Social and Emotional Learning

The Effects of Program Implementation and Longevity, 2011–2012 Through 2015–2016

Department of
Research and Evaluation
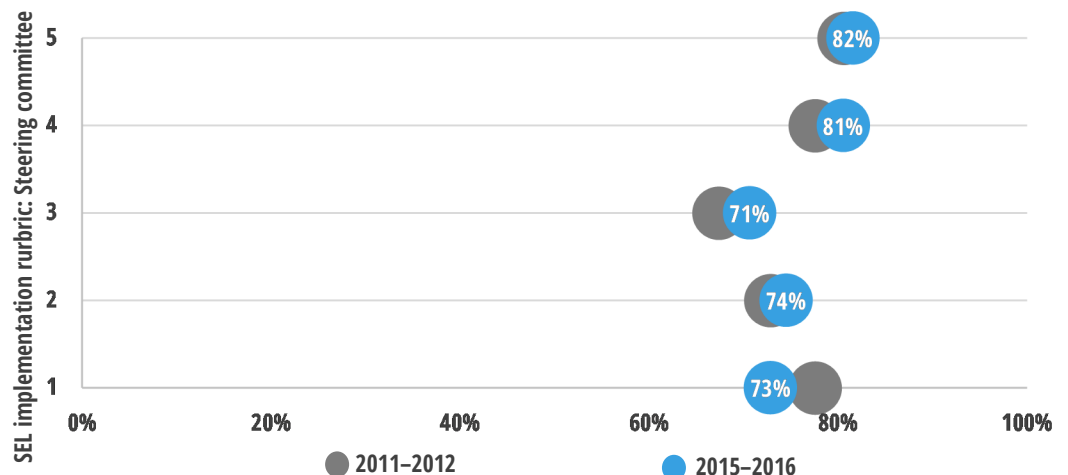AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
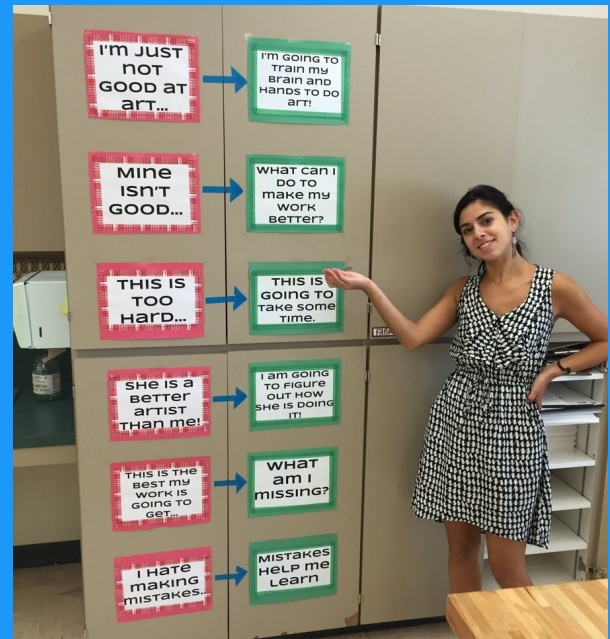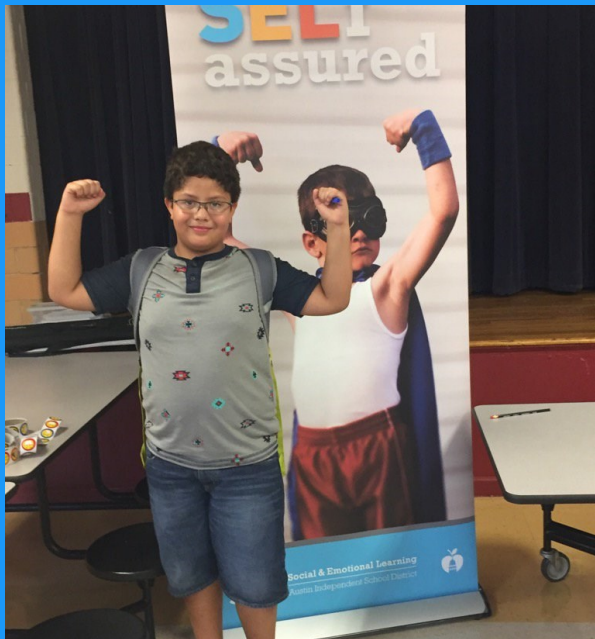
Executive Summary

In 2015–2016, the final cohort of schools in the Austin Independent School District (AISD) received training to implement Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). This report summarizes analyses examining the effects of SEL on schools based on longevity in SEL and the degree to which schools effectively integrated SEL into the fabric of their school. Specifically, this report describes campus-level effects of the SEL program from the year prior to district-wide SEL implementation (i.e., 2010–2011, when available) through 2015–2016. Key outcome measures (e.g., academic achievement, attendance, chronic absenteeism, discipline, school climate, staff climate) were analyzed over time to determine if change in outcomes over the same time period were more pronounced at schools participating in SEL for a longer period of time than at schools participating in SEL for a shorter period of time. Additionally, analyses were conducted to determine if degree of implementation positively influenced change in outcomes of interest over time. Analyses also examined the influence of SEL implementation and years in SEL on school climate and SEL skills. Importantly, results were more pronounced when examining the influence of SEL implementation on program outcomes than when examining the influence of years of experience in SEL. For example, elementary schools with effective steering committees (as measured on the SEL implementation rubric) experienced greater improvements in State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) math over time than did elementary schools with less effective steering committees (Figure 1). Indeed, the degree to which elementary schools integrated SEL with fidelity was related to positive program outcomes, whereas the degree to which secondary schools (i.e., middle and high schools) connected with their community was related to positive program outcomes. Positive relationships between student and staff perceptions of school climate, SEL skills, and SEL implementation were also found. Understanding which components of implementation are more critical to program success will help district leaders identify areas to target as SEL shifts its focus from "what we do" to "who we are."

Figure 1.

After controlling for baseline year, elementary schools with higher ratings of SEL steering committee integration predicted 2015–2016 STAAR math performance, regardless of length of time in SEL.

Source. 2011–2012 through 2015–2016 STAAR data and 2015–2016 SEL implementation ratings
Note. β = 1.29, p < .05

i

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Introduction

In 2011–2012, Austin Independent School District (AISD) began a 5-year mission to implement Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) district wide. Each year, new cohorts of schools joined SEL, with all schools receiving training by 2015–2016. As a result, some schools have participated in SEL for 5 years, while other schools have participated in SEL for just 1 year. One focus of this report is to determine whether longevity in SEL yields positive results. At the same time, as noted in previous reports (Lamb, 2015a, 2015b), longevity in SEL alone does not drive improvements in school outcomes; rather, the degree to which schools implement SEL with fidelity also influences improvements in school outcomes. Therefore, analyses in this report seek to answer the following question, do program outcomes improve more as a result of length of time or as a result of level of program implementation? As district leaders move from focusing on district-wide implementation to ensuring that SEL is part of the culture and climate of AISD, it is imperative to document which factors are most critical to program success.
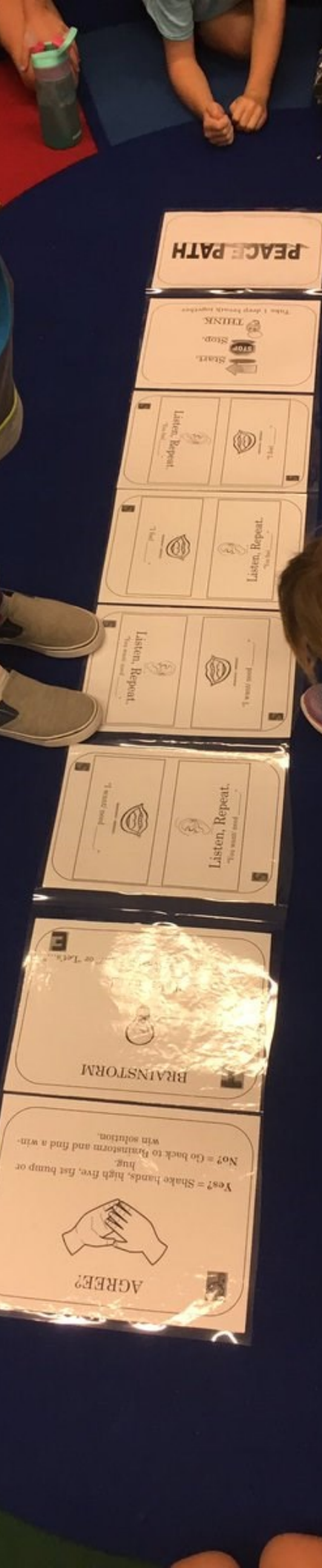
Analysis of Key Outcomes, Based on Years in SEL and Program Implementation

Because SEL was implemented district wide in 2015–2016, this section describes analyses conducted with each of the key outcome variables from 2010–2011 (when applicable) through 2015–2016. All schools were included to determine if change in outcomes over the same time period were more pronounced at schools with more years in SEL than at schools with fewer years in SEL. Additionally, analyses were conducted to determine what factors related to school implementation (e.g., SEL implementation rubric ratings and students' and staffs' perceptions of school climate) predicted change in outcomes over time. Throughout the report, small sample sizes often precluded the use of statistical significance tests; therefore, in those cases, data were examined for trends and patterns. Also, middle and high school data were combined into secondary-level data to increase the number of schools at this level of analysis.

Academic Achievement

STAAR Math. Examinations of elementary students' performance on the STAAR from 2011–2012 through 2015–2016 based on longevity in SEL yielded no significant results (see Appendix A for a table displaying performance over time, based on years in SEL). However, after controlling for 2011–2012 school performance on STAAR math, schools with SEL steering committees that regularly reviewed campus SEL implementation had higher 2016 STAAR math performance than did schools with steering committees that were less involved with SEL implementation (Figure 1). In conversations with SEL specialists, many said that strong steering committees drive the work of SEL implementation at the school level and should be an area of focus for schools with weaker program implementation.

Figure 1.
After controlling for baseline year, elementary schools with strong steering committees predicted 2015–2016 STAAR math performance, regardless of length of time in SEL.

Source. 2011–2012 through 2015–2016 STAAR data and 2015–2016 SEL implementation ratings
Note. β = 1.29, *p* < .05

After controlling for 2011–2012 elementary school math performance, schools where staff believed their school's discipline practices promoted social and emotional learning (e.g., developmentally appropriate consequences and restorative justice) had higher 2015–2016 math performance than did schools where staff did not believe discipline practices promoted social and emotional learning (Figure 2).

Figure 2.
After controlling for baseline year, elementary schools where staff believed discipline practices promoted social and emotional learning predicted 2015–2016 math performance, regardless of length of time in SEL.
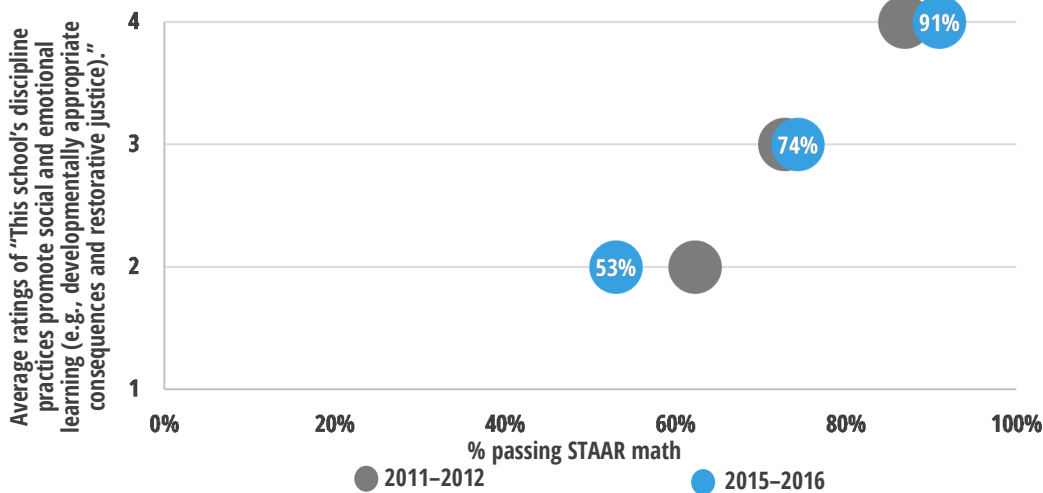
Source. 2011–2012 through 2015–2016 STAAR data and 2015–2016 TELL Staff Climate Survey
Note. TELL survey response options ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*
β = 16.20, *p* < .01

Finally, after controlling for 2011–2012 elementary school math performance, schools where students were more likely to believe that their classmates showed respect to other students who were different had higher STAAR math performance in 2016 than did schools where students were less likely to believe their classmates respected students who were different (Figure 3).

Figure 3.
After controlling for baseline year, elementary schools where students show respect to peers who are different predicted 2015–2016 math performance, regardless of length of time in SEL.
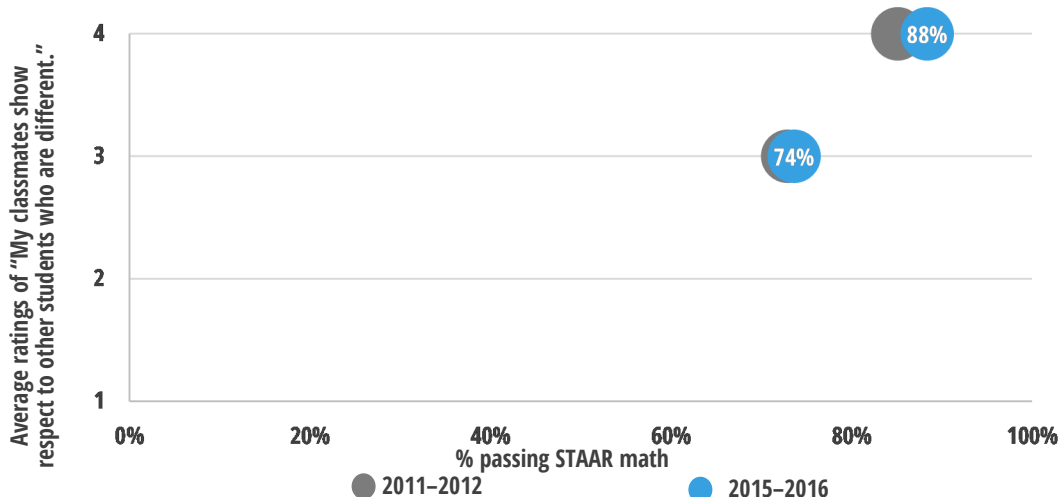
Source. 2011–2012 through 2015–2016 STAAR data and 2015–2016 Student Climate Survey
Note. Student Climate Survey response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 4 = *a lot of the time*
β = 10.96, *p* < .01
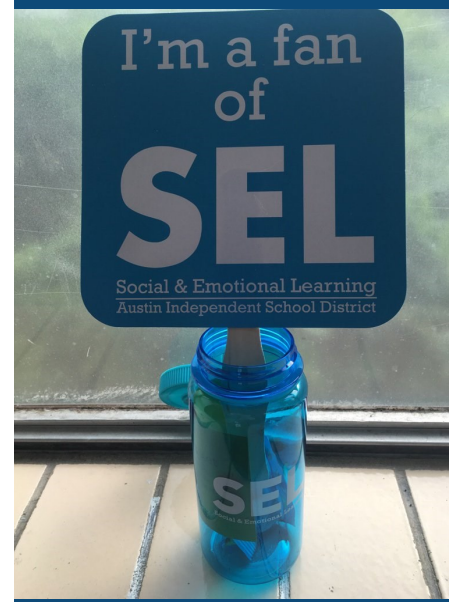
STAAR Reading. Similarly, there were no significant differences based on years in SEL and elementary school students' performance on STAAR reading (see Appendix A). Yet, after controlling for 2011–2012 STAAR reading performance, schools where staff believed that disciplinary practices promoted social emotional learning (e.g., developmentally appropriate consequences and restorative justice) had higher 2015–2016 reading passing rates than did schools where staff did not believe disciplinary practices promoted social and emotional learning (Figure 6).

