



K-12 Student Success: Out-of-School Time Initiative

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING

A Learning Brief

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The K-12 Student Success: Out-of-School Time Initiative is focused on boosting student success among Oregon's middle school students. Thus far, The Oregon Community Foundation and The Ford Family Foundation have funded 47 organizations that provide out-of-school time (OST) programming (e.g., after school or summer) to rural students, students of color and low-income students. Funded programs emphasize academic support, positive adult role models and family engagement, and are participating in an ongoing learning community to support program quality through the Initiative. This learning brief summarizes what is known about social and emotional learning (SEL) from existing research, and shares what we are learning about the efforts of grantee organizations to promote social and emotional skill development among the youth who participate in their programming. We hope that this brief builds greater understanding of the practices and experiences of OST programs in Oregon.



WHAT IS SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING?

What the Literature Says

Social and emotional learning is referred to by many names, including soft skills; non-cognitive or meta-cognitive skills; mindsets, essential skills, and habits (MESH) (Transforming Education); 21st-century skills (P21); and readiness abilities (Krauss, et. al., 2016). Similarly, there are a variety of frameworks for conceptualizing, defining and measuring SEL.

For the purposes of this Learning Brief, we use the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework for SEL. CASEL describes 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.”

As students engage in SEL, they become equipped with the skills, attitudes and behaviors to deal productively with daily responsibilities and challenges, ultimately preparing them for success in school, career and life.

Social & Emotional Learning Competencies

SEL aims to develop competencies in areas such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making (CASEL).

Self-awareness

The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism and a "growth mindset." Includes the following skills and concepts: identifying emotions, accurate self-perception, recognizing strengths, self-confidence and self-efficacy.

Self-management

The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals. Includes the following skills and concepts: impulse control, stress management, self-discipline, self-motivation, goal-setting and organizational skills.

Social awareness

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports. Includes the following skills and concepts: perspective-taking, empathy, appreciating diversity and respect for others.

Relationship skills

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. Includes the following skills and concepts: communication, social engagement, relationship building and teamwork.

Responsible decision-making

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. Includes the following skills and concepts: identifying problems, analyzing situations, solving problems, evaluating, reflecting and ethical responsibility.

For more information, please see Suggested Resources on page 18.

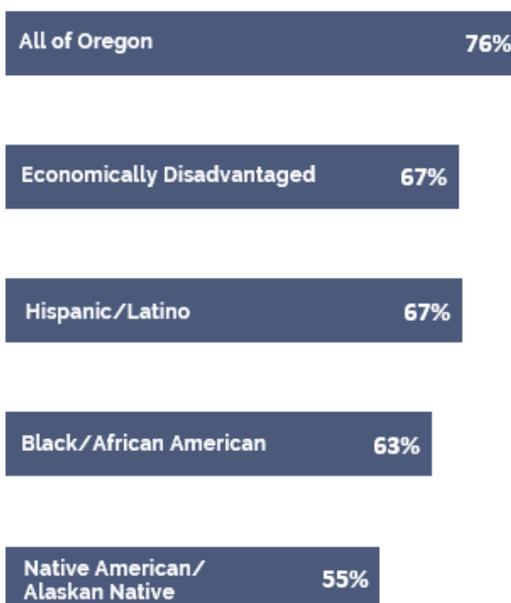
WHY IS SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING IMPORTANT?

What the Literature Says

A fundamental goal of the K-12 Student Success Initiative—and most OST programs—is to increase student success. The K-12 Student Success Initiative focuses on those students who are most likely to experience the achievement gap—to fall behind in terms of traditional markers of student success (e.g., graduation). In Oregon, as in many other states, the achievement gap is disproportionately experienced by students of color, students from low-income families and students in rural communities. This achievement gap is preceded by a gap in opportunities. Children from low-income families do not access to the same opportunities in their homes, schools and communities that are more readily available to those from higher-income families. Race, geography and other factors exacerbate this opportunity gap, with far-reaching implications for personal achievement throughout life. The K-12 Student Success Initiative funds and supports OST programs that aim to close that opportunity gap, to provide students with the support they need to be successful, including opportunities to develop social and emotional skills.

