LOCI

Literacy
Organizational
Capacity
Initiative

NORC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

A LEADER'S GUIDE TO TRAUMA-SENSITIVE SCHOOLS AND WHOLE-CHILD LITERACY

School, Home, and Community Working Together For **ALL** Children

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FOREWORD

The Literacy Organizational Capacity Initiative (LOCI) partners with individual schools, districts (from small rural to large urban), and state education departments to build capacity in educational systems for high quality teaching and learning. As our name suggests, our goal is to ensure that all students have the capacity to tackle personally meaningful reading and writing tasks that expand opportunities for college and career.

We do this by focusing on **THREE** things:

1. Alignment to standards coupled with whole-child engagement

High quality literacy teaching and learning is characterized both by its alignment to standards and tight link to short-cycle formative assessment and intervention. It engages the whole child and the whole community in the learning process. There's been an enormous amount of important and appropriate focus over the past decade on ensuring that states, schools and individual teachers have clear, measurable targets for learning. That they have the tools that allow them to assess students' acquisition of these learning goals in a way that allows them to quickly offer intervention and support such that all students, especially children of poverty and of color, are able to meet grade-level learning outcomes. Rather than excuses, which tend to blame families and children for failure, we as an educational community are shifting our attention to the ways that our instructional practices are failing students or the ways that struggling readers and writers could be characterized as "instructionally disabled" instead of personally disabled. We recognize that many teachers lack adequate opportunities for high quality professional learning and support and that our school systems tend to focus only on the cognitive dimensions of learning and not on the emotional and the culture and social. Learning is always situated in a local community in a particular time and place. It also, like all human activities, is highly emotional. Children who feel shamed by an activity, or come in to school scared, are not only "not ready to learn," but also unprepared for the kind of complex thinking processes that might be required in a moment. The attention to social emotional learning, whole school-whole community, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), trauma-sensitive schools reflects a body of research that examines the essential link in our brains between our emotions, experiences, and the way we think.

2. Professional development that supports system wide change

Effective, inquiry-based, job-embedded professional learning has become almost a mantra in the education field. Everyone says their professional development (PD) does all of this. Research on effective professional development (Darling-Hammond 2017) examines professional learning and the components that need to be in place to support system wide change. We have intentionally designed our school and district PD to align with these findings but also reflect the on-the-ground realities of the high poverty systems in which we work (teacher recruitment and transience challenges; rural school isolation and lack of internal literacy expertise; professional learning community structure but limited supports for how to use this time well; lack of clarity about how literacy coaching roles can support school wide change; plethora of assessments but teacher confusion about learning targets and measuring outcomes to support instructional action). We tackle these issues and the strategies we use with "literacy leaders" (principals, coaches, lead teachers, ELA directors) to create an interlocking system of supports for teachers in which a single focus for 6-8 weeks (organized in an inquiry cycle) allows teachers-as-learners to experience the gradual release model and "feel safe taking risks" in a process that builds school wide shared agreement about what good instruction looks like and how it is assessed.

3. Organizational conditions that support continuous improvement

Education systems must have the organizational conditions in place that are necessary to support continuous improvement processes, and leaders must have the skills and tools to balance collective accountability as well as individual ownership. We want systems where teachers feel safe taking risks and the organizational norms create coherence, alignment, and a clear focus on two or three things at the most to ensure the change both happens and is manageable.

This paper discusses these three areas in which LOCI works with a primary focus on developing "research-based" and effective instructional practices that support the cognitive, social emotional, and cultural dimensions of learning.

