



Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in Teacher Education: A Scan of SEL Content in Teacher Preparation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why SEL is Critical for Teacher Preparation

A fundamental mission of schools is to educate students to master essential content areas such as reading, writing, math, and science. In addition to these basic academic skills, however, most educators, parents, students, and the public at large support a more comprehensive agenda for education – one that includes promoting students' social and emotional competence.

Social and emotional learning, or SEL, is the process of acquiring the competencies to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations effectively. That is, SEL teaches the personal and interpersonal skills we all need to handle ourselves, our relationships, and our work effectively and ethically. Accordingly, SEL is aimed at helping children and adults develop fundamental skills for success in school and life.



*"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all."
-Aristotle*

Given recent breakthroughs in the science of SEL, it is critical now more than ever that teacher preparation programs include both the science and practice of SEL into coursework and pre-service field experiences in schools. To date, we have no knowledge of the degree to which this is occurring. The aims of this project are to provide a series of recommendations to educators, policy makers, and practitioners about strategies and tools to increase the effective and broad implementation of research-based, coordinated practices to promote SEL into teacher preparation programs.



Social and Emotional Learning in Teacher Education: The SEL T-ED Project

Project Overview

The overall purpose of the project is to examine the degree to which SEL is incorporated into teacher preparation. The project has four components:

1. A scan of state level teacher certification requirements.
2. Expert interviews with Deans of Colleges of Education to obtain their perspectives on factors that impede or promote successful incorporation of SEL into teacher preparation programs.
3. A scan of SEL course work and other content in teacher preparation programs in Colleges of Education in the US.
4. Description of exemplary “case studies” of programs in Colleges of Education already incorporating SEL content into their teacher preparation.

In this executive summary, we report the findings from our state level scan of teacher certification requirements as well as provide some highlights from our interviews with Deans of Colleges of Education.

This research study represents the first ever scan of SEL content in preservice teacher education programs in North America. Clearly, it is critical that we work with our pre-service teachers to prepare them with the competencies to integrate SEL into the fabric of educational practice so that they will be able to provide their students with the skills they need for succeeding in school and in life.

Social & Emotional Learning Core Competencies



Defining our Terms:

What is SEL in Teacher Preparation?

In our scan, we utilized the **five competencies** delineated by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning's (CASEL).

We examined SEL across 3 dimensions:

1. Social-Emotional Learning of Students.
2. Social-Emotional Competencies of Teachers.
3. The Learning Context: Classroom context/classroom management, school-wide coordination, supporting school-family-community partnerships.



Effective SEL programming by school personnel must be supported by coordinated federal, state and local educational policies, leadership, and professional development to foster the best outcomes.

Durlak and Weissberg, 2011

SEL in State Level Teacher Certification Requirements

Method

We began our state level scan by developing a comprehensive coding book in which categories of SEL across the three dimensions were delineated. The guide was comprised of three categories: (1) SEL of Students, (2) Social Emotional Competence (SEC) of Teachers, and (3) the Learning Context. These categories were then further divided into subcategories (Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Relationship Skills, Social Awareness, Responsible Decision-Making), with definitions drawn from both SEL theory and research identified via variety of articles by SEL experts. Next, for each state, a content analysis was completed on all relevant documents regarding descriptions of state-level requirements for teacher certification. The coding guide and details of the coding process including a description of inter-rater reliability is available upon request.

Each state and territory received a rating that represented the degree to which their teacher education standards addressed each category (i.e., SEC of Teacher, SEL of Student, and Learning Context). More specifically, the rating was based on whether there were (a) SEL standards that address all SEL subcategories (e.g., Self Awareness) for all pre-service teachers (regardless of grade level or subject area focus), (b) SEL standards that address some SEL subcategories for all pre-service teachers (regardless of grade level or subject area focus) or (c) SEL standards that are for some grade level and/or specific subject area foci, but not for all pre-service teachers. Following, maps were created for each of our SEL dimensions (i.e., SEL of students, SEC of teachers, Learning Context) and each state was given a color that reflected their rating.

Summary of Findings

On the next pages, the maps that we generated are presented. Our key findings include the following:

(1) Few states have content in their teacher certification requirements that have a comprehensive focus on promoting the SEL of children and youth.