According to the Oregon Department of Education, the four-year cohort graduation rate in Oregon was just over 76 percent for the 2014-2015 school year. Unfortunately, graduation rates for Native American/Alaskan Natives was just under 55 percent, for Hispanic/Latino students just under 67 percent, and for Black/African American students about 62.5 percent for the same school year. Economically disadvantaged students' graduation rate was roughly 66.5 percent. Based on 2015 data available through the Oregon Department of Education, the 5-year graduation rates for students living in rural counties is similar to students living in urban counties (Ruffenach & Worcel, 2017).

Oregon 4-year high school cohort graduation rates 2014-2015 school year



The 4-year cohort graduation rate follows students from the fall of their first year in high school to the end of their fourth year in high school, in order to determine the percentage of those students who graduate within four years.



Social and emotional development of students plays a vital role in ensuring their success in academics and beyond. Research has highlighted that young people's success in school, the workplace and the community depends on more than academic knowledge and test scores (Goleman, 1995). Social and emotional skills are critical for young people to reach their full potential and become productive, healthy and happy adults. There is a growing body of research that suggests that social and emotional learning and skill-building in both school and out-of-school time settings has a positive effect on a range of skills and outcomes, including improved attitudes about self and others, improved academic performance and connection to school, increased positive social behaviors, fewer problem behaviors and less emotional distress (Durlak, et. al., 2011).

There is a large body of research indicating that mastery of social and emotional skills is associated with myriad positive educational, social, economic, psychological and physical health outcomes, including improvements in academic performance and trajectory, employability, and better overall health and well-being. With such a broad impact on so many areas of individual development and success, SEL is critical from a diversity and social justice perspective as well. The development of social and emotional skills contributes to the ability to form positive lasting relationships and an increased capacity for empathy, ultimately enhancing the ability to connect with individuals with diverse perspectives, cultures, languages,

Benefits of Social & Emotional Learning

SEL contributes to academic achievement and proactive engagement in school.

Research indicates that social-emotional skill development enhances student's connection to and attitudes toward school, including improvements in classroom behavior as well as academic performance as measured by test scores and grades (Zins, et al., 2004; Durlak, et al., 2011). In addition, students who are organized, set academic goals, exercise self-discipline and who motivate themselves learn more and get better grades (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005; Elliot & Dweck, 2005). A 2006 study found that students do better academically when they employ problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and when they make responsible decisions when it comes to studying and completing homework (Zins & Elias, 2006). Early development of social-emotional skills has also been found to increase the likelihood that youth will graduate from high school on time (Jones et al., 2015).

SEL prepares youth for success in college and career.

Other research has focused on the relationship between SEL and success in college and career. Aronson concluded that students who display more self-awareness and confidence are more likely to try harder and persevere through challenges (2002). In addition, SEL contributes to employability and job stability. Economists and employers are paying increasing attention to the need for workers to have strong social-emotional skills like cooperation, problem-solving and decision-making to be successful in the workplace. Out-of-school time programs target many of the skills that employers seek, which places OST programs and staff in an important and unique position to help close the skills gap between low-income youth and their more affluent counterparts, preparing all youth for the workforce (Beyond the Bell, 2015).

SEL promotes positive life choices and overall well-being.

Research has also investigated the link between SEL and overall well-being. A 2010 study found that OST programs that seek to promote personal and social skills in youth were associated with increases in prosocial behavior and decreases in problem behaviors such as noncompliance, aggression, delinquent acts, rebelliousness, behavior that results in disciplinary referrals, and other types of conduct problems (Durlak et al., 2010). SEL has also been shown to decrease the risk of substance use, mental health conditions and involvement with the criminal justice system (Eisenberg, 2006; Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Weissberg & Greenberg, 1998; Jones et al., 2015). A recent study by Jones et al. concluded that early prosocial skills decreased the likelihood of living in public housing or being on a waiting list for public housing, receiving public assistance, involvement with police before adulthood, and ever being in a detention facility (2015).

histories, identities and abilities.

