The Intersection of School Climate and Social and Emotional Development

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Introduction

Purpose of the project

Healthy schools and supportive school environments provide connection, support, engagement, and physical and emotional safety, as well as access to social capital for students. They provide caring environments and positive conditions for learning. These environments include opportunities for all students to develop the social and emotional skills needed to meet the demands of school, work, and life, as well as opportunities for all students to have voice and to contribute and be recognized for positive contributions. In addition, healthy schools connect young people to essential health, mental health, and other family services that support physical and emotional wellness (Osher, Dwyer, & Jackson, 2004). In healthy schools, children and adults have relational trust, feel connected, supported, and have the opportunity to thrive (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

The vision of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is to build a national Culture of Health that promotes equity by facilitating conditions for societal transformation through the following endeavors: (1) making health a shared value; (2) fostering cross-sector collaboration to improve well-being; (3) creating healthier, more equitable communities; and (4) strengthening integration of health services and systems (RWJF, 2014). AIR is working with RWJF to contribute to the knowledge base on a Culture of Health with our partners in the field.

Two related strands of research—social and emotional learning (SEL) and school climate—provide guidance on how to support students in an equitable, collaborative, and healthy environment (e.g., Durlak et al., 2011; Elias, 2007; Osher et al., 2008). SEL serves as a coordinating field in areas that address students' capacities to coordinate cognition, affect, and behavior that help them navigate daily challenges and succeed in school and life (Osher, Kidron, Brackett, Dymnicki, Jones, & Weissberg, 2016). School climate includes many factors including conditions for learning and development—emotional and physical safety, connectedness, support, respect, engagement, and challenge—which are the focus of this paper (Berkowitz, Moore, Astor, & Benbensity, 2016; Garibaldi, Ruddy, Osher, & Kendziora, 2015; Osher & Kendziora, 2010). Although analytically distinct and sometimes encompassing different strategies, conditions for learning and SEL are inextricably linked. Integrating these perspectives can advance our knowledge of how healthy schools can improve child and youth well-being. This integration can facilitates educators' ability to align efforts, improve practice, and contribute to improved learning and developmental outcomes.

Equity is critical here. Access to supportive school environments is not equally distributed. Schools and educators often lack responsiveness to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Students of color, students who are economically disadvantaged, and students with high-incidence disabilities are more likely than their peers to experience harsh and exclusionary discipline (Morgan, Salomon, Plotkin, & Cohen, 2014; Fenning & Rose, 2007). Although not the immediate focus of the project, at the heart of this work and the agenda is promoting equitable schools. Developing practical understandings and applications of how to promote the conditions for learning and social and emotional development for all students can reduce inequities and contribute to all children thriving. A research and translation agenda that

aligns school climate and social and emotional development in a culturally competent manner can contribute to greater equity.

Throughout this work, we refer to the set of social and emotional skills, knowledge, and dispositions (i.e., attitudes, beliefs, mindsets, and orientations toward self and others) as *social and emotional competencies*, and to the development of these competencies as *social and emotional development*. We focus our attention on social and emotional conditions for learning (called conditions for learning) because they are the components of school climate that are most proximal to young people's experiences in schools, such as safety, connectedness, and engagement. These conditions are a subset of school and classroom climate, and are a product of interactions among all members of a class or school community, how these interactions are interpreted, and the school's culture (Garibaldi et al., 2015; Pianta & Hamre, 2009).

The goal of this paper is to inform an applied research and translation agenda that will support the creation of healthy, safe, nurturing, and developmentally supportive schools that support the development of students' social and emotional competencies as one mechanism to foster optimal learning experiences and school environments. It is informed by three meetings—a practitioner meeting, a researcher meeting, and a synthesizer meeting—and a web-based Delphi survey. Discussions at the meetings focused on the intersection of school climate and SEL; gaps in existing theory and research and its translatability to practice that need to be addressed; what barriers exist to integrating climate and SEL, both with each other and with related areas; what opportunities are available to integrate or align them; and how implementation strategies and service delivery can be better aligned and improved to meet the needs of educators and students. A previous version of this paper informed the conversation at the three meetings.

Guiding propositions

We developed from the meetings a set of propositions to guide the applied research and translation agenda. These were reviewed and revised by invited experts using a Delphi survey. Experts who could not attend the meetings provided feedback on a first set of propositions. AIR sent a revised set of propositions to all meeting attendees, who also provided feedback, and they were revised again. The following propositions were developed during this process. They are organized according to defining *what* is at the intersection of conditions for learning and social and emotional development; *how* to build conditions for learning and social and emotional competencies in schools; and questions about how to *measure* these efforts.

The intersection of conditions for learning and social and emotional development

- Schools are complex systems, and the outcomes of education involve the interdependent transactions and relationships between and among individuals and groups of individuals, people's perceptions and how they process and remember their perceptions, the contexts that affect teaching and learning, the cultural resources including beliefs of all members of the school community, material resources, and community and society factors (e.g., policy) that affect teaching and learning.

- Key aspects of school climate—conditions for learning (e.g., physical and emotional safety, connectedness and support, engaging and challenging opportunities to learn, and interactions with and modeling from socially and emotionally competent adults and peers)—and SEL are interconnected. SEL cannot flourish in a school independent of positive and supportive school and classroom climates, just as systematic efforts to build student and adult social and emotional competencies contribute to nurturing classroom and school climates.
- School climate and social and emotional competence frameworks converge at the point at which: (1) individual competence becomes a condition for others' experiences and development; and (2) the policies, procedures, norms, and expectations provide the conditions to support and foster students' social and emotional competencies.
- Greater conceptual clarity and alignment in definitions, goals, messaging, and measurement of social, emotional, and cognitive competencies, and school (and classroom) climate, and how to define the intersection between the two as well as between particular aspects of each, are needed. Continued refinement in these measures for specific contexts and communities can improve their validity and utility.
- Research and practice in fields that address education and development will benefit from umbrella questions and frameworks to guide dialogue and action that include defining and promoting positive school climate and SEL. Each of these umbrella questions can draw from and build upon theory and empirical research findings across multiple fields of study and can inform action-oriented questions and goals.

Building conditions for learning and social and emotional competencies in schools

- Social and emotional competencies of students and educators are malleable. Nurturing relationships within a positive school context call upon and provide opportunities for students to develop specific social and emotional competencies. Intentional efforts can support adults' capacity to have nurturing relationships with students within a positive school environment. These efforts can support the development of desired social and emotional competencies.
- Training, professional development, and knowledge dissemination can enable educators to explore their role in social development and to build their capacity to promote equity by implementing culturally competent and culturally responsive approaches, providing students with appropriate modeling, and supporting social, emotional, and cognitive development. These efforts should be informed by research, institutionalized in supportive policy, and refined through continuous improvement and evaluation research.
- Blended programs that incorporate school climate and SEL approaches might have additive effects on students and schools due to the interactions of school climate and SEL.
- Schools can fortify their universal supports and broaden their array of tiered supports to promote the healthy development and the social and emotional development of all students.

Equity

- An equity lens in research, practice, and policy is needed.
- Equity, includes: (1) equitable opportunities to learn; (2) access to structural and relational resources to achieve optimal health; (3) tailoring resources to each young person's individuality; and (4) ensuring equitable outcomes that include thriving. Equity is affected by structural factors such as resource allocation as well as institutionalization of bias and privilege and the implicit and explicit expressions of prejudice regarding race, culture, nationality, economic status, gender, and disability.
- Equity involves ensuring that each child receives nurturing and robust opportunities to develop and learn. Part of having an equity lens is articulating and assessing whether and how what we are doing is appropriate and sufficient to help the children and youth that we work with realize health and developmental equity and all have the same opportunities to strive and thrive.
- Knowledge regarding culturally competent and responsive interventions in schools is lacking. Research should address what conditions are necessary to reduce disparities in access to supportive environments and to create opportunities to achieve equitable outcomes.

Research

- Greater integration between systems and fields of study is needed. These systems and fields of study include (but are not limited to) K–12 education, early childhood, health care, mental health, juvenile justice, political, and policy systems, and fields of study such as youth development, neuroscience, workforce development, cultural competence, and resilience.
  - Developing research questions and articulating practical goals that connect fields of study will reduce research and practice silos in knowledge about how to create healthier school climates and social and emotional development.
  - Bridging these gaps can help establish a common language to spur interest and momentum.
- To have a stronger and more sustainable impact, research and practice should address strengthening school–family–community partnerships and create consistency across multiple child-serving systems.
- Understanding the usefulness and reach of practical and targeted approaches to social and emotional development as well as the impacts of the everyday experiences of young people and adults in the school is important. Equally important is understanding how systems-level factors—such as school design and district supports—shape school climate and social and emotional development.

- Interdisciplinary research collaborations, innovative research methods, and analyses of existing data can be leveraged in multiple and creative ways to answer questions about how school climate (including the social and emotional conditions for learning) and social and emotional competencies interact and can be improved.
  - Interdisciplinary collaborations, innovative methods, and existing data can be leveraged by using and aligning multiple theoretical perspectives, designs, methods, and data sets.
  - Methods and approaches should examine the effects of context, implementation quality and fidelity, and the effects of adaptation.

Measurement

- Measuring school climate and social and emotional competencies is useful for continuous improvement. Efforts to improve school climate and social and emotional competencies for all will benefit from the identification of early and leading indicators and the development of data systems that track individuals and schools over time.
- Measuring school climate and social and emotional competencies can be done only in combination with a careful assessment of the uses and possible misuses of the data. Systematic attention should be paid to areas where measurement bias, often stemming from implicit, explicit, and attributional biases (e.g., how contexts affect assessment) can affect measurement and assessment. Careful consideration to these sources of bias and how to take them into account when interpreting and extrapolating results will help reduce the chances of misusing the data. In addition, measuring social and emotional competencies should be done in combination with empirically tested interventions that respond to the needs of struggling students.
- Attention should be paid to conceptual clarity and the quality of measures of school climate and social and emotional competencies.
- Clear communication to educators, families, policy makers, and other system leaders about the purposes of measuring school climate and social and emotional competencies is critical to effective use.

Foundational paper

Although inextricably linked, school climate and SEL are analytically distinct and are studied through multiple distinct frameworks (Garibaldi et al., 2015; Osher et al., 2016; Osher, Kidron, DeCandia, Kendziora, & Weissberg, 2015), and have produced distinct bodies of research (e.g., Berkowitz et al., 2016; Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovich, & Gullotta, 2014). We begin to identify the theoretical and empirical evidence that supports how and under what conditions simultaneous investments in supporting healthy school climates and SEL reinforce each other and can support the diverse needs of students and of schools with diverse compositions and resources. We end with a discussion of methodological considerations to bring greater conceptual and practical clarity to measuring and monitoring efforts at the intersection of climate and SEL. The propositions laid out at the beginning of the paper can inform an applied research and translation agenda that can support a culture of health by helping practitioners, policy makers, and researchers better align

school climate and SEL activities, which include practices, policies, research, syntheses, and communication. This paper is not a systematic review of school climate or social and emotional competence frameworks (which are currently being examined under other projects) or of the evidence linking frameworks to child outcomes. However, we provide a list of common frameworks in the appendix for the purposes of discussing how they overlap and attempt to summarize the literature using select examples for illustrative purposes. We enable the reader to learn more about school climate and SEL by providing links to key readings.

School Climate and Conditions for Learning

School climate consists of an accumulation of short-term social interactions over time that exist within microenvironments and larger systems that dictate the parameters of interaction and, along with the meaning that individuals make of these interactions, directly and indirectly influence them. At the lowest level are the dyadic microsecond interactions. These dyadic interactions affect those directly involved, but also others around them. In this sense they have a rippling effect that influence other dyads as well as larger groups. The interactions that make up the climate shape and are shaped by the characteristics that members of the school community bring to them.

The National School Climate Council (NSCC) defines school climate as "patterns of school life experiences and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational structures" (National School Climate Council [NSCC], 2007, p. 4). School climate is a multidimensional construct with a single definition, but there is growing consensus on the essential components of a positive school climate. Thapa, Cohen, and Higgins-D'Alessandro (2013) identified four essential components of school climate based on a review of more than 200 school climate studies from the past decade: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and institutional environment. The U.S. Department of Education's school climate model consists of three broad categories: engagement, safety, and environment (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). *Engagement* includes the relationships between and among students, teachers, and families, and between schools and the broader community, as well as respect for diversity and school participation. *Safety* includes the emotional and physical safety of the school community, as well as substance use. *Environment* includes the physical, academic, and disciplinary environment, as well as the availability of school-based health supports.

Some elements of climate are particularly relevant to SEL and development (Osher, Cantor, Berg, Rose, & Steyer, 2017; Osher & Kendziora, 2016). The primary focus of this work is the elements of school climate that are most proximal to SEL and healthy development, which we define as conditions for learning: emotional and physical safety, connectedness and support, challenge and engagement, and most notable to this work, peer and adult social and emotional competencies (Osher & Kendziora, 2010; Osher, Penkoff, Sidana, & Kelly, 2016; Garibaldi et al, 2015). Conditions for learning are related to the emotional and affective salience of instruction and how students view the meaning and purpose of education, how safe and comfortable students feel, and students' willingness to take academic risks.

In the Technical Appendix, we present eight school climate frameworks in Table 2 and describe similarities and differences between the frameworks.

Social and Emotional Competencies

We define social and emotional competencies as the social and emotional skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to function within and across social fields. Social and emotional competencies include emotional processes such as regulating emotions and displaying empathy; interpersonal skills such as social competence and social perspective taking; and cognitive regulation including cognitive or mental flexibility, working memory, and inhibitory control (Jones, Bouffard, & Weissbourd, 2013; Zelazo, 2015). SE competence frameworks include different terms and definitions that imply that social and emotional competencies provide a foundation for healthy development, enabling young people to engage with others and with their environments; to handle stress; to become mentally, emotionally, and academically healthy; and to succeed in work and life (Osher et al., 2015). Social and emotional competencies are sometimes called *noncognitive factors* or *soft skills*, *life skills*, *character*, and—more recently—*21st century skills*. Some of these terms—namely, *noncognitive factors* and *soft skills*—can be misleading because cognitive processes and social and emotional development are intertwined (Osher et al., 2016; Osher et al., 2017), and social and emotional competencies may drive success as much as traditional academic skills do (Heckman & Kautz, 2012). One's cognitive ability to regulate emotions, impulses, behaviors, and focus plays a large role in one's ability to perceive, acknowledge, process, and act on the social world, just as social and emotional competencies contribute to academic performance (McClelland et al., 2007; Nagaoka et al., 2015; Rudolph, Lambert, Clark, & Kurlakowsky, 2001).

Many different social and emotional competence frameworks exist. In Table 1 of the Technical Appendix, we present a sampling of 15 of these frameworks and their component competencies. Although similarities and differences between the frameworks are not the focus of this work, we describe them in further detail in the Technical Appendix.

It is important to distinguish between social and emotional competencies that individuals have and the development of those competencies through social interactions and intentional SEL. Students and adults enter the school building with a set of competencies that are either triggered or not depending on demands placed on students. The climate can enable practice and reinforcement of certain competencies over others, and this can be done intentionally through relationships, practices, and policies.

SEL

SEL practices and policies help children and adults "acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can enhance personal development, establish satisfying interpersonal relationships, and lead to effective and ethical work and productivity. These include the competencies to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show caring and concern for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (Weissberg et al., 2015, p. 6). Systemic SEL is integrated into classroom practice and through partnerships with families and community members, implemented schoolwide with the whole school community, and aligned with targeted services for students who need them (Weissberg et al., 2015).

