



# From Growth Mindset to Sense of Belonging:

**How School Districts Measure Social-Emotional  
Learning to Support the Whole Student**

**A GUIDE BY PANORAMA EDUCATION**

# Social-Emotional Learning: Essential to Students' Success in School and Life

## What Is Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)?

Social-emotional learning (SEL) captures the mindsets, skills, attitudes, and feelings that help students succeed in school and life. Other names for these skills include “non-cognitive skills,” “soft skills,” “21st century skills,” and “whole child.” Research shows that students who participate in SEL programs demonstrate 11% gains in academics, improved classroom behavior, better stress management, and higher attendance.

## How Are Districts Addressing Social-Emotional Learning Today?

As the body of research on social-emotional learning grows, district and school leaders are focusing on infusing SEL into the classroom through different programs and activities. Some districts have even written visions for social-emotional learning into their strategic plans. For many schools and districts, however, measuring social-emotional learning remains a challenge. Without clear and actionable data on how students view their SEL skills, it's difficult to answer questions like “which social and emotional supports do our students need the most?” and “how effective is our SEL programming?”

## How to Get Started Measuring and Improving Social-Emotional Learning

At [Panorama Education](#), we've worked with over 400 school districts and 6 million students nationwide to develop a survey-based approach to SEL measurement. Here are the five keys we've found to assessing social-emotional learning:

- 1. Choose which topics to measure.** Which SEL skills, improve student outcomes, mindsets, and behaviors matter most to your district? Panorama's research-backed, customizable survey instrument contains [22 SEL measures](#) to choose from.
- 2. Gather baseline data with an SEL assessment.** Whether done online or by paper, SEL surveys take students 10-15 minutes to complete in class.
- 3. Analyze the results.** What are students' strengths and areas for growth? Panorama's reports display results at the school and district levels—as well as at the individual student level, if requested—with national benchmarks and subgroup analyses.
- 4. Take action to improve SEL.** Design a plan for improvement based on the data. Then, begin implementing the plan across your school or district.
- 5. Evaluate and adjust.** Did the interventions and supports work? Conduct another round of surveys to examine the effectiveness of your school or district's SEL efforts

In this guide, learn how school districts are focusing on social-emotional learning skills to improve student outcomes.



**Growth Mindset**



**Social Awareness**



**Self-Efficacy**



**Sense of Belonging**



**Teacher-Student Relationships**



## Growth Mindset

Students who believe they can grow their abilities and intelligence are more likely to succeed academically

### Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey Questions

In school, how possible for you is it to change:

- Being Talented
- Liking the subjects you are studying
- Your level of intelligence
- Putting forth a lot of effort
- Behaving well in class
- How easily you give up

Adapted from [Panorama's SEL Measures](#)

### WHY DOES GROWTH MINDSET MATTER?

The term “growth mindset” refers to the belief that you can develop your talents and intelligence through hard work and dedication. When it comes to the classroom, [research from Dr. Carol Dweck](#) shows that students who self report higher levels of growth mindset tend to **do better academically** and **are more confident** when confronting challenges than students with fixed mindsets.

Panorama’s research on survey responses from over 36,000 students shows that students’ growth mindset [decreases as they progress from elementary school to high school](#)—suggesting that cultivating a growth mindset is important at every step of a student’s journey to graduation, not just in the early years.

### Focus on Growth Mindset to Improve: Math and English Language Arts (ELA) Achievement



## District Spotlight

### Growth Mindset Improves Academic Outcomes in Long Beach Unified School District (CA)

- In an SEL survey, MacArthur Elementary found that only 5 out of 10 students believed they had a strong growth mindset.
- In response, educators taught students and families about the malleability of the brain and helped students practice applying a growth mindset in their daily lives.
- Students’ growth mindset scores increased by 33% points over the next two years. MacArthur also saw a 19% and 17% point increase in ELA and math achievement, respectively.

## Key Takeaway:



**Make a targeted effort to develop growth mindset in students to boost academic results.**





## Social Awareness

Building empathy in students reduces behavioral issues and creates safer learning environments

### Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey Questions

During the past 30 days...