Figure 6.
After controlling for baseline year, schools where staff believed discipline practices promote social and emotional learning predicted 2015–2016 reading performance, regardless of length of time in SEL.
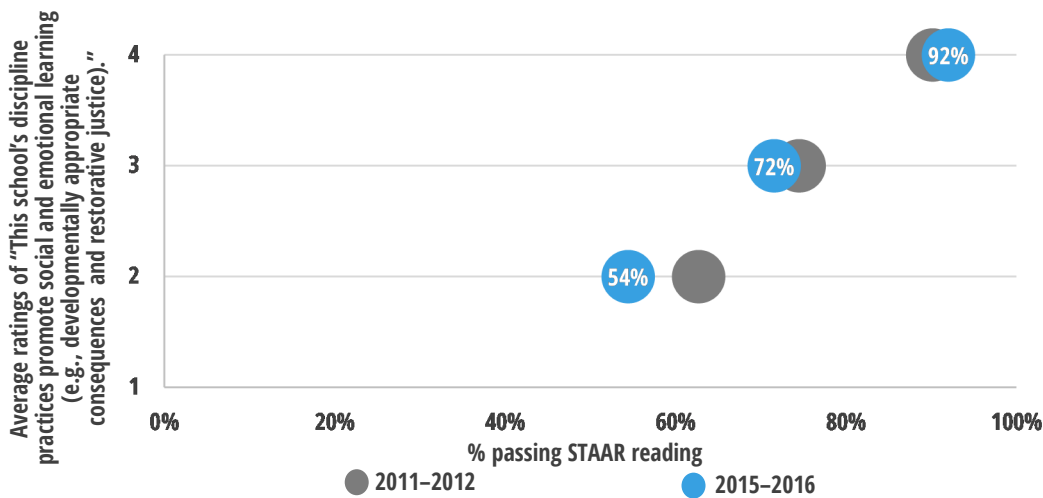
Source. 2011–2012 through 2015–2016 STAAR data and 2015–2016 TELL Staff Climate Survey
TELL survey response options ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*
Note. β = 10.91, *p* < .01.

After controlling for 2011–2012 STAAR reading performance, schools where students were more likely to believe that their classmates showed respect to other students had higher 2015–2016 reading passing rates than did schools where students were less likely to think that students showed respect to each other (Figure 7).

Figure 7.
After controlling for baseline year, schools where students believed their classmates respected each other predicted 2015–2016 reading performance regardless of length of time in SEL.
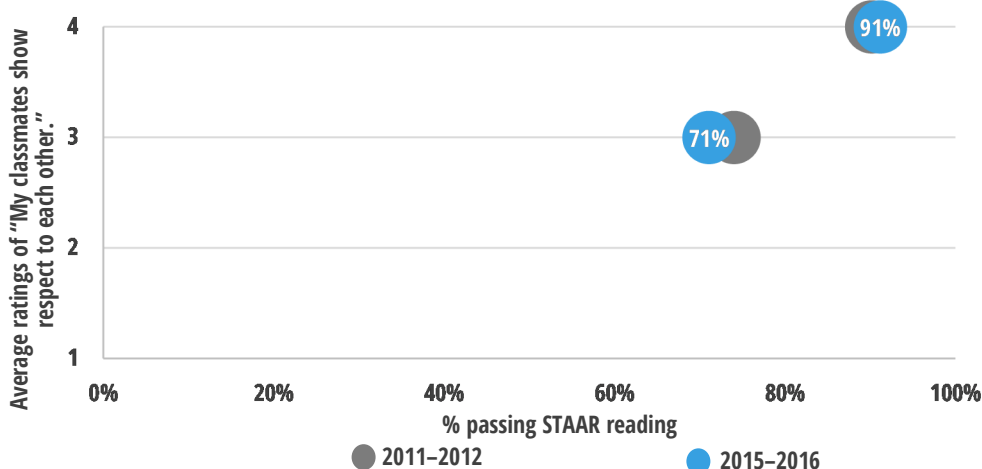
Source. 2011–2012 through 2015–2016 STAAR data and 2015–2016 Student Climate Survey
Student Climate Survey response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 4 = *a lot of the time*
Note. β = 13.65, *p* < .01

4

AISD's 2015–2016 SEL Implementation Rubric

The SEL implementation rubric was revised slightly in 2015–2016. Specifically, the wording for domain 1 was changed slightly, and domain 10 (i.e., collaborative classroom visits) was added. SEL specialists rated their assigned schools across the 10 domains with scores ranging from 10 to 50. SEL program staff are revising the implementation rubric to more accurately reflect measurable outcomes at both the elementary and secondary level; the revised rubric will be implemented in the 2016–2017 school year.

Domain	Implementation Level				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1. Principal SEL/ specialist meetings	One principal/ specialist meeting– no additional goals	Once per semester principal/specialist meeting – no campus-based goals agreed upon	Once per semester principal/specialist meeting – goal based on campus needs/ data agreed upon but not implemented	Once per semester principal/specialist meeting – goal(s) based on campus needs/data agreed upon and partially implemented	Once per semester principal/ specialist meeting – fully implement SEL goals based on campus needs/data in collaboration with SEL steering committee
2. Weekly explicit SEL instruction	Weekly explicit SEL instruction (30 minutes/week) using curriculum and resources provided by district – 10% of staff implementing (HS in advisory or seminar)	Weekly explicit SEL instruction (30 minutes/week) using curriculum and resources provided by district – 30% of staff implementing (HS in advisory or seminar)	Weekly explicit SEL instruction (30 minutes/week) using curriculum and resources provided by district – 50% of staff implementing (HS in advisory or seminar)	Weekly explicit SEL instruction (30 minutes/ week) using curriculum and resources provided by district – 70% of staff implementing (HS in advisory or seminar)	Weekly explicit SEL instruction (30 minutes/ week) using curriculum and resources provided by district – 90% of staff implementing (HS in advisory or seminar)
3. Implementation of peace areas	Implement Peace Areas (PK-5) / Peacemaking Process (6-12) in 10% classrooms/ common areas	Implement Peace Areas (PK-5) / Peacemaking Process (6-12) in 30% classrooms/common areas	Implement Peace Areas (PK-5) / Peacemaking Process (6-12) in 50% classrooms/common areas	Implement Peace Areas (PK-5) / Peacemaking Process (6-12) in 70% classrooms/common areas	Implement Peace Areas (PK-5) / Peacemaking Process (6-12) in 90% classrooms/ common areas
4. SEL Integration	Integration of SEL strategies or skills in instruction – evident in 10% of classrooms and common areas during campus visits	Integration of SEL skills or strategies in instruction – evident in 30% of classrooms and common areas in campus visits	Integration of SEL skills or strategies in instruction – evident in 50% of classrooms and common areas in campus visits	Integration of SEL skills or strategies in instruction – evident in 70% of classrooms and common areas in campus visits	Integration of SEL skills or strategies in instruction – evident in 90% of classrooms and common areas in campus visits
5. Monthly SEL facilitator/ specialist meeting	Monthly SEL facilitator/ specialist meeting – at least 5 meetings	Monthly SEL facilitator/specialist meeting – at least 5 meetings, including 1 collaborative classroom visit	Monthly SEL facilitator/specialist meeting – at least 6 meetings, including 2 collaborative classroom visits	Monthly SEL facilitator/ specialist meeting – at least 7 meetings, including 3 collaborative classroom visits	Monthly SEL facilitator/ specialist meeting – at least 8 meetings, including 4 collaborative classroom visits
6. SEL professional development/ training	There is little or no campus based professional development/ training related to SEL	Campus professional development/ training in SEL is offered to new staff; minimal ongoing SEL professional development/ training offered to professional staff	All staff receive regular ongoing SEL professional development/training – at least 2 different SEL trainings or one ½ day training; training provided by SEL specialist	All staff receive regular ongoing SEL professional development/training (at least 2 trainings or one ½ day training); teachers are regularly given opportunities to collaborate on SEL-related activities; training by specialist and campus staff	All staff receive regular ongoing SEL professional development/training (at least 2); teachers are regularly given opportunities to collaborate on SEL-related activities; school staff serve as campus experts in SEL and provide some of the SEL training

AISD's 2015–2016 SEL Implementation Rubric, continued

Domain	Implementation Level				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
7. Community engagement	No efforts are made to integrate the campus community (e.g., families, businesses, etc.) with campus SEL implementation	Campus community members are given limited information about SEL implementation and campus SEL plans	Campus communicates regularly with community members regarding SEL implementation and campus SEL plans; parents and families are trained in SEL concepts (at least one session)	Campus communicates frequently with community members regarding SEL implementation and campus SEL plans; parents and families are trained in SEL concepts (at least two sessions); at least one community event shows evidence of SEL integration	Campus communicates consistently with community members regarding SEL implementation and campus SEL plans; parents and families are trained in SEL concepts (at least 3 sessions); at least two community events show evidence of SEL integration
8. Steering Committee	Campus steering committee is limited to facilitator	Campus steering committee: - intermittently reviews campus SEL implementation activities but makes no adjustments - representation from 25% of departments or grade levels	Campus steering committee: - regularly reviews campus SEL implementation making few adjustments to plans - communicates effectively with administration - representation from 50% of departments or grade levels	Campus steering committee: - regularly reviews campus SEL implementation - makes adjustments to vision and implementation of SEL - communicates effectively with administration - representation from 70% of departments or grade levels	Campus steering committee: - regularly reviews campus SEL implementation - makes ongoing adjustments to implementation of SEL to reflect campus needs - communicates effectively with administration - representation from 90% of departments or grade levels - parent or student included as member of committee
9. Principal communication of SEL integration	Principal/ administrative staff do not share information about SEL with campus staff	Principal/ administrative staff share information about SEL with campus staff only when requested; written materials about SEL are occasionally shared with campus staff	Principal/ administrative staff regularly share information about SEL during meetings; written materials about SEL are shared regularly with campus staff	Principal/administrative staff frequently share information about SEL during meetings and other campus events; written materials about SEL are shared frequently with campus staff and families	Principal/administrative staff frequently share information about SEL during meetings; written materials about SEL are shared frequently with campus staff and families; principal/administrative staff requests feedback from campus staff and families regarding SEL implementation
10. Collaborative classroom visits	0 collaborative visits	1 collaborative visit	2 collaborative visits	3 collaborative visits	4 collaborative visits

Based on conversations with representatives from the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and SEL program staff, the rubric was divided into two subscales: **implementation and support.**

Implementation: weekly explicit SEL instruction, implementation of peace areas/peacemaking process, SEL integration, community engagement, principal communication of SEL integration

Support: principal/SEL specialist meetings, monthly SEL facilitator/specialist meeting, SEL professional development/training, steering committee, collaborative classroom visits

Did SEL implementation ratings vary based on school level?

As noted in prior reports (Lamb, 2015a, 2014), total SEL implementation scores were significantly higher at the elementary school level than at the middle and high school levels (Table 1). Indeed, ratings on nearly all domains were lower at the middle school level than at the elementary or high school level. For example, ratings of SEL specialist/principal meetings, the percentage of classrooms integrating SEL, and the effectiveness of steering committees were higher at elementary schools than at middle schools. Also of note, elementary schools received higher ratings of how well they implemented peace areas than did middle and high schools. Conversations regarding lower scores on this domain at the secondary level suggest that peace areas and the peace-making process are more characteristic of SEL elementary schools, and standards for this domain have not been established at the secondary school level. Although low scores at the middle school level could be attributed to real differences in schools, redefining the implementation rubric to best capture SEL at the secondary level is necessary. As stated earlier, in 2016–2017, a working group of SEL specialists along with staff from the Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) is working to create a more equitable implementation rubric.

Table 1.

In 2015–2016, elementary schools received higher total SEL implementation scores than did middle and high schools.

SEL domain	Elementary (n = 79)	Middle (n = 16)	High (n = 12)
Principal/SEL coach meetings	4.13[a]	3.38[a]	3.58
Weekly explicit SEL instruction	3.90	3.31	3.17
Implementation of peace areas	3.96[a,b]	2.33[a]	3.00[b]
SEL integration	3.70[a]	2.81[a]	3.17
Monthly SEL facilitator/coach meeting	3.70	3.06	3.58
SEL PD/training	2.69[a]	2.19[a]	2.08
Community engagement	3.74[a]	2.81[b]	3.75
Steering committee	3.62[a]	2.73[a]	3.00
Principal communication of SEL integration	3.27	2.25	2.67
Collaborative visits	3.47	2.88	3.58
Implementation subscale	3.73[a]	2.86[a]	3.16
Support subscale	3.51[a]	2.74[a]	3.13
Total SEL implementation score	36.05[a,b]	26.56[a]	30.58[b]

Source. 2015–2016 SEL implementation rubric scores
Note. Means sharing the same superscript are significantly different at $p < .05$.
Domains in red are on the implementation subscale; domains in dark gray are on the support subscale.

Did SEL implementation ratings vary based on SEL specialist?

As discussed earlier, SEL implementation scores were significantly higher at the elementary school level than at the secondary school level. Examining the spread of scores within each specialist paints a clearer picture of these differences (Figure 4). Again, according to discussions with SEL program staff, these differences were likely the result of the implementation rubric measuring things that were more prevalent and easier to implement at the elementary school level than at the secondary level (e.g., peace areas). Additionally, specialists reported that secondary schools generally had a more difficult time implementing SEL. Although some differences in scores could be due to true differences in level of implementation, the goal of the SEL program staff was to generate a more equitable implementation rubric to ensure that all schools are measured based on components that are not only critical to SEL but are also meaningful across school levels.

