

A review of school-based programs to promote students' social and emotional learning: Positive results and their implications for future research, practice and policy

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- “...promoting social, emotional, and behavioral well-being is an integral part of a child’s healthy development”

Surgeon General’s Conference on Child Mental Health, 2000.

What is social and emotional learning (SEL)?

➤ IN GENERAL:

-process for helping children, adolescents, or adults develop the fundamental skills for success in life.

➤ How to handle effectively and ethically:

- 1. Ourselves: feelings, thoughts, needs, and behaviors
- 2. Our relationships: getting along well with others
- 3. Our school/work: meeting developmental challenges and tasks

➤ www.CASEL.org

SEL Key Components

Self-Awareness

Identification and recognition of one's own emotions, recognition of strengths in self and others, sense of self-efficacy, and self-confidence.

Social Awareness

Empathy, respect for others, and perspective taking.

Responsible Decision Making

Evaluation and reflection, and personal and ethical responsibility.

Self-Management

Impulse control, stress management, persistence, goal setting, and motivation.

Relationship Skills

Cooperation, help seeking and providing, and communication.

Expected Benefits from SEL Interventions

- Youth will be able to:
 - 1. Manage their emotions and behaviors appropriately
 - 2. Develop caring and concern for others
 - 3. Learn how to work effectively with others (adults and peers)
 - 4. Establish positive relationships with others (adults and peers)
 - 5. Make responsible decisions
 - 6. Handle challenging situations
 - 7. Do better in school

- Can children learn important life skills?

YES!



Method

➤ Include if:

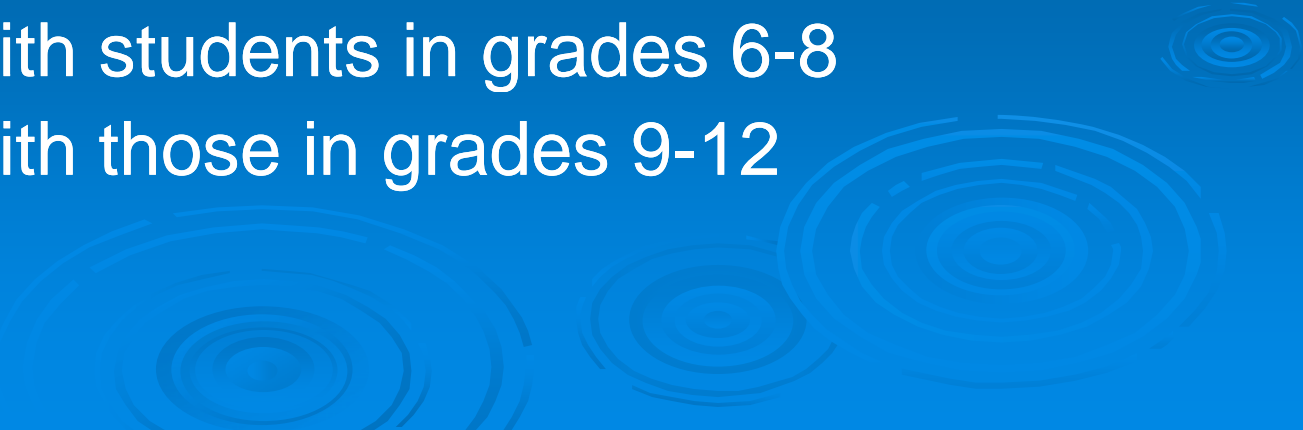
- Qualifies as a universal intervention (no known pre-existing problems)
- Intervention sought to promote ≥ 1 SEL skill (s)
- There was a control group
- Targeted school children in kindergarten through high school
- We could calculate an effect size for at least one outcome measure
- Study reported in English and appeared by December 31, 2007.

Method

➤ **Exclude if:**

- Intervention has a primary academic component
- Interventions whose **exclusive** purpose was to prevent drug use, pregnancy, HIV/AIDS or promote physical development

Study Sample for Review

- 213 Interventions involving 270,034 students
 - One-third appeared in 2000 or later
 - Most not evaluated in previous meta-analyses or narrative reviews
 - 81% appeared in published reports
 - 87% conducted in the United States
 - 56% done with students in grades K-5
 - 31% done with students in grades 6-8
 - 13% done with those in grades 9-12
- 

Outcomes and Findings

Positive Results for:

➤ Skills and attitudes

- SEL skills
- Positive attitudes (school and self)



➤ Behavioral adjustment

- Positive social behaviors
- Conduct problems
- Emotional distress



➤ Academic performance

- Tests and grades



What Features are Associated with Better Outcomes?

- We hypothesized the most important moderators would be:
 - 1. Following recommended practices for promoting skills
 - 2. Implementing the intervention to a sufficient degree

Effective Programs are S.A.F.E.