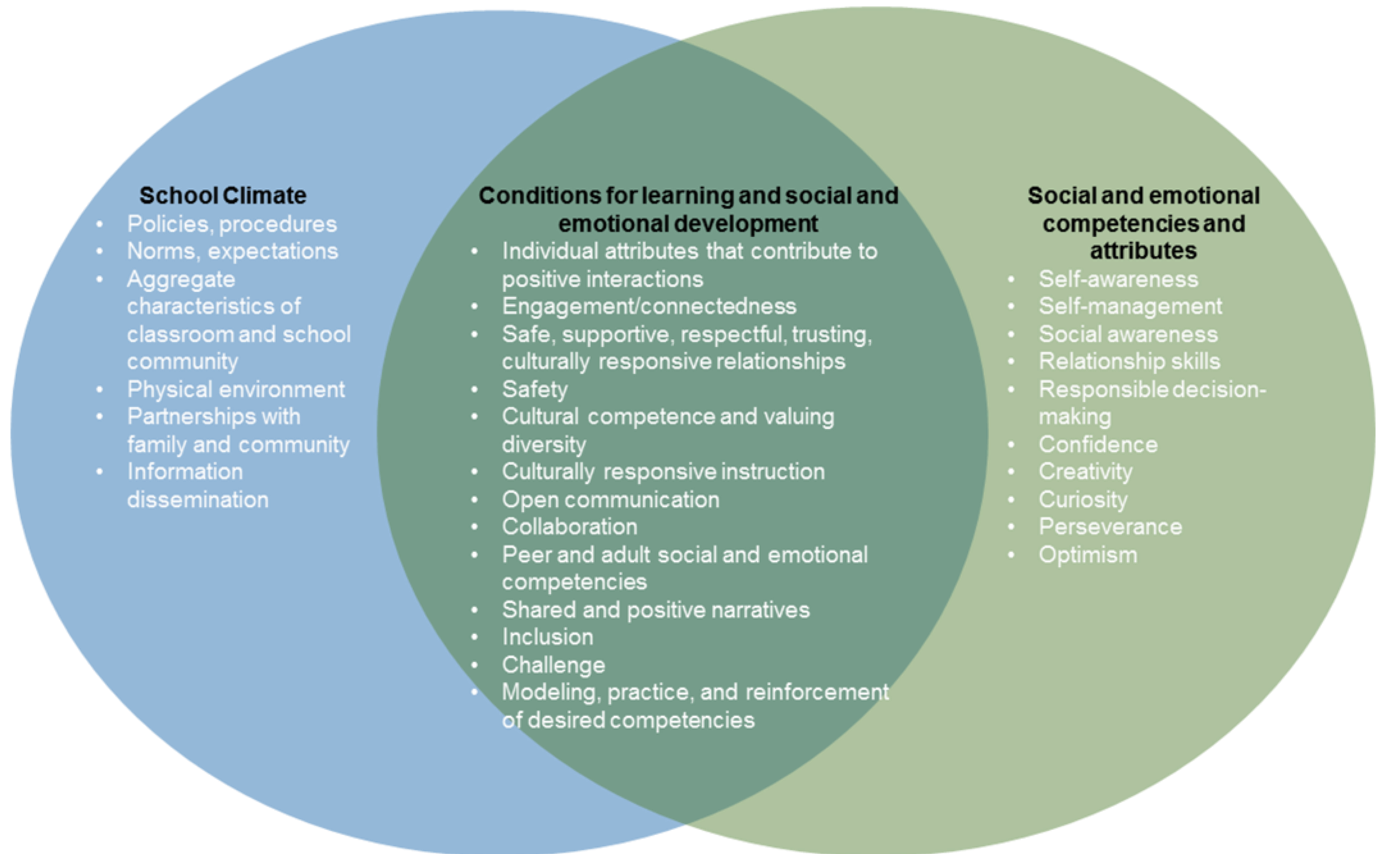
SEL takes different forms at different levels of the school system. SEL can take the form of packaged curricula directed at teachers in the classroom to intentionally build social and emotional competencies in their students through a standalone lesson or instruction embedded into standard curricula such as English language arts (Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Yoder, 2013). Impactful SEL programs can "spill over" to the whole class to improve conditions for learning in the classroom and school, making it easier for teachers to teach and other students to learn (Kellam, Ling, Merisca, et al., 1998; Thomas, Bierman, & Powers, 2011; Yudron, Jones, & Raver, 2014). SEL can be infused into everyday adult–student and student–student interactions in the classroom and throughout the school day. This is aided by SEL for teachers, which can include educator preparation and professional learning and SEL interventions for teachers such as mindfulness training aimed at reducing teacher stress (Roeser et al., 2013; Weissberg et al., 2015). At the whole-school level, SEL can build supportive conditions for learning by providing students consistent opportunities to build relationship skills and make responsible decisions (Weissberg et al., 2015). SEL also can be a coordinating framework for partnerships between and among educators, families, and communities to promote social and emotional competencies as well as for practices and policies that shape interactions among school members (CASEL, 2016).

Connecting the Promotion of a Positive School Climate and Social and Emotional Development

The relationship between school climate and social and emotional development

The proximal components of school climate concern the psychological experiences in everyday interactions that shape social and emotional development. These include the social and emotional competencies of others, which set the conditions for all individuals in interaction, both directly and through their effects on others. Other, more distal components shape these everyday interactions and how individuals perceive and experience them, and in so doing indirectly affect social and emotional development. Similarly, there are the social and emotional competencies that determine the conditions for learning when they are practiced and reinforced in everyday interactions, repeatedly in multiple interactions across the school day. Other social and emotional competencies contribute to but do not determine the nature of these interactions. The combination of individual attributes (e.g., neurobiology, health, social and emotional competencies) and the conditions under which they operate create the capacity for or challenges to healthy development. Figure 1 illustrates the overlap between components of conditions for learning and social and emotional competence frameworks.

Figure 1. A model of the overlap between conditions for learning and social and emotional competencies with illustrative components



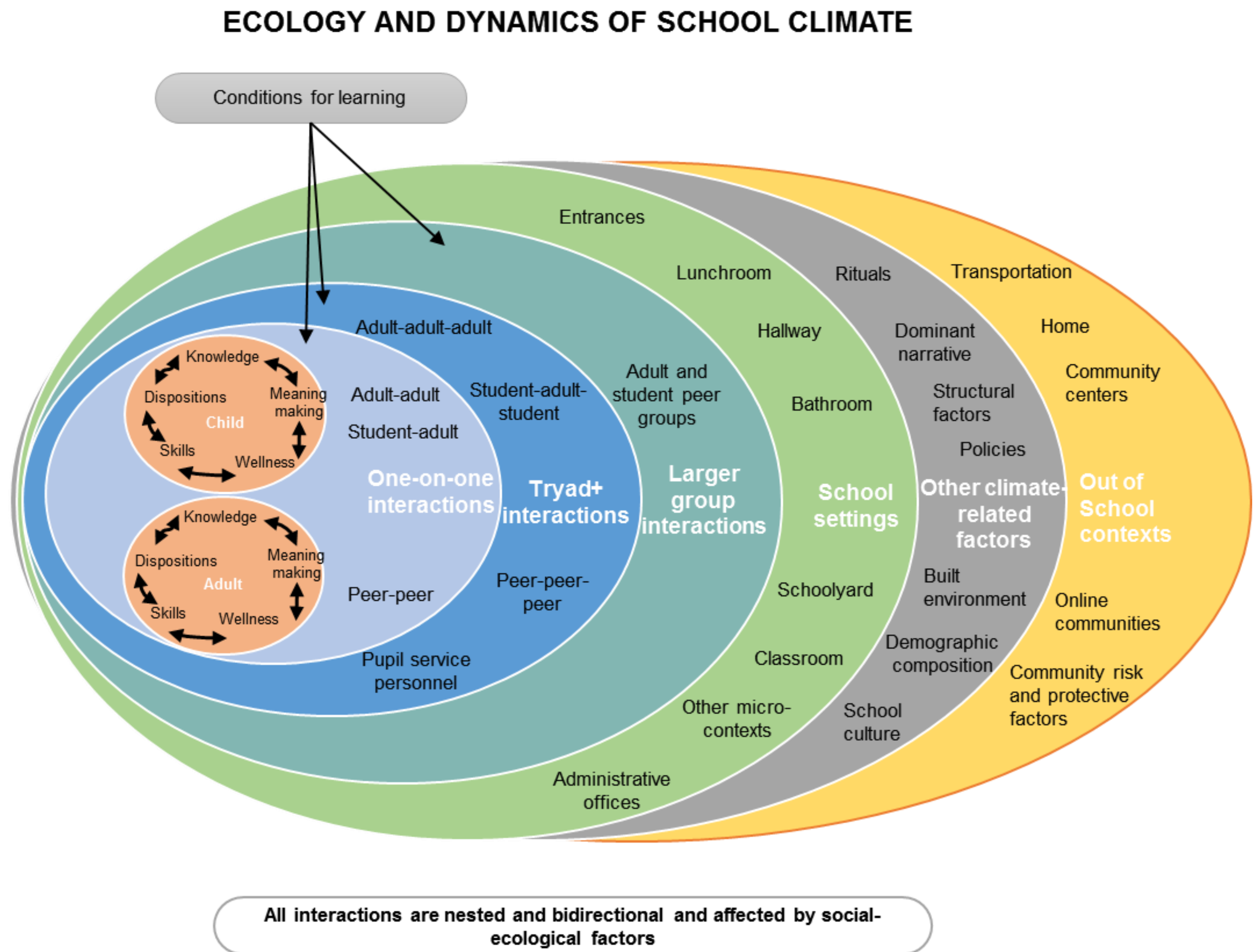
Conditions for learning and social and emotional development involve both individual and collective components, and their intersection exists at multiple levels of analysis: the microenvironment, the class, and the school. Students and adults enter the school building with a set of social, emotional, and academic competencies, stemming from other interactions in schools and other settings, which affect how they perceive and experience the school and how others perceive and experience the school. Individuals in interaction with each other create shared perceptions and experiences, which include a sense of safety, respect, and trust, as well as narratives, rituals, and cultural norms. These interactions can intentionally build social and emotional competencies as defined locally through direct instruction, modeling, and reinforcement.

How people interact in school and who they interact with are shaped by structural factors such as resource allocation, class size, and how students are grouped with each other and with adults, as well as by the built environment, which includes how shared spaces and classrooms are configured, posters and artwork on the walls, and physical features of the school building such as lighting and paint color. These associations between climate and SEL are transactional: schools that are characterized by safe, supportive, and inclusive interactions can better implement effective teaching strategies and other proactive strategies to reduce bullying, harassment, and violence, which are, in turn, useful for building competencies in individuals and creating the conditions for learning (Osher et al., 2008; Sprague & Walker, 2010). They shape and are shaped by out-of-school contexts that include community risk and protective factors, families,

community centers, how students get to school, and online communities that can be both supportive and unsupportive.

Individual and collective perceptions and experiences can be different on different days, at different times in the day, in different microenvironments, and in different interactions with others, but patterns of interactions build certain consistencies and commonalities within the school building. The patterns, as well as the differences, can ultimately be assessed at both the individual and collective levels. These associations are illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Model of the association between school climate and SEL



Conditions for learning and social and emotional development are intertwined, interdependent, and mutually beneficial: students and staff in a school need to have social and emotional competencies to create a positive social environment, and positive school climates create conditions that help students develop social and emotional competencies (e.g., Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). For example, teachers can provide models of social and emotional competence, and students are more likely to learn from teachers who are caring and culturally responsive. Similarly, improving students' social and emotional skills can contribute to their

safety and their ability to meet academic demands and effectively participate in cooperative learning. Elias and colleagues summarized the logic behind the model of SEL developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, Elias et al., 2007). This model delineates the connection between supportive learning environments and the process of acquiring social and emotional competencies:

> The logic model behind this view, in simplified form, is that (1) students become open to learning environments that are respectful, orderly, safe, academically challenging, caring, involving/engaging, and well-managed; (2) effective SEL-related programs emphasize, impart, and develop key attitudes and skills that are essential for reducing emotional barriers to learning and successful interpersonal interactions; and (3) reducing emotional barriers to effective learning and interaction is essential to low-performing students to learn academic content and skills deeply and for all students to reach their potential and apply what they learn in school to life inside and out of school. (Elias et al., 2007, p. 253).

We propose that the relationship between school climate (particularly conditions for learning) and opportunities to develop social and emotional competencies is transactional, multidimensional, multilevel, and diffuse and rippled:

Transactional in that children and youth develop in interaction with adults and students in the school community, and school climate both reflects and (as a latent construct) influences the quality and types of interactions between and among individuals (both youth and adults) and groups (school, family, and community). This is the case because school climate both reflects the culture, structure (including power relationships), and composition of the school, family, and community, and is the product of the quality and types of interactions in a school and surrounding community (Van Houtte, 2005).

Multidimensional in that transactional associations between school climate and social and emotional competencies may occur within one domain (e.g., student–teacher relationships) or across domains (e.g., physical well-being and emotional safety), in that each of these domains includes microenvironments that structure as well as reflect interactions, and in that these domains are jagged, meaning that some may be good and others not so good (Rose, 2016).

Multilevel in that transactional associations between school climate and individual social and emotional competencies operate at multiple levels of analysis. At the lowest level are everyday, moment-by-moment interactions. At a higher level are the norms of interactions between students and teachers and among students within the classroom, as well as within the school. At the highest level are the policies and procedures that determine responses to misbehavior, resources for mental health services, the level of collaboration between schools and the community, and access to SEL- and climate-related professional development as well as prevention and intervention services in schools.

Diffuse and rippled in that a specific interaction between a student and a teacher affects not only the student and the adult but also surrounding students and adults.

Central to the relationship between school climate and social and emotional development are the identities that students and staff claim, and the meaning they make of their experiences. Aspects of school environments, including policies and practices that shape definitions of what it means to be successful, students' perceptions of and reactions to these policies and practices, as well as norms of social interactions, are related to their academic identities, including their approaches to learning, sense of academic worth, persistence, motivation, and achievement, and their related sense of belonging and commitment (Roeser, Midgley, & Urdan, 1996), and their social identities. Cultural disconnects in instructional settings, for example, make it harder for students to perceive themselves as successful learners (Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006; Oyserman & Destin, 2010; Oyserman & Fryberg, 2006). Sense of identity, including cultural identity, is associated with health and wellbeing, as well as resilience (McCabe, 2007), in part because it creates a sense of coherence and purpose and helps individuals make sense of their personal experiences, which are often antagonistic for marginalized groups (Hernandez, 2002; Wexler, DiFluvio, & Burke, 2009). It can both promote resilient outcomes and create barriers to success (Spencer, 2007; Wexler et al., 2009).

Individuals make meaning of their own experiences and develop life narratives (McAdams2011; Spencer, 2005) and analyses of the world around them through stories, which help make sense of the world and shape behavior (Godsil & Goodale, 2013). Stories repeated over and over create dominant narratives that run through the fabric of schools and that can limit or empower individuals (Nasir, Snyder, Shah, & Ross, 2012). Stereotypes, particularly those that are dominant in the larger culture and perpetuated by the media, can become part of the school culture, and affect how individuals treat others, how they are treated, and their sense of belonging (Godsil & Goodale, 2013). Stereotype threat, for example, is associated with greater anxiety and lower performance in test taking (Pennington, Heim, Levy, & Larkin, 2016; Steele, 2010; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Stories can "become subtle vehicles for the dominant class to construct and prescribe roles that lead to status differentiation" (Godsil & Goodale, 2013, p. 3). But stories also connect us to other people and are useful in developing skills such as perspective taking, empathy, critical thinking, and nuanced views of the world (Ochs, Taylor, Rudolph, & Smith, 1992 in Godsil & Goodale, 2013). "Self-affirmations" that run counter to negative stereotypes remind individuals of their unconditional integrity and focus attention on the positive narratives. Although evidence suggests that encouraging self-affirmations can reduce the threat of negative stereotyping and improve academic performance among Black and Latino students (Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, & Master, 2006; 2009; Sherman et al., 2013), changing teacher behavior (a climate factor) may be more important in addressing stereotype threat (Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, & Harspalani, 2001; Steele, 2010).

Meaning-making, both individual and collective, is an important factor in the value young people place on markers of school success, such as doing well in school. For some students who face collective indignities at school or identify as being part of a marginalized group, resisting the dominant behavioral and achievement expectations, is, for them, an act of resistance and resilience (Osher, 2015; Sennet & Cobb, 1972; Wexler et al., 2009). This notion can extend to SEL which can be framed and reinforced in ways that can feel inclusive or exclusive. If SEL is not embedded within and aligned with the experiences and identities of youth and the communities with which they identify, it may be seen as lacking significance or controlling. SEL can also help schools realize greater opportunities for all students to strive and thrive when it is

culturally responsive and provides students with opportunities to appropriate the learning and apply it in their own lives (Hernandez, 2015).

Countering dominant narratives that are negative and creating positive narratives in the school culture and within individuals have the power to build resilience and agency (Godsil & Goodale, 2013). Schools can be intentionally responsive to these shifts through the conditions for learning and SEL.

The beneficial interactions between school climate and social and emotional competencies explain why SEL programs and school climate approaches can and in some cases do borrow from each other and share common goals, as a way of strengthening their efforts. Some SEL programs aim to develop the environmental conditions for skill acquisition, reinforcement, and recognition (e.g., Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Catalano et al., 2003; Osher et al., 2010). For example, some school-based SEL interventions provide high expectations, support from adults, structured and cooperative learning environments, and safe and orderly schools to produce improvements in children's engagement, prosocial behavior (and reduction in antisocial behavior) and academic success (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Some school climate approaches and interventions aim to promote social and emotional competencies that foster abilities to participate in deeper learning and self-discipline (Osher et al., 2010; Osher, Friedman, & Kendziora, 2014). Restorative practices, for example, may improve teachers' and students' positive attitudes and reduce teacher use of exclusionary discipline and student problem behaviors, while improving school climate (Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2014).

Despite the overlap between school climate and social and emotional competencies, the two areas of research have developed separately. The next section will address their intersection.

What is at the intersection of conditions for learning and social and emotional development?

