

# Embedding SEL in 6-12 Virtual Learning: A State-wide Model for Teacher-Centered Change

Presenter:

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QM Connect Conference

Nov 2-5, 2025



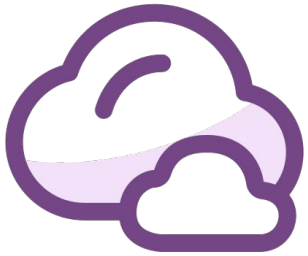
**North Carolina**  
**Virtual Public School**

# Session Objectives

Explore strategies to embed SEL in organizational culture that supports teacher and student success.

Design flexible professional learning balancing required training with teacher choice for diverse needs.

Discover how SEL skills empower teachers to build connected, supportive, and collaborative virtual classrooms.



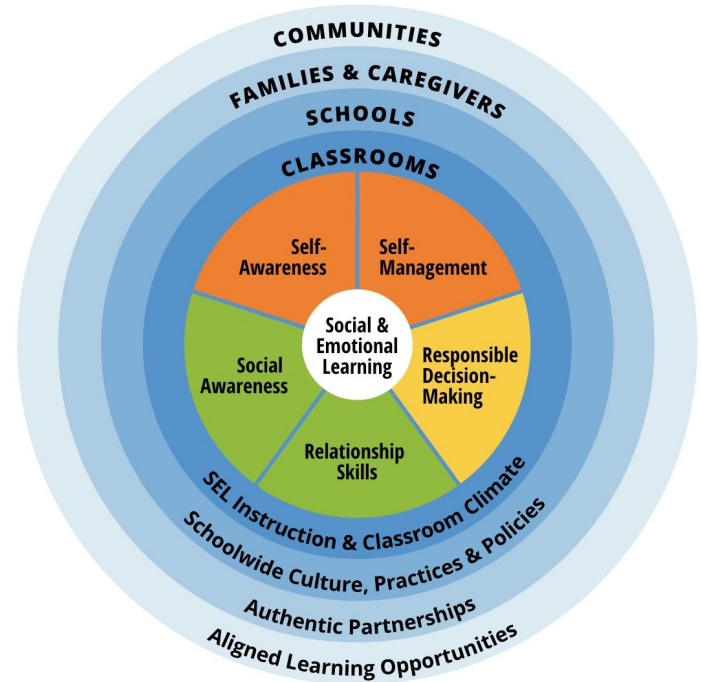
**When you hear "SEL,"  
what's the first word that  
comes to mind?**



# Social Emotional Learning: CASEL Framework

## Competencies

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making



# Why Social Emotional Learning?

## SEL leads to improved academic achievement

Supportive relationships and SEL learning:

- increase SEL skills, attitudes, prosocial behaviors, and academic achievement
- decrease conduct problems and emotional distress
- increased students' academic performance by **11 percentile points**, compared to students who did not participate.
- positive impact on academics lasts long-term: Years after students participated in SEL, their academic performance was an average of **13 percentile points** higher than students who didn't participate.

# Social Emotional Learning

SEL develops skills that promote future readiness & wellness

Students with stronger social and emotional skills are more likely to reach milestones including:

- High school graduation
- Post secondary education
- stable employment

SEL is effective across cultural contexts

SEL benefits adults



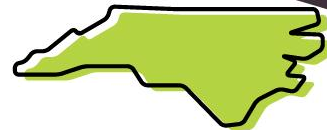
# About Us.

## North Carolina Virtual Public School

# A Closer Look



Established in **2007** to ensure equity and access  
for **all** North Carolina students



We are a supplemental program, serving public, home, and private school students

From our opening in 2007,  
until the present,

**872,264**

students have enrolled with us.

That amounts to

**55,000+**

student enrollments

**1,151**

Schools served in  
2024-2025



**135+**

Courses  
offered

**100**

QM certified  
courses



**700+**

Highly Qualified,  
NC Certified teachers  
per semester.