Figure 4.
Elementary school specialists provided higher 2015–2016 SEL implementation ratings than did their secondary peers.
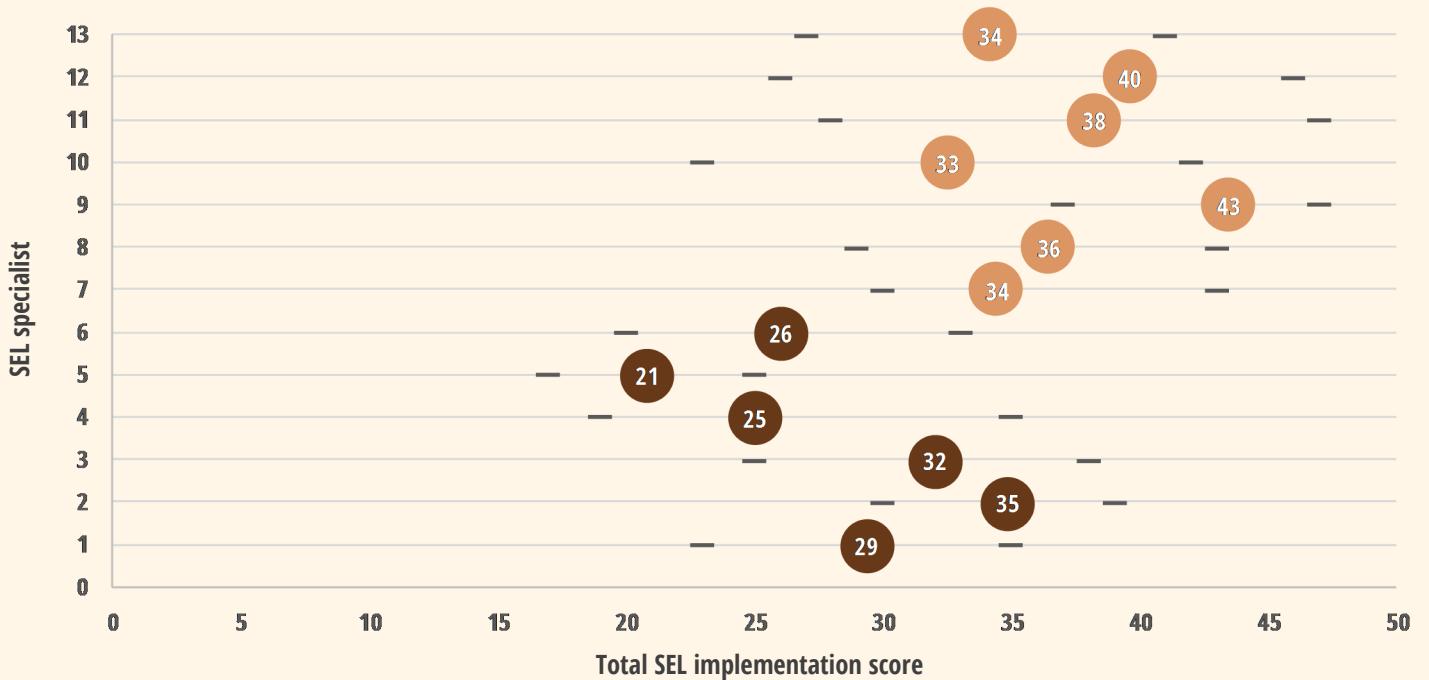
Source. 2015–2016 AISD SEL implementation rubric data
Note. Total scores ranged from 17 to 47. The **dark brown** circles represent secondary SEL specialists, and the light brown circles represent elementary SEL specialists. The **gray bars** indicate high and low scores for each specialist. One SEL specialist served both elementary and secondary schools, and for the purposes of this figure, that specialist's data were split based on school level. One SEL specialist served only one school and was excluded from this figure.

Did SEL implementation ratings vary based on length of participation in SEL?

Despite the fact that SEL implementation ratings differed based on school level, implementation ratings were generally higher at schools with more longevity in SEL, particularly at the secondary level. Most notably, ratings of SEL integration were higher at both elementary and secondary schools participating in SEL for 4 or 5 years than at schools participating in SEL for 3 or fewer years (Figure 5). Additionally, secondary schools participating in SEL for longer were more likely to have effective SEL steering committees than were schools with fewer years in SEL. SEL specialists often discussed the importance of the SEL steering committee, stating that once an effective SEL steering committee was up and running, the work integrating SEL into daily practice fell into place.

Figure 5.
Schools with 4 or 5 years in SEL had higher ratings of integration than did schools with 1, 2, or 3 years in SEL.

Elementary schools (SEL implementation rubric domains)

Domain	1, 2 or 3 years	4 or 5 years
Principal/SEL specialist meetings	4.0	4.2
Weekly explicit SEL instruction	3.8	4.0
Implementation of peace areas	3.9	4.0
Integration*	3.4	4.0
Monthly SEL facilitator/SEL specialist meetings	3.7	3.7
SEL professional development/training	3.7	3.8
Community engagement	3.6	3.6
Steering committee	3.1	3.4
Principal communication of SEL integration	3.4	3.5
Collaborative classroom visits	2.6	2.7
SEL implementation average score	3.6	3.7
Integration subscale	3.6	3.8
Support subscale	3.5	3.5

Secondary schools (SEL implementation rubric domains)

Domain	1, 2 or 3 years	4 or 5 years
Principal/SEL specialist meetings	3.3	3.6
Weekly explicit SEL instruction	3.2	3.3
Implementation of peace areas	2.5	2.6
Integration*	2.7	3.4
Monthly SEL facilitator/SEL specialist meetings	2.9	3.6
SEL professional development/training	3.1	3.2
Community engagement	2.7	3.1
Steering committee*	1.7	3.1
Principal communication of SEL integration	3.0	3.3
Collaborative classroom visits	2.0	2.3
SEL implementation average score+	2.7	3.2
Integration subscale	2.8	3.2
Support subscale+	2.7	3.1

Legend: ○ 1, 2 or 3 years in SEL ● 4 or 5 years in SEL

Source. 2015–2016 SEL implementation rubric. Scores ranged from 1 to 5.
Note. Due to the small number of secondary schools, + indicates a significant difference where $p < .10$. The number of schools in each subgroup are as follows: 38 elementary schools and 15 secondary schools have 3 or less years in SEL, and 41 elementary schools and 14 secondary schools have 4 or more years in SEL. Ratings are rounded to the nearest tenth
* indicates a significant difference where $p < .01$.

9

What outcomes of interest were related to SEL implementation ratings?

At the elementary school level, after controlling for 2010–2011 data, schools where SEL was integrated into 90% of classrooms also had higher passing rates in STAAR math, fewer discretionary infractions, more positive perceptions of staff (i.e., "Overall my school is a good place to work and learn" and managing student conduct), and more favorable levels of student climate (i.e., "Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions, "Adults at this school treat all students fairly," and "I feel safe at my school") than did schools with lower integration ratings (Table 2).

Table 2.
Elementary schools with greater implementation of peace areas also had higher passing rates on STAAR math, fewer discretionary infractions, and more favorable staff and student perceptions of school climate than did schools with lower SEL integration ratings.

SEL implementation rubric domains (n = 73)	STAAR		Discipline/Attendance			TELL		Student Climate Survey items					
	R	M	Discipline	ADA	CA	1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6
Principal/SEL specialist meetings	-												
Weekly explicit SEL instruction			✓							✓	✓		
Implementation of peace areas		✓	✓		✓								
SEL integration		✓	✓✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Monthly SEL facilitator/specialist meeting										✓		✓	
SEL professional development/training						✓							
Community engagement		✓											
Steering committee		✓	✓						✓			✓	
Principal communication of SEL integration			✓								✓	✓	
Collaborative visits													
Implementation subscale		✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	
Support subscale		✓	✓									✓	
Total SEL implementation score		✓	✓					✓		✓	✓	✓	

Source. 2010–2011 or 2012–2013 through 2015–2016 Student Climate Survey data and 2014–2015 SEL campus implementation ratings
Note. ADA = Average daily attendance, CA = Chronic absenteeism, R = STAAR reading, M = STAAR math
TELL survey items correspond with the following numbers:
1 = Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn
2 = Managing Student Conduct subscale (see pg. 22 for a list of items)
Student Climate Survey items correspond with the following numbers:
1 = My classmates show respect to each other
2 = My classmates show respect to other students who are different
3 = Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions
4 = Adults at this school treat all students fairly
5 = I feel safe at my school
6 = Students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with/taunted, threatened by other students)
Response options on the Student Climate Survey range from 1 = *Never* to 4 = *A lot of the time.* Response options on the TELL survey range from 1 = *Strongly disagree* to 4 = *Strongly agree.*
✓significant weak-to-moderate positive correlation (*r* values between .20 and .40); ✓✓significant moderate-to-strong positive correlation (*r* values between .40 and .60); – significant weak-to-moderate negative correlation (*r* values between .20 and .40); – – significant weak-to-moderate negative correlation (*r* values between .40 and .60). Check marks are used with negative outcomes (e.g., discipline and chronic absenteeism) to indicate that the result is positive, meaning that high implementation ratings were related to lower discipline and/or chronic absenteeism.
Domains in red are on the **implementation subscale**; domains in **dark gray** are on the **support subscale**.

At the secondary school level, after controlling for 2010–2011 data, schools with greater community engagement also had better attendance rates, fewer students who were chronically absent, and more favorable student perceptions of school climate (i.e., "My classmates show respect to other students who are different," "Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions," "Adults at this school treat all students fairly, "I feel safe at my school," and bullying) than did schools with less community involvement (Table 3). Interestingly, several negative relationships emerged, particularly in domains related to principal promotion of SEL. This could be because, as secondary SEL specialists noted, they often work with assistant principals, rather than the principal making principal buy-in and communication about SEL difficult. These findings also speak to the fact that secondary SEL specialists often described the difficulty that middle and high school principals have with "buying in" to SEL. However, for those schools with effective steering committees (often an indicator of successful SEL integration), attendance rates increased, rates of chronic absenteeism decreased, and student perceptions of bullying became more favorable.

Table 3.

Secondary schools with greater implementation of peace areas, of SEL integration, of principal communication about SEL integration, and of the implementation subscale had more students reporting they felt safe at school than did schools with lower ratings on these domains.

SEL implementation rubric domains	Discipline/Attendance			TELL		Student Climate Survey items					
(*n* = 15)	Discipline	ADA	CA	1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6
Principal/SEL specialist meetings				✓✓	✓✓		-	- -	- -	-	- -
Weekly explicit SEL instruction	-		✓✓			✓		✓			-
Implementation of peace areas	✓✓			✓✓	✓			-	- -		-
SEL integration		✓	✓✓								
Monthly SEL facilitator/specialist meeting		✓	✓	-	-		✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SEL professional development/training	✓	✓	✓✓	✓					-	-	-
Community engagement		✓	✓✓			✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	
Steering committee		✓	✓								✓
Principal communication of SEL integration	✓✓		✓	✓	-			-	-		-
Collaborative visits	✓						✓	- -		✓	
Implementation subscale	✓	✓	✓✓			✓					-
Support subscale	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			-		
Total SEL implementation score	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					-

Source. 2010–2011 or 2012–2013 through 2015–2016 Student Climate Survey data and 2014–2015 SEL campus implementation ratings
Note. ADA = Average daily attendance, CA = Chronic absenteeism
TELL survey items correspond with the following numbers:
1 = Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn
2 = Managing Student Conduct subscale (see pg. 22 for a list of items)
Student Climate Survey items correspond with the following numbers:
1 = My classmates show respect to each other
2 = My classmates show respect to other students who are different
3 = Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions
4 = Adults at this school treat all students fairly
5 = I feel safe at my school
6 = Students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with/taunted, threatened by other students)
Response options on the Student Climate Survey range from 1 = *Never* to 4 = *A lot of the time.* Response options on the TELL survey range from 1 = *Strongly disagree* to 4 = *Strongly agree.*
✓significant weak-to-moderate positive correlation (*r* values between .20 and .40); ✓✓significant moderate-to-strong positive correlation (*r* values between .40 and .60); – significant weak-to-moderate negative correlation (*r* values between .20 and .40); – – significant weak-to-moderate negative correlation (*r* values between .40 and .60).Check marks are used with negative outcomes (e.g., discipline and chronic absenteeism) to indicate that the result is positive, meaning that high implementation ratings were related to lower discipline and/or chronic absenteeism.
Domains in **red** are on the **implementation subscale**; domains in **dark gray** are on the **support subscale**.

Discipline

Examinations of school-level discretionary infractions (see sidebar for explanation of computations) found that most schools experienced a drop in discipline from 2010–2011 through 2015–2016, with decreases most pronounced at the secondary level. At the elementary school level, although there were no significant differences in the percentage of students with discretionary infractions from 2010–2011 to 2015–2016, the percentage change in students' discretionary infractions decreased more at schools participating in SEL for a longer period of time than at schools participating in SEL for fewer years (Figures 8 and 9). In fact, the percentage of students with discretionary infractions at schools with fewer years in SEL increased over the 5-year period (Figure 9).

Figure 8.
Although not significant, a trend emerged indicating that elementary schools participating in SEL for 4 or 5 years had fewer discretionary infractions in 2015–2016 than did schools participating in SEL for fewer years.
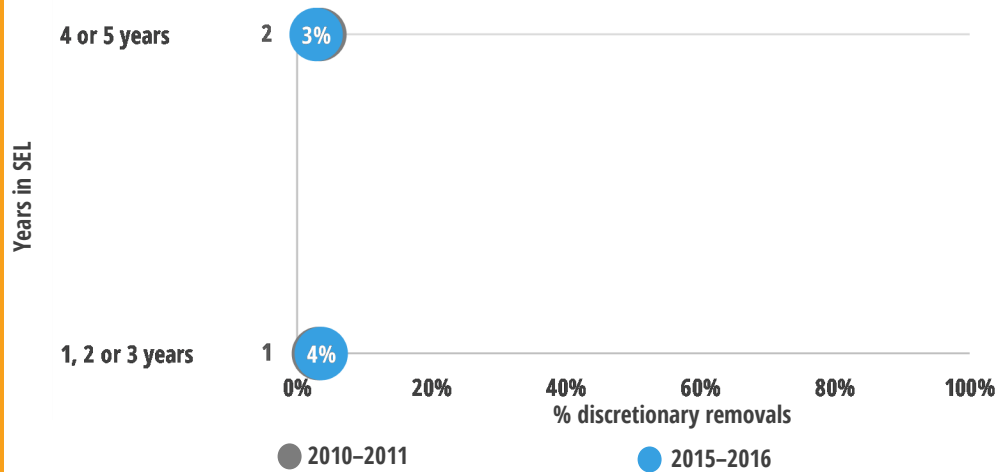
Figure 9.
The percentage change in discretionary infractions from 2010–2011 to 2015–2016 decreased at schools participating in SEL for more years and increased at schools participating in SEL for fewer years.
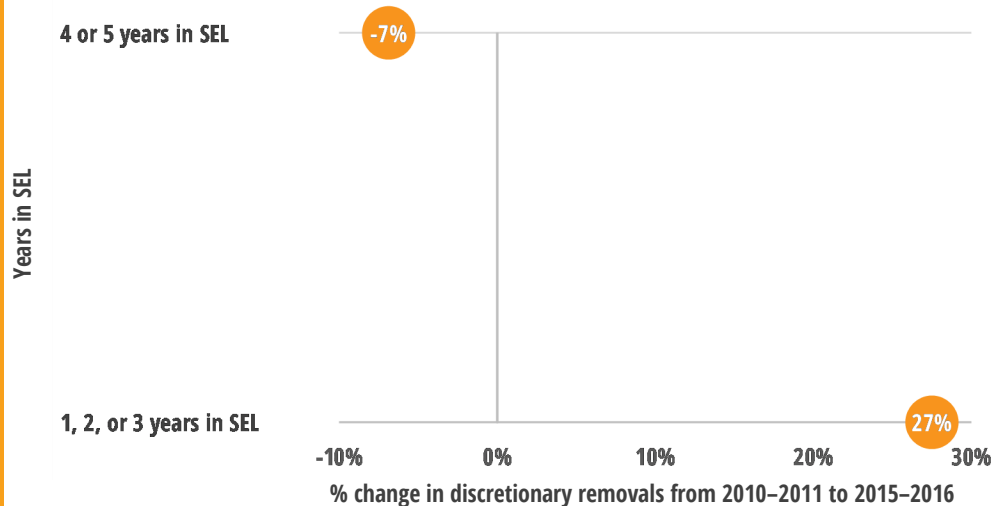
Source. 2010–2011 through 2015–2016 AISD discipline data
Note. Schools with less than 1% of students receiving a discretionary infraction in 2010–2011 or 2015–2016 were excluded from the analysis. Data from Jordan, Pickle, McBee, Widen, and DAEP were also excluded because the percentage change in discretionary removals was outside the normal range. $F(1, 31) = 4.80$, $p < .01$

12

At the secondary level, all schools experienced a significant decrease in the percentage of students with discretionary infractions from 2010–2011 through 2015–2016. The percentage change in discretionary infractions decreased more at schools with more years in SEL than at schools with fewer years in SEL (Figures 10 and 11).