At the intersection of conditions for learning and social and emotional development are the conditions that allow students and adults to practice and build their social and emotional competencies. These include:

- **Supportive, respectful, trusting relationships**

  When students feel they belong in school, they feel more engaged. When they feel connected to teachers, they are more likely to see them as models and accept feedback from them, which enables teachers to model social and emotional competencies and foster engagement in their students (Osher, Weissberg et al., 2015). Students who have a stronger web of relationships with adults and peers have greater self-awareness, emotional competence, openness to challenge, and personal responsibility (Roehlkepartain et al., 2017). The strongest relationships are those in which each person expresses care, pushes the other to become better, provides support, treats the other with respect and enables each to have a voice, and provides the opportunity to expand each one's horizons (Roehlkepartain et al., 2017). Students who have strong regulation, empathy, emotional expressiveness,

and interpersonal negotiation strategies can develop positive relationships with adults and peers (NRC & IOM, 2009).

- Emotionally and physically safe environments

  Stress and anxiety, brought on by a lack of safety, can be emotionally taxing, distracting, and can impair working memory (Shackman et al., 2006). Student learning can be affected by a sense of unsafety in school. On the other hand, students who feel emotionally, intellectually, and physically safe can better provide feedback to their teachers and respond positively to efforts to build social and emotional competencies through direct instruction and modeling (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Schools characterized by safety have students with strong social and emotional competencies (Kendziora, Osher, & Chinen, 2008; Osher et al., 2007).

- Cultural competence and valuing diversity

  Individual and contextual factors influence interactions between individuals of similar and different cultural groups in positive and negative ways (Hecht, Jackson, & Pitts, 2005). These factors include relative power held by each individual, immediate and past experience, stereotypes, communication styles, one's strength of ingroup identity, and one's cognitive representations of groups. The diversity of backgrounds and experiences among members of the school community require that schools facilitate communication and interactions between individuals from diverse backgrounds by infusing cultural awareness and understanding and inclusive practices into every aspect of the school culture. *Cultural competence* has been defined as a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that enables schools, agencies, or providers to work effectively in bicultural and multicultural interactions (King, Sims, & Osher, 2007). Cultural competence can help schools and agencies systematically set the conditions for students and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to feel supported, respected, and safe (Osher et al., 2017). Cultural competence in schools will ensure that students and adults feel that they belong and form trusting and supportive relationships and facilitated through regular assessments of how the schools practices, programs, policies, rituals, and artifacts meet the facilitate interactions and meet the needs of all members of the school community (Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Cultural competence in schools can also increase the chances that students are on-task and feel efficacious during learning (Appel, Weber, & Kronberger, 2015; Johns, Inzlicht, & Schmader, 2008; Pennington, Heim, Levy, & Larkin, 2016; Steele, 2010; Szymanski, Kashubeck-West, & Meyer, 2008).

  Schools also directly teach students competencies that facilitate cultural competence as part an SEL program. Self-awareness, for example, is related to both cultural competence and the ability to be culturally responsive. Culturally-relevant self-awareness includes being aware of one's privilege without being defensive. These approaches will be most relevant to all students when they consider the cultural relevance of values, attitudes, and cultural diversity (Osher et al., 2016). Cultural and historical factors affect what comprises SEL and the meaning and salience of social and emotional competencies (Hecht & Shin, 2015; Torrente, Alimchandani, & Aber, 2015). Collectivism in China and piety in Korea are two examples of social and emotional competencies that may not be included in many Western definitions (Lee & Bong, 2017; Yu & Jiang, 2017 in Martin, Collie, & Fryedenberg, 2017). Negative

emotions such as sadness, sorrow, fear, and shame also play useful roles in child development in the Confucian tradition and some such as pessimism could have positive components (Martin et al., 2017; Norem, 2008). SEL may be deeply embedded in educational practice in some cultures and seen as counter to educational goals in other cultures (Martin et al., 2017). With more research on how to address these differences, culturally competent approaches in SEL can be more responsive to this variation.

- Culturally responsive, participatory, and diverse instructional approaches to meet diverse needs

  Instructional approaches that are individualized, personalized, and culturally responsive support all students in using adaptive learning strategies and realizing their goals (Osher et al., 2017). *Culturally responsive approaches* are instructional approaches that acknowledge students' cultural displays of learning and meaning-making and scaffold learning by connecting new knowledge to cultural knowledge (Hammond, 2016; Lee, 2007; Lee, Spencer, & Harpalani, 2003). Teachers can use methods that leverage students' culture knowledge to scaffold new concepts and content, which helps students process information, connect learning experiences inside and outside the school, and master new information (Ambrose & Lovett, 2014; Lee, 2007; Hammond, 2016; Valenzuela, 1999). Cultural competence and culturally responsive approaches to instruction build upon students' strengths and prior knowledge to create learning environments that feel safe, inclusive, supportive, and challenging (Gay, 2010; Powell, Cantrell, Malo-Juvera, & Correll, 2016; Rickford, 2001). These approaches are responsive to the emotional, motivational, and interpersonal needs of diverse students while also building related competencies through experience, modeling, and reinforcement.

  Instructional approaches such as collaborative learning and design-based learning are participatory by nature and enable students to connect learning to their own lives, while providing them with opportunities to make responsible decisions and build their interpersonal skills (Gillies, 2014; Hattie & Yates, 2014; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 1999). Service learning integrates and reinforces social awareness (Darling-Hammond et al., 2015; McKay-Jackson, 2014; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Willis-Darpoh, 2013). Culturally responsive and participatory instructional approaches can be used for academic content, but can also be useful approaches to SEL, and can embed SEL into academic learning. By viewing cultural diversity as an asset rather than as a deficit and by enabling students to be agents in their own learning, teachers can create learning environments that promote belonging, support, respect, and emotional safety (Gay, 2010; Powell, Cantrell Malo-Juvera, & Correll, 2016; Rickford, 2001).

- Shared and consistent expectations and norms across contexts

  Shared experiences support relational trust among all members of the school community and contribute to feelings of safety (Osher et al., 2007; Thapa et al., 2013) and help students and individual who are new to the environment master behavioral expectations. High expectations and behavioral norms, when accompanied by support to realize these norms, contribute to opportunities and learning outcomes (Osher et

al., 2007). Shared norms and expectations enable desired behaviors to be reinforced across interactions and microcontexts and help ensure that adults will demonstrate equal expectations of and treatment of all students (Thapa et al., 2013). In addition, clear and consistent shared norms and expectations give students opportunities to actively exhibit their commitment to and uphold those norms, and students who feel a sense of belonging are more likely to adopt those norms and expectations (Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000).

- Shared narrative and support for different viewpoints

  Positive shared narratives that are culturally competent and responsive can counteract dominant narratives that are negative, build resilience, agency in individuals, and build a sense of safety among members of the school community (Godsil & Goodale, 2013). Simultaneously supporting individuals to have their own narratives supports personal agency and can be empowering (Hernandez, 2015). SEL can help students build positive individual and collective narratives in school when SEL is culturally responsive and tailored.

- Strengths-based approaches

  Each student and educator has unique strengths and needs, and effective approaches address both of these (Osher et al., 2007). School cultures can focus on strengths (or deficits). Schools can be most effective at further building competencies and building conditions for learning by guiding students and adults to leverage these strengths and transfer them from one context to another (Nagaoka et al., 2015). Being able to draw on one's strengths supports the development of other competencies such as setting goals (Nagaoka et al., 2015), while doing this collectively may contribute to collective resilience (Ebersöhn, 2012).

- Necessary additional supports for those who need them

  School climate and SEL approaches are often thought of as a universal approaches. Some students may need additional supports to feel safe, supported, and engaged and to build social and emotional competencies. This may apply to students who experience trauma, students with learning disabilities, students with mental health needs, and English language learners, as well as for students with the co-occurrence of some or all of these needs. When students need additional services, their interactions with others students and adults can be affected. Providing additional supports to students who need them will improve the quality of all interactions in the school and therefore improve conditions for learning. These supports and services should build as well as build upon strengths while addressing needs.

- Leadership and staff modeling of social and emotional competencies directly through behavior and indirectly through fair and equitable policies

  Administrative practices and policies play an important role in establishing cultural competence, consistent and shared norms and expectations, and feelings of belonging (Sprague & Walker, 2010). Some practices and policies that promote conditions for learning and build social and emotional competencies include fair and consistently

enforced disciplinary policies, regular assessments of culturally competent practices, strong partnerships with families and community members, clear rules regarding bullying, support for professional learning in SEL, and active efforts to promote staff collegiality.

School staff can set the conditions for SEL and can model social and emotional competencies in their everyday interactions with students. Teachers in particular can build social and emotional competencies in their students when they have the capacity to manage their classrooms and provide emotional security through supportive teacher-student interactions (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Students are more likely to learn to regulate their own emotions and behaviors when they are in classrooms that are calm and organized and teachers are less likely to feel burnt out (Jones et al., 2013). The inability to manage a classroom can affect student behavior and teacher stress (Kellam et al., 1998). Teachers can also model social and emotional competencies in their interactions with students. Teachers need social and emotional skills to create conditions for learning in the classroom. Socially and emotionally competent teachers have high self and social awareness, the ability to manage their emotions and behaviors, a sense of responsibility and the ability to make responsible decisions, and relationship building skills (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Leaders can build the capacities of teachers by creating practices and policies that build their social and emotional competencies and reduce stress and burnout (Jones et al., 2013). Keeping teacher stress levels down also reduces student stress and their capacity to self-regulate their emotions and behaviors, which contributes to classroom conditions for learning (Jennings, Frank, Snowberg, Coccia, & Greenberg, 2013; Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016; Roeser et al., 2013).

- Open communication and partnerships with families and community partners

  Partnerships with families and communities help align ecological settings, facilitate access to social and emotional supports, and promote greater sense of community to the benefit of children's development (Epstein, 2001; Simmons, 2011; Spier et al., forthcoming). Collaborations strengthen school policies, curriculum, and programming (Weissberg et al., 2017), as well as facilitate culturally competent practices (Birkett & Espelage, 2009) and engender a shared sense of responsibility, which promotes student competencies. Effective collaborations with families are culturally competent and family-driven (Osher et al., 2011; Osher & Osher, 2002; Szapocznik, Muir, Duff, Schwartz & Brown, 2015), and these can build upon staff social and emotional attributes such as self-awareness, empathy, and compassion.

- Measurement of these components for continuous improvement

  Schools can most efficiently and successfully assess needs and ensure that they are setting the conditions for learning and social and emotional development when they systematically collect and use data for continuous improvement. This includes using data to identify individual and collective needs, reporting the data back to educators, providing educators the means to use the data to improve programs and practices, and monitoring changes (Osher et al., 2008). This data is most representative of the needs of all members of the school community when it is collected from leaders, school

staff, students, and parents (Berkowitz et al., 2016). Measures that are reliable and valid, that align well with schools' ongoing efforts, and that are easy to use in the regular school context will be most useful for purposes of monitoring and evaluation (Weissberg et al., 2015).

Next, we explore the overlap between the social and emotional competence frameworks and the school climate frameworks.

Intersection between frameworks

Considerable overlap exists between school climate and social and emotional competence frameworks. First, both sets of frameworks are asset based, and revolve around or depend upon the development of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Second, there is conceptual overlap between the constructs in the two sets of frameworks. On the school climate side, the Conditions for Learning model in particular identifies adult and peer social and emotional competence as one of the four essential components of a positive school climate (Osher, et al., 2016). On the social and emotional competencies side, many of the frameworks acknowledge the need for rich and supportive settings and highlight the importance of interactions with students' environments, including changes in how students interact with these environments and the environments themselves. See the box below for further examples of this overlap.

Social and Emotional Competence Frameworks: Examples of Overlap With School Climate

Acknowledge settings that support social and emotional development. The **Developmental Assets model** includes two dimensions: *external assets* and *internal assets*. Internal assets encompass feelings, perceptions, and beliefs that lie within the individual. External assets are characteristics of the environment that make up the tone and attitudes of students and staff in a school, such as support and expectations. According to the Developmental Assets model, having a student body and staff who are committed to learning (e.g., engaged and bonded to school), one internal asset, is vital to a positive social environment. The **Partnership for 21st Century** model labels settings "21st Century Learning Environments." 21st Century Learning Environments include practices, supports, and physical environments as well as professional learning communities for educators.

Highlight the importance of interactions with environments. The **Foundations of Young Adult Success** model links maturation of competencies at each developmental stage to changes that are both internal (e.g., cognitive change) and contextual (e.g., changes in expectations in school, expanded peer groups, entry into paid employment). The most salient areas of growth in middle childhood, for example, are self-regulation, learning-related skills and knowledge, and interpersonal skills (Nagaoka et al., 2015). It is not until early adolescence that mind-sets (beliefs and attitudes about oneself and the outside world, and the interaction between the two) mature and become more salient. Children and youth build these components through strong, supportive, and sustained developmental relationships with adults and peers.

One of the major distinctions between the social and emotional and climate frameworks is their starting point. School climate frameworks address primarily the collective aspect of conditions for learning, while social and emotional competence frameworks tend to address primarily the individual competencies that shape those conditions. For the school climate frameworks, the sum

of their parts (e.g., the sum of the characteristics, norms, attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of individual students and staff that make up the school community), in addition to the norms and expectations set up by the policies and procedures in the school, serve as the starting point. For the social and emotional competence frameworks, individuals are the starting point. *Where the two sets of frameworks converge is the point at which: (1) individual competence becomes a condition for others' experiences and development; and (2) the policies, procedures, norms, and expectations provide the conditions to support and foster students' social and emotional competencies.*

Other differences are less nuanced. In some school climate frameworks, for example, the physical environment is important in supporting student learning, whereas in social and emotional competence frameworks, the physical environment is rarely considered. The physical environment shapes social and emotional development but does so less proximally than conditions for learning, Self-confidence and regulation are important components of social and emotional competence frameworks, whereas school climate frameworks do not always explicitly address the need for these characteristics in the student body.

Although the social and emotional competencies and school climate frameworks have emerged as distinct perspectives, discussions about how to support the needs of the whole child given the diversity of student backgrounds have increasingly focused on wedding the two approaches. A whole-child approach to education involves an integration of knowledge and practice to ensure that students not only perform well academically, but are healthy and feel safe, supported, challenged, engaged, and safe. A whole-child approach calls for coordination and collaboration across systems, policies, and practices within schools and between schools and the community (Lewallen, Hunt, Potts-Datema, Zaza, & Giles, 2015). In other words, a whole-child approach calls for the integration of positive school climates and SEL.

A whole-child approach is consistent with many strategies that experts acknowledge are useful for addressing the needs of students who are more likely to experience trauma and other adversities as a result of poverty, forced migration, racism, ethnocentrism, and prejudice. This includes students who were or are refugees and LGBT students who often experience environments as particularly unsafe. These students also require safe and supportive school environments that foster a sense of belonging, provide opportunities and supports to build self-confidence and relationship skills, and give them a voice to share their experiences (Han, 2010; Hatzenbuehler, Birkett, Van Wagenen, & Meyer, 2014; Gonzales et al., 2013; Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006; Hansen, 2007; Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2015). Along with others, they may require a trauma-sensitive environment (Osher et al., 2015).

The two fields of school climate and SEL are at inflection point for scaling up. Policymakers, practitioners, and researchers are increasingly pointing to the need for positive school climates and the development of social and emotional skills in schools, both in the U.S. and internationally. Similar questions have arisen in both fields: how do we measure and set standards to assess the quality of efforts to improve school climate and SEL? What are the most important SE and school climate components for healthy development? Have we identified the most important components for all students, regardless of culture, socioeconomic status, race,

disability status, and sexual and gender orientation? How do we address the challenges of translating research to practice? Since there is considerable overlap between the frameworks and there are similarities in the questions that both fields are grappling with, it is appropriate to develop a research agenda that aligns both strands of work—a proposition that participants in all three meetings supported.

School Climate Frameworks: Examples of Overlap With SE Competencies

Overlapping constructs. Some school climate frameworks involve components that describe student attitudes and motivations that parallel social and emotional competencies. A student body with these competencies creates a positive school climate. For example, in the **Conditions for Learning** framework, a positive school climate is defined as including socially capable peers and adults, and students with strong personal motivation. The **Safe and Supportive Schools** model identifies school participation and the **NSCC** framework identifies connectedness (which resembles engagement) as one essential component of a positive school climate.

Examples of the school climate components that foster social and emotional *competencies.* The **Whole Child Initiative** makes the connection explicitly by identifying the components of schools and classrooms that promote student health, engagement, challenge, safety, and support (see Table 2). For other frameworks, it is possible to extrapolate. For example, inclusiveness in the **Child Friendly Schools** model is likely to enhance relationship skills such as collaboration. Safety and order in the several frameworks, including **Five Essential Supports** and NSCC, are likely to promote emotion regulation as well as enhance relationships.

