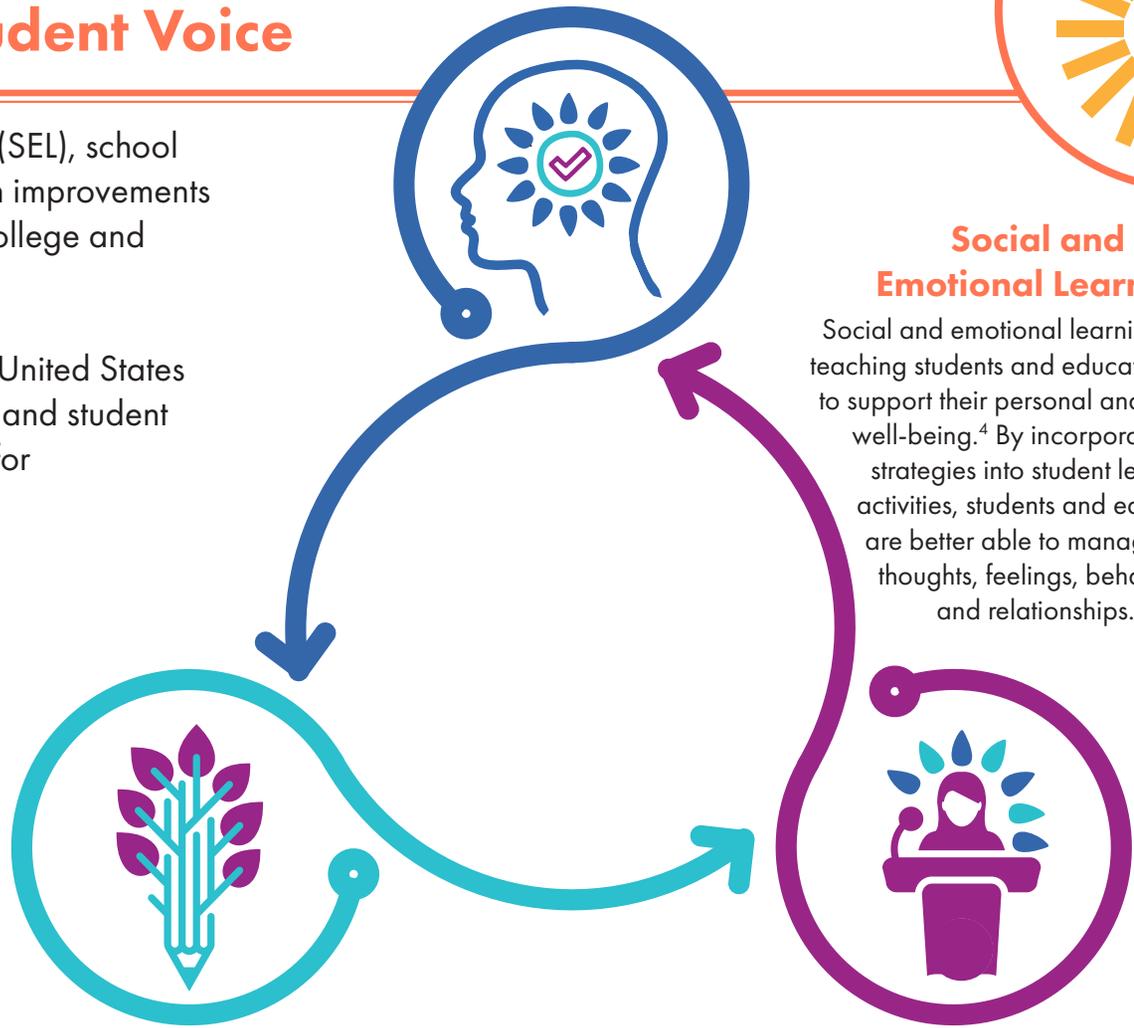# Connecting Social and Emotional Learning, School Climate, and Student Voice

Strategies to promote social and emotional learning (SEL), school climate, and student voice have been connected with improvements in student academic achievement, well-being, and college and career readiness.[1]

Given these benefits, schools and districts across the United States and the Pacific Region are using SEL, school climate, and student voice to help their students become better prepared for college and/or a career.[2, 3]

Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning involves teaching students and educators the skills to support their personal and academic well-being.[4] By incorporating SEL strategies into student learning activities, students and educators are better able to manage their thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and relationships.[5]

School Climate

School climate includes the practices that support students and adults in feeling safe, respected, and engaged in the environment.[6] When school climate strategies are implemented, teachers and families are able to build partnerships and create policies that support students' sense of safety in schools.[7]

Student Voice

Student voice enables students to indirectly or directly participate in education decision making.[8] When student voice strategies are used, students are better able to advocate for their needs and the needs of their peers, and educators are more responsive to students' needs.[9]

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Implementation Strategies

Effective school-wide implementation of these strategies often includes...

