Socially and Emotionally Competent Leadership: How School-based Leadership Practices That Promote Social and Emotional Learning Opportunities Shape the Work of Mental Health Staff

Author: Adam Renda

BOSTON COLLEGE

Lynch School of Education and Human Development

Department of Educational Administration and Higher Education

Professional School Administrator Program

SOCIALLY AND EMOTIONALLY COMPETENT LEADERSHIP: HOW SCHOOL-BASED LEADERSHIP PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES SHAPE THE WORK OF MENTAL HEALTH STAFF

Dissertation in Practice by

ADAM RENDA

with Michele M. Conners, Mark T Ito, Geoffrey Rose, and Donna Tobin

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Socially and Emotionally Competent Leadership:

How School-Based Leadership Practices that Promote Social and Emotional Learning Opportunities Shape the Work of Mental Health Staff

by

Adam J. Renda

Dr. Raquel Muñiz, Chair,
Dr. Audrey Friedman, Reader
Dr. Erin Nosek, Reader

Abstract

Researchers and educators recognize the benefits of developing students' social and emotional competencies, but there is little research about the impact of leadership practices on the social and emotional competencies of adults in schools. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the relationship between leadership practices (i.e., what leaders think and do) that promote SEL opportunities, and how they shape the work of mental health staff (MHS) — defined in this study as, school counselors, and nurses. Findings indicated that school-based leaders promoted SEL opportunities for MHS when they (1) provided time to meet, (2) provided resources for professional development, (3) provided feedback through dialogue, (4) accessed MHS' expertise through dialogue, and (5) provided coaching. These leadership practices shaped the work of MHS proactively. These findings suggest that principals should use social awareness to diagnose issues within the school, engage in responsible decision-making to set direction, and promote relationship-building to convince MHS to implement a plan.

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DEDICATION

My father Joe is both my personal and professional mentor. He was a gifted teacher and administrator, but an even better father. He is was nurturing while letting my siblings and I learn and grow from failure and struggle. Our conversations shaped me as a man and educator, one of the most important lessons learned was from a simple saying my father would repeat often "Don't sweat the small stuff." This wisdom is simple, but deep. These words have help me prioritize decisions based on what's best for kids and filter out the noise that prevents us from pushing forward. Thanks Dad, for your guidance and expectations. I dedicate this work to you.

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CHAPTER ONE[1]

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Opportunity and achievement gaps continue to challenge the educational system in the United States, as it struggles to balance a student's academic, social, and emotional skills. District and school-based leaders face the difficulties of monitoring expectations related to increased academic rigor while developing emotionally stable and healthy students. To address student and systemic educational challenges, social and emotional learning (SEL), as a conceptual framework, has gained traction in the field of education. Dusenbury et al. (2015) define SEL as:

> The process through which children and adults acquire 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. Social and emotional skills are critical to being a good student and citizen. (p. 2)

The ever-expanding body of research available supports the benefits of students having strong SEL competencies (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones, D. et al., 2017; Zins et al., 2007). Research shows that SEL has positive effects on a student's physical health, academic achievement, and lifelong success (Jones & Kahn, 2017; Taylor et al., 2017; Zins et al., 2007). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) highlights five competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2017) necessary for students to develop college and career readiness. Numerous studies suggest that high-quality SEL programs in schools do matter, and that students with SEL competencies are better able to manage their emotions and problem-solving skills as

[1] This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach to this project: Michele Conners, Mark Ito, Adam Renda, Geoff Rose, and Donna Tobin.

well as engage in more positive behaviors with fewer conduct and internalizing problems (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones., D. et al., 2017; Hagood, 2015; Zins et al., 2007). Due to the development of SEL competencies that promote health and wellbeing, student learning improves.

Knowing the benefits for students, district and school-based leaders work to put SEL initiatives into place. Adelman and Taylor (2000) argue that if schools and leaders focus only on instruction to help students obtain academic success, they will not effectively educate the whole child. Many states, like Massachusetts, encourage the inclusion of SEL competencies as part of their core curriculum expectations. Additionally, the federal law, *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), requires educational leaders to provide the necessary support in developing a student's SEL competencies that prepare them for success in college and career. These mandates call for schools to implement SEL; however, federal and state mandates focus primarily on developing student skills only and not the adults who influence them daily, including their social and emotional development.

Limited in the research is a focus on SEL competencies for adult staff. Long (2019) reminds us that, "unless they [districts] also address the SEL needs of teachers, especially those experiencing stress, poor working conditions, and classes with many historically underserved students—long-term, system-wide gains for students are less likely" (p. 1). Further complicating the matter, research shows that teacher stress, burnout, and low job satisfaction are formidable challenges in our nation (Beltman et al., 2011; Bobek, 2002; Greenberg, et al., 2016). Educators feel increasing pressure to strengthen relationships with all students, especially those that are marginalized, disenfranchised or disengaged. It is unclear, however, the degree of training and

support available to educators, as well as how much care is being given to their own social and emotional health in the process.

Few studies have investigated the extent to which leaders in schools promote SEL through their own actions and behaviors (Bridgeland et al., 2013; Buchanan et al., 2009; DePaoli et al., 2017). While some staff, including teachers and mental health staff, recognize that children benefit from developing their SEL competencies and skills, educators are generally not intentionally shown or explicitly told by leaders how to develop these competencies in their own practices. Due to this lack of knowledge, staff feel the overall stress, as they are expected to foster an environment in which they possess and model SEL competencies themselves. However, leaders play an important role in influencing the behaviors of their staff (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Minckler, 2014; Spillane & Lee, 2014). We explore this further in our literature review.

The impact of SEL is widespread; thus, we argue that it is critical and essential that district and school leaders model the SEL competencies that shape varied aspects of their schools and/or promote opportunities that develop the SEL competencies of all members of their community. The following overarching research questions guided our work: 1) What leadership practices model SEL competencies, or promote SEL opportunities for staff? and 2) How do these leadership practices shape a district and its schools? For the purpose of our study, we identified practices that modeled (i.e. displayed and demonstrated) SEL competencies. Additionally, we also identified practices that promoted (i.e. actively encouraged) opportunities for staff to develop their SEL skills. Table 1.1 summarizes our focus areas of study by researchers.

Table 1.1

Researcher and their individual focus area of study.

Researcher	Conceptual Frameworks	Focus of study
Conners	Sensemaking (Weick, 2009)	District-wide leadership practices that supported sensemaking on SEL for school-based leaders, and how its focus shaped school-based leadership practices.
Ito	Distributed Leadership (Spillane et al. 2004)	School-based leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies, as they shaped adult collaboration.
Renda	CASEL (Casel, 2017)	School-based leadership practices that promoted SEL opportunities, as they shaped mental health staff.
Rose	Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977)	School-based leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies, as they shaped collective efficacy.
Tobin	Prosocial Classroom (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009)	School-based leadership practices that promoted SEL opportunities, as they shaped staff resilience and well being.

Literature Review

The following literature informed our study by supporting our argument to integrate the SEL competencies into leadership practices. We present our review in two sections. In the first section, we focus on SEL competencies for students and adults that include the social and emotional intelligences, SEL competencies in schools, the identification of key SEL competencies and skills (CASEL, 2017), and SEL for district and school-based staff. In the second section, we explore the literature that further supports our research questions, focusing on leadership in districts and schools that include emotional intelligence, theories and practices such as transformational, distributed and social capital; and finally, social and emotional leadership. This final topic bridges the gap between what we know is good for students and adults, and discusses social and emotional competent leadership.

SEL Competencies for Students and Adults

This section describes a brief history of the social and emotional intelligences and how it set the foundation for developing CASEL's competencies framework. We also discuss the benefits of SEL competencies for students. It is important to lay this groundwork, as our group and individual studies use the CASEL competencies and skills to analyze the identified leadership practices. The work of CASEL furthers our emphasis on the importance of SEL for students' academic learning and personal health, and also provides insight into the limited research on the adults, including the leaders and staff who work with those students.

Social and Emotional Intelligences

The history of SEL dates back at least a century, as seen in the work of researchers on emotional intelligence and social intelligence. Thorndike introduced social intelligence in the 1920's and framed this concept as the ability to act wisely in human relations (Thorndike & Stein, 1937). Salovey and Mayer (1990) extended this research on social intelligences to focus more specifically on individual self-awareness and self-management skills related to one's emotions. They explicitly defined emotional intelligence (EI) as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). Goleman (1996) increased the prevalence of this concept by providing a research-based argument for the importance of EI, how it can be developed throughout life, and the need for our society to increase our focus on emotional literacy.

Additionally, Goleman (2006) stated that the initial intent of EI was to "focus on a crucial set of human capacities within us as individuals, our ability to manage our own emotions and our inner potential for positive relationships" (p. 5). From these theories of social and emotional

intelligences, the four domains of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management emerged (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008). These four domains laid the groundwork for the five core competencies defined by CASEL. Traditionally, these competencies have been applied to the emotional health and wellbeing of all people.

SEL Competencies and Schools

CASEL, an organization developed in 1994 to specifically consider the needs of social and emotional development programming in districts and schools, created a framework for SEL in educational settings. Each piece of the framework addresses the mental health needs of children and the fractured response to those needs in schools (Elias et al., 1997). Research affirms the positive influence this approach has on students and schools. It makes sense that when schools have structures and supports in place to meet the needs of the whole child, students perform better academically, relationships are stronger, and behavioral issues decrease. It follows then that the purpose of CASEL's framework is to "establish high-quality, evidence-based SEL as an essential part of preschool through high school education" (Elbertson et al., 2010, p. 1017). Increasingly, schools became responsible for more than just a student's academic performance.

More specifically, CASEL defined five core competencies within its framework that provided educators a common understanding about the knowledge and skills students and adults needed (Table 1.2). In addition to the four competencies originally established by Goleman (1996), CASEL added "responsible decision-making" as a fifth. With this additional competency, CASEL showed us that SEL is needed to "enhance students' capacity to integrate skills, attitudes, and behaviors to deal effectively and ethically with daily tasks and challenges. Like many similar ones, CASEL's integrated framework promoted intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competence." (CASEL, 2017). Table 1.2 defines the core competencies in detail.

Table 1.2

A Definition of CASEL's Core SEL Competencies

SEL competencies	Definition of competency
Self-awareness	Recognizing one's emotions and identifying and cultivating one's strengths and positive qualities
Self-management	Monitoring and regulating one's emotions and establishing and working toward achieving positive goals
Social awareness	Understanding the thoughts and feelings of others and appreciating the value of human differences
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

Source: CASEL, 2017

Research supports the need for districts and schools to focus on developing competencies as part of their students' overall academic, social, and emotional growth (Taylor, et al., 2017; Elias, 2009). Zins et al. (2007) stated, "[SEL competencies] are particularly important for children to develop because they are linked to a variety of behaviors with long-term implications" (p. 192). These behaviors include anxiety disorders such as depression, eating disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity, substance use disorders, truancy, dropping out of school, teen pregnancy, bullying, and violence (Elias et al., 1997). When these behaviors go unaddressed and their effects not considered, they compromise a student's academic learning. Zins et al. (2007) maintains that our educational system must support students holistically in

order to address the SEL challenges that obstruct students' abilities and capacities to connect to and perform in schools. Research over the past decade claims that students *with* SEL competencies have increased academic achievement, enhanced problem-solving skills, and higher levels of engagement in more prosocial behaviors with fewer conduct and interpersonal problems (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones, D., et al., 2017; Hagood, 2015). In summary, research shows that students' academic learning strongly benefits from the development of SEL skills, as healthy, attentive children focus more on classroom content.

Dusenbury and Weissberg (2017) support these findings. A meta-analysis of follow-up studies of 82 SEL interventions found the benefits of SEL to be durable over time and across diverse samples. Specifically, SEL programs and interventions implemented at the elementary school level effectively promoted academic achievement, improved positive behaviors, and reduced conduct issues. As evidenced by follow-up interviews, students continued to show positive achievement, and that they used SEL competencies after graduating from high school. Learning SEL competencies benefited students not only in the classroom, but also in their ability to be college and career ready for the future.

An additional study of 753 children from low-socioeconomic neighborhoods showed that, "perceived early social competence at least serves as a marker for important long-term outcomes and at most is instrumental in influencing other development factors that collectively affect the life course" (Jones et al., 2015, p. 2289). These outcomes included a greater likelihood of graduating from college, more positive work and family relationships, better mental and physical health, and reduced criminal activity (Jones, et al., 2015; Jones & Kahn, 2017).

Our review of these empirical studies strongly suggests that educating our students on SEL competencies, supporting students to practice them, and allowing students to experience the

long-term benefits of their impact are essential to success in today's schools. However, SEL development in adults, as it relates to improved relationships, productivity, and feelings of satisfaction in the workplace, is not a priority in leadership practices or research (Patti et al., 2015; Brackett & Salovey, 2006). We assert that adults can benefit from the acquisition of these competencies, especially knowing that if leaders and staff model and/or promote them, then students are ultimately more likely to internalize their importance, and use them to their advantage, too.

SEL for Staff

Further bolstering our argument for the systemic integration of SEL for adults in districts and schools, research conducted through CASEL maintains that district and school-based staff must develop their own SEL competencies. In support of these competencies as necessary in the workplace, CASEL (2017) stated that individuals need "…the ability to use SEL practices in life and on the job" (p. 1). With an increased focus on SEL in schools, the field of education needs all stakeholders, specifically leaders, teachers, and mental health staff, to continue to develop their own SEL competencies as well as be given the professional training to do so.

Brackett et al. (2010) conducted a quantitative study in England that measured 123 teachers' emotion-regulation ability (ERA). Specifically, these researchers found a positive relationship between the emotion-regulation abilities of teachers and their job satisfaction as well as their sense of personal accomplishment. Moreover, they found that teachers with higher ERA experienced greater levels of principal support and had better relationships with colleagues. Additionally, Jennings and Greenberg (2009) acknowledge that research (Goleman, 1996) over the past few decades has informed the education profession to promote teachers' SEL competencies. However, Sutton and Wheatley (2003) point out that, "researchers also know little

about how teachers regulate their emotions, the relationship between teachers' emotions and motivation, and how integral emotional experiences are in teacher development" (p. 328). Although current studies stress the importance of SEL for teachers, our study examines the need for SEL competencies to be displayed, demonstrated and actively promoted by district and school-based leaders, as they influenced the members of their organizations, including mental health staff.

In consideration of the impact teacher SEL training has on students, Reyes et al. (2012) conducted a study that involved 812 sixth grade students and their teachers from 28 elementary schools in a large urban school district in the northeastern United States. This study categorized teachers by their degree of resistance or acceptance to teaching SEL programs and named them low-, medium- and high-quality implementers. Analyses revealed that teachers who received more training and delivered more lessons, or were high-quality implementers, had more positive outcomes and felt more efficacious in their work. These findings showed that teacher beliefs, along with training and program fidelity, impacted SEL interventions and the students who received them. Leaders played an important role in ensuring that all staff received the training that they needed.

We argue that leaders need to engage in practices that model SEL competencies and/or promote opportunities for staff to develop their own skills, which ultimately impact student achievement. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) remind us that "teachers influence their students not only by how and what they teach but also by how they relate, teach, and model social and emotional constructs, and manage the classroom" (p. 449). That being said, limited research provides evidence of effective pre-service and professional development opportunities focused on staff competencies (Brackett & Salovey, 2006). Due to the importance of SEL in schools, and

the need for professional training, our study examined leadership practices and how they shaped adults' work in a district and its schools.

SEL Competencies and Leadership

In our research, we explored the integration of SEL competencies and leadership theory. The following section describes how social and emotional intelligences connect to leadership, how leadership theories and practices lay the groundwork for capability and capacity building (Cohen et al., 2007), and how social and emotional leadership is in its nascent stages. We explored the topic of leadership, as it supports our argument in understanding more deeply how leaders employed socially and emotionally competent practices in a district and its schools.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Leadership

The focus on EI, a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), gained strong momentum from the research of Goleman (2006) on emotional literacy. Since the inception of this concept, numerous studies emerged related to EI, including the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002; Boyatzis et al., 2011; George, 2000; Siegling et al., 2014; Walter et al., 2012). For example, Hur et al. (2011) conducted a quantitative study that exclusively utilized questionnaires to explore how emotional intelligence related to leader effectiveness, team effectiveness, and organizational climate. The findings revealed that followers who rated team leaders as more emotionally intelligent also rated them as more effective at shaping a positive climate in the organization.

Initially, corporate organizations conducted much of this EI research by seeking to align the EI of leaders with their overall performance**.** Over the past two decades, however, this

work has found its way into educational leadership practices. As Moore (2009) cites in her work on school reform, “EI can be the difference between a high performing school and a low performing school, and leaders who possess high levels of EI are more skillful in leading change and cultivating commitment among their staff” (p. 23). Cai (2011) also examined empirical studies published between 1996 and 2011 to explore the relationship between the EI of principals and the turnaround of low performing schools. While Cai acknowledged further investigation was needed, he concluded that the higher the school leader’s EI, the more likely teachers collaborated with each other and the greater prevalence that the leader demonstrated transformational leadership behaviors (e.g., idealized influence and intellectual stimulation). Lastly, evidence also suggested that the higher a principal’s EI the greater likelihood that they utilized positive interpersonal skills including communication, conflict management, and stress management.

Also, several studies described the relationship between leadership and EI (Palmer et al., 2001; Gardner & Stough, 2002). For example, Palmer et al. (2001) concluded that the foundation for competency of transformational leadership is a person’s skill to manage and monitor the emotions of themselves and others. Relatedly, Berkovich and Eyal (2015) conducted a narrative review of 49 peer-reviewed studies published between 1990-2012 that focused exclusively on educational leaders and emotions. In their analysis of quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods studies, the researchers identified three main themes across the literature including leaders’ behaviors and their effects on followers’ emotions; leaders’ emotional abilities; and leaders’ emotional experiences and displays of emotions. While these themes helped researchers better understand the importance of EI and leadership, we argue that schools and districts are

complex systems that require not just the development of an individual leader's skills, but more importantly, the collective skills of many.

Leadership Theories and Practices

Strong educational leadership highly impacts student academic achievement (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Principals are instructional leaders, and through their directive, they set teacher expectations and influence classroom activity that impacts student achievement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Branch et al., 2013). That being said, leaders are not only responsible for individual and collective academic successes but also ensuring the infrastructure to support these successes. Furthermore, leadership practices—what leaders think and do within the social contexts of schools—allow adults and students to grow. By extension, transformational and distributed leadership practices can be critical to the growth, progress, and success of both students and adults, and social capital theory strongly supports the benefits of colleagues interacting, supporting, and strengthening their work. Each of these theories value human relationships and encourage the development of capabilities and capacity building within the organization.

