

# Comment Report

SF 85

A bill for an act relating to public education, including participation in surveys, analyses, activities, or evaluations by students, employees, and contractors of school districts or charter schools and prohibiting the use of certain resources or materials related to social and emotional learning.

Subcommittee Members: Salmon-CH, Donahue, Evans

Date: 01/31/2023

Time: 09:30 AM

Location: Room 217 Conference Room

**Name:** Karen Costanzo

**Comment:** I appreciate that you are trying to protect our children from unnecessary surveys that do not promote education for the individual. Thank you. Know that your constituents are watching and taking note in appreciation.

**Name:** Carrie Wright

**Comment:** Social Emotional Learning is a trojan horse disguised as an innocuous social skills program. SEL's goal is to indoctrinate and train children for a oneworld government desired by the globalist regime. SEL is used to introduce these ideas into the minds of children. By changing definitions of words such as collaboration, empathy, and responsible decision making, they are able to convince parents this is an acceptable program. Thank you for resisting this indoctrination.

**Name:** Sandy Wilson

**Comment:** Citizen Engagement declares IN FAVOR of SF 85.

**Name:** Angela Wenell

**Comment:** In one of the explainers in the SEL curriculum used by our school district it states, "According to the Responsive Classroom philosophy, the social/emotional curriculum is given equal importance and weight with the academic curriculum." If it seems like this is taking over the basic subjects of learning, it's because it's supposed to. They equate emotional intelligence with academic intelligence. It will deprive our kids of actual education and dumb down our culture. They will not learn how to be critical thinkers, but emotive ones. While some students may benefit from learning how to deal with their emotions, not all kids need this and it creates emotional and psychological problems where there are none. It often crosses the line from the academic arena to the spiritual and religious one, and creates a vehicle for teachers or creators of curriculum to inject their own values that are not necessary for the school setting and conflict with values of parents and the local community.

**Name:** Courtney Collier

**Comment:** I support SF85. The Iowa DOE SEL standards, lessons, surveys given to students without parent permission and consent, are an intrusion into the minds and lives of our students and families. It is NOT the place of a school, a teacher or a 3rd party like CASEL to ask students about their emotions, feelings, thoughts, psychological or mental conditions, family beliefs, values etc. This practice of schools asking all students to participate in compulsory intrusive SEL surveys and lessons are a direct violation of student and parents rights. These SEL standards do not advance our childrens academic education but actually inhibit them. We may not learn the devastating effects of it for years to come. The SEL surveys contain a variety of intrusive and suggestive questions that violate the privacy of both student and parent.

They could also create mental issues in vulnerable students who are not prepared for some of these topics. The data from these surveys is collected and shared with whom? Stored where? This again is a violation of parent and student rights. The SEL standards are a cover for teaching anti American, Marxist gender and critical theory to students in the name of social and emotional learning. This is unacceptable in k12 education. SEL standards and CASEL need to be prohibited in Iowa schools and at the IDOE. The SEL initiative also has implemented inhouse school mental health counseling without parent permission or knowledge. Again, this is a huge violation of parents rights for their MINOR aged children. Not to mention dangerous. Parents should always be informed about their childs mental and medical needs and wellbeing, never excluded. Allowing SEL standards in Iowa k12 is the way the bureaucrats, state and 3rd party bad actors takes guardianship of children. The SEL standards, lessons and surveys create a wedge between parent and child and intentionally create secrecy between school and student edging parents out of the know with their own child.

**Name:** A Friend

**Comment:** The Constitutional Watchmen Society of Iowa supports this legislation. The state has a contract in place with Panorama Education who implements the data from these surveys using CASEL to further implement SEL in classrooms. Panorama's contract also contains fine print that designates them as school officials as well. These frameworks of CRT are also supported by the IADOE who lists it on their website as being implemented into the classroom as part of a Multi Tiered System of Support. In other words, the State of Iowa has been officially promoting SEL in classrooms for sometime now. This should anger us all.

**Name:** Holly Reid

**Comment:** I support SF85. As a parent who has been fighting SEL in public school I am very concerned with the content in this curriculum and its impact on our childrens hearts and minds. Thank you for the creation of this bill.

**Name:** Elijah Reid

**Comment:** I support limiting or getting rid of SEL it has been used as a means to indoctrinate our children in leftist ideologies. School should focus on education and empowering children to succeed. These programs focus on creating leftist activists and should have no place in classrooms.

**Name:** Patty SeregAlexander

**Comment:** I support this bill. As a teacher, I've had to fill out a student survey called SABERS. I had two concerns for this survey. One, parents were not notified of this evaluative social emotional survey. The other concern was that when I asked what will happen to this data and how long will it follow the students. No one could tell me what was going to happen with this data. It is imperative that schools should continue to be transparent to parents and guardians. Thank you.

**Name:** Kathy Pietraszewski

**Comment:** I support SF 85. The Marxist ideology permeating our school system is just plain wrong. Every American who knows anything about history knows that a free society is far superior in every way than one based in tyranny with the State controlling what ideas and feelings children are allowed to have. These progressive educators and woke parents are pushing us toward socialism. They were ANGRY in their objections to ESA for students. They said it would cause many to leave the public school system. Then they turn around and want this kind of dangerous ideology taught in public schools. Obviously, they are completely clueless on why there is a mass exodus. Please support our parents and students. Vote in favor of this important bill.