**115**

Districts

**123**

Charters

**246**

Non-Public

**Schools supported 2024-2025**

# The NCVPS Journey

Phase 1: Promoting SEL awareness in full-time staff	Starting Aug 2020
Phase 2: Professional Development for Teachers (choice + required)	2022-2025 Aug
Phase 3: Teacher-led research & sharing	2025-on.....



# Phase 1: Promoting SEL awareness in full-time staff

- Introducing SEL framework to our staff
  - Mapping message
  - Providing professional learning through webinars and resources
- Incorporating into culture. Building SEL opportunities into our staff, department, and teacher meetings.
- Clearly stating organizational values.
- Focus on teacher wellbeing.
- More opportunities for teachers/teams to connect.
  - Teacher Newsletter
  - 15 year meetups
  - Teacher Lounge
  - IL and CL Lounge
- Listening to Teacher Voice

We nurture learners' overall wellbeing by offering **opportunities** that support their **social and emotional learning**.

## Phase 2: Professional Development for Teachers

594 teachers completed at least 10 hours of PD around SEL.

- Setting the stage
  - Alignment with NC Professional Teaching Standards
  - Sharing of Evidence based research
  - Starting with teacher leaders/advocates
- Providing teachers with professional development opportunities.
  - Facilitated course
  - Self-paced course
  - Webinars
- Providing teacher resources (SEL prompt bank, teacher page etc.)
- Adding to Teacher Training
- Gave them 2 years to complete training

We have standards to address and a curriculum to teach. But we also have a service to our students to help them thrive socially and emotionally. Taking this SEL PD gave me insight into how I could address the whole child, not just teach the subject matter.

**NCVPS Teacher**

# Phase 3: Teacher Research and continuing support

## **SEL in Content Area Webinars**

A six-month “SEL in Content Areas” webinar series to deepen understanding of SEL competencies. Teachers linked SEL to student skills like time management, communication, and collaboration, and created shared prompts and reflections to enhance instruction.

## **Action Research Professional Learning Series**

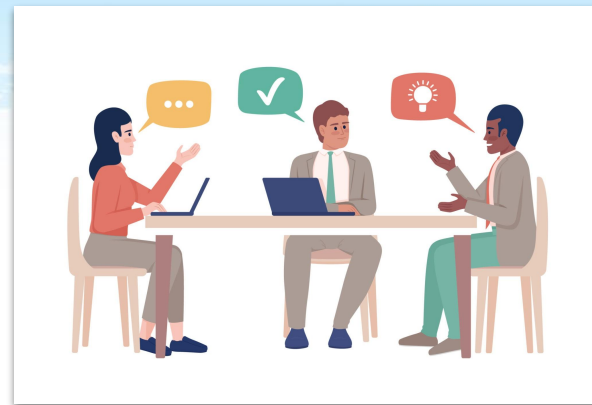
11 teacher leaders participated in a Action Research Cohort that spanned 6 months. Participants designed research questions and data collection methods to determine how the SEL Competency would impact student performance.

### **Example of Action Research: Students engaging with announcements**

- I found that 80% preferred written feedback over video/audio feedback. However, on the end of course teacher evaluation, 100% of students who commented on feedback said that the video/audio feedback was the most helpful for learning and resubmissions. Based on this information, I will continue to use a combination of feedback options/tools for student assignments.
- For next steps, I will continue to have a daily “Thought of the Day” and I will put more “mini videos”; talking to students about the weekly concepts/objectives; which will increase SEL involvement by asking students to respond to questions in video.

# Table Talk #1

**What strategies can help to embed SEL into an organization to support teacher and student success?**



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QR code to access the Canva Whiteboard to add table talk thoughts.



