



Collaborative for Academic,  
Social, and Emotional Learning

CIVIC  
ENTERPRISES

**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE: May 15th, 2013 – 12:01 a.m. (ET)**  
**EMBARGOED COPIES OF REPORT AVAILABLE BY REQUEST**

## TEACHERS CALL FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN SCHOOL

*In New National Survey, U.S. Educators Say Prioritizing SEL Would Boost Student Outcomes, Transform Schools*

**CHICAGO, May 15, 2013 – Teachers across America believe that social and emotional learning is critical to student success in school, work and life, according to a new national survey released today at the 2013 CASEL Forum.** The survey, highlighted in “The Missing Piece,” a report by Civic Enterprises with Hart Research for CASEL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, also found that teachers believe social and emotional skills can be taught, and that the development of those skills in *all* students should take far more priority in U.S. schools and state learning standards than they do today.

The most comprehensive SEL research report of late, “The Missing Piece: A National Teacher Survey on How Social and Emotional Learning Can Empower Children and Transform Schools” is the centerpiece of a bi-annual gathering of national education leaders, who convene today in Chicago to discuss the report’s implications and action steps based on its findings. Among those attending the 2013 CASEL Forum are U.S. Department of Education Acting Deputy Secretary Jim Shelton, Illinois State Superintendent Christopher Koch, Stanford University education professor Linda Darling-Hammond, superintendents from six of most populous school districts in the United States, and some of the nation’s prominent philanthropic leaders, including Jennifer and Peter Buffett of NoVo Foundation.

“The CASEL Forum unites the brightest lights in U.S. education around a single, powerful mission,” says Timothy P. Shriver, chair of CASEL’s Board of Directors and chairman and chief executive officer of the Special Olympics. “Our goal is to educate the whole child – socially, emotionally and academically. *Every* student in America deserves a chance to learn the skills that our nation’s teachers emphasize in ‘The Missing Piece.’”

According to the survey, teachers believe that SEL addresses several national challenges, including a slipping educational advantage over other countries and a skills gap that threatens American economic growth. The report concludes that “the lack of urgency around implementing social and emotional learning (SEL) in schools threatens the future success of America’s children.”

“Many of the skills that enable students to navigate school and life successfully – grit and determination, empathy and conflict resolution – are the very things that dropouts themselves have told us would have kept them in school and on a path to success,” says John Bridgeland, report co-author and chief executive officer at Civic Enterprises. “Now we know that those on the frontlines of schools – our teachers – agree that social and emotional learning is the missing piece to boost student outcomes and transform our schools.”

The report’s authors will discuss the complete findings of the report at the 2013 Forum’s opening session today. The report outlines the survey’s findings along three major themes. Top findings include:

1. **Teachers understand, value and endorse social and emotional learning for all students.** Nearly all teachers, 93 percent in the survey, believe SEL is “very” or “fairly” important for the in-school student experience. Even more, 95 percent, believe that social and emotional skills are teachable, and 87 percent report that SEL benefits students from all backgrounds, rich and poor. Further, more than three quarters of teachers believe a larger focus on SEL will be a major benefit to students because of positive effects on workforce readiness (87 percent), school attendance and graduation (80 percent), life success (87 percent), college preparation (78 percent) and academic success (75 percent).

2. **Teachers believe social and emotional learning helps students achieve in school and life.** Eight of 10 teachers think SEL will have a major benefit on students' ability to stay on track and graduate, and will increase standardized test scores and overall academic performance (77 percent). At least three quarters of teachers believe SEL will improve student academic achievement and performance.
3. **Teachers identify key accelerators for social and emotional learning.** Two of three teachers (62 percent) think the development of social and emotional skills should be explicitly stated in their state education standards. Teachers across grade levels, and their students' household income levels, share this sentiment: More than half of teachers in prekindergarten and elementary schools (65 percent), middle schools (64 percent) and high schools (55 percent), and more than half of teachers in high-poverty (68 percent) and low-poverty (59 percent) schools want SEL in their state standards.

"The Missing Piece" includes responses from a nationally-representative sample of 605 educators from preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. To support the findings, the report also includes in-depth interviews with 15 middle and high school students from diverse backgrounds, case studies of successful schools, conversations with leading educational thinkers, and a comprehensive review of SEL literature. In addition to the data, "The Missing Piece" highlights innovative programs and efforts around the country, with case studies in Montgomery County, Md.; Cleveland, Ohio; Austin, Texas; and DuPage County, Ill.. The report also recommends policies and strategies to promote, strengthen and sustain social and emotional learning.

"Our nation's teachers have made it clear: The development of social and emotional skills must be an essential element of the educational experience," says Roger P. Weissberg, president and chief executive officer at CASEL. Weissberg is also NoVo Foundation Endowed Chair in Social and Emotional Learning at the University of Illinois at Chicago. "The findings substantiate an imperative call for social and emotional learning, from the very professionals who most closely shape our children's education."

CASEL, established in 1994, leads scientific research on SEL and supports its implementation in districts throughout the United States. CASEL also promotes SEL by garnering support for congressional legislation. The Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act of 2013, introduced earlier this month by U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Ohio), would allow the flexible use of federal funds to support teachers' professional development in social and emotional learning.

CASEL's fourth Forum, which begins today at the Mid-America Club of Chicago's Aon Center, convenes leading education researchers, practitioners and policymakers for discussions on the survey findings, CASEL's Collaborating Districts Initiative, and efforts to elevate SEL in public policy. A full copy of "The Missing Piece" is available by request, or online starting March 15 at [casel.org](http://casel.org) or [civicenterprises.net](http://civicenterprises.net).

---

**About SEL:** Social and emotional learning involves the processes of developing competencies that help students stay focused on learning, engage in pro-social behavior, prevent problem behavior, and relieve stress and anxiety. These skills include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

**About CASEL:** CASEL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning is the nation's leading organization advancing the teaching of academic, social and emotional skills. Through research, practice and policy, we collaborate to ensure that all students in prekindergarten through 12th grade have the opportunity to master these skills and become knowledgeable, responsible, caring and contributing members of society.

**About Civic Enterprises:** Civic Enterprises is a public policy firm that helps corporations, nonprofits, foundations, universities and governments develop and spearhead innovative public policies to strengthen our communities and country. Created to enlist the private, public and nonprofit sectors to help address our nation's toughest problems, Civic Enterprises fashions new initiatives and strategies that achieve measurable results in the fields of education, civic engagement, health, and many more.