- Sequential: sequenced activities to achieve skills
- Active: interactive forms of learning
- Focused: focused on personal or social skills
- Explicit: targeting of specific skills

Outcomes and Findings

Positive Results for:

➤ Skills and attitudes

- SEL skills
- Positive attitudes (school and self)

SAFE
Programs



Other Programs



➤ Behavioral adjustment

- Positive social behaviors
- Conduct problems
- Emotional distress



➤ Academic performance

- Tests and grades



Outcomes and Findings

Positive Results for:

Process of Implementation

No Problems

Problems

➤ Skills and attitudes

- SEL skills
- Positive attitudes (school and self)



➤ Behavioral adjustment

- Positive social behaviors
- Conduct problems
- Emotional distress



➤ Academic performance

- Tests and grades



Ruling Out Alternative Possibilities


➤ QUALITY OF RESEARCH:

- Randomization
- Attrition
- Quality of outcome measure

➤ CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERVENTION & PARTICIPANTS

- Who did the intervention: researcher or regular teacher?
- Duration of intervention
- Age of student
- Locale of school: urban, rural or suburban area

Major Conclusions


- Students can learn SEL skills
 - SEL interventions are associated with positive effects in several areas of child development
 - Four recommended (SAFE) practices associated with better outcomes
 - Adequate implementation is also important
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Putting Findings in Context

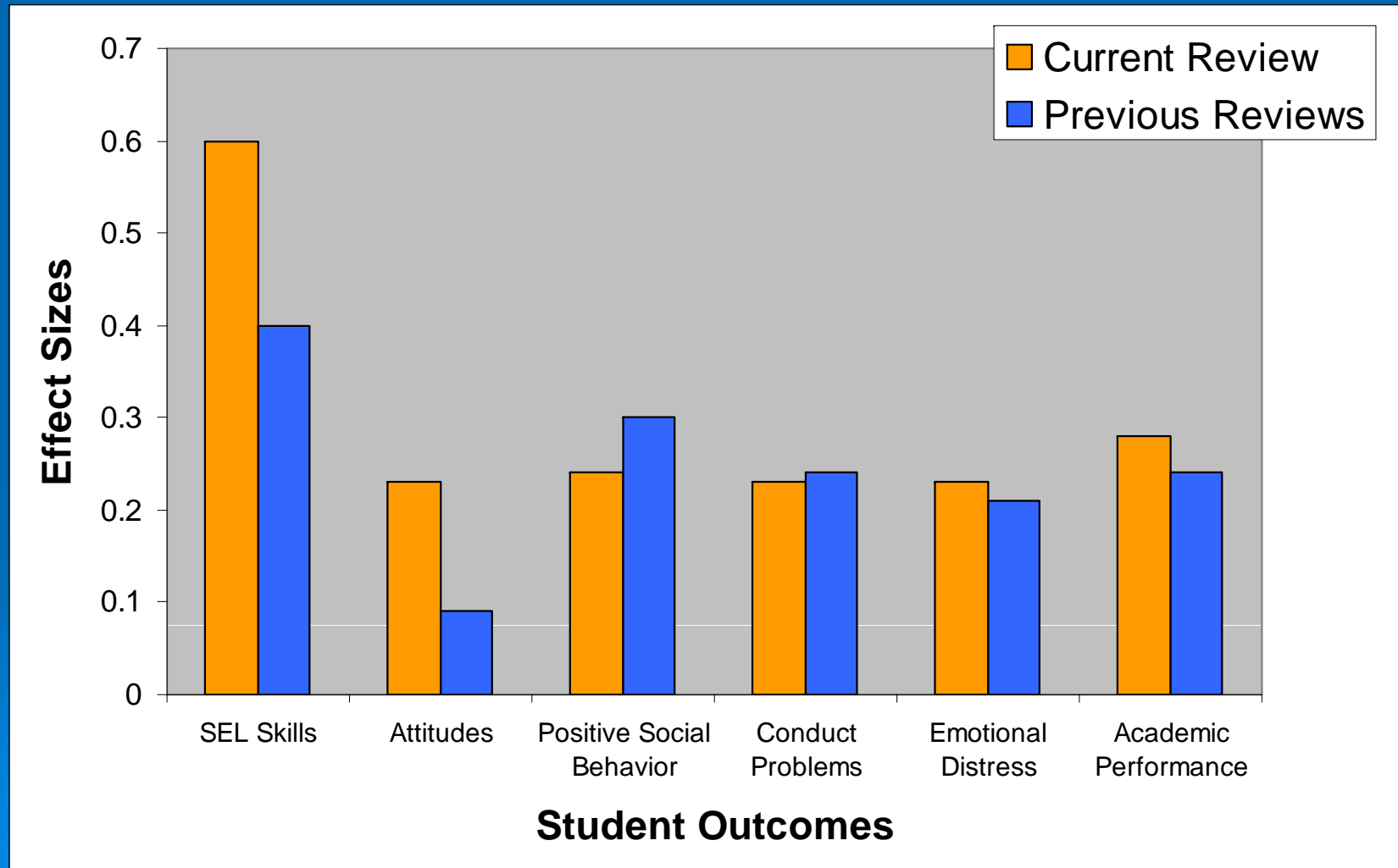
- What have others found for similar types of outcomes?



