlois, and Donna M. McGarrigle.

social-emotional as well as the academic needs of children. In an ongoing effort to address this reform movement, schools employ a variety of programs aimed at addressing discrete social-emotional issues such as substance abuse, conflict resolution, attendance, and character building (Greenberg et al., 2003). However, such stand-alone efforts often fail because they lack connection to a wider vision for SEL.

It is the responsibility of leaders to set direction in their districts, ensure staff development supports that direction, and create organizational structures that yield the desired results (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Therefore, leaders direct SEL implementation by establishing policies, setting vision, and creating strategic goals, all of which unite the many elements that comprise successful SEL programming (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). Additionally, leaders can ensure the appropriate allocation of resources for staff development and for necessary organizational structures.

Although much research exists regarding the impact of leaders on teaching and learning (e.g., Blase & Blase, 2000; Marks & Printy, 2003), there is a dearth of research addressing how school and district leaders can best support implementation of SEL policy and initiatives. Educational leaders play an important role in providing the support and guidance needed to implement effective SEL programming (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). Therefore, the broader aim of this project was to explore the role of school and district leaders in supporting implementation of SEL in public education.

Individual Studies and Conceptual Lens

This project examined specific aspects of SEL implementation and educational

leadership through four individual studies (Table 1.1). Each study established specific research questions and explored the implementation of SEL opportunities through a different conceptual lens. Table 1.1 lists each individual study and its corresponding conceptual framework. Collectively, the four views provided an understanding of the work done by school personnel to implement SEL in one district.

Table 1.1

Four Studies of the Role of Leadership in Social-Emotional Learning Implementation

Individual Study Title	Conceptual Lens	Investigator
One District's Approach to Professional Development	Self-efficacy and Professional Development	Caira, Jr.
Making Sense of Social-Emotional Learning Initiatives	Sensemaking	Hardy
Leadership and Classroom Learning Environment	Leadership Practices	Langlois
Principal and Counselor Practices to Support Social-Emotional Learning	Distributed Leadership	McGarrigle

Literature Review

The following review will familiarize the reader with the research literature used to inform our project. First, we define SEL, for the purpose of our project. Second, we present background information and research showing the importance of SEL on various student outcomes. Third, we examine the role of teachers in SEL implementation. Fourth, we review the literature regarding the role of leaders in developing and supporting SEL initiatives and improvements in schools.

Definition of Social-Emotional Learning

Elias (2006) calls SEL "the 'missing piece' in education, because it ...links academic knowledge with a specific set of skills important to success in schools, families, communities, workplaces and life in general" (p. 6). Throughout the research literature, the term SEL has various definitions and overlaps with a multitude of terms used in education, such as: character education, emotional literacy, whole child education, grit, and resilience (Elias, 2013). However, the commonality among terms is a focus on the development of essential social-emotional skills and the impact of these skills on student functioning and learning (Murray, Hurley, & Ahmed, 2015).

The inclusion of the word "learning" in the term "social-emotional learning" is intentional because it indicates social-emotional skills can be acquired (Oberle, Domitrovich, Meyers, & Weissberg, 2016). The term SEL recognizes the complex process involved in the attainment of social-emotional skills. As described by Elias and Moceri (2012), "[SEL] implies a pedagogy for building those skills and an intervention structure to support the internalization and generalization of the skills over time and across contexts" (p. 424). The importance of this skill development "over time and across contexts" highlights schools as a critical setting to foster social-emotional skills. In addition, these researchers recognized the importance of a range of people (e.g., teachers, parents, and peers) being involved in skill instruction, practice, and generalization of social-emotional competencies.

The definition for SEL from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) was the most appropriate one for our project due to its

framework for organizing social, emotional, and academic learning. According to CASEL (2015), SEL is the process of teaching, practicing, and reinforcing five social-emotional competencies. Formally, this definition states that SEL is:

> The process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2015, p. 5).

Per CASEL's (2015) definition, the five identified competencies related to social-emotional health include: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. See Table 1.2 for the definition of each of these competencies.

Table 1.2

CASEL's Core SEL Competencies

Social-emotional competencies	**Competency Definitions**
Self-awareness	Recognizing one's emotions and identifying and cultivating one's strengths and positive qualities
Social awareness	Understanding the thoughts and feelings of others and appreciating the value of human differences
Self-management	Monitoring and regulating one's emotions and establishing and working toward achieving positive goals
Relationship skills	Establishing and maintaining healthy, rewarding relationships based on cooperation, effective communication, conflict resolution, and an ability to resist inappropriate social pressure
Responsible decision making	Assessing situational influences and generating, implementing, and evaluating ethical solutions to problems that promote one's own and others' well-being

Note. Adapted from "Effective social and emotional learning programs," by CASEL (2015).

The Importance of Social-Emotional Learning for Students

The impact of SEL on students is substantial. SEL influences academic achievement, school behavior, and life-long success (Zins & Elias, 2007). We discuss the impact of SEL on these areas of student functioning in turn.

Academic achievement. There is a growing body of research that points to the link between academic achievement and students' social-emotional development (Elias, 2009). A meta-analysis of 213 studies looked at the effectiveness of universal SEL programs and found SEL programming positively impacted a broad range of skills (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). An analysis of one subset of these studies revealed an 11-percentile point gain in the academic achievement of students taking part in SEL programming. Similarly, Payton et al. (2008) found up to a 17-percentile point increase in academic test scores for students involved in SEL programming. Another study examined reading and math standardized assessment scores and found a link between reading and math achievement and social-emotional competencies (Oberle, Schonert-Reichl, Hertzman, & Zumbo, 2014). The same pattern of results is evident for subgroups of students. For example, when only students from economically disadvantaged families are included, regular participation in universal SEL services is also linked to better development of social-emotional and academic skills (Zhai, Raver, & Jones, 2015). Thus, time spent on SEL, even when taken away from the core curriculum, is time well spent.

School behavior. The importance of SEL for students goes beyond the impact on academic achievement and includes improved behavior (Durlak et al., 2011). Shechtman

and Yaman (2012) examined the effect of integrating SEL in literature instruction on student behavior. Along with increased content mastery, students had commensurate improvements in their classroom behavior and motivation (Shechtman & Yaman, 2012). So too, implementation of SEL programming was found to reduce student antisocial behaviors (Frey, Nolen, Edstrom, & Hirschstein, 2005) and improve school conduct (Brackett, Reyes, Rivers, Elbertson, & Salovey, 2011).

SEL can impact student behavior outside of the classroom as well. Even in less structured school settings, social-emotional skills play a key role. The use of explicit instruction in behavioral expectations coupled with positive adult reinforcement may lead to a reduction in undesired recess behavior (Lewis, Colvin, & Sugai, 2000) and improved hallway conduct (Oswald, Safran & Johanson, 2005). Thus, SEL is important to student success in a range of school settings.

While the presence of SEL programming can positively influence student behaviors (Brackett et al., 2011; Durlak et al., 2011; Lewis et al., 2000; Frey et al., 2005; Oswald et al., 2005; Shechtman & Yaman, 2012), the absence of thoughtful SEL implementation comes at a cost. According to Blum, Libbey, Bishop, and Bishop (2004), without the development of social-emotional competencies, students lose interest in school over time. In addition, without sufficient social-emotional skills, students struggle to form functional relationships. Furthermore, as students' connections to school erode, so too does student academic achievement. Consequently, a failure to establish effective relationships may lead to school failure (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2007).

Life-long success. In addition to the shorter term academic and behavioral benefits, skills gained through SEL are linked to better long-term outcomes for students. Elias (2009) explained, "[SEL] is about teaching all children to have the patience, interest, and skills to think about the complex issues all citizens face and to have the knowledge, inclination, and skills needed for civic participation" (p. 840). The skills and dispositions necessary to participate in a democracy also lead to well-being and happiness (Cohen, 2006). Therefore, providing systematic and explicit instruction in SEL supports students in developing skills that are essential for long-term success in life (Zins & Elias, 2007).

Dodge et al. (2015) conducted a longitudinal study to determine the impact of an intervention program on kindergarten students with high ratings of aggressive or disruptive behavior. Half of the students, approximately 445 children, were provided instruction in social-cognitive skills and peer relationships. Eighteen years later, researchers examined the arrest rates, drug and alcohol use, and psychiatric symptoms of all participants. They found lower rates of externalizing and internalizing behaviors with individuals who participated in the intervention. Thus, investing in students' social-emotional development through SEL programming and initiatives can have both short term impacts (e.g. increased achievement and prosocial skills), as well as long term ones (e.g. reductions in negative adult outcomes).

Teacher's Role in SEL

Teachers play an important role in the successful implementation of SEL for students. Our review of literature revealed teachers promote SEL for students in three

broad ways. First, we discuss teacher-student relationships. Second, we examine the importance of a positive classroom environment. Third, we present research findings regarding the effective implementation of SEL practices and programs.

Teacher-student relationships. Relationships play an important role in the cognitive and social development of students (Davis, 2003). Therefore, relationship development is instrumental in the implementation of SEL. According to Pianta (1997), positive adult relationships are important resources for student learning and development. In fact, students who learn from caring and responsive teachers were found to have a stronger work ethic and report a greater enjoyment of learning (Rimm-Kaufman, Baroody, Larsen, Curby, & Abry, 2015). Additionally, positive teacher-student relationships can lead to a decrease of externalized and internalized negative behaviors in children (Merritt, Wanless, Rimm-Kaufman, Cameron, & Peugh, 2012; O'Connor, Dearing, & Collins, 2011) and higher levels of prosocial functioning (Brock & Curby, 2014; Merritt et al., 2012). Warm and communicative relationships may also increase a student's social-emotional well-being (O'Connor et al., 2011). Positive relationships were found to be especially important for students with behavioral difficulties (Brock & Curby, 2014) and for those with a lower sense of self-efficacy (Martin & Rimm-Kaufman, 2015). So, although students enter school with a range of competencies, how teachers nurture these relationships has important implications.

Importance of a positive classroom environment. The relationships teachers establish with students are foundational in creating a positive learning environment. According to Elias (2006), "effective, lasting academic learning and SEL are built on

caring relationships and warm but challenging classroom and school environments" (p. 7). Students learning in positive classroom environments were more secure, attended to their academics at higher rates, and communicated more positively with peers (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2015). Additionally, classrooms characterized by a positive climate moderated the risk of early school failure (Hamre & Pianta, 2005).

Implementation of SEL practices and programs. While teacher-student relationships and classroom environments influence SEL, teachers also support SEL development through pedagogy and the explicit teaching of social-emotional skills through structured programs. The implementation of these programs has implications for their effectiveness. Researchers found teacher training in SEL programming led to increased program dosage and fidelity, which in turn, positively impacted students' emotional problem solving and emotional literacy (Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, Elbertson, & Salovey, 2012). Similarly, fidelity with and consistent implementation of an SEL program matters. As an example, Ottmar, Rimm-Kaufman, Berry, and Larsen (2013) examined the impact of the consistent use of Responsive Classroom, an educational approach focused on building a relationship between academics and SEL. They found this approach positively impacted the effectiveness of mathematics instruction, through student development of class rules, student choice in work, and regular modeling of classroom routines and expectations.

When weighing how best to develop SEL, it is critical to note that quick-fix, short-term, or isolated approaches are inadequate (Zins, Elias, & Greenberg, 2007). Thus, conveying the importance of SEL to staff prior to implementing new SEL

initiatives is imperative in order to attain staff buy-in. Therefore, the role of leaders in SEL implementation becomes essential.

The Importance of Educational Leadership

As is true with all school reform, educational leadership plays an important role in the development and implementation of SEL (Kendziora & Osher, 2016). Although research gaps exist regarding the impact of leadership in the effective implementation of SEL, leaders can move organizations forward by "influenc[ing] a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2016, p. 16). Setting direction, developing people, and redesigning the organization are three sets of practices through which leaders can facilitate change (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Setting direction. Creating a vision and articulating a plan to realize that vision are common practices among effective educational leaders (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). Leaders help to establish a sense of purpose and meaning by placing organizational goals into a broader context for the staff (Honig, 2016). How leaders frame a policy highlights certain aspects of the reform. Leaders can best garner support for reform by helping staff understand how the change connects to current practice, why the reform is necessary, and why the particular reform was selected. A leader's ability to articulate a compelling vision for the organization can energize and motivate staff to engage in the organizational reform (Minckler, 2014). Several researchers found vision setting to be a collaborative process in schools that affects positive change (Devos, Tuytens, & Hulpia, 2013; Dinham, 2005; Silins, Mulford, & Zarins, 2002). Irrespective of how a vision is determined, it is ultimately a leader's responsibility to set the

organizational vision and determine the organizational direction (Leithwood et al., 2004), whether as an individual process or a more collaborative one.