## Strategies that help in implementation

- Align SEL with organizational vision and goals.
- Build awareness and buy in in organization leadership
- Integrate SEL into existing practices like staff meetings, PLCs, and coaching cycles rather than adding separate initiatives.
- Share research based evidence for implementation
- Include teacher leaders as advocates
- Provide plenty of resources. Provide continuous follow-up and coaching.
- Allow for differentiation
- Give plenty of time

## Next Steps

- Provide continuous follow-up and coaching. Offer more opportunities for practice, feedback, and reflection over time.
- Use data to inform and celebrate progress.
- Share success stories to maintain momentum.

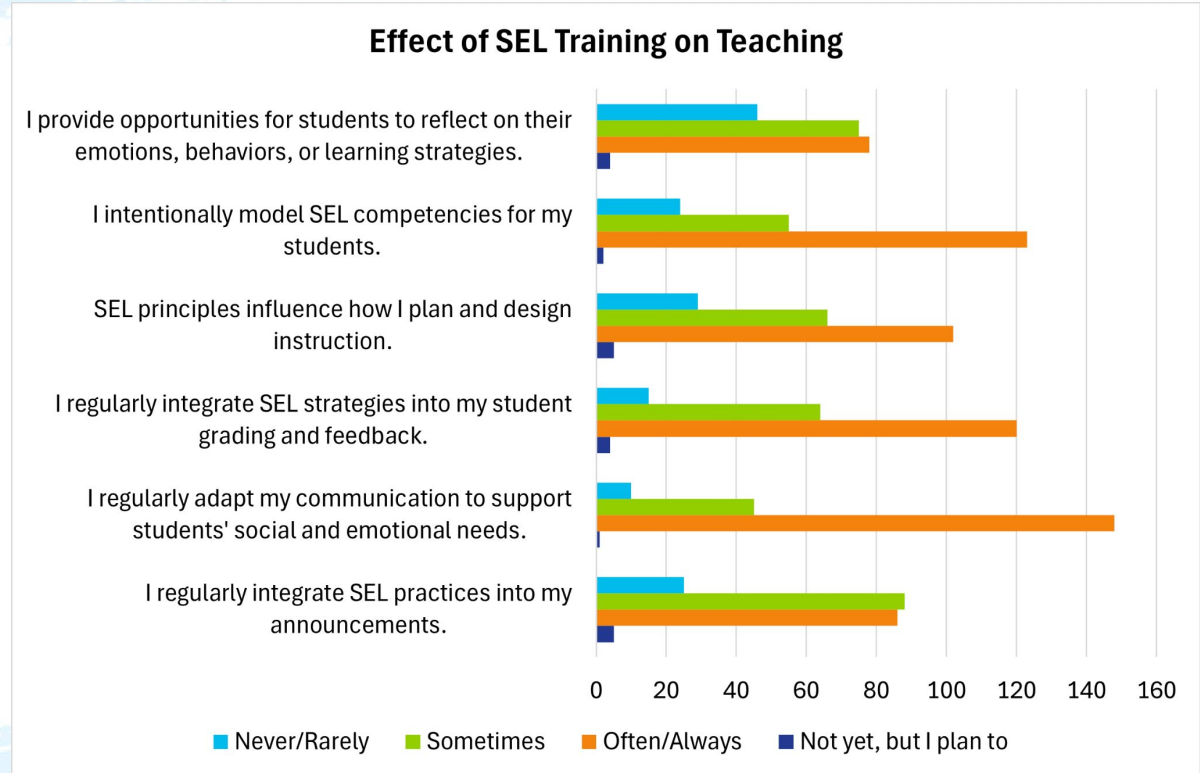
# Measuring Impact



# Impact on Teaching and Students' experiences, and teacher professional growth.

Survey Results; n=219 , 37%

## Effect on Teaching



“Please share one specific example of how you’ve incorporated SEL practices into your virtual classroom this year”

