

REDUCING STRESS AND BUILDING RESILIENCY IN STUDENTS

**Presentation to Lexington School Committee
by the Collaborative to Reduce
Student Stress**

February 26, 2013

Topics we will cover:

- **School-related Stress**
- **Resiliency and Mindfulness**
- **Communication**

Sources of stress

- Overloading
- Strive for perfection
- Push for achievement
- Peer and parental pressure
- College admissions

College admissions directors say

- Don't make course decisions or other choices based on what you think colleges want.
- Do what you are passionate about, create your intellectual footprint.

Finding a Healthy Balance

Goal: Help students make academic choices that allow for healthy balance

- Specify expectations & workload for all courses in advance
- Establish consistent teacher recommendation procedures for higher level courses
- Encourage students to make choices that align with their interests and passions
- Provide guidance on what really matters for college admissions

Academic Courses

Goal: More flexible course choices and appropriate levels for students

- Examine levels and sequencing of courses
 - Add honors level classes as alternatives to AP
 - Examine science course sequencing and levels
 - Rethink whether AP courses are suitable for sophomores
- Offer greater choice and flexibility of class options
- Give credit for sports, performing arts and other activities

Academic Workload

Goal: Homework that is meaningful and manageable

Meaningful

- Evaluate purpose, quality, relevance of homework in PLCs
- Communicate purpose of assignments to students

Manageable

- Revise district-wide homework policy
- Keep vacations and holidays free of homework and projects
- Coordinate to avoid overlapping projects & assessments

School Culture

Goal: Reducing stress and building resiliency through school culture

- Raise awareness about unhealthy stress
- Redefine the measures of achievement and success
- Explore ways to help students find balance and improve quality of life
- Make students aware of school resources and personnel available to help with stress
- Introduce strategies for coping with stress and building resiliency

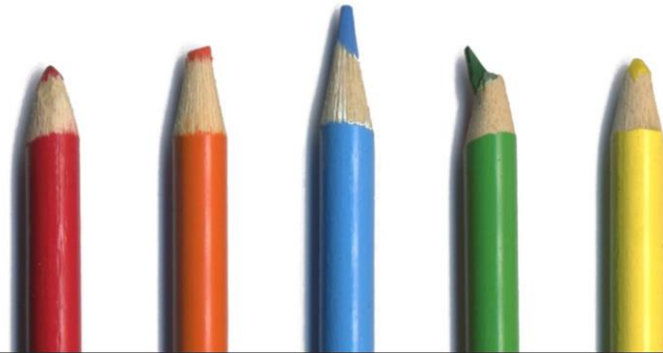
Topics we will cover:

- School-related Stress

-  Resiliency and Mindfulness

- Communication

How
**CHILDREN
SUCCEED**



GRIT, CURIOSITY, *and the*
HIDDEN POWER *of* CHARACTER

PAUL TOUGH

AUTHOR OF *Whatever It Takes*

What do 50 years of research say
about what best predicts a child's
future success?

THE COAST-TO-COAST
#1 BESTSELLER

THE
GROUNDBREAKING
BOOK THAT REDEFINES
WHAT IT MEANS
TO BE SMART

Emotional Intelligence

Why it can matter
more than IQ

Daniel Goleman

Author of VITAL LIES, SIMPLE TRUTHS

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

DANIEL GOLEMAN

THE REVOLUTIONARY BOOK
BY THE AUTHOR WHO REDEFINED
WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SMART

Social Intelligence

THE NEW SCIENCE OF
HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

Cognitive Intelligence (IQ) vs. Emotional/Social Intelligence (EQ/SQ)

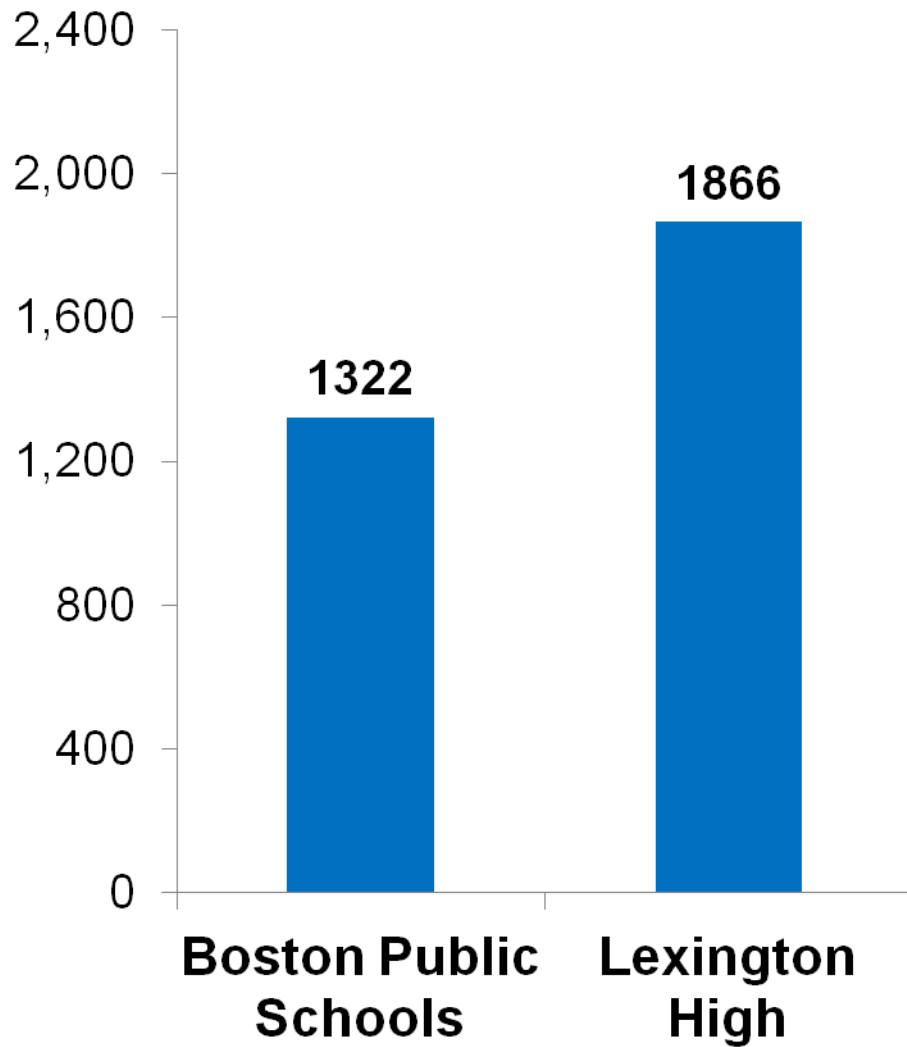
- Cognitive intelligence (IQ) does correlate strongly with success in school, future employment