Social and emotional skill development can be particularly beneficial for adolescents—youth aged roughly 14 to 17—as they begin to explore their independence and autonomy, experience new academic and social demands, experiment with risky behaviors, and learn to deal with new, intense emotions due to their changing brain structure and hormone activity (Yeager, 2017). In Yeager's recent review of a variety of SEL programs to tease out what works best with adolescents, he found that "effective programs can prevent catastrophic outcomes, such as unwanted pregnancy, arrests for violent crime or dropping out of high school" (p. 74).

Adults in school and youth program settings play an important role in promoting SEL outcomes that ultimately address disparities in education, health and other lifetime outcomes that persist across traditionally underserved groups. Indeed, research dating back to the late 1990s suggests a positive relationship between high-quality OST and student success (Fashola, 1998; Farmer-Hinton, 2009; Little, 2009; Moore & Hamilton, 2010; and more). Quality OST programs improve student attendance and engagement with school, boost social emotional skills and improve academic performance, which in turn increases the likelihood of high school graduation and post-secondary attainment. For example, recent studies of 21st Century Community Learning Centers have shown that school day attendance, behavior and grade promotion improves for students participating in high-quality programs (American Institutes for Research, 2013; Naftzger et al., 2015). Research also indicates that more intentional, structured and intensive programs are more likely to result in improved student success (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Kidron & Lindsay, 2014). Successful OST programs are also positively associated with social-emotional skills such as creativity, resiliency and problem-solving, which in turn increase success in school and life. Researchers have also found that experiential learning is linked to social-emotional skill gains (Farrington, et al, 2012; Kidron & Lindsay, 2014).



HOW CAN OST PROGRAMS SUPPORT SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN YOUTH?

What the Literature Says

Out-of-school time programs are prime settings for implementing SEL programs and practices (Beyond the Bell at AIR, 2015). Durlak, et al, found that high-quality OST programs that aim to enhance the personal and social skills of participating youth are successful at promoting positive outcomes, including improved self-perceptions, strengthened connections to school, increased academic achievement, positive social behaviors and reduced problem behaviors (2010). OST programs are successful in helping youth learn and practice social-emotional skills through activities focused on leadership development, team building, community service and civic engagement. Research has found that SEL programs are successful in urban, suburban and rural settings as well as across the educational spectrum (elementary, middle and high school) (Durlak, et al., 2011).

The research highlights three general approaches or models for building social-emotional skills in youth: skills models, climate models and mindset models (Yeager, 2017; Jones & Doolittle, 2017). Please see the box on page 9 for more information.

Very recent research indicates that certain approaches or models are more effective than others for supporting social-emotional skill development of certain age groups (Yeager, 2017). Practitioners and programs will be most effective when the practices and strategies employed for teaching and supporting SEL skills in youth are developmentally appropriate.

For adolescents, the onset of puberty brings with it changes in hormones as well as new psychological needs. Developmentally, adolescents are exploring opportunities to create their own identities and exercise autonomy, to make friends and be accepted by their peers, to contribute to something bigger than themselves, to choose the activities they want to be involved in, and to set goals and succeed (National Academy of Sciences, 2011). While skills-based models have been shown to be effective with younger children—elementary age—they have been found to be less so with adolescents. Evidence presented by Yeager (2017) suggests that the

Models of Social & Emotional Development

The research highlights three general approaches or models for building social-emotional skills in youth (Yeager, 2017; Jones & Doolittle, 2017):

Skills model

A skills model emphasizes that SEL skills can be taught and supported formally through direct instruction using a stand-alone curriculum specifically designed to develop social and emotional skills. There are a handful of SEL curricula that have been developed and are prominent in the literature including, among others: Positive Action, Life Skills Training, 4Rs, Second Step, and PATHS.