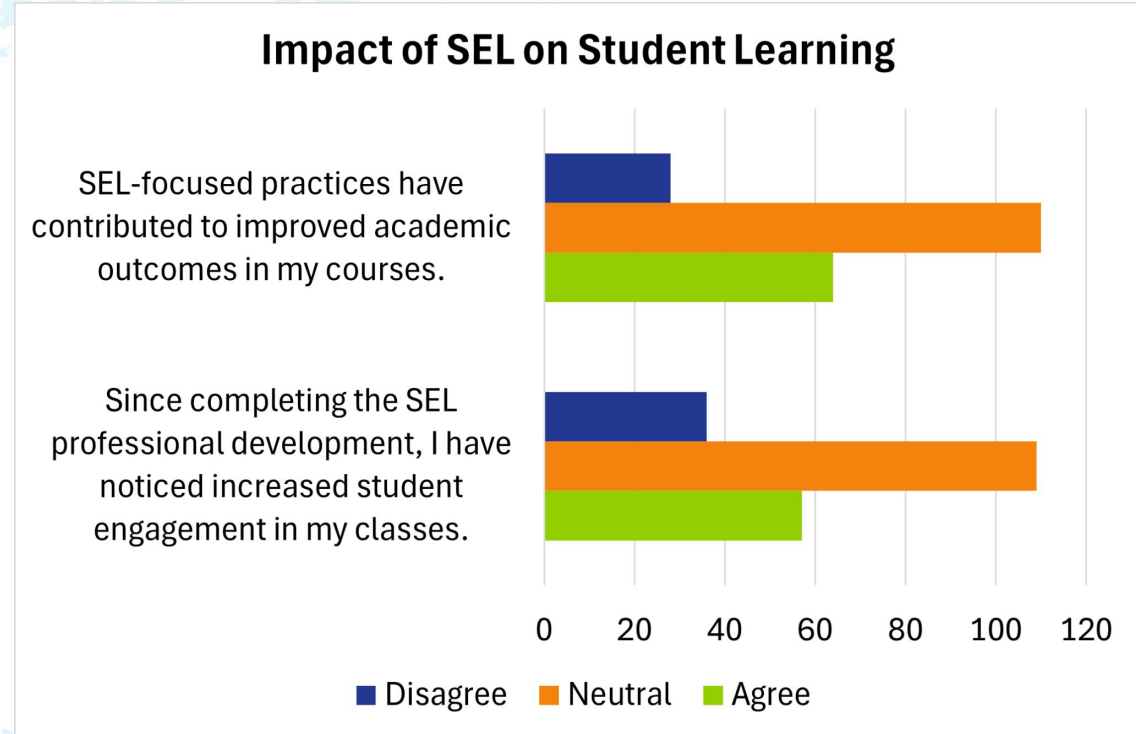
## Examples of SEL practices

- **Announcements including SEL content**
  - Daily/weekly announcements with affirmations, wellness checks, inspirational quotes, questions, growth mindset messages, self-care reminders, or personal reflections. (“Thought of the Day,” “Wellness Wednesday,” “Mindful Moments,” “Shout-outs,” etc.)
- **Positive, encouraging, and personalized feedback**
  - Feedback focused on strengths, effort, and growth; used positive tone; acknowledged emotions; provided motivational or reflective comments
- **Communication and check-ins via Canvas messages or emails**
  - Personalized messages asking students how they’re doing, encouraging responses about their feelings, lives, or stressors; open, ongoing communication
- **Student reflection and self-awareness activities**
  - Prompts or journaling questions encouraging reflection on emotions, stress, motivation, or learning habits; goal-setting exercises.
- **Building relationships and showing empathy/flexibility**
  - Teachers adjusted deadlines, showed understanding for student challenges, used compassionate communication, and worked to reduce stress.