Developing people. Motivating and energizing staff is often insufficient on its own to sustain growth, as even motivated staff may not have the prerequisite skills to make progress with new organizational initiatives (Meyer & Behar-Horenstein, 2015). However, participation in professional development can increase skills and efficacy of staff (McKeown, Abrams, Slattum, & Kirk, 2016). When leaders provide teachers with targeted professional development, teachers are more likely to attempt new techniques and implement changes to their daily practices (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002). Educational leaders can support staff development by providing appropriate external professional development or by facilitating access to internal resources or expertise (Minckler, 2014). In the development of staff SEL, effective professional development and supportive coaching can increase the quality and quantity of lessons implemented with a new SEL curriculum (Ransford, Greenberg, Domitrovich, Small, & Jacobson, 2009).

Redesigning the organization. Effective leaders establish the conditions that support staff towards meeting organizational goals (Dinham, 2005; Higgins, Ishimaru, Holcombe, & Fowler, 2012). Leaders can improve outcomes by creating the time and space for staff to work together and by establishing expectations for the work (Minckler, 2014). Leaders can also foster teacher collaboration as a norm of educator practice (Bruce, Esmonde, Ross, Dookie, & Beatty, 2010). Creating the appropriate structures and norms is particularly important for sustaining SEL initiatives due to the important

role contextual conditions play in SEL (Ringeisen, Henderson, & Hoagwood, 2003).

Leaders can increase organizational capacity through the creation of innovative learning environments that support risk-taking and the development of new skills (Higgins et al., 2012). In a study of Australian secondary schools, teachers who took a lead role in increasing organizational capacity were recognized and reinforced by school leaders (Silins et al., 2002). Similarly, Dinham (2005) found high performing schools had school leaders who placed value on actively growing through innovation. These leadership behaviors modeled for the staff the importance of growth and risk-taking in building organizational capacity.

A calm, well-structured environment is another organizational condition found to support reform initiatives (Leithwood, Steinbach, & Jantzi, 2002; Zins et al., 2007). A meta-analysis examining the impact of leadership found the creation of smooth, orderly school climates allowed increased learning for teachers and students, and thus contributed to greater organizational growth (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Leaders need to establish an educational climate of respect, care, and support to foster greater organizational growth (Minckler, 2014; Silins et al., 2002). Higher levels of administrative support were positively related to teacher efficacy and a greater breadth of teacher strategies (Bellibas & Lui, 2017). Creating appropriate organizational supports led to more effective implementation of SEL initiatives (Ransford et al., 2009).

Educational leaders have an important role to play in building their schools through improving an "organization's innovative capacity, teachers' working conditions, and smooth internal organizational functioning" (Witziers, Bosker, & Krüger, 2003, p.

416).

Conclusion

This literature review defines SEL as:

> The process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. (CASEL, 2015, p. 5).

SEL is dependent upon core social-emotional competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Students' academic achievement, behavior, and future success are impacted by SEL. Teachers are essential in creating positive relationships and building the environment where SEL can succeed. School and district leaders might play a pivotal role by supporting the work of teachers through vision setting, staff development, and the promotion of positive organizational conditions for the implementation of SEL.

CHAPTER TWO[2]

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Study Design

The purpose of this project was to explore the role of school and district leaders in supporting implementation of SEL in public education. This project utilized a qualitative case study methodology (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative data provides a rich description of "phenomena as they are situated and embedded in local contexts" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 20). Our research focused on one public school district. As a bounded system (Merriam, 2009), this district provided a useful context for examining the work of district leaders, school leaders, teachers, and counselors as they worked to support the social-emotional development of students.

Methodology

This project was conducted by four researchers investigating different aspects of the implementation of SEL (see Table 1.1). While our four individual studies shed light on specific approaches to the implementation of SEL, our collective work provided us insight into how a district can support such reform. We worked as a team in many aspects of the process including site selection, data collection, and analysis. In the following section, we identify the process used to determine the appropriate district for our project, define our common data collection process, and provide an overview of the data analysis used by the entire team. Data collection and analysis unique to the individual studies are reported in those respective chapters.

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[2] This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach of this project: Michael A. Caira, Jr., Sarah J. Hardy, Deborah Langlois, and Donna M. McGarrigle.

Site Selection

We conducted our research in a public school district located in the Northeast United States. For purposes of anonymity, we refer to the school district as Jamesberg. Two distinct criterion drove our site selection process. First, we identified a school district focused on developing and improving SEL programs and practices. During our initial site selection process, we discovered two documents that provided evidence of the Jamesberg School District's focus on SEL implementation: a health and wellness newsletter from June of 2016 and the superintendent's entry plan. Together, these documents indicated to us that Jamesberg was a district seeking to expand its SEL capacity.

Second, we wanted to conduct our research in a medium- to large-sized public school district. Presumably, a public school district of 5,000-10,000 enrolled students allowed for access to multiple schools of different grade levels and the potential to interview a large percentage of school leaders. We gathered information regarding student enrollment and school distribution from the state's education department website (School and District Profiles, n.d). According to the district and school profile, Jamesberg had a population of approximately 8,500 students and 14 schools (one preschool; nine elementary schools; three middle schools; and one high school).

Data Collection

This collaborative project utilized three sources for data collection: semi-structured individual and focus group interviews, as well as documents. We discuss these sources in turn.

Individual and focus group interviews. We conducted semi-structured, in-person individual and focus group interviews from October to December of 2017. Conducting interviews allowed us to gather information through a focused conversation (Merriam, 2009). The semi-structured format provided a framework based on our research questions while allowing for flexibility in the exact wording of questions and question order. Below, we describe the development of interview protocols, the selection and recruitment of participants, and the interview process.

Individual and focus group interview instruments. Semi-structured interview protocols for administrators (see Appendix A), counselors (see Appendix B), and teachers (see Appendix C) were developed to explore SEL implementation. The protocols for administrators and teachers were created collaboratively by including specific questions to address individual studies as well as the broader purpose of the overall project. We field tested the protocols by interviewing school leaders, teachers, and counselors not connected to our research district. Based on the field tests, we adjusted the protocols for clarity and to ensure the interviews stayed within a 45 minute to one-hour time frame.

The final interview protocols contained questions about practices used by district and school leaders for SEL implementation. Additionally, we included questions about participation in and perceptions of SEL implementation activities. We also created questions to elicit information regarding how leaders set direction, developed people, and redesigned organizational conditions during the implementation of SEL.

Individual and focus group interview participants. We selected our participants

from four categories: district leaders, school leaders, teachers, and counselors. Using the district website, we collected the names and contact information of all district administrators, principals, and assistant principals. Based on the listed job descriptions, we targeted district leaders whom we presumed would be knowledgeable about SEL. We contacted seven district leaders and 21 school leaders through email and invited them to participate in an interview. Of these recruitment contacts, four district leaders and 13 school leaders agreed to participate.

We conducted focus group interviews with teachers. To do this, we gained permission from the principals of three elementary schools, three middle schools, and the high school to inform teachers about the focus group interviews and to share our contact information. Teachers were contacted by a member of our team with details regarding location and time of the focus group interviews. We held four focus group interviews with a total of fourteen teachers. Focus group interviews were held at two elementary schools (with two teachers and five teachers), one middle school (with two teachers), and one high school (with five teachers). Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 counselors from the elementary and middle school levels: five guidance counselors and five social workers (see Table 2.1). All interviews were recorded and then transcribed by a professional transcription service. Subsequently, transcripts were read in their entirety to check for accuracy.

Individual and focus group interview process. In order to ensure a calibrated interview process, the first five interviews were conducted in pairs. Afterward, we reflected on our use of questioning and prompting in eliciting interview data. Together,

we reviewed the transcripts of the first several interviews to ensure questioning and prompting for all questions matched the needs of the individual team members. Our calibration provided us with confidence to move forward with interviews that were conducted by individual group members. In total, nine interviews with district and

Table 2.1

Participants

Participant by Role	Number	Interview Type	Studies Using Data Source
District Leaders	4	Semi-Structured	Caira, Hardy, and McGarrigle
School Leaders • Principals • Assistant Principals	13	Semi-Structured	Caira, Hardy, Langlois, and McGarrigle
Counselors • Guidance Counselors • Social Workers	10	Semi-Structured	McGarrigle
Teaching staff • Classroom Teachers • Special Education Teachers	14	Focus Group	Caira, Hardy, and Langlois

school leaders were conducted by paired researchers and eight interviews were conducted individually. Three of the four teacher focus group interviews were conducted in pairs. All 10 counselor interviews were completed by an individual researcher.

Document review. We gathered a range of documents from the Jamesberg Public Schools related to SEL implementation. The majority of the documents were available on the district website. In addition, the superintendent presented us with documents that were still in the working stage, most notably the strategic plan. See

Appendix D for a full list of documents and how they were supplied to us. Our review of documents provided auxiliary information of the district's past and future plans for SEL. All of the documents reviewed met one or more of the following criteria:

- Addressed some aspect of the social-emotional development of staff or students
- Addressed district or school policy or practices related to social-emotional health
- Articulated procedures for managing social-emotional health, either internally or in conjunction with external agencies
- Addressed communication on social-emotional health to families or the larger community
- Addressed some aspect of staff development related to SEL.

Data Analysis

As with data collection, the research team worked closely together in the analysis phase of the project. Specific questions in the common interview protocols were included to inform individual studies. Each team member read the entire transcript of district and school leader interviews, allowing us to gain a broader understanding of how the district was supporting SEL implementation. In addition, each group member conducted an initial review of the documents to ensure the relevance of the information and data provided (Bowen, 2009). During our initial document review, we identified quotes or sections related to the research questions and conceptual lens of each study. Additionally, information gleaned from this first review was used in the implementation of the semi-structured interviews by contributing to our knowledge base about SEL initiatives in the district.

To ensure continual communication and build a common understanding, we entered the qualitative data into a shared Dedoose account (www.dedoose.com), a data management tool for organization, categorization, and coding of data. Dedoose, as well

as the use of a common analytical journal allowed us to refine, reanalyze, and document our findings (Yin, 1981). For the journal, we utilized a common document to record and share our thoughts, hunches, and wonderings as they came to mind throughout the data analysis process (Saldaña, 2009). Team members read and commented on the entries made by others. These two systems allowed the group members to track and share commonalities and disparities revealed in our individual analysis, which then informed our collective understanding.

Each researcher used two cycles of coding based on the research questions and conceptual lens of his or her study (see Chapter 3). The analysis for the central exploration of the role of district and school leaders in supporting implementation of SEL in public education was completed collaboratively. We began with compiling the findings from our individual studies. This allowed us to see the district implementation efforts from multiple perspectives and supported the analysis procedure. We then used our individual data to determine which (if any) findings were universal or particular to that study. This process allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of the data and allowed team members to review each other's coding cycles, increasing the reliability of our collaborative conclusions and impressions.

CHAPTER THREE[3]

ONE DISTRICT'S APPROACH TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Statement of the Problem

Teachers have a profound impact on students academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally (Brock & Curby, 2014; Elias, 2006; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Whereas teachers are highly influential in the academic life of students (Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011), educational leaders can have a significant influence on teachers (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). Research has shown that one way leaders can influence teachers is through the provision of professional development, as it can provide educators with an increased feeling of positive self-efficacy (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Fishman, Marx, Best, & Tal 2003). Professional development that involves active participation, collaboration, and relation to practice positively influences teacher efficacy (Bruce, Esmonde, Ross, Dookie, & Beatty, 2010; Desimone et al., 2002; Ingvarson, Meiers, & Beavis, 2005). As teachers grow more confident in their abilities, and consequently become more efficacious, they are more likely to persevere when challenged and work with peers to improve instructional practices (Bandura, 1977; De Jong, Mainhard, van Tartwijk, Veldman, Verloop, & Wubbels, 2014; Guskey, 1988; Morris-Rothschild & Brassard, 2006; Ross & Bruce, 2001).