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INTRODUCTION

According to a 2017 nationwide survey of principals, attention to children's social emotional development is a top priority for schoolwide development (DePaoli, Atwell, & Bridgeland, 2017).This paper marries research with practice, providing practical guidance for implementation in a variety of contexts. This paper (a) examines the critical research around social emotional and provides a rationale for attention to these issues in schools who have a focus on student achievement; (b) examines the relationship between the implementation practices in this field (SEL, ACEs, trauma-sensitive schools); and, (c) provides a sampling of concrete strategies and practices that effectively integrate social and emotional learning (SEL) practices in literacy teaching and learning.
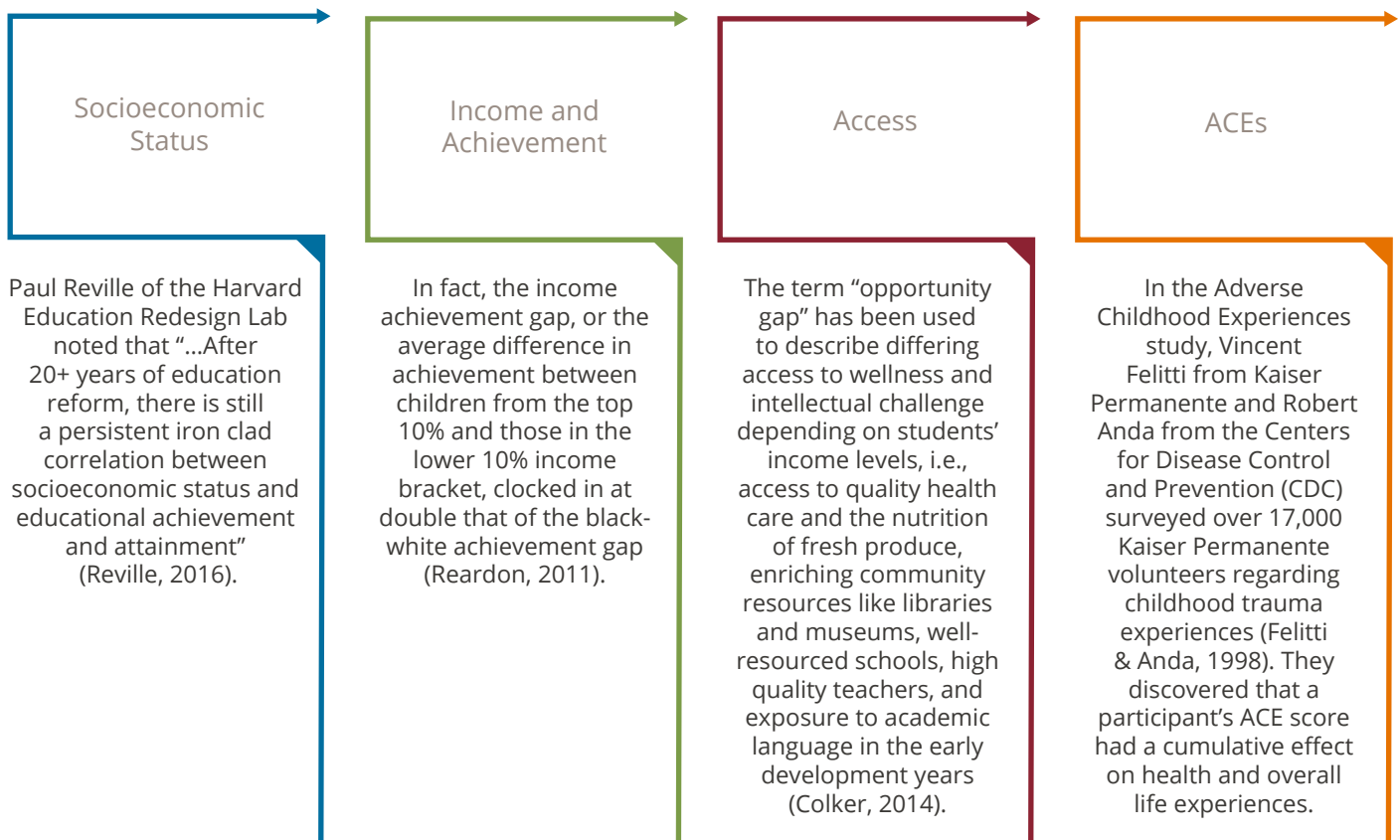
The Challenge before Us

With more than 10 years of nearly singular focus on academic press through the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) emphasis of No Child Left Behind (passed in 2002), there have been some advances in graduation rates and achievement, but the achievement gap has not narrowed significantly, especially for students of poverty and of color.

When considering these gaps in achievement, we must pay attention to the growing evidence of gaps in opportunity and to the growing body of knowledge about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Studies have shown that ACEs can have a cumulative effect on brain development, student performance, health, and overall life experiences.

Systems of opportunity and childhood experiences can feel daunting and out of our control. However, when we step back to take in the full picture, we begin to see how a more integrated and collaborative approach—one that addresses systemic factors as well as those closest to the classroom and the child—shows promise of impact. A shared space where community resources work together with school resources in the name of literacy learning.