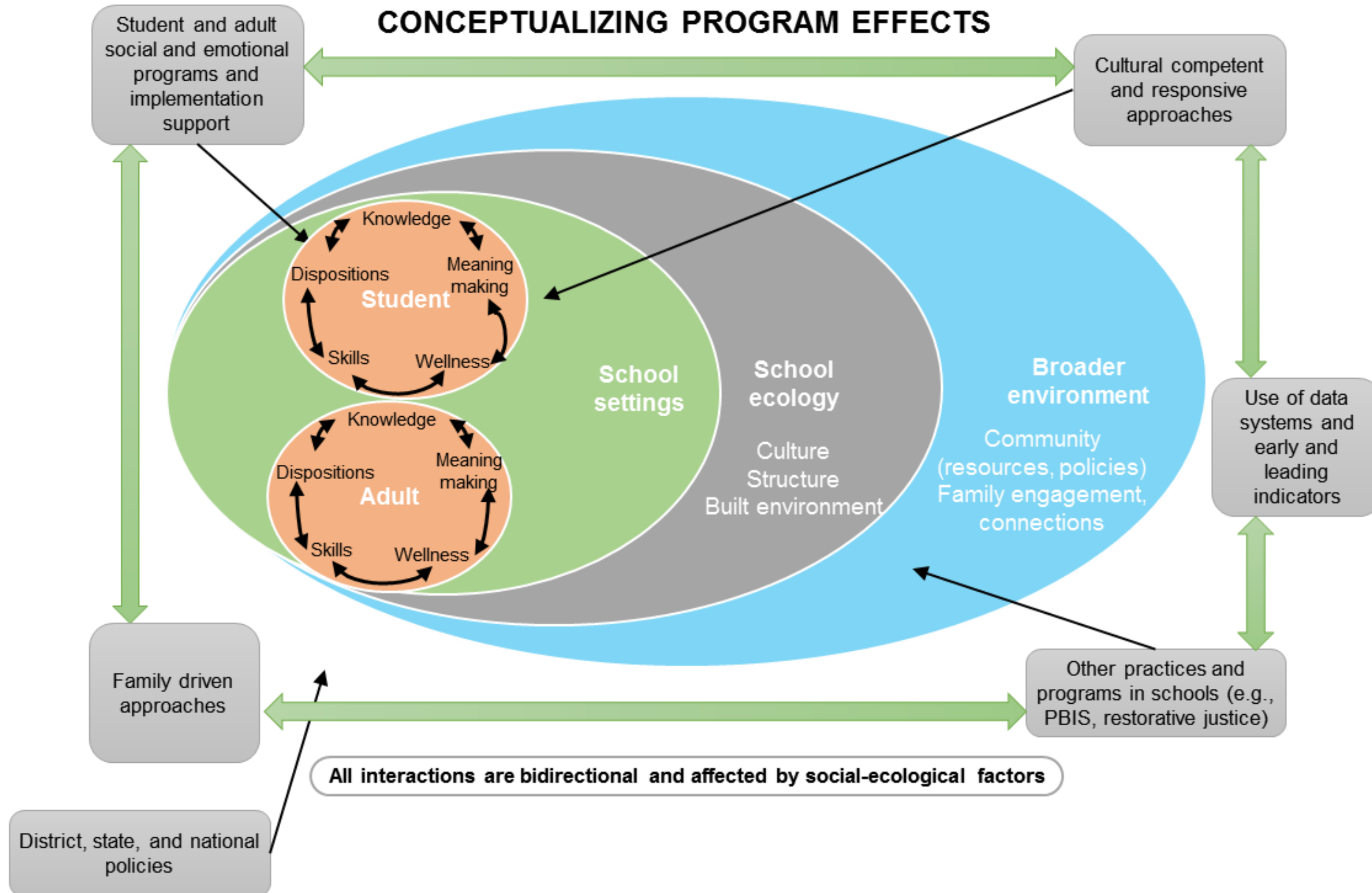
In the next sections, we approach the building of the research agenda in two different ways. We discuss how healthy schools can promote social and emotional development. We then discuss how SEL can promote healthy schools. We explore what actions can be undertaken for special populations (e.g., vulnerable children), schools with different levels of student need, and schools with different levels of organizational capacity. Finally, we briefly explore how this research agenda fits into the current political climate.

Why and how healthy schools promote social and emotional development

Theories that emphasize the bidirectional relationship between the child and his or her social contexts—including peers, families, teachers, schools, and public policy—are consistent with and have informed the development of many current SEL programs (Elias et al, 2007; Osher et al., 2015). These include Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994), Spencer's Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory approach (Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997), Sameroff's transactional model (Sameroff, 1975), and Lewin's field theory (Lewin, 1951), along with the Science of Learning and Development (Osher et al., 2017) and Vygotsky's conceptualization of zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Both social learning theory (SLT) and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) also influenced the development of SEL (Osher et al., 2016). SLT focuses on how individuals draw from their experiences to create expectancies about interactions with others (Bandura, 1973; Elias et al., 2007). Bandura was influential in bringing universal programs to schools; he argued that both social forces and individual skills should be targets for change (Bandura, 1973). CBT's focus on modeling, observational learning, and cognitive expectancies (Meichenbaum, 1977) also

influenced many SEL programs (Osher et al., 2016). The bidirectional associations between children and the interventions and practices that support them is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 1. Conceptualizing intervention effects



Young people need to grow up in environments that afford them the opportunities to develop, practice, and receive reinforcement for exhibiting the competencies that will best prepare them to pursue personal and societal goals while navigating life's obstacles (Hawkins, Smith, & Catalano, 2004; Nagaoka et al., 2015). Young people learn and flourish in settings that provide care, support, safety, clear and high expectations, and guidance (Cohen, 2006; Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Osher, Dwyer, & Jimerson, 2006; Osher et al., 2010; Osher et al., 2017; Thapa et al., 2013). Positive conditions for learning (proximally) and other aspects of climate (more distally) can increase conditions for SEL by providing models for and opportunities to practice positive behaviors, higher academic and behavioral expectations, and more openness to learning. Greater consistency (e.g., more structure and safety, less chaos) and more support provide an environment in which students can practice and reinforce social and emotional competencies more easily, including prosocial behavior, self-regulation, and mindful awareness (Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Killan, Fish, & Maniago, 2007). When schools reinforce these competencies, young people may improve their academic readiness through their academic engagement, their motivation and capacity to achieve, and their school-related behaviors (e.g., attendance, disciplinary violations, dropping out; Durlak et al., 2011; Zins & Elias, 2007).

School and classroom climate (including the level of cultural respect and responsiveness) can have a direct effect on social and emotional competencies and academic achievement as well as an indirect (also known as *mediated*) effect on physical and mental well-being (Hammond, 2014; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Steele, 2010).

Illustration of the Bidirectional Association Between Climate and Social and Emotional Competencies in the Classroom

The importance of a healthy learning environment is made evident in the everyday microprocesses that occur in the classroom. The quality of the classroom setting is dependent on norms, rules, and interpersonal relationships as well as on *programs of action* that define action and work involvement in each individual learning activity (Osher et al., 2010). Classroom management is dependent on teachers' abilities to gain and maintain students' cooperation and on students' engagement, motivation, and cooperation in learning activities. Well-managed classrooms encourage self-discipline by establishing these characteristics and conditions in each program of action for each learning activity. Conversely, the promotion of social and emotional skills such as self-management and social competence in students is necessary for creating well-managed classrooms.

Research on the capacity of school climate or whole-school approaches in promoting social and emotional development is relatively limited. Published studies that evaluate school climate or whole-school approaches typically report effects on manifestations of social and emotional development—namely, behavior and mental health. Conceptualizations of climate vary (Berkowitz, 2016) and few studies (detailed in the box below) report programmatic impacts on social and emotional competencies. One noteworthy exception is the Caring School Community program, which, by aiming to create a sense of community while also developing social and emotional skills, combines elements of both school climate approaches and SEL programs. Evaluations of the program implemented at the elementary school level found that the program had positive effects on students' sense of school as community and students' connection to school (e.g., educational aspirations, trust in and respect for teachers, liking school), as well as better conflict resolution skills, stronger commitment to democratic values, more concern for others, and stronger academic motivation, and that some of these endured into middle school (see https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/research-caring-school-community-research-results). In addition, the program had effects on teacher perceptions of faculty collegiality and trust in students (Battistich et al., 2004). In addition, there is some evidence that positive school climates can help facilitate the successful implementation of SEL programs (Faria, Kendziora, Brown, O'Brien, & Osher, 2013; Ransford, Greenberg, Domitrovich, Small, & Jacobson, 2009).

Research Connecting School Climate Approaches to Social and Emotional-Related Outcomes

Schoolwide PBIS has reduced student need and use of counseling services as well as suspensions and office discipline referrals (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010). However, these outcomes cannot be used to infer changes in student social and emotional competence as they just reflect decisions by adults who function as natural raters (Kellam & Rebock, 1992).

The Whole School, Whole Child model developed by **City Year** seeks to support and strengthen the learning environment to increase student engagement and commitment to school. Evaluations of City Year and **Diplomas Now**, another whole-school reform effort, do show some evidence for increases in social and emotional competencies, including self-confidence, engagement, on-task behavior, positive social interactions with peers and adults, and behavior, including decreases in suspensions, detentions, office referrals, and violence (Balfanz, 2011; Brett Consulting Group and the City Year Evaluation Department, 2012; Christman, Hartmann, Johnson, & Dean, 2009). However, this may be a function of latent SEL components, focused examination of the City Year model found that it was already providing some SEL and could elevate its impacts by more intentionally focusing on SEL (Kidron & Osher, 2010).

Restorative Practices

Punitive and exclusionary discipline undermines academic and SEL (Osher et al., 2010). While at least 79 percent of school districts across the country have adopted zero-tolerance discipline policies to handle school violations related to alcohol, drugs, and violence, there is no evidence that such policies work (Boccanfuso & Kuhfeld, 2011; Morgan et al., 2014; Skiba, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). There are now focused federal, state, and local efforts to address the problems of exclusionary discipline and discipline disparities. This trend is consistent with evidence that suggests that suspensions and expulsions are related to increases in student offenses and re-offenses, reduced likelihood of graduating, lower school-wide academic achievement, and worse school climate (Boccanfuso & Kuhfeld, 2011). In addition, zero-tolerance policies disproportionately affect African American students, Native American students, students with high-incidence disabilities, and in many cases Latino students, and in some cases Asian American subgroups (Fenning & Rose, 2007; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002).

Restorative practices are being employed to try to reduce exclusionary discipline. They include universal restorative class meetings, the creation of restorative problem solving methods such as peace circles, and restorative justice instead of punitive and exclusionary approaches. These practices depending upon stakeholders, aim at improving attendance, engagement, and equity. These practices both build upon and are aimed at promoting positive school climates and social and emotional competencies of all members of the school community by building a sense of community and reducing behavior and interpersonal issues rather than imposing harsh disciplinary policies (Fronius, Persson, Guckenburg, Hurley, & Petrosino, 2016). Dialogues between individuals or groups in conflict are intended to provide restitution, repair fractured relationships, promote empathy, hold individuals accountable for repairing fractures, give students a voice in decision-making, and provide an opportunity for those who have caused harm to reintegrate into the school community (McCluskey et al., 2008; Ortega, Lyubansky, Nettles, Larson, & Espelage, in press). In so doing, these practices aim to build individual social and emotional skills and traits such as self-regulation, empathy, respect for others, relationship building, and self-awareness; restore a sense of safety and support in school; and increase equity through more just disciplinary policies.

Experts in research, policy, and practice often point to restorative justice practice as a promising approach to change student and staff attitudes, provide staff with the structure to deal with misbehavior in a less punitive way, resolve conflict, reduce police visits, and improve student behavior (Bitel, 2005; Gillinson, Horne, & Baeck, 2010; Karp & Breslin, 2001; Ortega et al., in press), but the evidence is only suggestive at this point. Evidence from rigorous quasi-experimental or experimental evaluations of restorative practices in schools does not yet exist. Some evaluations of school-based restorative practices using nonexperimental methods, many of which have been implemented outside of the U.S., have pointed to the potential of this approach, particularly as a replacement for zero-tolerance policies, to change student and staff attitudes (Gregory et al., 2014). But the study findings are often mixed, and without rigorous evaluations it is difficult to assess the practices' impacts.

Budget constraints, readiness (including lack of consistent stakeholder buy-in), and lack of support for implementation are three challenges to realizing the potential effectiveness of restorative practices. In a policy environment where zero tolerance is widespread, it is easy for efforts to implement school-wide restorative practices as an alternative to be thwarted by, for example, behavioral incidents that threaten a sense of safety and create a lack of trust that the process will work.

Why and how SEL programs promote conditions for learning

Many SEL programs have the implicit or explicit goal of changing norms and expectations through individual skill building, direct targeting of practices and norms in the classroom and nonclassroom settings, or a combination of the two. There are several reasons why a student body and staff with more developed social and emotional competencies might contribute to conditions for learning, although more research is needed to understand and explain the mechanisms. One possibility is that students' enhanced social competence—including greater emotional sensitivity and control, greater cultural sensitivity, and ability to negotiate conflict—along with and in interaction with changed teacher behavior, contribute to more positive interactions between and among students and between students and staff, as well as to a reduction in problematic behavior (e.g., bullying and off-task behavior) and its reinforcement. Emotional sensitivity, empathy, or perspective-taking allow students to better understand others' actions and reactions, allowing students to become more competent in the other interpersonal skills that improve social interactions.

Several social and emotional competencies relate to the regulation of emotions, thoughts, and behavior. Self-regulation includes the ability to manage stress, control impulses, motivate oneself, and set and achieve goals (CASEL, 2016). A school composed of staff and students who are able to self-regulate and co-regulate (i.e., continuously and responsively regulate one's own behavior and the behavior of a partner) (Butler & Randall, 2013) allows both staff and students to manage acute and chronic stressful events inside the school (e.g., a challenging math problem, experiences of bullying) and outside the school (e.g., exposure to violence in the neighborhood) (Abenavoli, Jennings, Greenberg, Harris, & Katz, 2013; Blair & Diamond, 2008; Greenberg & Harris, 2011). The ability to self-regulate may reduce counter-aggressive behavior on the part of teachers and students. It can also contribute to greater ability to engage in learning, more frequent perceived and actual opportunities for academic learning, and more positive social interactions. In addition, reducing impulsivity addresses a risk factor for poor health outcomes, both during childhood and adolescence and over the life course (Farrington & Tfofi, 2009).

SEL can also affect academic challenge and the climate for learning. Developers of SEL programs tend to identify strategies for developing children's social and emotional competencies, many of which have the potential to improve classroom and school climates. Researchers and developers are increasingly suggesting that it is important to consider general teaching practices (Jones & Bouffard, 2012) and adult social and emotional competencies (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009) and their influence on the implementation of SEL programs and positive classroom climates (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Osher et al., 2012).

Example of How SEL-Related Pedagogy Can Affect Student School and Classroom Climate

Based on a review of evidence-based SEL programs that target general teaching practices, the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders identified 10 instructional strategies for improving social and emotional competencies, including strategies such as student-centered discipline and cooperative learning (Yoder, 2014). The aim of student-centered discipline is to increase fairness in disciplinary practices. SEL practices that improve student self-management will facilitate student-centered discipline (Osher et al., 2010). The improvement of the disciplinary climate is one component of a safer and more supportive school climate. Similarly, cooperative learning practices have the potential to increase student support and to enhance positive interactions, both between students and between students and teachers.

According to Jones, Bouffard, and Weissbourd (2013), teacher social and emotional competencies influence students in three ways: (1) the quality of the relationships that teachers have with their students; (2) the ways in which teachers model their social and emotional competencies to students; and (3) teachers' ability to organize and manage the classroom, including how it is experienced by students. Teachers' social and emotional competencies help them manage and navigate the stressors they encounter on a daily basis, impacting the type of environment they develop for their students.

As SEL programs and practices begin to move in a direction that has a dual focus on targeted student and adult social and emotional development, and on practices and structures that support classroom and school climate: research needs to follow, and this has started to occur. Traditionally, impact evaluations of SEL programs have focused on testing programs' effectiveness in building students' skills (and sometimes teachers' skills). Fewer studies explicitly tested whether the program had effects on the climate, and none have tested strategies that explicitly do so. More recently, a number of rigorous evaluations of SEL programs (including 4Rs, RULER, Tools of the Mind, PATHS, and Chicago School Readiness Project) have specifically examined whether the implementation of SEL programs improve classroom climate. In these evaluations of SEL programs, improvements in classroom climate are often significant, with moderate to large effect sizes (Barnett et al., 2008; Brown, Jones, LaRusso, & Aber, 2010; Hagelskamp, Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2013; Rivers, Brackett, Reyes, Elbertson, & Salovey, 2013; Raver et al., 2008). A handful of evaluations of SEL programs have measured and tested impacts on the school climate more broadly. Unlike with classroom climate, measures of school climate tend to be drawn from survey data rather than from observational measures (Catalano et al., 2003).

