



# Impact of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Program

2021-2022 Mid-Year Analysis

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## Abstract

This study examined whether PowerMyLearning’s Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program improved students’ SEL competencies from the beginning to middle of the school year. This program is one of many offered by PowerMyLearning that leverages the [Triangle of Learning](#)—a unique approach that we have been refining and studying over the last few decades. The results of this study indicate that **PowerMyLearning’s SEL program led to better student SEL skills, teacher confidence in supporting SEL, teacher-family relationships, and school climate.** These findings were statistically significant.



Students had significantly better self-efficacy (+12%;  $p < .10$ ) and also had significantly better self-management (+7%;  $p = .08$ ). In addition, teachers were significantly more confident in supporting students’ SEL, including self-efficacy (+11%;  $p < .10$ ), sense of belonging (+10%;  $p < .10$ ), and sense of safety (+11%;  $p = .08$ ). The study also showed significant improvements in teacher-family relationships (+13%;  $p < .01$ ) and school climate (+7%;  $p = .03$ ).

## Research Context

This study examined the impact of our SEL program called “Nurture Student Growth Through Social Emotional Learning (SEL)” on grade 1-6 teachers, students, and families at one partner school in San Jose, California during the 2021-2022 school year. The student demographics of this school were 67% Hispanic, 29% AAPI, and 78% free or reduced-price lunch.

In the prior year, the school delivered instruction remotely in response to the pandemic. The school was eager to focus on SEL during the 2021-2022 school year to address behavioral and interpersonal challenges that arose when students returned

to in-person instruction. During the 2021-2022 school year, 26 educators, including K-6 teachers and other school staff and leadership, participated in the program with a total reach of 523 students. This study focuses on data collected from 18 grade 1-6 teachers. Details of the study and our impact are provided in the research methods section of this report.

## PowerMyLearning SEL Program

The elements of the “Nurture Student Growth Through Social Emotional Learning (SEL)” program are designed to complement each other and to build capacity for both teachers and families by leveraging best-practices for

adult learners. We purposefully include families in the program because working with the adults closest to students (teachers as *well as caregivers*) enables these adults to reinforce one another. Our workshops for teachers are always followed by small-group coaching to extend learning into daily practice because this design has been shown to have the greatest impact.

In the 2021-2022 school year, the partner school received the following:

- **Four Educator Workshops for 26 teachers, leadership and other school staff.** The workshops were designed to provide strategies for interpreting and addressing challenging behaviors in and out of the classroom, and for building an inclusive community of motivated learners. Workshop topics included: Trauma-Informed Practices that Benefit All Learners, Mindfulness and More for Kids and Adults, Build a Classroom Community Where All Student Feel They Belong, and Transform Discipline into a Learning Opportunity.
- **Coaching for 19 teachers in grades 1-6** to extend learning from the first three Educator Workshops into daily practice. Each teacher participated in three cycles of three coaching sessions (nine total sessions). Coaching sessions were 45 minutes each, resulting in 6.75 coaching hours per teacher.
- **Four, 60-minute Family Workshops** delivered in Spanish and English that were designed to provide strategies for families to support their children's well-being, as well as their own. Workshop topics included: Self-Care for Family Wellness, Strategies to

Foster Your Child's Motivation, Navigate Cyberbullying and Social Media, Understand Your Child's Developmental Milestones.

### Research Methods

In this section, we will describe the survey instrument, data analysis, and study results. We will then discuss the implications and limitations of the results and next steps of this work.

*SEL Survey Instrument.* To examine PowerMyLearning's impact, we used a pre-post study design that compared SEL competencies before (beginning of year) and during (middle of year) the SEL program implementation. At each time point, 18 grade 1-6 teachers completed a 20-question SEL survey adapted from the Panorama teacher survey. PowerMyLearning researchers modified the original survey to incorporate questions related to additional hypothesized outcomes, including teachers' perceptions of school safety and students' sense of belonging. In addition, we adapted questions from the Panorama SEL survey to pertain to the whole class, rather than individual students, and we added questions to the survey to examine teacher perceptions of student SEL competencies. Thus, the SEL survey included questions about student SEL competencies, teacher confidence in supporting SEL, teacher-family relationships, and school climate. The SEL competencies included self-efficacy, growth mindset, self-management, and social awareness. The teacher confidence questions focused on supporting those same student SEL skills.

*Data Analysis.* Responses to each survey question were scored on a 5-point scale. In cases where multiple survey questions pertained to the same SEL construct, such as teacher-family relationships, the individual

question scores were averaged to create an overall score for that construct. We then conducted paired samples t-tests on the beginning and middle of year data for each of the SEL constructs.

*Study Results.* Statistical significance was evaluated relative to a p-value threshold of .10. With respect to student SEL competencies, the results indicate that PowerMyLearning’s SEL program led to significantly better student self-efficacy ( $p < .10$ ) and student self-management ( $p = .08$ ), but did not have a significant impact on students’ growth mindset ( $p = .33$ ) or social awareness ( $p = 1.0$ ). In terms of teachers’ confidence in supporting students’ SEL skills, the findings suggest a significant impact on teacher confidence in supporting students’ self-efficacy ( $p < .10$ ), sense of belonging ( $p < .10$ ), and sense of safety ( $p = .08$ ). There was a positive but non-significant trend for teacher confidence in supporting students’ social awareness ( $p = .19$ ). While we did see a statistically significant impact on student self-management, teachers did not indicate that their own confidence in supporting students’

self-management had improved ( $p = .58$ ). The results also indicate a significant effect of the SEL program on teacher-family relationships ( $p = .008$ ) and teacher perceptions of school climate ( $p = .03$ ).

*Discussion.* PowerMyLearning is committed to building evidence around the impact of our work. This study found statistically significant impact of PowerMyLearning’s “Nurture Student Growth Through Social Emotional Learning (SEL)” program on multiple aspects of SEL. The findings indicate that the SEL program successfully supports students’ SEL competencies, teachers’ confidence in supporting SEL, and the development of positive teacher-family relationships and school climate, which are key goals of the program. One limitation of this study is that several of the SEL constructs were based on a single survey question. Additional data with more robust instruments will be collected to corroborate the results of this study. In the next phase of this work, we will analyze the year-long impact of PowerMyLearning’s SEL program using end of year outcome data.

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## Acknowledgments

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## About PowerMyLearning

PowerMyLearning is a national nonprofit that advances educational equity and accelerates student success. What sets us apart from other organizations is our focus on unlocking the power of collaboration between students, teachers, and families—something we call the Triangle of Learning Approach. Our offerings are designed for schools and districts and include programs on fostering social emotional learning, accelerating learning, and promoting culturally relevant teaching practices. Each program includes professional development for teachers and capacity-building workshops for families. Additionally, we offer a program on accelerating learning in the early grades (K-2) that includes our base services and our award-winning education technology innovation, Family Playlists<sup>®</sup>. Now more than ever, our collective efforts to accelerate learning must address the needs of the whole child and include families so we can reverse the systematic denial of educational opportunity based on race, class, language, and learning differences. To learn more, please visit [www.PowerMyLearning.org](http://www.PowerMyLearning.org).