Figure 10.
All secondary schools experienced a significant decrease in discretionary infractions from 2010–2011 through 2015–2016.
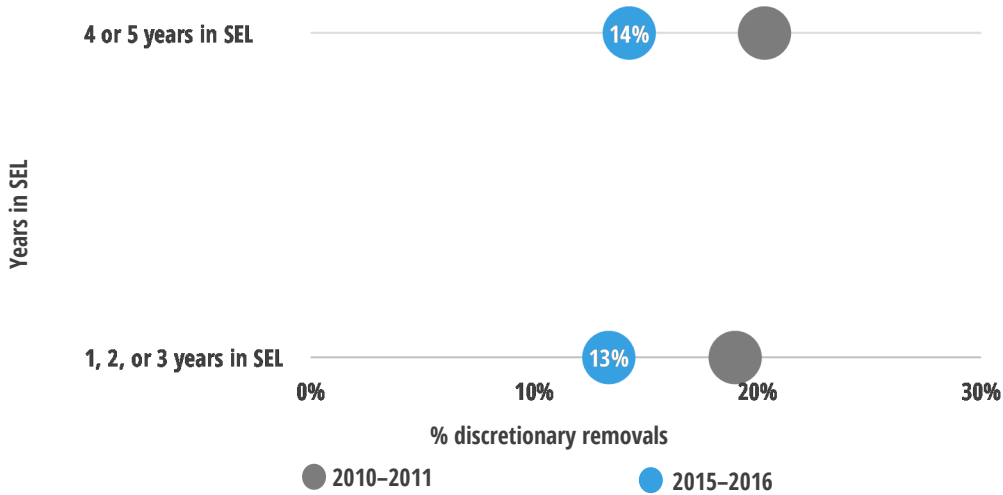
Figure 11.
Over the 5-year period, secondary schools with more years in SEL experienced a slightly greater reduction in discretionary infractions than did schools with fewer years in SEL.
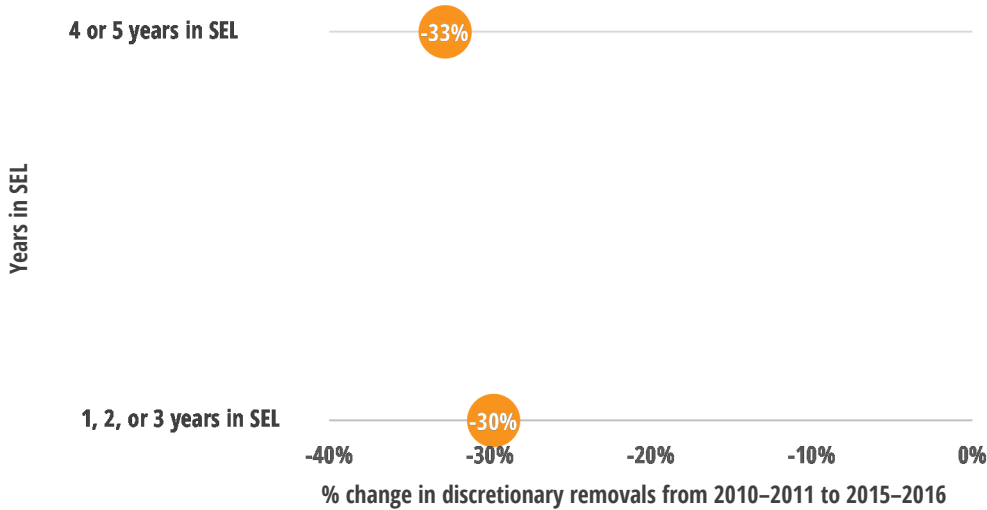
Source. 2010–2011 through 2015–2016 AISD discipline data
Note. The Alternative Learning Center (ALC) and International High School were excluded from the analysis.
$F(1, 26) = 3.15$, $p < .05$

Another set of analyses was conducted to determine which factors best predicted 2015–2016 school-level discretionary removal rates after controlling for 2010–2011 discretionary removal rates. At the elementary school level, schools where at least 70% of classrooms implemented SEL had lower 2015–2016 discretionary removal rates, regardless of years in SEL (Figure 12).

Figure 12.
Elementary schools where SEL was integrated with more fidelity experienced a greater reduction in discretionary removals in 2015–2016 than did elementary schools where SEL was implemented with less fidelity.
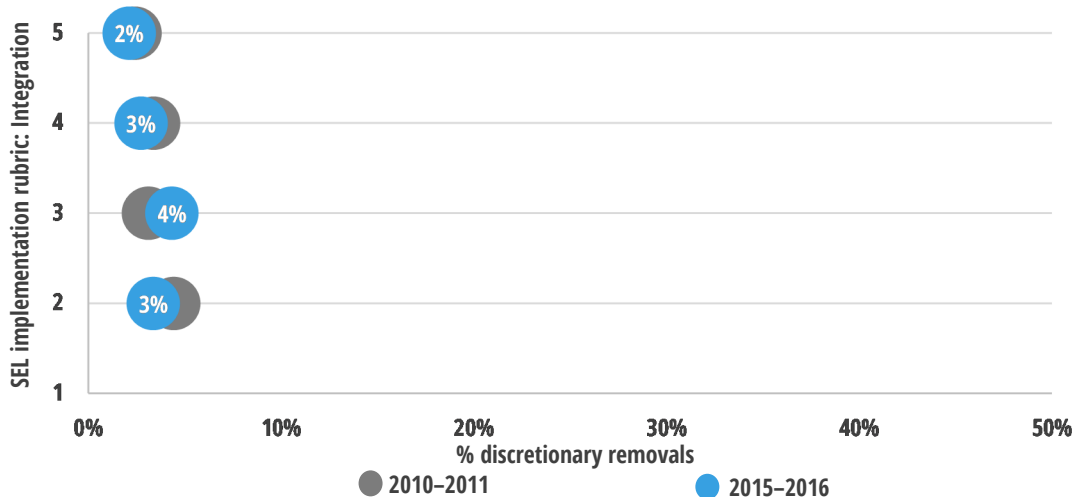
Source. 2010–2011 through 2015–2016 AISD discipline data and 2015–2016 SEL implementation ratings
Note. Schools with fewer than 1% of students receiving a discretionary infraction in 2010–2011 or 2015–2016 were excluded from the analysis. DAEP was excluded from the analysis. β = -.70, *p* = .04

At the secondary school level, after controlling for 2010–2011 discretionary removal rates, schools where staff believed their school had a long-term plan for implementing SEL predicted lower 2015–2016 discretionary removal rates (Figure 13).

Figure 13.
Secondary schools where staff believed their school had a long-term plan for SEL implementation predicted low discretionary infractions in 2015–2016, regardless of length of time in SEL or baseline disciplinary infractions.
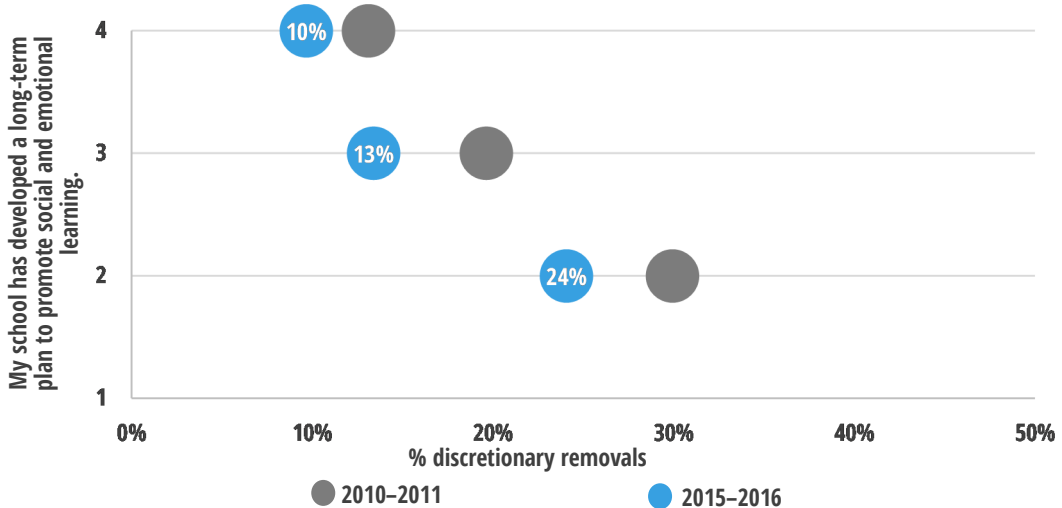
Source. 2010–2011 through 2015–2016 AISD discipline data and 2015–2016 ECS data
ECS survey response options ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*
Note. ALC and International high school were excluded from the analysis
β = -11.81, *p* = .04

14

Average Daily Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

Average daily attendance

School-level average daily attendance was computed using the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) formula, which divides the number of days attended by students in each 6-week period by the number of days taught during a 6-week period. The results for each six-week period were summed and divided by 6 (i.e., the six six-week periods). This number was then divided by weighted campus enrollment. For more information, see page 275 of TEA's *Student Attendance Accounting Handbook*: http://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/Financial_Compliance/Student__Attendance_Accounting_Handbook/

Chronic absenteeism

Using the Department of Education's definition (see https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/chronicabsenteeism.html), students with 15 or more absences per academic year were identified as chronically absent. The number of students falling into this category was summed and divided by the total number of students at the school level.

Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

Examinations of school-level average daily attendance (see sidebar for explanation of computations) found that at the elementary school level, average daily attendance rates remained high and stable over time, regardless of longevity in SEL. Analyses that controlled for 2010–2011 average daily attendance found that elementary schools where students believed their classmates showed respect to other students who are different predicted slightly higher average daily attendance rates in 2015–2016 than did schools where students' beliefs were rated lower (Figure 14).

Figure 14.
Elementary schools where students believed their classmates show respect to other students who are different was predictive of slightly higher attendance rates in 2015–2016, regardless of length of time in SEL.
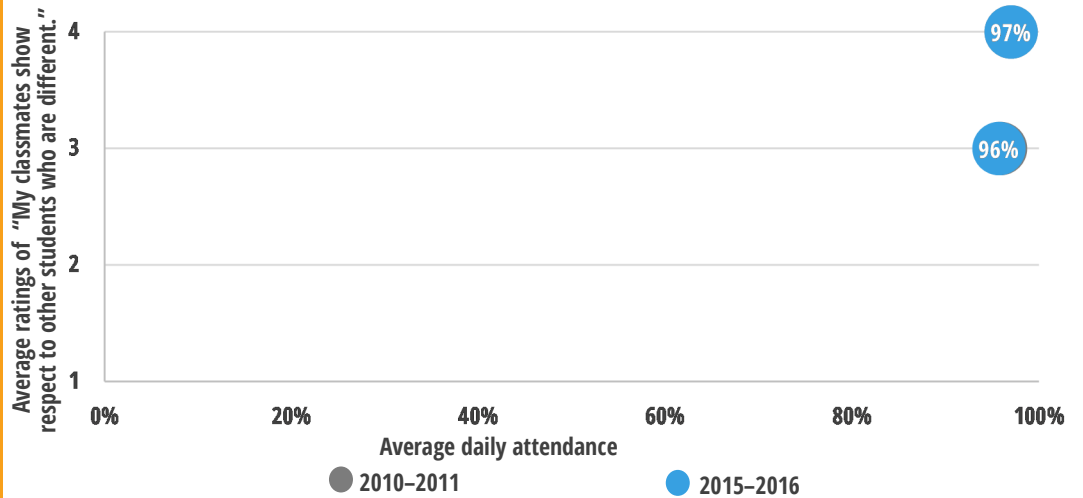
Source. 2011–2012 through 2015–2016 average daily attendance data and 2015–2016 Student Climate Survey data
Note. Student Climate Survey response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 4 = *a lot of the time*
DAEP was excluded from the analysis. β = .84, *p* < .01

Interestingly, analyses of chronic absenteeism found that the percentage change in chronic absenteeism decreased more at elementary schools with more years in SEL than at elementary schools with fewer years in SEL (Figure 15).

Figure 15.
The percentage change in the rate of chronic absenteeism increased more at elementary schools with fewer years in SEL than at elementary schools with more years in SEL.
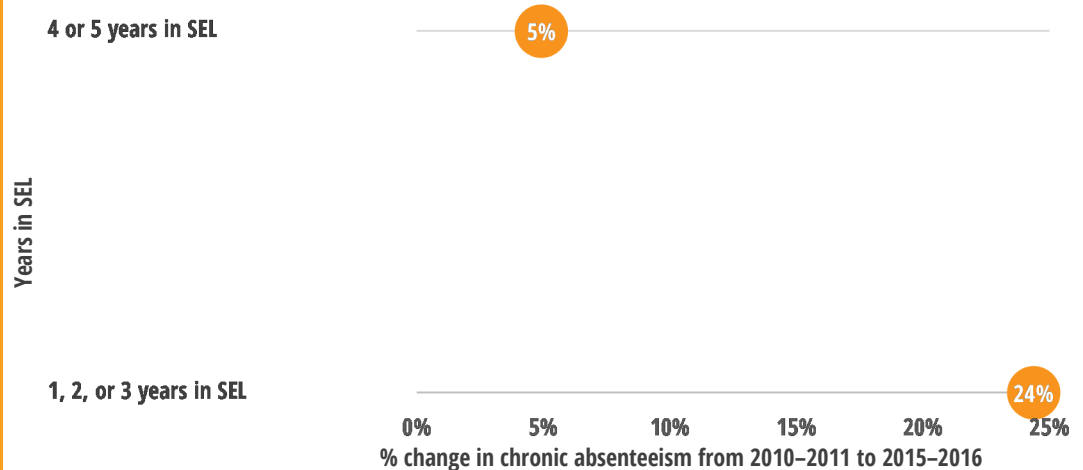
Source. 2010–2011 through 2015–2016 chronic absenteeism
Note. DAEP was excluded from the analysis. F (1, 76) = 3.94, *p* < .01

15

Analyses were conducted to determine which factors best predicted 2015–2016 chronic absenteeism after controlling for 2010–2011 chronic absenteeism. Results found that elementary schools where peace areas were integrated into at least 90% of classrooms predicted low rates of chronic absenteeism in 2015–2016 (Figure 16).

