Social-Emotional Skills

Leaders of the CORE districts believe, based on compelling research and their own experience as educators, that social-emotional (SE) competencies like self-management and developing a positive/growth mindset are an important complement to academic preparation in helping our students succeed in college, career, and life. A national teacher survey conducted in 2013 shows that 93% of teachers think it is very or fairly important for schools to promote the development of social-emotional competencies. Furthermore, 95% of teachers believe that these skills are teachable, and 97% believe they will benefit students from all backgrounds.

In a review of the mindsets and competencies that promote long-term learning, Professor Carol Dweck and her colleagues report that social-emotional competencies “can matter even more than cognitive factors for students’ academic performance. These may include students’ beliefs about themselves, their feelings about school, or their habits of self-control. Indeed, there is a growing recognition in education, psychology, and economics of the importance of [social-emotional] factors in achievement both in school and in the labor market (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005; Dweck, 1999; Heckman, Stixrud, & Urzua, 2006; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). There has also been a recognition that these factors offer promising levers for raising the achievement of underprivileged children and, ultimately, closing achievement gaps based on race and income (Heckman et al., 2006). [This research] shows that educational interventions and initiatives that target these...factors can have transformative effects on students’ experience and achievement in school, improving core academic outcomes such as GPA and test scores months and even years later.”

The CORE districts have prioritized four competencies as an initial set to consider for inclusion in the SQII: growth mindset, self-efficacy, self-management, and social awareness. These four competencies were selected based on research about the importance, measurability, and actionability of each competency as well as the lived experience of educators within each district. We do not believe these four competencies represent a comprehensive list of the social-emotional factors that support students’ success in college, career, and life. As such, we encourage districts to continue exploring other constructs of interest, which CORE may consider for inclusion in the SQII or the CORE-wide formative data system in future years.

**Social-Emotional & Culture-Climate Domain – Social-Emotional Skills – Last updated September 24, 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SE Competency</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth Mindset</td>
<td>The belief that one’s abilities can grow with effort. Students with a growth mindset see effort as necessary for success, embrace challenges, learn from criticism, and persist in the face of setbacks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>The belief in one’s own ability to succeed in achieving an outcome or reaching a goal. Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one’s own motivation, behavior, and environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Management</td>
<td>The ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, delaying gratification, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward personal and academic goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Awareness</td>
<td>The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Why wasn’t grit included?**

“Grit,” which refers to perseverance and sustained interest in long-term goals, comes from the same family of constructs as “self-management,” which refers to the ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. In essence, grit is a longer-term measure of the same skills required for effective self-management. Self-management is both easier to measure and has a longer research base demonstrating its important in college, career, and life success. (See “What research shows that social-emotional competencies are important?”) In fact, Angela Duckworth and Stephanie Carlson describe in their 2013 publication that, of the various human traits that psychologists and economists study, self-management is the trait most reliably related to school success.²

**Measurement Method (in development)**

Students in grades five to twelve will be asked to self-report on a series of behaviors (e.g., coming to class prepared, following directions) and beliefs (e.g., whether it is more important to be talented or to put forth a lot of effort), that, taken together, have been validated as indicators of social-emotional skills.

These instruments were piloted in Spring 2014. Our plan is to conduct a CORE-wide field test of a refined set of items in Spring 2015, setting a baseline for inclusion in the Index starting with the measurement of these skills in Spring 2016. (Note that delaying inclusion of the Social Emotional Skills in the Index until the Spring 2016 administration will require an amendment to the CORE Waiver).

**Questions to consider**

1) Which of the 4 social-emotional skill areas that were piloted do you think are most important? If you had to choose two, which two would you choose to include in the index and why?

2) Do you feel you have a basic understanding of this metric?

3) In what ways can schools influence/have an impact on this metric?

4) In what ways could you envision using data from this metric to support school improvement?

5) In what ways does this metric provide meaningful information about how a school is supporting student achievement, school culture, or social emotional development?