Specifically, researchers have explored the influence of professional development on teacher efficacy in areas of core curriculum (Bruce et al., 2010; Fishman et al., 2003;

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McKeown, Abrams, Slattum, & Kirk, 2016). However, there is minimal research literature regarding the potential effect of professional development about social-emotional learning (SEL) related methodologies, techniques, and practices on teacher efficacy. Despite growing attention to SEL, the majority of research regarding SEL-related professional development has focused on the introduction of specific programming, such as Responsive Classroom (Abry, Rimm-Kaufman, Larsen, & Brewer, 2013).

Since professional development influences teacher efficacy for teaching core curricula (Bruce et al., 2010; Fishman et al., 2003; McKeown et al., 2016), it is reasonable to ask if professional development might affect teacher efficacy for the provision of SEL curricula and practices. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore one district's approach to professional development for SEL. Three research questions (RQ) guided my study: (RQ1) What professional development occurred during SEL implementation? (RQ2) How meaningful was professional development during SEL implementation? (RQ3) What was the effect of SEL-related professional development on teacher efficacy?

Literature Review/Conceptual Framework

The following literature review includes three sections. In section one, I define and describe self-efficacy. In section two, I describe self-efficacy in the context of teachers and teaching. In section three, I describe the critical role of professional development on teacher efficacy.

What is Self-efficacy?

In order to understand self-efficacy, it is necessary to define the concept and identify its sources. Self-efficacy is the manner in which one perceives his or her abilities to perform a task. Mastery experiences and vicarious experiences are two critical sources that promote the attainment of self-efficacy. I will define self-efficacy and its sources in turn.

Defining self-efficacy. Bandura (1977, 1986, 1995) defined efficacy as the manner in which a person judges their "capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances. It is concerned not with the skills one has but with the judgments of what one can do with whatever skills one possesses" (1986, p. 91). In other words, self-efficacy is the belief in one's abilities to execute a task. For example, as children begin to believe in their ability to ride a bike, self-efficacy increases. This belief grows through experiences that involve practice, encouragement from others, and watching peers ride a bike successfully.

Additionally, a person's prior experiences influence his or her belief in their abilities and willingness to attempt a challenge (Bandura, 1977; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Hoy, 2005). When confronted with challenges, people may avoid situations that pose threats and cause fear, while actively pursuing activities in which they might be more confident (Bandura, 1977; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Hoy, 2005). Thus, if children are fearful of falling off the bike, they are less likely to continue trying. If they gain confidence in their abilities, their efficacy will increase and they will continue to attempt to ride. To put it another way, self-efficacy involves experiences, thoughts, personal

beliefs, and outside influences that affect a person's ability and willingness to perform tasks.

Sources of self-efficacy. Two sources of self-efficacy are important to this study: mastery experiences and vicarious experiences. Mastery experiences are the personal accomplishments and failures of an individual. Vicarious experiences involve witnessing a model perform a task.

Mastery experiences. Bandura (1977, 1986, 1995) suggests mastery experiences are pivotal in the creation of a strong sense of self-efficacy. Mastery experiences influence self-efficacy through participation in activities because individuals acquire "cognitive, behavioral, and self-regulatory tools for creating and executing appropriate courses of action to manage ever-changing life circumstances" (Bandura, 1995, p. 3). The influence of the mastery experience on self-efficacy is dependent upon one's ability to handle the failures and accomplishments associated with the given experience. For example, participation in successful experiences increases efficacy, while failure decreases efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Hoy, 2005). Simply put, mastery experiences are the accomplishments and failures one encounters based on personal actions. The development of self-efficacy through participation in mastery experiences takes time. For instance, the child learning to ride his bike gains efficacy by successfully balancing on the bike for greater distances each time he rides.

Conversely, initial failure in a mastery experience has a negative impact on efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Hoy,

2005). However, "after strong efficacy expectations are developed through repeated success, the negative impact of occasional failures is likely to be reduced" (Bandura, 1977, p. 81). In other words, when a person is confident in one's abilities, succeeding after occasional failures can ultimately increase individual efficacy. Bandura (1995) claimed that individuals persevere and succeed, despite setbacks and adversity, if they believe they have the skills to achieve. Ultimately, efficacious individuals learn from failure and grow stronger when challenged. For example, if a teacher fails using an instructional technology she has never used before to introduce a new concept, she is less likely to try again. However, if she had previous success with the technology, prior to her failure, she may work through the failure, ultimately becoming more efficacious.

Vicarious experiences. Vicarious experiences occur when individuals witness peers successfully carrying out challenging tasks. Through observation, individuals gain knowledge of the skills necessary to successfully complete a task, thus increasing their confidence in their own ability to perform (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Hoy, 2005). Several factors influence the effect of the vicarious experience. Vicarious experiences positively influence efficacy when the witness has limited personal experience, has not participated in a mastery experience with the modeled task, or when a more productive way to accomplish a task is witnessed (Bandura, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Hoy, 2005). For instance, if a child who has never ridden a bike has the opportunity to watch his peers ride bikes successfully, the child could gain efficacy.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of a vicarious experience, the relationship

between witness and model is important. The participant in the vicarious experience must deem the model relatable, as models serve as an exemplar by which the witness judges himself or herself (Bandura, 1995; Bruce et al., 2010). Furthermore, models must exude competence and the ability to succeed in the face of adversity. When witnesses see peer models succeed despite challenges and setbacks, they become more confident in their own ability to perform the given task (Bandura, 1995; Bruce et al., 2010). For example, efficacy does not necessarily increase if a child watches an adult succeed at riding a bike, however if a 6 year old watches another 6 year old succeed, the experience is relevant and relatable. In addition, if the child watches his peer fall off the bike and get back on, his efficacy can increase.

On the contrary, if an individual views the continued failure of a peer, such as falling off the bike, getting hurt, and not getting back on, the witness may question his or her personal capabilities (Bandura, 1986; Bruce et al., 2010). Therefore, a negative vicarious experience can ultimately inhibit one's ability to perform successfully. Despite the possibility of witnessing a negative experience, viewing successful vicarious experiences are extremely powerful tools for growth in efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1995; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Hoy, 2005).

Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy is the manner in which a teacher perceives his or her ability to carry out the skills and demands of the teaching profession. Teacher efficacy influences educators' attitudes, abilities, and instructional practices. I will discuss the importance of teacher efficacy and how professional development influences teacher efficacy.

The importance of teacher efficacy. Teacher efficacy is as an educator's perception of his or her ability to engage students, influence students, and produce positive learning outcomes (Bandura, 1995; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Positive teacher efficacy provides teachers with the confidence to impart difficult concepts to students, and to attempt and apply various instructional strategies (McKeown et al., 2016). Furthermore, teachers who report higher levels of efficacy are more likely to work through challenges, and collaborate with peers to improve instructional practices (Bandura, 1977, De Jong et al., 2014; Guskey, 1988; Morris-Rothschild & Brassard, 2006; Ross & Bruce, 2001).

For example, when teaching third graders how to multiply two-digit numbers, an efficacious teacher will present various techniques and strategies to students to assist with their understanding. The efficacious teacher is more likely to collaborate with colleagues to discuss students who are struggling with the concept and attempt a new lesson learned from a peer. On the contrary, a teacher who lacks confidence in his or her ability is less likely to provide a multitude of strategies and may only show students the traditional method for solving multiplication problems.

In other words, positive teacher efficacy leads teachers to attempt new instructional techniques that can ultimately engage and motivate students, leading to student success. Simply stated, teacher efficacy can have a positive influence on teacher performance (De Jong et al., 2014; Guskey, 1988; Morris-Rothschild & Brassard, 2006; Ross & Bruce, 2001, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Professional Development and its influence on teacher efficacy. Bandura's

(1977, 1985, 1996) assertions regarding the importance of efficacy in one's attitudes and willingness to participate in new and difficult activities support the necessity for effective professional development. The provision of practical and meaningful professional development allows teachers to gain new skills and change beliefs and attitudes (Bruce et al., 2010, McKeown et al., 2016). Professional development opportunities that incite teachers to become directly involved in their learning may promote teacher efficacy by facilitating mastery experiences (Bruce, et al., 2010; Desimone et al., 2002; Ingvarson et al., 2005). Similarly, vicarious experiences that encourage teachers to collaborate and learn from their peers may positively influence teacher efficacy.

Vicarious professional development increases efficacy through collaboration and successful peer modeling (Bruce et al., 2010). Furthermore, efficacy increases when teachers witness colleagues performing skills directly related to instruction (Ingvarson et al., 2005). Participation in professional development, such as peer observation, aligns to Bandura's (1986) sources of self-efficacy, as he stated, "the capacity to learn by observation enables people to acquire rules for generating and regulating behavioral patterns" (p. 19). In addition, McKeown et al. (2016) noted that teachers reported significant increases in self-efficacy after participation in professional development directly related to their practice. Similarly, Desimone et al. (2002) claimed effective professional development focuses on instructional practices.

For example, an elementary reading teacher's efficacy may increase if he or she participates in a professional development experience wherein he or she witnesses a colleague leading a guided reading lesson. On the contrary, the reading teacher would

not necessarily benefit from witnessing a colleague teaching the scientific method. The professional development experience is more likely to influence the teacher's efficacy if the experience is relevant and involves direct participation or collaboration.

Elements of Professional Development

When provided meaningful professional development, teachers are more apt to employ the learned practices in their teaching. Meaningful professional development commonly consists of three important elements: active participation, collaboration, and relation to practice. I will discuss these three elements that lead to meaningful professional development in turn.

Active participation. When teachers are active participants in professional development the learning experience can be more meaningful (Ingvarson et al., 2005). Active participation includes providing and receiving feedback, looking at student work, data analysis, and calibration of thought (Bruce et al. 2010). Active participation also relies upon engagement with specific instructional strategies and allocates time for reflection so participants can connect the learning to practice (Bruce et al., 2010, Desimone et al., 2002). As such, when teachers are not simply listening, but performing tasks related to learning, it can increase the impact of the learning experience on teacher performance and they are more likely to implement the learned practices (Desimone et al., 2002; Ingvarson et al., 2005).

In addition, when teachers participate in learning opportunities that involve direct experiences, embedded into everyday teaching, they feel more competent in their abilities (Bruce et al., 2010). As an example, when teachers incorporate the use of running

records to assess student reading, it is incumbent upon a leader to allow time for the teacher to practice and reflect with peers regarding the assessment technique. By actively engaging students and interacting with one another regarding pedagogy and student outcomes, teachers improve their own practice (Desimone et al., 2002).

Collaboration. Collaboration is an important aspect to meaningful professional development (Ingvarson et al., 2005). Accumulating evidence suggests that professional development is perceived as more meaningful when it includes teachers who work together in the same district, school, subject area and grade (Desimone et al., 2002). Additionally, collaborative professional development offers educators time to observe peers performing specific skills and practices (Bruce et al., 2010; Desimone et al., 2002). An example of productive, collaborative professional development is when leaders provide teachers the opportunity to observe colleagues teaching demanding concepts (Bruce et al., 2010).

Relation to practice. The direct relation to teachers' practices and experiences can make a professional development opportunity more meaningful (Ingvarson et al., 2005). Teachers want professional development to include pertinent information regarding their current practices (Desimone et al., 2002). As an example, an elementary math specialist wants to receive professional development regarding how to introduce the concept of long division. An elementary math specialist does not want to participate in a literacy-based professional development regarding how to introduce students to non-fiction text features.

In addition, if professional development builds upon prior knowledge and links to

building based goals, specific instructional goals and/or state and district mandates, teachers are more likely to consider it meaningful (Desimone et al., 2002). Furthermore, when teachers participate in professional development within the environment in which the learned behaviors and skills take place (i.e., the classroom), professional development is more meaningful (Bruce et al., 2010). For instance, if a school goal calls for the provision of increased movement activities, teachers will find meaning if they participate in a professional development opportunity focused on ways to incorporate movement during instruction time within their classrooms.

Methods

My study was part of a larger one that generally explored the role of school and district leaders in supporting the implementation of SEL in kindergarten through grade 12 education. The purpose of my individual study was to explore district approaches to professional development for SEL. The following research questions guided my study: (RQ1) What professional development occurred during SEL implementation? (RQ2) How meaningful was professional development during SEL implementation? (RQ3) What was the effect of SEL-related professional development on teacher efficacy?