Transformational Leadership. Burns (1978) introduced "transformational leadership," as a theory based on relationships and meeting the needs of followers to help foster change within an organization. A transformational educational leader delivers a mission-centered emphasis on setting direction and vision, a performance-centered emphasis on developing people, and a culture-centered emphasis on redesigning the organization (Leithwood, 1994; Marks & Printy, 2003). Bass (1998) used transformational leadership as a lens to view organizations, specifically how leaders impacted the behaviors and feelings of other members within the organization. Furthermore, Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) extended the transformational

model to include seven dimensions: (1) build school vision and establish school goals; (2) provide intellectual stimulation; (3) offer individualized support; (4) model best practices and important organizational values; (5) demonstrate high performance expectations; (6) create a productive school culture; and (7) develop structures to foster participation in school decisions.

In their study, Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) examined the practices of leaders in twelve Ontario schools that displayed effective collaboration. They found that principals who utilized transformational leadership such as developing people, and setting vision, better assisted in the development of collaborative school cultures. By extension, Northouse (2016) proclaimed that transformational leaders are "concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long term-goals. It includes assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings" (p. 161). This focus on understanding the emotions of others and the relationships between leaders and followers reflected the integration of SEL competencies with the dimensions of transformational leadership.

Hackett and Hortman's research (2008) sought to understand a relationship between SEL competencies and the behaviors associated with effective leadership performance. In this study, researchers analyzed any relationships between the four domains of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management and four transformational leadership behaviors. Specifically, researchers focused on the dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. With data collected from self-reports of both instruments, they found that emotional competencies were related to these transformational leadership dimensions. Thus, it makes sense for researchers to explore how leadership practices, such as those identified by the transformational leadership theory, model or promote SEL competencies.

Furthermore, in relation to transformational leadership focused on developing people, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) asserted that "capital has to be shared and circulated" and further state that, "groups, teams, and communities are far more powerful than individuals when it comes to developing human capital" (p. 3). This focus on developing people through collaborative structures relies on leaders utilizing, modeling, and promoting the SEL competencies of social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. In addition to transformational leadership, social capital theory further extends the fundamental importance of colleagues' relationships to support their work.

Social Capital. Bourdieu (1985) and Coleman (1990) first introduced the social capital theory by acknowledging that the relationships and interactions between people can serve as a resource for them. Leana (2011) conducted a large-scale, quantitative study in New York City that analyzed the work of staff in relation to student achievement. Leana found that "teachers were almost twice as likely to turn to their peers as to the [outside] experts designated by the school district, and four times more likely to seek advice from one another than from the principal" (p. 33). Moreover, when teachers engaged in more frequent conversations and expressed positive relationships with their peers, students showed higher achievement gains. This showed the importance of collegial relationships grounded in trust and sharing of practices to support improvement as well as the understanding that the formal school leader cannot solely bear the responsibility of supporting and coaching staff.

In addition to Leana's findings, Minckler (2014) enhanced social capital theory by emphasizing that strong relationships provide value to individual members and the collective organization. In her quantitative study, Minckler (2014) explored the relationship between school leadership and the development of teacher social capital through a convenience sample of

thirteen schools in two school districts in southeastern United States. One major finding of this study suggested that the transformational leader played an essential role "in developing the structures, both physically (e.g., shared scheduling time) and culturally (e.g., norms of collegiality) that create opportunities for groups of teachers to work together to create and use teacher social capital" (p. 672). This shows that formal leaders play an important role in creating essential, supportive contexts for leaders and staff to interact within the school day.

Distributed Leadership. Distributed leadership theory focuses on how multiple leaders in an organization interact with others in a specific context to create leadership practices. Spillane et al. (2004) states, "rather than seeing leadership practice as solely a function of an individual's ability, skill, charisma, and/or cognition, we argue that it is best understood as a practice distributed over leaders, followers, and their situation" (p. 11). This theory supports the importance of increasing capabilities and capacity for change within the organization by considering the relationship of multiple leaders and followers, and their activities. As defined by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), capabilities are more than just having "adequate ability," but rather the possession of "attributes required for performance or accomplishment" (p. 55). Additionally, Mullen and Jones (2008) referred to capacity in their work as "enabling the growth of teachers as leaders who are responsible for their actions" (p. 329). In many schools, leadership is not just the job of one person, but rather a "web" that includes district, school, and teacher leaders engaged with a variety of different colleagues and contexts.

In considering a distributed leadership model, we argue for the importance of knowing where the key relationships reside and understanding how leaders emerge from amongst the staff. When leadership is viewed from a distributed perspective, the analysis of power relationships inevitably changes (West et al., 2000) and distinctions between leaders and

followers blur (Gronn, 2003). Staff leaders, who are content experts (e.g., subject-area teachers), do not always hold positional authority such as that of a supervisory administrator. This means that an evaluative approach during interactions is not the driving dynamic between them. Due to this potential dynamic, staff leaders influence the organization's leadership practices by focusing on those skills (e.g. listening) that enhance relationships between colleagues.

In one empirical study, Timperley (2005) observed literacy instruction in seven elementary schools and examined its impact on student achievement. Timperley found that the followers who did not respect their designated positional leaders, sought out their peers as teacher leaders. These teacher leaders were not appointed by the school or district, but organically rose as leaders within the situations in which they worked with colleagues. Followers selected colleagues based on camaraderie and like-mindedness (i.e., not necessarily content expertise) which ultimately led to ineffective leadership practices. We acknowledge that this research showed that peer interactions did not result in positive outcomes that impact productive adult collaboration and student learning.

In much of our research, we identified leaders as both those who were hired and appointed formally and those who assumed the role amongst their colleagues informally. We also considered the leader's level of administrative and/or content expertise in relation to those staff members following them. In a distributed framework, the interdependencies between leaders, followers and a situation, and who the follower sees as a leader, can influence what leadership practices emerge. For leaders to act in ways that support increased staff effectiveness, they must consider their practices, and how they foster situations that build capabilities and capacity amongst staff (Cohen et al., 2007). We believe that socially and emotionally competent

leadership practices will result in stronger collaborative and collegial relationships that yield greater feelings of sensemaking, collective efficacy, resilience and well-being.

Socially and Emotionally Competent Leadership

Due to the importance of SEL competencies in adults, and the role leaders play in building staff capabilities and capacity within their districts and schools, we turn to the current literature on leadership development that integrates SEL into its practices. Goleman's work (2006) deepened our research by naming explicitly that social intelligence should be included when thinking about effective leadership practices. Goleman (2006) observed that "a more relationship-based construct for assessing leadership is social intelligence, which we define as a set of interpersonal competencies" (p. 76). This construct considers how the actions of leaders, and their relationships with staff, impact a school environment.

Relatedly, Berg (2018) distinguished that leaders should "engage in collaborative problem solving around key school-wide issues, using protocols that engage team members in generating multiple perspectives . . . and resolving decisions in a way that allows everyone with relevant knowledge to contribute" (p. 83). This illustrates how leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies enhanced opportunities for collective decision-making amongst staff, and how it allowed for shared responsibility in reaching district and school goals. In response, we explored further how school communities are shaped by district and school-based leadership practices that may, or may not, model and/or promote social and emotional competencies. We seek to deepen knowledge in this field about how these socially and emotionally competent leadership practices existed within various aspects of a district and its schools.

Administrators build their organizations by sharing leadership responsibilities with their staff. Patti et al. (2015), stated, "school leaders have a great opportunity to impact student growth

and achievement by shaping a culture that cultivates motivated, engaged, and effective teacher leaders" (p. 438). Additionally, they asserted that districts and schools must invest in high quality leadership development to create and sustain teacher leaders and school success (Patti et al., 2012; Sparks, 2009). As described, transformational leadership, social capital and distributed leadership all argued in favor of building staff capabilities and capacity throughout an organization. Furthermore, we argue that as leadership responsibilities spread, administrators build structures within their schools that allow for staff to work independently of them, and that staff consider both their own personal well-being and that of others.

Conclusion

Prior research on social and emotional intelligences and learning has established the importance of SEL for students, both in terms of personal health and academic learning. Yet little of this research has focused directly on the adults that work with these students. School-based staff face increasing pressure to serve as role models to students in the ways in which they behave and possess the core competencies expected in their practices. In support, district and school-based leaders recognize the need to strengthen the SEL competencies of adults, although further research is needed to understand the most effective practices to move the work forward.

The importance of district and school-based leadership is seen both in theory and practice. Transformational and distributed leadership theories both place an emphasis on leaders developing people and/or practices within the organization, and social capital theory highlights the importance of understanding the working dynamic between them. Leadership practices, as they are implemented in districts and schools, are important in shaping the ways in which adults feel, act and perceive their work in schools.

As we continue to implement education reforms intended to close achievement gaps, we strongly believe in the need to prioritize a focus on the development of socially and emotionally competent leadership. Cherniss (1998) writes that "to be successful, educational leaders must be able to forge relationships with many people. They need to be mediators and mentors, negotiators and networkers. In short, educational leaders need to be more emotionally intelligent" (p. 26). We argue that leaders need to integrate SEL competencies into their leadership practices that influence staff behaviors. Although research is currently limited, our study contributes to the field by exploring how SEL competencies are integral components of what leaders think and do, and how they understand and shape their staff's work.

Our research study focused on both social and emotional learning and leadership by identifying key leadership practices, understanding how these practices modeled and/or promoted SEL competencies and skills for adults, and further showing how these practices shaped a district-wide focus on SEL, collective efficacy, adult collaboration, staff resilience and wellbeing, and the work of mental health staff. We aimed to contribute to the SEL field by understanding the actions of leaders and how they shaped a district and its schools. The goal of our study was to encourage leaders to integrate social and emotional learning competencies into their practices in order to support the positive perceptions, sensemaking, productivity, and wellbeing of adults.

The research questions for our individual studies, as outlined in Table 1.3, reflect how each piece of our work contributes to the greater field.

Table 1.3

Overview of research questions by individual researchers

Name	Individual Research Questions

Conners	1. How do district leaders support school-based leaders as they make sense of district-wide focus on SEL? 2. How does a district-wide focus on SEL shape school-based leadership practices? 3. What leadership practices, if any, model social and emotional learning competencies?
Rose	1. What school-based leadership practices, if any, model social and emotional learning competencies? 2. How do these school-based leadership practices shape the sources of collective efficacy?
Ito	1. What school-based leadership practices, if any, model social and emotional learning competencies? 2. How do these school-based leadership practices shape the ways in which adults collaborate?
Tobin	1. What leadership practices develop and support the resilience and well-being of school-based staff? 2. How do these practices relate to promoting SEL opportunities for staff in school settings?
Renda	1. How do school-based leadership practices promote social and emotional learning opportunities for mental health staff in schools? 2. How do these school-based leadership practices shape the work of mental health staff in schools?

CHAPTER TWO[2]

Research Design and Methodology

Our study identified leadership practices that modeled social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies, and/or promoted SEL opportunities for adults, while investigating how those leadership practices shaped a district and its schools. While our collective study examined this phenomenon, our individual studies examined leadership practices through a variety of theoretical and conceptual lenses (see Table 1.1).

This chapter outlines the methodology of our larger, collective study. Collaboratively, the team of five researchers designed the protocols for collecting and analyzing semi-structured interview data. Data collection and analysis unique to the individual studies are outlined in those respective chapters. The sections to follow describe our individual researcher positionality, the overall study design and site selection, our common data collection procedures, and an overview of the data analysis the team used.

Researcher Positionality

As a team of researchers conducting a qualitative case study, we recognize that we are the data collection instrument. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that our backgrounds and experiences are important variables that may affect the research process. We are all district or school-based leaders, in public school districts in Massachusetts, with a belief in the importance of socially and emotionally competent leadership practices. It is because of this belief that we seek to understand how leadership practices model and/or promote SEL competencies and skills for adults, and further investigate how those practices shaped a district-wide focus on SEL, collective efficacy, adult collaboration, staff resilience and wellbeing, and the work of mental

[2] This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach to this project: Michele Conners, Mark Ito, Adam Renda, Geoff Rose, and Donna Tobin.

health staff. This reflects the likelihood that our own subjectivity could come to bear on our study and report findings. The data collection and analysis methods described below demonstrate the steps we took to remain objective throughout the process and present trustworthy findings.

Study Design

In order to identify leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies, and/or promoted SEL opportunities for adults, while investigating how those leadership practices shaped a district and its schools, we utilized a qualitative case study methodology. The qualitative case study method suited our research process because our unit of analysis was a single school district in Massachusetts, or a bounded system (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). More specifically, we employed an instrumental case study. Stake (1995) defines an instrumental case study as one in which the issue is dominant, and studying the organization will enable the researchers to gain insight into a particular issue, redraw generalizations, or build theory. Thus, this methodology was appropriate for our study, because investigating the *issue* of leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies, and/or promoted SEL opportunities for adults, was of greater significance than investigating the *case*, or the school district as a whole (Stake, 1995). The instrumental case study method enabled our team to provide a narrative, or "thick description" (Mills & Gay, 2019, p. 8) of the school district in relation to our research questions.

Site Selection

Recently, the National Association of State Boards of Education highlighted Massachusetts as a state committed to social emotional learning (SEL) for both students and adults (Long, 2019). Supporting students' SEL is one of five Core Strategies identified in the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) Strategic Plan (2018). While adults are not specifically mentioned in the plan, Massachusetts' standards for

High Quality Professional Development require professional learning experiences to be grounded in strong SEL practice (Long, 2019). A recent study on SEL initiatives, which included Massachusetts, found that SEL initiatives must be "championed at the district level and tailored to each local context, in order to build on existing success" (*Opportunities for Massachusetts, Lesson for the Nation,* 2015, p. 16).

Given that SEL is a DESE priority for school districts, the research that supports the importance of developing SEL in educational leaders and students alike, and our roles as educational leaders in Massachusetts school districts, we felt it was important to examine the link between SEL and leadership in a school district in Massachusetts. This interest led to our goal of investigating leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies, and/or promoted SEL opportunities for adults. Therefore, a key criterion in selecting an instrumental case for our research was that the district demonstrated a focus on SEL, specifically a mission, vision, and/or strategic plan that articulated a focus on SEL across the district. We conducted our study in a mid-sized school district of 10-15 schools with a multi-tiered leadership structure across the district and its schools. Specifically, our instrumental case study took place across six schools within a suburban school district of approximately 6,000 students and 410 teachers.

Data Collection

As a qualitative methods approach, our individual studies relied on data collection from document reviews, a questionnaire, observations, and semi-structured interviews. Table 2.1 outlines the data collection methods utilized by each researcher for their individual study. The variety of data collection formats enabled us to both confirm and triangulate findings during our data analysis, as well as enrich our collective understanding of the research problem within a specific district context (Creswell, 2014; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Across all studies, we used

semi-structured interviews. Sub-study specific data collection and analyses methods for document reviews, observations, and the questionnaire are found in the respective chapters of those researchers who utilized each data source (see Chapter 3).

Table 2.1

Overview of data collection methods by individual researchers

Data Collection Method	Researcher
Semi-structured interviews	Conners, Ito, Renda, Rose, Tobin
Questionnaires	Ito, Rose, Tobin
Document Review	Conners, Renda, Tobin
Observations	Ito, Rose

Semi-structured interviews

We conducted semi-structured, face-to-face individual interviews from September 2019 to December 2019. Table 2.2 lists interview participants by position, and the studies that utilized each data source. The use of our semi-structured interview protocol allowed flexibility to respond to the interviewee with additional probing questions as the dialogue occurred (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The interviews helped us gain an understanding of the extent to which a district-wide focus on SEL influenced leadership practices across multiple domains. The focus of the interviews enabled interviewees to highlight their experiences around leadership practices, and their perceptions of how leadership practices shape a district and its schools, specifically around a district-wide focus on SEL, collective efficacy, adult collaboration, teacher resilience, and the work of mental health staff. The interview protocol ensured consistency in the process,

and our research team utilized the protocol with all interview participants and ensured that we asked the same questions of each participant.

Table 2.2

Interview Subjects

Participant by Role	Number	Researchers who Utilized Each Data Source
Superintendent of Schools	1	Conners
Director of Social Emotional Learning	1	Conners
School-based Leaders	9	Conners, Ito, Renda, Rose, Tobin
Teaching and Learning Directors	3	Conners
Teachers	20	Ito, Renda, Rose, Tobin
Mental Health Staff	10	Ito, Renda, Rose, Tobin

Semi-structured interview protocol. We developed semi-structured interview protocols for district leaders (see Appendix A), school based-leaders (see Appendix B), and teachers and mental health staff (see Appendix C) to explore the extent to which a district-wide focus on SEL influenced leadership practices from the perspectives of both school-based leaders and other school staff, specifically teachers and mental health staff. We developed the protocols collaboratively by including specific questions to address our individual studies as well as the broader focus of the larger study. We piloted our interview protocol with district leaders, school-based leaders, and teachers outside our case study district. This process ensured that our interview items were clearly and respectfully worded in an effort to elicit relevant responses.

Additionally, piloting the protocol helped us identify and correct potential problems and ensure we stayed within a one-hour time frame (Singleton & Straits, 2018).

Participant Selection. To select participants, we used purposeful sampling, which is "based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 96). This method of sampling is most effective when a limited number of people can serve as primary data sources due to the nature of study. Utilizing purposeful sampling, we selected our interview participants from four categories: district leaders, school-based leaders, teachers, and mental health staff. Purposeful sampling helped us discover, understand, and gain insight from a sample of participants from whom we felt the most could be learned relative to our research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Because we focused on leadership practices, it was important to not only interview district and school-based leaders, but also teachers and mental health staff who work with those leaders. The interview participants reflected a typical sample of district and school-based leaders, as well as teachers and mental health staff, that were common to public school districts in Massachusetts.

Participant Recruitment. In August, we met with the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Special Education, and the Director of Social Emotional Learning and School Counseling. This afforded us the opportunity to discuss the scope of both our collective and individual studies, as well as who they felt should be interviewed at the district level. After meeting with the Superintendent's leadership council to explain our study needs and gather information on the various populations of each school, we selected four of the six elementary schools, and both middle schools, for the study. We focused on the four elementary schools based on district programs housed within the schools, as well as student demographics,

providing us a diverse student population. Research team members coordinated their independent school visits with the principal in each building. We contacted each of the six school-based leaders through email, explained the scope of our collective and individual studies, and invited them to participate in a series of interviews. All six school-based leaders agreed to participate. All interview participants received a confidentiality statement and signed an informed consent, at the time of the interview.