HOWEVER...

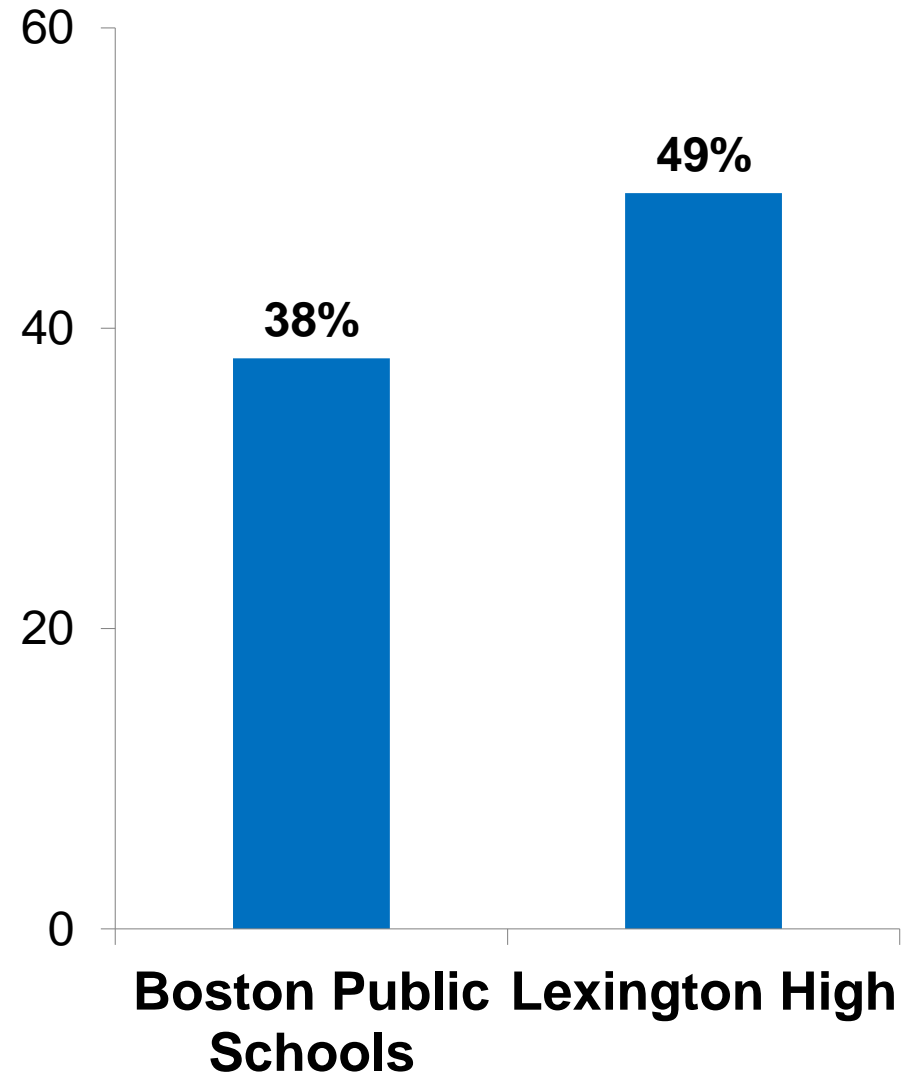
- At similar levels of cognitive intelligence, those with higher EQ/SQ were healthier, happier, more likely to be leaders, better paid, and less likely to be divorced, unemployed, arrested, abusing alcohol or drugs

Knowing this, how should we educate our children to help them succeed in life?