ROOTED IN FACT

Socioeconomic Status	Income and Achievement	Access	ACEs
Paul Reville of the Harvard Education Redesign Lab noted that "...After 20+ years of education reform, there is still a persistent iron clad correlation between socioeconomic status and educational achievement and attainment" (Reville, 2016).	In fact, the income achievement gap, or the average difference in achievement between children from the top 10% and those in the lower 10% income bracket, clocked in at double that of the black-white achievement gap (Reardon, 2011).	The term "opportunity gap" has been used to describe differing access to wellness and intellectual challenge depending on students' income levels, i.e., access to quality health care and the nutrition of fresh produce, enriching community resources like libraries and museums, well-resourced schools, high quality teachers, and exposure to academic language in the early development years (Colker, 2014).	In the Adverse Childhood Experiences study, Vincent Felitti from Kaiser Permanente and Robert Anda from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) surveyed over 17,000 Kaiser Permanente volunteers regarding childhood trauma experiences (Felitti & Anda, 1998). They discovered that a participant's ACE score had a cumulative effect on health and overall life experiences.

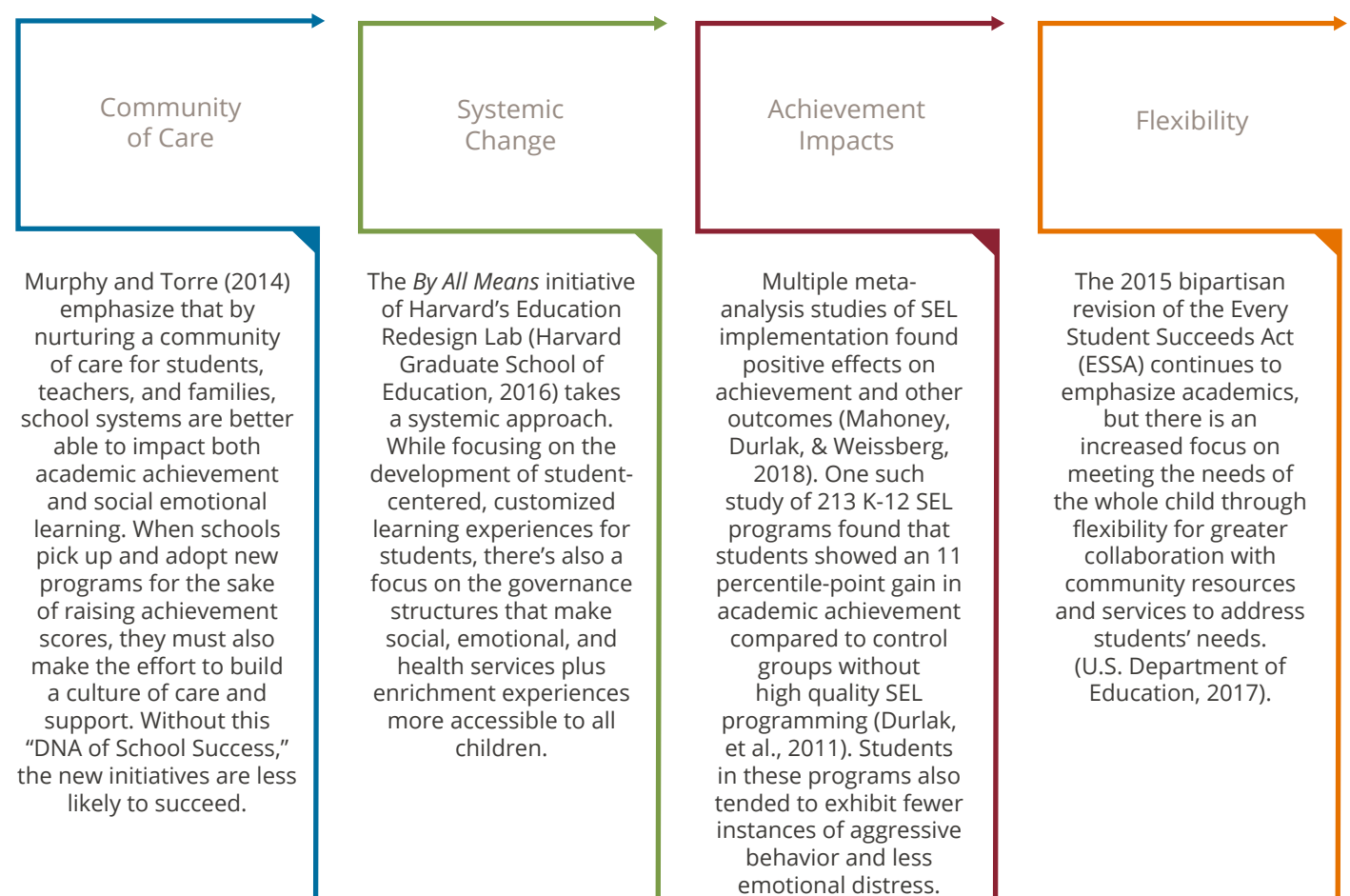# THE SOLUTION: Taking a Systems Approach to Educating the Whole Child