**Name:** Mandy Gilbert

**Comment:** I support SF 85. SEL once was viewed by educators as a way to incorporate manners and the golden rule into curriculum but it has now morphed into a data collection, mining program that uses the information to drive culture at school. This country, not very long ago, had a common standard of morality. Unfortunately this standard has shifted and many parents are finding this shift is in contradiction to the morals taught at home. A school that raises the importance of a collective view over improving academic success and critical thinking is rooted in Marxism. Many professionals have identified the new SEL as such. Thank you for recognizing the importance of this bill and giving parents an opt in versus opt out option for this material.

**Name:** Julie Scott

**Comment:** I am in support of SF85. When any teaching or counseling is given without parental approval it should be an alarm and anger all. It is wrong and has no place in our public schools. SEL or Social Emotional Learning is a disguised term to make unaware parents think it is for their child's benefit. Whenever a school is using a type of teaching to try to be the parent, it should not be allowed. SEL has most recently overstepped boundaries by using surveys and even lessons that do not agree or align with family values. Much of which should be private within a family and their home. This type of so called education is not beneficial to the student, the family or our schools. I find SEL unacceptable, as it is a violation and it causes divisions, and confusion. Please vote YES to SF85.

**Name:** Deana Sorgen

**Comment:** Because our son has behavioral goals on his IEP, we could not opt out of SEL. SEL teaches morality. Schools should be focusing on reading writing and arithmetic. Morality should be taught at home. When my son was given an SEL assignment he told the teacher he did not agree with it and he did not feel comfortable. The teacher then said he was just being non compliant. My son has had meltdowns in school because of SEL more than once. Any student should be able to say they are uncomfortable, without getting any push back. SEL needs to stop.

**Name:** Brian Scott

**Comment:** I am in favor of SF 85. I do not believe SEL is where teachers and or school faculty need to be focusing their time and energy. I believe that SEL as it is called, should not be a focus of the school at all. I believe that schools should strengthen the student's academics, not emotions.

**Name:** Denise Perez

**Comment:** I am vehemently opposed to SF 85. As a parent of an LGBTQ+ child who is trying to keep their child alive, I am telling you this bill will literally kill children. Stats from the Trevor Project on LGBTQ+ Youth for 2022: 45% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year. LGBTQ youth who felt high social support from their family reported attempting suicide at less than half the rate of those who felt low or moderate social support. Fewer than 1 in 3 transgender and nonbinary youth found their home to be genderaffirming. LGBTQ youth who found their school to be LGBTQaffirming reported lower rates of attempting suicide. 60% of LGBTQ youth who wanted mental health care in the past year were not able to get it. LGBTQ youth who live in a community that is accepting of LGBTQ people reported significantly lower rates of attempting suicide than those who do not. Having teachers who know how to address questions or circumstances is imperative. Please stop this attack on children. Or is the cruelty the point?  
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey2022/>

**Name:** Matt Wells

**Comment:** Social and emotional learning is a euphemism for critical theory. It does nothing advance academic excellence. It teaches children that emotions take precedence over

facts, logic, and reason. This adherence to SEL protocols has produced a generation of people unable to comprehend that someone might disagree with them. It's the exact opposite of preparing someone for a fruitful and fulfilling life. Leftist teachers (the majority) and administrators must be admonished for pushing this and if they don't stop, they must be fired.

**Name:** Pam Gronau

**Comment:** I support SF85. CASEL needs to be removed as the framework to our states SEL program. If you analyze the CASEL information on Iowas DOE website, there are many references to things that would violate HF 802 regarding critical race theory. How can we as a state, have a law against these concepts, and then the states department of education adopts a program that is in direct opposition to this law? Further, we always hear these programs are evidence based. I would challenge that notion. Have we as a state looked at our own data to see if these programs have had a positive or negative effect on our children? From where I stand, our childrens test scores are down, behaviors are out of control, and our students are dealing with more social emotional issues than ever before. Further, I am in support of parents having to opt their children in to surveys. A school should never collect data on our children without our permission, especially concerning their social/emotional well being. I would like to thank Senator Salmon for bringing this bill forward!

**Name:** Teri Patrick

**Comment:** I am in support of HF85. In 2021 my district announced that SEL surveys would be occurring in the fall I emailed the principal to see the questions and was told they did not have access to the questions because the survey was being administered by Panorama. This year fall 2022, there was no communication about the SEL survey, I found out by reading some meeting minutes. I checked with the school and it was confirmed that no notification was sent out. Parents had no opportunity to opt out. Why are we even surveying children on social and emotional subjective questions, attitudes, and beliefs? Where does that information go? I have yet to see any of this personal social and emotional data on my child? Who determines what the right answers are to these questions? As for SEL SEL was originally found to be helpful to identify students who needed assistance and work with them in a controlled setting by trained professionals. Today we deliver it to ALL students and it is now being woven into every subject. In 2019 transformative SEL was adopted by CASEL. I believe transformative SEL is in opposition of HF802 and Iowa should no longer be affiliated with the CASEL organization and SEL curriculum that aligns with the CASEL framework, including Transformative SEL. Transformative SEL has tenants of critical theories. In the paper Equity & Social and Emotional Learning: A Cultural Analysis coauthored by Robert Jagers of CASEL states: Given the prominence of the CASEL framework and its attention to citizenship as a longterm developmental imperative, there is heuristic and practical value in viewing children and youth as the next generation of informed, engaged, and justiceoriented citizens. Consistent with the pursuit of educational equity, we recently offered the concept of transformative SEL to reflect our interest in making explicit issues such as power, privilege, prejudice, discrimination, social justice, empowerment, and selfdetermination in the field of SEL. The focus of schools needs to go back to academics and move away from mental health. The constitution says children are entitled an education, not a transformation of social and emotional competencies and/or liberation.

