

From Collaborative of Academic, Social and Emotional Learning-CASEL

What is SEL » Climate & Connectedness

Within caring learning communities, there are respectful, supportive relationships among students, teachers, and parents. Students have opportunities to collaborate with others, as well as to experience autonomy and influence, and there is a sense of shared purpose and ideals among all members of the community. In such communities, students and faculty and staff look forward to walking through the schoolhouse door.

There is solid evidence demonstrating that student attachment to school is strongly influenced by the learning environment. Classroom and school interventions that make the learning environment safer, more caring, better managed, more participatory, and that enhance students' social competence, have been shown to increase student attachment to school. In turn, students who are more engaged and attached to school have better attendance and higher graduation rates, as well as higher grades and standardized tests scores.

Research also indicates that attachment to school decreases the prevalence of high-risk behaviors. Interventions that improve classroom climate and functioning, and enhance student attachment to school, decrease rates of high-risk behaviors. When students are attached to school and to pro-social teachers and peers, they are more likely to behave in pro-social ways themselves, and to avoid engaging in high-risk behaviors. Providing students with opportunities for participation may also increase students' intrinsic motivation to behave in pro-social ways, thereby decreasing school crime and other forms of deviant behavior in the school setting.

WEB contributes to the academic, social and emotional development of both 6th graders and WEB Leaders in a number of ways:

- Provides a structure that builds supportive relationships among students
- Brings together students from a cross section of the student body to collaborate with each other for a common purpose
- Trains WEB Leaders to act autonomously after being thoroughly prepared to influence 6th graders positively
- Creates a safer environment by giving permission to older students to “look out for” their 6th graders
- Encourages and supports involvement in co-curricular activities as well as better academic performance
- Focuses on contributing to the success of others for the sake of being a responsible member of the community, not for extrinsic reward