Data Collection

Table 3.1 provides information regarding data collection. To address the aforementioned research questions, I led semi-structured interviews of district and school leaders. I also conducted focus group interviews with teachers. Finally, I collected various district documents (see Appendix D).

Table 3.1

Data Collection

Method	Source	Number	Research Question
Document Review	Documents	6	RQ1, RQ2
Semi-Structured Interview	District Leaders	4	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3
Semi-Structured Interview	School Leaders	13	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3
Focus Group Interview	Teachers	14	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3

Note: RQ1: What professional development occurred during SEL implementation?
RQ2: How meaningful was professional development during SEL implementation?
RQ3: What was the effect of SEL-related professional development on teacher efficacy?

Semi-structured interviews. I conducted semi-structured interviews with four district leaders and 13 school leaders (see Table 3.1). Answers from interviews provided insight as to what professional development occurred during SEL implementation, how the professional development was structured, the perceived meaningfulness of the professional development, and the presumed effect of professional development on teacher efficacy. I embedded specific questions (see Table 3.2) about the occurrence of SEL-related professional development, its meaningfulness and its effect on efficacy, within the context of a larger interview protocol (see Appendix A).

Table 3.2

Administrator Semi-Structured Interview Questions Connected to Each Research Question

Administrator Interview Questions	Research Questions
3. What professional development has occurred regarding SEL?	RQ1
4. Have teachers been afforded the opportunity to collaborate with peers regarding SEL?	RQ1, RQ2
5. Has confidence improved due to participation in SEL related PD?	RQ3
9. In what ways have you successfully supported a teacher struggling to build positive relationships with and between students?	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3
10. What are the biggest challenges you've faced as you support teachers in this area?	RQ1,RQ2,RQ3

Note: RQ1: What professional development occurred during SEL implementation?
RQ2: How meaningful was professional development during SEL implementation?
RQ3: What was the effect of SEL-related professional development on teacher efficacy?

Focus group interviews. I conducted four focus group interviews. I worked with school administrators and representatives to invite a cross-section of teachers from various grades and curriculum areas to participate in the focus group interviews. The focus groups consisted of 14 teachers in total. I conducted focus groups in two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Table 3.3 provides information regarding teacher participation in the focus group interviews.

Table 3.3

Interview Participants

School	Level	Participants
Ripken Elementary	Elementary	2
Brady Elementary	Elementary	3
Jordan Middle School	Middle	2
Jamesberg High School	High School	5

Focus group questions focused on the occurrence and collaborative nature of SEL-related professional development. I also asked about teacher confidence surrounding SEL, and the effect of the professional development on teacher confidence. Finally, I asked teachers about meaningful experiences that affected how they incorporated SEL practices. I embedded specific questions (see Table 3.4) within the context of a larger interview protocol (see Appendix C).

Table 3.4

Teacher Semi-Structured Focus Group Questions Connected to Each Research Question

Teacher Interview Questions	Research Questions
1. Has this school (or district) provided any professional development on social-emotional learning? If so, what was (or is) your involvement?	RQ1
3. Have you been afforded the opportunity to collaborate with peers regarding SEL?	RQ1, RQ2
4. How confident are you regarding SEL centered practices?	RQ3
a. Probe: Has your participation in SEL centered PD changed your practice in any way?	RQ2, RQ3
b. Probe: Has your confidence improved due to your participation in SEL related PD?	RQ3
c. How has your understanding of SEL changed or developed?	RQ3
5. Do you actively research SEL or attempt to incorporate SEL activities/strategies into your everyday practices?	RQ3
6. Tell me about a meaningful experience you had that has impacted the way you incorporate SEL practices.	RQ2
9. What supports has your principal offered to you to support your growth in building a positive learning environment in your classroom?	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3

Note: RQ1: What professional development occurred during SEL implementation?
RQ2: How meaningful was professional development during SEL implementation?
RQ3: What was the effect of SEL-related professional development on teacher efficacy?

Document review. Research question one related to the professional development that occurred during SEL implementation. In order to determine what PD occurred, I conducted a review of documents related to SEL and professional development. I reviewed public documents accessed from the district website. I further obtained documents from district leaders, principals, and teachers. A comprehensive list

of documents is available in Appendix D. The primary documents I used to gather information included Panorama's "Key Insights from Social-Emotional Learning Surveys", CASEL's "Social and Emotional Learning Readiness and Engagement Analysis," Professional Development Day Offerings for March 1, 2016, and documents provided by the superintendent of schools regarding the development of a new district strategic plan.

Data Analysis

Data from the document review, semi-structured interviews, and focus group interviews provided evidence regarding the occurrence of professional development during SEL implementation, the meaningfulness of the professional development and the effect of the professional development on teacher efficacy. I triangulated data from the document review with data from semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews (Creswell, 2012). I utilized Dedoose (www.dedoose.com), a data management tool for storage, organization, categorization, coding of data as well as data analysis. I utilized multiple cycles of coding to analyze the qualitative data (Saldaña, 2009).

Research question one. In order to determine what professional development occurred during SEL implementation, I coded data from the document review, semi-structured interviews, and focus group interviews. I coded the professional development as either mastery, vicarious, or traditional.

Mastery. I coded professional development as mastery if teachers were directly involved in their learning. These opportunities included direct interactions between teachers and students, as well as participation in program-specific trainings. Participation

in the supervision and evaluation process, in which evaluators provided feedback on SEL practices, also constituted a mastery professional development. Additionally, data teams, in which teachers fully participated and actively spoke about student behaviors and student performance, qualified as mastery professional development.

Vicarious. I coded professional development as vicarious if teachers learned directly from or worked collaboratively with a peer. These opportunities included peer observations, participation in professional learning communities (PLC), common planning meetings, and other collaborative sessions not led by an administrator.

Traditional. I coded professional development as traditional if it did not involve direct participation of the teacher, but instead the teacher listened to a lecture, or watched an individual, other than a peer, perform a task.

Research questions two and three. In order to determine the most meaningful professional development opportunities for teachers and the effect of professional development on teacher efficacy, I coded data from the document review, semi-structured interviews, and focus group interviews. I used multiple cycles of coding for each research question. During first cycle coding, I established a list of the varied SEL-related professional development opportunities identified by teachers as meaningful. Based on teacher description of the professional development, I then categorized the meaningful professional development by type (mastery, vicarious, traditional). Further analysis included the categorization of the elements of the professional development. I categorized the meaningful professional development based on a variety of descriptors including active participation, collaboration, and relation to practice. For example, one

teacher attended a four-day intensive training regarding Responsive Classroom, an educational approach focused on building a relationship between academics and SEL. I categorized this mastery professional development as both active participation and relation to practice.

In order to answer research question three, my second cycle of coding grouped the various professional development activities based on whether or not respondents claimed the professional development affected teacher efficacy. Additionally, I looked for similarities in the specific experiences to find commonalities. For example, if teachers discussed observing peers and working collaboratively as having an effect on efficacy, I categorized it accordingly.

Findings

In the following section, I describe the district approaches to professional development for social-emotional learning (SEL). First, I list and explain what professional development occurred during SEL implementation. Second, I communicate how meaningful professional development was during SEL implementation. Third, I explore the effect of SEL-related professional development on teacher efficacy.

What Professional Development Occurred

Table 3.5 lists the SEL-related professional development experiences identified by administrators and teachers. In line with my conceptual framework, I grouped the varied professional development according to mastery, vicarious, and traditional experiences.

Table 3.5

Types of Professional Development

Mastery	**Vicarious**	**Traditional**
Supervision/Evaluation	Collaborative Meetings	Partnerships
Classroom Observations	• PLC	• Suffolk University
• Direct Feedback	• GLIM	• CASEL
• Post Observation Meetings	• TAP Team	• Walker
Administrative Led Data	• Common Planning	• CCE
Teams	• Daily Team Time	• School Works
Program Training	Staff Circles	Guest Speakers
•Responsive Classroom	Peer Observations	• Mitch Ablett
Self-reflection	Peer Modeling	• Jessica Minahan
Data Teams	Book Group Discussions	Program Training
Coaching		• CPI
		• Tough Kid Toolbox
		• Open Circle
		• Circles
		• Restorative Practices
		• PBIS
		Faculty Meetings
		Administrative Modeling

Mastery professional development. Mastery professional development included experiences in which teachers were directly involved in their learning (e.g., supervision and evaluation processes, data teams, and program training). Generally, teachers spoke of a desire to receive more mastery professional development. Teachers also spoke about self-reflection and direct interactions and experiences with students, as being meaningful. School administrators spoke about using the supervision and evaluation process as professional development in the area of SEL. However, teachers did not mention the evaluative process as a professional development experience. In fact, teachers often referenced their desire to receive more relevant and useful feedback. Therefore, the

differing views of leaders and teachers regarding supervision and evaluation of SEL practices provided evidence of a general disconnect between administration and teaching staff.

Vicarious professional development. Vicarious professional development included experiences in which teachers learned directly from or worked collaboratively with a peer (e.g., collaborative meetings, staff circles, peer observations, peer modeling, book group discussions). Both administrators and teachers spoke of the varied ways in which teachers collaborated.

Traditional professional development. Traditional professional development included those experiences where teachers learned from a trainer or administrator (e.g., outside partnerships, guest speakers, program training, faculty meetings, administrative modeling). Nearly all individuals spoke about guest lecturers. However, while all teachers mentioned guest speakers, only a few teachers could recall the name of the speakers. A wide variety of outside partners provided different professional development opportunities to schools. Teachers rarely mentioned the outside partners, while school administrators consistently spoke of the partners involved with their particular schools.

Meaningful Professional Development

My second research question explored how meaningful professional development was for teachers in regards to their SEL practices. The most significant finding was that teachers and administrators were generally dissatisfied with the professional development that was offered. When teachers described meaningful professional development experiences they most often discussed collaboration. Only one teacher discussed her

active participation in a professional development opportunity as meaningful. Additionally, other teachers spoke of mastery experiences, that they did not attribute to professional development as their most meaningful experiences. However, while I considered this a professional development experience, they did not associate or categorize these experiences as professional development. I will discuss these findings in turn.

General dissatisfaction. Administrators and teachers spoke of a general dissatisfaction with SEL-related professional development offerings. Both groups discussed inconsistencies with SEL programming and a lack of training related to the chosen programs. Furthermore, teachers categorized SEL-related professional development as irrelevant to practice.

Lack of professional development and inconsistent programming. I found teachers and administrators were dissatisfied based on a lack of professional development and inconsistencies in the district's approach to SEL. Continually, I heard administrators and teachers say there was simply not enough professional development. Subsequently, several building level administrators spoke of frustrations regarding teacher training. As an example, one principal summed up the concerns of several colleagues when she claimed no training took place in the five years of her principalship. In addition, a central office administrator summarized the feelings of district leaders, school leaders, and teachers when she stated, "There's not enough professional development, I wish there was more that could be done…because, everyone needs help."

Another central office administrator acknowledged the lack of training along with

the problem of inconsistent programming. Despite the fact that most elementary schools used Open Circle and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), two programs dedicated to SEL, a lack of professional development to support teachers in implementing the programs was evident throughout the district. While the district did have several professional partnerships, administrators were frustrated with the lack of direction and district planning. They described the training for these programs and partnerships as minimal and inconsistent. One school leader spoke about the disparity among the different elementary schools. She encapsulated her frustrations when she asserted, "You have some schools doing Responsive Classroom, some are still using Open Circle, but nobody at the district level is committed. We need to invest in something that's going to be consistent throughout schools."

A central office administrator offered a feasible solution to the frustrations felt by many and showed she understood why school leaders and teachers were frustrated when she claimed, "We need to figure out what we're going to use as a foundational program for SEL and then roll it out." Her thoughts echoed many teachers and administrators who noted that professional development lacked connectivity to district goals, an important driver for meaningful professional development.

SEL-related professional development was irrelevant to practice. Throughout the interviews and document reviews, a pattern emerged among teachers that they considered SEL-related professional development to be irrelevant to their practice. Specifically, a survey conducted by Panorama in 2016 provided significant evidence of teacher dissatisfaction. According to the survey, only 28% of teachers in the district

responded that professional development opportunities related to SEL were relevant to their practice. Ultimately, teachers interviewed in the current study corroborated these findings.

