



ACTION

Let's Talk About: Social-Emotional Learning

- **What is social emotional learning (SEL)?** Originally, the goal of SEL was to promote morally neutral soft skills such as self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and goal setting. In 2020, it shifted to “Transformative SEL” which is race and gender ideology embedded into what were previously neutral student competencies.
- **Why is it bad?** SEL effectively asks teachers to act as therapists. Trained only with pop psychology and one-day professional development sessions, it encourages them to probe into students’ psyches to uncover and address “trauma.” There is a reason why medical ethics prohibits the practice of therapy by unlicensed and untrained individuals. Moreover, it coopts neutral to positive concepts like “self-awareness” and “self-management” to embed ideas rooted in critical race theory, anti-racism, and the like in K-12 public schools.
- **Examples:** Look at [PDE’s Indoctrination Map](#) for examples from your state to share with your local citizen activists and lawmakers.

Social Emotional Learning proponents may use these phrases, so we broke them down for you.

When they say...	They mean...
Transformative SEL	Race and gender ideology embedded into what were previously neutral student competencies like “self-awareness” and “self-management.”
Self-awareness	SEL proponents have lumped self-awareness into “identity,” defined now through the lens of “intersectionality.” Recall that intersectionality uses fixed traits like skin color, biological sex, and ethnicity as key components to identify “oppressor” and “victim.” As such, “self-awareness” in Transformative SEL has little to do with traditional self-awareness (definition below) and focuses more on indoctrinating children in radical race ideology. <i>“Self-Awareness,” is normally understood to mean how we perceive the things (personality, actions, values, beliefs) that make us who we are as individuals</i>
Self-management	Self-management, which usually means one’s ability to regulate behaviors and emotions (a healthy skill for all people) replaces the concept of “agency” with “cultural humility.” Transformative SEL teaches that self-regulation contributes to stress management, conflict resolution, and resilience. But, emphasizes cultural orientation and identity as critical components of self-management. In other words, SEL teaches that “self-management” has more to do with identity than individual choices and character.

If you are asked...	You can say...
But this is evidence-based, why don't you believe it?	Most of these claims are exaggerated and the rare evidence of positive outcomes was a result of the <i>old</i> version of SEL. On the contrary, there is anecdotal reason to believe that the newer version of SEL contributes to a decline in students' social and emotional health. It's too soon to know for sure.
Don't you want kids to learn about skills like goal setting and empathy?	SEL, especially from organizations like the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), have an ideological, "antiracism" and "CRT" angle. As it is being taught, SEL is not about coaching soft skills. It is indoctrination under the guise of mental health and emotional well-being.
This is not happening. It is called "social-emotional learning," not "critical race theory." You are labeling everything you don't like as "critical race theory."	<p>There are examples here (use PDE's Indoctrination map). CASEL, the leading SEL consultant, is deeply rooted in "antiracist ideology".</p> <p>In its "Roadmap to Re-Opening," CASEL defines "self-awareness" as "<i>examining our implicit biases,</i>" and "self-management" as "<i>practicing anti-racism.</i>"</p> <p>CASEL's former CEO, Karen Niemi, declared, "we believe that our work in Social and Emotional Learning must actively contribute to anti-racism," and that SEL can "help people move from anger, to agency, and then to action."</p>

<p>⚠SEL and Data Collection/Student Surveys (See Surveys and Data Collection for more)</p>
<p>One of the most troubling components of SEL is that teaching SEL in schools often involves collecting private student data about their mood, family, sexuality, gender identity, and beliefs.</p> <p>Sometimes, parents are not informed about the nature of these questions, nor do they have strong reason to trust that the answers will remain private.</p> <p>In 2022, hackers stole personal information of over 820,000 students in New York City Public Schools. If SEL encourages schools to create more datasets on their students, there may be further hacks and privacy violations.</p>