**Name:** Mary Jobst

**Comment:** I support SF 85. K12 public schools and their teachers need to be focused on building their students foundational knowledge and skills in reading, math, science, and civics/ history so they are prepared to be productive adult members of society. Programs, questionnaires, and classes based on CASEL and SEL are unnecessary, intrusive, expensive, and potentially harmful. The simplest and best social and emotional learning is Follow the Golden Rule.

**Name:** Heather Stancil

**Comment:** I support SF85. Teaching social & emotional learning according the values of a third party, be it CASEL or the school, is not the purpose of public education. These topics are the proper role of parents. Unless a school can teach this according to each individual family's belief & moral systems (which is impossible), this needs to remain under parental authority. The continued attempts at undermining parental authority with nonsense like this is one of the reasons why school choice happened. Parents have had enough. If you really care about public schools, get these liberal agendas out of our schools & stick with academics.

**Name:** Jennifer Allsup

**Comment:** Im in support of SF 85.

**Name:** Ashley Petersen

**Comment:** I support SF85.

**Name:** Amber Williams

**Comment:** I support this bill. Here are some HARMFUL ELEMENTS OF SEL(Social and Emotional Learning)1. ALL 15 HARMFUL ELEMENTS OF CSE (COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION) MAY BE PRESENT IN VARIOUS SEL PROGRAMS. WE STRONGLY EMPHASIZE NUMBER 14: SEL UNDERMINES PARENTAL RIGHTS This program is designed by CASEL and similar organizations and is authorized by governing authorities to indoctrinate students and to collect the most personal data of students and their families. SEL is designed to become the parenting voice to encompass the whole child in the socalled missing piece of education and is promoted with dire importance as stated by their president: Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. Karen Niemi, President, CASEL. By design, this framework is in the process of being woven throughout every subject, evolving like proverbial kudzu.2. PROMOTES DATA COLLECTION See Project Unicorn, Common Educational Data Standards Government longitudinal data bases are collecting data on students to follow them for life to measure outcomes for the working classes of society and the collective good. Parents have not consented to this data collection and many responses are private information best suited between a counselor and a patient. Phone apps among others are also used for students to provide data.3. IMPERSONATES MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES Many SEL programs are designed to shape the childs developing brain to accept particular worldviews regarding sexuality, racial attitudes, and other social issues under the guise of providing a mental health benefit.4. PROMOTES PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS BY UNQUALIFIED TEACHERS Interventions may be prescribed by a teacher with limited training that may adversely impact a students permanent data file. The numbers of trained counselors are limited in most schools, so most SEL interventions likely will be administered by untrained or poorly trained personnel.5. INVOLVES PROBLEMATIC PRIVACY POLICIES may disclose student data that could be used against parents in regard to the personal choices they make for their children. If situations are detected regarding gender, sexual orientation or other sexual rights violations, this could become a window for family disruption or separation.6. SEL IS A BELIEF SYSTEM OR WORLDVIEW WITH OCCULT ORIGINS originally hosted at the Fetzer Institute, where New Age religion was founded. According to the Fetzer Library, Mr. Fetzer is also linked to Alice Bailey, an occultist and she founded the Lucifer Publishing Company (now known as the Lucis Publishing Company) and is also affiliated with the Lucis Trust. David J. Sluyter, Senior Advisor, Fetzer Institute, is also listed as one of the founders of

CASEL.7. SPIRITUALLY, MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY ABUSIVE Sacred family beliefs may be classified as unkind or unacceptable instead of a matter of morality. SEL teachings force students to choose between two leaders in authority over them (their parents versus their teacher) with opposing directives. The child is then left to flesh out which path is the one that will bring him the most relief in order to survive. 8. REQUIRES THAT STUDENTS ACCEPT FALSE CONCEPTS SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) These identities are not based in science and present false concepts as if they are based in factual truth. Some assignments force students to produce false confessions or coerced admissions regarding oppression and expressed acceptance of ideologies that may contradict sincerely held beliefs.9. SYSTEMATICALLY UNDERMINES ESTABLISHED PROTOCOLS AND LAWS according to CASEL: Schools were being inundated with a slew of positive youth development programs such as drug prevention, violence prevention, sex education, civic education, and moral education, to name a few. SEL was introduced as a FRAMEWORK that addresses the needs of young people and helps to align and coordinate school programs and programming. By asserting this nonacademic, incognito framework, they are able to circumvent parental rights protections such as Health Advisory Committees, parent reviews, optout forms, etc.10. PREVENTS MEANINGFUL REGULATION OR SURVEILLANCE Integrated into the publishers live website, updates and changes can occur at any time. When first purchased, lessons may seem helpful and desirable with little to no controversial elements; however, in some cases later investigations reveal a bait and switch tactic with controversial lesson updates, (woke ideology, CRT, etc.). Due to the size of these video libraries, it is impossible to preapprove or monitor lessons, especially in live form. Investigations are timeconsuming and working parents (if even aware) would not have the amount of time needed to adequately safeguard their student. SEL programs may also be coupled with virtual learning software platforms.11. REVISIONIST LESSONS Due to the progressive integration of SEL with other classes, revisionist history, science, human geography and even math concepts have been observed in schools that fully embrace SEL. CASEL promotes itself as the lever for equity and social justice. With this in mind, it would not be difficult to transition any of these software programs into an infrastructure for a totalitarian reset.12. SCHOOLS ARE HEAVILY FUNDED WITH TARGETED GRANTS Learning loss is identified as a primary need for SEL with abundant funding. This point alone requires constant investigation and becomes very detailed.13. WAS FOUNDED & FINANCED BY GLOBALISTS CASELs website reveals its corporate and foundational connections. Corporate Partners: Allstate Foundation, ChanZuckerberg Initiative, LG, Susan Crown Exchange. Foundation Partners: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, New Profit, The NoVo Foundation (Warren Buffet family), Founders Eileen Rothschild Growald and more. The goal of these organizations is global education and indoctrination.14. PROMOTES ACTIVISM, ALLEGIANCE AND DIVISION SEL is promoted as the lever for equity and social justice. Critical Race Theory and Marxist lessons are taught regarding oppression, oppressors, intersectionality, race, gender, and religion in ways that promote illegal, sectarian concepts. Community organizing events and afterschool programs are routinely promoted. CASEL is committed to the morally bankrupt woke doctrine of radical progressives. Consider their SEL PLEDGE: I pledge to contribute to a caring, just, and thriving world by prioritizing social and emotional learning for myself and others. I will examine my own emotions, identities, beliefs, and biases to understand how they impact the way I interact with others. I will create spaces for others to explore their emotions, strengths, and assets, and how they can be channeled to serve the collective wellbeing. I will listen to young people, elders, and those who are different from me. I will work to build meaningful relationships so that I can better understand others perspectives, experiences, cultures, and stories. I will create inclusive environments where everyone feels a sense of belonging and where young people find purpose and passion. I will work alongside others to IDENTIFY AND DISMANTLE inequities, stand up to injustice, and use our collective voice and power to create spaces where everyone thrives. I will use: my power, my privilege, my time, my work, my influence, my lived