Research Connecting SEL Programs to Classroom Climate

An evaluation of **Responsive Classroom** showed increases in teacher reports of teacher collaboration and greater involvement in school decision making as well as more favorable student perceptions of school (Brock, Nishida, Chiong, Grimm, & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008). The prosocial classroom approach that fosters socially and emotionally competent teachers is associated with optimal classroom climate (i.e., low levels of conflict, low levels of disruptive behavior, appropriate expression of emotions, and respectful communication and problem solving; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Evaluations of **Incredible Years** and **PATHS** are notable in that they showed positive effects on several dimensions of classroom quality, as measured with several triangulating tools (Conduct Problems Prevention Group [CPPRG], 1999; Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Stoolmiller, 2008). PATHS used classroom observations, teacher reports on students, and peer nominations of student behavior and found that the program reduced classroom aggression and hyperactive-disruptive behavior and improved the classroom atmosphere (CPPRG, 1999).

Given the interactions between school climate and SEL, blended programs that incorporate school climate and SEL approaches may have additive effects on students and schools. For example, a combination of SWPBIS and SEL programs might help educators address disciplinary problems, help students develop social and emotional competencies, and make both educators and students more effective (Bear, 2014; Bradshaw, Bottiani, Osher, Weissberg, & Sugai, 2014; Osher et al., 2010;). Schoolwide programs that target policies, procedures, and norms also aim to provide the conditions necessary to develop social and emotional competencies and well-being; SEL programs that primarily target SEL skills also often aim to provide the conditions for skill acquisition, reinforcement, and recognition (Osher et al., 2010). As indicated earlier, safe and supportive school climate may be more conducive to SEL, just as promoting SEL in schools may produce the skills in students and teachers that lead to more respectful relationships and decreased bullying. There is some evidence that programs that combine SWPBIS or PBIS with SEL show stronger effects on student outcomes. For example, Skills for Success, a school violence prevention program, and SWPBIS produced stronger effects on student behavior than Skills for Success alone (Sprague, Nishioka, & Stieber, 2004).

Research Connecting SEL Programs to School Climate

The evaluation of **Steps to Respect** found significant effects on several dimensions of school climate, as reported by students and teachers (Brown, Low, Smith, & Haggerty, 2011). Teacher-reported effects were the most substantial; they included positive effects on student and staff climate and antibullying policies. Student-reported effects included positive effects on student climate and bystander behavior.

An evaluation of the **Raising Healthy Children** program implemented in elementary schools showed that teachers and parents reported stronger commitment to the schools as a result of the program (Catalano et al., 2003).

An evaluation of **PATHS** found that as teachers' implementation of PATHS increased, so, too, did students' report of school climate (i.e., teachers' expectations in their school, supportive teachers in their school, their peers' social competence, and safety within the school). Schools with higher and/or improving school climate demonstrated the most positive student outcomes, and schools with low or declining school climate demonstrated worse student outcomes (Faria et al., 2013).

Addressing Critical Needs

Addressing the needs of children who experience adversity, trauma, and violence

Students face institutional and individual barriers that are related to disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes (Artiles, Kozleski, Trent, Osher, & Ortiz, 2010; Osher et al., 2004, 2012). Institutional barriers come from resource allocation, rituals, policies, protocols, epistemologies, and practices. Individual behaviors include harassment, microaggressions, and negative stereotyping. Epidemiological data suggest that about 46% of young people in the United States have experienced at least one adverse childhood experience (ACE), defined as a *potentially traumatic event that can affect health and well-being* (Felitti et al., 1998; Sacks, Murphey, & Moore, 2014). In some states, more than half of all children have experienced at least one ACE. Traditional ACE categories include economic hardship, divorce or separation of parents or guardians, exposure to neighborhood violence, alcohol or drug abuse, and the occurrence of mental illness (Sacks, Murphey, & Moore, 2014). Other ACEs, which were not identified in the original study that used a largely middle class sample, include community stressors, personal victimization, hunger, disturbances in family functioning; loss of a parent; challenging peer relationships; discrimination; poor health; overemphasis on achievement; and stressful experiences at school, with the child welfare system, and with juvenile justice (Burke et al., 2011; Luthar, Barkin, & Crossman, 2013; Wade, Shea, Rubin, & Wood, 2014). Many youth (about 1 in 6) also experience chronic physical health conditions such as chronic fatigue syndrome, epilepsy, migraine/tension headache, visual and hearing impairment, and spina bifida. These youth are also at risk for a host of emotional, behavioral, social, and academic difficulties (Suldo, Gormley, DuPaul, & Anderson-Butcher, 2013).

Immigrant-origin and refugee students face their own distinct forms of adversity. Many of the challenges faced by refugee children are similar to those faced by nonrefugee immigrant-origin students: language difficulties, challenges with acculturation and integration, clashes between two cultures, financial hardship, and feelings of alienation and isolation (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2015). Immigrant students are often vulnerable to bullying and low teacher expectations. Undocumented immigrant adolescents often feel isolated, anxious, angry, and hopeless. They face several stressors, such as fear of deportation for themselves and their families and increased family responsibility, in addition to poverty, lack of health care, and crowded housing (Gonzales, Suarez-Orozco, & Dedios-Sanguineti, 2013). They are often excluded from some major so-called rites of passage in adolescence, such as getting a driver's license and going to college, and often face discrimination. Many refugee and war-traumatized students experience psychological distress due to high levels of direct or indirect trauma and intergenerational trauma transferred between family members (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016), impeding their ability to learn (Beiser & Hou, 2006; Isik-Ercan, 2012). In addition, refugee youth experience mental disorders at a rate that is twice as high as for non-immigrant U.S. adolescents (Kessler et al., 2012). The symptoms are often internalizing rather than externalizing and therefore harder to detect (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016). Schools are often the first point of contact for refugee youth and many refugee families view schools as safe havens for their children (Isik-Ercan, 2012). While many refugee parents want to be involved in their children's education, they face language barriers and lack the experience to navigate the culture of

schooling (Isik-Ercan, 2012). In today's anti-immigration political and policy climate, schools can be a place to counteract the heightened feelings of fear and experiences of harassment among immigrant and refugee students and their families that recent anti-immigration policies and political rhetoric has fueled.

Although some schools are affirming places for students who are LGBTQ, many schools function as heteronormative institutions, which affect curricula and school structure (Blackburn & Pascoe, 2015; Wimberly, 2015). LGBTQ youth also face high levels physical, verbal, and sexual harassment and bullying (Espelage, 2015); social exclusion; and isolation in school; and in some cases other adversities that are related to the intersectionality of LGBTQ-related factors with race, class, culture, and gender. All these factors appear to contribute to increased absenteeism, discipline problems, and health risk behaviors, and decreased engagement and academic achievement (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009; Hansen, 2007; Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009). Many LGBT youth undergo a process of identity development that may happen before their sexual orientation is visible to others. Support systems that are accepting and validating are important to the process of positive identity formation (Hansen, 2007).

School-based trauma, including bullying, physical violence, and microaggression, are additional sources of adversity for students. More than a quarter of students between the ages of 12 and 18 report being bullied at school (Robers et al., 2012). Microaggression in school, often related to gender, race, ethnicity, and LGBTQ status, and often the product of teacher and staff behavior, may contribute to hostile learning environments, social injustices in school, and deep psychological and academic effects on marginalized students (Brondolo et al., 2003; Sue et al., 2007; Szymanski, Kashubeck-West, & Meyer, 2008). Microaggression takes the form of "everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based on their marginalized group membership" (Sue et al., 2007) and can come from students and adults.

Adversity may affect children's working memory and organizational and language abilities, as well as their abilities to self-regulate their emotions, interact with others, concentrate, and engage in learning, which can impede children's capacities to maintain supportive relationships and pay attention in class (Cole, Eisner, Gregory, & Ristuccia, 2013; Raver & Knitzer, 2002). Absent supportive relationships, traumatic experiences may result in school disengagement and failure (Bethell, Newacheck, Hawes, & Halton, 2014) as well as prolonged stress response, elevating the risk for other mental, emotional, behavioral, health, and academic problems (Center on the Developing Child, 2010; National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information, 2001).

Not all children who have experienced an ACE will suffer negative outcomes (Bethell et al., 2014; Masten, 2004). Researchers have documented a substantial heterogeneity in resilience (Bethell, Newacheck, Hawes, & Halton, 2014; Southwick, Bonanno, Masten, Panter-Brick, & Yehuda, 2014; Theron, Liebenberg, & Malindi, 2014) as well as how it relates to social support and context (Suniya, Luthar, Sawyer, & Brown, 2006; Masten, 2011). Children's responses to trauma in their environment will vary as a function of individual dispositions, socialization practices, and the countervailing supports available to them in those same or other environments (Goldstein & Brooks, 2012; Masten & Tellegen, 2012). For example, children who hear gunshots in their

neighborhoods can cope with that experience if they feel safe and have supportive adults at home or at school who can help them make sense of those experiences. Often, vulnerable children do not receive the same opportunities (e.g., clear standards for behavior, supportive and respectful adults) as other children to develop social and emotional competencies (Hawkins, Smith, & Catalano, 2004) and well-being. One issue is that children who face adversity and chronic stress do not develop the same physiological and behavioral responses to social situations as children who do not face such stress (Blair & Raver, 2012). However trauma sensitivity is important both because (a) it is impossible to identify all students who have experienced trauma and those who will demonstrate resilience over the long haul, and (2) there appear to be physical tolls of resilience which affect health over the life course (LeBrón, Schulz, Mentz, & Perkins, 2015).

Schools can actively promote these resilience-building transactions with positive school climates, which foster positive and caring interactions; and with trauma-sensitive school staff, trauma-sensitive approaches, and targeted intervention for those who are struggling (Birkett & Espelage, 2009; National Association of School Psychologists, 2006). A three-tiered approach to student support that addresses risk factors, builds protective factors and developmental assets, and improves social and emotional conditions for learning is a proven method to turn around struggling schools and students at risk of failure (Osher et al., 2015). Positive school climate can be particularly vital for addressing vulnerable children's needs by providing strong relationships with adults and peers, enhancing self-regulatory skills, improving academic success, and promoting physical and emotional health and well-being (Osher & Kendziora, 2010; Tishelman et al., 2010). In addition, addressing the needs of children who face adversity requires that adults at the schools understand and have the capacity to address their developmental needs in a caring, trauma-sensitive, and culturally responsive manner. Vulnerable children may need additional SEL supports to put them on track for the developmental progression of social and emotional competencies.

Schools should actively seek to understand, respect, and leverage the role of culture and religion in children's social and emotional development (Han, 2010; Isik-Ercan, 2012; Lee, 2010) and provide staff with the training and support that allow them to interact with students and families in a culturally responsive and competent manner. They can encourage a sense of belonging, build self-confidence, and restore a sense of control by providing emotionally safe spaces for undocumented students to meet and allowing them to openly discuss how they are feeling and share their backgrounds in the classroom (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2015; Gonzales et al., 2013). Schools that foster a strong sense of belonging may also reduce depression and increase self-efficacy in refugee students (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007).

School-level policies and supportive teachers, staff, and peers mitigate the challenges that LGBT students face at school. For example, LGBT adolescents living in cities and states with school climates that explicitly support LGBT youth (e.g., schools that have a gay-straight alliance and safe spaces for LGBT youth, that prohibit harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and that encourage staff to attend trainings on creating supportive environments for LGBTQ youth) are less likely to report suicidal thoughts than LGB youth living in other cities and states (Hatzenbuehler, Birkett, Van Wagenen, & Meyer, 2014). Indeed, these strategies are thought to encourage more supportive and safe school environments, increase open discussions about sexual minority issues in the classroom, increase LGBT students' sense of belonging, and provide students with opportunities to build important social and emotional skills (including

relationship-building skills and self-confidence), and reduce risky behaviors (Goodenow et al., 2006; Hansen, 2007).

Schools differ in their needs and those of their students, as well as their capacity for supporting the development of healthy, safe, and nurturing environments that promote students' social and emotional well-being (Cantor et. al, 2013; Osher et al., 2008). Schools vary in their overall school climate, in particular climate areas (e.g., emotional safety), as well as in how different subgroups of students experience school climate. A school's strengths and weaknesses, as well as its capacity to improve the necessary conditions for learning, vary based on a host of factors, including the size of the school, the stability of the teaching force and student body, and the context in which the school is situated (e.g., level of poverty, crime, community assets including social capital) (Coleman, 1966; Sebring, Allensworth, Bryk, Easton, & Luppescu, 2006). Some schools lack the capacity to address the social and emotional needs of their students, and this situation makes it harder for students to learn and thrive (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton, & Luppescu, 2010; Kendziora & Osher, 2009). These challenges may be addressed by creating *fortified teaching and learning environments* where schools can meet the needs of children by simultaneously fostering supportive relationships between adults, peers, families, and communities; promoting social and emotional competencies in all students; and reducing stress while providing students with rigorous and engaging academic content (Cantor et al., 2013).

Recent research suggests that schools create an environment in which all students can succeed when the schools provide strong leadership, offer ongoing coaching and support for staff; provide students with a rigorous curriculum; focus on the social, emotional, and academic development all of students (through differentiated supports); and forge strong connections with the community (Kendziora & Osher, 2009; Sebring et al., 2006). Community Schools, neighborhood approaches (e.g., Promise Neighborhoods), citywide approaches to alignment (e.g., Say Yes to Education), and other approaches to comprehensive and coordinated services can, when implemented effectively, facilitate this process (Osher & Chasin, in press). However, the effects of coordinated services may be limited if they do not address the social and emotional barriers to learning, build conditions for learning, and intentionally support student SEL (Kendziora, Osher, & Schmitt-Carey, 2007; Osher & Kendziora, 2010).

School-wide approaches to creating *trauma-sensitive schools* such as the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI) of Massachusetts Advocates for Children and Harvard Law School (Cole et al., 2013) and Washington's Compassionate Schools Initiative (Wolpow, Johnson, Hertel, & Kincaid, 2016) may provide educators with approaches to address trauma's impact on learning on a schoolwide basis while also promoting a positive school climate. TLPI, for example, developed an inquiry-based action planning process for educators to address problems and challenges in a trauma-sensitive way. They infuse trauma sensitivity into leadership; professional development; resources and services; academic and nonacademic strategies; policies, procedures, and protocols; and collaboration with families. These reform efforts are two among others that represent promising approaches to developing schools' capacities to create healthy schools and promote the well-being of all children, including those who are vulnerable.

We should never forget the role of families and communities in children's social and emotional development. Collaborations among schools, families, and communities come in many forms: relationships with community agencies, coordinated services in schools, systems of care for

students with deeper needs, community schools models (see Osher & Osher, 2002 and Spier, González, & Osher, forthcoming, for a review of these different models). Family involvement is "co-constructed," and involves both parents' attitudes and behaviors with the school but also the school's outreach, partnerships, and interactions (Weiss, Bouffard, Bridglall, & Gordon, 2009). Alignment of ecological settings can positively influence children's development (Epstein, 2001; Simmons, 2011; Spier et al., forthcoming) and helps schools serve their students in a culturally competent manner (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Strong partnerships provide greater social and emotional supports to students and access to supports while promoting a greater sense of school community (Spier et al., forthcoming). Targeted interventions that enlist the participation of parents and community members are better poised to bridge cultural gaps (Birkett & Espelage, 2009; Isik-Ercan, 2012). Schools benefit when such collaboration strengthens school policies, curriculum, and programming. Collaboration across multiple institutions, including schools and community organizations, can more powerfully promote the healthy development of children than any one institution working alone, and can avoid the problem of silos that often plagues the different institutions affecting children and youth (Osher, 2002; Osher & Chasin 2015; Spier et al., forthcoming). On the other hand, lack of collaboration between schools, families, and communities contributes to disparities; low-income families often have fewer opportunities to be involved in their children's learning, and family members are not seen as assets as they should be (Weiss et al., 2009). Low family involvement in children's education is a concern because it is one of the strongest predictors of school success and contributes to a sense of belonging in the school community (Weiss et al., 2009). Although collaboration has been and continues to be challenging, family driven and culturally competent models that draw upon the assets of families and communities to develop cross-sector partnerships and a shared sense of responsibility will help promote student competencies by aligning developmental settings, empowering families, and strengthening schools and communities (Osher et al., 2011; Osher & Osher, 2002; Szapocznik et al., 2015).

Providing additional supports

Universal, or "Tier 1," SEL programs that build social and emotional competencies in all children are most prevalent (Weissberg et al., 2015). They are cost-effective, support conditions for learning by creating a shared language, can help set standards of rules and behavior for all students, and do not stigmatize any particular group (Moffitt et al., 2011). Still, some students, whether due to trauma, disability, behavioral challenges, mental health needs, or learning challenges, may need additional supports. Although these students benefit from universal SEL, they may need additional resources to build the social and emotional competencies that help them strengthen interactions and contribute to conditions for learning. Linking promotive efforts with the delivery of services that ensure that opportunities benefit all students can be important. Universal programming creates a school-wide foundation that can support and be complimented by Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports to address students who have greater levels of need (Osher, Dwyer, & Jackson, 2004; Osher et al., 2008). It is helpful when these supports are aligned with universal supports (Elias et al., 1997), for example, by using the same language.