Average SAT Scores 2011-2012



Past Month Alcohol Use 2011 YRBS Results



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Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

**Promoting Social and Emotional
Learning for School and Life Success**

www.casel.org
www.sel4mass.org

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

.....process for helping individuals develop the fundamental skills for success in life

* Source: Durlak, JA. Loyola University Chicago, 2009



How to handle effectively and ethically:

1. **Ourselves**: feelings, thoughts, needs, and behaviors
2. **Our relationships**: getting along well with others
3. **Our school/work**: meeting developmental challenges and tasks

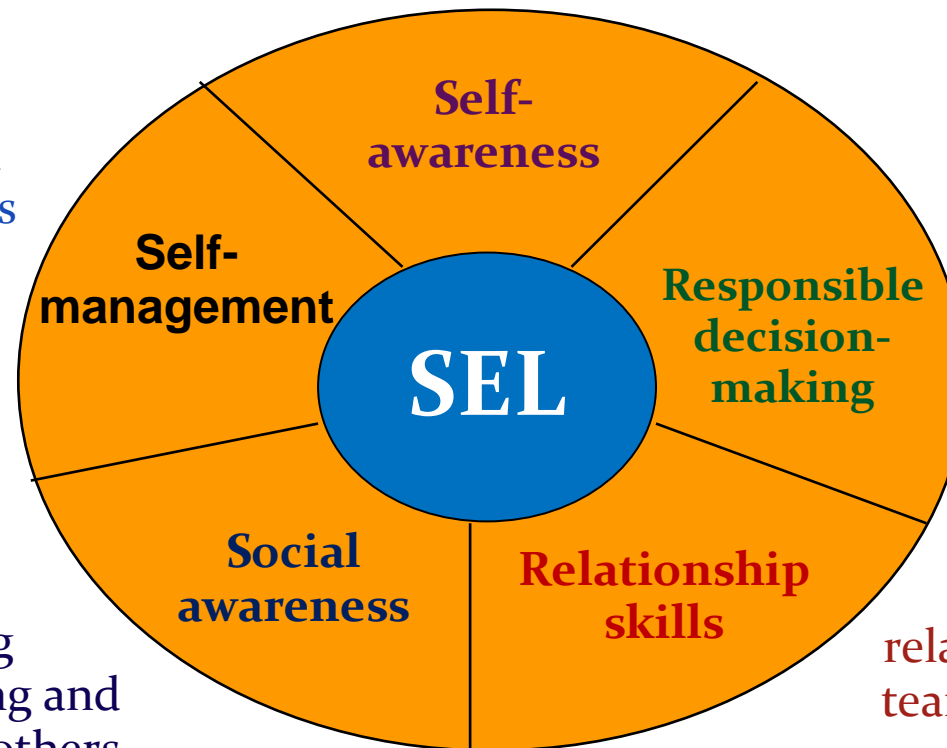


Stress is a part of life...

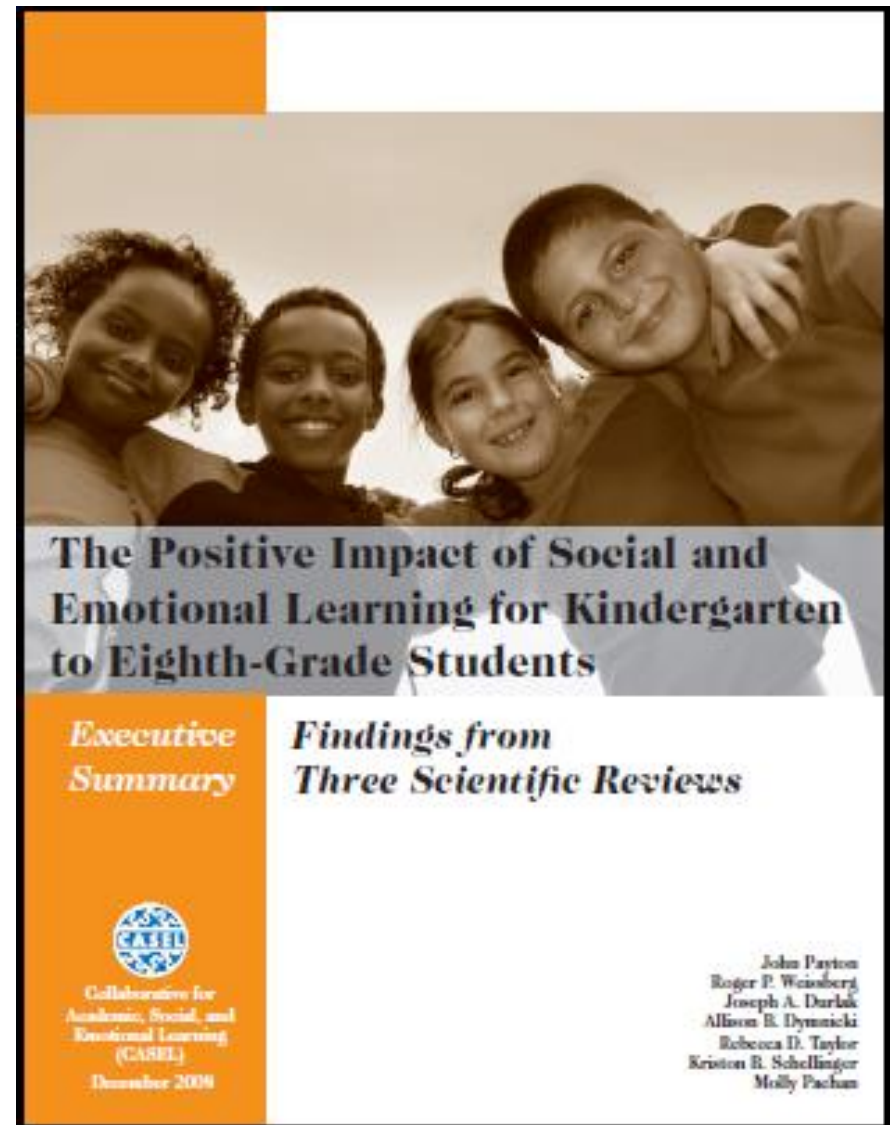
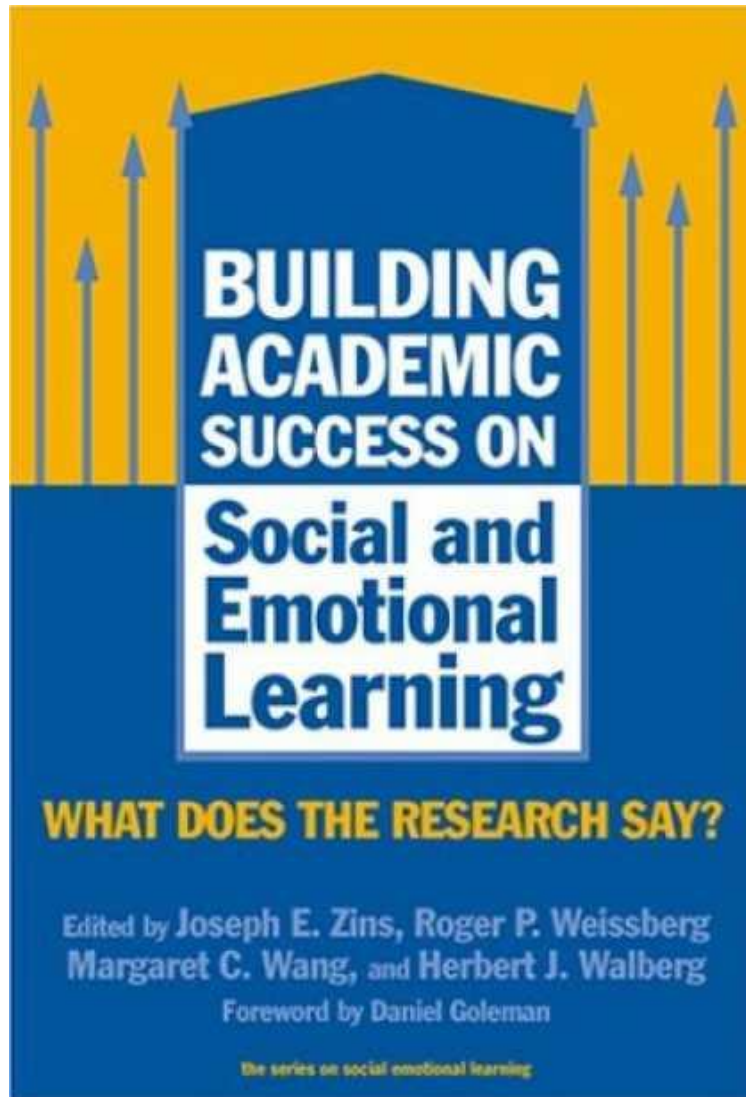