When we take a step back, we are better able to see the interlocking nature of teaching and learning as integrally linked to community, family, and experiences. This means that change cannot occur through isolated initiatives, but rather through a systemic approach that connects the whole child, the whole school, and the whole community. The ASCD (formerly Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development), in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control (2014), offers the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model to visualize the connected nature of school, family, and community—providing youth with access to health and wellness resources and instruction, safe environments to learn and play, impactful family-school partnerships, and youth workers and educators who have the support necessary to also find satisfaction, challenge, and wellness in their places of employment.

When focusing on the whole child, academics and SEL share the stage. Instruction that has a social emotional focus provides students with skills and strategies necessary to make sound decisions and to understand their self and others (2018b). The competencies we aim for students to know and apply are self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness (CASEL, 2018a). Students learn and practice these skills through the discussion of shared texts, collaborative problem solving, inquiry, and exploratory play. Academics don't get left behind when we focus on SEL. In fact, research increasingly demonstrates the positive impact a whole child focus has on achievement (Becker & Luthar, 2002).

The recent report "From a Nation at Risk to a Nation at Hope: Recommendations from the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (Aspen Institute, 2019) notes, "the promotion of social, emotional, and academic learning is not a shifting educational fad; it is the substance of education itself. It is not a distraction from the 'real work' of math and English instruction; it is how instruction can succeed." p. 1.

The report puts forth six Recommendations: 1. Set a clear vision that broadens the definition of student success to prioritize the whole child. 2. Transform learning settings so they are safe and supportive for all young people. 3. Change instruction to teach students social, emotional and academic skills; embed these skills in academics and in schoolwide practices. 4. Build adult expertise in child development. 5. Align resources and leverage partners in the community to address the whole child. 6. Forge closer connections between research and practice by shifting the paradigm for how research gets done.

ROOTED IN FACT

Community of Care	Systemic Change	Achievement Impacts	Flexibility
Murphy and Torre (2014) emphasize that by nurturing a community of care for students, teachers, and families, school systems are better able to impact both academic achievement and social emotional learning. When schools pick up and adopt new programs for the sake of raising achievement scores, they must also make the effort to build a culture of care and support. Without this "DNA of School Success," the new initiatives are less likely to succeed.	The *By All Means* initiative of Harvard's Education Redesign Lab (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2016) takes a systemic approach. While focusing on the development of student-centered, customized learning experiences for students, there's also a focus on the governance structures that make social, emotional, and health services plus enrichment experiences more accessible to all children.	Multiple meta-analysis studies of SEL implementation found positive effects on achievement and other outcomes (Mahoney, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2018). One such study of 213 K-12 SEL programs found that students showed an 11 percentile-point gain in academic achievement compared to control groups without high quality SEL programming (Durlak, et al., 2011). Students in these programs also tended to exhibit fewer instances of aggressive behavior and less emotional distress.	The 2015 bipartisan revision of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) continues to emphasize academics, but there is an increased focus on meeting the needs of the whole child through flexibility for greater collaboration with community resources and services to address students' needs. (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

THE INTERSECTIONS OF ACEs, SEL, AND TRAUMA SENSITIVE SCHOOLS

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study described above demonstrated the impact that ACEs have on health and cognitive development. The trauma-sensitive schools movement aligns with the whole child, whole community focus to address the impact of ACEs on student learning and well-being. Trauma-sensitive schools build a culture of support for all students, include resources from the external community, implement specific classroom practices to build relationships and a safe classroom culture, and teach specific strategies for building resilience and developing executive function skills. These are all well-grounded examples of social emotional learning integrated in instructional practices. We want to emphasize that this is not an add on, but is a culture shift that integrates with the ongoing curriculum and classroom practices.

Schoolwide emphasis on knowing and caring for the child, and what they are dealing with inside and outside of school is how we get better at addressing the needs of students who have experienced high concentrations of ACEs. Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, a pioneer pediatrician and leading face of the trauma movement highlights the importance of incorporating trauma-sensitive practice into all areas of our work, 'I believe that when we each find the courage to look this problem in the face, we will have the power to transform not only our health, but our world" (2018, p.222). As more educators have become aware of the research on ACEs, there has been a groundswell movement on learning more about the research and its implications for improving educational practices to move toward a culture of trauma-sensitive schools and providing students with the tools for resilience in the face of adversity.