Students with mental health needs may need more than SEL alone, even if it is multi-tiered. For example, some students can benefit from cognitive behavioral interventions, which,while having SEL components, have been demonstrated to be effective in treating internalizing disorders

(Mychailyszyn, Brodman, Read & Kendall, 2012). They appear to be a promising strategy to help refugees with their social and emotional needs (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016).

Comprehensive school mental health reform takes a whole-child approach to link to efforts to improve the social and emotional development of youth and improve school climate. School mental health services can be a powerful resource for students who face mental health disorders associated with chronic stressors, including students with chronic physical conditions, sexual, racial and ethnic minority students, and immigrant and refugee students (Suldo et al., 2013). School-based services can help equalize the utilization of mental health services for racial and ethnic minority students who may face barriers to accessing clinic-based services (Cummings, Ponce, & Mays, 2010; Suldo et al., 2013).

School mental health services have traditionally been targeted to a small subset of students, implemented in isolation of other programs in the school, and have competed with instructional time (Atkins, Hoagwood, Kutash, & Seidman, 2010). In order for school mental health services to be part of a comprehensive school reform effort that integrates social and emotional learning with school practices, stakeholder engagement and support, collaboration across systems within and outside of schools, family involvement, and the implementation of universal and targeted services are needed (Hoagwood & Johnson, 2003; McDougal, Clonan, & Martens, 2000). One example of collaboration across systems is to use mental health staff to support teachers in providing effective instruction and classroom management (Atkins et al., 2010). Mental health professionals in schools and in the community can train school staff such as lunch staff and security guards to implement school-wide SEL programs outside of the classroom (Capella, Frazier, Atkins, & Schoenwald, 2008).

Integration of mental health services into universal programming can have the benefit of reducing school stigma around mental illness. Universal health screenings are one approach to expanding school mental health services beyond reactive approaches to address the needs of students showing acute signs of distress to preventive approaches to promote psychological well-being for all students. Mental health screenings could help schools regularly track and address the mental health needs of students in a timely and dynamic way (Sprague & Walker, 2010). This strategy is thought to link school mental health with school-level reform by advancing mental health and whole-child well-being to the forefront of educational policy and practice discussions and providing the data to track the well-being of all students (Dowdy et al., 2015). To be most effective, however, universal screenings should be accompanied by a response plan with a clear set of recommendations for intervention, the availability of evidence-based interventions in schools and in the community, engagement by all school staff, and an integrated data system that is accessible and linkable to different school teams (Dowdy et al., 2015).

Measurement Considerations

The intersection of school climate and SEL should occur at multiple levels of practice and policy in order for real change to occur. The recent reauthorization of ESSA recognizes the critical importance of school climate, conditions for learning, and student engagement in learning. The U.S. Department of Education has released a suite of four free school climate surveys (for students, teachers, other school staff, and families) that has the capacity to provide data for continuous quality improvement. As schools enter an era defined by a revised ESSA, the definition of school

success has broadened beyond typical measures of student achievement. The definition now includes how schools promote conditions for learning, provide a positive school climate, engage students and staff, and develop skills beyond academic performance. Given the adage "What gets assessed gets addressed" (Osher et al., 2008), schools now have the autonomy to assess school climate as a part of their accountability metrics. They also may expand the range of data collected to measures of social and emotional competence. Although such data may be used for continuous improvement (e.g., Osher & Kendziora, 2010), districts, states, and researchers need to address the challenges to prematurely using SEL assessments for accountability (e.g., Duckworth & Yaeger, 2015).

Emerging from a discussion of policy questions at the first meeting of practitioners, and with the goal of producing a cohesive message with a shared set of values and principles for the Department of Education, a core team of participants produced a statement with a set of recommendations to guide state education agencies (SEAs) and local school districts in the effective implementation of ESSA. The statement, entitled *A Call to Action for Inspiring and Motivating Our Children and Teachers to Learn and Grow in Social, Emotional, and Cognitive Arenas*, signed by 354 individuals and 70 organizations, made three sets of recommendations around the following: the use of professional development and systematic, comprehensive, coordinated, evidence-based approaches; clear standards and supports for evidence-based social, emotional, and academic programming that enables students to be college and career ready; and the establishment of practical, sound, reliable, and valid measures of school climate and students' social and emotional competencies to be used to inform planning and practice to enhance students' learning and development. The principles set forth around measurement are as follows:

It is critical for researchers and educators to join forces to establish practical measures of students' intrapersonal and interpersonal competence that are scientifically sound, feasible to administer, and inform planning and practice to enhance students' learning and development. Reliable and valid assessment tools of students' social and emotional competence as well as school climate are available and can be used, but only if used wisely.

a. Measures that ask students to evaluate their own progress in developing specific skills like self-regulation, executive functions, growth mindset and social awareness are often helpful for teachers as they try to assess progress for individual students. These measures can be combined with behavior ratings and performance tasks that help educators to understand next steps that promote schoolwide, instructional and/or relational improvement efforts that can be monitored to support continuous learning. *More research, however, is needed to explore how and if these measure can be used for accountability*. Currently, they can be used formatively to *monitor student learning* and provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. Under these conditions, educators, often view them as extremely helpful.

b. New measures like the U.S. Department of Education's school climate survey (or other highly respected climate surveys) can be used to monitor the conditions for learning and important factors that contribute to learning such as a student's sense of being safe, known, and valued. While these instruments still rely on self-report, they should nonetheless be used to track progress in improving the overall conditions for learning. Climate measures that focus on trust, physical and emotional safety, strong relationships between and among adults and students, and cultural competence are particularly important.

c. Data currently being collected by schools can and should be part of the overall assessment of the effectiveness of social, emotional, cognitive as well as school climate interventions. In particular, attendance rates, discipline referrals, suspensions, expulsions, and graduation rates are all useful measures of the success of any school.

d. School leaders should include students, as well as families, in the process of understanding social and emotional and school climate measurement findings. We believe that students can become "action researchers" themselves and help interpret data and identify personalized and school-wide responses and interventions that are likely to be successful.

Methodological Considerations

Several methodological considerations still need to be addressed to bring greater conceptual and practical clarity to the discussion around school climate and SEL. Challenges around how to operationalize and measure implementation readiness and fidelity of school climate and SEL interventions, as well as social and emotional competencies, in reliable, valid, and practical ways are at the forefront of the research and practice discussion and are now the focus of an assessment workgroup. For example, measures of social and emotional competencies can be used formatively to monitor student learning and provide feedback, but there are currently limitations to their use for accountability (Duckworth & Yaeger, 2015). In addition, the measurement of school climate, an ecological construct, still relies on teacher and student self-reports. Researchers have for a long time struggled with how best to capture the relationships between constructs that are measured at the individual level and those that are meant to represent group-level processes (Van Horn, 2003). Teacher reports of school climate and social and emotional competencies can be subject to biases stemming from teacher attitudes and expectations, as is the case with teacher reports of social and emotional competencies, or misinformation about what happens outside of the classroom. Reports by students do not always correspond with reports by teachers and can sometimes be idiosyncratic—if, for example, young students do not fully understand the questions. Furthermore, students' and teachers' social and emotional competencies influence their perceptions of school climate (Berg & Aber, 2015; Koth, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2008; Vieno, Perkins, Smith, & Santinello, 2005).

Theoretical frameworks that speak to the intersection of school climate and SEL—Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, Tseng and Seidman's systems framework, Sameroff's transactional model of development, Spencer's Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory—argue for dynamic, transactional processes between person and environmental systems. But these theories and methods are at a high level of generality and are

difficult to study empirically. Different constructs exist at different levels of analysis, ranging from the individual level (i.e., psychological and biological characteristics of individuals) to the micro level (i.e., relationships between individuals) to the macro level (i.e., compositional, contextual, community characteristics). In order to truly capture empirically the intersection of school climate and SEL, it will be useful to capture the interdependencies and alignment or misalignment among social and emotional competencies, dimensions and experiences of school climate including conditions for learning, and practices and policies that are being implemented (Tseng & Seidman, 2007). At the lowest level of specificity, this includes identifying, organizing, measuring, and modeling the specific components of school climate that are most relevant to social and emotional development (Jones, 2015; Osher et al., 2016). The development of competencies can be nonlinear across time and varying across contexts (Osher et al., 2017). The components of school climate are nested and exist at different levels of analysis (e.g., dyads and triads, microcontext, classroom, school, family, community, and interactions between these) and can be defined and measured as the psychological experiences of different individuals in the school community as well as collective climate (Berg & Aber, 2015; Berkowitz et al.,2016; Thapa et al., 2013). These nuances create analytic complexities. Measures of school climate and social and emotional competencies are constantly being improved to address some of these concerns. Valid and reliable self-report measures should be combined with other types of assessments, such as observations of classroom and school climate and performance tasks, to capture what individual competencies and climate dimensions, as well as what combination, contribute most to healthy development.

Randomized controlled trials and quasi-experimental evaluations are important for understanding both the impact (or lack of impact) of efforts to build healthy schools and individuals and advancing the theory about the direction of associations between conditions for learning and social and emotional development (Berkowitz, 2016). At the same time, qualitative case studies and descriptive work are useful for unpacking how and why these efforts are or are not successful, as well as for refining and aligning measures, and can be carried out in a shorter timeframe with fewer resources. Triangulation using mixed-method studies that align quantitative and qualitative designs (e.g., in sampling) can simultaneously help us develop measures and understand causal effects as well as the processes through which these effects occur.

Context, implementation readiness, fidelity, and quality contribute to program effectiveness. We still have much to learn about how contextual factors, implementation readiness, and the quality and fidelity of implementation moderate and mediate intervention effectiveness, but the field of implementation science has made significant progress. There is a growing awareness that implementation readiness, which includes motivation, general capacity, and intervention-specific capacity, is an important moderator of program effectiveness (Dymnicki, Wandersman, Osher, Grigorescu, & Huang, 2014; Scaccia et al., 2015). Collaboration with relevant stakeholders that involve assessing the level of need and school climate from multiple perspectives is important to the adoption and sustainability of whole school efforts (Berkowitz, 2016; Thapa et al., 2013; Weissberg et al., 2015). Collaborating on developing needs and readiness assessments and creating a careful plan for implementation and adaptation, along with creating a clear structure for implementation, is more likely to ensure successful adaptation of initiatives to specific cultural and demographic contexts in ways that are developmentally appropriate and sustainable (Meyers, Durlak, & Wandersman, 2012).

A positive school climate can facilitate the adoption and quality of implementation as well as make it more likely that schools will be implementation ready. Contextual factors such as organizational health and the quality of collaborations contribute to implementation adoption and fidelity (Domitrovich et al. 2015; Weissberg et al., 2015). For example, teachers who perceive greater principal support and staff affiliation report greater efficacy and, in turn, openness to new practices (Johnson, Pas, Loh, Debnam, & Bradshaw, 2016). In addition, intervention induced changes in these contextual factors are associated with intervention induced changes in school and student outcomes (e.g., Dymnicki, Wandersman, Osher, & Pakstis; Han & Weiss, 2005; Jones, Brown, & Aber, 2008).

There are various ways to approach the question of how implementation might affect outcomes. One way is to ask educators about what they see as points of entry and barriers to program adoption and implementation before implementation or in combination with the evaluation (Weissberg et al., 2015). Another way is to assess the associations of implementation fidelity to impact post hoc using quasi-experimental methods (e.g., Berg et al., 2016; Hulleman & Cordray, 2009; Unlu et al., 2010). A series of checks can be systematically applied to any evaluation, which can include, for example, a sequential series of questions about the strength of the treatment-control contrast, the degree to which the initiative was implemented with fidelity to implementation and to the intervention model, whether the skills targeted were aligned with the skills measured, and whether there was alignment between the target population and the study sample (Jaciw, Zacamy, Schellinger, & Lin, 2017). Any attempt at understanding the link between implementation and program effectiveness will require robust implementation indicators as part of the evaluation design.

These empirical considerations are important for understanding how and under what conditions simultaneously promoting positive school climate and SEL will be most effective. For example, it is useful to know whether classroom-level efforts and school-level efforts contribute differently to school functioning. In addition, a lack of fit between a student or group of students and a school climate initiative, as well as between a policy or practice and the existing school climate, may hinder its effectiveness. For example, schools characterized by greater autonomy and social openness may be related to fewer student behavioral problems in low-conflict schools but more behavioral problems in high-conflict schools (Kasen, Johnson, & Cohen, 2004). Some school climate and SEL initiatives may be misaligned with the needs of some individual students or groups of students. Our ability to measure individual-context fit will help to adapt initiatives according to the needs of individuals and contexts, as will the identification of individual, cultural, and contextual moderators of success. Research can do more to adequately measure and analyze these multilevel, multidimensional, context-specific, and temporal dynamics, including exploring efficient ways to measure students' experiences in different settings, the change sensitivity of existing measure, and differences in temporal metrics of change across individuals and contexts (Lerner, Schwartz, & Phelps, 2009).

Conclusion

School climate (and conditions for learning) and SEL affect and are affected by many areas. These areas include social and emotional skill development, character and moral education, deeper learning and project-based learning, emotional intelligence, executive functions, grit,

empathy, compassion, cultural competence, health promotion, positive behavior supports, positive youth development, growth mindsets, and civic education. During the past two decades, research on climate and SEL has burgeoned. We now know much more about effective programmatic interventions and their effects, the importance of context, implementation challenges, and systemic efforts (Osher et al., 2016) as well as about the biological factors that affect learning, their malleability, and how relationships in social contexts affect this malleability (Osher et al., 2017). The new ESSA provides an opportunity for states, districts, and schools to reflect this knowledge.

There is an urgent need to ensure that teachers, administrators, other school staff, families, community members, youth, and policy makers have the best tools and knowledge at their disposal to develop the social and emotional competencies of children and adults—and this need is likely to increase due to increasing inequality and manifestations of prejudice, and a weakened social safety net. Educators also must have guidance for creating school cultures and climates that support trusting relationships, collaboration, cultural responsiveness, the effective use of data, and learning. Together, these educational and environmental tools must be implemented and evaluated with attention to evidence-based best practices that build and sustain the capacities of adults to support students and to help students develop critical skills for success.

Six challenges to realizing this urgent need are as follows:

- Dissemination—Many individuals do not understand the importance of what they see as "nonacademic" factors. Even if they do understand it, they may not know how to leverage research to improve practice or apply it effectively. Effective approaches to communication, including social marketing techniques, are necessary to reach all key stakeholders.
- Intellectual fragmentation—Rich knowledge has often been developed in distinct knowledge communities and communities of practice that employ different frameworks, measures, and approaches. This fragmentation exists within and between climate and SEL research and practice. Steps must be taken to align frameworks and measures and to bring knowledge communities and communities of practice together in a manner that leverages their richness to support effective practice and research, collaboration, and development of effective policy.
- Practice efficiency—Educators, youth workers, and parents all have busy lives that include multiple roles, expectations, and pressures. This may be particularly true for educators who are held accountable to short-term academic metrics and who feel that they have insufficient time to improve academic performance. Educators and others need tools and approaches that can help them to efficiently improve climate and student social and emotional competencies while meeting their other obligations.
- Effective implementation support—Principals, district leaders, and state officials lack the tools and knowledge to support educators in effectively and efficiently implementing climate and SEL interventions in a culturally responsive manner that realizes the goals of education. There is a need to understand more about how this can be done, as well as for efficient and valid tools to support continuous improvement.

- Equity and disparities—Students do not access supportive conditions for learning and opportunities to learn and promotive SEL equally. These disparities may be enhanced by the fact that research has paid insufficient attention to phenomenological factors and to how matters of diversity affect access, intervention effects, and evaluation. Research and improved practice to address these needs are needed.

- Obsessing on behavior- Climate and SEL are promotive—they are not just about creating behavioral compliance through student self-management and creating safe environments while ignoring other conditions for learning and development. There is a danger that policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders will focus on social control functions to the exclusion of other important factors such as self-awareness, compassion, the experience of academic challenge, and intellectual safety.

An applied research and translation agenda can help meet the urgent need for access to the best tools and knowledge while addressing these six challenges and contributing to and aligning with multiple efforts which include: The National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, the National Work Group on SEL Assessment, The Science of Learning and Development, The Interagency Working Group on Youth Program's *Pathways for Youth*, and the AERA-AIR interdisciplinary work group on Schools, Rules, and Socialization.