5 Core Social and Emotional Competencies: i.e., “Resiliency”

Recognizing one’s emotions and values as well
as one’s strengths and limitations



Decades of Research on SEL Outcomes



SEL Outcomes

Students who received SEL instruction were:

- more connected to teachers and school
- more engaged in learning
- more motivated to learn
- less likely to engage in problem behavior
- performed better academically
 - 11-17% increase in math and literacy scores on standardized achievement tests

Source: Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg (2004). Building Academic Success on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): What Does the Research Say?

How Do You Promote Social and Emotional Competency?

Effective Learning Environment

- Creating safe, caring, engaging, supportive, well-managed learning environment
 - **e.g., Responsive Classroom**

Skill development

- Providing explicit skills instruction for all students
 - **e.g., Open Circle**



SEL Programs: What Predicts Success?

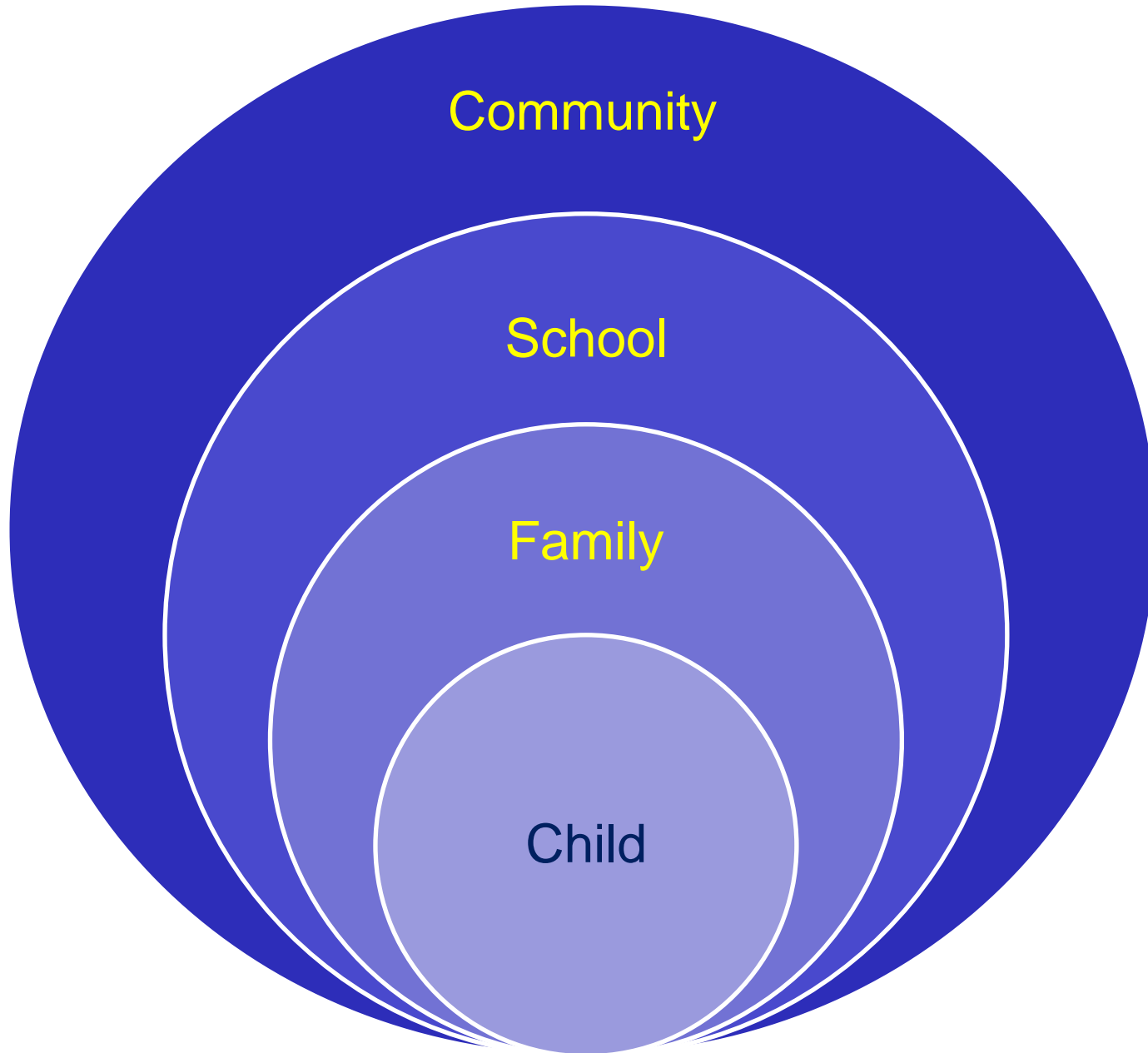
Only programs found to be **S.A.F.E.** had a significant positive impact on participants' academics:

- **Sequenced** set of activities to build SEL skills step-by-step
- **Active** forms of learning (role-plays, behavioral rehearsal) for skills practice
- **Focused** attention on SEL, >8 sessions, with consistent, ongoing reinforcement
- **Explicitly** targets SEL skills development as the learning objectives

More Keys to Success...

- More effective when taught by classroom teachers, rather than non-school staff
- Included high quality staff development and support
- Adequately implemented across school staff and across all grades
- Involved family and community as partners

Source: Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg (2004). Building Academic Success on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): What Does the Research Say?



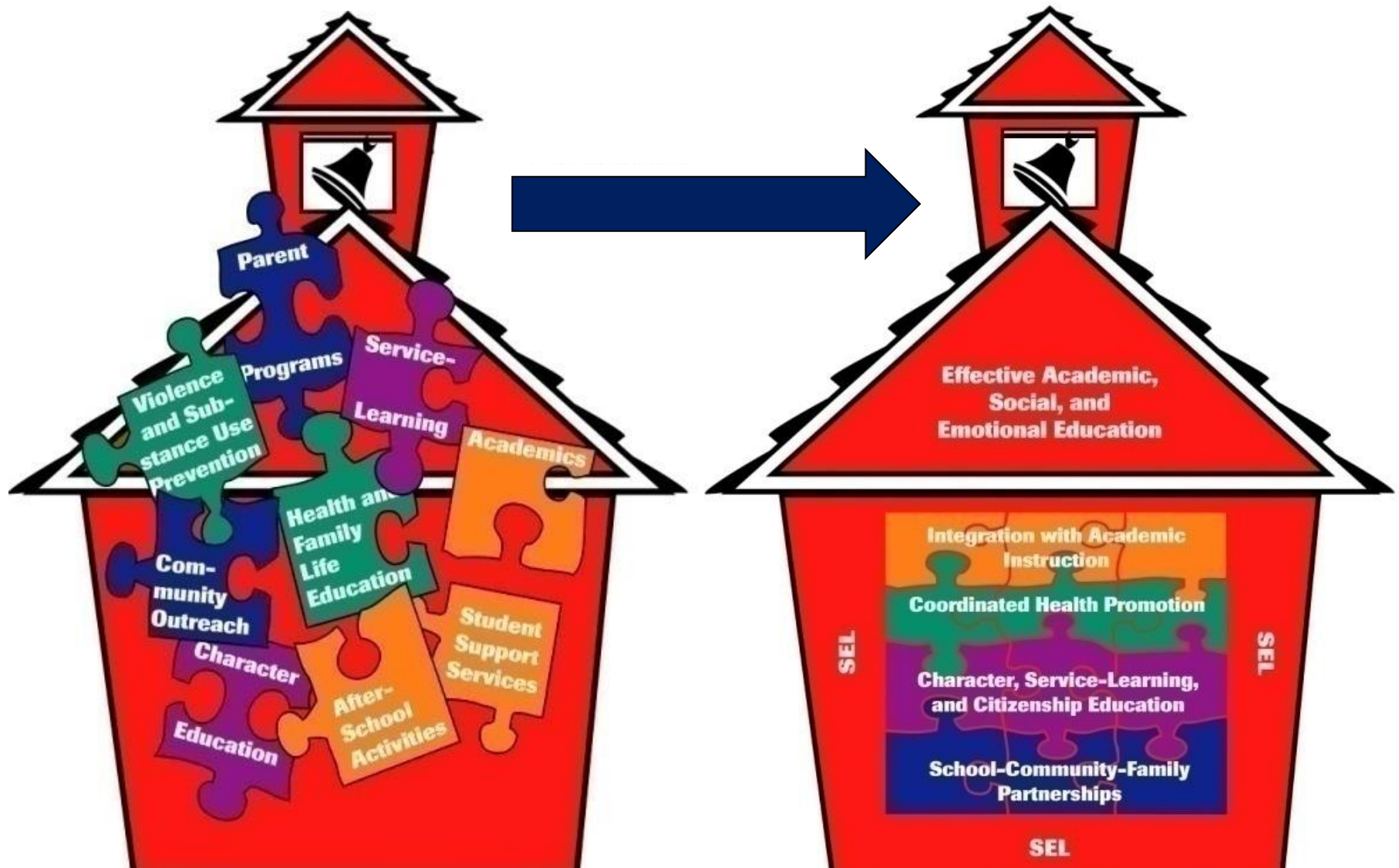
Recap: Why SEL?