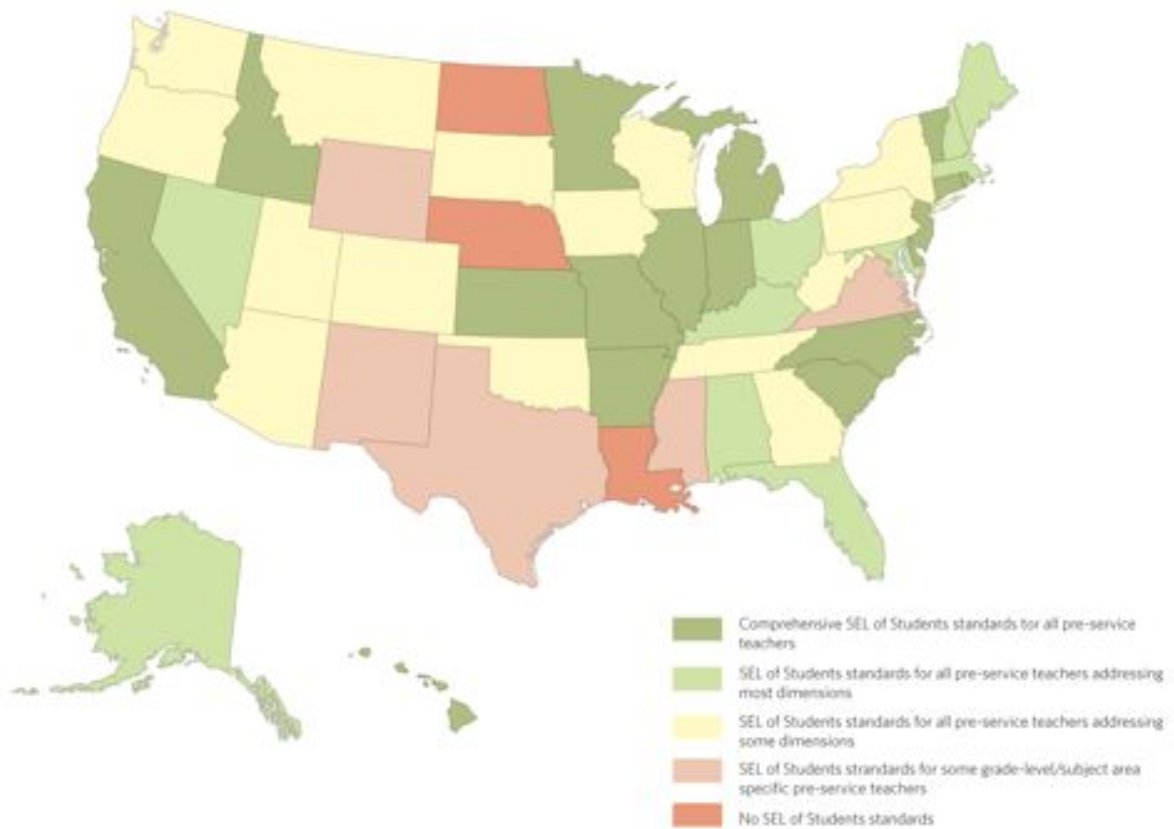
Our scan revealed that **only 25% of states and territories** required that teachers have knowledge and/or skills to promote all 5 dimensions of SEL of their students. Several states were exemplars in this area including Illinois, California, Idaho, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Arkansas, Indiana, South Carolina, North Carolina, Vermont, Delaware, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Hawaii.

(2) The promotion of the social and emotional competencies of teachers is given little emphasis in teacher certification requirements.