## Impact on Student Learning

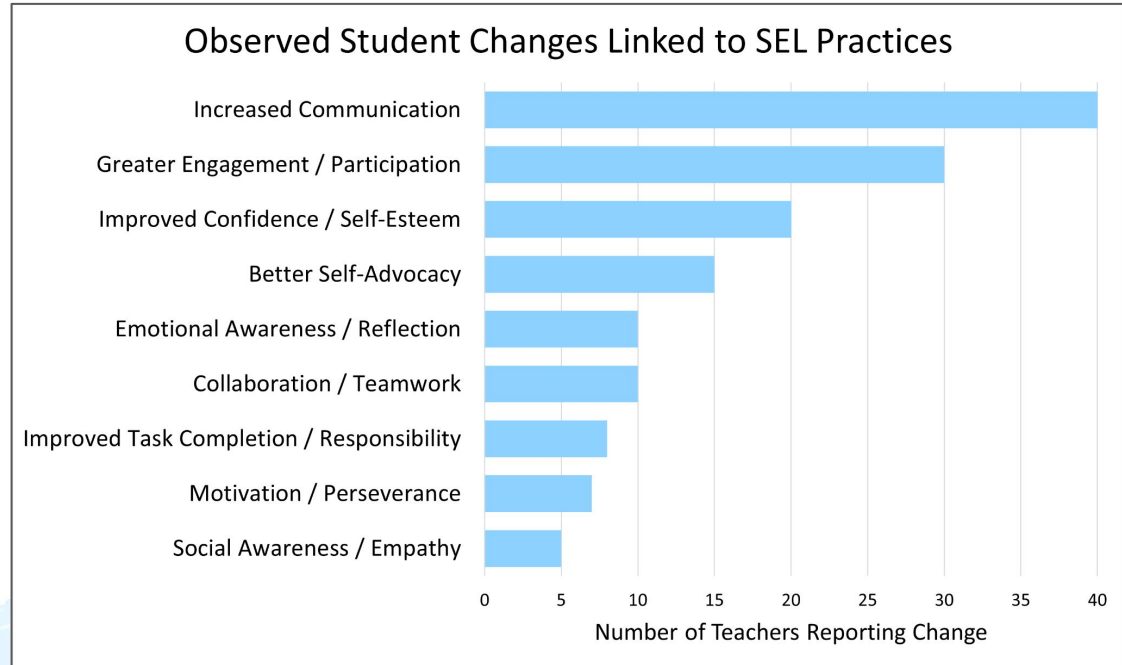


## Impact on Student Learning: Observed Changes

Describe one change you've observed in your students that you believe is linked to SEL practices.

About 29% of teachers reported little or no observable change in students linked to SEL practices.

About 71% reported seeing positive changes such as increased engagement, communication, confidence, or self-awareness.



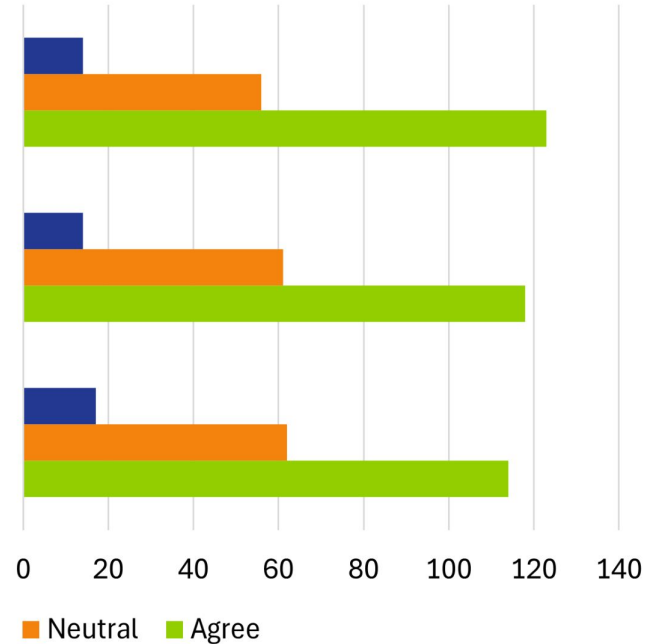
## Impact on Teacher

### Impact of SEL Training on Teacher

SEL principles have positively influenced how I interact with people.

I feel more confident building relationships and fostering a sense of belonging in a virtual environment.