- Emotions affect how and what we learn
- Positive effects on academic performance, health, relationships, and citizenship
- Essential for lifelong success
- Relevant skills can be taught
- A coordinating framework to overcome fragmentation

Typical Prevention Approaches by Schools

- AIDS Education
- Bullying Prevention
- Career Education
- Character Education
- Civic Education
- Community Schools
- Delinquency Prevention
- Dropout Prevention
- Drug Prevention
- Family Life Education
- Health Education
- Mental Health Promotion
- Multicultural Education
- Nutrition Education
- Physical Injury Prevention
- Sex Education
- Suicide Prevention
- Truancy Prevention
- 21st Century Workplace Skills
- Violence Prevention

SEL Can Be a Coordinating Framework



Benefits of a Coordinated, Comprehensive SEL Framework for K-12

- Conveys importance of SEL as core part of educational process in Lexington (K-12)
- Coordinated goals/action plans across grades
- Enhances overall SEL efficacy through sequenced implementation and consistency
- Greater efficiency by addressing the root causes of multiple “problems” simultaneously (e.g., bullying, substance use)



Needham Public Schools

Information for: [Parents](#) [Students](#) [Staff](#) [Community](#) [New to Needham](#)

SEL

[What Is SEL? Skills for Learning, Skills for Life - Competencies](#)

[How Is Effective SEL linked to Academic Achievement and School Life?](#)

A Look at SEL in Action in Needham

[Elementary Level](#)

[Secondary Level](#)

[Parent and Professional Resources](#)

[How Has Needham Funded SEL Development?](#)

Social/Emotional Learning at the Needham Schools

Office of Student Development and Program Evaluation

Needham has become a leader nationwide in social and emotional learning, having developed a K-12 approach that is a part of every school and classroom in the district. The advancement of SEL has been one of three district-wide goals for eight years. Needham's program emphasizes skill development in:

- self-management and self-awareness,
- decision-making,
- social/interpersonal skills.

Articulated competencies for pre-kindergarten through high school guide our work; each level has identified where SEL skills and concepts intersect and support school curriculum and needs. Now in our eighth year, we are seeing the results of our work with few routine discipline problems at elementary level, and fewer students engaging in risky activities at the middle and high school levels.

Social and Emotional Competencies – Grades PreK-12

	PreK	K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
Self-awareness, Self-management Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins to identify own emotions and direct connections that lead to emotions • Labels simple overt emotions in others • Expands beyond primary coping strategies; demonstrates patience and self-restraint • Shows responsibility for belongings, materials, and tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies feelings that most people experience • Labels positive and negative emotions in others • Recognizes and resists inappropriate behaviors (Impulse control) • Learns and uses several self-management skills, including self-calming, verbalizing rather than enacting anger, verbalizing frustration and/or sadness, and displaying patience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies observed emotions in self and others • Identifies strategies for coping with strong emotions • Communicates rudimentary refusal skills • Accepts failure or frustration and continues effort • Discontinues emotional expression that seems to upset others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies and reflects on feelings • Recognizes stressful situations • Identifies coping strategies that are self-enhancing and other-enhancing, and strategies that are self- and other-destructive • Identifies own strengths and weaknesses and sets appropriate and realistic goals • Identifies his or her own values and how they are similar or different from others in practice • Identifies assumptions held about others • Shows awareness of how their experiences are like and unlike people from other communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands and expresses personal needs • Analyzes situations to separate one's own needs and feelings from peers and adults • Seeks information to develop one's own values and perspective • Independently initiates and manages tasks, inquiries, and responsibilities • Shows awareness of and ability to manage emotions resulting from neg. & pos. consequences • Shows willingness to incorporate negative and positive consequences in future action • Develops realistic plans and goals for self-improvement based on self-evaluation • Identifies how prejudice, discrimination, and privilege impact his/her identity and opportunities

Competencies listed include those measurable by student surveys and self-reports, and those measurable by teacher observation.

Source: Needham Public Schools

A Promising New SEL Strategy: Mindfulness Training



What is mindfulness?

Practice of bringing our full attention to present moment experience, on purpose, with curiosity and openness, and without judgment

Mindfulness practice helps to...

- Release our mind's tight grip on worrying about the past or the future
- Get greater enjoyment from an experience as it is happening (e.g., mindful eating)
- Build greater attentional control and awareness

Parents and teachers tell kids 100 times a day to pay attention, but we never teach them how.