Interview Process. Given the nature of our individual studies, each school-based leader was interviewed twice, once by a pair of researchers and once by an individual researcher. This ensured all of our individual questions were addressed in addition to our collective questions, as well as a means to ensure consistency in our interview process. On average, the interviews lasted 40-60 minutes. We recorded and transcribed all interviews and reviewed transcriptions for accuracy. Since only one researcher collected data specific to district leaders, that round of interviews was completed prior to interviewing school-based leaders. This enabled the other four researchers to complete their interviews with school-based leaders first, share the transcripts from those interviews with the individual researcher, and provide that researcher an opportunity to focus on questions related to her individual study. Throughout the interview process, we shared our interview transcripts and checked in as a group to ensure our use of questioning and prompting was eliciting the data necessary to explore our research questions.

Data Analysis

Creating meaning and making sense of the data is the main purpose of qualitative data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Creswell (2014), data analysis consists of "... 'taking the data apart' to determine the individual responses, and then 'putting it together to summarize it'" (p. 10). Data analysis guided our identification of leadership practices that

modeled social and emotional learning competencies, and/or promoted social emotional learning opportunities for adults. Further analysis supported our work to investigate how those leadership practices shape a district and its schools. Ongoing data analysis required us to continually revisit and reflect upon the data we collected (Creswell, 2014). Further, data analysis involved assigning meaning through codes, themes, or other categorization processes, as we moved through the data and towards the answers to our research questions (Saldaña, 2016). Individually, researchers kept analytic memos to document the coding process, field notes, and reflections to aid in a thorough understanding and analysis of our data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Creswell (2014) suggests including the following steps in the process of qualitative data analysis "...(a) organizing and preparing the data for analysis, (b) gaining an overall sense of the information by reading through data, (c) coding the material into categories, using a descriptive term to label the topics, and (d) using the coding process to produce an explanation of the background or people as well as categories or themes for analysis" (p. 193). Following these steps, or variations thereof as appropriate for each individual study, provided us with a structured process of analyzing the textual data we collected. Specific data analysis processes, connected to our individual studies, can be found in the corresponding chapters, as each researcher employed a variety of methods and coding processes to analyze their data based on the research questions and conceptual framework of their study (see Chapter 3).

The CASEL framework (Figure 2.1) provided a model for our unit of analysis, and conceptually grounded our individual studies. The five CASEL competencies (see Table 1.2) served as the lens for identifying leadership practices that modeled or promoted SEL competencies, guided and facilitated our understanding of the data, and established our initial categories for data analysis. After transcribing the interview data, each researcher read through

the transcripts and identified leadership practices, defined as what leaders think and do. Once the leadership practices were identified, we applied our *a priori* codes to those practices for our initial cycle of coding. Our *a priori* codes, or the codes we identified before examining our data (Saldana, 2016), are based on the skills and competencies within the CASEL framework: self-awareness (SA), self-management (SM), social awareness (SOA), relationship skills (RS), and responsible decision-making (RDM). We re-examined the initial categories to further focus our data to reveal subsequent patterns or categories. Re-examining the initial categories helped us understand if the identified leadership practice modeled (i.e., displayed or demonstrated) or promoted (i.e., actively encouraged) SEL competencies. Our coding manual can be found in Appendix D.

Since each researcher identified their individual conceptual framework and research questions, additional coding was completed specific to the individual study (see Chapter 3).

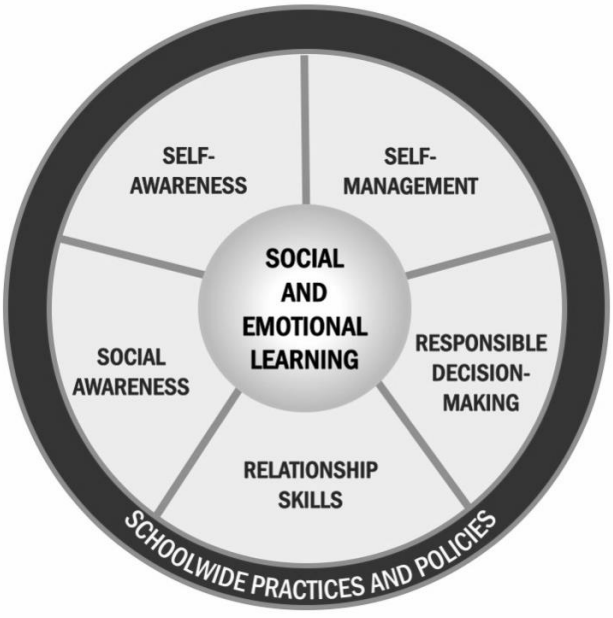

Figure 2.1. CASEL Social Emotional Learning Framework, 2017

Triangulation. Across the five individual studies, data collection methods involved semi-structured interviews, document review, observations, and a questionnaire. Given the variety of data collection methods, we were able to compare and cross-check our data with one another, providing both investigator and data triangulation (Merriam, 2009). Triangulation involves researchers' (investigators') cross-checking information and conclusions with one another through the use of multiple procedures and sources (data) (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The use of multiple methods of data collection within and across our individual studies enabled us to confirm information we heard in interviews alongside information we read in documents, witnessed in observations, or gathered through questionnaires during the course of our individual data analysis. The ability to triangulate our data and findings was one way we addressed the trustworthiness of our findings.

Trustworthiness. As a team of researchers, we took several steps to ensure our findings were trustworthy. Merriam (2009) and Mills & Gay (2019) suggest multiple strategies to support trustworthiness. Among those strategies, we identified triangulation, adequate engagement in the data collection, researcher's position (reflexivity), peer review, and rich, thick descriptions as those strategies that support the trustworthiness of our study.

As discussed previously, we triangulated our data through the use of multiple investigators and data collection methods. We engaged deeply in data collection from September through December 2019 through the semi-structured interviews, document review, observations, and questionnaires to ensure our data was saturated. We recognized data saturation when we began to see and hear the same information repeatedly and were not uncovering any new information (Merriam & Tisdell 2016).

Lincoln and Guba (2000) define reflexivity as "the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher" (p. 183). As a team of district and school-based leaders, we recognized that we hold assumptions about educational leadership, and that those assumptions could have an impact on our role as a human instrument in the research process, so it was important that we engaged in ongoing discussions central to our assumptions and biases.

Because this study was conducted by a team of researchers, peer review was ongoing. Throughout the course of data collection and analysis, we discussed the processes we were following, compared our emerging findings against the raw data, and developed tentative interpretations of those findings. These ongoing, evolving discussions enabled us to identify gaps in our understanding of the data as well as confirm our common findings across studies.

Finally, our study created a "rich, thick description" (Merriam, 2009) of how a school district's leadership practices modeled social emotional learning competencies, or promoted social emotional learning opportunities for adults, and how those practices shaped the district and its schools. This description of the study's setting, participants, and findings support the possibility of the study "transferring" to other settings (Merriam, 2009).

CHAPTER THREE

Statement of Purpose/Research Question

The purpose of my study is to investigate the relationship between leadership practices (i.e., what leaders think and do) that promote social and emotional learning (SEL) opportunities and shape the work of mental health staff (MHS), defined in this study as, school adjustment counselors, guidance counselors, and social workers. Examining this relationship will contribute to a deeper understanding how leadership practices shape the work of MHS in relation to SEL. It is essential for school leaders to know not only which leadership practices shape students' academic outcomes, but also those that shape the social and emotional competencies of staff (Jones, Bouffard, & Weissbourd, 2013). According to Jennings and Greenburg (2009), "socially and emotionally competent teachers know how to manage their emotions and their behavior and also how to manage relationships with others" (p. 495), including school leaders and students.

MHS have played a greater role in schools as mental health issues, particularly social and emotional issues, have increased among students. A survey by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) ranked student social and emotional problems as principals' greatest concern in 2016 (Grinn-Gofroń et al., 2016). Principals consistently identified mental health issues as a significant contributing factor to student misbehavior, chronic absenteeism, and loss of instructional time; often, this is a result of the schools' inadequate or inappropriate use of support services such as therapy, social skills, mindfulness, and peer mediation (Grinn-Gofroń et al., 2016).

Jennings and Greenberg (2009) explained the importance of school staff's social and emotional competencies and how the staff's competencies shape students' competencies noting that the staff's social and emotional competencies are vital to the progress of supportive staff-

student relationships (p. 492). A school staff member who identifies a student's emotions understands the cognitive bandwidth that the emotions may occupy, how these emotions affect the student's behavior, and can effectively respond to the student's needs (Sutton, et. al., 2009).

Meanwhile, a school leader's competencies can, in turn, help shape school staff competencies. Those leadership practices that promote SEL among adults and shape the work of MHS can influence how MHS work with students (Patti, et al., 2015). Thus, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do school-based leadership practices promote SEL opportunities for MHS in schools?
2. How do school-based leadership practices shape the work of MHS in schools?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework grounding this study draws on the SEL framework established by the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). CASEL 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. (Shah, 2012, p. 4)

CASEL classifies social and emotional skills into five competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (see Table 1.2).

Using the CASEL framework, I examined the relationship between leadership practices and the work of the school's MHS as it relates to SEL in schools. As my conceptual framework, the CASEL core competencies aided me in recognizing those leadership practices that promoted SEL opportunities for MHS. I subsequently determined how these leadership practices shaped

the work of MHS in schools CASEL was a useful framework for this study because the work of MHS work is so closely aligned to SEL and MHS are often responsible for SEL implementation. By identifying leadership practices related to SEL administrators can help school counselors with their work on SEL programs. This study uses the CASEL framework to identify leadership practices that promote SEL competencies and in turn shape the work of MHS

Literature Review

When school leaders' practices promote SEL opportunities by providing resources (i.e. time, money, permission) or modeling a competency during individual or group interactions, MHS have an opportunity to develop their social and emotional competencies. MHS with developed social and emotional competencies can, in turn, better serve students, including helping students develop their own SEL skills (Jones et. al. 2015). This study contributes to the body of research by identifying how school-based leadership practices that promote SEL opportunities might shape the work of MHS. A research gap exists in terms of how leaders shape the work of MHS in a school in general, and specifically how leadership practices that promote SEL opportunities shape the work of MHS. In this section, I discuss the literature on (a) SEL and positive student outcomes; (b) the role of schools' staffs' social and emotional competence in helping students develop their own social and emotional skills; (c) the role of MHS in helping students develop social and emotional skills; (d) the leaders' role in the development of educators' SEL competencies; and (e) the relationship between school leaders and MHS.

SEL and Positive Student Outcomes

Before recent educational reforms, schools often ignored SEL because of the increasing pressure to perform academically under federal and state accountability measures (Evans, Murphy, & Scourfield, 2015). However, research has shown that ignoring the social and

emotional needs of students may be counterproductive to realizing achievement goals. Elbertson et al. (2009) emphasized that schools promoting SEL have seen a decrease in problem behavior, an increase in academic achievement, and an increase in quality relationships among students. Their findings suggest that students with developed social and emotional skills have "positive relationships, are less likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors such as using drugs and alcohol, experience fewer emotional symptoms, and perform better academically" (p. 335).

In 2011, a meta-analysis of 213 programs, spanning three decades, found social and emotional learning interventions that address the SEL competencies increased students' academic performance by 11 percentile points, as compared to students who did not participate in such SEL programs (Durlak et al., 2011). Many researchers have documented the importance of caring teacher-student relationships in fostering students' commitment to school and in promoting academic success (Blum & Libby, 2004; Hamre & Pianta, 2006; Hawkins, Smith, & Catalano, 2004; Jennings & Greenberg 2009).

SEL helps students develop their social and emotional skills. Strong social and emotional skills form a foundation for good mental health and a successful life. Understanding and managing their emotions and behaviors, solving personal and interpersonal problems, building healthy coping strategies, and developing self-esteem, are all essential skills for students to have the resilience to face life's challenges, and to build positive relationships (Payton et al., 2000). Thus, schools should prioritize social and emotional curriculum to improve students' mental health and academic achievement.

Role of Educators' Social and Emotional Competency in Helping Students Develop Social and Emotional Skills

Existing research emphasizes that an educator's SEL competencies impact students' academic and social outcomes. Although a gap exists in the research regarding MHS and how their SEL competencies affect students, it is important to remember that teachers and MHS are all educators; their curricula and delivery methods are what distinguish them (Wilder, 2018). Whereas teachers are the primary implementer of the academic curricula, MHS are at the frontline of SEL education for students, especially students dealing with mental health issues. MHS's SEL competencies likely have critical effects on students' academic and social outcomes (see Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). The nature of MHS positions and the fact that many of the students they serve frequently suffer from some mental health issues provide an ideal environment in which MHS can promote the growth and development of students' SEL competencies.

Jennings and Greenberg (2009) recognized that adults' SEL competencies might influence other classroom climate variables, such as classroom management and educator-student relationships. Merrell and Gueldner (2010) concluded that classroom management and positive educator-student relationships also contribute to the successful implementation of SEL programs. Miller and Wiltse (1979) discussed how an educator's mental health influences the emotional state and climate of the classroom. More specifically, they found that an educator's positive mental health is critical in creating a positive classroom community. The authors theorized that the continuous responsibility of having to be a good example, the pressure of preparing students academically, and the frequency of dealing with interpersonal and behavioral problems in teaching create a great deal of stress. Such internal stressors affect teachers, who are at risk for mental health problems, leading "maladjusted" teachers to act out and often demonstrate behaviors that are detrimental to students' well-being (Miller & Wiltse, 1979).

Research on teachers' psychological well-being supports the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher self-awareness as well as their effects on instructional behaviors and student outcomes (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011). MHS often deliver whole class SEL curricula as well as work in small groups and one on one with students with varying levels of need. This can be stressful and create compassion fatigue in MHS (Najjar et. al. 2009p. 271). For these reasons, Jennings and Greenberg's (2009) findings likely also apply to all educators, including MHS.

Han and Weiss (2005) found that a teacher's sense of self-efficacy was related to instructional variables such as their persistence in teaching under difficult situations, commitment to teaching, openness to new ideas, and willingness to try alternative teaching methods to meet the needs of their students. Teacher self-efficacy was also related to student outcomes such as achievement, motivation, and students' sense of efficacy. Han and Weiss (2005) reported that teachers who experienced high burnout are more likely to have a higher rate of absenteeism and negative interactions with students and leave the teaching profession. This burnout affects staff's mental health as they work with the neediest of students and often do not feel successful at their jobs (Hunter, 2016; Morkides, 2009). Teachers dealing with burnout can suffer from reduced empathy, diminished sense of personal safety, reduced sense of control, hopelessness, increased involvement in escape activities and chronic overeating, drug or alcohol use (Portnoy & Portnoy, 2011). All of these can have a negative effect on school morale. When MHS provides students with SEL support, students are more likely to be ready to learn, and, consequently, the self-efficacy of MHS is improved.

At an individual level, teachers more skilled at regulating their emotions experience~~d~~ less burnout and higher job satisfaction, are more likely to display more positive affect, and receive more support from principals (Elbertson et al., 2009). Jennings and Greenberg (2009)

hypothesized that teachers' SEL competencies support the underlying psychological process that contributes to their emotional self-regulation and promotes their well-being. Higher teacher SEL competencies allow for better SEL implementation because such competencies enable them to be more willing to adopt a new program, serve as positive role models of SEL skills, and more frequently identify and reinforce students for using SEL skills. Teachers with high levels of SEL competencies also develop more positive teacher–student relationships and effective classroom management, thereby not only enhancing SEL program implementation but also creating a healthy classroom climate (Malecki & Demaray, 2003; Yoon, 2002). The likelihood of positive academic and behavioral student outcomes increases when teachers promote classrooms with emotional and instructional support and community building (Hamre et al., 2007; Suldo et al., 2009). MHS need to consider these same aspects when they deliver SEL competency programs and interventions to all students.

Role of MHS in Helping Students Develop Social and Emotional Skills

In recent years the role of MHS has transitioned from helping students' individual needs to a whole school SEL approach. These new responsibilities, however, have not replaced prior responsibilities, but instead have added to the MHS's already difficult job. Although few people will contest the point that mental health issues hinder students' performance in school, many people argue that schools cannot mitigate the effects of such issues. Rothstein (2008) noted that schools are facing an uphill battle in trying to educate children according to today's high standards while simultaneously working to provide students with what they need socially and emotionally. Many of these demands are placed on MHS to help students suffering from mental health regulate their issues and be available to learn, but MHS also address the SEL needs of the entire school. Notably, mental health does not exist within an individual child, but is intensified

by the interactions between the child and his or her environment (Sheehan, 2017 p.1). When MHS integrate SEL into school practices it enhances social and emotional skills in the individual child–, which in turn impacts the child's capacity to interact with his/her larger environment. This will also create safe and supportive environments where children feel they belong, reduce the stigma of mental health difficulties, and encourage children to seek help when they need it, promoting mental well-being in all children (Cook et al., 2015). Cook et al. (2015) go on to explain how children suffering from mental health issues who participated in SEL had significantly fewer externalizing behaviors than children who did not participate in SEL.

There is a serious need for SEL to help students regulate during the school day. This mental health support is provided by a range of personnel, including school guidance, adjustment counselors, and partnerships with outside agencies. More than 46% of students 13 to 18 years old have faced a mental health issue in their lives (Forness, Kim, & Walker, 2012; Merikangas et al., 2012). With such a high percentage of students affected by mental health issues, it is alarming that schools lack mental health services for students, especially considering how mental health issues contribute to poor academic growth, legal issues, and substance abuse, among other problems (Swick & Powers, 2018; Harris, 1997).

A MHS's role in supporting students encompasses academic, career, and personal/social domains (Sink & Edwards, 2008). The MHS is tasked with identifying obstacles to academic and social success (Ryan, Kaffenberger & Carrol, 2011). Therefore, delivering SEL programming to students in large and small groups, as well as one-to-one is some of the most important work of MHS. MHS are best suited to deliver and lead school staff who work to create a positive school climate that includes school-based prevention and intervention programs. With the increased need for comprehensive prevention efforts, MHS are the gateway to these services (Dockery,

2012; Kelly & Lueck, 2011). They can help students as they deliver systematic SEL-informed programs that promote students' academic, career, and personal/social development (ASCA, 2018). As MHSs have specific training such as trauma sensitivity and self-regulation for working with students with mental health issues in the social and emotional domains, they are qualified to promote SEL opportunities to all students. To do this MHS's social and emotional competencies need to be well developed to best help their students develop these skills. CASEL's Guide to Schoolwide SEL identified growing adult SEL as a focus, recommending schools foster a supportive staff environment that cultivates the social and emotional competence and capacity of the adults in the building as they need social-emotional competencies to be able to foster trauma-informed practices that, in turn, build students' social-emotional competencies and help students cope with trauma (CASEL, 2018).