Figure 16.
After controlling for 2010–2011 chronic absenteeism, elementary schools where at least 90% of classrooms implemented peace areas predicted low rates of chronic absenteeism in 2015–2016, regardless of length of time in SEL.
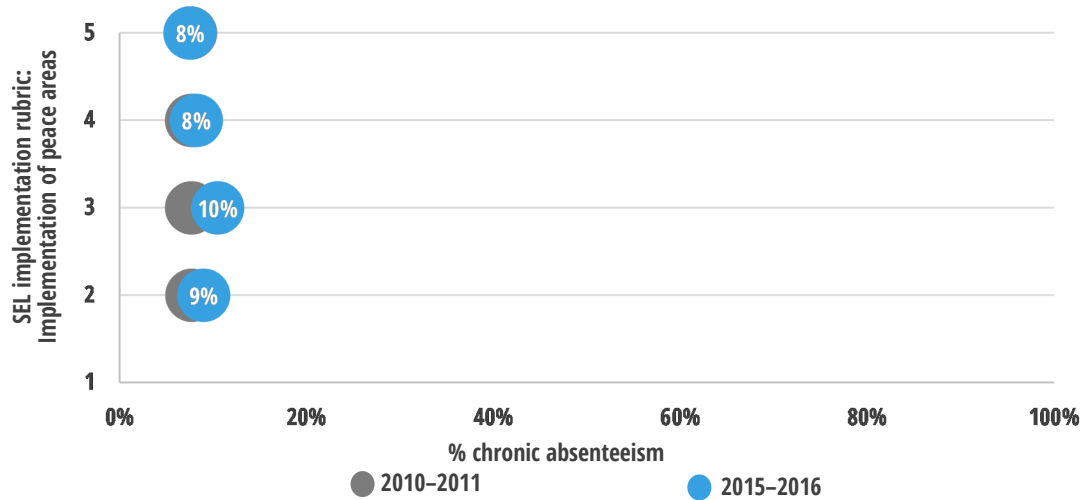
Source. 2011–2012 through 2015–2016 chronic absenteeism data and 2015–2016 SEL implementation ratings
Note. DAEP was excluded from the analysis.
β = -.56, *p* =.05

At the secondary level, results found that neither the percentage change in school-level average daily attendance nor chronic absenteeism over time varied based on longevity in SEL. However, schools where SEL was integrated into at least 50% of classrooms predicted 2015–2016 decreases in chronic absenteeism even after controlling for 2010–2011 rates of chronic absenteeism and years in SEL (Figure 17).

Figure 17.
After controlling for 2010–2011 chronic absenteeism, secondary schools where at least 50% of classrooms integrated SEL predicted low rates of chronic absenteeism in 2015–2016, regardless of length of time in SEL.
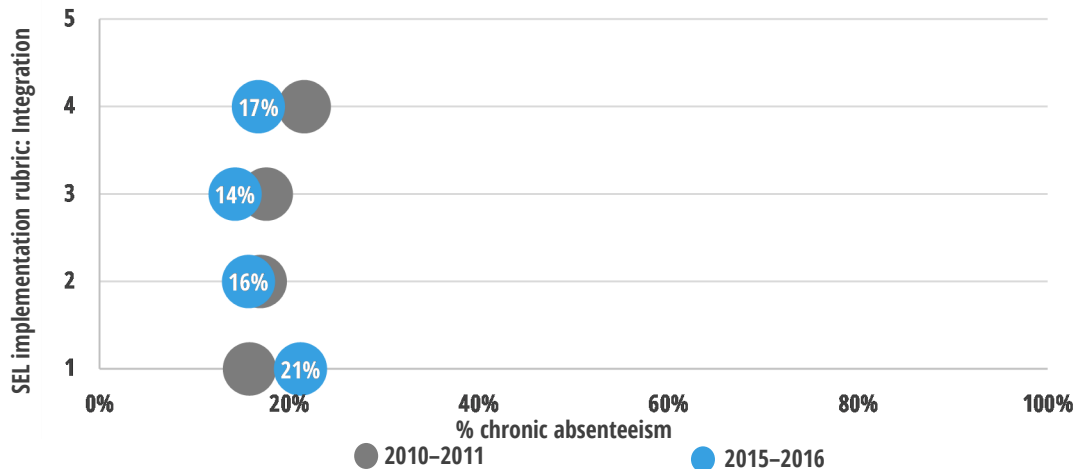
Source. 2011–2012 through 2015–2016 chronic absenteeism data and 2015–2016 SEL implementation ratings
Note. ALC and International High School were excluded from the analysis.
β = -1.3, *p* =.06

Did students' SEL skills relate to school longevity in SEL?

In 2015–2016, DRE collaborated with CASEL to develop a 20-item self-assessment of students' SEL skills. Students in grades 6 through 11 were asked to self-assess 20 SEL skills. Although a sample of students at four elementary schools also completed the SEL Skills Survey, their responses were excluded from the analyses due to the small number of schools with data. Six items addressing CASEL's five SEL competencies (i.e., self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, behavior management, and responsible decision making) were added to the 2015–2016 Student Climate Survey, which was administered to all students in grades 3 through 11. School-level analyses of these items were included in this report. Analyses of the relationships between data from the Student Climate Survey and the SEL Skills Survey will be discussed in a forthcoming report.

Results from these analyses revealed no significant differences in students' ratings based on how long their respective school participated in SEL (Figure 18).

Figure 18.
Secondary students' ratings of their SEL skills did not vary based on years in SEL.

Source. 2015–2016 SEL Skills Survey data
Note. The item stem was "Please let us know how easy or difficult the following are for you." Response options ranged from 1 = *very difficult* to 4 = *easy*. Numbers are rounded to the nearest tenth.

In fact, students at schools with fewer years in SEL rated several items higher (although not statistically significantly) than did students from schools with more years of SEL participation. This difference could be due to the fact that students at schools participating in SEL for a longer time were more aware of what it takes to develop these skills, and as a result rated themselves lower than did students at other schools. Importantly, regardless of how long their school had participated in SEL, students felt that talking to an adult when they had a problem was difficult.

An examination of the Student Climate Survey showed that elementary school students at schools implementing SEL for 4 or 5 years found it easier to know what others were feeling by the look on their face than did students at schools implementing SEL for 3 years or fewer (Figure 19). No significant differences were found at the secondary level (Figure 19).

Figure 19.
Elementary school students at schools participating in SEL for 4 or 5 years were more likely to believe they knew what others were feeling by the look on their face than did students at schools participating in SEL for fewer years.
Ratings at the secondary level were similar regardless of how long their school had participated in SEL.
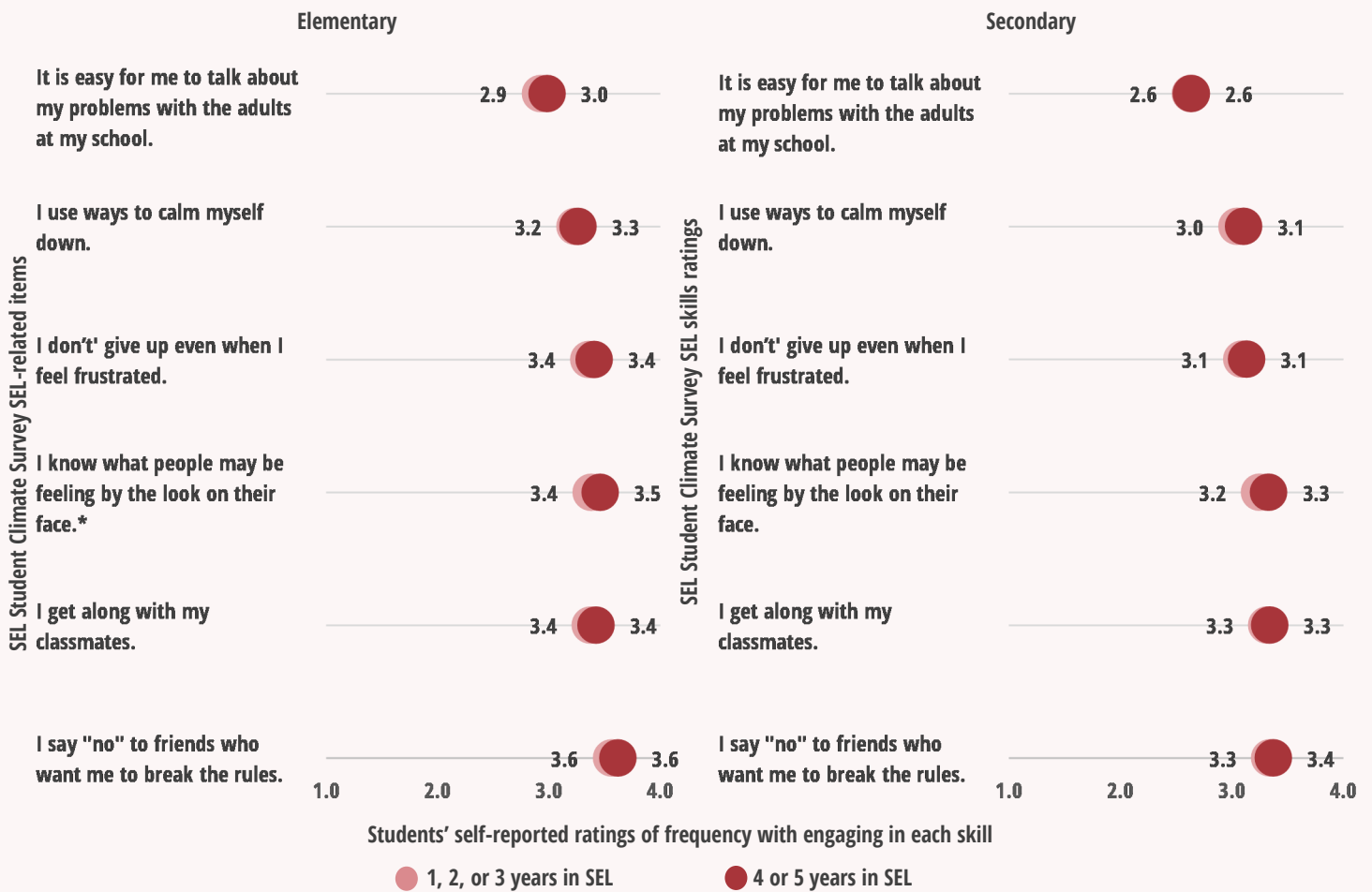
Source. 2015–2016 Student Climate Survey data
Note. Response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 4 = *a lot of the time*. Numbers are rounded to the nearest tenth.
* Statistically significant at *p* < .05.
The number of schools in each subgroup are as follows: 38 elementary schools and 15 secondary schools have 3 or less years in SEL, and 41 elementary schools and 14 secondary schools have 4 or more years in SEL.

18

Did students' SEL skills relate to overall school-level SEL implementation?

Descriptive analyses were conducted to determine if school-level SEL implementation ratings related to students' ratings of their SEL skills. To do so, total implementation scores were split into quartiles, based on school level. Schools in the top quartile were identified as having a high implementation score, and schools in the bottom quartile were identified as having a low implementation score. Analyses compared students' SEL skills across schools in the top and bottom quartiles. Results found a trend for students at schools with higher SEL implementation ratings to report greater ease calming themselves down than reported by students at schools with lower SEL implementation ratings (Figure 20). Students' skills ratings appeared higher at schools with higher SEL implementation ratings than at schools with lower SEL implementation ratings.

Figure 20.
Secondary students at schools with higher SEL implementation reported greater ease with engaging in various SEL skills than did students at schools with lower SEL implementation ratings.
Students at schools with higher SEL implementation ratings also had high ratings of "Knowing ways to calm myself down" than did students at schools with lower SEL implementation ratings.

SEL Skills Survey ratings	Low SEL implementation	High SEL implementation
Knowing the emotions I feel	3.2	3.2
Being patient even when I am really excited	3.0	3.1
Learning from people with different opinions than me	3.0	3.0
Respecting a classmate's opinions during a disagreement	3.0	3.1
Thinking about what might happen before making a decision	3.0	3.1
Knowing how to get help when I'm having trouble with a classmate	3.0	3.1
Knowing ways to calm myself down*	3.0	3.1
Finishing tasks even if they are hard for me	2.8	2.9
Knowing what people may be feeling by the look on their face	3.1	3.2
Getting along with my classmates	3.2	3.2
Knowing what is right or wrong	3.3	3.4
Talking to an adult when I have problems at school	2.7	2.8
Knowing what my strengths are	3.1	3.2
Setting goals for myself	3.1	3.1
Knowing when someone needs help	3.2	3.2
Saying "no" to a friend who wants me to break the rules	3.1	3.2
Knowing when my feelings are making it hard for me to focus	3.0	3.1
Doing my schoolwork even when I do not like it	2.7	2.8
Getting prepared for tests	2.8	2.8
Getting through something even when I feel frustrated	2.7	2.8

Low SEL implementation (*n* = 9)   High SEL implementation (*n* = 7)

Students' self-reported ratings of ease with engaging in each activity

An analysis of students' ratings of their SEL skills presented on the Student Climate Survey showed that elementary school students at schools with high SEL implementation ratings were more likely to believe that they "don't give up" even when they feel frustrated, know what others may be feeling by the look on their face, get along with their classmates, and say no to friends who want them to break the rules than were their peers at schools with lower SEL implementation ratings (Figure 21). Students' ratings were similar at the secondary level regardless of school SEL implementation ratings (Figure 21).