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Technical Appendix

Social and emotional competence frameworks

We identify a select number of frameworks in the table. This list is in no way comprehensive. We selected these frameworks for illustrative purposes based on the following criteria:(1) considered current and are widely adopted in the fields of education and positive youth development; (2) grounded in theory and research; (3) identify and define a set of social and emotional competencies essential for young people's development and well-being; (4) present social and emotional competencies that are malleable; and (5) have inspired programs and practices that support SEL in schools. The frameworks, all guided by theory and research, differ in their taxonomies and in their orientations.

Table 1. Social and Emotional Competence Frameworks

Framework Name	Developer	Key Competencies	Key Ideas
Building Blocks model Stafford-Brizard, K. (2015). *Building blocks for learning: A framework for comprehensive student development.* New York, NY: Turnaround for Children.	Turnaround for Children	**Healthy development** • Attachment, stress management, self-regulation **School readiness** • Self-awareness, social awareness/relationship skills, executive functions **Beliefs about self and school** • Growth mind-set, self-efficacy, sense of belonging, relevance of school **Perseverance** • Resilience, agency, academic tenacity • Independence and sustainability • Self-direction, curiosity, civic identity	Every child needs a set of foundational skills that rely on healthy brain development and are supported by relationships and environmental conditions. The guiding principles are as follows: alignment to the development of child as "learner," measurable and malleable, related to academic achievement.

Framework Name	Developer	Key Competencies	Key Ideas
CASEL Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (2015). *Social and emotional learning core competencies.* Retrieved from http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/core-competencies/	Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)	**Self-awareness** • Recognize one's emotions and thoughts, assess one's strengths and limitations, confidence, optimism **Self-management** • Self-regulation, stress management, impulse control, motivation, set and work toward achieving personal and academic goals **Social awareness** • Take perspective and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures; understand social and ethical norms for behavior; recognize family, school, community resources, and supports **Relationship skills** • Clear communication, active listening, cooperation, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict, seek and offer help **Responsible decision making** • Make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions	This model is rooted in an educational practice perspective and is intended to help educators and researchers identify and assess the social and emotional competencies most useful for students to succeed in school.
Clover model Program in Education, Afterschool & Resiliency (2015). *The Clover Model*. Retrieved from http://www.pearweb.org/about/Clover.html	Gil Noam and Program in Education, Afterschool & Resiliency (PEAR)	**Active engagement** • To connect to the world physically • Body, impulse, movement **Assertiveness** • To affect and influence the world • Voice, choice, executive function, self-control, negotiating rules, roles, boundaries, decision making, capacity to act **Belonging** • To belong to a society • Strong positive relationships with peers and adults, empathy, and support/group acceptance **Reflection** • To create a sense of identity • Thought, analysis, insight, observation, and understanding	Helps identify the basic needs that young people have; was developed for afterschool programming. A specific goal of the developers of this model is to provide a framework and common lens through which the diverse set of adults who contribute to children's development—and the children themselves—can communicate.

Framework Name	Developer	Key Competencies	Key Ideas
Deeper Learning model National Research Council. (2012). *A framework for K-12 science education: Practices, crosscutting concepts, and core ideas*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.	National Research Council (NRC)	**Cognitive** • Cognitive processes and strategies, knowledge, creativity **Intrapersonal** • Intellectual openness, work ethic/conscientiousness, positive core self-evaluation **Interpersonal** • Teamwork and collaboration, leadership	Taxonomy of 21st century competencies; aligned with personality and ability taxonomies. Focuses on the competencies that students need to learn in the classroom.
Definition and Selection of Key Competencies (DeSeCo) model Rychen, D. S., & Salganik, L. H. (Eds.) (2003). *Key competencies for successful life and well-functioning society*. Cambridge, MA: Hogrefe & Huber.	DeSeCo Project and OECD	**Using tools interactively** • Language, symbols, and texts, knowledge and information, technology **Interacting in heterogeneous groups** • Relate to others, cooperate/work in teams, manage and resolve conflicts **Acting autonomously** • Act within big picture; form and conduct life plans and personal projects; defend and assert rights, interests, limits, and needs	Key competencies that contribute to valued outcomes for societies and individuals, help individuals meet important demands in a wide variety of contexts, and are important for all individuals.

Framework Name	Developer	Key Competencies	Key Ideas
Developmental Assets model Search Institute (2016). Retrieved from: http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18	Search Institute	**Internal assets** • Commitment to learning (achievement motivation, school engagement, homework, bonding to school, reading for pleasure) • Positive values (caring, equality and social justice, integrity, honesty, responsibility, restraint) • Social competencies (planning and decision making, interpersonal competence, cultural competence, resistance skills, peaceful conflict resolution) • Positive identity (personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose, positive views of personal future) **External assets** • Support (family support, positive family communication, other adult relationships, caring neighborhood, caring school climate, parent involvement in schooling) • Empowerment (community values youth, youth as resources, service to others, safety) • Boundaries and expectations (family, school, and neighborhood boundaries, adult role models, positive peer influence, high expectations) • Constructive use of time (creative activities, youth programs, religious community, time at home)	Building blocks of healthy development that help young children to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.
Developmental Taxonomy of Pathway Skills Jones & Savitz-Romer. (2013). A developmental taxonomy of pathway skills: Toward a coherent framework for non-cognitive and social-emotional predictors of college and career readiness.	Jones & Savitz-Romer	**Early childhood** • Executive function, self-control, SEL **Middle childhood** • Motivation, mind-set, approaches to learning **Adolescence** • Grit, tenacity, perseverance, positive youth development • Identity, autonomy, self-efficacy, goal setting **Young adulthood** • Initiative, goal commitment, flexibility, adaptability	As young people shift how they spend their time—from spending the majority of their time in the home/care setting to schools, afterschool programs, and community-based organizations and then to college—there is also a shift in the “proximal” skills necessary for success.

Framework Name	Developer	Key Competencies	Key Ideas
Emotional Intelligence Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam.	Goleman	• Emotional self-awareness • Understanding of others • Identification • Empathy • Differentiation between internal and external emotional states • Emotional self-regulation • Expressiveness • Emotional self-efficacy	Focus on understanding and regulating emotions within oneself and in others.
Employability Skills model Association for Career and Technical Education (2016). *What is "career ready"?* Retrieved from http://cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills/index.php/resources/about_resources	Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE)	**Applied knowledge** • Applied academic skills (put academic skills such as reading, writing, math to practical use) • Critical thinking skills (analyze, reason, solve problems, plan, organize, make sound decisions) **Effective relationships** • Interpersonal skills (ability to collaborate as a member of a team or work independently, communicate effectively, maintain positive attitude, contribute to workplace goals) • Personal qualities (responsibility, self-discipline, flexibility, integrity, initiative, sense of professionalism and self-worth, willingness to learn, acceptance of responsibility for own professional growth) **Workplace skills** • Resource management (manages time, money, materials, personnel) • Information use (locates, organizes, uses, analyzes, communicates information) • Communication skills (communicates verbally, listens actively, comprehends written material, conveys information in writing, observes carefully) • Systems thinking (understands and uses, monitors, and improves systems) • Technology use (understands and uses technology)	Skills necessary to be successful in the labor market and employment (at any level within the system), which can be taught within the education setting or workplace setting.

Framework Name	Developer	Key Competencies	Key Ideas
Five (or Six) *C*s of Positive Youth Development Lerner, R. M. (2004). *Liberty: Thriving and civic engagement among American youth*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.	Richard Lerner, Rick Little	**Competence** • Positive views of one's actions in specific areas • Social, cognitive, academic, health, vocational competence **Confidence** • Positive self-worth and self-efficacy **Connection** • Positive bonds with people and institutions (i.e., peers, family, school, community) **Character** • Respect for societal and cultural norms, possession of standards for correct behaviors, morality, integrity **Caring/Compassion** • Sense of sympathy and empathy **(results in) Contribution** • Contribution to self, family, community, and institutions of civil society	Key approach to understanding positive youth development.
Foundation of Young Adult Success model Nagaoka, J. et al. (2015). *Foundations for young adult success: A developmental framework*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago, Consortium on Chicago School Research.	University of Chicago Consortium on School Research	**Self-regulation** • Executive functions, awareness of self and others **Knowledge and skills** • Academic, institutional, interpersonal knowledge and skills **Mind-sets** • Self-efficacy, openness, growth mind-set **Values** • Moral code of conduct used in daily activities (e.g., being kind, being truthful) and long-term outcomes of importance (e.g., getting an education, having respect of friends, contributing to community)	Characterizes experiences and relationships that youth need to develop into young adults who have agency, a directed identity, and requisite competencies. Describes how to enact social and emotional competence frameworks and standards across settings in school, out of school, and at home.

Framework Name	Developer	Key Competencies	Key Ideas
OECD model OECD (2015). *Longitudinal study of social and emotional skills in cities.* Paris, France: OECD, Call for Tenders.	OECD	**Working with others** • Social approach and connection, assertiveness, enthusiasm **Collaboration** • Compassion, respect for others, trust, relationship harmony, interdependent self-construal **Emotion regulation** • Stress resistance, self-confidence, emotional control, self-esteem, self-compassion, incremental mind-set, fear of happiness **Task performance** • Self-discipline, organization, responsibility, goal orientation, task initiation **Open-mindedness** • Intellectual curiosity, creative imagination, aesthetic interests, appreciation, self-reflection/awareness of inner experiences, autonomy/independence of judgment and self-construal	Grounded in Big Five personality taxonomy (John, 1990) and influenced by 21st Century Skills.

Framework Name	Developer	Key Competencies	Key Ideas
Partnership for 21st Century model Partnership for 21st Century Learning (2007). *Framework for 21st century learning.* Retrieved from http://www.p21.org/about-us/p21-framework	Partnership for 21st Century Learning	**Learning and innovation skills** • Creativity and innovation (think creatively, work creatively with others, implement innovations) • Critical thinking and problem solving (reason effectively, use systems thinking, make judgments and decisions, solve problems) • Communication and collaboration (communicate clearly, collaborate with others) **Life and career skills** • Flexibility and adaptability (adapt to change, be flexible) • Initiative and self-direction (manage goals and time, work independently, be self-directed learners) • Social and cross-cultural skills, leadership, and responsibility (interact effectively with others, work effectively in diverse teams) • Productivity and accountability (manage projects, produce results) • Leadership and responsibility (guide and lead others, be responsible to others)	Identifies an exhaustive list of skills, knowledge, and expertise that students need to succeed in work and life. It also includes specific academic content and interdisciplinary themes (e.g., global awareness, health literacy, environmental literacy), and information, media and technology skills. In addition, it includes support systems (i.e., standards, assessment, curriculum and instruction, professional development, learning environments).

Framework Name	Developer	Key Competencies	Key Ideas
PRACTICE model Guerra, N., Modecki, K., & Cunningham, W. (2014). Developing social-emotional skills for the labor market: The PRACTICE model. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper.* Washington, DC: World Bank.	World Bank with Nancy Guerra	**Problem solving** • Social information processing skills, decision making, planning skills **Resilience** • Stress resistance, perseverance, optimism, adaptability **Achievement motivation** • Mastery goal orientation, sense of purpose, motivation to learn **Control** • Delay of gratification, impulse control, attention focus, self-management **Teamwork** • Empathy/prosocial, low aggression, communication skills, relationship skills **Initiative** • Agency, internal locus of control, leadership **Confidence** • Self-efficacy, self-esteem, positive identity **Ethics** • Honesty, fairness orientation, moral reasoning	The goal is to have a simple, cohesive organizing framework that employers value, that predict school and labor market success, that follow a developmental course, and that are malleable through structured, evidence-based interventions.
Strive framework Strive Task Force on Measuring Social and Emotional Learning (2013). *Beyond content: Incorporating social and emotional learning into the Strive Framework.* Retrieved from http://www.strivetogether.org/sites/default/files/images/Strive%20Together%20Volume%20I.pdf	Strive Network	**Academic self-efficacy** **Growth mind-set/mastery orientation** **Grit/perseverance** **Emotional competence** **Self-regulated learning/study skills**	Skills that have an evidence-based relationship to achievement, are malleable, and are measurable.

Each framework has its own definition of how social and emotional competencies are defined. For example, **the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)** framework includes cognitive processes and mindsets in its definition of social and emotional competencies. Social and emotional competencies are "the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (CASEL, 2016). **The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**, rooted in the field of personality, offers an additional and explicit acknowledgement of the biological dispositions that underlie social and emotional development. They define social and emotional competencies as "individual characteristics that (a) originate in the reciprocal interaction between biological predispositions and environmental factors, (b) are manifested in consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, (c) continue to develop through formal and informal learning experiences, and (d) influence important socioeconomic outcomes throughout the individual's life (OECD, 2015; De Fruyt, Wille, & John, 2015; Primi, Santos, John, & De Fruyt, submitted)" (John & De Fruyt, 2015). In the **Partnerships for 21st Century Learning** framework, *21st century skills* are necessary for young people's success in work, life, and citizenship. The framework suggests that student knowledge and mindsets shape the development of skills, which are cultivated in the context of a student's environment (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015). The **National Research Council's Deeper Learning and 21st Century Skills framework** provides a similar conceptualization of social and emotional competencies (National Research Council, 2012).

Many social and emotional competence frameworks are consistent with a positive youth development perspective, which emphasizes youth competencies, strengths, protective factors, and well-being over deficits and risk factors. Social and emotional competence frameworks share many commonalities. The frameworks involve observable behaviors and internal processes necessary for social adjustment and success in school, work, and life (Osher et al., forthcoming). Furthermore, several of the frameworks include a combination of cognitive regulation and emotional understanding (i.e., intrapersonal competencies), and social competence (i.e., interpersonal competencies).

The difference between frameworks can be classified as variations in scope and type (Jones, Bailey, Nelson, & Barnes, 2015). Frameworks vary in scope, meaning that they differ in (1) the degree to which they are comprehensive versus field-oriented and developed to inform a specific program or set of practices; (2) how deeply they delve into one or more domains and type of competencies (e.g., skills versus mindsets); and (3) how many constructs they encompass (Osher et al., forthcoming). Frameworks also vary in type. Differences in type include the extent to which they emphasize different outcomes, such as healthy relationships and well-being rather than promote college and career readiness and success (Hagen, 2013). Other differences include the extent to which they delineate developmental progression of competencies versus the extent to which they identify a set of competencies that one ultimately should have as an adult. The frameworks presented in Table 1 are comprehensive frameworks that serve to develop and implement a variety of programs and practices. See "Examples of How Social and Emotional Competence Frameworks Differ" for examples of frameworks that vary on these dimensions.

Social and Emotional Competence Frameworks Differ

By number of constructs. The frameworks that include numerous competencies, such as the **Developmental Assets** and the **Partnership for 21st Century Skills** model, include less detailed characteristics of social and emotional competencies. Other models, such as the **CASEL** model, include five overarching categories of social and emotional competencies, but these are described in detail.

By type. **The Clover model**, for example, emphasizes healthy relationships, whereas the **Employability Skills model** identifies skills necessary for success in the labor market. Differences in type are determined by and affect the frameworks' intended audience and application. For example, the Clover model is often applied to afterschool programs that seek to promote social and emotional competence, and the Employability Skills model was developed by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) to build a stronger workforce.

By developmental progression. The **Partnership for 21st Century skills** identifies the skills that one ultimately should have as an adult, whereas the **Foundation of Young Adult Success** and **Building Block** frameworks identify the competencies that one would expect to possess at different developmental stages. Thus, these models are explicitly developmental in nature.

The extent to which one framework is more useful than another for policy and practice depends on stakeholders' reasons for adopting the framework and the conditions under which the framework is being adopted. Because there are so many frameworks, it can sometimes be challenging to bring conceptual clarity to the field, including knowing what competencies are most essential, for what purposes, under what conditions, and for whom (i.e., all young people versus young people who face adversity). Yet, improving conceptual clarity may be essential to bringing greater understanding and awareness to educators and policymakers, to developing effective social and emotional practices that align with other school activities, and to measuring the effectiveness of these practices.

How do students develop social and emotional competencies?

Students can develop social and emotional competencies in multiple ways. SEL is "the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, skills" that make up social and emotional competencies, and this process occurs "in the context of supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging, and meaningful" (CASEL, 2012). Osher and colleagues (forthcoming) identified 5 characteristics of universal SEL approaches that effectively promote social and emotional competencies based on Durlak and colleagues' 2011 meta-analysis of research on 213 SEL programs in Grades K–12, other research, and their own assessment. These characteristics can be helpful in theorizing on the process of acquiring social and emotional competencies.

The first characteristic of an effective SEL program, as defined by Osher and colleagues, is developmental fit (i.e., the program aligns with children's cognitive, social, and emotional skills). Put another way, SEL approaches should promote skill building when children are developmentally ready to acquire the skills, and they should provide additional scaffolds for educators of younger children in teaching skills that are more challenging to learn. Frameworks that emphasize the developmental sequence of competencies can be helpful in identifying the

skills that students can and should develop in school and when, as well as how educators, schools, and others can facilitate this development. The **Practice Model**, developed by the World Bank (Guerra et al., 2014), refers to the developmental periods of skills acquisition as *optimal periods*, which are "windows of opportunity of maximum sensitivity when it is easiest for individuals to acquire specific skills" (Guerra et al., 2014, p. 6).