Climate model

SEL skill development is fostered through a climate model by integrating supportive strategies into program policy and practice, including changes to rules and expectations. Altering staff practices and the nature of staff-student interactions through professional development and training creates a supportive emotional climate during a students' experience in a program (e.g., when staff are responsive and encouraging or support students in working through challenges while letting them find their own solutions).

Mindset model

A mindset model focuses on influencing students' belief systems or mindsets—their perceptions of themselves, others and the community or world around them—in hopes of producing internalized, lasting change that will stay with the youth over time and can be applied beyond a particular program context or setting.

most effective approach to building social and emotional skills in adolescents aged roughly 14 to 17, is a combination of the climate and mindset models, essentially creating a program space where youth feel supported emotionally as they learn to shift the way they see the world around them. Yeager (2017) argues that, "effective programs make adolescents feel respected by adults and peers and offer them the chance to gain status and admiration in the eyes of people whose opinions they value most" (p. 75).

In addition to these three models, the body of research offers several general recommendations for effectively supporting youth in developing social-emotional skills. Beyond the Bell at American Institutes for Research offers several recommendations based on key program features that support social and emotional learning in their Research to Practice brief titled *Supporting Social and Emotional Development Through Quality Afterschool Programs* (2015).

Bolster youth engagement and participation in programming.

It is important to foster strong student engagement and participation in programming, especially in those aspects that build SEL skills through targeted

activities and opportunities to practice new skills. There are many ways that OST programs can work to increase student participation and engagement, including learning about student needs and interests as well as those of their families. Programs can offer supports that would make it more feasible for students to attend—this may mean providing transportation, food, or enrichment and recreational activities that draw students and families in and ensure they return (Beckett, 2009). Program staff are also encouraged to survey students about their level of satisfaction and perceived engagement in programming and to make changes that reflect students' feedback.

Ensure programming is sequenced, active, focused and explicit (S.A.F.E.).

Granger (2008) notes a consensus in the afterschool field that, “being explicit about program goals, implementing activities focused on these goals and getting youth actively involved are practices of effective programs” (p. 11). There is broad agreement in the research community that programs are most effective when staff “use a sequenced, step-by-step training approach, use active forms of learning, focus sufficient time on skill development and have explicit learning goals,” (Durlak, et al., 2011, p. 4). It's important to note that these four practices are most effective in promoting personal and social skills in youth when used in combination, rather than independently (Durlak, et al., 2010). Program staff should have access to professional development to support them in incorporating S.A.F.E. strategies into their program practice.

Make decisions about which social-emotional skills matter most.

Program managers and staff are encouraged to choose a few key social-emotional skills the program aims to build—based on the youth the program is serving, program goals and program activities—and focus measurement efforts on those specific skills. It is not feasible to build student skills in every aspect of SEL highlighted in the research and myriad SEL frameworks that exists today. By focusing on those key skills that align with program goals and student needs, SEL skill development and measurement will be more manageable and meaningful.

Ensure staff have the appropriate skillset and experience for delivering SEL programming.

The adults delivering SEL programming are critical to its success. Program staff need to have adequate professional development opportunities to support their successful delivery of programming aimed at developing and supporting social-emotional skills in youth. Supportive staff should take on the role of a mentor as well as possess the SEL skills they aim to instill in the youth with whom they are working. Jones and Doolittle note, “For adolescents, SEL programs may be more effective if they're delivered by adults who show that they understand and respect the adolescents' point of view and need for autonomy, rather than trying to control them” (2017, p. 9).



WHAT DOES SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT LOOK LIKE FOR K-12 STUDENT SUCCESS GRANTEES?

What We're Learning in Oregon

The K-12 Initiative grantees are working to develop the social-emotional skills of their students both formally and informally. Several grantees use formal curriculum designed to support social-emotional skill development (e.g., Thrive, Positive Action), while the majority do so primarily through the way that staff and students interact and through activities meant to support students' SEL. For programs that are using a formal curriculum, lessons follow the recommended S.A.F.E. guidelines for effectively promoting social-emotional skill development—they are highly structured, explicit about the skills the lesson is intended to build, and include activities for youth to explore a particular SEL concept or competency. Formal lessons also often include time for reflection, allowing students to consider what they've learned and how they might apply a particular skill when interacting with various people and places in their lives.