Leader's Role in the Development of Educators' SEL Competencies

Leadership practices help educators build social and emotional competencies, thereby helping educators, including MHS, better serve students. One area of research that illustrates this concept is transformational leadership. In 1978, James MacGregor Burns introduced transformational leadership theory based on relationships and efforts to meet the needs of followers to foster change within an organization (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). Bass further developed Burns's theory. Bass found transformational leadership creates meaningful and productive change in followers and helps develop them into leaders (Bass, 1998). A transformational leader delivers a mission-centered emphasis on setting directions, a performance-centered emphasis on developing people, and a culture-centered emphasis on redesigning the organization (Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Marks & Printy, 2003).

Transformational leadership has gained popularity in school leadership literature because of the constant change schools have experienced following educational reform acts in the 1990s. The more a school or district must change, the greater the influence a leader must have over the people who must make the change happen. To that end, Leithwood and Riehl (2005) described leadership as a set of functions and processes whereby leaders purposefully and directly influence individuals and conditions to accomplish group goals. That influence is contextual, mediated by social relationships, and contingent upon factors such as group participants, resources, organizational culture, and leader characteristics (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). This influence amplifies the importance of the principal's role in creating a culture for open, honest, and reflective exchanges between leaders and staff (Blase & Blase, 2002). For a leader to build and capitalize on these relationships to foster change, their SEL competencies must be well developed.

Elias et al. (2006) asserts that transformational leadership practices are crucial for establishing effective SEL programs and interventions in schools. To make lasting change, school leaders need to use transformational leadership practices to establish vision and courage, integrate efforts schoolwide, and implement them with integrity (Elias et al., 2006). In accomplishing any of these three transformational practices, a school leader depends on the relationships s/he builds with MHS. Principals can set the vision for MHS while making them a priority throughout the school. For this type of active change principals need to see a variety of perspectives and model excitement, urgency, and optimism (Fullan, 2001). A school principal has the authority to implement SEL programs with integrity by providing professional development (PD) and scheduling time to implement the plan. To make this happen, the

principal relies on meeting with MHS, accessing their expertise, identifying where they need professional growth, and providing feedback when needed.

Leaders can promote SEL opportunities by providing resources (i.e. money, time, and permission) or modeling the SEL competencies themselves. When leaders promote SEL competencies by using practices that model these competencies or provide resources (i.e. time, money, permission) to encourage learning these competencies, MHS are exposed to examples they can follow regarding how to be socially and emotionally competent and have opportunities to develop their SEL competencies. In turn, MHS can promote SEL for students. By modeling SEL competencies, principals can impact both classroom and school climate and SEL opportunities for MHS (Durlak et al., 2015). Conversely, when adults do not have the social and emotional competence to help support students' mental health and address difficult behaviors, they become emotionally exhausted and reactive (Cohan & Honigsfeld, 2011, p. 134). CASEL (2018) provides several examples of how principals can model SEL, as indicated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Modeling SEL

SELF-AWARENESS	SELF-MANAGEMENT
Use feeling words: “I feel ___ when things like this happen.”	Cultivate self-regulating and calming strategies.
Admit mistakes and say how you’ll make things right.	Be willing to ask for help from others.
Become aware of one’s own cultural lens and recognize the biases that may exist because of that lens.	Manage conflict effectively by finding win–win solutions.
Be aware of how your emotions impact others and seek feedback from others.	Approach new situations as learning opportunities.
Notice events and ideas and how your body responds to them.	Use and return school materials with care.

Notice personal behaviors, tone of voice, and personal affect that arise with various emotions/situations.	Model respectful disagreements with courteous language and a restorative mindset.
View challenges with a growth mindset.	Engage in self-care strategies.
SOCIAL AWARENESS	RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING
Consider others' perspectives and understand that everyone has their own set of truths and beliefs based on their own experiences.	Model problem-solving strategies, like gathering all relevant information before drawing a conclusion.
Actively support the school's mission and goals.	Consider legal and ethical obligations before making decisions.
Model upstanding behaviors.	Place the needs of students ahead of personal and political interests.
Be willing to compromise.	Consider how your choices will be viewed through the lens of others.
Model appreciation and acceptance of others' beliefs and cultural differences.	
Treat students' families and community organizations as partners who can support your work with students	
RELATIONSHIP SKILLS	
Greet others by name daily.	
Build a connection with someone in your school with whom you do not normally interact.	
Get to know others while respecting individual comfort level and boundaries.	
Take time to reflect on potential outcomes before responding.	
Allow others to get to know you within your individual comfort level and appropriate boundaries.	
Be willing to give and receive constructive, helpful feedback during collaboration.	
Model fairness, respect, and appreciation for others.	

Source: CASEL (2018)

Relationship Between School Leader and MHS

Considering that the dropout rate for students with severe emotional and behavioral needs is twice that of other students (Lehr et al., 2004), school leaders need to focus on providing in-school support for students with mental health issues. To accomplish this, collaboration between MHS and principals is important for establishing effective and appropriate school counseling programs (Kaplan, 1995; O'Connor, 2000). School principals define the MHS's role in a school

building (Dahir, 2000; Ponec & Brock, 2000). This is why principals and MHS should work together to define the role the MHS will play in the school (Murry, 1995). Historically, MHS have served roles in schools that are not related to their MHS role, such as test administrators, clerical assistants, and disciplinarians (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). School models, not counseling models, have defined the job duties of many MHS (Sink & MacDonald, 1998). Another prevalent role is that the MHS role is defined by passive avoidant leadership. Bass (1990) explains passive-avoidant leaders have a limited ability to initiate and implement change, or only make decisions when necessary. This could result in an undefined role or assignment of unrelated work for MHS and a total waste and lack of recognition of their expertise.

Today, non-counseling duties are persistent barriers that interfere with the implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs. Jackson (2000) compared MHSs' daily activities with the recommended activities from existing models and found that many MHS were overusing individual counseling and misusing small group counseling, guidance activities, and consultation. In addition, they were overburdened with non-counseling activities, such as clerical work and test coordination. Appropriate counseling duties are addressed in the ASCA's national model, which suggests that MHS should spend 80% of their time in the delivery component, where they provide direct and indirect services (i.e. case management, counseling, and social skills) to students (ASCA, 2003). Lieberman (2004) suggests that principals and MHS prioritize matching the role of MHS to the mental health needs of the school.

School leaders, such as principals, have the authority to start or stop the implementation of mental health programs in schools. A positive and supportive relationship between MHS and school leaders directly impacts the effectiveness of a school counseling program (Dahir etl al.,

2010). School leaders can decide what MHSs' role is and in what ways they can interact with students (Dollarhide, Smith, & Lemberger, 2007a). Principals and MHS must reconsider how their roles interact to have a direct impact on students (Zalaquett, 2005). Ponce and Brock (2000) concluded that collaboration between MHS and principals is necessary for effective communication and the positive relationships necessary to create a successful school counseling programs. However, when principals do not understand what a school counseling program should involve, it creates conflict between the administrator and MHS (Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). When MHS are assigned tasks not aligned to their counseling duties or abilities, it takes away from the time spent providing for students' SEL and mental health needs (Dahir et al., 2010). In sum, the better the relationship between the principal and MHS, the more likely the principal will seek out the involvement and expertise of MHS to create and protect appropriate mental health support for students.

Conclusion

Through years of research, academics have established the importance of social and emotional intelligence and learning for life. However, there is a research gap regarding adult SEL competencies and how they shape adults' work with students. Specifically, there is a research gap regarding principals and how their SEL competencies related to leadership practices influence MHS. Principals and MHS are under pressure to act as role models who demonstrate core SEL competencies and serve as role models to students through behaviors and leadership practices (McDonell & Pun, 2012). Though educators are beginning to recognize that strengthening the SEL competencies of adults will in turn strengthen the SEL competencies of students (Patti, et al., 2015), further research is needed to understand the most effective practices to move the work forward.

The importance of principals and MHS in this process is seen both in theory and practice. Transformational leadership theory places an emphasis on leaders developing people and/or practices within the organization (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). Leadership practices are essential in shaping how MHS feel, act, and perceive their work and actualize a school's vision of MHS responsibilities (Dahir etl al., 2010). This is confounded by the ever-increasing responsibilities of MHS in today's schools due to the rise in mental health issues in students and the truth that principals can change MHS work at any time and often those changes are more about administrative and not mental health work.(Dollarhide, Smith, & Lemberger, 2007b).

As educators implement reforms to close achievement and opportunity gaps, there is a need to prioritize a focus on the development of socially and emotionally competent leadership. Cherniss (1998) acknowledges this need:

> [To] be successful, educational leaders must be able to forge relationships with many people. They need to be mediators and mentors, negotiators and networkers. In short, educational leaders need to be more emotionally intelligent. (p. 26)

I argue that leaders need to integrate SEL competencies into their leadership practices that provide SEL opportunities to positively shape the work of MHS. Although research is currently limited, my study contributes to the field by exploring how SEL competencies are integral components of what leaders think and do, and how they understand and develop their staff's work, especially the work of MHS. My research adds to the literature on both SEL and leadership by identifying and understanding how essential leadership practices promote SEL opportunities for MHS and further showing how these practices shape the work of MHS.

Methods

Study Design

This study is part of a larger study that identified leadership practices that modeled social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies, and/or promoted SEL opportunities for adults, while investigating how those leadership practices shaped a district and its schools. Chapter 2 provided a detailed description of the study design, site selection, interview protocols, and methods we employed as they relate to the larger study. Connected to the larger study, this sub-study explored the following two research questions:

1. How do school-based leadership practices promote SEL opportunities for MHS in schools?
2. How do school-based leadership practices shape the work of MHS in schools?

The purpose of this study is to expand on the limited research on social and emotional competencies and leadership practices—specifically, to examine how those practices promote SEL opportunities among MHS and shape their work. To this end, I examined data from interviews with school leaders and MHS. This qualitative case study took place within a suburban school district in the northeast. As the researcher of this study, I was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; using an inductive investigation strategy, I intended to have an end product that was richly descriptive (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 36). Using qualitative methods, I developed an in-depth description of individual leaders as well as compared leaders within the district.

As a group, we identified a school district with a director of SEL position, thereby signifying the district's focus on SEL. The district had eight to twelve schools ranging from pre-K to 12 and multiple schools at each level. However, this study focused on elementary and middle schools in the district, with grades ranging from kindergarten to eight, to gather data and

determine the extent to which leadership practices provided SEL opportunities for MHS and shaped their work.

The participants for this sub-study included nine MHS and six school leaders serving students in grades kindergarten through eight. To be included in this research study, both principals and MHS had to have at least one year of working experience in the district; those with less than one year were excluded from the study. Staff with less than one-year experience in the school may not have the institutional knowledge to answer the interviews questions thoroughly. All study participants were informed that the research was being conducted for a dissertation in practice and how we would share the results with the district and with whom. As a team, we distributed all required Institutional Review Board documentation and notifications. The following subsections outline the data collection and data analysis methods.

Data Collection

The main source of data were semi-structured interviews, which I used to identify how school-based leadership practices promoted SEL opportunities for MHS in schools and how school-based leadership practices shaped the work of MHS in schools. I conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews to allow for participant responses and flexibility in probing questions as needed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I used probing questions to tease out insights from both the leaders and MHS, which made the semi-structured interviews effective.

As discussed in the site selection process in Chapter 2, I utilized purposeful sampling for the selection of interview subjects (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). According to Creswell (2014), purposeful sampling allows the researcher to select a sample from which s/he can “discover, understand, and gain insight” into the questions to be answered (p. 96). I used purposeful sampling to discover, understand, and gain insight about the leadership practices that promoted

SEL opportunities for MHS and how these shaped MHS's work. Before conducting the semi-structured interviews in this case study, the research team piloted interview questions within our current school districts with district and school leaders (see Saldaña, 2016). We interviewed staff members; interviews lasted from 20 to 60 minutes. The interviews provided an opportunity for school leaders and MHS to reflect on leadership practices and how the practices impact MHS work. I recorded all interviews using audio recording devices and transcribed them using an online transcription service. I reviewed all transcriptions for accuracy.

I asked five overarching questions during interviews, one set for principals (see Appendix A) and one set for school-based staff (see Appendix B). These overarching questions primarily answered my first research question: How do school-based leadership practices promote SEL opportunities for MHS in schools? I developed additional questions related to my focus on MHS to answer my second research question: How do school-based leadership practices shape the work of MHS in schools?

To increase the credibility and validity of the findings in the semi-structured interviews, I also conducted a review of documents and other artifacts. I reviewed staff newsletters, faculty meeting agendas, pertinent Twitter accounts, and each school's website for artifacts related to MHS. As part of my document review I also captured a limited number of images of related documents that were visible in the schools that I visited, as well as items that participants offered to share during the interviews. I examined documents and other artifacts that schools produced between August 2019 and December 2019, the period of our data collection. I used this time frame because I wanted the document review to reflect documents produced by the leadership team at the time of the study and intended for the staff at the time of the study. In this sense, I could compare whether the documents and artifacts aligned with the responses from the semi-

structured interview participants and questionnaire respondents. For example, teachers discussed shout outs in staff newsletters as an important form of recognition, therefore, I examined the newsletters for examples of shout outs. I stored all documents and artifacts in a Google document.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research can include a thematic analysis, assigning meaning through codes, themes, or other categorization processes to answer the research questions (Saldaña, 2016). Creswell (2014) suggested including the following steps in the qualitative data analysis process:

> (a) organizing and preparing the data for analysis, (b) gaining an overall sense of the information by reading through data, (c) coding the material into categories, using a descriptive terms to label the topics, and (d) using the coding process to produce an explanation of the background or people as well as categories or themes for analysis. (p. 193)

I followed these steps to provide a structured process while analyzing the data. While the steps provide structure, the analytic process was iterative.

The first step in the analysis of the interview data was to organize and prepare data gathered from the interviews with school leaders and MHS. All interview recordings were stored in a shared password-secured folder in the Boston College network. The research team worked independently and in pairs to transcribe the interviews using an online transcription service and checked the transcriptions for accuracy to ensure reliable data. The paired work consisted of semi-structured interviews and transcribing while the individual work involved data analysis through each team member's theoretical lens.

The second step included developing an overall sense of the information by reading through the data. Creswell (2014) recommended reviewing interview transcripts several times.

After reading each interview transcript three times, I completed the first round of coding. The first read though of transcripts was to gain an overall understanding of the interviews and identify themes. The second read through was focused on coding for the first research question to identify SEL opportunities for MHS. The third read through was to answer the second research question and identify how the leadership practices shape the work of MHS.

The third step and focused on identifying patterns, themes, and relationships related to my research questions. I used the coding software Dedoose to facilitate the coding of all data. I utilized the five CASEL competencies as a framework to guide my first round of coding and the following SEL competencies as initial code (see Appendix C): self-awareness (SA), self-management (SM), social awareness (SA), relationship skills (RS), and responsible decision-making (RDM).

In the final step, I developed broader patterns and themes across the data. The CASEL competencies guided my understanding of the leadership practice data and served as my initial category for analysis, but because coding is an iterative, multi-step process (Saldaña, 2016), I identified additional codes. While undertaking the process, I first coded for MHS work and then coded the work into MHS-related responsibilities and non-MHS-related responsibilities (i.e., did they involve mental health or SEL?). After I coded MHS-related work, I began to identify some patterns. I found each of the work-related tasks of MHS fell into one of three categories and thus I coded for these three categories: proactive (i.e., work that is planned and preventative), reactive (i.e., the crisis or issue of the moment determined the MHS's work), or both (i.e., practices could be either proactive or reactive depending how or when they are implemented). I discovered a larger theme by school; four schools had a preponderance of proactive work-tasks, while two schools had a preponderance of reactive work-tasks. I then labeled each school as proactive or

reactive, respectively. Interestingly, the principals and the MHS of the four proactive schools described the work of MHS similarly; they had an aligned vision of MHS work with the vision MHS had for their own work. In contrast, the principals of the two schools I labeled as reactive, described the work of MHS very differently than the MHS staff described their own work; their vision of MHS work did not aligned. My findings regarding research question two, are based on the intersectionality of the leadership practices coded according to CASEL and whether or not the school was considered proactive or reactive.

Employing Triangulation of Data

In order to ensure research validity, reliability and trustworthiness, I employ the triangulation of the aforementioned data sources as part of my process of analysis. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define triangulation as, "using multiple investigators, sources of data or data collection methods to confirm emerging findings" (p. 259). As discussed, I used interviews from two teams, and read through district and school documents for context, to compare and cross-check findings from the schools. Additionally, my use of interviews (i.e., a qualitative approach) allowed me to interpret the perspective of the interviewees without the interjection of an additional instrument between me and my research subjects. Finally, with five members on the research team, we peer-reviewed our work and worked together during data collection to ensure trustworthiness. As a team, we scheduled time multiple times weekly to share and/or code findings throughout the process. Our ongoing dialogue led to revisions and new approaches to take, as the research progressed. Our team used a deductive (Cycle 1) and inductive (Cycle 2) approach to analysis, reducing any preconceived biases based on our historical experiences working in schools that employ SEL practices.

Findings

This section describes the findings. The first section describes how principals' leadership practices related to the CASEL competencies, and how these practices promoted SEL opportunities for MHS. Through the data analysis, I found that leaders promoted SEL opportunities in two ways: by providing resources (i.e. money, time, and/or agency) and modeling the SEL competencies themselves. Second, I explored how these leadership practices related to the CASEL competencies shaped the work of MHS in a proactive or reactive way.

The conceptual framework for this research project is CASEL's SEL competencies: self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship building. Although the intent was to identify which practices were related to all the CASEL's competencies, through the data analysis, I found that the leadership practices related only to social awareness, relationship building, and responsible decision-making. The five leadership practices subsumed under these competencies are leaders (1) provided time to meet, (2) provided resources for professional development, (3) offered feedback through dialogue, (4) accessed expertise through dialogue, and (5) provided coaching. The following subsection describes how these leadership practices are related to social awareness, relationship building, and responsible decision-making to provide SEL opportunities for MHS, as well as how these SEL-related leadership practices shaped the work of MHS.