experience, my love, my passion, my energy, and my resolve. Because, when we commit to social and emotional learning, we can build stronger schools and communities today, and a more just and caring world tomorrow.

**Name:** April D

**Comment:** I am in favor of SF 85. We need more laws to protect our children from indoctrination. We need to get back to the basics in education.

**Name:** Steve Corey

**Comment:** Team Iowa and its members stand in support of SF85. The citizens of Iowa are awake and watching this session closely to determine who is representing the constituents of Iowa and who is supporting special interests, especially those that support the indoctrination of our children.

**Name:** Jennifer Briggs

**Comment:** I am in support of this bill and much more than what is even outlined here. This is an absolute must pass at the bare minimum level of acceptance for a start to address what is the truth behind social emotional learning in MANY of today's schools in our state. Think of SEL as the carrier oil of the poison to infect the host. Not in all situations in some situations (what it used to be intended for) it is good. But by today's standards and in my district, it is the perfect cover and conveniently confusing web of protection to hide the reality of its purpose. So glad to see CASEL called out directly, as this doesn't take as much know how to uncover the intentions, origins and roots as the blanket SEL cover terminology. However, there is still not enough teeth or exposure to the reality of what we've uncovered here regarding the recent repurposing of SEL for our youth. This is a poisonous pill and not a gift of knowledge in more instances than not. Get the ball rolling and pass this past due legislation and tighten it up if possible. Thank you

**Name:** Loree Horn

**Comment:** I strongly support SF85. Schools have not been transparent about SEL. What are they doing with the surveys, who gets this information and what is done with it, what is the end goal? Lack of transparency is reason enough to be skeptical, but then further reading about SEL leaves me with much greater concern. Schools need to get back to 100% focus on reading, writing, math, science, and history to provide the educational foundation needed for our children to contribute to society. Parents are responsible for providing the emotional foundation.

**Name:** James Hunter

**Comment:** This bill is an abomination, based out of people's fear that the educational system is "grooming" its students. Kids exposed to different points of view is a healthy, sane way to let them develop their own attitudes, as well as how to be tolerant of other people whose values may not match theirs. The DOE website itself calls SEL "an integral part of education and human development."

**Name:** James Lindsay

**Comment:** I'm writing to support this bill to block CASEL, SEL, and the related surveying from the Iowa Department of Education and, ideally, Iowa public schools. SocialEmotional Learning itself, in its most general form, is an unnecessary intrusion into children's mental, social, and emotional lives and a potential threat against parental rights to direct the upbringing of their child. It is simply not part of the education system's mandate to take such an active role in the raising of children they are tasked with educating, particularly in academic subject matter. CASEL, however, does not present SocialEmotional Learning in its most general form. Through the years since its founding at the Fetzer Institute, a NewAge Spirituality Organization in Kalamazoo, Michigan, that seeks to combine science and spirituality into a single discipline and teach it to a new generation, CASEL's approach to SEL has evolved.

