# Social-Emotional Learning: Research and Policy Opportunities
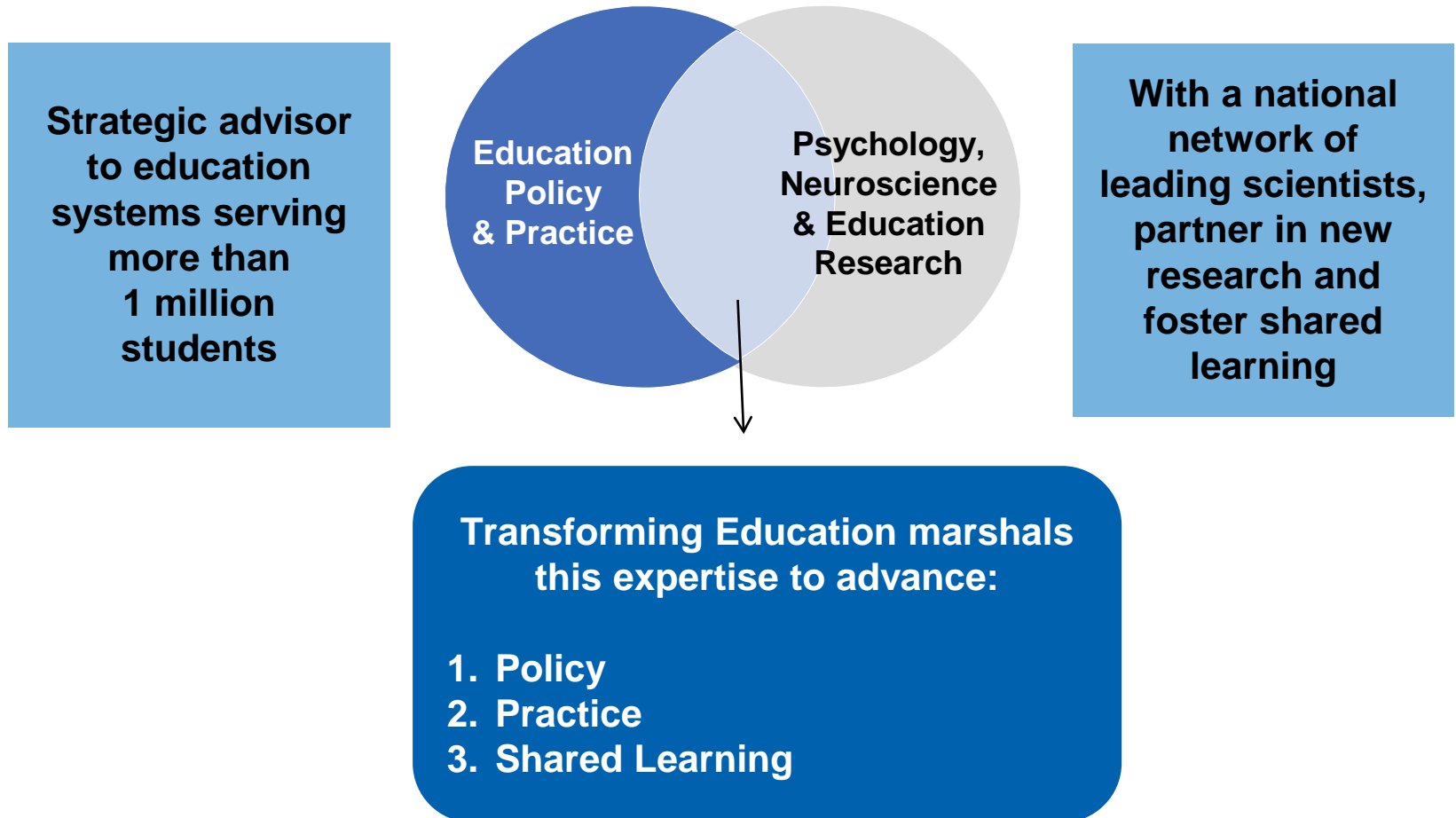


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# TransformEd supports school systems in equipping students with the mindsets and skills they need to succeed

**Strategic advisor to education systems serving more than 1 million students**

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2. **Practice**
3. **Shared Learning**

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# What is Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)?

SEL refers to the building of intra- and interpersonal competencies, e.g.