Teachers displayed frustration with the lack of focused and relevant professional development. While various teachers spoke of this need, a high school teacher sufficiently described the feelings of many when she stated, "They give us a little bit, but when we keep describing our population and the needs of our kids, why can't the district figure out how to give us something more substantial?" Notable, the district brought in a guest lecturer for the 2017-2018 school year to speak with staff about SEL; however, teachers were largely dissatisfied. Several teachers described the lecturer as knowledgeable in the field, but they did not find the information presented as practical or relevant to their current situation. According to teachers, the lecturer did not offer strategies and they were left wondering, "What can I now take to my room?" Although one teacher found the presentation informative from a parenting lens, she concurred with colleagues when she claimed, "There wasn't anything concrete that I could use (in my classroom)." However, one teacher stood out as an exception. This teacher reported positive feedback for the guest lecturer, although she mentioned her general dissatisfaction with prior professional development. She indicated that the lecture satisfied her desire to participate in a professional development that was more relevant than prior offerings, such as a yoga class. In addition, she claimed she took a handful of good ideas from the lecture, and felt like the time spent in the lecture was valuable.

Some experiences were meaningful. While teachers and administrators

generally communicated frustrations about SEL-related professional development, teachers reported some exceptions to this trend. Most significantly, teachers spoke about collaboration with peers as meaningful experiences. In addition, one teacher found value and meaning in her active involvement in a four-day intensive professional development training, regarding a specific SEL program. Moreover, others spoke of the importance of mastery experiences with children as their most meaningful experiences, rather than participation in professional development. I will describe these experiences in turn.

Collaborative professional development. More than any other factor, teachers consistently mentioned time spent collaborating with peers as their most meaningful professional development. In fact, teachers from each of the three grade levels spoke of the importance of peer interaction, whether through peer observation, conversation, or participation in professional learning communities (PLC). As an illustration, one teacher asserted her best learning came from watching and speaking to colleagues. Similarly, an elementary teacher highlighted the meaningfulness of collaboration during PLCs when she claimed, "Being given the opportunity to talk about SEL at the professional learning community [meeting] has been helpful."

Additionally, teachers agreed it was important to see strategies in action, particularly when a peer was applying the strategy in a classroom setting. Teachers found great value when they had the opportunity to discuss their observations with peers, either formally or informally. A middle school teacher commented, "I get to use strategies that are current and actually in use…it's nice to see it in action, and it's from an actual classroom, not just some made up strategy." Her colleague went on to speak about

the importance of the informal conversation after the observation as she asserted, “And then you can debrief over lunch or something with the other colleagues…It's nice to have another set of ears.” High school teachers agreed that a recent opportunity to observe colleagues was an excellent chance to improve their practice. For example, teachers observed two colleagues for 20 minutes and after the observation, a discussion ensued between the educators regarding what they witnessed.

Interestingly, while teachers spoke of the importance of peer observation consistently, administrators rarely mentioned it. Much like the disparity regarding supervision and evaluation, this discrepancy between teachers and administrators shows a further example of a possible disconnect between what teachers want and what administrators provided. Administrators seemed to place a high value on guest lecturers and experts who were brought in to speak to teachers about practice. Teachers, however, preferred to learn from one another, as they found more value in watching a peer and discussing strategies with an individual who was actually living in the same situation. The underlying cause of this disconnect is attributable to the teachers’ desire for more relevant learning experiences from relatable peers, whereas the leaders consistently called upon outsiders, such as experts and organizations to promote SEL practices. Although, there was one principal who identified peer observations as important. As a result, he required all teachers to observe a peer during the school year at least once a cycle.

Peer observation was not the only collaborative activity described by teachers as meaningful. High school teachers agreed that a professional development experience that involved learning directly from peers, was one of the most meaningful professional

development opportunities offered. Teachers described an opportunity in which they had to participate in a mini-course led by a peer. One teacher commented, "It's the best [professional development] by far. Once a year it happens…it's everyone's favorite…I sign up for all the ones that sound fun for me and there's a ton of great social-emotional offerings." While teachers acknowledged the value in learning from one another, they pointed out there are not enough opportunities. In short, teachers longed for these peer interactions and wanted more time to learn from their colleagues.

Active participation. Although it is true that a majority of teachers described frustrations with professional development, I found it notable that one teacher described a specific training as a meaningful experience. Contrary to her peers, she described a specific training as meaningful, due to its direct relevance to SEL and the profound effect it had on her practice. Specifically, the teacher referenced her participation in a four-day intensive training regarding Responsive Classroom, an educational approach focused on building a relationship between academics and SEL. She was one of four teachers in her school who volunteered to participate in the training and ultimately assist with the building wide implementation of Responsive Classroom.

According to the teacher, not only was the training the most meaningful professional development she participated in during SEL implementation, but one of the most meaningful experiences of her teaching career. Accordingly, she was thankful for the opportunity to participate and claimed the training changed the way she handled situations in her classroom and spoke to students. For example, her participation in the training provided her with a new understanding of how to build a positive community of

learners. She credited the training with changing her practice for the better, as she stated, "I've been using it in my room and it seems more effective than what I was doing."

Meaningful experiences were mastery by nature. Although teachers struggled to recall meaningful SEL-related professional development experiences, they continually described direct experiences with students as especially meaningful. These meaningful experiences were not attributed to professional development, but they were mastery in nature. This was heard at the elementary, middle and high school levels. When speaking about specific student-teacher experiences, teachers often highlighted situations involving challenging students. They also spoke about the importance of being acknowledged for their work, building relationships with students, and leading students to appropriate resources. For example, one elementary teacher presented a story that was notably representative. She reflected on having received acknowledgement from a student's parents, and how meaningful the acknowledgement was to her. These parents claimed their child was a "different student" because of her efforts. As a result of this experience, her later practices changed significantly.

Indeed, she was not the only one who described mastery experiences as meaningful. Teachers at the middle school and high school described different experiences where they learned new strategies and tools through working with individual students. Specifically, the middle school teacher highlighted the critical nature of building relationships with children. Working as a mentor and advisor to students, she learned about their personal and educational successes and struggles. This mastery experience was professionally meaningful to her. Similarly, a high school teacher

described the importance of getting to know students in order to direct them to school supports and resources. She described helping a stressed-out student, by taking the time to listen and connect with her. Thus, the teacher found this mastery experience more beneficial than any type of professional development, as she learned from her direct involvement in the situation.

The Effect of SEL-Related Professional Development on Efficacy

My third research question addressed the effect of SEL-related professional development on teacher efficacy. Since, the majority of teachers and administrators claimed professional development regarding SEL was insufficient; the most significant finding was the lack of consensus regarding the effect of SEL-related professional development on teacher efficacy. Some teachers claimed they were already confident and skilled enough to perform tasks associated with SEL. Others claimed mastery experiences affected efficacy and they did not classify the mastery experiences they found most meaningful as professional development. Finally, I found that teachers and administrators claimed the professional development was not necessarily an important tool for improving efficacy. While the aforementioned themes emerged from the research, no one finding stood out as a clear indicator of SEL-related professional development affecting teacher efficacy. I address each of the themes in turn.

SEL-related professional development was insufficient. While teachers and administrators agreed about the importance of SEL training and acknowledged the growing need for SEL instruction, both groups described their SEL-related professional development as insufficient. For example, only 28% of teachers and staff responding to

the Panorama Survey classified SEL-related professional development as "relevant." Moreover, interview respondents described the desire for more practical professional development. As one administrator said, teaching has changed, and teachers are currently "ill-equipped" to effectively serve the changing social-emotional needs of the students in front of them. Echoing this, a teacher lamented that first year educators are inadequately prepared to handle the challenges of offering social-emotional support to students.

Teachers were self-confident. Contrary to the beliefs of some peers and administrators, I spoke with teachers who believed they were fully equipped in relation to SEL practices, regardless of professional development. Most significantly, one high school teacher pronounced, "I don't think confidence is lacking. Nobody wants more confidence." Along the same lines, her colleague described a recent traditional professional development opportunity in which a speaker lectured staff about SEL practices. Specifically, she claimed the lecturer spoke to staff about strategies of which they were already familiar and felt confident employing. These teachers did not perceive a lack of confidence or limited teacher efficacy as challenges to implementing SEL practices.

Efficacy was associated with mastery experiences. Teachers spoke of specific types of mastery experiences as having a significant effect on efficacy. They did not classify these mastery experiences as professional development. For example, one teacher mentioned her strengths, qualities, and abilities had built over time. She spoke of how her confidence dealing with difficult children and her ability to read emotions and

understand the fine line between "how much to push and how much to pull back" had grown over time. Her direct interaction and mastery experiences with students, rather than participation in training, provided her with an overall feeling of efficacy. While she acknowledged that training could ultimately benefit her positively as an educator, she felt she already possessed the skillset necessary to succeed due to her prior experiences.

Another teacher related her years of experience in the field to her efficacy. Rather than any specific training, she credited her maturity and knowledge of her material to her intrinsic understanding of her students. She also had a strong understanding of instructional techniques and this experience allowed her to keep up with the changes in curriculum as well as SEL needs.

Efficacy was associated with a collaborative culture. In addition to my findings regarding meaningful experiences, nearly all administrators and teachers agreed that collaboration and a strong sense of community had a positive effect on teacher efficacy. Specifically, teachers spoke about positive interactions with support staff, such as counselors, social workers, and assistant principals, as a means to growing one's efficacy. The teachers needed to have faith that their colleagues would be available to them when needed as well as provide expertise in areas revolved around students' emotional well-being. In short, when teachers felt supported by their colleagues, they felt more confident in their own work. Similarly, if they had confidence in the ability of their peers to support students and fellow educators, they also felt more confident to perform their own roles.

Evidence of collaboration having a positive effect on efficacy went beyond peer-

to-peer modeling, observation, and conversation. For instance, teachers claimed they felt more confident to perform tasks associated with SEL when they felt supported by counselors and administration. As an example, a high school teacher spoke of the importance of guidance counselor support as she described a variety of experiences. Specifically, with some counselors, she could simply pick up the phone and the support was immediate, while other counselors were not as helpful. An elementary teacher encapsulated the importance of feeling comfortable and supported in her environment. She described a feeling of security, wherein administration protected her and provided her with the necessary resources for effective instruction. Accordingly, she discussed the importance of feeling confident in the professionals around her in order to perform her own job effectively.

> You need your resources, or you need your training to lead your class, but you know that at any time you can ask for help and anyone is going to understand what you are dealing with, and you are going to have immediate support. In this way, the (school) community is really supportive. Not only for the children, but also for the teachers. It helps a lot. It's very important here.

Another teacher commented, “The community here is important. It starts with administration, because nothing is ever degrading or demeaning. It's more about how we can help one another.”

Discussion

This study attempted to discover the manner in which leaders in a single school district utilized professional development in the area of social-emotional learning (SEL). Findings described the various professional development activities that occurred during the implementation of SEL-related practices. In addition, I explored the perceptions of district and school leaders and teachers regarding the meaningfulness of the professional

development. Lastly, I presented teachers and administrators' beliefs about the effect of SEL-related professional development on teacher efficacy.

In the following section, I discuss SEL research and practices related to the current professional development opportunities available in the Jamesberg School District. In addition, I discuss teacher and administrator views on the SEL-related professional development opportunities as related to prior research on teacher efficacy and professional development. Subsequently, I make recommendations and suggest action steps for the district as it moves forward in offering professional development opportunities in the area of SEL.

Professional Development in Jamesberg and Future Recommendations

Participation in professional development can positively influence teacher efficacy and skills (McKeown et al., 2016). Accordingly, teachers who report higher levels of efficacy are more likely to attempt new strategies with students, work through challenges, and collaborate with peers to improve instructional practices (Bandura, 1977, De Jong et al., 2014; Guskey, 1988; Morris-Rothschild & Brassard, 2006; Ross & Bruce, 2001). In addition, professional development can provide teachers with the necessary mindset to teach difficult concepts, as well as attempt and apply a myriad of instructional strategies (McKeown et al., 2016).