Most recently, it has pushed for "systemic implementation" of "Transformative SEL," and any program reliant upon CASEL will eventually go in this direction. Systemic implementation refers to weaving SEL into every subject and all parts of the school experience, so all subjects will be taught through an SEL lens. What this means in practice is that every subject will become SEL, which, in practice displaces class time and subverts the purpose of education. All CASEL SEL has been "critical" in its orientation for several years now, at least since 2015 (see below), but this refers to "critical pedagogy," which is an educational method, approach, and basis of content that is derived from Marxism. "Transformative SEL" is explicitly critical in that it openly says its goal is to raise "critical consciousness," which is a term that means neoMarxist consciousness as it has been meant since the middle part of the 20th century. In fact, the word "transformative" in Transformative SEL means to transform the individual, society, and the world in line with Marxist Theory, though we must also leave room for John Fetzer's New Age spirituality and "Theory of Change" given CASEL's origins. To back this up, consider the words of CASEL officer emerita and longtime SEL advocate, including for education teams with the Biden and Obama Administrations, Linda DarlingHammond. In *The Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning: Research and Practice* (2015), DarlingHammond writes the following in the foreword: "As the contributors to this book show, there is a large body of scientific evidence demonstrating the positive outcomes of SEL and suggesting how these outcomes can be achieved. This scientific foundation challenges us to undertake a decidedly humanistic endeavor." To begin with, there is a baitandswitch in this claim, as the scientific evidence supporting SEL is not rigorous, is conflicted in its findings, and refers to programs implemented mostly before 2011, which cannot apply to CASEL's Transformative SEL in systemic implementation since those projects began in 2019. In other words, at best, they're using heavily curated evidence to claim something about a much more modest product than the one they currently advocate. At worst, that "scientific evidence" does not exist and they're committing fraud, perhaps unintentionally, by claiming it. That, however, is beside the point. What does DarlingHammond mean by "a decidedly humanistic endeavor"? She tells us, quoting Brazilian Marxist educator Paulo Freire, who argued throughout his entire life that education must be repurposed to raise a Marxist critical consciousness. She writes: "As Paulo Freire explained, humanization is the process of becoming more fully human as social, historical, thinking, communicating, transformative, creative persons who participate in and with the world. Educators, he argued, must listen to their students and build on their knowledge and experiences in order to engage in ... personalized educational approaches that further the goals of humanization and transformation (Freire, cited in Salazar, 2013, p. 126). Indeed, this is what we see in schools that successfully undertake the journey of becoming socially and emotionally educative." For CASEL officer emerita Linda DarlingHammond, even four years before Transformative SEL emerged at the heart of the CASEL program, "becoming socially and emotionally educative" was defined in explicitly Marxist terms following the work of an explicitly Marxist educator who believed the purpose of education is to "conscientize" students into a Critical Marxist consciousness. That was in 2015, before it became explicitly Marxist under "Transformative" branding. People are free to believe this in the United States of America and the state of Iowa, but it is a tremendous betrayal of the trust of parents to allow what provably amounts to a Maoiststyle Marxist brainwashing technique to systematically weave itself throughout every subject of the education system based on biased evidence and terrible arguments like that the overwhelming majority of states and districts in the country already do it. (If all your friends jumped off a bridge, would you?) The fact is that CASEL has seen such incredible widespread implementation because of a law called the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) they helped lobby to get in place in 2015. ESSA mandates reporting similar to that of earlier Common Core programs should schools wish to obtain federal dollars, but under ESSA schools must report on at least one \*nonacademic\* competency area in addition to everything else. CASEL helped push for this law and then sent its materials and consultants to school districts around the country to offer their SEL program as an easy means of satisfying this new crooked



government funding requirement. In other words, SEL's widespread implementation, aside from any cultural madness we might be experiencing and any other corrupt dealings, can be explained almost entirely not on its merits but as a result of having lobbied to create a federal mandate for a product of its type. Much more could be said about why implementing and supporting SEL is one of the gravest mistakes in American history. In fact, once you get under the surface, it is virtually impossible to find any redeeming quality or honest brokering around it at all. For the sake of some brevity, however, I will close my comments here with the following appeal: you should do everything you can to remove this dangerous poison, however pretty the box it is packaged in, from all Iowa schools under your jurisdiction with the greatest haste. To the degree this bill helps in that endeavor, it must be supported.

**Name:** Sara Ferneding

**Comment:** I am in full support of this bill. Data is the new gold. It is the hottest currency out there. I do not want my kids' data to be mined by our schools and then handed to organizations whose intentions I do not know of or trust. And at this point I have little trust in any educational agency after all of the indoctrination & ideology crap they have been pushing in our schools to undermine the family unit. You cannot tell me that the survey's they take online are not traceable. The computers assigned to each student that the children are taking these survey's on are absolutely traceable. Down to who that computer was assigned to. Even if the surveys were on paper I would be opposed to them for the fact that the questions being asked are not provided to the parents before hand. I am in absolute favor of parents needing to opt IN (not OUT) for these surveys. That way those who are opposed to this bill can still take all the survey's they want. Just leave my kids out of it. My kids are not for sale! I want to thank the committee for this bill & ask for full passage of this bill to stop our kids from being data mined & subjected to inappropriate questions without a parent/guardian's prior consent. Opt IN not opt OUT!

**Name:** Sean McRoberts

**Comment:** I oppose this bill and the several others that target trans people, especially children, in our state. As you take up these legislative proposals, it is essential that you recognize the impact that our state policies have on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people, and especially children and youth. This bill has life or death implications for LGBTQ youth."Compared to their heterosexual and cisgender peers, LGBTQ+ youth are at increased risk for having suiciderelated thoughts and behaviors. Identityspecific stressors such as homonegativity and antiqueerness are among the unique factors posited to contribute to this risk and inhibit factors that protect against suicide...Beyond their role as a primary access point for behavioral health services, schools offer a unique opportunity to support suicide prevention by combating minority stressors through promoting positive social relationships and a safe community for LGBTQ+ students." (The roles of school in supporting LGBTQ+ youth: A systematic review and ecological framework for understanding risk for suiciderelated thoughts and behaviors Marisa E Marraccini, Katherine M Ingram, Shereen C Naser, Sally L Grapin, Emily N Toole, J Conor O'Neill, Andrew J Chin, Robert R Martinez Jr, Dana Griffin<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35190078/>)