Dr. Phillippe Goldin, Stanford

Lexington schools bringing mindfulness into classroom



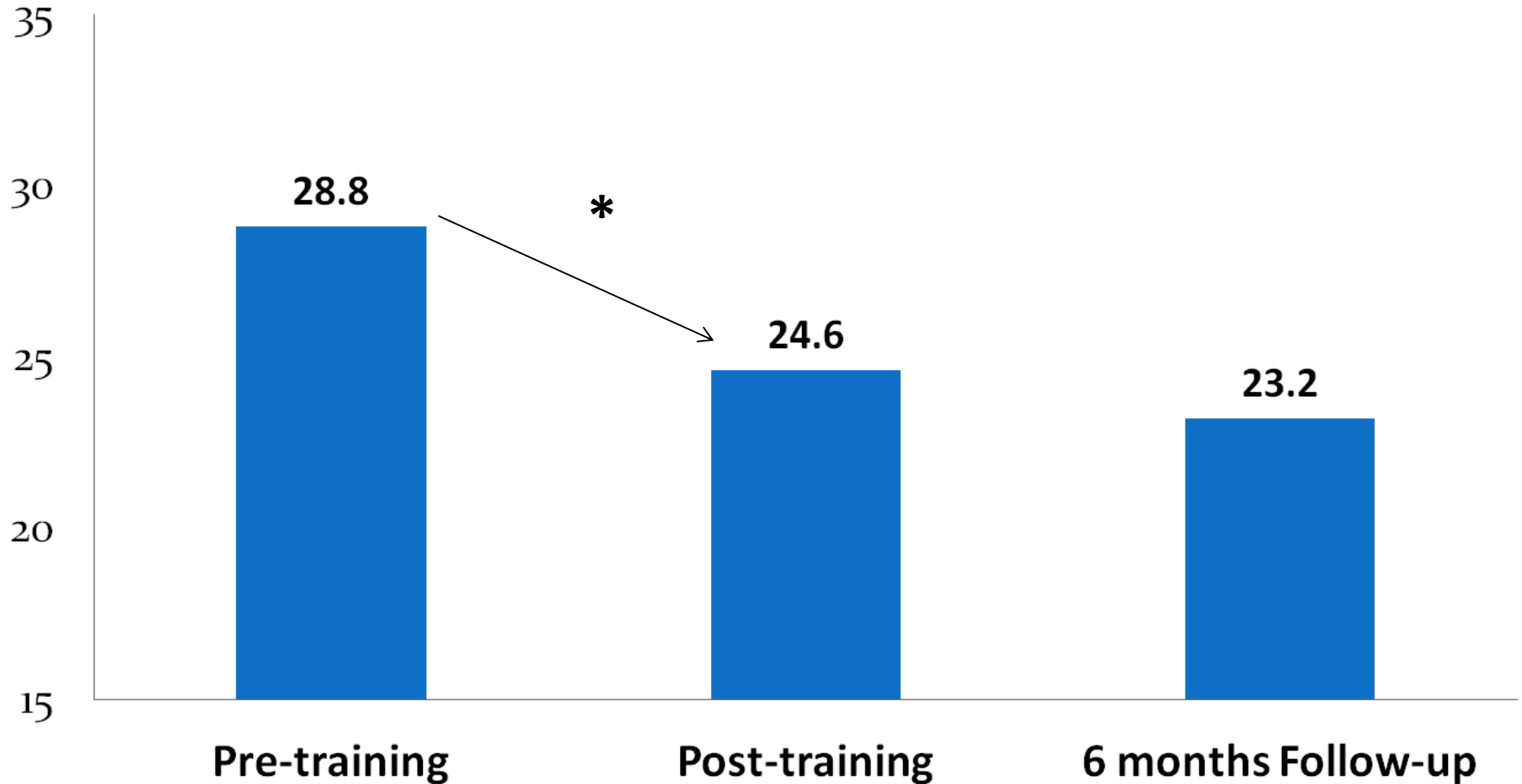
The Aware Teacher Training

Funded by Lexington Education Foundation

28 LPS staff participants in pilot 5-week training

- 48% from elementary/middle schools
- 41% from high school
- 72% teachers
- Mean years of experience in schools: 18 ± 10

Participant Perceived Stress Score



* Statistically significant difference

Participant Comments

Professional Impact:

“I am making fuller contact – by listening better to students and colleagues”

“I breath before I answer difficult or irritating questions”

“I have been calmer in the classroom and have been able to calm my students as well”

Participant Comments cont'd

Student Impact:

“I find myself a lot more aware of the student’s perspective and try to be an active listener for them”