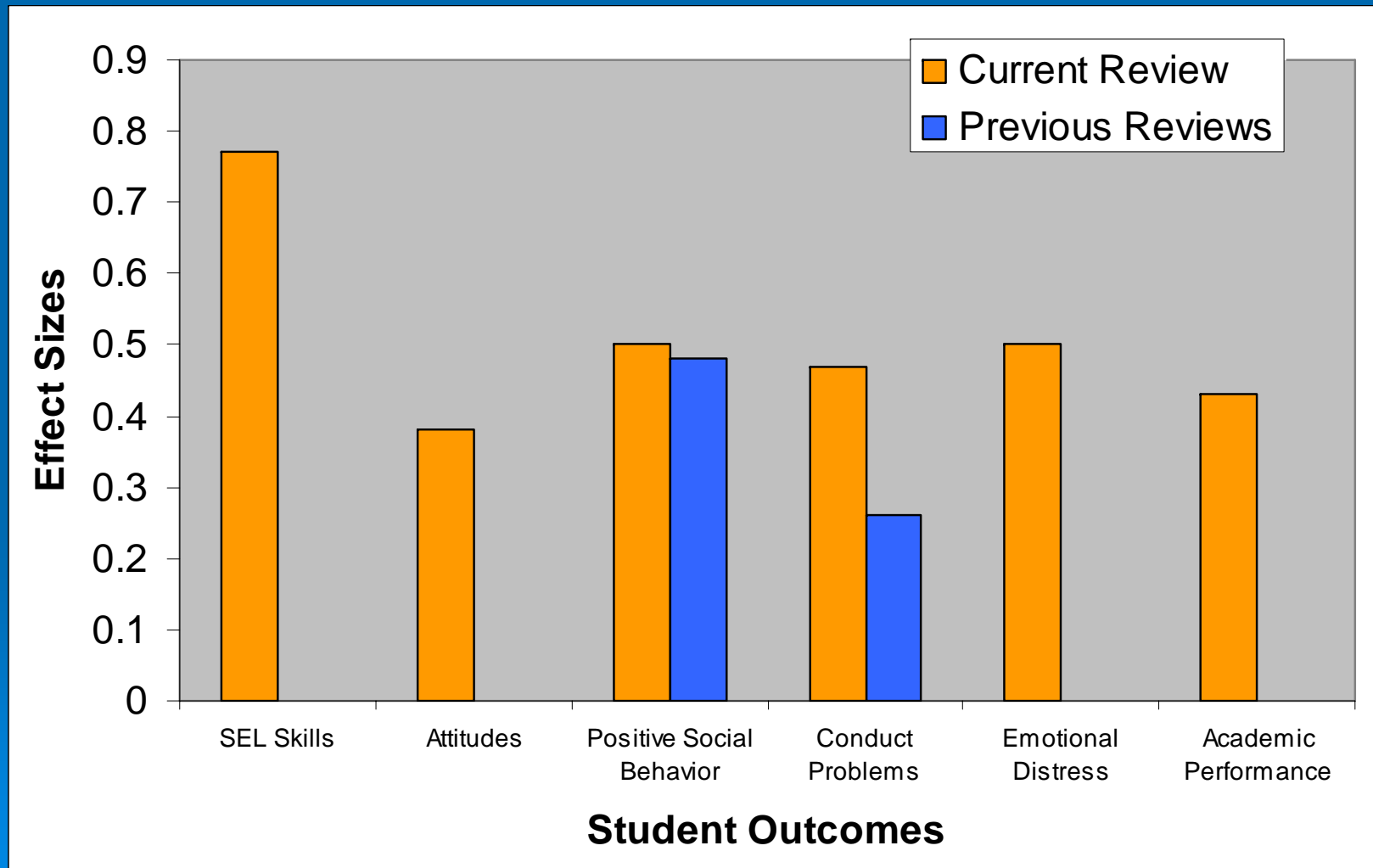
Results from Our Three Reviews

- 1. Universal school-based programs
 - 2. Indicated school-based programs
 - 3. After-school programs
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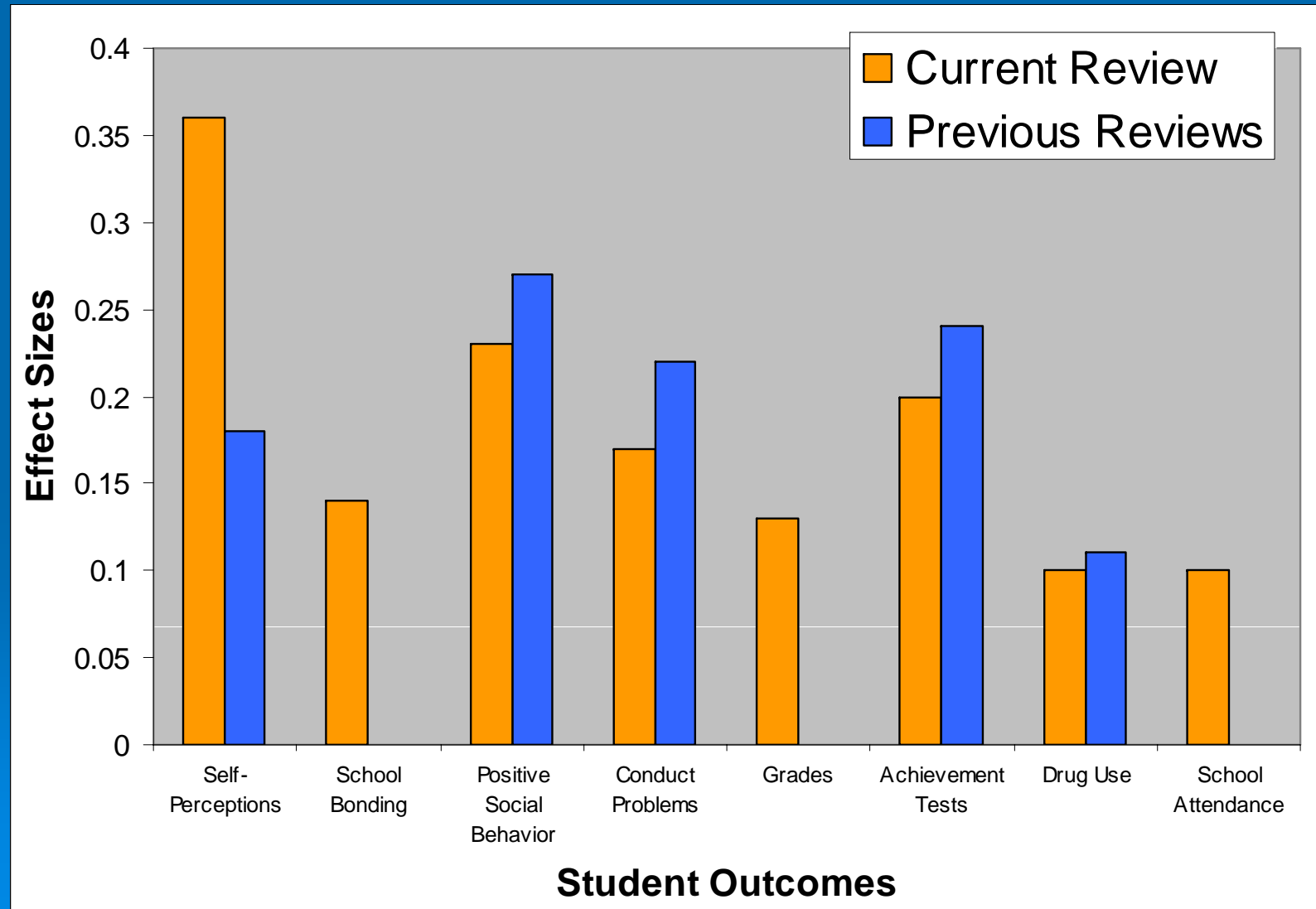
Universal School-Based and Other Reviews



Indicated School-Based and Other Reviews



After-School Programs and Other Reviews



Two Primary Questions

- Do SEL skills mediate obtained outcomes?
- If so, which skills or what combination is best for different outcomes?



Implications for Future Research

- Research needs to examine:
 - which SEL skills
 - in which programs best enhance development
 - on which outcomes
 - for which children
 - at what times
 - and for how long

Implications for Policy and Practice

- Educational policies should promote use and evaluation of SEL programs
- SEL interventions should be integrated into educational curricula
- Effective professional development programs needed for school staffs

References

- Durlak, J. A. Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A., B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (under review). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions.
- Payton, J., Weissberg, R. P., Durlak, J. A., Dymnicki, A., B., Taylor, R. D., Schellinger, K. B., & Pachan, M. (2008). The positive impact of social and emotional learning for kindergarten to eighth-grade students. Findings from three scientific reviews. Retrieved September 5, 2009, from www.casel.org.
- Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., and Pachan, (2007). The impact of after-school programs that promote personal and social skills. Retrieved September 5, 2009, from www.casel.org.

THANK YOU!

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