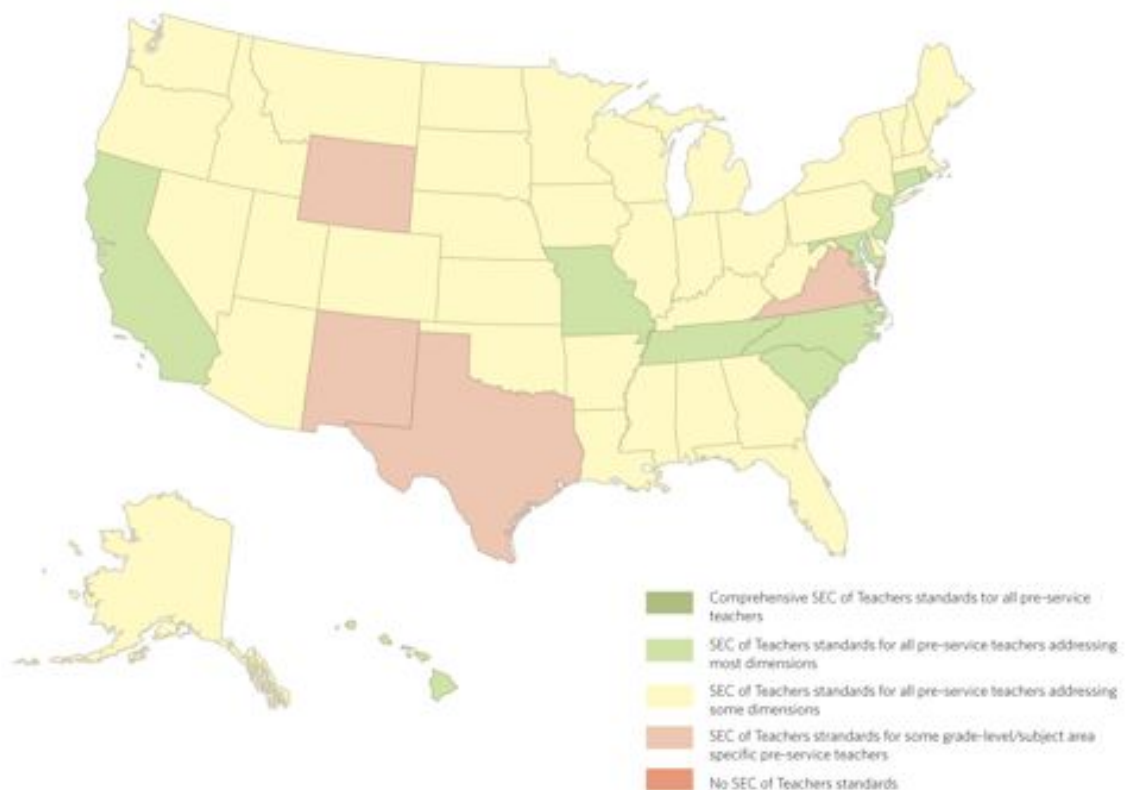
In our scan we found that there was not one state or territory that required the promotion of all 5 SEL competencies of teachers for teacher certification. There were however, 9 states that had a focus on promoting some SEL dimensions of teachers including California, Minnesota, Missouri, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, Delaware, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

(3) Almost every state and territory requires that teachers have some knowledge or course on the learning context for teacher certification.