**Name:** Mimi Holesinger

**Comment:** I oppose SF 85. Please look into exactly what SEL is teaching and how Iowa educators and the DE have created the Iowa Competencies. The 5 Iowa Competencies are SelfAwareness (Identifying Emotions, Accurate Self Perception, SelfConfidence), SelfManagement (Impulse Control, Stress Management, SelfDiscipline, Goal Setting, and Organizational Skills), Social Awareness (Perspective Taking and Empathy, Appreciating Diversity and Respect for Others, Civic Engagement), Relationship Skills (Communication, Social Engagement, Relationship Building, Teamwork), Responsible Decision Making (Identifying Problems, Analyzing Situations and Solving Problems, Evaluating and Reflecting,

Ethical Responsibility). Yes, the Iowa Competencies are based on the CASEL framework, but they can stand on their own without the framework if there are valid concerns with the entire Collaborative for Social Emotional Learning (CASEL). In classrooms these competencies are showing up in lessons about these topics: Being Safe, Respectful and Responsible, Listening, Focusing Attention, Using SelfTalk, Being Assertive, Identifying Feelings, Same and Different Feelings, Showing Compassion, Feelings in My Body, Stop and Name Feelings, Calming Down, Managing Learning Challenges, S Say the Problem, T Think of Solutions, E Explore Consequences, P Pick the Best Solution, Inviting to Play, Playing Fairly, Making Amends, Handling Name Calling. These are needed lessons and lessons that have been taught for many years, long before the term "SEL" was used. SEL is not new, the term is new. Families are absolutely the first teacher and play an essential role in shaping SEL implementation in schools. Knowing that my children spend so much time at school, I appreciate the opportunity for them to practice these competencies across many settings. Please look into the details and value the work of the educators and DE members who worked to provide these SEL Competencies as a guide. We are better because of these competencies. Please consider just looking at the framework and the CASEL association and leave the Iowa created competencies intact. Thank you for having this conversation and putting our students first.

**Name:** Rebecca Wilkerson

**Comment:** I am in support of SF85. Our schools need to get back to teaching academics and let parents teach their beliefs at home. Data mining is dangerous and we need to stop it before it gets worse. I researched CASEL and the third party influence is disturbing. Thank you for bringing this bill forward!!

**Name:** Heidi W

**Comment:** I am a public school teachers and I HATE teaching SEL and anything related to gender. We are lying to these kids. If we would back off with this and just allow our kids more free play(without stepping in every time something makes them unhappy), they would learn to self regulate. Instead we try to make our kinders act like 2nd graders when that's not age appropriate. Parents need to step up and teach kids these things. As a parent, I do not want the school teaching my kids how to handle life situations. I want to teach them, how I believe they should handle things. Schools need to stick to the basics reading, writing and math. Get rid of SEL, get ride of common core and let us decide what or students need.

**Name:** Dawn Bertrand

**Comment:** SEL is unacceptable! Our schools need to concentrate on teaching reading, writing and math not supporting the gender altering perception of the LGBTQ+ agenda! Please vote to support SF85!

**Name:** Michelle Veach

**Comment:** I am in favor of SF85. Iowa schools must focus on academics, and invest the instructional time and money currently being used on SEL to improve literacy/math proficiency rates. Surveys are datamining our kids, establishing an online profile that previous generations have never experienced. The data can be stolen, mishandled and puts our kids at risk for future identity theft and/or manipulation. Casel proudly announces its social justice worldview on its website a worldview that teaches division and racism. In Iowa, we should focus on uniting our kids as Americans. Please remove SEL from our schools in entirety and lets get focused on the basics of reading math and science.

**Name:** Sara Ferneding

**Comment:** After listening to the opponents to this bill speak at the subcommittee meeting today one very loud & clear point the all make is they want our children's data. They state this is to better understand the needs of our youth. This information is then used to "diagnose" our children as a group & not as individuals. This information is then

being used to mentally treat our children as a group in schools via SEL curriculums & not looking at each child as an individual. I am very concerned that our schools are becoming mental health institutions for our children who are all being treated as mentally ill whether they are or not. I am very concerned that my children's academic teachings are being limited & hindered by the increase of time spent on SEL trying to "treat" my child for social, emotional & mental deficiencies the agencies are pulling & manipulating from the survey data they are taking on children. Some opponent stated that the claims of not being able to opt out or not being able to get copies of the survey's before hand must have been "isolated" incidents. That is not true. I opted my child out of surveys & it was not honored. Copies of the surveys are not made available to parents prior to being given. Parents have no idea how this data is shared, how long it is kept for or how long it follows the student for. There is an egregious lack of transparency in these surveys. Opt IN should be the ONLY option. Our children are not for sale & they are not mental health experiments. I feel this bill needs amended to include prohibiting and & all forms of SEL not just CASEL. And I feel this bill needs legal recourse for parents with financial protections for court costs when victorious against a school for not abiding by this bill. I don't want this to be like the CRT bill that was passed last year where the agencies responsible for enforcing the law refuse to do so & leave the parents with no other recourse. Thank you for bringing this bill & passing it out of subcommittee today!

**Name:** Kayla Pickering

**Comment:** I am strongly in favor of this bill. SEL data mines sensitive information from kids and does not treat each child as an individual but rather strides to form each kid into their ideology. This undermines parental rights. We have seen a drop in not only academic performance but kids are also not any better at regulating their emotions. This takes time away from teaching kids the basics they need. Opt out is flawed as it relies on teachers and admin to keep track of which families have opted out. Proponents say that kids and parents are approaching them for this, then why not simply let them opt in to it without having to pull others along?