While the teachers and leaders of the Jamesberg Public Schools spoke of a variety of different professional development offerings, there appeared to be a disconnect between leaders and teachers regarding what teachers wanted. Continually, leaders spoke about their connections with outside agencies and collaborative efforts with experts.

However, teachers did not find value in these collaborations, but instead longed for more time with one another. In addition, leaders spoke of guest lecturers, but teachers could not recall the names of these lecturers and did not find their lectures relevant to their practice. This disconnect can be attributed to a lack of communication between leaders and teachers, as well as a lack of vision and direction of the district. Without a guiding vision and clear district goals driving school goals, teachers were left wondering about the purpose of professional development offerings.

Research suggests meaningful professional development opportunities depend upon three important factors: active participation, collaboration, and relation to practice (Bruce et al., 2010, Desimone et al., 2002, and Ingvarson et al., 2005). In addition, Desimone et al. (2002) posited, meaningful professional development focuses on skills related to subject matter directly correlated to classroom instructional practices. Teachers in Jamesberg claimed their professional development offerings regarding SEL lacked relevance to their practice and lacked a collaborative structure, both of which are essential for meaningful professional development (Bruce et al., 2010; Desimone et al., 2002; Ingvarson et al., 2005). Additionally, teachers could not connect SEL-related professional development to their current practices or find meaningful strategies for how to apply the content. Furthermore, teachers in Jamesberg described their most meaningful professional development experiences as those including the opportunity to collaborate with one another. Therefore, they longed for more collaborative opportunities.

Collaborative professional development offers educators time to observe peers

performing specific skills and practices (Bruce et al., 2010; Desimone et al., 2002). When teachers from the same district, school, subject area and grade collaborate, professional development is more meaningful (Desimone et al., 2002). Since successful professional development centers on time to collaborate with colleagues as well as observe peers performing specific skills and practices (Bruce et al., 2010; Desimone et al., 2002), the district would benefit from the expansion of opportunities for staff members to collaborate regarding the SEL needs of students as well as the integration of SEL practices.

In addition, teachers spoke of meaningful experiences with students that were mastery in nature. These experiences shaped the manner in which teachers taught and worked with students. Leaders rarely spoke of the importance of teacher experiences as a way to improve efficacy. Teachers should be afforded time and space to reflect upon their interactions with students and share their experiences with one another. This work can be done during planed meeting times as well as informal collaborative opportunities. It is up to leaders to provide teachers the means to engage in these types of activities as well as promote the importance of self-reflection as a means to improving practice.

District leaders could provide SEL-related professional development opportunities that incorporate activities that allow teachers to learn and use particular instructional strategies and offer time for reflection to connect the learning to practice (Bruce et al., 2010, Desimone et al., 2002; Ingvarson et al., 2005). That is, if leaders provide time for teachers to observe one another and reflect upon the observations, teachers will potentially find more meaning in their professional development. As an

illustration, learning walks, instructional rounds (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Lee, 2009), and general peer observations provide teachers opportunity to see similarly skilled individuals apply practical techniques. Therefore, it could behoove school and district leaders in Jamesberg to arrange teacher schedules to allow for those collaborative professional development opportunities.

Furthermore, when teachers are active participants in the professional development, they are more likely to implement the practices they learned (Desimone et al., 2002). When teachers participate in learning opportunities that involve direct experiences, embedded into everyday teaching, they feel more competent in their abilities (Bruce et al., 2010). Professional development where teachers are not simply listening, but performing tasks related to learning, increases the impact of the learning experience on teacher performance (Desimone et al., 2002; Ingvarson et al., 2005).

It is the responsibility of leaders to present teachers with learning opportunities that provide useful tools and techniques that have a direct application to their classroom and context. Ultimately, when leaders provide teachers with targeted professional development, teachers are more likely to attempt new practices and implement changes to their everyday teaching (Desimone et al., 2002). Hence, if teachers are struggling with students of trauma, professional development that focuses on trauma-sensitive practices will likely satisfy the teachers' desire for relevant professional development.

Furthermore, research suggests that effective teacher training in SEL programming leads to increased program dosage and fidelity and ultimately influences students' emotional problem solving and emotional literacy (Reyes, Brackett, Rivers,

Elbertson, & Salovey, 2012). Therefore, the planning of SEL-related professional development opportunities should weigh the relevance of content to staff, promote the active participation of staff, and incorporate collaborative opportunities (Bruce et al., 2010; Desimone et al., 2002; Ingvarson et al., 2005).

Study Limitations and Future Research

Although these findings present an accurate representation of the views and opinions evaluated in the current study, there are limitations and potential biases that should be addressed in future research. The first limitation of this study is the time course during which the data was collected. The research was completed over the course of five months starting at the beginning of the school year. Therefore, the data is representative of that time only. Furthermore, the district leadership changed seven months before I began my study. As such, my data reflects the experiences and opinions of staff members during a transitional phase.

Additionally, the majority of my data were collected based on administrator interviews and teacher focus groups. Many teachers were not easily accessible during the research phase, thus limiting my pool of interview respondents. The small number of teachers represented in the focus groups may limit the data's validity. Participants in the teacher focus groups, while reliable, were self-selected, therefore not necessarily an accurate representation of the teaching population at large. I recommend the use of quantitative survey data for further investigation regarding teacher perception of the influence of SEL-related professional development on efficacy.

In addition, as an outsider to the district, I was dependent upon district and school

leaders, as well as other school personnel to gather documents necessary to maximize findings. The documents reviewed for the study were not created with the sole purpose of answering my research questions, therefore they were subject to my personal interpretation. Moreover, my employment as a school-based administrator contributed to my interest in this research study and may have influenced my interpretations of data. However, I dutifully attempted to remain impartial and unbiased during the data collection and analysis phases of my research.

Finally, one of the main purposes of this study was to examine the influence of SEL-related professional development on teacher efficacy. Teachers largely reported their dissatisfaction with the professional development offerings as related to SEL. Without the presence of satisfactory professional development branded as SEL-related, teachers could not necessarily relate the influence of the professional development on their efficacy. Therefore, my findings for that particular research question were limited to conjecture. In the future, an ethnographic study (Creswell, 2012) may provide a more detailed and thorough understanding of the way the district utilizes professional development in the area of SEL, as well as its influence on teacher efficacy. By immersing oneself into the environment, the researchers can participate in the professional development, observe the participants and interview participants before and after their participation in the professional development.

CHAPTER 4[4]

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of school and district leaders in supporting implementation of social-emotional learning (SEL) in public education. To do so, we examined the role of district leaders in establishing SEL initiatives (Hardy, 2018), the district's approach to SEL-related professional development (Caira, 2018), the practices of principals and counselors (McGarrigle, 2018), and the practices of school leaders in supporting teachers to build a positive learning environment (Langlois, 2018).

We begin the following chapter with an observation of the district's strengths as related to SEL. Next, we discuss how the narrow view of SEL articulated by school and district leaders could hinder forward progress in this initiative. Finally, we explore the status of SEL implementation in Jamesberg through the lens of the three leadership practices outlined by Leithwood et al. (2004): setting direction, developing people, and redesigning the organization.

District Strengths

From the beginning of our exploration of the Jamesberg district, the importance placed by district and school leaders, as well as teachers and counselors, on the academic and social-emotional well-being of their students was clear. Renewed commitment to SEL programming was fueled, in part, by the entry of a new superintendent in April 2017. In multiple individual and focus group interviews, educators in Jamesberg expressed faith that under his leadership the district would not only improve but thrive.

[4] This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach of this project: Michael A. Caira, Jr., Sarah J. Hardy, Deborah Langlois, and Donna M. McGarrigle.

While all parties acknowledged there was much work to be done, specifically in the area of SEL, there was a feeling of optimism for what lay ahead.

Even before the start of the new superintendent's tenure, the district was interested in providing social-emotional support to its students. This was evidenced by the use of two outside resources to garner information about the district's SEL practices. In 2016, the district hired the Collaborative for Academic and Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL) to generate a report assessing the district's SEL readiness and engagement. In addition, in the spring of 2017, employees, students, and families participated in a survey assessing perception of school climate and safety, student engagement, and student-teacher relationships. Finally, the new superintendent brought in a consultant who specialized in SEL methodology to work with him and his leadership team during his initial district takeover. District and school leaders used the data gathered from these reports as a resource when drafting a district strategic plan that prominently featured SEL. The details of this process are just one of many examples demonstrating the strong investment educators in Jamesberg had in the success of their students.

Social-Emotional Learning is Bigger Than You Think

SEL has garnered increased attention in the field of education in recent years (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Slade & Griffith, 2013; Zins & Elias, 2007). As a result, public schools have implemented a variety of SEL programming. The strongest SEL reforms include a comprehensive, multifaceted approach (Elias, Zins, Graczyk, & Weissberg, 2003). However, Jamesberg's approaches to SEL implementation were based on a narrowly scoped definition of SEL, which resulted in a fragmented program (Hardy,

2018). We noted gaps in two specific areas. First, although research indicates that SEL should be part of programming designed for all students (Durlak et al., 2011; Elias, 2009; Payton et al., 2008), we did not find this to be the case in Jamesberg. Second, a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to SEL includes the creation of safe, caring learning environments (Durlak et al., 2011; Elias, 2006). Yet, in Jamesberg, creating positive learning environments was not viewed as part of SEL implementation (Langlois, 2018). We discuss the significance of these two areas of concern in turn. Furthermore, we make research-based recommendations for the district regarding potential next steps in both areas.

Social-Emotional Learning is for Everyone

Multiple studies exist supporting the importance of instructing all students in social-emotional competencies for academic and life-long success (Durlak et al., 2011; Elias, 2009; Payton et al., 2008). Whereas, in Jamesberg, we found staff were primarily focused on the aspects of SEL that supported students with deficits in social-emotional or behavioral skills (Hardy, 2018). Missing from SEL programming in Jamesberg was an understanding of the social-emotional competencies all students should be acquiring. Evidence-based SEL curriculum is one way all students can be exposed to SEL content (Low, Cook, Smolkowski, & Buntain-Ricklefs, 2015; Rimm-Kaufman & Chiu, 2007). Jamesberg had some explicit social-emotional skill instruction in place (McGarrigle, 2018). However, research indicates SEL practices should also be embedded in academic instruction to capitalize on the connection between emotions and learning (Kress, Norris, Schoenholz, Elias, & Seigle, 2004). Beyond the training provided to a few teachers

regarding the incorporation of Responsive Classroom (Caira, 2018), Jamesberg staff rarely referred to embedded SEL instructional practices. Embedding SEL practices into academic instruction ensures all students acquire and practice these skills in their daily contexts (Elias, 2006). Later, in the recommendation section, we make suggestions for how leaders in Jamesberg could approach this work.

Another way schools ensure SEL instruction reaches all students is by using counseling staff (i.e. guidance counselors and social workers) in a systematic way to teach, model, and practice social-emotional competencies for all students (Flaherty et al., 1998). However, our findings indicated some counseling staff in Jamesberg spent a large amount of time responding to students in crisis (McGarrigle, 2018). As a result, some counselors were less involved in proactively supporting SEL for all students. Because of this, only some students in Jamesberg benefited from the support this specialized staff can provide. We make recommendations regarding the utilization of counseling staff at the end of the section.

Social-Emotional Learning Includes Creating Safe, Caring Learning Environments

In addition to understanding that SEL instruction is for everyone, a comprehensive definition of SEL recognizes the role of safe, caring learning environments in the development of social-emotional competencies (Durlak et al., 2011). Healthy teacher-student relationships allow students to learn about and practice social-emotional competencies and also increase student engagement and motivation to learn (Anderman, Andrzewjewky, & Allen, 2011; Elias & Moceri, 2012). At least two schools in the district were implementing a Responsive Classroom approach (Caira, 2018), which

develops students' social-emotional competencies through the establishment of a positive classroom and school environment (Abry, Rimm-Kaufman, Larsen, & Brewer, 2013). However, the only systematic, district-wide programming in place to address learning environments was Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) (Hardy, 2018; McGarrigle, 2018). PBIS has been shown to increase school attendance (Freeman et al., 2015) and student compliance with behavioral expectations (Lewis, Colvin, & Sugai, 2000). Yet, PBIS is only one component that contributes to creating a positive and safe learning environment (Cohen, 2006; Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010).