A second characteristic of an effective SEL program involves alignment with, and relevance to, the culture of those who engage in the SEL program. SEL should consider the values, attitudes, behaviors, and meanings of SEL-related concepts. According to Osher and colleagues, effective SEL approaches should also have the following characteristics: (1) align with the characteristics and needs of adults and students, and provide training and support for the entire school community; (2) show rigorous evidence of their effects; and (3) incorporate current technologies and infuse a wide range of social and emotional competencies into existing curricula. In other words, SEL programs must be adopted and adapted across diverse student populations to make them culturally relevant and appropriate. They must align with the skills and needs of students and staff in the school, and they must work to train and support students and adults (i.e., school staff, families, community members). They must incorporate technological advances such as computer-based platforms for lessons and professional development, blended learning, and/or experiential education in which academic curricula consider and capitalize on social and emotional competencies. SEL programs should strive as much as possible to build social and emotional competencies through regular curricula and routines that relate to students' lives as well as to engage adults in the learning process (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). Finally, no program can be as effective as intended without high-quality implementation. According to Han & Weiss (2005), high-quality implementation requires readiness planning, execution, and sustainability. Many SEL programs have experienced implementation challenges, including a lack of buy-in and alignment with other school and district efforts (Osher et al., forthcoming). The design of creative, new measurement tools and the fine-tuning of existing tools to measure the effectiveness of these models is another essential step in incorporating and evaluating SEL in schools.

Summary

In this section, we defined social and emotional competencies, compared and contrasted several social and emotional competence frameworks, and theorized, based on the evidence, on how schools can adopt approaches to promote social and emotional development. In the next section, we apply a similar approach to school climate. We briefly define school climate, compare and contrast several school climate frameworks, and theorize about elements of, and how to adopt approaches that promote, a positive school climate.

School Climate Frameworks

The frameworks that we list in the table that follows are in no way comprehensive. We used the following criteria for choosing this sampling of frameworks that: (1) are wide-ranging in nature; (2) have a strong research base; and (3) are gaining traction in local and state initiatives to track and improve school climate. For example, the NSCC's definition embodies many of the characteristics of a healthy school that are described in most school climate frameworks (e.g., Anderson, 1982; Brookover et al., 1978; Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Felner et al., 2007, 2008; Stockard & Mayberry, 1992). The U.S. Department of Education developed a framework that was designed to be a nationwide effort to develop actionable measures that are now freely available to schools to support the monitoring of school climate (AIR, 2014). The ED's definition framed the Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS) Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) grants and continues to guide recent local and state efforts to assess school climate in a systematic way. For example, the U.S Department of Education's School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS), developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), allow stakeholders to review school-, district-, and state-level scores on each of the components of school climate (AIR, 2014).

Although common components exist across the school climate frameworks, they differ in type and scope. There is one noticeable difference in type. Some frameworks (e.g., National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], ED, and Conditions for Learning) were developed to explicitly define and describe school climate, whereas other frameworks, such as ASCD's Whole Child approach, place the development of the child at the center of the model and address school climate by identifying components of the environment that allow for healthy development. The frameworks also differ in scope. Some frameworks, such as the Conditions for Learning model, place great emphasis on students. Healthy schools are places in which students feel supported, included, safe, and challenged (Garibaldi et al., 2015; Osher & Kendziora, 2010). Other models, such as the NSCC model, also place emphasis on conditions that teachers and other staff create for students, including providing high-quality instruction to students, implementing student-centered disciplinary policies and practices, and ensuring a safe and welcoming physical environment.

Table 2. School Climate Frameworks

Framework	Developer	Key Domains	Key Ideas
Authoritative School Climate Konold, T., Cornell, D., Huang, F., Meyer, P., Lacey, A., Nekvasil, E., Heilbrun, A., & Shukla, K. (2014). Multi-level multi-informant structure of the Authoritative School Climate Survey. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *29*, 238-255.	Cornell	**Disciplinary structure** • Strict but fair enforcement of school rules **Student support** • Supportive and respectful student-staff relationships	Seeks to make connections between multiple characteristics commonly found in school climate models. The model was originally derived from Baumrind's work on authoritative parenting, wherein parenting falls into two dimensions: (1) parental expectations and demands, and (2) parental warmth and support.
Child Friendly Schools (CFS) model Osher, D., Kelly, D. L., Tolani-Brown, N., Shors, L., & Chen, C. S. (2009). *UNICEF child friendly schools programming: Global evaluation final report.* Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.	UNICEF	**Child centeredness: health and safety** • Physical and emotional safety; emotionally supportive climate; safe and welcoming school learning environment; safe and welcoming classroom learning environment; healthy learning environment (hygiene and sanitation, child-centered services) **Child centeredness: pedagogy** • Child-centered pedagogy; challenging student-centered learning and environment; support for teachers' development and pedagogy **Democratic participation** • Active participation of children, families, and communities in school decision making; strong links between home, school, and community; policies and services that are fair, participatory, and free of discrimination **Inclusiveness** • Child-seeking; inclusive and welcoming of all students; gender-sensitive and girl-friendly; have policies and services that encourage student attendance and retention	Inspired by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and intended as a framework for encouraging quality education and positive student outcomes in low- and middle-income countries. The three overarching principles are complementary, interactive, and overlapping.

Framework	Developer	Key Domains	Key Ideas
Conditions for learning American Institutes for Research (2014). *ESSIN Task 31, Subtask 2: Position paper on School Climate Survey (SCLS) content*. Washington, DC: Author.	AIR	**Student safety** • Physical safety, emotional and social safety, treated fairly and equitably, avoid risky behavior **Students challenged** • High expectations, strong personal motivation, school is connected to life goals, rigorous academic opportunities **Students supported** • Meaningful connection to adults, strong bonds to school, positive peer relationships, effective and available support **Socially capable peers and adults** • Emotionally intelligent and culturally competent, responsible and persistent, cooperative team players, contribute to school and community	AIR developed an assessment of school climate that was measurable and easily communicable. The characteristics that the team identified as part of this initiative were aspects of climate most proximal to learning and development.
Five Essential Supports Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Bryk, A. S., Easton, J. Q., & Luppescu, S. (2006). *The essential supports for school improvement.* Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research.	The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research	**Ambitious instruction** • Intellectual challenge **Professional capacity** • Quality of human services, professional development; values and beliefs about teacher responsibility; professional community **Strong parent-community-school ties** • Teachers knowledgeable about student culture and local community; staff engage parents and community in strengthening student learning; schools draw network of community organizations to expand services for students and their families **Student-centered learning climate** • Safety and order; academic press; personal concern for students **Leadership** • Inclusive; focused on quality of instruction; high standards; parents, community members, and faculty have a sense of influence over school policy; strategic orientation; teachers learn about student culture and local community	Based on a 15-year longitudinal study comparing elementary schools that improved to those that did not. The study culminated in the development, testing, and validation of a framework of five essential supports for school improvement. This model places emphasis on organizational characteristics. The supports are anchored within a climate of trust, school organizational structure, and resources of the local community.

Framework	Developer	Key Domains	Key Ideas
Maryland Safe and Support Schools (MDS[3]) Bradshaw, C. P., Waasdorp, T. E., Debnam, K. J., & Johnson, S. L. (2014). Measuring school climate in high schools: A focus on safety, engagement, and the environment. *Journal of School Health*, *84*(9), 593–604.	MDS[3]	**Engagement** • Connectedness, academic emphasis, parent involvement, culture of inclusion **Safety** • Physical safety, bullying, substance use, social and emotional well-being **Environment** • Order and discipline, physical environment, support services	Used to assess the effectiveness of positive behavioral intervention and supports (PBIS).
National School Climate Council (NSCC) framework National School Climate Center (2016). *School climate.* Retrieved from http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/	NSCC	**Relationships** • Respect for diversity, school and community collaboration, morale, connectedness **Safety** • Physical and social and emotional safety **Teaching and learning** • Quality of instruction, social, emotional, and ethical learning, professional development, leadership **Environmental-structural** • Cleanliness, adequate space and materials, inviting aesthetic quality, size of school, curricular and extracurricular offerings	Based on a review of more than 200 school climate studies of the last decade.
Safe and Supportive Schools model National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) (2016). *School climate.* Retrieved from https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/school-climate	Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS)	**Engagement** • Relationships, school participation, respect for diversity, cultural and linguistic competence **Safety** • Emotional and physical safety, bullying, substance abuse, emergency readiness/management **Environment** • Physical, academic, and disciplinary environment; physical and mental health	Considered the NSCC framework and many of the models that came before it, culminating in an even broader model. The one major difference between this model and the NSCC model is that the environment domain combines the teaching and learning domain and the environmental-structural domain.

Framework	Developer	Key Domains	Key Ideas
Whole Child Initiative ASCD (2016). *ASCD's whole child approach.* Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/whole-child.aspx	ASCD	**Promote health and well-being of students through** • Health education curriculum; school facility and environment; staff; collaboration with parents and local community; ongoing activities; professional development; curriculum; assessment practices; realistic expectations; access to health, mental health, and dental services; healthy eating patterns and food safety **Promote safety** • Physical and emotional safety • Physical environment; safe, friendly, and student-centered; students feel valued, respected, and cared for and are motivated to learn; behavioral expectations, rules, routines, modeling, and supports to students, staff, and families to help students manage and improve behavior; social justice and equity; high expectations **Promote engagement** • Active learning strategies; range of opportunities to contribute and learn; reinforce citizenship and civic behaviors, participatory decision making; field trips and outreach projects; real-world application of learned content; inquiry-based, experiential learning tasks and activities; students monitor and direct their own progress; promote age-appropriate responsibility for learning; responsible environmental habits **Promote support** • Personalized learning; diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments; supportive adult-student relationships; access to structured academic, social, and emotional support systems such as school counselors; encourage family collaboration; use variety of methods across languages and cultures to communicate with family and community members; help families understand available services; advocate for children's needs; support children's learning; all school staff are well qualified and properly credentialed; all staff model prosocial behavior **Promote challenge** • Access to challenging, comprehensive curriculum for all students in all content areas; develop key social and emotional competencies; collect qualitative and quantitative data; high expectations; help families understand connection between education and lifelong success; evidence-based strategies; provide and monitor extracurricular, co-curricular, and community-based programs; global awareness and competencies; cross-cultural learning	Seeks to shift the vision of schooling from academic achievement only to a whole-child approach that strives to ensure long-term development and success in children. ASCD's approach differs from the others in that it takes a coordinated school health approach. Going a step further, their Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model calls for greater alignment and integration between education and health with the goal of improving not only children's cognitive, social, and emotional development but also their physical development. In addition to coordinated services and involvement, a positive social and emotional climate and a healthy and safe physical environment are essential components of the model.

The school climate frameworks contain components that are consistent across models. These components include a comfortable physical environment, emotional and physical safety, high academic expectations, adequate staff support, and high student engagement (Garibaldi et al., 2015). Across these frameworks, students enter a positive school climate when they walk into a school building that is clean and undamaged; feel safe from physical harm and bullying; are supported, nurtured, and attended to; encouraged by their teachers and other adults in the school; are surrounded by engaged students; and are challenged academically. In addition, a positive school climate is one in which systemic structures such as school policies and procedures are clear and fair; all students and staff feel equally included in the school community; staff feel supported and included by their colleagues and the administration; and student services, such as health services, are adequately provided (Gregory et al., 2010). Though less attention is often given to the physical health of students, health disparities that include vision, asthma, teen pregnancy, and physical activity reduce student motivation and learning (Basch, 2011). Schools benefit from providing adequate and coordinated health services to students. This includes proper sanitary conditions and strategies to ensure that students arrive at school well rested, as well as opportunities for physical activity, healthy foods, and medical supports including a school health coordinator (ASCD, 2013; Bailey, 2006; Basch, 2011; Osher, Poirer, Dwyer, Hicks, Brown, Lampoon, and Rodriguez, 2008; Osher, Kelly, Tolani-Brown, Shors, & Chen, 2009). If schools do not meet these conditions, students are more likely to exhibit behavior problems, have decreased motivation and achievement, and experience diminished physical health.

Poor physical conditions, a lack of safety, and unfair disciplinary practices are three ways in which schools do not meet the conditions for a positive school climate. Poor physical conditions of school buildings, such as chipped paint and broken furniture and fixtures, can affect student behavior and learning, physical health, and cognitive development as well as teacher satisfaction (Evans, 2004; Mendell & Heath, 2005; Garibaldi et al., 2015).

Although U.S. schools are relatively safe (compared to community settings), a large majority (around 74% in 2009-10) of schools report one or more violent crimes (i.e., rape, sexual battery, physical attacks or fights and threats of physical attacks with or without a weapon, and robbery) a year to the police and about 23% of schools report daily or weekly bullying (Robers, Zhang, & Truman, 2012). In low safety conditions, students who fear being bullied may not want to use the restroom or stay to wash their hands, just as students who believe they will be ridiculed for being smart may not raise their hands in class. Violence and emotional aggression in both the school and the surrounding community can threaten students' abilities to concentrate and teachers' abilities to teach; both are associated with antisocial behavior and poor mental health (Garibaldi et al., 2015; Klein, Cornell, & Konold, 2012; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). Despite being located in a community with a high incidence of violence, schools can capitalize on the strengths and resources in the school and community to provide a safe environment for teachers to teach and for students to learn (Center for Public Education, 2005).

Unfair disciplinary practices are another way in which the quality of the school climate is threatened. Studies show that black students are disproportionately identified for disciplinary action, including expulsions, in U.S. schools (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Losen & Gillespie, 2012). Unfair disciplinary practices are associated with antisocial behavior (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, & Gottfredson, 2005). In addition, suspensions and expulsions that are disproportionately directed toward students with emotional and behavioral disorders and

toward students of color contribute to disengagement from school (Morrison et al., 2001; Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010; Osher, Morrison, & Bailey, 2003). Equitable practices that support positive behavior for all students are primary to creating a safe environment.

How do we create positive school climates?

The development of a positive school climate is multidimensional, multilevel, and integrates multiple systems. In spite of the complexity, research suggests that several strategies can effectively improve school climate. Strategies include using clear and consistent, schoolwide rules and consequences; minimizing the use of exclusionary disciplinary policies; increasing the use of restorative practices; providing opportunities for students and staff to take on leadership roles within the school; fostering positive relationships with students, including ensuring that all students have at least one adult with whom they connect; and developing opportunities for students to feel successful (Gambone, Klem, & Connell, 2002). Another important strategy is to set high expectations and develop multi-tiered academic, social and emotional, and behavioral supports to ensure that students are able to meet those expectations (Osher et al., 2008). Supports include mental health services (Osher, Dwyer, Jackson, 2004) and offering students information, clear guidance, and encouragement (Malecki & Demaray, 2003).

When schools take a strategic, purposeful approach to improving school climate, they can successfully improve their conditions for learning. Efforts to improve school climate often suffer from confusion because of multiple school climate and SEL initiatives, leading to fragmented services to students (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2001). The NSCC (2012) and the ED (forthcoming) identified a set of common practices essential to school climate improvement. These include (1) democratic, collaborative, and inclusive decision making that involves all stakeholders; (2) quantitatively sound, regularly collected school climate data (see the box below for examples) that identify areas of strength and areas for improvement; that guide action planning, intervention practices, and program implementation; and that provide data for continuous monitoring and evaluation; and (3) tailored, integrated, and well-planned goals, practices, and programs. To this end, the NSCC identified three additional, essential practices: (1) capacity building and/or professional learning communities that promote collective efficacy and staff skills; (2) research- and theory-based supports, instruction, and intervention that include strength- and risk-based practices and programs that promote positive learning environments and eliminate individual student barriers to learning; and (3) strengthening of policies, procedures, and operational infrastructures for effective data collection, planning, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability. As researchers and practitioners develop a better understanding of how best to implement these practices, these strategies will lead to healthier schools.

Examples of Regularly Collected, Reliable, Comprehensive School Climate Measures

Alaska School Climate and Connectedness Survey

American Institutes for Research Conditions for Learning Survey

California Healthy Kids Survey

California School Climate Survey

The Consortium on Chicago School Research Survey of Chicago Public Schools

New York City School Survey

Safe Schools/Healthy Students

More information about these and other surveys can be found here: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/school-climate-measurement/school-climate-survey-compendium

School climate improvement efforts can be a part of a comprehensive, multi-tiered approach that also provides differentiated supports to students, staff, and families with additional needs (Osher et al., 2008). A multi-tiered or blended approach involves universal supports, early intervention for individuals or groups at higher risk, and intensive supports for those who need more targeted and individualized supports. Regular data collection efforts can help in identifying these members of the school community.

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