Social and Emotional Learning[10]

- **Explicit Instruction:** Use lessons focused on teaching SEL.
- **Academic Integration:** Incorporate SEL into academic content.
- **School Climate**: Foster a positive school environment to promote SEL.
- **Family & Community:** Communicate SEL goals beyond the school walls.

Examples of Implementation

Teach lessons on effective listening.

Provide vocabulary words for feelings.

School Climate[11, 12]

- **Student Voice:** Support students in being co-leaders and co-learners.
- **SEL:** Build adults' and students' social and emotional skills.
- **Partnerships:** Provide space for multiple stakeholders to participate in decisions.
- **Inclusion & Equity:** Ensure that all adults and students feel supported and safe.

Examples of Implementation

Build partnerships between schools and the community.

Create policies to support student safety.

Student Voice[13, 14]

- **Youth Development:** Build students' capacity to participate in decision making.
- **Adult Ally:** Select at least one adult to support students in decision making.
- **Relationships:** Foster student–student and student–adult relationships.
- **Inclusion & Equity:** Ensure that all students are supported to share their voice and feel safe.

Examples of Implementation

Create a schoolwide student advisory council to co-participate in decision making.

Collaborate with students to co-create classroom lessons.

Combined Implementation: An Interactive Relationship [15, 16, 17]

Social and emotional learning promotes the development of students' social and emotional skills.

School climate promotes a positive, safe, and engaging environment, which allows students and adults to develop and use their social and emotional skills.
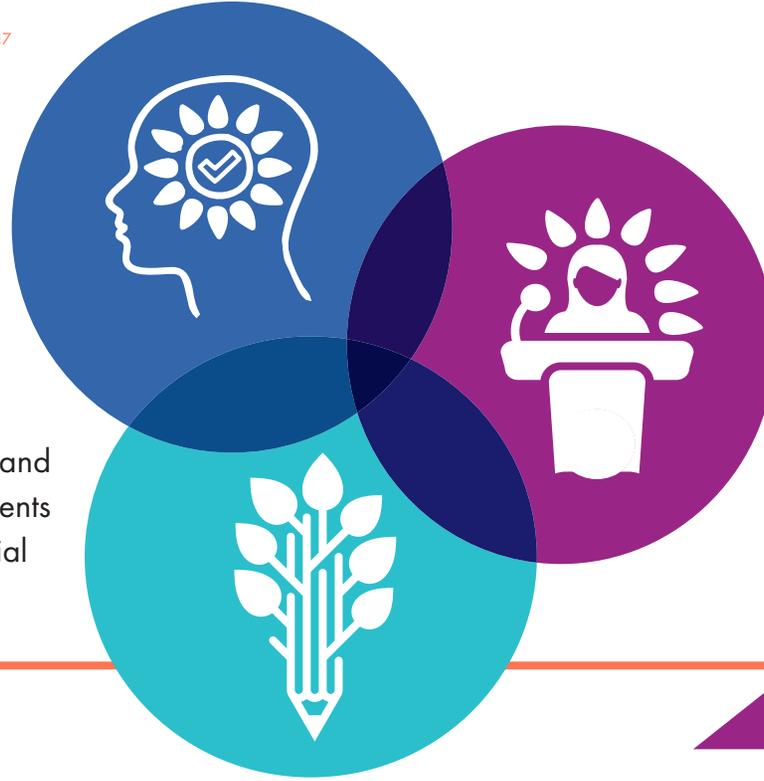
Student voice empowers students to use learned social and emotional skills to participate in education decision making and contribute to creating a positive school climate.

Outcomes of Combined Implementation [18, 19, 20]

Supportive relationships between students, teachers, and administrators.

Increased student engagement in their learning and school environment.

Culturally responsive teachers and administrators who work with students, families, and communities.

Classrooms and schools that adapt to and meet the needs of students.

Student growth along measures of academic success and social and emotional wellbeing.

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