In addition to establishing behavioral expectations, another aspect of creating safe, caring learning environments is the establishment of positive teacher-student relationships (Skiba, Ormiston, Martinez, & Cummings, 2016). As such, an understanding of the comprehensive meaning of SEL includes the role teacher-student interactions play in SEL development (Klem & Connell, 2004). Although research indicates students are most able to learn when they feel safe, competent, and autonomous (Brooks, 1999), this concept was not included in most leaders' or teachers' definition of SEL (Langlois, 2018). Instead, establishing positive classroom environments was more often brought up in relation to problematic student behavior. This reactive way of approaching positive environments highlighted how many leaders thought of SEL as implementing a prescribed program or curriculum, instead of a set of skills to be embedded into teacher-student interactions and academic content (Langlois, 2018). The section to follow contains recommendations for next steps.

Recommendations to Expand Understanding of Social-Emotional Learning

Broadening the definition of SEL in Jamesberg is an essential next step for leaders. Below, we outline recommendations in two areas: expanding the focus of SEL instruction to *all* students and including the establishment of safe, caring learning environments as part of SEL programming.

First, through policy and practice, leaders should seek to establish SEL as a component of instruction essential for all students in the district (Zins & Elias, 2007). One way to approach this task would be to outline a developmentally appropriate scope and sequence for social-emotional competencies (Elias & Moceri, 2012). Including a list of expected SEL instructional practices would help staff understand how SEL should be embedded into their daily instruction with all students (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Training curriculum leaders regarding how social-emotional competencies are embedded in instructional practice is another possible avenue. As academic curriculum is implemented, curriculum leaders could facilitate embedding SEL practices into unit design. The key task for leaders in Jamesberg will be to shift the thinking of principals and teachers to see SEL as a core component of programming for *all* students.

In addition, we recommend that leaders in Jamesberg examine the roles of counseling staff within their schools. Articulating a clear definition for their roles would be a first step. As part of that work, leaders might consider how counseling staff could be used to provide explicit instruction to students in a proactive manner instead of a reactive one (Zins & Elias, 2007). For example, leaders could facilitate the creation of a schedule for counseling staff to provide direct instruction in social skills to students. These supports would allow the district to best utilize counseling staff.

Our second recommendation regards building safe, caring learning environments as part of the district's approach to SEL programming. We suggest the leaders of Jamesberg expand the understanding of SEL to include the ways adults interact with students and the relationships they form. While school leaders support teachers in building these relationships, they do so in reaction to problems, versus as proactive professional development (Langlois, 2018). A critical step in this process is through the identification of the school environment as a part of SEL implementation (Elias, 2009). PBIS has taken root in the district. Thus, if leaders continue to support the systems and practices provided through PBIS, schools will benefit. However, district leaders should help school leaders and staff expand their understanding of the elements of a safe, caring school environment, including how the school environment can be used to provide coordinated supports for students (Slade & Griffith, 2013). One way to accomplish this is to include a specific action item in the strategic plan addressing the creation of a common definition and understanding of a positive school environment. Furthermore, leaders can provide professional development opportunities for teachers that are directly related to building positive classroom environments (Caira, 2018). Ultimately, if school leaders and teachers hold a more comprehensive and proactive approach to SEL programming they will be able to support the success of all students.

Setting Direction

As seen in this project, staff in Jamesberg were invested in the social-emotional needs of their students, but had a narrow definition of SEL. In addition to having a comprehensive understanding of SEL, effective educational leaders utilize a set of

leadership skills aimed at setting direction in their schools and districts (Leithwood et al., 2004). These skills enable leaders to direct efforts through the establishment of a clear, shared vision and the development of group goals that define high expectations (Seashore Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2014). However, outside of the PBIS initiative, Jamesberg lacked district-wide priorities or actions steps for change related to SEL implementation. Without consistent priorities and goals, there was limited cohesion in SEL instruction. Instead, most SEL initiatives were fueled by individual principals (Hardy, 2018; McGarrigle, 2018).

The creation of a unified district vision is particularly important for successful SEL implementation, because it brings cohesion to the variety of programs, practices, and interventions required for a comprehensive approach (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). The lack of a unifying vision in Jamesberg led to an uneven application of SEL programs and practices across the district (Hardy, 2018), as well as the trainings that were offered to teachers regarding SEL practices (Caira, 2018). Next, we will discuss implications in two areas: the impact of school autonomy and the need for aligned goal setting. Finally, we will follow with recommendations for the district in the area of direction setting.

School Autonomy

Without a clear, shared vision, the adoption of SEL programs in Jamesberg was primarily initiated by school principals (Hardy, 2018; McGarrigle, 2018). School leaders established a range of SEL curricula and practices based on the needs of their individual buildings and their particular interests and beliefs. According to Honig (2016), context is important to consider when implementing a new initiative, but in Jamesberg, the district

context was not considered. Instead, principals worked autonomously from the building-centric contexts of their individual schools when framing SEL initiatives. While this autonomy provided building leaders the freedom to address the SEL needs in their school, it also resulted in inconsistencies among schools, particularly in the area of training (Caira, 2018) and support of teachers in building positive learning environments (Langlois, 2018). Many of the school leaders interviewed expressed concern over the lack of funds and opportunities for new teachers to be trained in SEL programs. While school leaders strove to provide effective in-house professional development, keeping new staff trained on previously introduced SEL programs was problematic. New teachers did not always have access to the same level of training as teachers who had been in district when that program was first introduced and there was not a system to address this gap. This inconsistency of training led to inconsistency of implementation. For some schools, it also meant no SEL programming beyond PBIS. In the recommendation section, to follow we make suggestions for establishing a clear, shared vision.

Developing Group Goals

Establishing a clear, shared vision is only one part of setting direction. Leaders must also use that vision to fashion group goals with high expectations for staff (Leithwood et al., 2014). This is often accomplished through the use of strategic planning. A strategic plan assists in setting the direction of a district; it provides shared goals as well as a roadmap for meeting those goals (Seashore Louis et al., 2014). Jamesberg had a team of district and school leaders charged with developing a district

strategic plan. Directed by the superintendent, the plan included a goal to integrate SEL into instructional practices (Hardy, 2018). The committee was charged with creating the necessary action steps to realize this goal.

Recommendations for Setting Direction

Given the importance setting direction plays in the success of reform, we have three recommendations for next steps. First, we recommend the goals and action steps outlined in the strategic plan address a comprehensive meaning of SEL. As detailed previously, this would include a focus on SEL instruction for all students and the inclusion of safe, caring learning environments (Elias et al., 2003).

As indicated by Elias et al. (2015), vision setting allows leaders to take a variety of SEL programs and practices and help staff understand how they relate to each other. Therefore, our second recommendation is that district leaders take a detailed inventory of SEL programs currently in place. This inventory will enable district leaders to decide if specific programs should be brought to scale across the district (Elias et al., 2003). Furthermore, leaders in Jamesberg can use the information to determine which programs to support with trainings for new teachers.

A collaborative process for vision setting yields an effective planning process (Devos et al., 2013; Silins et al., 2002). Therefore, our third recommendation is for leaders to ensure the vision set for SEL is truly a shared one. The superintendent brings a passion for SEL instruction to the district. Yet, before he arrived, principals and staff were invested and working hard to address the SEL needs of their students. Many school leaders had established SEL programming in their individual schools (Hardy, 2018). As

a vision for SEL is established in the district, it should include the input of all educators in Jamesberg. It will be important to ensure staff understand the visioning process and are given a way to actively participate in the creation of action steps. Shifting from complete principal autonomy to a district-led vision will present challenges. Consistent and transparent communication around vision setting will be an important tool in bringing all stakeholders into this work and ensuring the vision is truly shared among all of them.

Developing People

Setting direction enables a school district to set a vision for reform and outline goals and action steps related to that vision. In conjunction with setting direction, developing people propels reform efforts because it allows leaders to build the capacity of staff to carry out the reform (Leithwood et al., 2004). Seashore Louis et al. (2014) found targeted staff development builds knowledge and skills and positively influences the attitudes of staff members in carrying out organizational goals. As such, a focus on developing people will be essential for leaders in Jamesberg as they work to improve SEL in the district. Below we offer perspectives on the role of professional development in change and the instructional methods that lead to effective professional development. Further, we put forth recommendations for next steps in the area of developing people.

The Role of Professional Development in Change

According to Ransford et al. (2009), effective professional development can have a direct impact on the quality and quantity of lessons implemented when introducing specific SEL curricula. As such, targeted professional development can lead teachers to

attempt new practices and implement changes to their everyday teaching (Desimone et al., 2002). Teachers in Jamesberg reported a general dissatisfaction with the district professional development around SEL (Caira, 2018). For instance, the introduction of SEL programs in Jamesberg was not often paired with sufficient training. In some cases, school leader support for teachers in building positive relationships was not seen as professional development so no programing existed to support the work. School leaders instead responded individually to teachers struggling in this area (Langlois, 2018). Research shows insufficient training may lead to deficits in program fidelity and negatively influence students' emotional problem solving and emotional literacy skills (Reyes et al., 2012).

Instructional Methods of Effective Professional Development

The instructional methods used to implement professional development affect the outcomes. Effective professional development includes the active participation of those involved, and it requires access to relevant tools and content applicable to teachers' practices (Bruce et al, 2010; Desimone et al., 2002; Ingvarson, Meiers, & Beavis, 2005). Therefore, professional development where teachers are not simply listening, but performing tasks related to learning, increases the impact of the learning on teacher performance (Desimone et al., 2002; Ingvarson, et al., 2005). However, relevant SEL-related professional development that included active participation was rarely reported in Jamesberg (Caira, 2018). While the district partnered with outside organizations and hired expert lecturers, teachers did not have access to instructional coaches regarding SEL practices and methodologies. Supports such as coaches have been found to improve

teacher confidence during SEL implementation (Ransford et al., 2009). Ultimately, when provided with targeted professional development, teachers are more likely to attempt new practices and implement changes to their everyday teaching (Desimone et al., 2002). Consistent with Bruce et al. (2010), we found that without involvement in direct experiences, embedded into everyday teaching, teachers reported feeling disconnected from many professional development offerings. As such, we make recommendations for future practice related to developing people.

Recommendations for Future Practice in Developing People

When defining the vision and goals for SEL, the district will inevitably identify areas requiring professional development. As informed by our collaborative findings and the research literature, we have two recommendations for leaders as they consider the work of developing people. First, we recommend district leaders perform an assessment to examine professional development needs (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). Second, we recommend district leaders establish a professional development plan that coincides with a cogent strategic plan and accounts for information gathered through the needs assessment. We will discuss these two recommendations in turn.

A leadership driven assessment. The results of our collaborative findings provided evidence that the Jamesberg administration and teaching staff are committed to the academic and social-emotional needs of their students (Caira, 2018; Hardy, 2018, Langlois, 2018; McGarrigle, 2018). In order to capitalize on the staff's commitment, we recommend district leaders perform a review of professional learning needs (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). The purpose of the assessment would be three-fold. First, district and

school leaders should carefully review and consolidate the information contained in the CASEL report and the survey from spring 2017 assessing perception of school climate and safety, student engagement, and student-teacher relationships. These data sources provide valuable information from teachers and counselors regarding specific areas related to SEL in which they would like support. Second, the assessment could identify staff knowledge and skills related to SEL goals articulated in the district strategic plan (Seashore Louis et al., 2014). Third, district and school leaders could evaluate current professional development as it pertains to the action steps in the new strategic plan and consider ways to incorporate active participation and relevant content in future SEL-related professional development opportunities (Desimone, et al., 2002; Ingvarson, et al., 2005).

Creation of a professional development plan. Using the information from the assessment, we recommend district and school leaders collectively create a professional development plan. The collaborative plan would ensure the information derived from the assessment is used in clear and actionable ways to develop staff in the area of SEL instruction. We recommend two areas for leaders to consider as they develop the professional development plan.

First, in order to ensure the success of the professional development plan, it should be paired with a strong vision for SEL implementation and designed to build the knowledge, skills, and disposition of staff required for the successful execution of SEL practices (Seashore Louis et al., 2014). Specifically, the content outlined in the professional development plan should be relevant to the context of teachers (Datnow,

2000). This can be accomplished by addressing areas identified in the assessment and by linking the content of professional development to staffs' prior knowledge and building-based goals (Desimone et al., 2002). Relevance can also be created by ensuring the content of professional development includes how to apply the essential elements of the concept, and how to address any problems that arise (Durlak, 2016).

