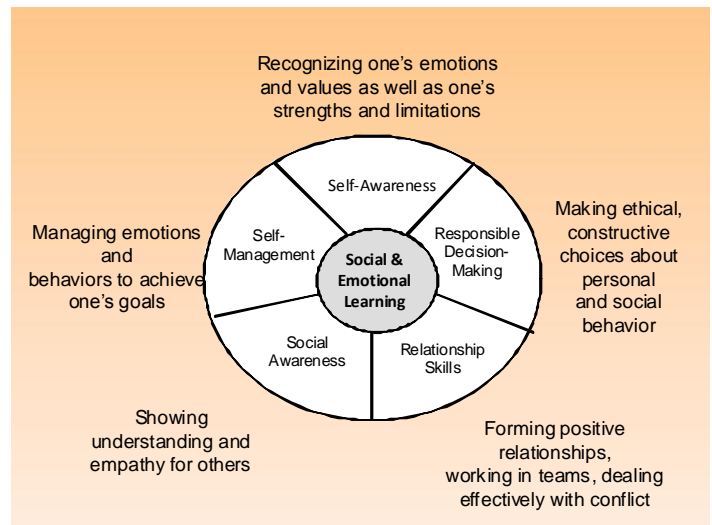


Social and Emotional Learning Program

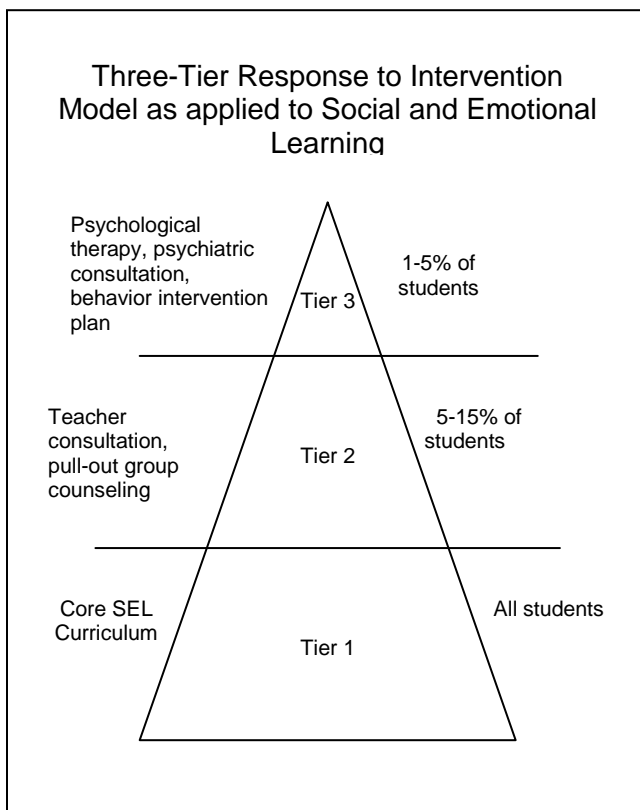
“The list of issues facing today’s educators and students is daunting. But genuinely effective schools – those that prepare students not only to pass tests at school but also to pass the tests of life – are finding that social-emotional competence and academic achievement are interwoven and that integrated, coordinated instruction in both areas maximizes students’ potential to succeed in school and throughout their lives.” – Zins and Elias, Social and Emotional Learning.

Social and Emotional Learning Defined

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is an important element in the education of young children, especially in urban classrooms. Research shows that students from low-income backgrounds are more likely to be motivated to please teachers and other adults whom they respect and whom they know respect them rather than competition or class rank. SEL is designed to promote 21st-century skills such as respect, problem solving, empathy, communication, and teamwork within the classroom. These concepts are essential to the creation of a caring, respectful school environment, which in turn is essential to supporting learning for young children. Schools who use SEL programs report a number of positive outcomes such as the promotion of mental health, positive youth development, and academic achievement, as well as a decrease in negative outcomes such as the prevention of substance abuse and interpersonal violence.



UT Elementary Serves as the Model



As a research-based demonstration school, UT Elementary built upon current research from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), by developing and modifying the curriculum so that the specific needs of each urban student are addressed. Our school psychologist developed a 3-tier model for SEL, based on the 3-tier model used in reading instruction. Tier 1 is a SEL curriculum program developed by our school psychologist, which includes learning standards for each grade level. All classroom teachers are trained in a Second Step curriculum resource to explicitly teach these standards. Tier 2 includes teacher consultation and pull-out group counseling for at-risk children by our school psychologist and school social worker. Tier 3 involves behavior intervention plans, psychological therapy and psychiatric consultation for students with significant emotional difficulties – these services are provided in collaboration with the Texas Child Study Center.

The SEL Team, our school psychologist and school social worker, plays an integral role in creating the support for classroom instruction and necessary positive school climate for the students to truly succeed. In addition to training and coaching UT Elementary staff to implement the core SEL curriculum, our school psychologist also works with Metz and Govalle Elementary Schools. These two schools have seen dramatic success since the implementation in the 2009-10 academic year.

The development and expansion of this program would not be possible without the support of the Buena Vista, Klein, Tapestry, and Mitte Foundations. UT Elementary will continue to fully imbed the program on its own campus as well as rigorously evaluate and refine the program and curriculum. We will also provide curriculum resources and training to schools in the east Austin community, who will then implement these successful practices on their own campuses.