

What you need to know: Social-Emotional Learning

What's social-emotional learning?

Originally, the goal of social-emotional learning (SEL) was to promote soft skills, such as self-awareness, emotional management, empathy, and goal-setting. In recent years, it's shifted to "transformative" social emotional learning, which embeds race and gender ideology into behavioral competencies.

What's the issue?

Social-emotional learning takes vital time away from the classroom. It also pushes teachers and school counselors to act as behavioral therapists. SEL co-opts positive concepts like "self-awareness" and infuses it with divisive race and gender ideology. At times, schools have given students surveys as part of social-emotional learning that asks if students feel accepted at school or at home based on their race or gender identity.

When they say...	You can say...
Student mental health suffered during the pandemic. These mental health supports are vital for students.	Students do need mental health support. Asking students to ruminate on their feelings during time that could be spent on reading, writing, and math, however, is wrong. What better way to give students a boost than to help them succeed in learning a challenging topic? Parents, not schools, should be directing a child's mental healthcare.
SEL promotes self-awareness and cooperation among kids. How could that be a bad thing?	Social-emotional learning proponents have lumped "identity" into self-awareness, with identity being defined through an intersectional lens. Intersectionality uses fixed traits like skin color, biological sex, and ethnicity as key components to identify victims and oppressors. This seeks to divide children rather than bring them together.
Don't you want kids to learn about skills like goal setting and empathy?	SEL pushed by groups like the Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) have an ideological bent. As it is currently being implemented, SEL is not about promoting soft skills, but rather, it's indoctrination under another name.

Social-emotional learning and data collection

One of the most troubling components of social-emotional learning is that its implementation often involves collecting private student data. This has included information about their mood, sexuality, gender identity, and even their family's political beliefs and religious practices.

Sometimes, parents are notified about these questions. Other times, they aren't.

Student data privacy has also become an issue. Hackers are increasingly targeting school districts, and at times, demand massive ransom payments in exchange for sensitive student information. In 2022, hackers stole personal information from more than 820,000 students in New York City Public Schools. If SEL encourages schools to keep more data sets on students, there may be more hacks and data privacy concerns.