

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee works on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 appropriations bill, I urge you to fund the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Initiative at \$270 million.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. A review of more than 200 studies found that programs that teach social and emotional skills have yielded significant positive effects on student attitudes about self, others, and school, and have improved school safety. Overall, these programs “are associated with positive results such as improved attitudes about the self and others, increased prosocial behavior, lower levels of problem behaviors and emotional distress, and improved academic performance.”ⁱ According to a 2017 meta-analysis on the effects of social and emotional learning, students participating in social and emotional learning programs demonstrated a 6% increase in high school graduation rates and an 11% increase in college graduation rates.ⁱⁱ

With school safety issues becoming increasingly important, it is also critical that we invest in resources that foster a safe and inclusive learning environment that addresses the unique challenges facing today’s children. Studies show that students who participated in SEL programs demonstrated significantly fewer conduct-related issues and had significantly lower levels of emotional distress compared to students without SEL training.

To support the growth of SEL programs, we are requesting \$270 million for a **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Initiative**.

- \$170 million within the **Education Innovation and Research** program for grants for evidence-based, field-initiated innovations that address student social, emotional, and cognitive needs;
- \$25 million within the **Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED)** grant program for teacher professional development and pathways into teaching that provide a strong foundation in child development and learning, including skills for implementing SEL strategies;

- \$25 million within the **School Safety National Activities** program to make schools safer through a new competition that will help local educational agencies (LEAs) directly increase the number of mental health and child development experts in schools; and
- \$50 million for **Full-Service Community Schools** to provide comprehensive services and expand evidence-based models that meet the holistic needs of children, families, and communities.ⁱⁱⁱ

SEL programs have an average of \$11 returned for each dollar invested into their programs and the impact of these kinds of investments lasts over time.^{iv} To ensure that all students have access to the social and emotional development and supports they need to succeed, we ask that you fund the SEL Initiative for \$270 million in FY21.

Sincerely,



Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

ⁱTaylor, R. D., Oberle, E., Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2017). Promoting positive youth development through school-based social and emotional learning interventions: A meta-analysis of follow-up effects. *Child Development, 88*(4).

ⁱⁱ Taylor, R. D., Oberle, E., Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2017). Promoting positive youth development through school-based social and emotional learning interventions: A meta-analysis of follow-up effects. *Child Development, 88*(4).

ⁱⁱⁱ Partnership for the Future of Learning. (2018). Community Schools Playbook. Washington, D.C.: Partnership for the Future of Learning. <https://communityschools.futureforlearning.org/>

^{iv} Belfield, C., Bowden, B., Klapp, A., Levin, H., Shand, R., & Zander, S. The Economic Value of Social and Emotional Learning. New York, NY: Center for Benefit-Cost Studies in Education. Teachers College, Columbia University. <http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rulesforengagement/SEL-Revised.pdf>

Social and Emotional Learning Initiative Appropriations, FY 2021
List of Signatories
March 13, 2020

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