Second, in considering the instructional practices outlined in the professional development plan, leaders should seek ways to promote active participation (Desimone et al., 2002; Ingvarson et al., 2005) and allow time for staff to reflect and absorb the material (Kendziora & Osher, 2016). According to Bruce et al. (2010), active participation includes providing and receiving feedback. One way this could be accomplished is by providing additional opportunities for teachers to participate in peer observations. School leaders should ensure peer observations are paired with time for discussion and reflection (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016).

Furthermore, active participation relies upon engagement with specific instructional strategies and allows teachers time to reflect and connect their learning to their practice (Bruce et al., 2010, Desimone et al., 2002). One mechanism for reflection and making connections is through the supervision and evaluation process. This process allows leaders to provide specific and meaningful feedback to teachers. However, our collaborative findings did not show evidence of the supervision and evaluation process as a source of professional development for SEL (Caira, 2018, Langlois, 2018) . Therefore, we recommend training and encouraging administrators to provide targeted feedback related to SEL along with time for collaborative reflection.

Redesigning the Organization

In addition to setting direction and developing people, an important aspect of effective educational leadership is the ability to build organizational structures that support learning (Leithwood et al., 2004; Witziers et al., 2003). This requires the creation of structures that support and encourage the growth of staff members to integrate new learning into their current practice (Elias, 2006). Jamesberg had successfully created structures to support SEL growth through its PBIS initiative. To build on this preliminary work, we have identified two focus areas for leaders: effective support structures and ongoing collaboration (Leithwood et al., 2003). At the end of the section, we present recommendations for school and district leaders.

Effective Structures to Support Social-Emotional Learning

Creating the right structures to sustain SEL initiatives is a challenge for school systems (Elias et al., 2015). To determine the right structures to support SEL efforts, districts should consider the contextual variables and internal expertise (Elias et al., 2003; Minckler, 2014). Jamesberg was successful in integrating PBIS in all the elementary and middle schools through the use of a district-wide tiered support structure (Hardy, 2018; McGarrigle, 2018). This structure supplied an implementation framework that was flexible enough to allow schools to individualize the program based on their schools' needs. Although PBIS was an incomplete response to a more comprehensive SEL system, this program was successfully embedded in these schools through the multi-pronged structures created to implement and sustain it.

In contrast to the support structure of the PBIS initiative, the support structures of

guidance counselors and social workers were not consistent across buildings (McGarrigle, 2018). Most schools had a support model that aligned with the training and expertise of each discipline (Flaherty et al., 1998). A few schools recently shifted to a model where the roles and responsibilities of guidance counselors and social workers were interchangeable. Instead of differentiating the roles based on level of student need, the roles were assigned by grade level. Both models have their benefits and drawbacks, dependent upon school and district context (Datnow, Park, & Kennedy-Lewis, 2013; Robinson et al., 2008). However, in Jamesberg the support model that differentiated roles based on the training and expertise of counselors had been well-established and aligned well with the PBIS tiers of support. There was concern among several counselors and administrators that the shift to a grade level model would not effectively support all students.

Collaborative Processes

Another organizational mechanism to support SEL implementation is to create structure in the school schedule that allows for and even encourages collaboration (Minckler, 2014). Research has shown that providing staff members with the opportunity to collaborate is a powerful way to develop staff (Bruce et al., 2010; Desimone et al., 2002) and meet organizational goals (Leithwood et al., 2014). The district recognized and responded to this need for the counseling staff by building a collaborative structure for sharing expertise and effective practices (McGarrigle, 2018).

As found throughout this project, teachers, too, yearned for additional opportunities to collaborate in order to increase their skill set and receive emotional

support from peers (Caira, 2018). Most teachers identified seeking out support for SEL challenges through impromptu conversations with counselors, peers, or principals (Caira, 2018, Hardy, 2018; Langlois, 2018). Specifically, teachers discussed positive interactions with support staff as a means to growing one's efficacy. When teachers felt supported by their colleagues, they felt more confident in their own abilities (Caira, 2018).

Although these conversations were helpful, teachers reported wanting a more formal structure for collaboration (Caira, 2018). This is consistent with research that shows the integration of SEL practices into a teacher's skillset increases when collaboration is a standard practice (Berzin, O'Brien, & Tohn, 2012; Guo, Justice, Sawyer, & Tompkins, 2011).

Recommendations for Organizational Structures

As informed by our collaborative findings and the research literature, we have two recommendations for leaders as they consider the work of redesigning organizational structures. First, we recommend leaders review the roles and responsibilities of guidance counselors and social workers to ensure that structures support the SEL needs of schools and the district. Clear, consistent structures and operating procedures (Leithwood et al, 2007) help organizations run more efficiently and allow all organizational members to understand how to best access supports. As part of the review process, we recommend establishing clear job descriptions and role expectations in order to clarify and strengthen the existing student support systems. Additionally, this clarity could lead to collaborative relationships among these professionals in order to create a responsive support structure

that serves all students (Flaherty et al., 1998). Leaders could utilize the already established guidance meetings as a time to gather and analyze a list of duties, tasks, and responsibilities for each role.

Second, we recommend leaders establish a schedule that allows for collaboration between teachers regarding SEL. In addition, providing teachers with a protocol for collaborating about SEL will keep discussions focused and productive. Creating a formalized structure to allow development of collaborative, collective teams in schools can convey a sense of organizational stability and clarity of purpose. For staff, this can lead to higher levels of connectedness, collegiality, trust, and mutual respect (Bellibas & Liu, 2017). Student outcomes in schools that build in collaborative structures for staff include higher achievement (Dinham, 2005), engagement, and participation (Silins et al., 2002).

Conclusion

The awareness of social-emotional learning (SEL) as an essential aspect of education is growing. District and school leaders are increasingly aware of the need to provide programing and support for teachers in order to meet the needs of students. Therefore, the broader aim of this project was to explore the role of school and district leaders in supporting implementation of SEL in public education. Our research project focused on one district from four different perspectives: the role of district leaders in establishing SEL initiatives, the district's approach to SEL-related professional development, the practices of principals and counselors, and the practices of school leaders in supporting teachers to build a positive learning environment.

In Jamesberg, we found a district with a strong investment in the academic and social-emotional well-being of their students. Overall, the district's approach to SEL implementation was narrowly defined. While many programs and initiatives existed, there lacked a unifying district-wide vision for SEL programming. Professional development for SEL was evident but did not adequately meet the needs of the district. Finally, we found evidence of some organizational structures to support SEL.

The three leadership practices outlined by Leithwood et al. (2004) (setting direction, developing people, and redesigning the organization) established a framework for future recommendations.

The commitment of the new superintendent and the on-going strategic planning reflected the district's commitment to incorporating SEL into the practices of all staff. Staff investment in the academic and social-emotional well-being of students, along with a leadership team focused on making district-wide improvements, provided a sense of hopeful optimism for Jamesberg and the future implementation of SEL.

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Appendix A

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol: Administrators

1. What SEL initiatives has your school (or the district - for district leaders) implemented in the past two years?

    a. **Probe** (for District Leaders): What levels/schools implemented the initiative(s)?

2. Talk about how the initiative(s) was implemented?

    a. **Probe**: What strategies were used during implementation to help building-based staff understand the purpose or goal of the initiative?

    b. **Probe**: What strategies were used during implementation to help building-based staff develop their knowledge base about the initiative?

    c. **Probe (**for District Leaders): How was the plan for implementation communicated to school-based staff?

    d. **Probe** for (District Leaders): What structures were used or created to improve communication between district leaders and school-based staff and/or among school-based staff?

    e. **Probe**: What support systems (if any) were put in place to help building-based staff during adoption of the SEL initiative?

3. What professional development has occurred regarding SEL?

4. Have teachers been afforded the opportunity to collaborate with peers regarding SEL?

5. Has confidence improved due to participation in SEL related PD?

6. How do you define a positive classroom learning environment?

    Potential categories of answers include:

    1. Clear signs of rituals and routines/organization

    2. Instructional strategies for engagement

    3. Social emotional (teacher/student interactions, teacher sensitivity, regard for adolescent perspective)

    Interviewer: *I'd like for us to focus on the social-emotional aspects of the classroom environment for the next three questions.*

7. What skills do teachers need in order to build positive relationships with students?

Probe: Can you give me an example?

8. What skills do teachers need in order to build positive relationships between students?

Probe: Can you give me an example?

9. In what ways have you successfully supported a teacher struggling to build a positive relationships with and between students? In what ways have you not been successful?

Look for professional development, coaching feedback (specifics) and evaluation.

10. What are the biggest challenges you've faced as you support teachers in this area?

11. Can you talk to me about the ways you support staff or students social-emotionally?

12. Talk to me about your work with your counselors.

a. **Probe**: Do you meet regularly? How often?

b. **Probe**: How does the communication work between you and the counselors?

13. What impact does trust have on how you work with your counselors? Teachers?

a. **Probe**: Talk to me about the ways you built trust as an administrator

b. **Probe**: What have been barriers, if any, you have experienced in building trust?

Appendix B

Semi-structured Interview Protocol: Counselors

Background Data

I/we'd like to start by learning a little more about you.

1. What is your role in this school?
2. How long have you been in this role?
3. Have you worked in other school systems?

SEL Initiatives

1. Can you tell me about the ways you support SEL in your role?
2. Have there been any initiatives in this school/district to develop SEL? Can you talk to me about them. What was your involvement?
3. Talk to me about your work with students? What does that look like? What goes well? What makes that work challenging?
4. Tell me about a time you worked with a student that had a big impact on your personally or professionally?
5. Talk to me about your work with teachers. What goes well? What makes that work challenging?
6. Talk to me about your interactions with administration? How do the communication channels work?
7. Who do you go to for advice/support?
8. What impact does trust have on your work with students? Teachers? Administrators?
   Probe: Talk to me about how you go about building trust?
9. What's missing in this building/district? What would make this a better place for staff and students?
10. Have you been involved in providing any professional development for teachers?
11. Have you attended any professional development recently?
12. What motivates you in this work?
13. Where do you see yourself professionally in the future?

Appendix C

Focus Group Interview Protocol

The Impact of Educational Leaders on SEL Implementation

1. Has this school (or district) provided any professional development on social-emotional learning? If so, what was (or is) your involvement?

2. Talk about why your school and district implemented _____ (fill in with specific SEL initiative)?

Probe: What were the hopes for the initiative?

3. Have you been afforded the opportunity to collaborate with peers regarding SEL?

4. How confident are you regarding SEL centered practices?

a. **Probe:** Has your participation in SEL centered PD changed your practice in any way?

b. **Probe:** Has your confidence improved due to your participation in SEL related PD?

c. **Probe:** How has your understanding of SEL changed or developed?

5. Do you actively research SEL or attempt to incorporate SEL activities/strategies into your everyday practices?

6. Tell me about a meaningful experience you had that has impacted the way you incorporate SEL practices.

7. How do you define a positive learning environment?

8. What skills do you, as a teacher, need in order to successfully build a positive learning environment in your classroom?

9. What supports has your principal offered to you to support your growth in building a positive learning environment in your classroom? (Possibilities might include: feedback, peer-to-peer observations, professional development)

Probe: Did you find any of the supports helpful or effective? If so, please explain how. If not, please explain why not.

Appendix D

Documents

Agenda from Administrative Leadership Retreat on 8/24 and 8/25

Attendance Initiative Overview

Collective Turnaround Plan for three elementary schools

Content from Health and Wellness Website

District Strategic Plan dated March 2014

District Panorama Key Insight Report – spring 2017

Draft of District Strategic Plan dated January 2018

Educational Visioning Community Forum Events flyer

Final FY18 Budget Book

Health and Wellness Newsletter – June 2016

Metro West Health Survey

Multi-year strategic planning working documents for 4 standards

PBIS Information from Elementary School Website

PBIS Information from Middle School Website

PowerPoint from 2016 PBIS training by the May Institute

Professional Development Day Plan for March 1, 2016

Redacted teacher evaluations

School Improvement Template and Guidance Document

SEL rating for GLIMS

SEL Readiness and Engagement Analysis – by CASEL Nov. 2016