CLARIFYING TERMINOLOGY

TERM	AREA OF FOCUS
Social Emotional Learning (SEL)	"**Process** through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply 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, 2018b).
Trauma-Sensitive Schools	"A **safe and respectful environment** that enables students to build caring **relationships** with adults and peers, self-regulate their emotions and behaviors, and **succeed academically**, while supporting their **physical health and well-being**" (Lesley University & Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative, 2012).
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	"Stressful or traumatic events, including abuse and neglect...witnessing domestic violence or growing up with family members who have substance abuse disorders. ACEs are strongly related to the development and prevalence of a wide range of **health problems** throughout a person's lifespan. When children are exposed to chronic stressful events, their neurodevelopment can be disrupted. As a result, the child's **cognitive functioning** and/or ability to cope with negative or disruptive **emotions** may be impaired." (p.1, SAMHSA, 2018).
Resilience	"Process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress...Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone" (American Psychological Association, 2018).

STRATEGIES FOR LEADERS OF WHOLE CHILD, TRAUMA-SENSITIVE SCHOOLS

The Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative, based out of the Harvard Education Law Center and in collaboration with the Massachusetts Advocates for Children provides a planning and assessment framework for schools to use in planning for the integration of trauma-sensitive routines throughout the school day. This is not only useful for meeting the unique needs of children with high ACES scores, but this work is good for all children and all schools. Why? Because in the end, this is about developing a culture that holds a better understanding of each individual child, of building their social and emotional awareness, and of focusing on their whole selves. This includes the parts of the child that have, in the past, been allowed to hide in the shadows and be ignored. This framework reflects an understanding of how schools build their capacity to adapt to change, to be a learning community, and to build partnerships with the external community to meet needs of students.

The *Flexible Framework for Trauma-Sensitive Schools* focuses on six, interrelated aspects of school structures that are necessary to shift classroom and school practices as a system:

1. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC STRATEGIES
View children holistically. Their physical and psychological well-being, relationships, and self-management are all connected to their academic learning.

2. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES
Engage families in all aspects of their children's education. Families should feel welcome at school and know the importance of their role.

3. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES
Identify and coordinate with social, emotional, and physical health services and other support or enrichment organizations.

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Provide educators and service providers with opportunities to build the skills and capacity to meet the needs of the whole child.

5. LEADERSHIP
Lead in a manner that provides the infrastructure and climate necessary to support the shifting practices necessary to be a trauma-sensitive, whole child school and community

6. POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS
Review the everyday policies and protocols of the school. Assure their alignment to a whole school, whole child, trauma-sensitive environment.

We believe that these six components of the Flexible Framework call for a three-pronged focus:

CURRICULUM attending to both academic and non-academic strategies

PARTNERSHIPS with family and community

LEADERSHIP facilitating the alignment of school culture, policies, and practices

CURRICULUM: Attention to academic and non-academic strategies

The Flexible Framework for Trauma-Sensitive Schools calls on the best of whole child strategies to meet the needs of ALL children. Classroom strategies revolve around knowing each child individually—knowing their strengths and their weaknesses, both academically and in non-academic areas like social skills, mindfulness, creativity and curiosity. Strategies include clear communication, establishing predictable routines, and providing safe spaces for all students to build relationships and express emotions honestly and with self-regulation. High impact literacy practices provide rich opportunities for learning and practicing the non-academic and the academic simultaneously.

Trauma-sensitive schools provide an environment where all students are known and cared for. **Relationships** are key to building resilience.

- Define a plan for every student to receive one-on-one, positive attention from staff members. Try the Two-by-Ten strategy (McKibben, 2014) of dedicating two minutes a day for ten days to focused, non-school conversation with a student. Discussions of life outside of school allows students to feel seen and heard, and literacy skills are also built through daily discourse.

- Use interest inventories. Responses should be used and reused throughout the year to regularly align text selection, discussion questions, and student projects to topics of interest for the students. Plenty of examples are available online. Three Smeken's Educational Solutions (2011) provides a few age appropriate samples to get you started.

- Select texts with careful attention to who is represented in the texts and who isn't. Provide students with opportunities to see themselves within the texts and the curriculum. The We Need Diverse Books initiative (2019) has produced a number of useful resources for finding texts to best fit your student population.