**Name:** Lakeisha Steele

**Comment:** January 30, 2023  
The Honorable Sandy Salmon  
The Honorable Molly Donahue  
Iowa Senate Education Committee  
Iowa Senate Education Committee  
Iowa State Capitol  
Iowa State Capitol  
1007 East Grand Avenue  
1007 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
The Honorable Lynn Evans  
Iowa Senate Education Committee  
Iowa State Capitol  
1007 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
Re: Senate File 85 and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning  
Dear Senator Salmon, Senator Donahue, and Senator Evans,  
I, as the CEO and President of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) am writing to express concerns with SF 85, a bill which, as written, would ban the Iowa Department of Education (the Department) from disseminating or displaying CASEL materials on its website. The information provided on the Departments website is grounded in decades of research and helps contribute to successful outcomes from students across the state. At CASEL we conduct, commission, and synthesize academic research to continuously advance the field of social and emotional learning (SEL), while working alongside researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. Among the ways we accomplish this are by reviewing and evaluating SEL programs to help educators make datainformed decisions that meet their local needs. For example, to qualify for inclusion in CASELs Guide to EvidenceBased Programs, the criteria is closely aligned to the Every Student Succeeds Acts (ESSA) two most rigorous tiers: Tier 1 (strong) and Tier 2 (moderate) to ensure a level of rigor and evidence of impacts. Further, rather than a onesizefitsall approach, CASEL's framework provides a foundation for communities to use evidencebased SEL strategies in ways that are most meaningful to their local context, emphasizing the need for schoolfamilycommunity partnerships to decide how best to implement, teach, and assess SEL based on the specific priorities, strengths, and needs of their local schools and communities. Research indicates that wellimplemented, evidencebased SEL programs are an effective way to ensure the academic success, career readiness and overall wellbeing of students. We also work with partners to combine rigorous SEL research with practical, actionable findings. Perhaps the most prominent among the materials this bill seeks to remove, however, are the CASEL 5 Core Competencies, the most widelyused framework for helping schools and districts make evidencebased decisions around SEL implementation. The CASEL competencies address five broad and interrelated areas of competence and highlights examples for each: selfawareness, selfmanagement, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decisionmaking. The CASEL 5 can be taught and applied at various developmental stages from childhood to adulthood and across diverse cultural and local contexts. The impact the framework has on children is powerful. For example, according to a nationally representative survey conducted in 2020 by Tyton Partners, 99 percent of individual respondents demonstrated awareness of SEL with 95 percent of district respondents having adopted SEL practices. According to this same study, CASEL was reported as the leading framework used with 42 percent of respondents stating it as a top source of information. Research shows that when students are supported in growing their social and emotional competence via skill development in these five areas, students are more likely to experience improved prosocial behaviors and academic achievement as well as a decrease in emotional distress. In fact, the research consistently shows that SEL interventions that address the five core competencies outlined above increased students academic performance by 11 percentile points, compared to students who did not participate. Whats more, students participating in SEL programs showed improved classroom behavior, an increased ability to manage stress and depression, decreased drug use and problematic behaviors, and better attitudes about themselves, others, and school. In addition, about 27 percent more students who experience evidencebased SEL programs improve their academic performance at the end of the program and 24 percent more have improved social behaviors and lower levels of distress. All of these demonstrated outcomes are vital for schools now, as we emerge from the

COVID19 pandemic, given that they support student academic recovery, mental health, future readiness, and overall wellbeing. Finally, costbenefit research shows that for every dollar spent on SEL, there is an \$11 return on investment. In everything we do and in all our materials and resources, our efforts are unified by a commitment to evidencebased SEL that supports all students learning and development. By removing our materials from the Departments website and prohibiting their dissemination to education professionals, local communities will be restricted in making their own decisions about how to best support childrens social and emotional learning. Further, Iowas students may not receive the high quality SEL instruction and skill development they need for future success. Sincerely, Dr. Aaliyah A. SamuelPresident and CEOCollaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)



January 30, 2023

The Honorable Sandy Salmon  
Iowa Senate Education Committee  
Iowa State Capitol  
1007 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

The Honorable Molly Donahue  
Iowa Senate Education Committee  
Iowa State Capitol  
1007 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

The Honorable Lynn Evans  
Iowa Senate Education Committee  
Iowa State Capitol  
1007 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Re: Senate File 85 and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

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At CASEL we conduct, commission, and synthesize academic research to continuously advance the field of social and emotional learning (SEL), while working alongside researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. Among the ways we accomplish this are by [reviewing and evaluating SEL programs](#) to help educators make data-informed decisions that meet their local needs. For example, to qualify for inclusion in CASEL's Guide to Evidence-Based Programs, the criteria is closely aligned to the Every Student Succeeds Act's (ESSA) two most rigorous tiers: Tier 1 (strong) and Tier 2 (moderate) to ensure a level of rigor and evidence of impacts. Further, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, CASEL's framework provides a foundation for communities to use evidence-based SEL strategies in ways that are most meaningful to their local context, emphasizing the need for school-family-community partnerships to decide how best to implement, teach, and assess SEL based on the specific priorities, strengths, and needs of their local schools and communities. Research indicates that well-implemented, evidence-based

SEL programs are an effective way to ensure the academic success, career readiness and overall well-being of students.<sup>1</sup> We also [work with partners](#) to combine rigorous SEL research with practical, actionable findings.