- How carefully did you listen to other people's points of view?
- How often did you compliment other's accomplishments
- How clearly were you able to describe your feelings?
- How much did you care about other people's feelings?
- How well did you get along with students who are different from you?

Adapted from [Panorama's SEL Measures](#)

### WHY DOES SOCIAL AWARENESS MATTER?

Social awareness—or the ability to put oneself in another's shoes—is at the core of all social emotional skills. According to [research](#), if students improve at social perspective-taking, their other SEL skills will improve as a result.

In addition, a high degree of social awareness can lead to **better student behavior** and a **safer classroom environment**. Why? People who are skilled at social perspective-taking are better at responding to conflicts and are more likely to develop positive relationships with those who hold differing beliefs.

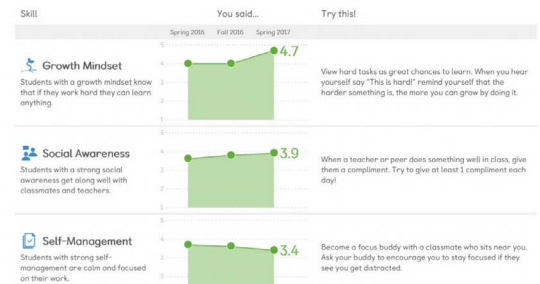
### Focus on Social Awareness to Improve: Behavior, Graduation

#### Eddie Barnes

Spring 2017

#### What is this report?

You recently answered a survey in class that asked questions about how you think and feel. Take a look at the topics below and consider the ways you can build on your strengths and work to improve on your areas for growth.



## District Spotlight

### Council Bluffs (IA) Promotes Social Awareness as a Core SEL Competency

- Council Bluffs Community School District (CBCSD) includes social awareness, along with CASEL's four other [core SEL competencies](#), in their "**Profile of a FutureReady Graduate**"—which encompasses both academic and social-emotional indicators of success.
- CBCSD uses Panorama to measure and report on social awareness and other SEL skills at the **student**, **school**, and **district** levels
- During advisement classes, teachers and students use the SEL reports to facilitate 1:1 conversations about SEL goals and growth.

## Key Takeaway:



Build social awareness into your district's definition of "college and career readiness," and encourage educators to spark 1:1 conversations with students about their social awareness skills.



## Self-Efficacy

Students with high levels of confidence are more likely to achieve academic goals and outcomes

### Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey Questions

- How confident are you that you can complete all the work that is assigned in your classes?
- When complicated ideas are presented in class, how confident are you that you can understand them?
- How confident are you that you can learn all the material presented in your classes?
- How confident are you that you can do the hardest work that is assigned in your classes? your feelings?
- How confident are you that you will remember what you learned in your current classes, next year?

Adapted from [Panorama's SEL Measures](#)

### WHY DOES SELF-EFFICACY MATTER?

Self-efficacy—otherwise known as confidence—is the belief that you have the ability to achieve a goal or an outcome. Self-efficacy plays an important role in student performance; research indicates that students who self-report higher levels of self-efficacy tend to do better in school, career, and life.

Interestingly, Panorama's national dataset shows that students with "gifted or talented" status respond **15% more favorably** to questions in the self-efficacy scale than students without "gifted or talented" status. This underscores the importance of working to instill a sense of self-efficacy in **all students**.

#### Focus on Self-Efficacy to Improve: Academics, Attendance, Graduation

Growth Mindset

**61** % favorable

Self-Efficacy

**45** % favorable

Self-Management

**73** % favorable

Social Awareness

**58** % favorable

## District Spotlight

### Fresno Unified School District (CA) Works to Support Girls' Self-Efficacy

- Fresno's SEL survey results across 106 schools showed that girls' perceptions of their self-efficacy **plummeted in middle school** compared to boys' perceptions.
- To address the issue, district leaders added staff to its counseling offices, created "climate and culture teams" at every school, and developed interventions for girls.
- By tending to every student's social and emotional needs—especially those of girls—Fresno Unified has made significant progress in educating the whole child.