Other programs incorporate SEL through program activities, language and the nature of interactions between staff and youth rather than through a more formal curriculum. For example, starting or ending each program session with a community circle or group check-in allows each student to voice their thoughts, concerns or feelings and promotes a safe, supportive environment, self-awareness, relationship skills and empathy for others. Several grantees integrate specific language and practice around a growth mindset—the idea



that abilities and intelligence can be cultivated through effort—into programming and the way staff approach and interact with youth. For example, if staff is working with a student who is struggling with a math assignment during a homework session, they may say something like, “That feeling of math being hard is the feeling of your brain growing.” Evidence of this more informal approach around growth mindset was apparent during a visit to one grantee program when an OCF evaluation staff missed catching a ball that was tossed her way. When she commented to the students, “I’m sorry, I’m not very good at this,” one of the students in the group responded, “That doesn’t sound like a growth mindset to me!”

Through their programming and interactions with students, many grantees promote SEL by focusing on goal setting and helping students plan for the future, by actively promoting cultural identity and belonging, and by building students’ self- and social awareness.

Supporting goal setting and a future orientation.

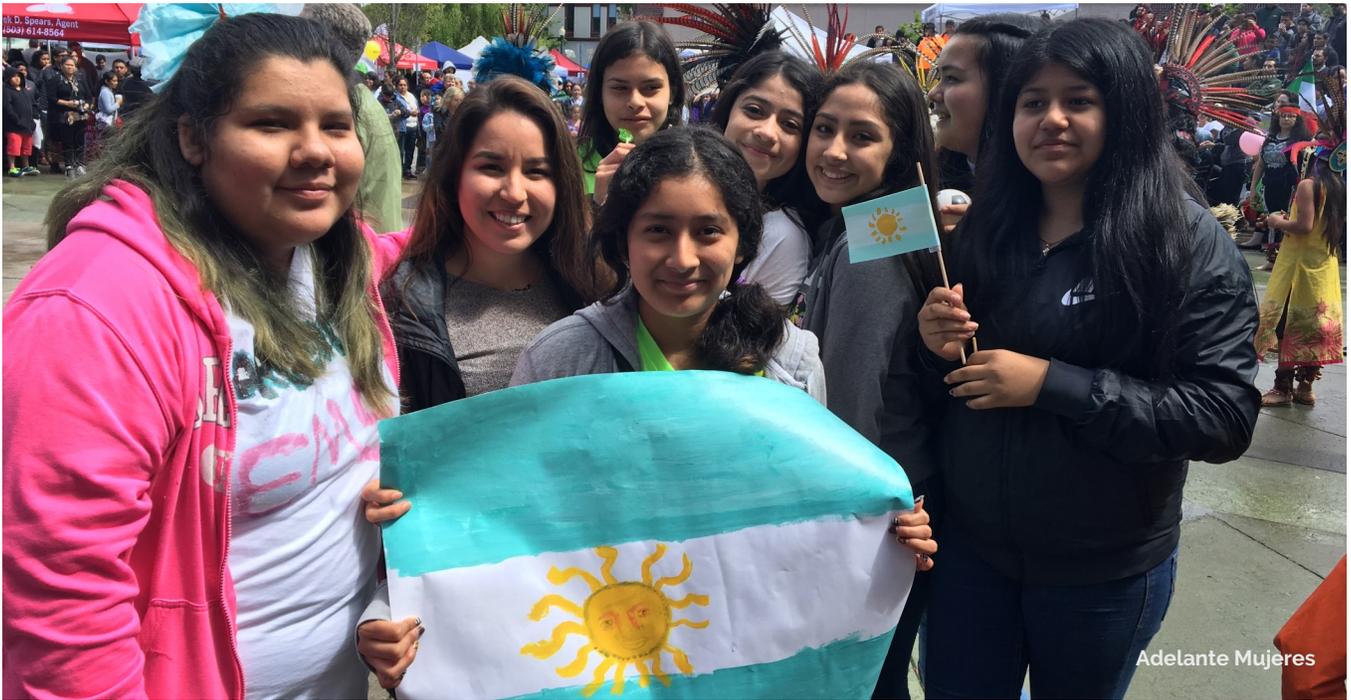
Several grantees report working on goal setting with students as a good way to support both social-emotional growth and keeping them on track academically. One grantee describes staff working with students to create individual plans to raise one letter grade in one core class. Students have the freedom to determine which class and to make a plan for how they will do it, with guidance from staff. “We try to make it feel attainable. By focusing on one class, they learn transferrable skills that they can use to succeed in other classes.” Activities like community circle can help students reflect on their goals and staff can coach them to think about their future.