**Self-Management**
- The ability to regulate your actions and beliefs

**Growth Mindset**
- The belief that your ability can improve over time

**Social Awareness**
- The ability to empathize with others; take different perspectives

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# We refer to these Mindsets, Essential Skills, and Habits as "MESH"

Social-emotional competencies

MESH competencies

Learning mindsets

Student agency

Non-cognitive skills

Character

Meta-cognitive skills

Non-academic skills

**Source**: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Tower of Babel*, c. 1568

# Research shows that MESH matters!

## STUDENT ACADEMICS

- MESH predicts high school and college completion.
- Students with strong MESH have greater academic achievement within K-12 and college.
- Fostering MESH as early as pre-school has both immediate and long-term impact.

## CAREER SUCCESS

- Employers value MESH and seek employees who have them.
- Higher MESH predicts a greater likelihood of being employed.
- Stronger MESH in childhood predicts higher adult earnings and greater financial stability.

## HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- Adults with stronger MESH are less likely to commit a crime and be incarcerated.
- Strong MESH decreases the likelihood of being a single or unplanned teenage parent.
- The positive health effects associated with stronger MESH include reduced mortality and lower rates of obesity, smoking, substance abuse, and mental health disorders.

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# MESH Measurement in Practice: The CORE Districts



8 school districts

> 1M students

~ 1,600 schools

> 51,000 teachers

# Sample Items: Self-Management Scale

**Please answer how often you did the following during the past 30 days:**

During the past 30 days…

- I came to class prepared.
- I remembered and followed directions.
- I got my work done right away instead of waiting until the last minute.
- I paid attention, even when there were distractions.
- I worked independently with focus.
- I stayed calm even when others bothered or criticized me.
- I allowed others to speak without interruption.
- I was polite to adults and peers.
- I kept my temper in check.

*(Almost Never, Once in a While, Sometimes, Often, Almost All the Time)*

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# Student self-reports are significantly predictive of other important student outcomes

Correlation of Student Self-Reports with Academic and Behavioral Outcomes
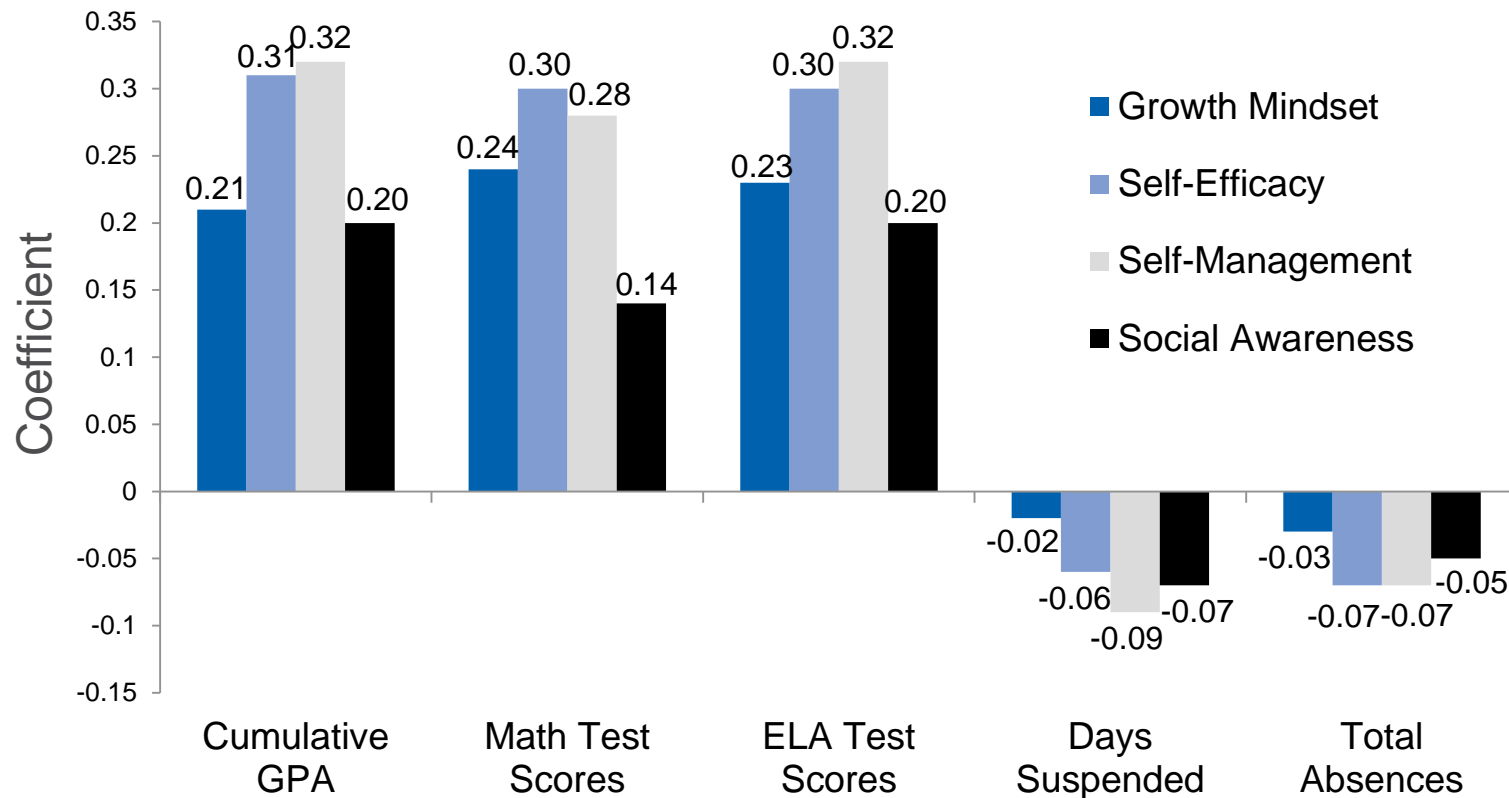
# The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): Opportunities