**Analyze students' SEL skills, such as self-efficacy, by gender in order to better target supports and interventions.**



## Sense of Belonging

Students who feel like valued members of the community show higher attendance and graduation rates

### Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey Questions

- How well do people at your school understand you as a person?
- How much respect do students in your school show you?
- Overall, how much do you feel like you belong at your school?
- How connected do you feel to the adults at your school?
- How much do you matter to others at this school?

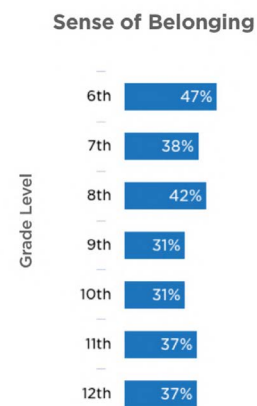
Adapted from [Panorama's SEL Measures](#)

### WHY DOES SENSE OF BELONGING MATTER?

Feeling like you belong is a basic human need that's especially pertinent in the classroom. Students' motivation, dropout rates, and academic performance are [correlated with feelings of belonging](#). When students self-report stronger senses of belonging, they tend to **do better academically** and have **higher rates of attendance and participation** in school.

But a students' sense of belonging may not stay constant throughout his or her education. Panorama's research on nearly 200,000 students shows that perceptions of belonging decline dramatically from the third through tenth grades. If not addressed, this trend could have implications for student success in school and beyond. of selfefficacy in **all students**.

### Focus on Self-Efficacy to Improve: Academics, Attendance, Graduation



## District Spotlight

### Everett Public Schools (WA) Addresses Students' Sense of Belonging During Transition Years

- In the results of an SEL survey across Everett's 27 schools, district leaders observed that students' feelings of belonging dropped 11% points between the eighth and ninth grades.
- To close this gap, district and school leadership expanded its use of the Second Step social-emotional learning program and began using an early-warning system to proactively identify at-risk students.
- By supporting every student's sense of belonging and social-emotional needs, Everett Public Schools maintains among the highest graduation rates in Washington state.

## Key Takeaway:



When measuring and improving sense of belonging, analyze the results by grade level to determine which groups of students need the most support.



# Teacher-Student Relationships

A strong social connection between teachers and students deepens classroom engagement

## Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey Questions

- How many of your teachers are respectful towards you?
- If you walked into class upset, how many of your teachers would be concerned?
- If you came back to visit class three years from now, how many of your teachers would be excited to see you?
- When your teachers ask how you are doing, how many of them are really interested in your answer?
- How many of your teachers would you be excited to have again in the future?

Adapted from [Panorama's SEL Measures](#)

## WHY DO TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS MATTER?

Positive relationships with teachers can elevate students' academic performance and social-emotional skills. [Studies have shown](#) that students who rate their relationships with teachers more positively tend to feel a greater sense of belonging and value academic subjects more highly.

When students feel connected to their teacher, they are **74% more likely** to report using strategies to learn more effectively. However, [Panorama's research](#) on survey responses from over 300,000 students shows a **10% drop** in the average teacher-student relationships score from third to ninth grade. This finding suggests a need to better nurture these relationships in middle school and during the transition to high school. and beyond. of selfefficacy in **all students**.

## Focus on Student-Teacher Relationships to Improve: Attendance, Graduation

**Your Goals**

*In this first section, we would like for you to think about the goals you set for yourself.*

1. How often do you stay focused on the same goal for several months at a time? Clear

Almost never
Once in a while
Sometimes
Frequently
Almost always
2. If you fail to reach an important goal, how likely are you to try again? Clear

Not at all likely
Slightly likely
Somewhat likely
Quite likely
Extremely likely
3. When you are working on a project that matters a lot to you, how focused can you stay when there are lots of distractions? Clear

Not at all focused
Slightly focused
Somewhat focused
Quite focused
Extremely focused

## District Spotlight

### Woodridge School District 68 (IL) Deepens Teacher-Student Relationships

- Under Woodridge's Significant 72 initiative, teachers spend the first three days of the school year focused on building relationships with students. The district uses Panorama's "Get to Know You" survey to kick off each year.
- To understand the impact of Significant 72, Woodridge also administers Panorama's SEL Survey and makes the results available to every teacher and counselor—helping them create individualized support plans for students.
- Investing in SEL and teacher-student relationships at Woodridge has decreased discipline referrals and created a better learning environment for students.