Perhaps the most prominent among the materials this bill seeks to remove, however, are the [CASEL 5 Core Competencies](#), the most widely-used framework for helping schools and districts make evidence-based decisions around SEL implementation. The CASEL competencies address five broad and interrelated areas of competence and highlights examples for each: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The CASEL 5 can be taught and applied at various developmental stages from childhood to adulthood and across diverse cultural and local contexts.<sup>2</sup> The impact the framework has on children is powerful. For example, according to a nationally representative survey conducted in 2020 by Tyton Partners, 99 percent of individual respondents demonstrated awareness of SEL with 95 percent of district respondents having adopted SEL practices. According to this same study, CASEL was reported as the leading framework used with 42 percent of respondents stating it as a top source of information.

Research shows that when students are supported in growing their social and emotional competence via skill development in these five areas, students are more likely to experience improved prosocial behaviors and academic achievement as well as a decrease in emotional distress.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the research consistently shows that SEL interventions that address the five core competencies outlined above increased students' academic performance by 11 percentile points, compared to students who did not participate. What's more, students participating in SEL programs showed improved classroom behavior, an increased ability to manage stress and depression, decreased drug use and problematic behaviors, and better attitudes about themselves, others, and school.<sup>4</sup> In addition, about 27 percent more students who experience evidence-based SEL programs improve their academic performance at the end of the program and 24 percent more have improved social behaviors and lower levels of distress.<sup>5</sup> All of these demonstrated outcomes are vital for schools now, as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, given that they support student academic recovery, mental health, future readiness, and overall well-being.

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<sup>1</sup> "Program Guide," CASEL, n.d., <https://pg.casel.org/>

<sup>2</sup> "What Is the CASEL Framework?," CASEL, August 3, 2022, <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/>.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph A. Durlak et al., "What we Know, and What we Need to Find out about Universal, School-based Social and Emotional Learning Programs for Children and Adolescents: A Review of Meta-analyses and Directions for Future Research" (Psychological Bulletin, December 2022), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366301585\\_What\\_we\\_know\\_and\\_what\\_we\\_need\\_to\\_find\\_out\\_about\\_universal\\_school-based\\_social\\_and\\_emotional\\_learning\\_programs\\_for\\_children\\_and\\_adolescents\\_A\\_review\\_of\\_meta-analyses\\_and\\_directions\\_for\\_future\\_research](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366301585_What_we_know_and_what_we_need_to_find_out_about_universal_school-based_social_and_emotional_learning_programs_for_children_and_adolescents_A_review_of_meta-analyses_and_directions_for_future_research)

<sup>4</sup> Durlak, Joseph & Mahoney, Joseph & Boyle, Alaina. (2022). What we know, and what we need to find out about universal, school-based social and emotional learning programs for children and adolescents: A review of meta-analyses and directions for future research (in press). Psychological Bulletin.

<sup>5</sup> "What Does the Research Say?," CASEL, May 26, 2022, <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-does-the-research-say/>.

Finally, cost-benefit research shows that for every dollar spent on SEL, there is an \$11 return on investment.<sup>6</sup>

In everything we do and in all our materials and resources, our efforts are unified by a commitment to evidence-based SEL that supports all students' learning and development. By removing our materials from the Department's website and prohibiting their dissemination to education professionals, local communities will be restricted in making their own decisions about how to best support children's social and emotional learning. Further, Iowa's students may not receive the high quality SEL instruction and skill development they need for future success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Samuel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Aaliyah A. Samuel  
President and CEO  
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

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<sup>6</sup> Clive Belfield et al., "The Economic Value of Social and Emotional Learning" (Teachers College, Columbia University, February 2015), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/583b86882e69cfc61c6c26dc/t/59089094cd0f6810013b15ff/1493733525917/SEL-Revised.pdf>.



**Name:** Jennifer Turner

**Comment:** I support SF85. Attached is a great example of what Social Emotional Learning is doing to our schools. This is one of the most important bills this session to improve education in Iowa. While I believe CASEL may quite possibly be the most dangerous, other SEL programs must be taken into consideration. Our children deserve an academic education. Social Emotional Learning is nothing more than a backdoor into Critical Race Theory. Social Emotional Learning uses a method of instruction called Culturally Responsive Teaching (theother CRT.) This method filters lessons through a Critical Race Theory viewpoint to purposefully engage students in conversations that critique society as systemically racist/oppressive. Culturally Responsive Teaching was coined by Gloria LadsonBillings, a selfproclaimed Critical Race Theorist, and activist. She explains that using this method develops a critical consciousness for students that challenge inequities(systemic racism/oppression) that institutions perpetuate.

# CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## 10 YEARS OF SEL IN CPS

### THE LIE

SEL  
IMPROVES  
STUDENT  
OUTCOMES

GRADUATION  
RATE

83.8%

### HOW?

2010

MATH  
PROFICIENCY

79%

READING  
PROFICIENCY

70%

BUDGET

\$4.48 Billion

10 YEARS

LOST STUDENTS  
-63,000

LOST TEACHERS  
-33

2021

MATH  
PROFICIENCY

17%

READING  
PROFICIENCY

21%

BUDGET

\$6.37 Billion

2023 BUDGET  
FOR SEL &  
EQUITY

\$30 Million

MATH



DOWN  
78.5%

READING



DOWN  
70%

BUDGET

UP 42%



"This is a wonderful sign of our District's progress."

- *Pedro Martinez, CEO  
Chicago Public Schools*

EPIC  
Evidence-based Programs for Integrity in Curriculum

COURAGE IS A HABIT  
COURAGEISAHABIT.ORG