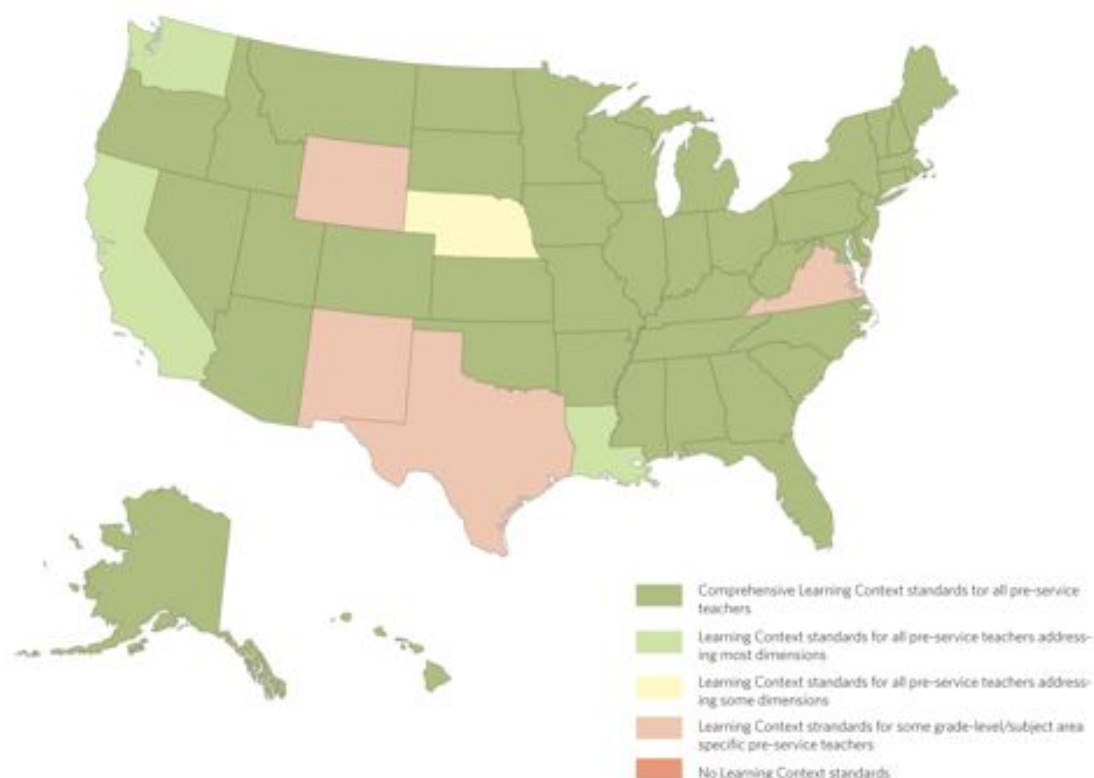
Social-Emotional Learning of Students



Social-Emotional Competence of Teachers

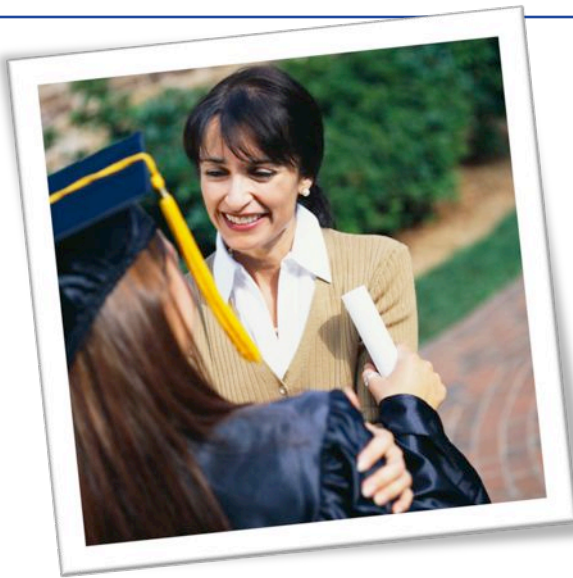


Learning Context



States that have “Most” or “All” SEL content across all three SEL dimensions

Standards for All Pre-service Teachers						
State	SEC of Teachers (# of subcategories met out of 5)	Map Color	SEL of Students (# of subcategories met out of 5)	Map Color	Learning Context (# of subcategories met out of 4)	Map Color
Connecticut	4	Light green	5	Dark green	4	Dark green
Hawaii	4	Light green	5	Dark green	4	Dark green
New Jersey	4	Light green	5	Dark green	4	Dark green
North Carolina	4	Light green	5	Dark green	4	Dark green
Rhode Island	4	Light green	5	Dark green	4	Dark green
South Carolina	4	Light green	5	Dark green	4	Dark green



What Influences the Deans of Colleges of Education?

To answer this question, we conducted a series of interviews with Deans of Colleges of Education across the US to obtain their perspectives on SEL in teacher preparation in order to identify those factors that influence them in their decisions. To date, we have interviewed a total of eight deans and more interviews will be conducted. We have been able to glean some key messages so far from these interviews that provide some direction of how SEL can be incorporated into teacher preparation in Colleges of Education across the US. The following quotes provide some examples of what we have learned so far:

Deans' Messages

1. National and state level policy influence the content of teacher preparation programs.
2. Empirical research is needed that provides support for the inclusion of SEL in teacher preparation.
3. Deans are influenced by recommendations from their faculty members that advocate for the inclusion of SEL content in teacher preparation courses and field placements.

"I had the most wonderful, loving and caring first grade teacher who made a lasting and very positive impact on me."

Dr. Lindan Hill,
Former Dean, School of Education,
Marian University

"I was just at a meeting of the Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education and there are many Deans involved with that. Five years ago I started a conversation about doing a best practices in SEL and people had no idea what I was talking about. I just left a meeting right now and people are using it all the time. The work that is happening at CASEL is having a very positive impact at organizing the language."

Hardin Coleman,
Dean of Education, Boston University

"Public schools were designed to be the great engine of democracy. It was a way to create citizens of this country. In order to do that you need to be able to interact with other people and systems. A large part of what we are talking about there is SEL - being able to get along with people and being able to work effectively with others."

Gary Sasso,
Dean of Education, Lehigh University



How do we influence Deans to focus on SEL? Marketing is not enough. We need research that is relevant to higher education faculty and curriculum – not just elementary and secondary school educators. There is a big gap in this research.

Robert Pianta,
Dean, Curry School of Education,
University of Virginia



Next Steps

We are currently conducting a scan of course content in teacher preparation programs in colleges and universities across the US. Our scan includes a stratified random sampling of 30% of all public and private universities that offer certification in teacher education. In our scan we are also looking at the top ten universities as rated by US News and World Reports. The results of this scan will be available at the end of 2013.



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