## Key Takeaway:



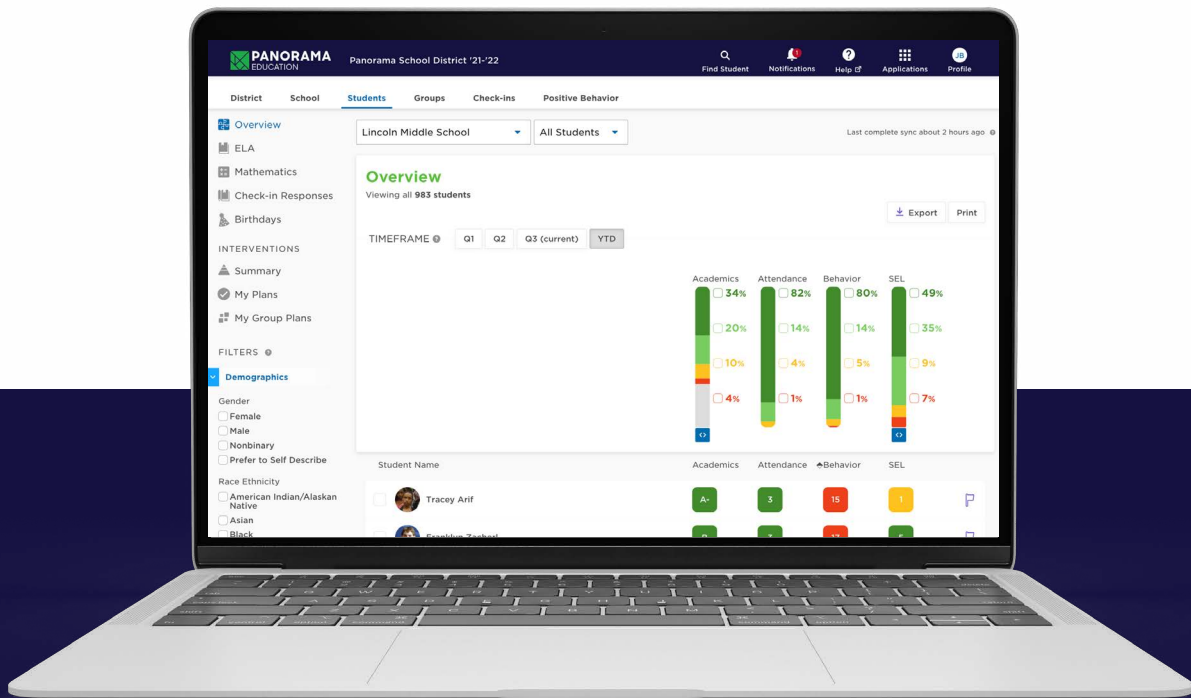
**WOODRIDGE**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT 68

**Teacher-student relationships are key to student engagement and motivation; carve out a few days of the year to build and reflect on these relationships.**

# Learn more about measuring and supporting social-emotional learning with Panorama

**Panorama Education** partners with K-12 schools and districts across the country to collect and analyze data about social-emotional learning, school climate, family engagement, and more. With research-backed surveys and a leading technology platform, Panorama helps educators act on data and improve student outcomes. Panorama supports more than 15 million students in 25,000 schools across 50 states, including those in the New York City Department of Education, Dallas Independent School District, Seattle Public Schools, and San Francisco Unified

School District. [panoramaed.com/social-emotional-learning](https://panoramaed.com/social-emotional-learning)



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