How Leadership Practices Promoted SEL Opportunities.

There are 5 leadership practices related to CASEL competencies identified through the interviews. Table 3.2 summarizes the categories, practices, and their connection to CASEL.

Table 3.2

Leadership Practices that Promoted SEL Opportunities

Leadership Practice: What a Leader Says or Does	CASEL Competency Which the Leaders Provided an Opportunity for MHS to Learn
The leader provides MHS with collaborative time with each other or school leaders	Social Awareness
The leader provides opportunities for MHS to attend professional development to build capacity	Social Awareness
The leader offers feedback to MHS through dialogue	Relationship Building
The leader accesses the MHS's expertise through dialogue	Relationship Building and Responsible Decision-Making
The leader provides MHS with coaching	Relationship Building

Leaders provided time to meet. MHS members, in 4 of 6 participating schools, stated that their school leaders provided time for mental health staff to meet with other MHS, teachers, and building leaders. These meetings have a variety of purposes, such as case management, Tier 1 SEL instruction, student crisis, and staff and student wellness. This leadership practice provided MHS the opportunity to develop and deepen their social awareness. CASEL (2019) defines social awareness as "the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports (para, 1). Providing time to meet with other MHS or school leaders was an opportunity for MHS to become more social aware. This happens first, by interacting with their peers allowing them to gain a range of perspectives and developed an enhanced recognition of supports. Secondly, providing meeting time gave MHS a chance to learn from the model behavior of the school leader: they saw the importance placed on dedicating time to learn from one another. This practice had the added benefit of allowing leaders to demonstrate empathy with the difficult work MHS undertake by developing a better understanding of how to support their work and by having the MHS work align with appropriate mental and SEL tasks, not

administrative or clerical work. Leaders scheduled times for MHS to meet with other MHS, teachers and building leadership(p.55).

The school leaders prioritized scheduling time for MHS to collaborate with other MHS. Providing time for MHS to meet with one another, demonstrated that the leader placed importance and prioritized resources to support the work of MHS. Through the meeting time, the MHS could in turn interact with one another and continue to build their competence as MHS.

The school leaders also modeled social awareness by providing time for MHS to meet. Given the high frequency with which MHS are often assigned tasks unrelated to their job description, when a school leader schedules time for MHS to meet with each other, s/he demonstrates -s/he understands, supports community resources, and prioritizes the work of MHS. By providing time to meet, the principals also empathized with MHS by understanding MHS's need to meet with mental health colleagues. Principals described how MHS meet as part of the SEL team, student support teams (SST), and during case management time with other MHS. This provides MHS time to problem-solve together and build and learn from each other.These meetings consist of MHS, teachers and administration and are an opportunity to action plan to provide support to specific students. One MHS staff member said,

> You know, they [the school leaders] try to put us in job alike groups, but they also try to match up different related service providers. We have SST [student support teams] teams where we bring everybody together, so we try to be more cohesive in our response.

This quote illustrated how the principals empathized with MHS by scheduling meetings for those with similar jobs and understanding that the MHS was a school resource that the principal supported. Another MHS member explained how the principal modeled social awareness through the scheduled faculty meetings:

> [During the meetings, he] wants to set up people to have discussions not just with your peers or your friends. I think people tend to go to their friends, but [it is important] to be able to sit at a table and have conversations with other people to get them to think critically about it.

Here, the MHS member perceived the leader to be modeling social awareness by allocating specific time during the faculty meetings to allow a space for MHS to learn from one another. Additionally, the leader not only modeled social awareness, but was providing time so that faculty members, including MHS, with different backgrounds and experiences shared with one another and learned to empathize with others who held potentially different perspectives, all important social awareness skills.

A different MHS member echoed a similar sentiment as he talked about an SEL team; the leader provided resources so that MHS could develop their own social awareness and also modeled social awareness. They stated: “We have a social emotional learning, SEL, team here at school that meets every three weeks, and the principal sits on that as well.” Once again, MHS recognized that the principal provided time for the SEL team to meet, and, provided focus of the team (i.e., SEL), an opportunity for MHS to continue the conversation on the importance of SEL for students. Because through the team the MHS had an opportunity to continue to work together, however, the leaders also provided an opportunity for MHS to develop their own SEL skills (social awareness) by learning from their peers’ perspectives about the norms and ethics around SEL, and about family, school, and community resources available to support SEL in schools. Finally, the leader also modeled social awareness by defining and prioritizing scheduling a time for the SEL team to meet sent a clear message to the entire staff: the leader understood the importance of SEL and allocating resources so that the SEL team could continue

to brainstorm how to implement SEL programming. The MHS perceived such leadership practice as demonstrating that the leader was modeling good social awareness of the need for staff to meet and discuss SEL. One elementary social worker described a meeting with leadership and her thoughts about the principal understanding the importance:

> We have a weekly social work meeting with the principal, assistant principal, two social workers, and the school nurse. The principal knows how valuable that meeting is to get us all collaborating, we talk about our kids, we're looking at absences and tardies, we're looking at excessive nurse visits. We're really approaching things from a global perspective. We're talking about where we want to see things move or shift or go. We're tag-teaming approaches.

Leaders provided resources for professional development. School leaders demonstrated a second leadership practice: they provided professional development to build the capacity of MHS. Professional learning experiences helped MHS learn about social awareness in two possible ways: 1) The MHS could become more socially aware directly learning from actual professional development on SEL; and/or 2) MHS could learn social awareness, as the school leader modeled how to be socially aware.

Multiple MHS interviewees mentioned principals' willingness to send them to PD, both within and outside the district. The nature of professional development for MHS provided training on SEL content. All MHS talked about professional development on SEL topics, such as Responsive Classroom, trauma-informed practices, social thinking, and training specifically on CASEL's competencies. These learning experiences helped MHS develop a better understanding of SEL to support students and improve their competencies.

When a principal sent MHS to professional development, s/he modeled personal social awareness. Principals demonstrated their awareness of MHS's need for professional growth inside and outside school walls. One participant stated, "By contract, we're allowed two professional development days per year." Guaranteeing two professional development days directly in the contract demonstrates a high-level of support from the district to allow educators to grow as professionals. This same employee went on to say, "I will say that most of the time if people want to go to more than that, they get approved." This provided additional evidence that the principal supports the professional growth of her/his MHS. Approving opportunities for PD was another example of how a principal modeled social awareness and provided the resources of time and money.

Leaders provided feedback to MHS. The third leadership practice was: providing feedback to MHS. To provide effective, and sometimes constructive feedback, that was well-received, the building principal must have a positive relationship with MHS. These conversations allowed the school principal to model relationship building. CASEL (2019) defines relationship building as:

> The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed (para. 2)

Providing feedback to MHS was an opportunity for MHS to learn about relationship building, because the principal modeled relationship building during the time s/he gave feedback as MHS interacted with their peers. MHS described times when they met with their principals and received formal feedback (e.g., evaluation, student success meetings, and SEL team meetings). Feedback was a specific type of dialogue in which principals engaged MHS. In general, most MHS had positive experiences receiving feedback. One MHS faculty member

described receiving feedback stating, “they’re really good about the way that they say it—even if they have any suggestions, something that they noticed.” Having constructive feedback received well by MHS was an indicator that the principals built positive relationships with MHS. In addition, a school principal described waiting for an appropriate opportunity to provide good feedback saying, “Marching in two minutes after I discovered this, that's not going to help either, I have to find a good moment to have a hard conversation.” Waiting shows that when feedback is delivered can influence the relationship between MHS and the principal. Another staff member described receiving difficult feedback in a constructive way stating, “ I felt that the feedback that I got on a not great observation was very constructive and helpful. And I never once felt like I was being reprimanded, or I got the sense that everyone at the table wanted to work with me so that I could become better.. And, and some of the things they were saying about my lesson, weren't necessarily the best, but I didn't feel badly about it. Which was great. And that made me really want to do a better job more.” These relationships, in turn, provided MHS an opportunity to reflect on practices that developed these same positive relationships. Through the dialogue with MHS, the principal actively modeled relationship skills .

Leaders accessed MHS Expertise: Another identified leadership practice was: accessing the expertise of MHS. When leaders accessed MHS’s expertise to address a concern or solve a problem, they modeled effective relationship building and responsible decision-making skills; this modeling provided MHS an SEL opportunity. CASEL (2019) defines responsible decision-making as:

> The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others (para. 3)

The principal provided a learning opportunity for responsible decision-making by modeling how to ethically and responsibly weigh consequences before making decisions. MHS staff mentioned that principals included them in the decision-making process. An MHS member described a principal seeking advice about contacting the Department of Children and Families, explaining, "51As are a really good example of collaboration. We talk it through, and they're thinking, 'I need to file this.' [It's] concerning, but [we're] having a conversation about why." When a principal asked others, who are more knowledgeable than s/he, the principal modeled effective relationship-building practice, trusting the expertise of MHS. One MHS member shared that "the principal seeks my professional opinions, makes me feel valued, and that my role is essential to supporting students and families, and staff." This comment not only demonstrated that the school principal developed positive relationships but that s/he also modeled responsible decision-making, because the principal used the knowledge of the MHS to make the best possible decision.

Leaders Supported MHS practice. The final leadership practice was coaching. Coaching encompassed one-on-one and small group professional development. At its core, coaching involved two people (in this case, the principal and an MHS member). Coaching provided MHS SEL opportunities around the competency of relationship building by allowing MHS to interact with the principal and thereby build relationships.

Coaching happened before school leaders identified any deficit or issue. For example, an MHS member mentioned a principal coaching her on how to ask for help when needed: "This is an expectation that I hold for you. If you need help, [or] if you're not able to get your work done within these frameworks, let me know. We will look at

your schedule and things like that." MHS perceived this exchange as an example of the leader encouraging MHS to ask for help. Through this type of coaching, the school leaders dedicated time and support to the MHS's daily practice, functionally modeling relationship skills. This is a key part of the relationship-building process.

How Leadership Practices Shaped MHS Work

To answer research question two, I first identified the work of MHS to determine how the leadership practices shaped their work. To this end, I asked both principals and MHS to describe the work of the MHS in each school. Table 3.3 depicts the results of the coding process for the second research question.

Table 3.3

MHS Work: Proactive and/or Reactive & Associated Leadership Practices

Mental Health-Related Work	Associated Leadership Practices
Proactive Mental Health Work	
Communication w/principal about areas of expertise	1. The leader provides MHS time to meet with each other or the school leaders.
SEL team member	2. The leader provides opportunities for MHS to attend professional development for professional growth.
Tier 1 SEL instruction	3. The leader provides feedback to MHS.
Special education services	4. The leader accesses MHS's expertise. 5. The leader provides MHS with coaching.
Reactive Mental Health Work	

Communication w/outside service providers	
Counseling	
Communication with families	
Crisis intervention	
Non-Mental Health-Related Work	**Associated Leadership Practices**
Discipline	1. The leader provides MHS time to meet with each other or the school leaders.
Managing teachers' behaviors	
Assigned administrative duties	

Table 3.3 indicates that MHS work data spanned two categories: proactive and reactive practices. Proactive practices were planned and took potential crises and emergencies into account when developing a plan for a day. Reactive practices resulted in work dictated by an emergency or crisis as they arose. All schools had some reactive and proactive practices, but there was a distinguishable difference between the schools with whose principal and MHS shared an aligned vision of MHS and the schools where visions were not aligned. The following two subsections describe the differences between proactive and reactive MHS work and how leadership practices shaped their MHS work.

Proactive MHS Work. Schools with proactive MHS work had an aligned vision for the MHS work between the MHS and school principal. Table 3.4 highlights the proactive MHS

practices and identifies how leadership practices related to CASEL's competencies shaped the MHS work.

Table 3.4

Proactive MHS Practices

Proactive MHS Work	**Associated Leadership Practices** **The Leader . . .**	**How Leadership Practice Shaped the Work Proactively**
Counseling	Provided MHS time to meet with each other and the school leaders	MHS meet to plan caseloads, discuss students, and troubleshoot possible issues.
Communication w/ Principal about Areas of MHS Expertise	Accessed MHS's expertise	MHS meet with the principal to help inform decisions about…
SEL Team Member	Provided MHS time to meet with each other and the school leaders Accessed MHS's expertise Provided coaching Provided MHS with feedback	MHS meets with the team during a scheduled time to share expertise on SEL. During these meetings, principal coaches MHS on the vision for SEL and provides feedback on SEL initiatives.
Tier 1 SEL instruction	Provided opportunities for MHS to attend professional development	Principals send MHS to professional development to strengthen school-wide Tier 1 SEL instruction.

Communication with Families	Provided MHS time to meet with each other and the school leaders	MHS can talk to parents about counseling and other services to help students before a crisis.
Communication w/ Outside Service Providers	Provided MHS time to meet with each other and the school leaders	MHS can talk to parents about counseling and other services to help students before a crisis.
Special Education Services	Provided opportunities for MHS to attend professional development	MHS can plan for disruptions in services because of crises or emergencies.
Crisis Intervention	Provided MHS time to meet with each other and the school leaders Provides coaching	MHS can plan for disruptions in services because of crises or emergencies.

One example of proactive MHS work, happened when MHS had regular meeting times where administration and MHS discussed and planned Tier 1 SEL curriculum and interventions, action plans for struggling students, and how to cover for each other when dealing with unexpected crises or emergencies. One MHS member described how a principal provided time for such meetings:

> I think it helps facilitate time to meet, so providing coverage. I think when somebody comes to them, they [the school leaders] support meeting with colleagues by saying, “Have you talked to so and so? Have you reached out to them? Can I help you set that time up?” Not letting a lot of conversations happen in silos or isolation, and helping facilitate those conversations.

This communication led to fewer missed services for students on individual education plans, the ability to complete SEL groups at scheduled times, the chance to make parent phone calls during the day, and the opportunity for a team to receive feedback from a principal. The schools with a proactive approach had more time to deepen district and school initiatives within programs like social thinking, restorative practices, and responsive classroom. A school social worker stated:

> I teach whole class social-emotional lessons, which I think is a huge component of [tier 1 SEL support], not only for the way kids see me, but also the way adults [see me]. And I can go in and model and kind of provide that [example] for teachers.

This Tier 1 lesson is proactive, and the social worker had time to implement this curriculum because s/he was not forced to move hurriedly from one problem to the next. Principals who used leadership practices connected to CASEL competencies, especially social awareness, relationship building, and responsible decision-making shaped the work of MHS by clearly defining their MHS roles and protecting them from administrative tasks and school distractions.

An additional example of proactive work is engaging MHS and other staff in problem solving. One principal described her approach to school issues by explaining the following,

> As a staff, we do a really nice job in our meetings, whether it's our SST meetings or IEP meetings, or staff meetings to look at highlighting pros and cons. We're always looking for the positives, and then what people are struggling with, whether it's students or adults. But keeping it at a level and ways to improve. We work together as a staff to solve problems, kind of like this is what we're seeing. This is some of the things that we'd like to do to address it. Here's what we have available to support staff in doing this.

The whole staff reflection and accessing expertise to improve and streamline a building routines, procedures and practices is a proactive approach to MHS work and school management in general.

Reactive MHS Work. Reactive MHS Work. Schools that predominantly had reactive MHS work had principals and MHS whose vision of MHS work was not actualized. One principal in a reactive school described the work of MHS as, “The MHS are tied to IEP goals, so that's a big driver of what their time is used for. They're responsibility is to do social groups with students, lunch bunch. They do some individual counseling and lots of SEL.” This work is all related to mental health and SEL, but when a MHS in the same school was asked her daily tasks she explained the following, “We have at this school a system, the stop-by system where if a

teacher perceives a student to be in crisis, they call the main office, and then an announcement is made for a stop by at a specific location. One of the social workers will go and support that situation. So, oftentimes, that's in a classroom or out at recess and most of the time it's just a discipline issue." This example shows that even when a principal has the intention to create proactive work and an appropriate vision of the work it is not necessarily actualized. The only SEL-related leadership practice identified in schools with predominantly reactive MHS work was: leaders provided opportunities for MHS to attend PD for professional growth. Table 3.5 identifies reactive practices, the SEL-related leadership practice identified in schools with predominantly reactive MHS works, and how the leadership practice shaped the work of MHS.

Table 3.5

Reactive MHS Practices

Reactive MHS Work	Associated School Leadership Practices	How Leadership Practice Shapes the Work Reactively
Communication w/ Outside Service Providers	The leader provided opportunities for MHS to attend professional development for professional growth.	Outside services provided after a crisis because time was not provided to MHS to plan.
Counseling		Counseling is set up after acting out behavior. Service is issued because of school emergency or crisis because MHS isn't providing direct services to students.
Communication with Families		Communication with families is disciplinary because MHS isn't providing Tier 1 SEL support

Crisis Intervention		Crisis dictates the actions of the day; no plan for preventative measures because MHS is not provided time to plan with each other.
Discipline		MHS respond to discipline problems rather than take preventive measures, such as Tier 1 SEL support
Assigned Administrative Duties		MHS fulfill administrative tasks, keeping them from working with students in need.

One example of a reactive strategy is when an MHS from one of the schools involved with predominantly reactive MHS work tried to collaborate. One MHS described collaboration as follows: "So in the past, we have collaborated, but it's hard. But sometimes I think it happens more in a crisis." This MHS member could not describe collaborating with other MHS, except during a crisis. Not collaborating unless dealing with a crisis is a reactive model, and it could pull MHS from servicing another student. Another MHS member in a school with predominantly reactive MHS work also mentioned collaboration and explained:

> I'm feeling a little overwhelmed this year, which concerns me a little bit that it's only October because I don't feel like I have enough time to be able to do the collaboration. That would be really helpful. Because I find myself being pulled into like managing behavior or supporting a classroom teacher, you know? So, it's being able to deploy resources so that I could do what I said was that I wish I had additional support so that I could do the things that I find really important like parent engagement, collaboration, being able to plan and organize more instead of, like, running from one thing to another.