- Devolves **more power to states (SEAs) and local authorities (LEAs)**, providing them with flexibility to expand the definition of student and school success.

- Emphasizes the use of **evidence-based approaches**.

- Establishes **opportunity to incorporate SEL measures** into state systems, either for accountability purposes, formative purposes, or other public reporting.

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# How Are States Using ESSA to Advance SEL?
## Federally-Mandated Indicator

**NEVADA**

- "The **student engagement** consists of a measure of student chronic absenteeism, **school climate**, a measure of high school readiness, and a percentage of students with academic learning plans and contributes 10% to the total index score." (p. 28)

**NEW MEXICO**

- "A new instrument/measure as part of the **Opportunity To Learn indicator**, with stakeholders from inside and outside the [Public Education Department] coming together to select student and family **survey instruments that account for school safety, climate, culture**, and responsiveness to community needs, including a version for PreK-3." (p. 70)

**NORTH DAKOTA**

- A **Student Engagement Survey** will be used that was designed for the purpose of providing a valid reliable survey to measure student engagement that would glean valuable and actionable data for improvement." (p. 42)

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# How Are States Using ESSA to Advance SEL?
## Data Reporting or Needs Assessments

### OREGON

- "Oregon's **Comprehensive Needs Assessment** process engages districts in a review of major systems that impact outcomes for students, including: [...] Academic, **Social and Emotional Supports.**" (p. 23)

### MICHIGAN

- "Michigan is redeveloping its **comprehensive needs assessment** process using a Multi-tiered System of Support approach to focus on the whole child, which includes supporting schools in doing a data-based review of all of the conditions that relate to student learning, including … **behavioral and social emotional health.**" (p. 39)

### NEVADA

- "NDE is collaborating with AIR to design & administer a **statewide School Climate / Social and Emotional Learning Survey** that serves as the needs assessment for the social worker in school block grants." (p. 50)

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# How Are States Using ESSA to Advance SEL?
## Guidance and Resources to LEAs

### CONNECTICUT

- "CSDE will create **Evidence-based Practices Guidance** for the following areas … Early Learning (staffing, programming, instruction, social-emotional supports, etc.) … **School Climate (staffing, teaming, social-emotional supports**, restorative/non-exclusionary

  discipline, chronic absenteeism, etc.)." (p. 44)

### MASSACHUSETTS

- "[**Guidelines on Implementing SEL**] contains guidelines for schools and districts on how to effectively implement **social and emotional learning** curricula for students in grades K-12." (p. 70)

### NEW JERSEY

- Under description of use of **Title IV funding**: "NJDOE is also finalizing the development of **social emotional learning competencies** and support materials to promote positive school climates and more positive approaches to improving student behavior." (pp. 121-122)

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