The SEL professional learning has influenced my overall teaching philosophy.



## Impact on Teacher:Biggest Impact

What is the biggest impact this training has had on you?

Little or no impact: 17%

### Increased Awareness of SEL/Student Emotions

more aware of students' feelings, needs, and emotional states; many mentioned "awareness," "being more mindful," or "understanding the whole student."

### More Intentional/Reflective Practice

Teachers now consciously plan or teach with SEL in mind; they consider tone, empathy, and the whole learner; e.g., "I plan with SEL first," "I think before giving feedback."

### Improved Communication / Empathy / Tone

Increased use of empathetic, positive, and encouraging communication in messages, feedback, and grading.

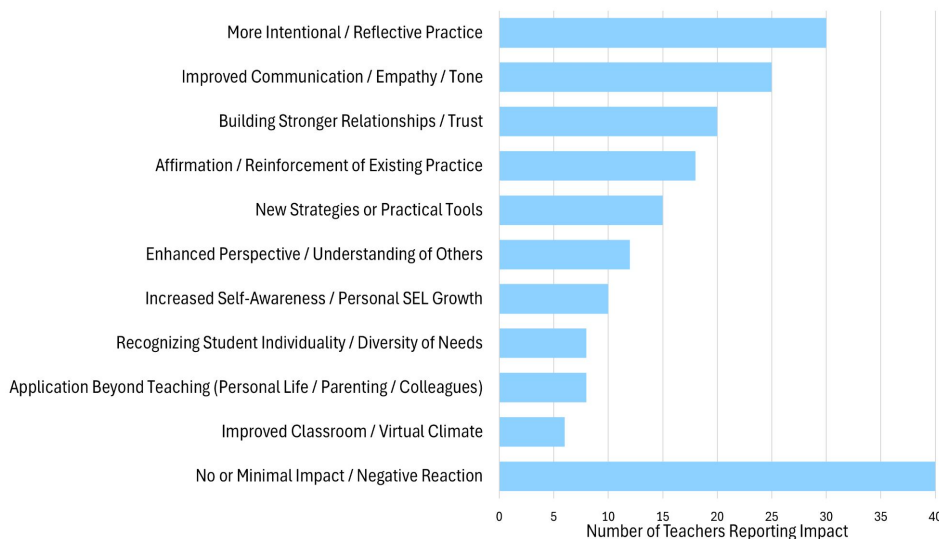
### Building Stronger Relationships / Trust

Greater effort to connect personally with students and foster belonging.

### Affirmation / Reinforcement of Existing Practice

Teachers said the PD confirmed or validated what they were already doing ("I was already practicing SEL," "reaffirmed my approach")

Impact of SEL PD on Teachers



## Table Talk #2

**What impact have you seen or hope to see of SEL programs in your organization?**



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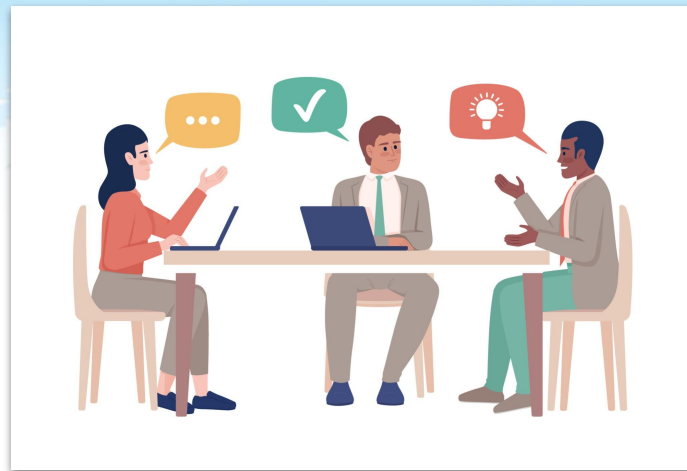
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## Table Talk #3

How can we measure the impact of PD initiatives on Student learning?



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# Thank you