Promoting cultural identity and belonging.

Almost a third of grantees are working explicitly on building cultural identity and belonging which supports SEL in the areas of self-awareness, social awareness and relationship skills. By hiring staff who reflect youths’ racial or ethnic background or experience, K-12 Initiative OST programs are promoting positive racial identity. Research shows that positive adult role models, such as OST program staff, can help youth develop positive identities and have an impact on the emotional well-being of youth.

Encouraging self-awareness, social awareness and reflection.

In one program, a student was challenged by program staff to stretch their thinking about homelessness. Grantee staff recounted a story about a youth who was questioning the purpose of a community service project to prepare meals for individuals who were experiencing homelessness. This particular youth expressed to staff that they saw homelessness as a choice people make. By exploring that idea with program staff and peers, the youth was able to make a connection between their own experience as an immigrant in the United States and the sense of not always feeling at home in this country. As a result, the youth had a shift in thinking and decided to lead a clothing drive to help displaced people in their community.



Adelante Mujeres

SUCCESSSES WITH SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING

What We're Learning in Oregon



There are many ways K-12 Initiative grantees have been successful in their efforts to develop social-emotional skills for the youth they serve. Successes include supporting goal setting and helping youth plan for a positive future; providing experiential, enrichment and community service learning opportunities; promoting cultural identity and belonging; and working to strengthen program quality through assessment and continuous improvement efforts. It is noteworthy that not all grantees' experiences are the same. Some are experiencing successes with aspects of SEL that others find more challenging.

Supporting goal setting and future orientation.

Many grantee programs provide youth with opportunities to learn about college and career opportunities, though in varying capacities. These include staff supporting youth in exploring career options using online tools, staff taking youth to college and career fairs and staff taking youth on college campus tours. In addition, the academic focus of many (if not all) grantees is designed to help participating students be more prepared for eventual graduation and college attendance. A couple of grantees are particularly focused on helping students plan for college attendance, such as College Dreams, while others intend to help students explore and pursue particular college and career pathways, such as the STEM-focused Oregon MESA and

OSU Smile programs. In spring of 2015, 2016 and 2017, students in the grantee programs completed a survey intended to measure their social and emotional development and its relationship to OST programming from the students' perspectives. Each year, a majority of students said that their programs help them become more interested in what they're learning in school and help them connect their homework to their future goals. During winter and spring 2016, grantee staff worked with youth on a photo voice project to capture their perspectives about their experiences in OST program. Through this project, some youth explained that they are open to learning new things at their program they believe will help them in the future.

Providing experiential, enrichment and service learning opportunities.

Many grantee programs offer experiential and enrichment opportunities for youth through activities such as field trips, service learning projects, outdoor science excursions, project showcases and robotics competitions. These often serve as an incentive for student engagement—students who attend a field trip may then become more regular attendees at a program, for example. For some grantees, these are important opportunities to expose students to life outside their communities or comfort zones—opportunities that students in rural and low-income communities don't often experience. Some programs take students on their first college campus tour, or introduce them to role models working in fields of interest (e.g., Latina engineers). These types of experiences can help youth develop social and emotional skills such as self-confidence, communication, social engagement, relationship-building, teamwork, problem-solving, perspective-taking and reflecting as they learn from and work with each other and members of their broader communities.