This MHS was describing being pulled into different tasks and not having the time necessary to collaborate because of the need to tend to one issue after another. Moving from one problem to the next is an example of reactive practices dictating daily work. The principal did not provide

time because there was no scheduled time for the MHS to meet with the principal or other MHS. Not scheduling time suggested that time was not a priority to or protected by the principal All six principals described MHS work as case management, working with students on IEPs or in crisis, social groups, and tier 1 SEL support, as mental health and SEL related. Though all principals described the work of MHS similarly, not all had an actualized vision. In reactive schools what was described as MHS work and what was happening was different. It is important to note that there was not an assistant principal in one reactive school. In addition, more than one proactive school had a substantially separate classroom which comes with additional support and requires planning to maintain stability. Principals in reactive work schools did use the SEL-related practice of providing opportunities for MHS to attend professional development for professional growth. However, without the other leadership practices, one MHS described professional development with frustration:

> So yeah, I mean, I think the intention is good, but it's hard because you know, there's people who are brand new, who I'm sure it's relevant for, but at the same time, you know, there's just these days that are occurring at a really frenzied pace. And you're feeling like you don't have enough time to get through all the responsibilities. And so, when you have to, like, drop everything and go sit in a meeting, and you're thinking about [how] I need to call this parent, and I need to type this note and this IEP, and I really want to go check on that kid or document. And you're sitting there listening to somebody talk to you about something that you heard, like, when you're a student. It's a little bit frustrating, you know.

Other MHS discussed being assigned to special education grid services and regularly missing these services to deal with crises or emergencies, without having a coverage plan. Still, others talked about administrative tasks they performed instead of servicing students. Both of these examples contributed to the reactive nature of MHS work in some schools.

Discussion

This case study describes five leadership practices that provided SEL opportunities for MHS and shaped the work of MHS. These leadership practices included providing meeting time, using resources to support professional development, giving feedback, coaching, and sharing expertise. The data analysis from interviews indicated that these leadership practices predominantly promoted the three SEL competencies of social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The data also described how leaders provided those learning opportunities and how the practices shaped the work of MHS proactively and reactively. This section discusses the implications of these results and recommends further research.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2009) described dimensions of transformational leadership as principals who solve problems, inspire staff, set a shared vision, and build individual and group capacity. The results of this case study showed that principals who used leadership practices related to social awareness, relationship building, and responsible decision-making worked with staff on transformational dimensions. These dimensions included: (1) building school vision (developing a widely shared vision); (2) establishing school goals; (3) providing intellectual stimulation; (4) offering individualized support; and (5) modeling best practices and important organizational values (Leithwood, 1994). These practices and dimensions shaped the work of MHS to be proactive in organizations that were by nature proactive. Blase and Blase (2002) underscored the importance of principals gaining the confidence of their staff to build school capacity. Their findings stressed the importance of the principal's role in creating a culture for open, honest, and reflective exchanges between leaders and staff (Blase & Blase, 2002). In this study, I found that a trusting relationship between the principal and MHS illustrated how expertise could be shared and utilized to create proactive MHS work. The role of the school leaders was critical in creating that trusting relationship.

All principals in this case study used leadership practices related to CASEL's social awareness, specifically, the leadership practice of providing opportunities for professional development. However, four of the six principals went further, demonstrating competencies in relationship building and responsible decision-making as well, ultimately demonstrating the dimensions of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership refers to a leadership approach that causes a change in people and systems. When enacted appropriately, it creates meaningful and productive change in followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders (Bass, 1998). Specifically, they demonstrated dimensions of transformational leadership in the following ways: (1) building school vision for MHS work (developing a widely shared vision); (2) establishing school goals for MHS work; (3) providing intellectual stimulation by accessing MHS expertise; (4) offering individualized support through coaching and professional development; and (5) modeling CASEL's competencies and important organizational values (see Leithwood, 1994). Part of the leaders' work included working with MHS to develop solutions, which was a way to access MHS expertise and model relationship skills and responsible decision making.

Murry (1995) found that principals and MHS should work together to define the role the MHS will play in the school. In this case study, principals and MHS clearly worked together to define MHS roles in the 4 proactive schools. These four principals used leadership practices related to social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making, as evidenced by the principal's and MHS's shared and actualized vision of MHS work. One example of proactive MHS work is when the MHS role meets the needs of students before issues arise. For instance, principals in the 4 proactive schools meet with MHS during a scheduled SST meeting to discuss a student's SEL needs. Through the SST meeting, a student who recently suffered

from a traumatic event received a counseling intake to acquire support. This type of proactive work requires a principal to demonstrate an understanding of the role of MHS in schools. The opportunity to identify the mental health needs of the school and match the needs to the appropriate role of MHS should always be a priority (Lieberman, 2004).

Identifying mental health needs was a priority in four proactive schools and principals protected this work by scheduling the time MHS would complete this work. One of the proactive schools had a scheduled meeting every Tuesday at 9:00am, and no other meeting could be scheduled at this time. The other 3 proactive schools had similar set meeting times. In proactive schools the principals actualized their vision on MHS work by putting the time in the schedule and meeting with MHS to coach, access expertise towards accomplishing the goals and vision of the school. The proactive school principals protected the work of MHS in order to make SEL the priority the school district wants it to be. SEL work and the work of MHS were embedded in every aspect of the school day. The 4 proactive schools all ran versions of Tier 1 SEL support, using Responsive Classroom, Mind Up, and other classroom management and character education systems. MHS in the four proactive schools worked with classroom teachers on developing social groups for struggling students, case management with outside service providers, special education student support, and crisis management. Making this work a priority in a fixed schedule is an action that enables a system to meet and reflect with MHS, which creates a proactive environment and serves as accountability measures for MHS work. This proactive approach eliminated complacency and created a trusting environment that strived for constant improvement.

In contrast, a principal who did not use practices related to SEL competencies of relationship building and responsible decision-making shaped the work of MHS to be reactive.

An example of this was providing counseling for a student only after the student experienced an outburst or an emergency. Reactive practices were prevalent when principals and MHS identified different tasks completed by MHS in their schools, and there was no plan on how to carry out the day-to-day interactions in the school. The vision principals in reactive schools described as MHS work, was not actualized. A lack of leadership practices around relationship skills and responsible decision-making resulted in not protecting or planning MHS work. Not supporting protecting and planning MHS word resulted in reacting to day to issues as they arose, rather than proactively establishing action steps on how to eliminate them.

The two reactive schools' principals in this case study showed characteristics of passive avoidant leadership. Bass (1990) found that passive avoidant leaders remain passive in their approach to problem-solving and fail to intervene until problems began to manifest. This reactive approach allows the immediate situation to determine MHS daily work. In the 4 proactive schools a common/aligned vision and preemptive planning or proactive management determined MHS daily work. Whereas the proactive or transformational leadership approach focuses on setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization (Leithwood,1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Marks & Printy, 2003), the passive avoidant leadership style avoids decision-making until a problem occurs. Fullan (2001) found that principals who actively promoted change saw broad views and modeled excitement, urgency, and optimism, whereas passive avoidant leaders avoided making decisions, including setting the vision and inspiring MHS to react to the situations of the day, rather than work to fulfill the school's vision. In one reactive school the principal did not establish meeting times with MHS or protect MHS work by integrating scheduled tasks during the day. As there was not a sacred time established for MHS to meet with school leadership to plan or discuss SEL, the work did not happen, and there were

no established routines and procedures for MHS to follow. One principal clearly illustrated this behavior. Although the MHS was expected to be involved in Tier 1 SEL work with teachers, there was no consistent and fixed time in the schedule for MHS to complete this work. This led to MHS piecemealing together Tier 1 SEL support when time permitted. Instead they would react to issues as they arose during the day and support struggling teachers when requested. The Tier 1 SEL work when implemented effectively would have eliminated many of the issues MHS reacted too during the day. In addition, reacting to a teacher's request for help can enable some teachers to hand off issues they do not want to deal with which creates a cycle of reacting to support a teacher with poor classroom management skills and a cycle of learned helplessness. Although the leadership in this same building leadership was able to use her social awareness to identify issues within the building, such as teachers feeling stress before grades are due or frustration with a new curriculum, she only pacified these issues with treats or rewards. The principal did not meet with staff to address critical issues or to find a solution. This demonstrated a lack of relationship skills and responsible decision-making. This reactive principal was unable to inspire staff and set goals and vision through leadership practices. This is one reason why the work was not proactive in this school. By avoiding making decisions and meeting with MHS to set a plan to actualize the vision for MHS work the principal forced MHS to react to the issue of the day rather than plan how to extinguish issues before they arose.

In conclusion, though all the principals in this case study used practices related to CASEL's competencies, those who demonstrated practices related to social awareness, relationship building, and responsible decision-making displayed transformational leadership dimensions (Leithwood, 1994). The impact of using all three of these competencies resulted in providing learning opportunities for MHS that shaped their work proactively. In contrast, in schools where

principals used practices related only to social awareness, they identified problems but did not provide direction or appropriate support for MHS, resulting in reactively shaping MHS work and passive avoidant leadership practices (Bass, 1990). This study suggests that principals should use social awareness to diagnose issues within the school, engage in responsible decision-making to set direction, and promote relationship building to convince MHS to implement a plan. This work will result in an aligned and actualized vision of MHS's role. Principals whose practices relate only to social awareness will have an ineffective, reactive vision of the MHS's role**.**

Limitations

This study sought to identify leadership practices that promoted SEL opportunities for MHS in schools, as well as shaped MHS work. However, the study faced several limitations in terms of data collection, sample size, time, resource constraints, self-selection of participants, and validity of self-reporting during interviews.

This study relied on volunteers to participate in semi-structured interviews, which might have led to participant bias (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Participants might have promoted or concealed strengths or challenges of the schools or district. In addition, because I conducted interviews with school leaders who discussed their practices, it is possible that some answers might have been untruthful. Moreover, some participants discussed the leadership practices of their supervisors, and they might have withheld sensitive information or exaggerated positive aspects of school leadership. To mitigate such bias, we asked probing questions to further our understanding. Interviewers also made a note of participants' body language and any inconsistencies in responses. Moreover, my prior experience and current employment as a district leader contributed to my interest in this study and may have

influenced my interpretation of the data. However, I worked diligently to remain impartial and unbiased during the data collection and analysis phases of my research.

In terms of time and resources, this study was completed within five months. This time constraint limited the number of MHS, teachers, and school leaders within a district who could participate in interviews. An additional limitation was the number of time participants were able to be interviewed based on their work within their school district. Finally, the five researchers who conducted this study were limited by the amount of time they could spend in the field. To mitigate this limitation, we asked some overarching questions of interviewees to increase the amount of codable data. The researchers also asked specific questions related to the study to increase the amount of codable data.

Although these limitations are unavoidable, as researchers, we attended to the guidelines to implement credible data analyses and interpretations (Mills & Gay, 2019). The findings discussed herein will contribute to the current research on leadership practices and SEL competencies, as well as how these practices can shape the work of MHS.

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CHAPTER FOUR[3]

Summary of Research Questions and Methods

The purpose of this study was to identify leadership practices that modeled social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies for adults and/or promoted opportunities for the SEL of staff. Our intent was to determine how these practices shaped different aspects of a district and

[3]This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach to this project: Michele Conners, Mark Ito, Adam Renda, Geoff Rose, and Donna Tobin

its schools. To do so, we examined how district leaders supported sensemaking among school-based leaders around SEL (Conners, 2020) as well as the influences that school-based leaders had on adult collaboration (Ito, 2020), mental health staff (Renda, 2020), collective efficacy (Rose, 2020), and teacher resilience and well-being (Tobin, 2020).

We developed two overarching research questions that guided our collective work. Research question one (RQ1) was "what leadership practices model SEL competencies and/or promote SEL opportunities for staff?" Research Question two (RQ2) was "how do these leadership practices shape a district and its schools?" Our methodology included a qualitative case study with a unit of analysis of a single school district in Massachusetts, fictitiously named Westlake Public Schools (WPS). Our study encompassed four elementary and two middle schools. Utilizing purposeful sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), we selected our interview participants from four categories: district leaders, school-based leaders, teachers, and mental health staff (MHS). For data collection, we employed semi-structured interviews, document reviews, online questionnaires, and onsite observations. To analyze the data, our team used coding software, Dedoose, and used the coded data to find patterns and themes (Creswell, 2014).

In our analytic lenses, all members of the team used the CASEL competencies which included self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships skills, and responsible decision-making and their associated skills (Appendix D) when determining the social and emotional competence of our identified leadership practices. Individually and collectively, we established that the competencies of social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making were the most widely recognized SEL competencies related to the identified leadership practices (i.e., what leaders think and do).

From our synthesis of our individual studies, we found three common themes in response

to our RQ1: 1) Leaders allocated time and resources to meet the needs of individuals; 2) Leaders engaged in relationship building with staff and/or colleagues; and 3) Leaders created structures for shared responsibility amongst colleagues. We found these leadership practices shaped the district and its schools (RQ2) when leaders prioritized outside resources and time to support individual development; staff felt validated when their leaders supported their personal and professional wellbeing; and leaders created structures designed to access shared knowledge and decision-making. In the following sections, we present our synthesized findings, discuss these findings in relation to the literature, propose a new framework for socially and emotionally competent leadership, and discuss recommendations and implications for practice.

Synthesis of Findings

We begin the section by examining common leadership practices identified across our studies. To address RQ1, we determined if the practices modeled (i.e., demonstrated or displayed) the SEL competencies or promoted (i.e., actively encouraged) SEL opportunities. For RQ2, through districtwide examples and the existing literature, we also explored how these practices shaped the district and its schools. As a result, we make recommendations to the district on how to potentially approach these practices when implementing them in the future.

Leaders Allocated Time and Resources to Meet the Needs of Individuals

This leadership practice focused on professional development (PD) and scheduled time in relationship to how leaders allocated time and resources that affected the needs of staff. In relation to RQ1, leaders modeled and/or promoted the SEL competency of relationship skills in their practices when they worked cooperatively with others, engaged socially with diverse individuals, listened well, and communicated effectively in order to increase the professional

knowledge of their staff. Additionally, when leaders allocated resources for scheduled time in their practices, they also modeled and/or promoted the competency of social awareness, because they recognized the importance of collaboration for staff and the resource of time needed for them to engage. In response to RQ2, this practice shaped the district and its schools by leaders prioritizing outside resources for learning as opposed to internal expertise; and providing time in the schedule as opposed to developing greater capacity for shared responsibility of the work.

Professional Development

Collectively, we found that leaders encouraged and supported staff to attend training, workshops and conferences in order to increase their professional knowledge. Leaders promoted opportunities for staff to seek PD in the areas related to their specific roles (e.g., instruction, mental health and/or leadership) and/or in support of higher-level district goals (e.g., SEL, cultural proficiency, and/or project based learning). District leaders also modeled and promoted this practice by encouraging participation for individual WPS staff to attend out-of-district PD opportunities. These actions shaped the district and its schools by leaders prioritizing external opportunities for increased professional knowledge.

We found WPS spent more than half a million dollars ($535,801) in FY19 on external PD (WPS Report to Town Meeting & Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Summary, p. 30). In relation to the district's PD investments, one district leader referred to providing "buckshot PD opportunities to WPS staff," as a means for supporting their learning. A buckshot PD opportunity is one that is widely communicated and often a one-time experience outside of the school district. Another district leader reflected that "part of what I see as my job is scouring the internet and places to find PD opportunities so that teachers can sign up for them." These specific examples from

district leaders showed practices that modeled an awareness to support individualized staff practices through encouragement and communication of PD offerings.

In some cases, staff independently initiated and sought support for PD opportunities, specifically when the expertise the individual needed resided outside of internal district resources. During the semi-structured interviews, staff members across the district often commented that their leaders provided substitute coverage and paid registration fees in order for staff to participate in their choice of adult learning outside of their schools. This practice shaped the work of the schools by staff feeling supported through the time and money provided to attend PD. Furthermore, while some staff referenced these training sessions during interviews, findings showed that staff did not identify PD as pivotal in shaping their practice. Additionally, limited evidence supported purposeful shared learning from these "external" opportunities.

Conversely, another district leader acknowledged that they "made significant investments in bringing in national trainers to come here and certify about 12 or 15 instructors." One leader highlighted that the district-supported PD promoted SEL opportunities such as Responsive Classroom, Trauma Sensitive Schools, and Social Thinking, through an iterative process designed to support internal implementation. Based on our gathered evidence, it was unclear if the district's priorities aligned with buckshot PD opportunities or those that provided iterative training. The inconsistent use of district resources to support staff learning and development shaped the work of WPS staff.

Overall, this leadership practice shaped the district and its schools since leaders and staff relied on outside resources to support their professional development. Furthermore, leaders promoted opportunities for staff to find and access external PD offerings. However, intentionally using internal time and resources appeared less in the data as a way to gain professional

knowledge, and sharing expertise among colleagues did not happen regularly enough for staff to feel it was a standard practice in which they benefited from during collaborative time.

Scheduled Time

Throughout our data collection processes, we found that leaders allocated time for leaders, teaching and learning directors, coaches, teachers, and mental health staff to meet. Through this practice, leaders modeled the competency of social awareness because they recognized the importance of collaboration for staff, and the resource of time needed in which to engage. As one staff member reported, “Even at the highest level, leaders realize how important collaboration is, so they carve out time for it.” This practice of scheduling time shaped WPS leaders’ responsibilities, as it was expected that they would perform this task.

At the school level, our analysis showed that leaders promoted opportunities for staff to formally meet with their leaders and/or colleagues. During the semi-structured interviews, staff members commented that they participated regularly in formal meetings with leaders and/or colleagues. At both the elementary and middle school levels, school and district leaders built four to five formal meetings (e.g., staff, department, community) into their weekly and monthly schedules. Planned district and school meetings occurred both during the school day and after school (including weekly early release days for all elementary staff on Tuesdays). Additionally, interviews indicated that MHS across all schools observed that school leaders provided scheduled time to collaborate with others. Specifically, leaders modeled relationship skills when they created structures for MHS to participate in job-alike groups or tried to match them up with different related service providers. These examples showed how leaders shaped the interactions of staff by providing opportunities for them to meet.

In relation to the allocation of scheduled time, we heard inconsistent reflections from school leaders and staff. Some staff perceived that collaborative time was not useful and took away from other work that needed to happen. As seen through the questionnaire data, both leaders and staff positively perceived that staff are committed to collaborative time; however, more than half of both staff and leaders did not positively perceive that time was used effectively. Related to this data, we acknowledge that the positionality of each staff member may influence their perceptions about the usefulness of collaborative time. Moreover, leaders also placed an emphasis on supporting summertime curriculum work when they provided teachers or MHS daily stipends. Although one district leader mentioned that leaders encouraged staff to meet as groups during these summer opportunities, school-based staff did not discuss or reference these opportunities as shaping their growth. These reflections highlighted the lack of coherence from WPS staff about the perceived value of their time.

