

Comment Report

Education

Date: 02/14/2024

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: RM 102, Sup. Ct. Consult

Name: Angie Hance

Comment: I'm opposed to this bill and ask you to reconsider. HF2329 eliminates the teaching of social emotional learning in schools. The findings from hundreds of independent studies across multiple fields and sources show SEL instruction leads to beneficial outcomes related to: social and emotional skills, academic performance, mental wellness, healthy behaviors, school climate and safety, and lifetime outcomes. Hundreds of studies involving more than 1 million students worldwide across PreK12 offer consistent evidence that SEL has a positive impact on students academic achievement. *Students participating in SEL at school have higher levels of school functioning, as reflected by their grades, test scores, attendance, and homework completion. *SEL builds social and emotional skills that increase student engagement and lead to improved academic performance. *SEL interventions that addressed the five core competencies increased students academic performance by 11 percentile points, compared to students who did not participate. *The positive impact on academics lasts longterm: Years after students participated in SEL, their academic performance was an average of 13 percentile points higher than students who didnt participate. Our governor has pledged to improve our mental health supports in Iowa. Social Emotional Learning is a universal mental health support in schools and all legislators need to understand this. Look at the Conditions for Learning Survey It shows an immediate need to INCREASE social emotional learning in schools. Statewide, only 20% of 3rd5th graders feel emotionally safe in their schools; 58% feel physically safe, and only 80% rate adultstudent relationships in schools as favorable. For students in grades 612, only 24% report feeling emotionally safe, 48% feel physically safe, 38% feel favorable about student to student relationships, and 36% feel favorable about adultstudent relationships. Let's consider THIS data and the thousands of research studies that show SEL instruction MAKES A DIFFERENCE in the lives of our children. Critics are ignoring the vast body of research that shows the wideranging benefits of social emotional learning.

Name: Cheryl Laughlin

Comment: As someone working in the field of behavioral health, I am extremely opposed to HF 2329 because it will negatively impact Iowa students abilities to learn and actually lower their academic achievement. An overwhelming number of research studies have proven this! Here is what evidencebased research has shown: throughout early childhood, elementary, adolescence, and into young adulthood the brain develops differently based on the opportunities to engage actively and safely with rich and meaningful environments and social relationships. The brains plasticity (the ability to adapt and adjust to the demands of different contexts and experiences) is a critical opportunity and responsibility for learning. Over the past 15 years, huge strides have been made in understanding the science behind how the brain develops, how that development relates to thinking, and the settings and contexts that are conducive to brain development and ultimately, to learning. The most striking, fundamental insights that have emerged from the field of developmental neuroscience over this time show that human brain development requires social relationships, emotional experiences, and cognitive opportunities. Furthermore, the quality of these relationships, experiences, and opportunities influences how the brain develops and how a person thinks, feels, and responds to their environment. Childrens environments vary greatly in characteristics and cultural features. When a persons

world is seriously impacted on any of these dimensions (whether at school, home, or in their communitye.g. violence, bullying, abuse, isolation, food insecurity, sensory and/or language deprivation, etc) brain development and the learning that depends on it can be dramatically compromised. When humans are experiencing hardship/trauma in any of these dimensions, their brains are in fight/flight mode. When in this mode, the ability to think, process, and store new learning is severely compromised. This is exactly why SEL is so critical! Students need to feel valued, respected, and included by their teachers and peers. By developing trusting relationships in classrooms where everyone feels that they belong and make a difference, students brains are able to get out of fight/flight mode while at school, which in turn allows the brain to return to its thinking, processing, and storing capabilities. Science has shown repeatedly that SEL is the gateway to academic learning and it must be in place first and foremost. On the flip side, when a persons world is enriched on these dimensions, brain development is facilitated and learning is enabled to a significantly higher degree. While environments affect brain development across peoples lifespans, the most vulnerable periods are those in which the brain is most actively changing: prenatal development through childhood, adolescence, the transition to parenthood, and old age. I am asking you to think about the huge ramifications of passing this bill and the degree to which it will negatively impact the safety and academic health of our youth. If nothing else, remember this: hurt people, hurt people and connected people, deepen connections (Ali Hearn, national keynote speaker, trainer, and coach for restorative practices). If you want our schools to go back to the basics and you choose to ignore the socialemotional needs of Iowas children, then you will see a rise in school violence, lower academic achievement in schools, an increase in chronic absenteeism, and so much moreall because they dont feel safe and secure. Our students must feel valued in the place where they spend most of their time. If they dont feel valued and accepted, they will make it known just as much as the data will.

Name: Stefanie Staben

Comment: I am extremely opposed of this bill. I work in preschool where socialemotional learning is integrally embedded into instruction. Time and time again I hear, this needs to continue into elementary school. That is because it works for students to intentionally learn SEL skills, then have repeated opportunities to apply these skills in the environment they learned them. As we know when children have these opportunities, they are more likely to generalize them to other aspects of their lives and in different environments. Taking this away in an environment children spend to much time in, takes away highly effective learning opportunities for students to learn skills universally and apply them systematically. We cannot assume that children are getting the SEL support elsewhere in their lives; therefor, taking away this in schools, takes away necessary learning!

Name: Nicole Skaar

Comment: You all have snuck in a provision that would BAN social and emotional learning in Iowa Schools. Please read what social and emotional learning is before you ban it. It is teaching kids about empathy, goal setting, persistence, emotional regulation, relationship skills. I believe ALL families and ALL Iowans wish their students to learn these skills at home and at school. Schools partner with families every day to foster these skills in young people, please do not take this away from teachers, families, and students. You are likely not getting many comments about this because people don't know it's in this bill. Do legislators even know it's in this bill? There is so much going on in education with the AEA bill, many people don't know this is happening. Please amend this bill to remove the provision about social and emotional learning!