Promoting cultural identity and belonging.

Many of the K-12 grantees are weaving together enrichment programming, academic learning and SEL. For example, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs OST programming is teaching students native languages and cultural traditions, and blends math and writing with programming. During root-digging season, the program teaches students about the seasons, climate and plants. Program staff speak eloquently and enthusiastically about the importance of building student connections to native language and culture: "Inside of our language it holds our value system. Once you pick up the language, you become who you are." "[Students] need to know [academics and culture] to be comfortable in our community and outside our community." Elders who teach programming note that student confidence and cultural agility is building as a result of their participation. Through the photo voice project completed in the winter and spring of 2016, several students described a deep sense of pride in their culture, which they feel is recognized and celebrated in their OST programs.

Participating in formal program quality assessment and improvement efforts.

All of the K-12 Initiative grantee organizations have participated in formal program quality assessment and improvement efforts as a requirement of the Initiative. The Youth Program Quality Assessment framework and tools are designed to support positive youth development, focusing staff attention on key practices that support development of social and emotional skills, such as providing youth opportunities to reflect and lead. In addition, through these efforts program managers and staff have been able to celebrate what their programs do well in addition to acknowledging the strengths and capacities they bring to their work. This gives programs an opportunity to practice and model the strengths-based, social and emotional development they want staff to use with youth. A focus on program quality also supports social-emotional skill development in youth by improving overall program climate and fostering supportive staff-student interactions.

Suggested Resources

- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
- Preparing Youth to Thrive: Promising Practices for Social & Emotional Learning
- Preparing Youth to Thrive - A new social and emotional learning field guide from the Susan Crown Exchange and the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality



Kids Club of Harney County



CHALLENGES WITH SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING

What We're Learning in Oregon

K-12 Initiative grantees have experienced several challenges related to promoting social-emotional skill development for the students participating in their programs. For some, the challenge is recruiting and engaging youth who would benefit most from their programs while also supporting a wide range of student needs. For others, the challenge lies in retaining experienced youth development workers and providing them with adequate and appropriate professional development opportunities. Another persistent challenge for many programs is determining which of the myriad SEL competencies matter most for their youth and how to measure skill development in those areas.

Recruiting and keeping students engaged.

All of the grantee programs funded through the Initiative are serving middle school students from low-income families. In addition, more than half of the grantees are serving students of color and almost half are serving youth in rural communities. While grantees are serving many of the youth in their communities who stand to benefit most from their programs and from social and emotional skill development supports, many explain that they still struggle to recruit high numbers of these students. Once students are recruited, it can sometimes be a challenge to keep them engaged in the

program over an extended period of time. Several grantees have noted that staff turnover, inconsistent staff, competing interests and priorities (e.g., sports), as well as limited family support, can all negatively impact student recruitment and engagement in the long term.

Recruiting and retaining staff, and providing professional development opportunities.

The often limited number of youth development professionals in any given community who have the right experience and skill set to work well with middle school-age youth is a persistent challenge. Once programs do attract and hire experienced staff, there is the added challenge of high turnover as some grantees struggle to retain staff over time. Another challenge articulated by grantee organizations, is in providing adequate professional development opportunities for youth workers, especially those focused on supporting student SEL. In order to develop social-emotional skills in youth, staff must have and be able to draw upon their own SEL skills. For example, staff should be able to build positive relationships, deal constructively with conflict, engage in self-reflection, and exhibit empathy for those around them.

Supporting wide-ranging student needs.

Many students are participating in K-12 Initiative grantee programs because they need extra academic or social support. However, students may be in very different places developmentally; middle school in particular is a time where the developmental “ages” of students in the same grade can vary greatly. Determining and then responding to the wide range of student needs is one of the biggest challenges for grantee staff, particularly with regard to varying degrees of social and emotional skill development.

Determining which SEL competencies matter and how to measure them.