Figure 21.
Elementary school students at schools with higher SEL implementation ratings had higher ratings of their SEL skills on four of the six items than did students at schools with lower SEL implementation ratings.
Ratings at the secondary level were similar regardless of school level of implementation.
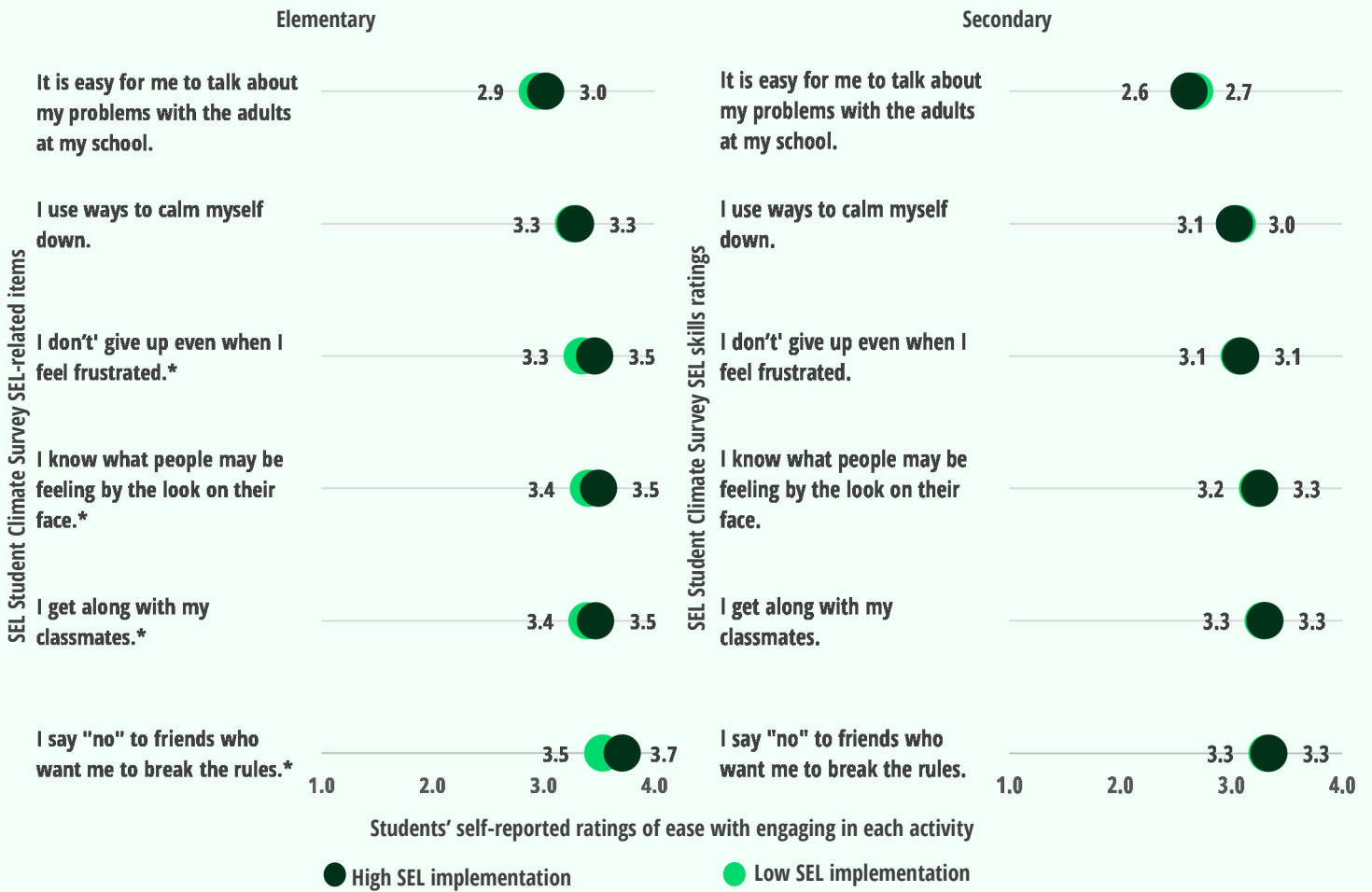
Elementary

SEL Student Climate Survey SEL-related items	Low	High
It is easy for me to talk about my problems with the adults at my school.	2.9	3.0
I use ways to calm myself down.	3.3	3.3
I don't' give up even when I feel frustrated.*	3.3	3.5
I know what people may be feeling by the look on their face.*	3.4	3.5
I get along with my classmates.*	3.4	3.5
I say "no" to friends who want me to break the rules.*	3.5	3.7

Secondary

SEL Student Climate Survey SEL skills ratings	Low	High
It is easy for me to talk about my problems with the adults at my school.	2.6	2.7
I use ways to calm myself down.	3.1	3.0
I don't' give up even when I feel frustrated.	3.1	3.1
I know what people may be feeling by the look on their face.	3.2	3.3
I get along with my classmates.	3.3	3.3
I say "no" to friends who want me to break the rules.	3.3	3.3

Students' self-reported ratings of ease with engaging in each activity

● High SEL implementation   ● Low SEL implementation

AISD Student Climate Survey (grades 3–11)

The following items from AISD's Student Climate Survey are considered integral to SEL integration (years of availability in parentheses):

- My classmates show respect to each other. (2010–2011 through 2015–2016)

- My classmates show respect to other students who are different. (2010–2011 through 2015–2016)

- Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions (2010–2011 through 2015–2016)

- Adults at this school treat all students fairly. (2010–2011 through 2015–2016)

- I feel safe at my school. (2010–2011 through 2015–2016)

- Students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with, threatened by other students). (2011–2012 through 2015–2016)

Campus- and district-level reports for the Student Climate Survey can be found on the DRE website.

School Climate

Elementary. Examinations of change in school climate items considered integral to SEL implementation (see sidebar) over time were conducted. At the elementary school level, schools participating in SEL for more years experienced a greater improvement over time than did schools participating in SEL for fewer years on the following student climate survey items: "My classmates show respect to each other," and "I feel safe at my school" (Figures 22 and 23).

Figure 22.
Students from elementary schools participating in SEL for at least 4 years experienced greater improvement in ratings of "My classmates show respect to each other" than did students from elementary schools with fewer years in SEL.

% change in "My classmates show respect to each other" from 2010–2011 to 2015–2016

Figure 23.
Students from elementary schools participating in SEL for at least 4 years experienced greater improvement in ratings of "I feel safe at my school" than did students from elementary schools with fewer years in SEL.

% change in "I feel safe at my school" from 2010–2011 to 2015–2016

Source. 2010–2011 through 2015–2016 Student Climate Survey ratings
Note. DAEP was excluded from the analysis. For Figure 22, $F(1, 74) = 5.05$; $p = .03$, for Figure 23, $F(1, 74) = 5.86$, $p = .02$.

Analyses were also conducted to determine which, if any, SEL implementation ratings predicted changes in school climate over time. After controlling for years in SEL and 2010–2011 ratings, elementary schools where at least 70% of classrooms integrated SEL into lessons had higher 2015–2016 student climate ratings of "My classmates show respect to each other," "Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions," and "Adults at this school treat all students fairly" (Figure 24). Additionally, elementary schools where at least 70% of classrooms integrated SEL into lessons had higher 2015–2016 staff climate ratings of "Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn," and managing student conduct (Figure 25).

Figure 24.
After controlling for baseline ratings, 2015–2016 elementary school students' perceptions of adult-to-student and teacher-to-student respect were more favorable at schools with more integrated SEL than at schools with less integrated SEL, regardless of longevity in SEL.

Source. 2010–2011 through 2015–2016 Student Climate Survey ratings
Note. Student Climate Survey response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 4 = *a lot of the time.* DAEP was excluded from the analysis; ratings are rounded to the nearest tenth. β = .05, *p* = .05; β = .03, *p* = .02; β = .02, *p* = .05

22
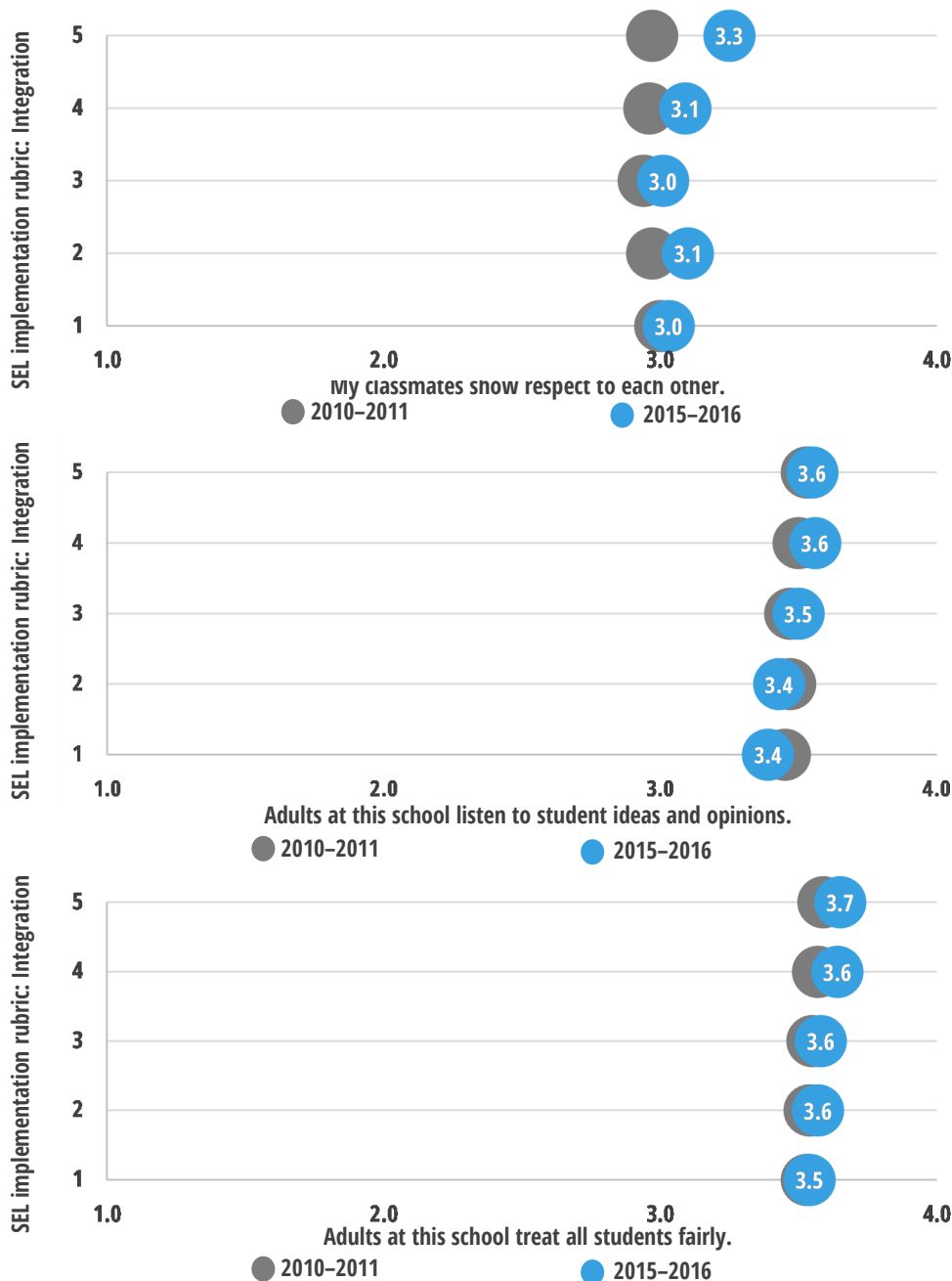
Figure 25.
After controlling for baseline ratings, 2015–2016 staff perceptions of work environment and student behavior management were more favorable at schools with more integrated SEL than at schools with less integrated SEL, regardless of longevity in SEL.

SEL implementation rubric: integration (y-axis: 1–5)

SEL integration	2010–2011	2015–2016
5		3.6
4		3.5
3		3.4
2		3.4
1		3.4

Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn. (x-axis: 1.0–4.0)

● 2010–2011   ● 2015–2016

SEL implementation rubric: integration (y-axis: 1–5)

SEL integration	2015–2016
5	3.3
4	3.2
3	3.2
2	3.1
1	3.1

Managing Student Conduct (x-axis: 1.0–4.0)
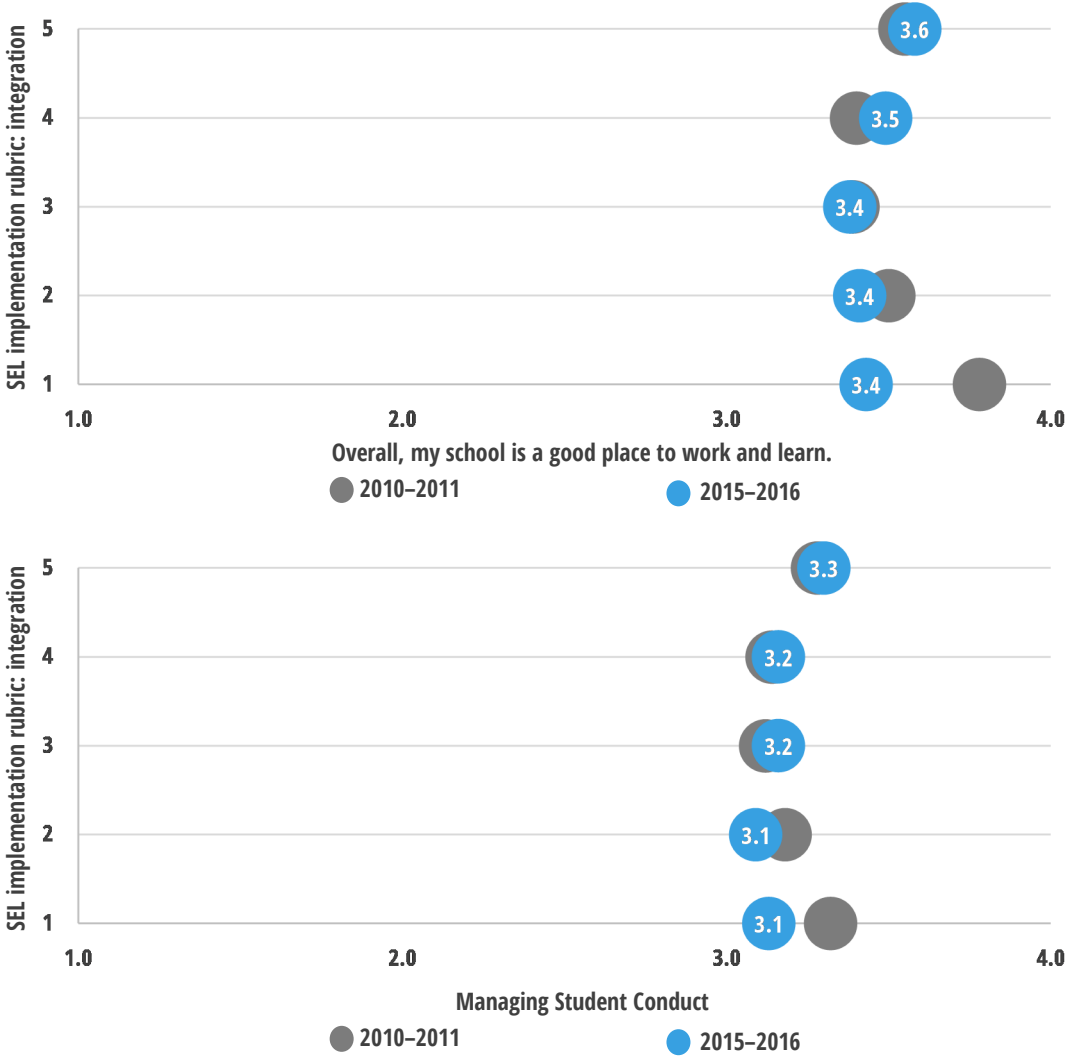
● 2010–2011   ● 2015–2016

Source. 2010–2011 through 2015–2016 TELL AISD Staff Climate Survey ratings
Note. Student Climate Survey response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 4 = *a lot of the time*. ALC and International High School were excluded from the analysis; ratings are rounded to the nearest tenth. β = .05, *p* = .06; β = .03, *p* = .02

Secondary. Analyses of school climate at the secondary level showed a trend for students' perceptions of "Adults at this school treat all students fairly" to improve more over time at schools participating in SEL for 4 or 5 years than at schools participating in SEL for fewer years (Figure 26). Additionally, students' perceptions of school safety improved more and experiences with bullying decreased more at schools participating in SEL for a longer period of time than at schools participating in SEL for a shorter period of time (Figure 26).