- Designate space for a Community Wall. This might be a bulletin board or a blank wall used to provide an interactive forum for sharing the class's experiences and work. Samples of work, resources, pictures, projects can be added daily, and these artifacts become recognition of student learning and focal points for ongoing discussion with students, teachers, and families. Cotsen Foundation's (2012) Teaching Fellow, Chris Wilson, developed this community wall throughout the year as they used primary sources to investigate questions of power and social change. This timeline provided a collective and public reflection of the vibrant community within the classroom.

Trauma-sensitive schools spend time on teaching and learning social emotional competencies. **SEL** is key to building resilience.

- Select texts containing sufficient depth to engage in discussions of social and emotional characteristics and problem solving used by the characters. This list of "must-have picture books" (Moran, 2017) to teach SEL strategies provide a good starting point. Also, biographies of relevant and engaging individuals provide rich opportunities for these types of discussions while also integrating with other aspects of the curriculum.

- Establish routines for focused time spent on SEL. Many classrooms hold class meetings, providing students with opportunities to express worries and collectively problem solve. When planning for SEL sessions, consider how academic standards can be woven into the experience. For example, use one of the books from the list above to kick-start conversation or plan for think-pair-share opportunities that engage students in strengthening their speaking and listening skills. This video of how Mission Hill School in Boston (Valens & Valens, 2014) begins a new school year provides multiple examples of class and school meetings focused on building social emotional skills.

- Implement restorative practices to provide students with tools to identify and work through problems together. Restorative practices enhance a combination of SEL skills and executive function through community building and conflict resolution (Schott Foundation, 2014).

- Insure that SEL instruction balances an inward focus on self with an outward focus on community and the well-being of others. "SEL, when it is taught right, is enhanced with character education and explicit teaching of the values of democracy: fairness, honesty, integrity, appreciation for differences, and equity" (Ray, 2018). The Social Justice Standards from Teaching Tolerance (2016) provide a useful framework for engaging students at all levels in developing awareness and advocacy for justice, diversity, and equity.

Trauma sensitive schools facilitate the development of executive function and self-regulation. These are the "mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully" (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard, 2017). **Executive function and self-regulation** is key to building resilience.

- Teach and practice mindfulness in the classroom. Students learn to be fully present and aware of what they're feeling, and then how to moderate their feelings and reactions. Practicing mindfulness while also expanding the vocabulary students can draw from to both express how they are feeling and identify what they need in order to avoid overwhelm are just two examples of how to address both academic and non-academic outcomes. The Positive Psychology Program (2017) provides a rich selection of resources for mindfulness practices for students of all ages.

- Incorporate regular opportunities for students to move. Physical movement aids brain development and cognition (Diamond & Lee, 2011; Center for Disease Control, 2010). Movement also provides rest from cognitive focus and the ability to redirect thought patterns (2016). Brain breaks as described by Dr. Judy Willis introduce novelty which moves brain activity to a new part of the brain, and this in turn allows the previously used area of the brain to rest and rejuvenate. Acting out a character from a book or tossing a beach ball around the room as each student contributes new ideas to a single shared story are just two examples of how brain break movement and literacy can walk hand in hand.

- Play games that require the following of instructions, turn-taking, and strategizing. These practices help students become more adept at goal setting and staying focused. The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2014) provides a list of age appropriate activities to lead a child from infancy through adolescence, strengthening their abilities to set goals and assess progress toward those goals.

PARTNERSHIPS: Connect schools with family and community assets

Partnering with families in ways that are truly collaborative is something that takes concerted effort. School settings need to move beyond efforts to get families to attend events and celebration or to do school at home, and move toward two-way relationships where families are viewed as holders of expertise in the relationship. Families should feel welcome at school and their important role in their child's education should be affirmed and celebrated.

Family engagement is a staple of whole child teaching and learning, but one of the most difficult to integrate into practice. The US Department of Education calls for schools to spend less time on low-impact strategies like newsletters, celebrations, and showcase events; and spend more time and energy on relationship building and shared family-school focus on meeting academic goals (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Working on high impact strategies for partnering with families is an essential component of trauma-sensitive schools.