Additionally, district leaders modeled social awareness for school-based leaders by providing time for elementary principals to collaborate during meetings. Moreover, when asked how they show support for collaboration, several district leaders modeled relationship skills by protecting the structures and schedules that allowed for ongoing, consistent collaboration among leaders. Other leadership meetings included principal meetings; superintendent's administrative team meetings, and opportunities for school leaders to work with mental health staff to design interventions. Furthermore, every district leader referred to ongoing discussions between district- and school-based leaders about the promotion of SEL opportunities across schools and within classrooms. The overarching theme was that district leaders modeled and empowered school-based leaders to engage in collaborative opportunities with their job-alike colleagues.

Leaders Engaged in Relationship-building with Staff and/or Colleagues

Leaders in WPS modeled and/or promoted practices that valued and fostered collaborative relationships with school-based staff and between staff and their colleagues. In response to RQ1, leaders modeled the competency of relationship skills because they communicated clearly when they publicly acknowledged the work of staff and/or showed their appreciation. Leaders also modeled relationship skills when they delivered and shared information during formal and/or informal interactions. Lastly, leaders positively promoted relationship skills when they collaborated with staff and effectively modeled this competency when they offered support. In relation to RQ2, this leadership practice positively shaped WPS when leaders engaged in actions that strengthened relationships through communication, collaboration, and support.

Cooperative Opportunities

Data analysis at the school- and district-level strongly supported the importance of relationships. As an illustration, one district leader commented, “everything that applies to education is all about building relationships so the best way to support the staff is to know them as human beings.” Furthermore, district leaders specifically modeled positive relationship skills by understanding the importance of bonding as a community, and caring about departments as a community of people. In general, we learned that school-based and district-level leaders considered the importance of modeling and maintaining positive, healthy, and supportive relationships.

In order to strengthen relationships, district leaders highlighted that meetings are often opportunities for cooperation, collaboration and discussion, including many ice breakers. They also emphasized the importance of social gatherings and outings outside of school. As noted in one interview with an MHS, “my principal always tries to bring people together.” These

relationships, in turn, promoted opportunities with staff to engage in practices that developed positive relationships with their leaders. As a result, district and school leaders positively shaped WPS when they exhibited practices that valued WPS staff and their collaborative opportunities with each other.

Staff expressed coaching as a valued resource, specifically when leaders promoted opportunities for subject area coaches to collaborate with teachers in their schools in order to improve their teacher's instructional practices. By promoting opportunities to collaborate with coaches, leaders provided dialogue between staff and their coaches specific to their content curriculum in an effort to bring improvement and change to what happens in classrooms. In some instances, elementary school teachers scheduled time with coaches to be in their classrooms to observe, discuss and advise on the instruction being delivered. As an example, one staff member emphasized that their collaborative relationship with a coach shaped their practices by having a "really good feeling, and I feel like I still can go ask her for advice just because I have that connection with her." In summary, when leaders supported collaborative opportunities between staff and coaches, their practices promoted opportunities for encouraging relationship skills, specifically positive connections and cooperative mindsets.

Clear Communication

In order to promote clear communications, two different district leaders acknowledged open door policies by naming that "doors are always open here." Furthermore, another district leader commented, "I listen to teachers and if I think if there's something that they think they need, whether it's just time to talk to me or whether it's time to work with their colleagues or whether it's more resources." Another district leader commented on the importance of having conversations with teachers, just listening to them and asking them questions of what they need.

These examples modeled how leaders effectively listened and supported both staff's individual needs and professional skills.

In addition to supporting by listening, data also showed that leaders modeled the relationship skills competency when they communicated with staff through feedback and praise. Noticing strong practices of staff and appreciating them, led to positive attitudes about meeting with administrators, and the trust and support that ensued. Collectively, we learned that leaders often recognized the work of staff privately and publicly. Leaders provided recognition in a variety of ways, including: notes in mailboxes or on a staff member's desk, a quick email, a shout-out in a newsletter or publication, a social media (Twitter or Facebook) acknowledgement, or just a quick verbal thank you or high-five. More specifically, staff interviews confirmed the importance of how recognizing others' successes can support and maintain positive relationships. In general, most staff expressed positive experiences receiving feedback and praise from their leaders as it shaped their perceptions about their own practices.

By providing cooperative opportunities and clear communication, this leadership practice shaped adult relationships by setting the tone for ongoing engagement: therefore, it paved the way towards honest and authentic dialogue between staff and leaders as well as a greater commitment to the school and district work. Furthermore, conversations between leaders and staff were important in building and/or maintaining relationships and staff viewed feedback and praise as constructive and positive. In summary, this leadership practice shaped the district and its schools since staff felt validated when their leaders took the time to listen to and talk with them about their personal and professional wellbeing.

Leaders Created Structures for Shared Responsibility Among Colleagues

Leaders in WPS employed practices that modeled SEL competencies and/or promoted SEL opportunities, such as accessing and sharing expertise, encouraging interaction between colleagues, and providing problem-solving opportunities that included consulting and working with others. More specifically, in response to RQ1, leaders promoted responsible decision-making by giving staff opportunities to be involved in decisions regarding their work. While not consistently seen across the schools, when leaders gave staff opportunities to analyze situations and to identify possible solutions, they promoted opportunities to be included in responsible decision-making on behalf of the greater organization. In response to RQ2, shared expertise shaped the district and its schools by implementing collaborative structures that allowed access to the sources of collective efficacy, namely vicarious experiences and social persuasion. Additionally, shared decision-making opportunities shaped WPS by providing structures for leaders and staff to process challenging situations through a sense-making lens.

Shared Decision-making

Leaders promoted learning opportunities related to responsible decision-making by forming teams to access expertise, analyze situations, solve problems accurately, and provide input into the school community's policies and procedures. Evidence supported that some school leaders included staff in decisions related to their work. When leaders involved staff in decisions, staff reported that they felt valued and trusted. During the interviews, staff provided numerous examples of times when leaders sought their input during meetings, through surveys, or during individual conversations. Specifically, MHS mentioned that principals included them in the decision-making and communication processes to best support students and keep them safe.

At the district level, one leader highlighted the presence of monthly principal meetings which included shared facilitation roles and open agendas. Specifically, leaders were asked,

"What do you need? What would you like some feedback on or what do you need to present to everybody [staff]?" This showed the intentionality of district leaders supporting the individual needs of school leaders as well as encouraging shared responsibility during collaborative opportunities. In addition to scheduled meetings, district and school leaders also referenced frequent opportunities to problem solve together. School leaders felt empowered to call or email various district leaders with a dilemma. In turn, district leaders felt responsible to partner with school leaders "to problem solve things that could really be very impactful to their school or their department." Through these examples, WPS leaders modeled relationship- oriented practices while they interacted with each other, as they assessed outcomes, dealt with challenging situations, and made collaborative decisions.

Conversely, some staff stated that leaders should be more inclusive in decision making and that when leaders asked for input, they should actually consider it. Additionally, although evidence supported that some schools had structures in place to facilitate shared responsibility for decisions, some staff expressed there were many committees where their input was not apparent in the results. Although the practice was modeled, not all staff felt that the decision-making processes were inclusive.

Shared Expertise

Leaders promoted learning opportunities related to relationship skills by allowing staff to observe and learn from each other in order to build collaborative teams and support colleagues when needed. Findings demonstrated that collaborating with colleagues was the primary driver for staff changing practice. Moreover, staff expressed that they learn from their colleagues and that informal collegial discussions support their work. By recognizing the value of sharing expertise, leaders modeled the competency of responsible decision-making because they

assessed what could happen when colleagues learn from each other. Additionally, this practice promoted opportunities for others to take responsibility for the learning and professional exchange of knowledge with colleagues.

Across all six schools, the leadership practice of staff sharing expertise through collegial visits and observations emerged as a common theme. Leaders referenced various structures for sharing learning such as creating a "What do you want to see project?" posting staff schedules online to allow for self-identified pedagogical strengths and times when others can observe, publicly posting a board with staff strengths, and utilizing different frameworks for learning walks. These structures provided opportunities for staff to share their practices in their teaching environment in an effort to display their interactive work in classrooms.

Despite the fact that all leaders identified these different structures for sharing expertise, few school-based staff mentioned these specific practices during interviews. Furthermore, all of the meeting observations provided time for teachers to interact with each other in some capacity, yet, only three of the six meetings followed a protocol for sharing expertise. The questionnaire revealed that while half of staff positively perceived that their colleagues shared their expertise during collaborative time, only some leaders positively perceived that this was actually happening. Collectively, this data showed that inconsistencies emerged between the perceptions of leaders and staff about the value of formal collaborative structures.

Staff reported that collaborating with colleagues improved their instruction and supported their professional growth. One staff member said, "To be able to collaborate with our team helps my instruction improve. When we were looking at student work, I was able to check out what other classes are doing, and it helps me to learn and grow." In support, leaders provided opportunities for staff collaboration, and when staff engaged with people from different content

areas it broadened staff's perspectives. One staff member said, "The best part of collaboration is getting different points of view and working with people with different skill sets." Data also showed that some principals took the time to access the expertise of MHS specifically, by fostering opportunities for collective problem solving and modeling SEL lessons in classrooms.

Our synthesized findings supported the presence of leadership practices in WPS that modeled and promoted the competencies of social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These practices shaped the district and its schools when leaders prioritized outside resources for learning as opposed to internal expertise, and leaders provided time in the schedule as opposed to developing greater capacity for shared responsibility of the work. Additionally, staff felt validated when their leaders communicated with them about their personal and professional wellbeing. Lastly, leaders shaped WPS when they created structures designed for shared decision-making and knowledge. We further extended these findings to establish a framework that explores the importance of these practices and why they matter when thinking about socially and emotionally competent leadership.

Discussion and Recommendations

In WPS, our team found three leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies and/or promoted SEL opportunities: 1) leaders allocated time and resources to meet the needs of individuals; 2) leaders engaged in relationship building with staff and/or colleagues; and 3) leaders created structures for shared responsibility among colleagues. Based on our findings, we connected these leadership practices to the literature and broadened them further. The result is three leadership practices that support the development of socially and emotionally competent leadership (SECL) in schools and districts. We encourage district and school leaders to implement these practices as outlined in Figure 4.1. In this visual, we display

the SEL competencies, leadership practices, and how these practices shape a district and its schools, more specifically, by developing individual capabilities, strengthening coherence of vision and action, and establishing the structures that promote collective leadership capacity.

It is important to note that the identified leadership practices in the visual represent those found within the scope of our study. Specifically, we focused on the identification of leadership practices that modeled and/or promoted SEL competencies (i.e. social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) in the context of adult interactions as opposed to SEL competencies (i.e. self-awareness and self-management) that focus more on attributes specific to an individual. Although self-awareness and self-management are important competencies to develop in SECL, in our study, we did not look for practices that exhibited these competencies. As a result, our visual below highlights the leadership practices and competencies we encourage leaders to develop and support when considering adult dynamics, and a means to SECL.

Socially and Emotionally Competent Leadership

The visual we created establishes three practices that can guide leaders in both districts and schools. The center of our visual, "Socially and Emotionally Competent Leadership," reflects an intentional integration of the SEL competencies with what leaders think and do. Around the center, we build on and broaden the three identified leadership practices. Specifically, we discuss how each practice can shape the development of individual capabilities, the strengthening of coherence of vision and action, and the establishment of collective leadership capacity in a district and its schools. Finally, the "outer ring" of our SECL visual reflects the SEL competencies that our study highlights, and that we argue are integral to the work of leaders, districts, and schools. Collectively, the visual below answers our team's research questions: 1) What leadership practices modeled SEL competencies and/or promote

SEL opportunities for staff? and 2) How did these leadership practices shape a district and its schools?

Figure 4.1. Recommended Practices that Support Socially and Emotionally Competent Leadership

The three practices found in WPS enabled our team to collectively develop this visual that constructed meaning and reasoning as to why these leadership practices that modeled competencies and/or promoted SEL opportunities mattered. By implementing these practices, we argue that leaders can increase adult capabilities and their organization's capacity. As defined by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), capabilities are more than just having "adequate ability," but rather the possession of "attributes required for performance or accomplishment" (p. 55). Additionally, Mullen and Jones (2008) refer to capacity in their work as "enabling the growth of

teachers as leaders who are responsible for their actions" (p. 329). Based on our findings and the literature, we assert in our recommended practices that both adult capabilities and capacity improve as a result of SECL, which further extends the research of Cohen and colleagues (2007) who laid the groundwork for differentiating between capabilities and capacity-building.

The first leadership practice that we aimed to broaden, "leaders allocated time and resources to meet the needs of individuals," was significant because leaders showed an awareness of the needs of staff in order to support the development of an individual's capabilities. This practice aligned with Fullan and Quinn (2016) who discussed how surface learning "occurs when the experience is very individualized" and may "result from one-shot workshops and random accessing of online resources without a linkage to broader goals or applications" (p. 61). Capabilities of staff in an organization are built by offering individualized support to followers (Leithwood, 1994) and leaders are expected to assess followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treat them as full human-beings (Northouse, 2016).

The significance of this practice of allocating scheduled time and resources is that the formal leaders at WPS provided time and budget to what staff felt were important to their work or dictated as iterative training that supported the district's vision and goals. However, we learned that individualized PD was primarily happening through buck-shot opportunities outside of the district, without coherence or alignment to collective goals. We argue that leaders should recognize that providing opportunities for staff to seek expertise outside of the district may not have been as cost-effective or as valuable as creating opportunities for staff to leverage expertise from within the organization itself (Leithwood et al., 2019). Seeking outside PD opportunities did not necessarily yield more efficacious results.

From our findings, we broaden this original practice to one that develops SECL by arguing that leaders should be aware of the needs of staff in order to develop individual capabilities. Specifically, we recommend that WPS implement PD into their scheduled meetings and utilize the expertise found internally to grow staff capabilities. Forman et al. (2015) supported this recommendation by asserting that "professional development events are replaced by a culture of professional learning that happens in real time throughout the school year" (p. 218). This recommendation reflects an understanding that adult learning should be embedded within scheduled time and often take place in collaborative peer structures such as networks (Leithwood et al., 2010).

The second leadership practice that emerged from our findings, "formal leaders engaged in relationship building with staff and/or colleagues," was significant because leaders demonstrated that engaging in and modeling healthy relationships with staff and colleagues promoted the implementation of SEL competencies that built individual capabilities. It built these individual capabilities by considering the individual's needs and what supported them emotionally and stimulated them intellectually (Leithwood, 1994). In order for this practice to happen, leaders implemented practices that encouraged collaborative relationships between leaders and staff. The SECL practice that we established from this original practice is that leaders built and encouraged relationships with and between staff in order to build coherence of vision and action. We acknowledge that the organization benefits when leaders model, through their practices, important organizational values and their vision (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). Additionally, this practice aligns with the research of Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) who maintained the importance of relationships for strengthening individual and collective commitment to the organization. Specifically, we recommend that WPS strengthen adult

relationships by clarifying roles and responsibilities of administrators, coaches, and staff that align to the vision of leaders with the actions of staff. For example, explicitly naming the differences and/or similarities of the roles and responsibilities of coaches, administrators, MHS, and teachers related to the planning, facilitation, and outcomes of weekly team meetings within the schools. The research focused on role clarity and intentional alignment of collaborative work reflects the research of Donohoo (2018) who asserted that common understanding of responsibilities is essential to group effectiveness.

The third leadership practice that we looked to broaden, "leaders created structures for shared responsibility amongst colleagues," was significant because leaders, at times, supported a distributed model of shared decision-making that led to capacity building in their organizations. Data inconsistently supported that WPS staff felt empowered to contribute in shared decision-making structures and shared expertise opportunities. In order for this practice to happen more frequently, leaders should work internally and with intentionality to create opportunities for staff leadership to develop (Patti et. al., 2015). Specifically, by identifying where social capital exists and utilizing it to share expertise, schools and districts can most effectively influence practices and beliefs between colleagues (Minckler, 2014; Guskey, 1996). By implementing this approach, the organization can benefit by developing structures that foster participation in school decisions and improvement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999).

The leadership practice that develops SECL is that leaders model and promote responsible decision-making in order to build collective leadership capacity. Specifically, we recommend that WPS formally identify internal expertise and provide these informal staff leaders with opportunities to model and promote their practices through adult learning structures (see Minckler, 2014; Leana, 2011). Within this final recommendation, we argue that leaders

should support adult learning structures that share expertise, in the context of staff making responsible decisions for the good of the organization. We argue that this recommendation leads to collective leadership capacity where formal leaders do not need to facilitate all collaborative interactions and manage individual actions (see Spillane, 2004). We assert that the more that expertise is identified and collectively shared, the greater the capacity of the organization, and the stronger likelihood that the organization will reflect a consideration of the greater good (see Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009).

Limitations

This study identified leadership practices that modeled SEL competencies, and/or promoted SEL opportunities for district and school-based staff, while investigating how those leadership practices shaped a district and its schools. We acknowledge the following areas with limitations: 1) generalizability of findings; 2) time period of research; and 3) data collection and analysis.

A limitation of our study was the generalizability of the findings due to the small scope of the study. Because our research focused on a single unit of analysis, one school district in Massachusetts, our findings are not generalizable to other school districts in Massachusetts, or in the United States. While generalizability was a limitation within our study, the purpose of our study was not to seek ultimate truths, but to understand the relevance of our findings both as educational leaders and contributors to existing research (Mills & Gay, 2019). Despite a focus on one district, our process of selection ensured that the district we studied provided meaningful insights about a district-wide focus on SEL, and assisted us in identifying themes that we believe are relevant to other districts in the process of implementing this type of reform, because qualitative research builds theory.

The specific time period during which the data was collected and analyzed was driven by the research team's limited timeframe, and thus we only captured a moment in time. As a result, we were not able to analyze how each of our individual research themes and the leadership practices evolved over time. The district hired a Director of SEL two years prior to our study, which likely played a key role in our findings. Entering a district in the initial stages of a district-wide focus on SEL would likely result in different outcomes than entering a district deeply engaged in SEL. However, our findings are relevant and meaningful as they could assist other districts in developing leadership practices that model or promote SEL competencies.

Importantly, we did not gather data from all members of the case study district, but rather from a purposeful sample of district and school leaders. District, schools, and leaders were purposefully selected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), however, individual staff participants volunteered to contribute to this study. Self-selection into the study opened up the possibility of participant bias in terms of what they wanted to promote or conceal as strengths or challenges both within the district and as individuals. To mitigate this bias, we asked probing questions to maximize the interactions between the participant and interviewer to increase rapport and reduce the risk of socially desirable answers (Patton, 1990). In addition, we used multiple sources of data to allow for methods triangulation in this study.