Beyond the Bell at American Institutes for Research notes in their Research to Practice brief *Supporting Social and Emotional Development Through Quality Afterschool Programs*, “[t]he challenge for the afterschool field is that social and emotional competencies are not universally agreed upon, and their measurement is both complicated and controversial” (2015, p. 1). This is true for OST programs in Oregon. In the early stages of the K-12 Student Success Initiative, there was interest from both the funders and the grantee organizations in understanding more about OST program impacts on social-emotional skill development in the youth participating in programming. There was a sense that program staff were supporting SEL and that students were developing SEL skills; however, there were a lot of questions about what SEL competencies to focus on and how best to measure those skills in youth. While much research has been done in recent years around the concepts, impacts and measurement of social and emotional learning and skill development, much remains to be determined in regards to a shared language, framework and assessment for SEL in Oregon and the broader field of study.

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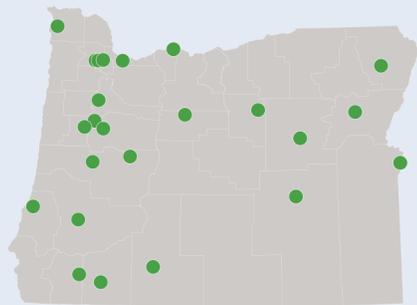
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ABOUT THIS LEARNING BRIEF

The K-12 Student Success: Out-of-School Time Initiative began in late 2013 and is currently ongoing. The goal of the Initiative is to help close the achievement gap for students in Oregon by raising awareness of the importance of supporting students in their middle school years and the valuable role out-of-school time (OST) programs play in supporting student success. Thus far, through the K-12 Initiative, The Oregon Community Foundation and The Ford Family Foundation have funded 47 organizations that provide OST programming (e.g., after school and summer) to rural students, students of color and low-income students across the state. These programs emphasize academic support, positive adult role models and family engagement.

This learning brief summarizes what is known about social and emotional learning through existing research as well as the successes and challenges of Initiative grantees in working to support social-emotional skill development among the youth who participate in their programs. Information included in this brief was gathered through a number of Initiative evaluation activities including literature review, interviews with grantee staff and leaders, OST program observations, and several rounds of student survey administration and analysis. This brief is one of several developed and published by the Research Department at The Oregon Community Foundation to share what we're learning during the Initiative with practitioners and other stakeholders in order to build understanding of the practices and experiences of OST programs in Oregon.

K-12 STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVE GRANTEES



47 Grantees

Have received funding
through the K-12 Student
Success Initiative.

Adelante Mujeres
Airway Science for Kids
Baker School District 5J
Bandon Community Youth Center
Beaverton Education Foundation
Boys and Girls Club of Albany
Boys and Girls Club of Corvallis
Boys and Girls Club of Salem,
Marion and Polk Counties
Boys and Girls Club of
Southwestern Oregon
Boys and Girls Club of the Western
Lane County
Boys and Girls Club of the Western
Treasure Valley
Boys and Girls Clubs of Portland
Boys and Girls Club of the Greater
Santiam
Boys and Girls Club of the
Umpqua Valley

Building Healthy Families
Camp Fire Columbia
Camp Fire Central Oregon Council
Centro Cultural
Chiloquin Jr Sr High School
College Dreams
Confederated Tribes of Warm
Springs
Coquille School District #8
Eugene School District 4J
Falls City School District #57
Friends of the Children
Grant School District #3
Hacienda CDC
Hood River County SD/Arts in
Education of the Gorge
Human Solutions Inc.
I Have a Dream Foundation
Illinois Valley Community Develop-
ment Organization—RiverStars

Impact NW
IRCO
Kids Club of Harney County
Kids Unlimited
Lane Community College Foundation
Latino Network
McKenzie School District #68
Open Meadow
Oregon MESA
OSU SMILE
Port Orford-Langlois School District
2CJ
REACH Redmond
Self Enhancement Inc.
Sunset Empire Park and
Recreation District
Todos Juntos
Wheeler County Community School



In partnership with