Figure 26.
Students' perceptions of adult fairness, school safety, and bullying improved more over time at secondary schools with more longevity in SEL than at schools participating in SEL for fewer years.
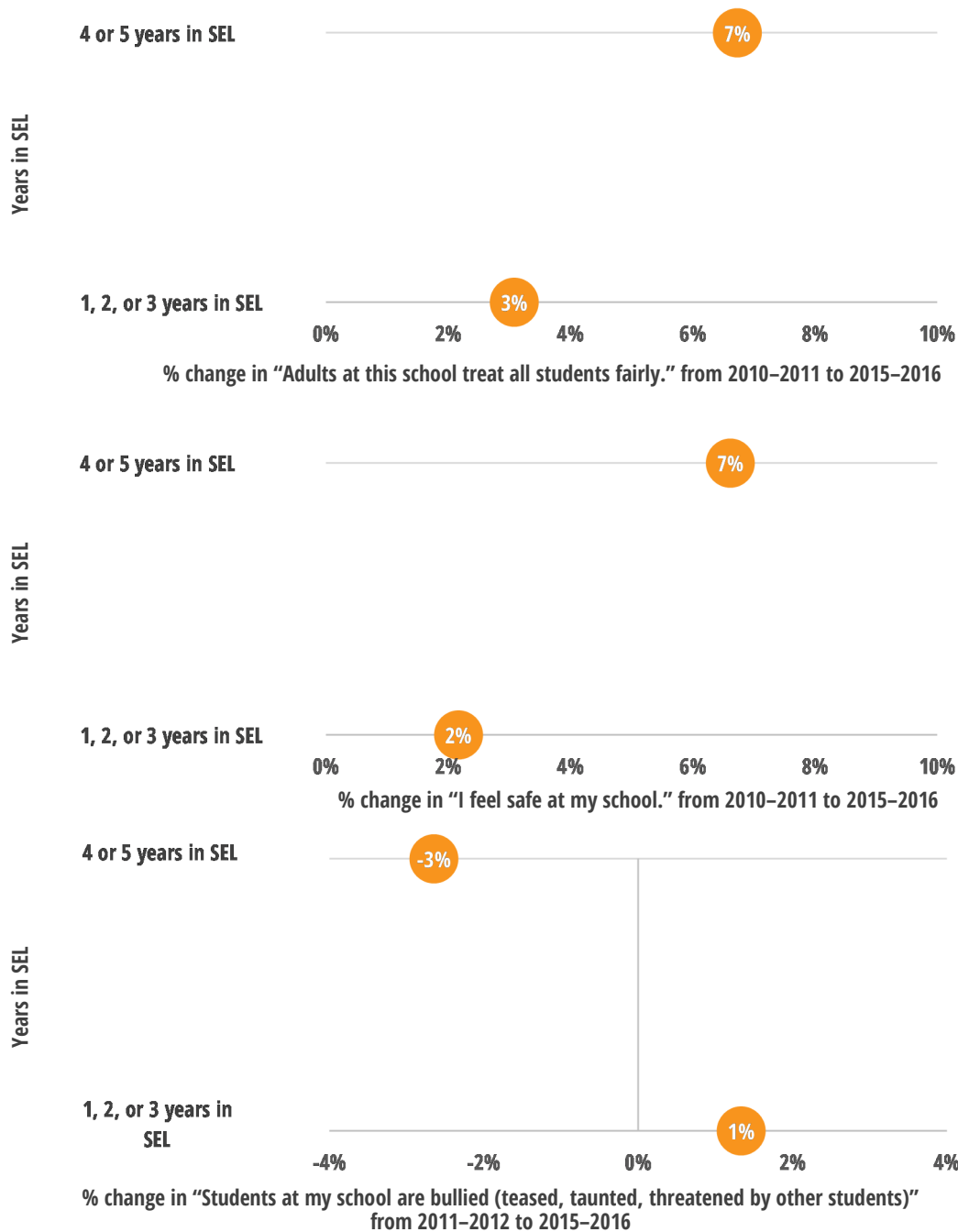
Source. 2010–2011 or 2011–2012 through 2015–2016 AISD discipline data
Note. ALC and International High School were excluded from the analyses. The following *F*-tests are associated with each graph in the figure: $F_{(1, 25)} = 3.24$, $p = .08$; $F_{(1, 25)} = 4.81$, $p = .03$; $F_{(1, 27)} = 7.08$, $p = .01$

Analyses were also conducted to determine which SEL implementation ratings predicted school climate outcomes after controlling for baseline climate data and years in SEL. Results from these analyses showed secondary schools that worked more diligently with campus community members to implement SEL also had students who reported more favorable ratings of "My classmates show respect to each other," "My classmates show respect to other students who are different," "Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions," and "Adults at this school treat all students fairly" (Figure 27). Future conversations with program staff will explore the importance of community engagement as it pertains to strengthening SEL implementation at middle and high schools.

Figure 27.

After controlling for baseline ratings, 2015–2016 student perceptions of student-to-student respect and adult-to-student respect were more favorable at schools that worked more closely with their community to implement SEL than at schools that worked less closely with their community to implement SEL, regardless of years in SEL.
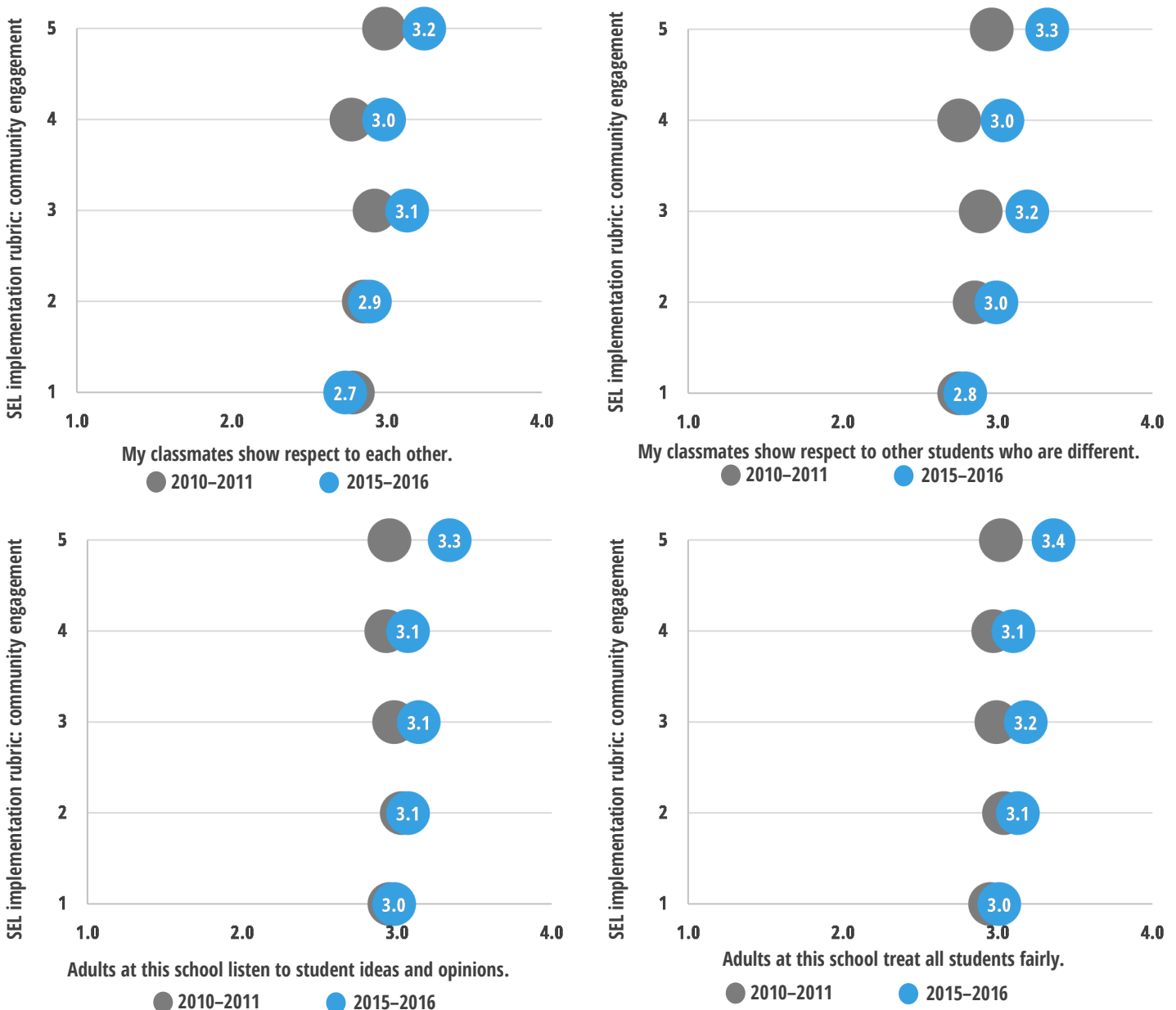
Source. 2010–2011 through 2015–2016 Student Climate Survey data and 2015-2016 SEL implementation rubric data
Note. Student Climate Survey response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 4 = *a lot of the time.* ALC and International high school were excluded from the analyses. Parameter estimates are as follows: β = .08, *p* = .02; β = .08, *p* = .02; β = .07, *p* = .02; β = .02, *p* = .05; ratings are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Did high-needs SEL schools improve more over time than non-high-needs SEL schools?

Conversations among district administrators have focused on the potential impact of SEL for students and schools with the most need. To that end, high economically disadvantaged schools with 4 or 5 years of SEL experience were categorized as high needs and non-high needs, based on the following criteria:

- Schools received a high-needs score of 1 if they were in the bottom quartile[1] in any of the following areas: 2010–2011 attendance rates, 2010–2011 student ratings of "I feel safe at school," 2010–2011 staff ratings of "Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn," and 2010–2011 staff ratings of managing student conduct.

- Schools also received a score of 1 if they were in the top quartile in the following areas: 2010–2011 discipline rates, and 2010–2011 student ratings of "Students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with/taunted, threatened by other students)."

- Scores were summed across all six areas so that scores ranged from 0 to 6. Due to the small number of schools meeting these criteria, elementary, middle, and high schools were combined.

- Schools with a score of 3 or greater were considered high needs, and schools with a score of 2 or less were considered non-high needs ($n = 35$).

- Only high economically disadvantaged schools participating in SEL for 4 or 5 years were included in the analyses ($n = 12$ high-needs, high economically disadvantaged schools; and $n = 17$ non-high-needs, high economically disadvantaged schools). Six schools were excluded from the analysis because of the low percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged.

Due to the small number of schools, elementary and secondary schools were combined. Descriptive analyses compared outcome measures of interest from baseline year through 2015–2016 to determine if high-needs, high economically disadvantaged schools experienced greater improvement over time than did non-high-needs, high economically disadvantaged schools.

Results found that students' ratings of respect they received from fellow students and adults, as well as their perceptions of school safety, improved more over time at high-needs schools than did students' ratings of these items at similar non-high-needs schools. Also important, staff members' ratings of "Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn" improved more over time at high-needs schools than did staff members' ratings of working conditions at similar non-high-needs schools (Figure 28). A similar analysis comparing trends over time for schools with 4 or 5 years in SEL, based on the school percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged (regardless of need status), is included in Appendix B.

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[1] Quartile rankings were based on schools with 4 or 5 years of SEL experience only; ALC, DAEP, and International High School were excluded from the analysis.

Did high-needs SEL schools improve more over time than non-high-needs SEL schools?

High-needs high economically disadvantaged schools experienced greater improvement over time than did similar **non-high-needs** schools with respect to students' perceptions of their relationships with students and adults at their school and of school safety.

Staff ratings of work environment at **high-needs** schools also improved more over time than did staff ratings at **non-high-needs** schools.
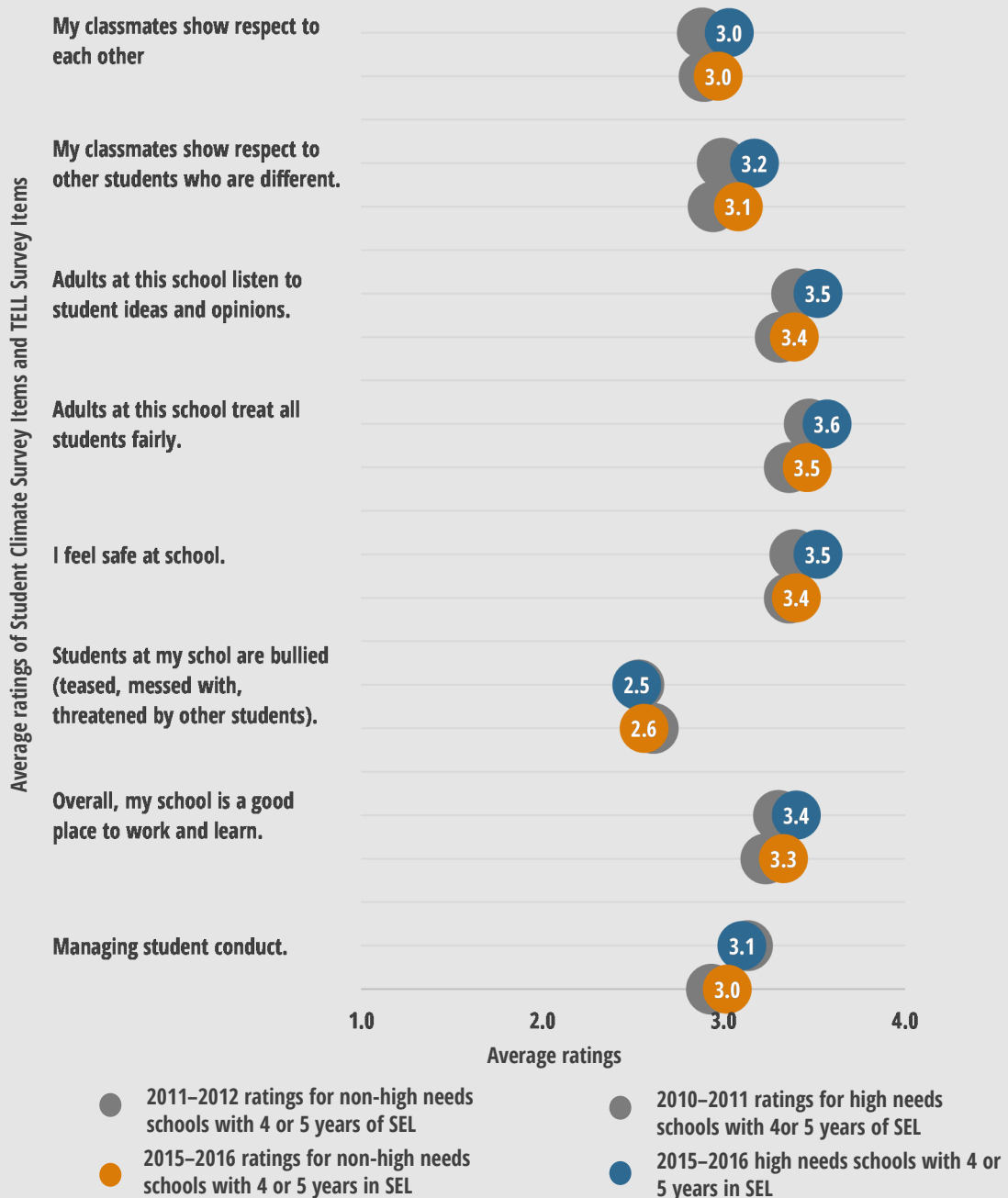
Average ratings of Student Climate Survey Items and TELL Survey Items

Survey Item	Ratings
My classmates show respect to each other	3.0 / 3.0
My classmates show respect to other students who are different.	3.2 / 3.1
Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions.	3.5 / 3.4
Adults at this school treat all students fairly.	3.6 / 3.5
I feel safe at school.	3.5 / 3.4
Students at my schol are bullied (teased, messed with, threatened by other students).	2.5 / 2.6
Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.	3.4 / 3.3
Managing student conduct.	3.1 / 3.0

Average ratings: 1.0 2.0 3.0 4.0

Legend:
- 2011–2012 ratings for non-high needs schools with 4 or 5 years of SEL
- 2015–2016 ratings for non-high needs schools with 4 or 5 years in SEL
- 2010–2011 ratings for high needs schools with 4or 5 years of SEL
- 2015–2016 high needs schools with 4 or 5 years in SEL

Did high-needs SEL schools improve more over time than non-high-needs SEL schools?