We aimed to access a range of perspectives by collecting data from documents, questionnaires, observations, and interviews to triangulate the outcomes of the interview analyses. It was important that we had multiple data sources because, "every type of data has strengths and limitations, using a combination of techniques helps compensate for the weaknesses found in one approach (Salkind, 2010).

We analyzed documents that were readily and publicly available to district and school staff, parents or guardians, and the community. We interviewed district administrators, principals, teachers and mental health staff who volunteered to participate. Their perspectives were not necessarily representative of the perspectives of all certified professional staff in the district and its schools. In addition, schools are dynamic environments in which the teachers and administrators can change from one year to the next.

Finally, this qualitative case study has the potential for validity errors. According to Creswell (2014), validity signals that the researcher checks for accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures. To improve validity, we posed "how" research questions that influenced the use of strategies to address external validity (Yin, 2014). We triangulated our data sources, data types, and methods, while reflecting upon the data collection and interpretation process in an effort to minimize methodological threats to interpretation of the data (Yin, 2014).

Conclusion

Our collective findings supported the identification of leadership practices in WPS that modeled and promoted the SEL competencies of social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These leadership practices shaped the district and its schools when leaders encouraged collaborative relationships and supported the development of individual capabilities, needs, and professional skills. Furthermore, our collective research led to the identification of new leadership practices that supports the development of SECL.

We argue that implementing leadership practices with the intention of developing SECL has the potential to positively shape a district-wide focus on SEL, the sources of collective efficacy, adult collaboration, staff resilience and wellbeing, and the work of MHS. As a result of our research, leaders should focus their efforts on cultivating the capabilities of the adults

through structures that promote collaborative and collective expertise. Additionally, we acknowledge that relationships and resources have the potential to positively shape the work of educators and the tasks that we cannot accomplish individually. In conclusion, by developing SECL practices in districts and schools, adults will grow their professional knowledge, vision and actions will align more coherently, and shared responsibility will build organizational capacity. Ultimately, district and school-based leaders and staff will benefit the students they teach and support.

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Appendix A

DISTRICT LEADER INTERVIEWS

Social and Emotional Leadership Practices that Shape Districts and Schools

Interview Protocol and Notetaking Form

Researcher (to be read to participants): Hi, my name is (insert) and we are here today as part of our dissertation as doctoral candidates at Boston College. Our overarching research questions are, "*How do leadership practices model SEL competencies for adults, or promote the social and emotional learning of teachers and other staff?" and "How do these leadership practices shape a district and its schools?"* We will be asking questions related to general leadership practices, collective efficacy, adult collaboration, teacher resilience and well-being, and the work of mental health staff.

ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL. The information from responses to this semi-structured interview will be compiled by the dissertation team for their analyses. Any data, including race/ethnicity and gender, that is not currently available to the public will only be used in aggregated form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any participant in any report or presentation or in the public use file that will be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study.

Before starting we would like to ***get your consent*** to participate in this study and permission to record this session. *(Get signature on consent form.)* Thank you. *(Once recording starts.)* The recording has started. Thank you for allowing us to record this session. Before we start, do you have any questions?

[Interviewer: Prior to starting the script, ensure that all questions re: consent form & study have been thoroughly addressed]

Thank you for sharing your time so we can learn more about your experiences in the Westlake Public Schools. As a quick reminder, we've allocated 45 minutes for this conversation and a questionnaire that we will ask you to complete at the end of the interview. Please let us know if you have any questions during our conversation. We just want to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers, we only wish to understand your unique insight. All of your information and responses will be confidential and used for research purposes. No individual information or identifying information will be shared. At any point in our interview, you can end our conversation or take a break for any reason. If for any reason, the interview questions do not apply to you, or you wish to skip any question, you may do so.

Your input is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable during this interview so please ask any clarifying questions you may have or let us know if you don't understand a question.

Appendix B

SCHOOL-BASED LEADER INTERVIEWS

Social and Emotional Leadership Practices that Shape Districts and Schools

Interview Protocol

Researcher (to be read to participants): Hi, my name is (insert) and we are here today as part of our dissertation as doctoral candidates at Boston College. Our overarching research questions are, "*How do leadership practices model SEL competencies for adults, or promote the social and emotional learning of teachers and other staff?" and "How do these leadership practices shape a district and its schools?"* We will be asking questions related to general leadership practices, collective efficacy, adult collaboration, teacher resilience and well-being, and the work of mental health staff.

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[Interviewer: Prior to starting the script, ensure that all questions re: consent form & study have been thoroughly addressed]

Thank you for sharing your time so we can learn more about your experiences in the Westlake Public Schools. As a quick reminder, we've allocated 45 minutes for this conversation and a questionnaire that we will ask you to complete at the end of the interview. Please let us know if you have any questions during our conversation. We just want to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers, we only wish to understand your unique insight. All of your information and responses will be confidential and used for research purposes. No individual information or identifying information will be shared. At any point in our interview, you can end our conversation or take a break for any reason. If for any reason, the interview questions do not apply to you, or you wish to skip any question, you may do so.

Your input is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable during this interview so please ask any clarifying questions you may have or let us know if you don't understand a question.

QUESTIONS (Look for leadership practices – what leaders *think and do*)

1. What is the role of leadership in your school? In other words, what do leaders *do*?

2. a) In your district/school, who supports your work and *what type of things do they do* to show support?

   b) Whom do you support? What do *you do* to show support?

3. a) How are collective and/or individual goals established in your district/school?

   b) What do you *do* to support this process?

4. How do you *show* support for collaboration in your district/school?

5. What do you *do* to *actively encourage* your staff's professional growth and development?

6. Describe what you *do* in meetings.
(Exposes what the interviewee thinks a leader does in the context of collaboration.)

7. What do you see as the benefits of collaboration in your district/school?
(Exposes the interviewee's perceptions of collaborative time)

8. What do you do that contributes to your staff's feelings of success?

9. What opportunities do you provide for your staff to learn from their colleagues?

10. What and/or who drives you to change your practice?
(*Probe: Can ask specifically about adults.)*

11. Are there things that you do that promote social and emotional learning opportunities for staff? If so, what are they?

12. What types of things seem to cause the most stress for teachers and what do you do, if anything, to support teachers when they are feeling stressed?

13. Do you engage teachers in decision making that is related to the work that they do in this school? If so, how?

14. How is feedback delivered and how open are teachers to receiving feedback?

15. What are the primary responsibilities of mental health staff? How is this determined? By whom? When? How would you change this?

16. How do you manage the mental health staff's work and/or interactions with students and how does the work impact students?

Appendix **C**

SCHOOL-BASED STAFF INTERVIEWS

Social and Emotional Leadership Practices that Shape Districts and Schools

Interview Protocol

Researcher (to be read to participants): Hi, my name is (insert) and we are here today as part of our dissertation as doctoral candidates at Boston College. Our overarching research questions are, "*How do leadership practices model SEL competencies for adults, or promote the social and emotional learning of teachers and other staff?" and "How do these leadership practices shape a district and its schools?"* We will be asking questions related to general leadership practices, collective efficacy, adult collaboration, teacher resilience and well-being, and the work of mental health staff.

ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL. The information from responses to this semi-structured interview will be compiled by the dissertation team for their analyses. Any data, including race/ethnicity and gender, that is not currently available to the public will only be used in aggregated form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any participant in any report or presentation or in the public use file that will be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study.

Before starting we would like to ***get your consent*** to participate in this study and permission to record this session. *(Get signature on consent form.)* Thank you. *(Once recording starts.)* The recording has started. Thank you for allowing us to record this session. Before we start, do you have any questions?

[Interviewer: Prior to starting the script, ensure that all questions re: consent form & study have been thoroughly addressed]

Thank you for sharing your time so we can learn more about your experiences in the Westlake Public Schools. As a quick reminder, we've allocated 45 minutes for this conversation and a questionnaire that we will ask you to complete at the end of the interview. Please let us know if you have any questions during our conversation. We just want to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers, we only wish to understand your unique insight. All of your information and responses will be confidential and used for research purposes. No individual information or identifying information will be shared. At any point in our interview, you can end our conversation or take a break for any reason. If for any reason, the interview questions do not apply to you, or you wish to skip any question, you may do so.

Your input is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable during this interview so please ask any clarifying questions you may have or let us know if you don't understand a question.

QUESTIONS

(Look for leadership practices – what leaders *think and do*)

1. What is the role of leadership in your school? In other words, what do leaders *do*?

2. a) In your district/school, who supports your work and *what type of things do they do* to show support?

b) Whom do you support? What do *you do* to show support?

3. a) How are collective and/or individual goals established in your district/school?
b) What do leaders *do* to support this process?

4. How do leaders *show* support for collaboration in your district/school?

5. What do leaders *do* to *actively encourage* your professional growth and development?

6. Describe what leaders (i.e., teachers or administrators) *do* in meetings.
(Exposes what the interviewee thinks a leader does in the context of collaboration)

7. What do you see as the benefits of your collaboration?
(Exposes the interviewee's perceptions of his/her collaborative time.)

8. What do leaders do that contribute to your feelings of success?

9. What opportunities do leaders provide to learn from colleagues?

10. What and/or who drives you to change your practice?
(*Probe: can ask specifically about adults.)*

11. Are there things that your leader does that promote social and emotional learning opportunities for staff? If so, what are they?

12. What causes you the most stress, and what if anything, does your leader do to support you in managing this stress?

13. Does your leader engage you in decision making that is related to the work that you do in this school? If so, how?

14. How do you receive feedback from your school leader and how do you usually feel after receiving feedback?

15. What are the primary responsibilities of mental health staff? How is this determined? By whom? When? How would you change this?

16. How does the principal manage the mental health staff's work and/or interactions with students and how does the work impact students?

Appendix D

BC DIP SEL Coding Manual

Codes that focus on leadership practices and support, interview questions, social and emotional learning competencies and skills, adult collaboration, collective efficacy, and resilience and well-being

While entering into the initial coding process, we began our coding manual to define the SEL skills related to each SEL competency and came to an "aha realization" that CASEL may have purposefully selected different verbs when outlining each of the skills. No verb is repeated. We expect to use these verbs to support our findings and discussions when thinking about our research questions related to LEADERSHIP PRACTICES - what leaders think and do! Out of the 29 SEL skills identified, ***23 skills are action oriented*** and ***6 skills are descriptive.***

General Codes

Parent code	Child code	Definition
Leadership Practices	**THINK**	To have as an intention or opinion
	DO	To perform or execute
Leaders Support *(reoccurring themes)*	**LISTENING**	To hear something with thoughtful intention
	TIME	A measurable period when an activity or thought exists; *Schedules
	TRUST	Assured reliance on someone to be honest, truthful, good
NON-SEL		A leadership practice that does not model one of the CASEL competencies

Interview Question Codes

Parent code	Child code	Interview question number	
Interview Questions	School-based leaders	**SBL #1** **SBL #2** **SBL #3** **SBL #4** **SBL #5** **SBL #6** **SBL #7** **SBL #8**	**SBL #9** **SBL #10** **SBL #11** **SBL #12** **SBL #13** **SBL #14** **SBL #15** **SBL #16**
	School-	**SBS #1**	**SBS #9**

	based staff	**SBS #2** **SBS #3** **SBS #4** **SBS #5** **SBS #6** **SBS #7** **SBS #8**	**SBS #10** **SBS #11** **SBS #12** **SBS #13** **SBS #14** **SBS #15** **SBS #16**

*Note: The coding of transcripts needs to identify leadership practices that **model (i.e., display and/or demonstrate)***
*or **promote (i.e., actively encourage)** SEL competencies.*

CASEL Competencies (5) and Skills (29)

Parent code	Child code
Self-awareness	Accurate self-perception
	Sense of self-confidence
	Self-efficacy
	Recognizes strengths
	Identifies own emotions and impact on others

Parent code	Child code
Self-management	**Controls** impulses
	Manages stress
	Self-motivated
	Self-discipline
	Sets goals
	Exhibits organizational skills

Parent code	Child code	Definition
SOCIAL AWARENESS	**RESPECTS OTHERS**	• Shows respect to others and consideration for them *praise or affirmation
	SHOWS EMPATHY	• Demonstrates perspective taking an/or affective understanding
	APPRECIATES DIVERSITY	• Recognizes the importance of and understands inclusivity as it relates to race and other marginalized groups
	ABLE TO CONSIDER OTHERS' PERSPECTIVES	• Works to understand what others are experiencing and thinking
	UNDERSTANDS SOCIAL AND ETHICAL NORMS	• Perceives the importance of and has an awareness of how to act and interact with and around others for the common good
	RECOGNIZES FAMILY, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS	• Identifies and acknowledges available resources

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS	**WORKS COOPERATIVELY WITH OTHERS**	• Interacts collegially with colleagues
	RESOLVES CONFLICTS	• Works with others to improve challenging situations
	COMMUNICATES CLEARLY	• Deliver, share or exchange information, news, or ideas in understandable ways
	ENGAGES SOCIALLY WITH DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS	• Interacts w/ individuals of different races and/or other marginalized groups
	COLLABORATES WITH TEAM MEMBERS	• Meets and works jointly with colleagues and supervisors
	LISTENS WELL	• Gives one's attention to someone
	SEEKS AND OFFERS HELP WHEN NEEDED	• Receives and gives support when needed
RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING	**MAKES ETHICAL CHOICES**	• Acts with and makes decisions with moral principles
	IDENTIFIES AND SOLVES PROBLEMS	• Finds and deals with challenging situations and figures out ways to improve them. *technical problems, for example
	REFLECTIVE	• Makes thoughtful decisions
	ANALYZES SITUATIONS ACCURATELY	• Examines methodically and in detail within a specific context for the purpose of interpretation; *adaptive problems, for example
	EVALUATES CONSEQUENCES IN CONSIDERATION OF THE WELL-BEING OF OTHERS	• Assesses what could happen and how it could impact others for positive outcomes; *people-oriented, relationship-oriented

DIP Focus Areas

Parent code	Parent code	Parent code
Sensemaking	Teacher resilience and well being	Mental health staff

Parent code	Child code	Definition
COLLECTIVE EFFICACY	**MASTERY EXPERIENCES**	• When you feel that something you did works
	VICARIOUS EXPERIENCES	• Seeing/hearing someone else have a successful experience

		• Sharing a successful idea
	SOCIAL PERSUASION	• Receiving feedback from someone else that causes you to reflect or change practice
	AFFECTIVE STATES	• Actions that make you feel a certain way
ADULT COLLABORATION	**POSITIVE ATTITUDES**	• Supportive, trusting • Committed, motivated • Understanding of collaborative roles • Accountability to team • Shared philosophy/goals
	TEAM PROCESS	• Communications b/w colleagues • Clear, formal processes • Collective effort over individual wants
	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	• Clarity of focus (standards, expectations, values) • Teacher voices in planning • Connections b/w activities and classrooms • Teachers and administrators share expertise • Ongoing activities, flexibly scheduled • Community building climate
	LEADERSHIP	• Shared leadership • Supportive climate • Volunteer for leadership roles • Effort is recognized • Participants hold themselves to high expectations
	RESOURCES	• Targets needs • Ongoing assessment • Participant initiated
	BENEFITS	• Evident • Lived and prominent • Public recognition
RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING	**COLLABORATION**	Two or more staff members and/or leaders and staff members coming together to: • support each other or seek support from each other • problem solve • produce or create something (i.e. policies, curriculum • share work, ideas, successes and frustrations

	RECOGNITION AND FEEDBACK	• Acknowledge the contributions and efforts of staff • Share staff contributions with others • Celebrated successes • Notice tings that made a difference for colleagues and/or students • Provide positive feedback during evaluation process • Offer constructive feedback to support growth in a thoughtful way
	INCLUSIVE DECISION MAKING	• Seek staff input • Listen to suggestions and ideas • Include all stakeholders in conversations related to decisions • Engage in constructive discourse to make better decisions • Use provided suggestions • Make decision making process transparent
	WORK/LIFE BALANCE AND SELF-CARE	• Allow staff to attend important family events • Encourage care of children and family members • Recognize family needs during crisis or trauma • Model work/life balance • Provide opportunities to engage in self-care at work • Offer workshops and training related to stress reduction and well-being • Promote growth mindset

Boston College PSAP

Social and Emotional Leadership Practices that Shape Districts and Schools

- Michele Conners
- Mark Ito
- Adam Renda
- Geoff Rose
- Donna Tobin

October 6, 2019

Defining Social and Emotional Learning

Dusenbury, Calin, Domitrovich, and Weissberg (2015) define Social and Emotional Learning as:

The process through which children and adults acquire 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. Social and emotional skills are critical to being a good student and citizen (p. 2).

SEL competencies	Definition of competency	Examples of skills with the competency
Self-awareness	Recognizing one's emotions, thoughts and values and how they influence behaviors, and identifying and cultivating one's strengths and limitations, and positive qualities	Accurate self-perception, sense of self-confidence, self-efficacy, recognizes strengths, identifies own emotions and impact on others
Self-management	Monitoring and regulating one's emotions, thoughts and behaviors in different situations and establishing and working toward achieving positive goals	Controls impulses, manages stress, self-motivated, self-discipline, sets goals, exhibits organizational skills
Social awareness	Understanding the thoughts and feelings of others and appreciating the value of human differences, understanding social and ethical norms for behavior and recognizing family, school, and community resources and supports.	Respects others, shows empathy, appreciates diversity, considers others' perspectives, understands social and ethical norms, recognizes family, school and community resources and supports
Relationship skills	Establishing and maintaining healthy, rewarding relationships with diverse individual and groups based on cooperation, listening, support, effective (clear) communication, conflict resolution, and an ability to resist inappropriate social pressure	Works cooperatively with others, resolves conflicts, communicates (clearly) effectively, engages socially with diverse individuals and groups, collaborates with team members, listens well, seeks and offers help when needed
Responsible decision-making	Making constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. Evaluating consequences of various actions in consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.	Makes ethical choices, identifies and solves problems, reflective, analyzes situations accurately, evaluates consequences in consideration of the well-being of others

Table 1. Social and emotional learning: competencies, definitions and associated skills. Adapted from "What does evidence based instruction in social and emotional learning actually look like in practice?: A brief on findings from CASEL's program reviews" by Dusenbury, L., Calin, S., Domitrovich, C., & Weissberg, R. P., 2015, *A Publication of the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning*, Chicago: CASEL; and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2017, retrieved from https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Competencies.pdf