- As described in the academic and non-academic resources section, the Community Wall and other showcase opportunities for students to share their work and knowledge is a great way to get families in the door.
- Select a curricular focus on topics close to the lives of the students. This provides rich opportunities for family members to share their expertise and experiences with the whole classroom. For example, the book, "Momma, Where are You From?" by Marie Bradby provides a great text to launch a family interview or podcast project (Gardner, 2019).
- Provide family trainings in practices similar to those that teachers are using in classrooms. This raises family status to a shared level of importance and expertise as they receive similar training and practice on topics such as how to engage in conversation or ask higher-order-thinking questions (Simon, 2019) about a shared text or experience.
- Provide opportunities for students and family members to do joint projects, both at a school event or at home—e.g. an art project related to a book they read together or following a recipe to make a share a family or cultural tradition.

Leaders who are committed to addressing the whole child also spend time and resources to build partnerships with external service and health organizations. When we truly hold the whole child at the core of the work we do, no single service agency can do it alone. No matter the community, children come to school with needs that fall outside the realm of schools alone. This is especially true when we consider ACEs and its impact on student learning. When students come to school with a toothache because they lack access to the dentist or a student is hungry because her last meal was the school lunch she ate the day before, these students are not in a position to fully engage and learn. Similarly, due to poverty and access, many students have limited access to enriching opportunities such as museums or nature preserves. If, however, we take a whole child, whole community stance, then as a school system, we will find ways to collaborate with the individuals and agencies who can address these unmet needs.

- Consider the assets in the local community that could contribute to the strength of your literacy efforts. What other individuals, organizations, and agencies have an interest or a structure in place to provide expanded opportunities for practice with SEL strategies, executive function, reading, speaking, and listening?
- Provide librarians, Sunday school teachers, and day care providers with literacy and SEL strategies such as open ended questioning, conducting interactive read-alouds, and specific ways they can integrate social emotional learning in their work.
- Partner with colleges, universities, and cultural centers to provide access to enrichment opportunities that might not be available otherwise, such as access to fine art or research laboratories for expanded art, science, technology, and engineering experiences. These institutions could also be a source of professional development for teachers.
- Coordinate work between the medical and education community to meet the needs of the whole child, such as offering dental, vision, and preventative health services at school during school days. The Partnership for Resilience offers a good example of what this looks like in practice (Jayaraman, Lenz, Peterson, & Bannor, 2018).

LEADERSHIP: Facilitating the alignment of school culture, policies, and practices

When taking a child-centered approach, the teacher's community must also be addressed. The need for care, trust, belonging, and empowerment is necessary for teacher professional learning. This whole teacher perspective is well-represented within Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning.

Learning Forward Standards

Standards for Professional Learning

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students...	**LEARNING COMMUNITIES** ...occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility and goal alignment.	**LEADERSHIP** ...requires skillful leaders who develop capacity advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.	**RESOURCES** ...requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.
DATA ...uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.	**LEARNING DESIGNS** ...integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.	**IMPLEMENTATION** ...applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.	**OUTCOMES** ...aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

Teachers should have access to the same supports that we want for learners in our classes: clear and focused targets, plenty of opportunities for modeling and guided practice before independent expertise is expected; attention to the social and emotional dimension of learning and risk-taking; balance of accountability for growth with individual decision making and ownership, and alignment of priorities and focus so that teachers are working on mastering one new thing and not twenty. High quality, job-embedded, and continuous professional development is a core component of high quality literacy and social emotional learning instruction in trauma-sensitive schools.

- Consider multiple sources of evidence when identifying the professional learning focus including student achievement data, teacher reported needs and interests, observations of instructional practice, and ongoing initiatives already in place.

- Set school day, week, and year schedules to allow for frequent, collaborative professional learning. The Plan-Do-Study-Act model for teacher inquiry provides a structure for teachers to strengthen the ties between SEL and literacy in their instructional practices (Moen, Nolan, & Provost, 1991).

[1]Standards. (n.d.). Retrieved December 16, 2018, from https://learningforward.org/standards

PLAN:	DO:
• Define the change that needs to occur. What evidence exists that this change is needed? • Make predictions about what will happen as a result of the change. • Design a way to measure the change on an appropriate scale. Exit tickets or running records might be useful data sources.	• Carry out the change. • Document how the change was implemented. Consider video recordings or peer observations. • Collect data using the measures defined in the Plan.
STUDY:	**ACT:**
• Analyze the data as a team. • Compare what actually happened to what was predicted. • Discuss insights that should inform the next cycle.	• Decide what to do next based on what was learned. **Common possibilities include:** • Abandon the idea and move on to a different evidence-informed change. • Make adjustments to this change. • Take this change to scale.