Descriptive data were summarized comparisons of elementary school students' STAAR reading and math performance over time at high-needs, high economically disadvantaged schools and non-high-needs, high economically disadvantaged schools with 4 or 5 years of SEL experience. High-needs high economically disadvantaged schools (n = 10) experienced slightly greater improvements in reading and math STAAR performance over time than did similar non-high-needs elementary schools (n = 11; Figure 29). A similar analysis comparing STAAR performance over time at high economically disadvantaged schools and less economically disadvantaged schools with 4 or 5 years of SEL experience is included in Appendix C.

Figure 29

Improvements in STAAR reading and math from 2011–2012 to 2015–2016 were slightly higher at high-needs SEL elementary schools than at non-high-needs SEL elementary schools.

STAAR performance

Math
73%
71%

Reading
69%
67%

% met STAAR reading and math

- 2011–2012 ratings for non-high-needs schools with 4 or 5 years of SEL
- 2015–2016 ratings for non-high-needs schools with 4 or 5 years in SEL
- 2011–2012 ratings for high-needs schools with 4 or 5 years of SEL
- 2015–2016 high-needs schools with 4 or 5 years in SEL
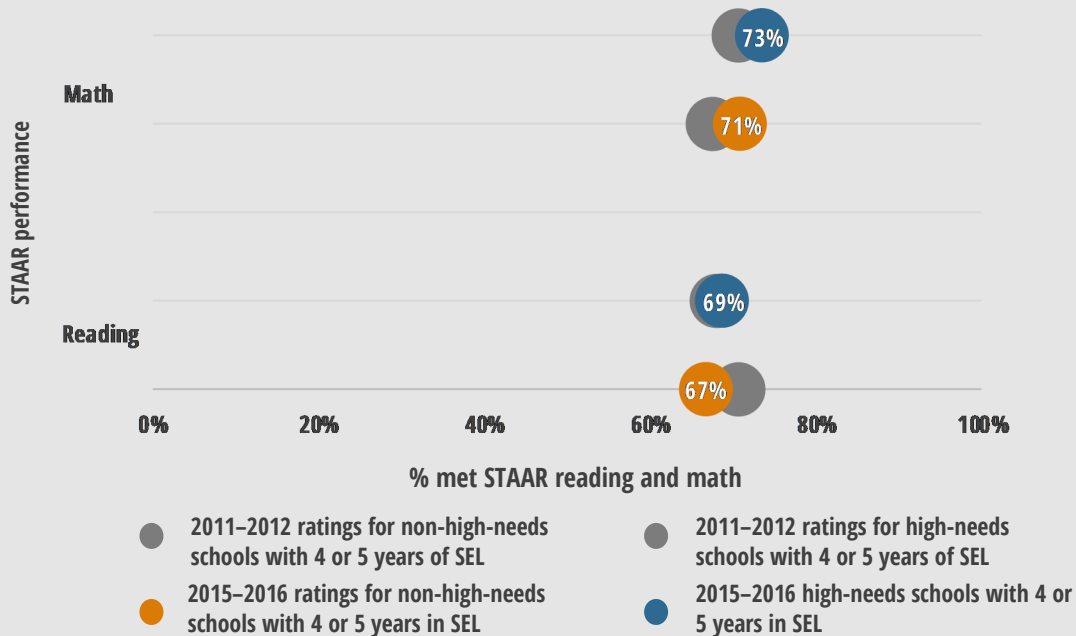
Source. 2011–2012 through 2015–2016 STAAR data

Conclusion

Results presented in this report offer vital information so that SEL is not only what we do, but is also who we are. Analyses examining outcome variables from 2010–2011 through 2015–2016 revealed instances when length of time in SEL led to stronger program outcomes. For example, secondary schools with more years in SEL experienced a greater reduction in student discretionary discipline removals since 2010–2011 than did secondary schools with fewer years in SEL. At the elementary school level, the percentage change in chronic absenteeism decreased more at elementary schools with more longevity in SEL than at elementary schools with fewer years in SEL. These findings corroborate trends emerging nationally that have documented reductions in disciplinary infractions for students at schools participating in SEL for multiple years (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2010).

Positive outcomes based on longevity in SEL were not limited to attendance and discipline data; importantly, elementary schools participating in SEL for more years experienced greater improvement over time in students' perceptions of school safety and student-to-student respect than did schools participating in SEL for fewer years. At the secondary level, students' perceptions of adult fairness, school safety, and frequency of bullying improved more from 2010–2011 to 2015–2016 at schools participating in SEL for 4 or 5 years than at schools participating in SEL for 3 or fewer years.

An in-depth analysis of economically disadvantaged schools participating in SEL for 4 or 5 years revealed critical results. Specifically, comparisons of the changes in outcomes of interest (e.g., school climate, STAAR performance) over time were made between high-needs, high economically disadvantaged schools and non-high-needs, high economically disadvantaged schools. Although tests of significance could not be conducted due to the small sample size, descriptive results revealed that high-needs, high economically disadvantaged schools experienced greater improvements over time than did similar non-high-needs schools in the following areas: students' perceptions of student-to-student respect, adult-to-student respect, and school safety, and staff's perceptions of working conditions. This suggests that schools that had more to gain from SEL (i.e., high-needs, high economically disadvantaged schools) seemed to benefit the most from the SEL program. As district administrators work to identify critical factors contributing to SEL success, in-depth analyses should be conducted to identify what makes SEL work at these schools.

In isolation, these results suggest that it takes time for SEL to influence the climate and culture of a school. However, results examining the influence of school-wide SEL implementation tell a slightly different story. For example, after controlling for baseline STAAR math performance and years in SEL, elementary schools with more integrated SEL steering committees predicted high STAAR math performance in 2015–2016. Similarly, elementary schools where SEL was integrated into more classrooms experienced a greater reduction in student discretionary discipline removals from 2010–2011 to 2015–2016 than did elementary schools where SEL was integrated into fewer classrooms, regardless of years in SEL or baseline disciplinary data. After controlling for 2010–2011 chronic absenteeism, schools where at least 90% of classrooms

implemented peace areas (elementary) and where 50% of classrooms integrated SEL (secondary) predicted lower rates of chronic absenteeism in 2015–2016, regardless of length of time in SEL. These results suggest that longevity in SEL is not the only factor contributing to program success: the degree to which SEL is implemented with fidelity matters.

If SEL implementation matters, and is something that schools can focus on and change (as opposed to years in the program, which cannot be changed) what factors contribute to SEL implementation? Results from analyses presented in this report suggest that improvements in school climate and SEL implementation are inextricably linked. For example, after controlling for years in SEL and baseline ratings, elementary schools where SEL was integrated into at least 70% of classrooms experienced greater improvements in students' perceptions of student-to-student and adult-to-student respect than did schools where SEL was integrated into fewer classrooms. At the secondary level, after controlling for years in SEL and baseline ratings, schools where the community was engaged in SEL implementation experienced greater improvements in students' perceptions of student-to-student respect and adult-to-student respect than did schools where the community was less engaged in SEL implementation. Most importantly, elementary school students' ratings of student-to-student respect predicted 2015–2016 STAAR reading and math performance, after controlling for years in SEL and baseline STAAR performance.

Similarly, examining students' SEL skill ratings suggests that level of implementation matters more in developing these skills than does the number of years a school has participated in SEL. Indeed, at the secondary level, students' self-assessments of their SEL skills were slightly higher at schools participating in SEL for fewer years than were students' self-assessments at schools participating in SEL for a longer time. On the other hand, elementary school students' ratings of several SEL skills on the Student Climate Survey were higher at schools with high SEL implementation ratings than at schools with low SEL implementation ratings. It is important to note that secondary students' ratings on both surveys did not seem to vary based on longevity in SEL or level of implementation. This result could be due to the fact that secondary students have reached a developmental ceiling in their SEL skills, while elementary students are developing their SEL skills. Indeed, similar findings regarding secondary students' SEL skills were reported by the American Institutes for Research's (AIR) evaluation of CASEL's Collaborating District's Initiative (CDI; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). Additional research is necessary to further explore these and other questions related to SEL skill assessment.

Taken together, these results suggest that if schools wish to improve their students' social and emotional learning, they should begin by focusing on specific and consistent ways to improve school climate and culture, which will in turn improve SEL implementation. These improvements will then drive more long-term program outcomes related to student achievement, attendance, and discipline. Importantly, this connection holds regardless of how long a school has participated in SEL. Also of note, improvements to school climate were more pronounced among high-needs SEL schools that had participated in SEL for 4 or 5 years. This suggests that schools that have the most to gain from SEL and that commit to the program experience great change.

As district leaders develop the next phase of SEL in AISD, focusing on school climate, integration of SEL into elementary school classrooms, and connecting with the secondary school's community will ensure that SEL is not only what we do, but is also who we are.

Future reports will analyze possible relationships between students' responses to the SEL Skills Survey; students' responses to the Student Climate Survey; teachers' ratings of students' personal development skills; and outcomes such as student-level attendance, achievement, and discipline. An additional report will examine staff perceptions of and experiences with SEL.

Appendix

Appendix A. Elementary School Passing Rates in Reading and Math Over Time, by Years in SEL

Years in SEL	Subject	2011–2012	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015	2015-2016
5 years	Reading	82%	86%	85%	85%	81%
	Math	80%	82%	82%	81%	79%
4 years	Reading	75%	78%	78%	79%	72%
	Math	72%	76%	77%	72%	75%
3years	Reading	73%	73%	73%	76%	70%
	Math	70%	71%	71%	72%	73%
2 years	Reading	77%	79%	81%	80%	74%
	Math	77%	79%	81%	76%	77%
1 year	Reading	79%	82%	82%	81%	79%
	Math	76%	80%	80%	78%	80%

Source. 2011–2012 through 2015–2016 STAAR data
Note. Percentages were computed by taking the maximum administration date, summing the number of students who passed the student standard, dividing by the total number of students tested for each subject, and aggregating at the school level. Percentages in this table might not match records produced by the (TEA).

Appendix B. High economically disadvantaged schools (*n* = 27) and non-high economically disadvantaged schools (*n* = 25) participating in SEL for 4 or 5 years experienced similar changes in student and staff ratings of climate over time. Descriptive analyses suggest that students' ratings of "My classmates show respect to each other," at non-high economically disadvantaged schools improved more over time than did students' ratings at high economically disadvantaged schools.


Average ratings of Student Climate Survey Items and TELL Survey Items

Item	Values
My classmates show respect to each other	3.0 / 3.3
My classmates show respect to other students who are different.	3.1 / 3.4
Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions.	3.4 / 3.5
Adults at this school treat all students fairly.	3.5 / 3.6
I feel safe at school.	3.5 / 3.6
Students at my schol are bullied (teased, messed with, threatened by other students).	2.5 / 2.3
Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.	3.4 / 3.5
Managing student conduct.	3.1 / 3.2

X-axis: Average ratings (1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 4.0)

Legend:
- 2011–2012 ratings for non-high economically disadvantaged schools with 4 or 5 years of SEL
- 2015–2016 ratings for non-high economically disadvantaged schools with 4 or 5 years of SEL
- 2010–2011 ratings for high economically disadvantaged schools with 4 or 5 years in SEL
- 2015–2016 ratings for high economically disadvantaged schools with 4 or 5 years in SEL

Source. 2010–2011 through 2015–2016 Student Climate Survey and TELL data
Note. Response options on the Student Climate Survey range from 1 = *Never* to 4 = *A lot of the time*; response options on the Staff Climate Survey range from 1 = *Strongly disagree* to 4 = *Strongly agree*. Ratings are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Appendix, continued

Appendix C. Descriptive analyses found that students' STAAR math performance improved more over time at high economically disadvantaged elementary schools (*n* = 21) participating in SEL for 4 or 5 than at non-high economically disadvantaged elementary schools with 4 or 5 years in SEL (*n* = 20).

● 2011–2012 ratings for non-high economically disadvantaged schools with 4 or 5 years of SEL

● 2015–2016 ratings for non-high economically disadvantaged schools with 4 or 5 years of SEL

● 2010–2011 ratings for high economically disadvantaged schools with 4 or 5 years in SEL

● 2015–2016 ratings for high economically disadvantaged schools with 4 or 5 years in SEL
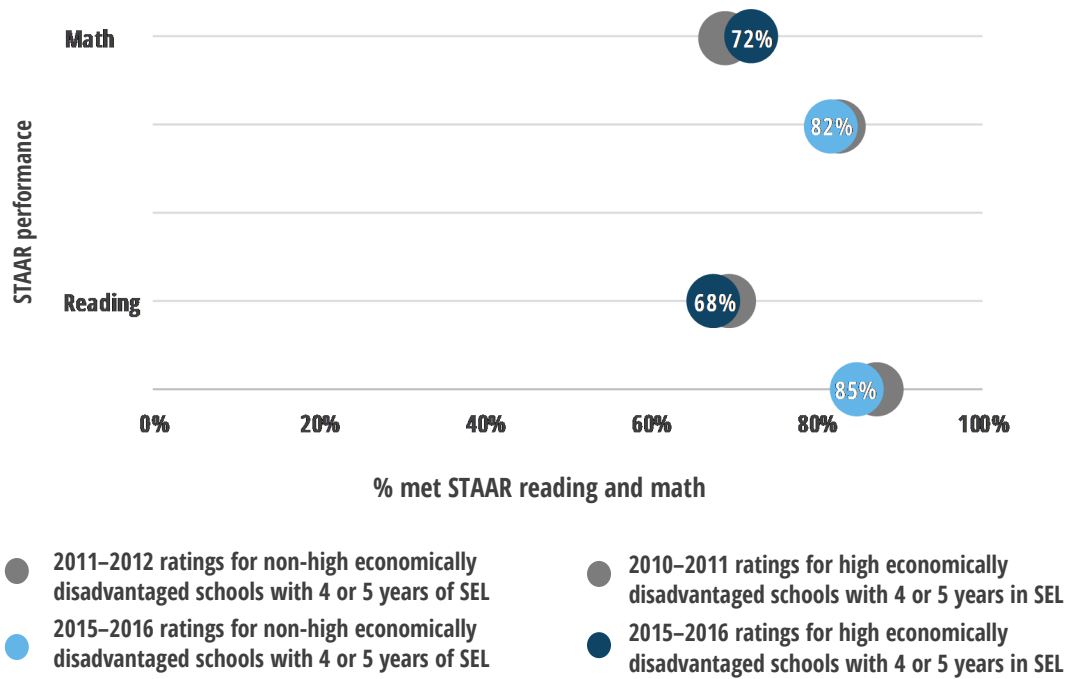
Source. 2011–2012 through 2015–2016 STAAR data

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