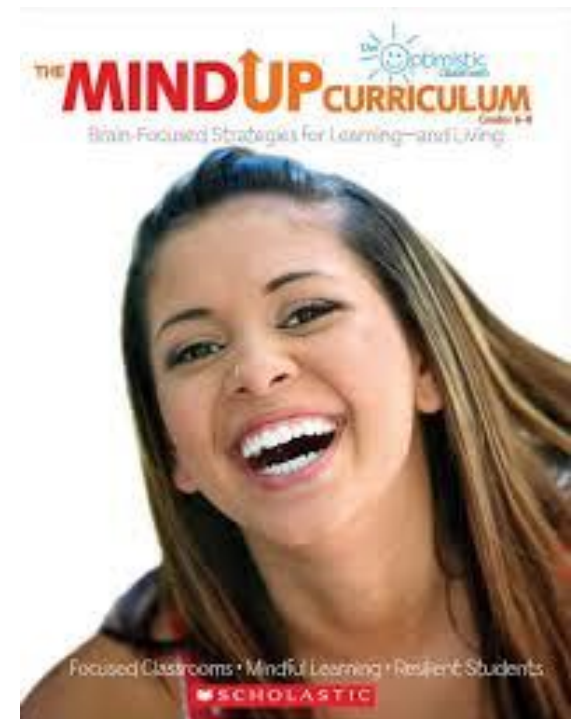
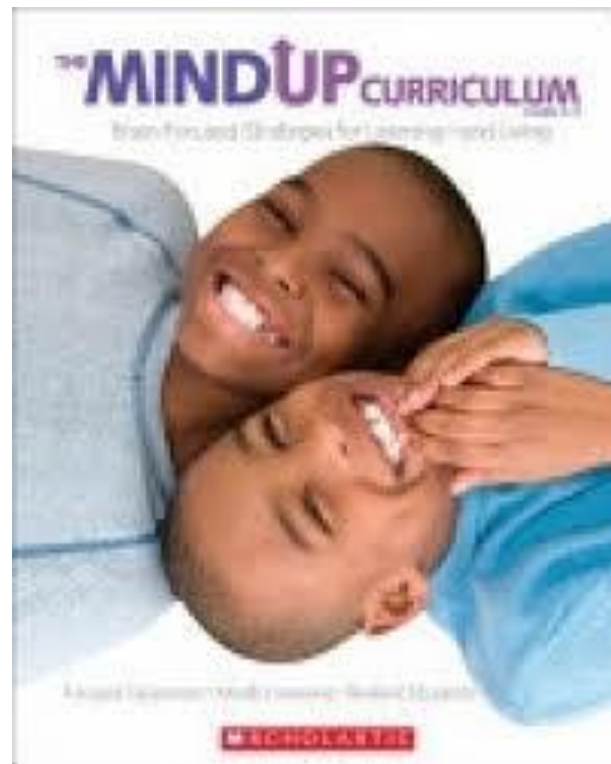
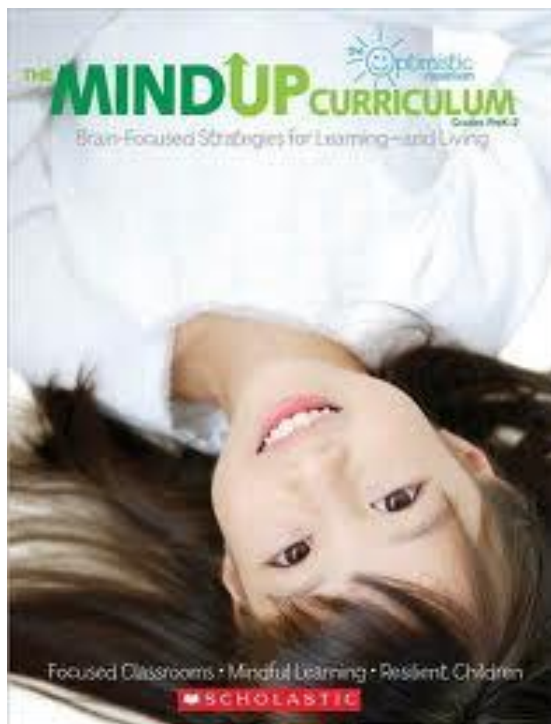
“It...increased my understanding of, and empathy for, student stressors. I am thinking of reducing my contributions to that.”

“I have helped students relax and focus on their breathing and prevented them from letting their emotions overtake them”

Suggestions for Moving Forward

- Create advisory group to develop plan for training more school staff, and providing reinforcement and support for those already trained
- Integrate mindfulness practice throughout school day (e.g., Extended Homeroom at high school)
- Focus training more on how to bring practices into the classroom
 - Meet in grade-level teams to develop grade-appropriate practices, role-play lessons

New Mindfulness Curriculum for K-8

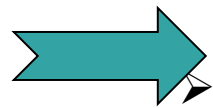


Moving Forward

“...that this is something valued in all schools, and for our focus to be on excellence, with the first focus being on excellence of our students, not just their scores.”

Topics we will cover:

- School-related Stress
- Resiliency and Mindfulness



➤ Communication

Proactive communication with the community is vital

- Provide information on initiatives, actions and outcomes
- The community needs to know what schools are doing to address stress
- Ongoing communication will demonstrate that this important issue is a major priority for the school administration.

2012-2013 LPS System Goal

If we increase student pro-social behavior and resiliency, and reduce sources of unhealthy student stress, then student academic performance and well-being will improve.

What the Community Wants to Know:

- What specific programs or changes are in place or planned at the district and school levels?
- What progress has been made and what have you learned?
- What can the community do to help you succeed in this mission?

Ways to Communicate

At the district level:

- A prominent section on the district web site devoted to initiatives to reduce stress and build resiliency
- Regular updates from the School Committee and the Superintendent
- Articles or a regular column in the Minuteman, Lexington Patch and/or Colonial Times

Ways to Communicate

At individual schools

- A prominent section on each school web site devoted to initiatives to reduce stress and build resiliency
- Regular columns/updates in school newsletters and via the List serves
- Solicit student and parent feedback on stress initiatives
- Include parents and students on committees related to addressing stress

Working Collaboratively

Role of the Collaborate to Reduce Student Stress

- A vehicle to facilitate collaboration between the school administration and the parent community.
- Conduct and share research on topics related to resiliency and student stress
- Help plan and organize community events