It is impossible for meaningful and sustainable change to occur without strong leadership that strives to build collective capacity. The leadership in schools plays a vital role in setting the tone, influencing the culture, and ensuring that the structures and resources needed for successful shifts in practice are available (Habbeger, 2008; Murphy & Torre, 2014). The Leader's Guide to Building Instructional Capacity (Nelson & Dunsmore, 2018) addresses these ideas in greater depth.

- Leadership should hold shared agreements about what success looks like. If they don't, then new practices embedded in classrooms could be interpreted differently during evaluative observations.
- Leaders participate side-by-side with teachers in professional development and in collaborative teams.
- Capacity-driven leaders share and nurture leadership in others, not just within the principal's office.
- Leaders establish a culture of trust and safety rather than a carrot and stick model of accountability.

Lastly, leaders are critically aware of the larger system of policies, structures, and protocols impacting efforts to implement trauma-informed practices. Policies and procedures can be more or less responsive to the whole child and their needs. Also, at times, the policies and protocols of a school can get in the way of efforts to try new things in the classrooms. When taking the time to build a trauma-sensitive school focused on seamlessly integrating SEL and literacy teaching and learning, it's the perfect opportunity to identify practices that are getting in the way of whole child, whole school, whole community environment. Structures for critique might include:

- Discipline and management systems
- Student recognition practices
- Grading protocols
- Participation and selection processes
- Communication with families
- Student self-monitoring and empowerment
- Classroom environment and use of physical space
- Teacher evaluation or school accountability measures
- Inclusion practices and identification of support services for student needs
- Contractual working conditions

We do not recommend addressing all of these structures simultaneously or alone. Pick one or two for in depth inquiry by a collaborative team of teachers, administrators, and staff. The District Framework and framework aligned Priority Setting Questionnaire available from CASEL's (2017) District Resource Center are useful tools for assessing current status and deciding where to begin. The Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle is just as useful for this process of critique and remodeling as it is for teacher professional learning.

Susan Craig's (2016, 2017) books on building trauma sensitive schools at both the elementary and adolescent levels provide excellent insights and strategies for both administrators and teachers.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The paradigm shift toward becoming a whole-child, trauma-sensitive school may seem daunting, but the science of ACEs and resilience compels us to embrace the whole child, whole community work of social emotional learning sooner than later. The evidence is clear. SEL embedded in the curriculum makes a difference in student achievement, health and well-being, behavior, and more (CASEL, 2018c). Again, this does not mean SEL instruction occurs at the expense of academic or literacy achievement. Instead, it's an integrated focus, where literacy instruction provides the vehicle for achieving SEL outcomes and vice versa. The above strategies provide multiple options for how to wade into the waters of this change.

We want to close by emphasizing three important factors to increase the likelihood of success:

- Focus on a narrow set of topics or strategies. This aligns with Joseph Murphy's (2013) Principle of Parsimony, "In the world of school improvement, a handful of things done well is always better than a big bag of interventions" (p. 70).
- Change takes time and focused attention. You can't expect quality implementation of new strategies to be taken up and put into practice well within short periods of time. It requires focused time and attention. A coherent plan for implementation efforts that includes a constant cycle of plan-do-study-act-repeat helps to maintain a focus on a narrow set of goals while continuing to move practice forward. Michael Fullan (2001) refers to this as "slow knowing" which means absorbing the disturbances that occur during implementation to then tease out new patterns to inform next steps.
- Be mindful of your moral purpose before undergoing any change process (Fullan, 2001).

For us, that moral purpose of meeting the whole child, whole school, and whole community targets is imperative. To do this well, relationships are key, as is coherence. Go slow and go together.

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. ~African proverb

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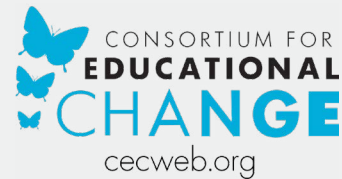## REFERENCES

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> ## We don't just want to do good work. We want to do impactful work. Our job as partners is to guide and support leaders and teachers on a path that builds on local aspects when designing learning systems that leverages collective capacity for change and improved outcomes for students.

–Dr. KaiLonnie Dunsmore, LOCI founder and principal research scientist at NORC at The University of Chicago

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LOCI Literacy Organizational Capacity Initiative
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Partnership For Resilience

CONSORTIUM FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE
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Get in Touch

We'd love to explore how LOCI can help your organization realize ongoing change.

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