Webinar
Advancing Social-Emotional Learning Measurement and Practice:
Lessons from the CORE Districts

May 30, 2018

http://www.edpolicyinca.org/projects/core-pace-research-partnership
What is SEL and how do the CORE districts work to support it?

How does CORE measure SEL and are the measures valid and reliable?
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<th>Speaker</th>
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<tr>
<td>Noah Bookman (<a href="mailto:noah@coredistricts.org">noah@coredistricts.org</a>)</td>
<td>CORE Districts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taylor Allbright (<a href="mailto:taylor.allbright@usc.edu">taylor.allbright@usc.edu</a>)</td>
<td>University of Southern California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olabayo Allen-Taylor (<a href="mailto:olabayo.allen-taylor@ousd.org">olabayo.allen-taylor@ousd.org</a>)</td>
<td>Claremont Middle School, Oakland Unified School District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan Ward-Roncalli (<a href="mailto:sroncall@lausd.net">sroncall@lausd.net</a>)</td>
<td>Los Angeles Unified School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather Hough (<a href="mailto:hjhough@stanford.edu">hjhough@stanford.edu</a>)</td>
<td>Policy Analysis for California Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Richardson (<a href="mailto:BARBARA.RICHARDSON@sbcusd.k12.ca.us">BARBARA.RICHARDSON@sbcusd.k12.ca.us</a>)</td>
<td>San Bernardino Unified School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine Olmstead (<a href="mailto:COlmstead@ocde.us">COlmstead@ocde.us</a>)</td>
<td>Orange County Department of Education</td>
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The CORE Districts

- 8 school districts
- > 1M students
- ~ 1,600 schools
- > 51,000 teachers
How the CORE districts work together

• 2010 to 2013: District Partnerships
  • Standards Implementation
  • Building Relationships

• 2013 to 2016: CORE ESEA Waiver
  • Measuring More than Test Scores
  • Equity Driven Accountability – School Report Cards
  • Continuous Improvement Based Interventions (e.g., School Pairings)

• Current Work: Systems Improvements
  • Equity Driven Analytics - the CORE Data Collaborative
  • Networked Improvement Communities
School Quality Improvement System

First in the State to Look at:

**STATE MEASURES**
- Student Test Results
- English Learner Progress
- Chronic Absenteeism
- Suspension Rates
- Graduation Rates

**CORE’S LOCALLY DRIVEN MEASURES**
- Student Academic Growth
- Student Social/Emotional Learning
- School Culture and Climate
- High School Readiness

**UNDER DEVELOPMENT**
- College and Career Readiness
CORE DATA COLLABORATIVE provides educators in urban, rural and suburban districts a clearer picture of school progress.
CORE is part of the national dialogue on including Social Emotional Skills in Multiple Measure approaches to school quality.

"We’re putting a flashlight on the social and emotional skills to help schools think about the role they play. We think school quality is not only about academic success but also about developing the whole child."

With almost half a million students surveyed across two years, CORE’s measures of social-emotional skills let us explore how to measure these essential skills at scale.
Why Does SEL Matter?

James Heckman demonstrated that students’ self-esteem and locus of control are important predictors of educational attainment, employment, and salary.

Probability of Being a 4-Year College Graduate by Age 30 by Decile of Cognitive and Non-cognitive Factors (males)

Note: Non-cognitive factors are measured by the Rotter Locus of Control scale and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.
Surveys of Students’ Social-Emotional Learning

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SE Competency</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth Mindset</td>
<td>The belief that one’s abilities can grow with effort. Students with a growth mindset see effort as necessary for success, embrace challenges, learn from criticism, and persist in the face of setbacks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>The belief in one’s own ability to succeed in achieving an outcome or reaching a goal. Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one’s own motivation, behavior, and environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Management</td>
<td>The ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, delaying gratification, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward personal and academic goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Awareness</td>
<td>The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.</td>
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The identified skills include intrapersonal and interpersonal skills

**Intrapersonal**
- Growth Mindset
- Self-Efficacy

**Interpersonal**
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
Social-emotional indicators prioritized by CORE districts have been mapped to the CASEL framework for social-emotional learning.

- **Self-Awareness**
  - CORE Indicators: Growth Mindset, Self-Efficacy

- **Self-Management**
  - CORE Indicators: Self-Management

- **Social Awareness**
  - CORE Indicators: Social Awareness
In Winter 2017, CORE launched our first Networked Improvement Community

By 2020, we will see the following improvement in math achievement:

- African American and Hispanic/Latino students will improve by 44 points
- The gaps between these students and white students will decrease by 20 points
Social emotional factors have surfaced as a driver of math gaps in our root cause analyses.
As we delve into improvement work with school and district teams, many of the change ideas being tested have a social-emotional factor to them.
Continuous improvement

Smarter policy & practice

By sharing:
- Lessons learned
- Tools and resources
- Best practices
- Original research with data unique to CORE
Our Analytic Approach

Quantitative analysis
- Uncover patterns in data
- Explore variation
- Analyze outcomes
- Validate measures

Qualitative analysis
- Understand implementation
- Highlight “promising practices”
- Explain variation
What is SEL and how do the CORE districts work to support it?

How does CORE measure SEL and are the measures valid and reliable?
Enacting Social-Emotional Learning:
Practices and Supports Employed in CORE Districts and Schools

Taylor N. Allbright
May 30, 2018

With Julie A. Marsh, Susan McKibben, Heather Hough, Michelle Hall, Ananya M. Matewos, Caetano Siqueira
Research Questions

• How do educators define social-emotional learning?
• What strategies do schools use to enact and support various conceptions of SEL?
• How do districts support schools’ SEL practices?
Context of CORE Districts

- Current focus on accelerating math achievement for African American and Latino students, grades 4-8
- CORE has hypothesized that SEL plays a role in math success
- CORE invited us to examine SEL practices that may support their goals of accelerating math achievement
Methods

• Multiple case study of “positive outlier” schools, outperforming schools with similar demographics & resources

• Selected 2 schools each in 5 districts

• Selection criteria included:
  • Served large proportions of African American and/or Latino youth, who were top quartile in SEL in both 2015 and 2016
    • Schools were also performing relatively well in math

• Data sources: Interviews ($n=71$), observations, documents
Research Questions

• How do educators define social-emotional learning?
• What strategies do schools use to enact and support various conceptions of SEL?
• How do districts support schools’ SEL practices?
Research Questions

• How do educators **define** social-emotional learning?

• What **strategies** do schools use to enact and support various conceptions of SEL?

• How do **districts** support schools’ SEL practices?
Respondents varied widely in conceptions of SEL.

- Supporting student mental and emotional well-being
- Creating a safe and supportive school climate
- Developing social skills and appropriate behavior
- Supporting adolescent development
- Building a culture of inclusion and acceptance of difference
- Addressing the needs of the whole child
Research Questions

• How do educators define social-emotional learning?
• What strategies do schools use to enact and support various conceptions of SEL?
• How do districts support schools’ SEL practices?
Six Categories of SEL Strategies

1. Promoting positive climate and relationships
   - Whole-school culture-building
   - Personal interactions for trust and relationships
   - Advisory periods
   - Organizing schedules and students to support relationships
   - Inclusion strategies

2. Supporting positive behavior
   - Positive behavior management and restorative practices
   - Clear values and expectations
   - Targeted approaches for struggling or traditionally underserved students
Six Categories of SEL Strategies

1. Promoting positive climate and relationships
   - Whole-school culture-building
   - Personal interactions for trust and relationships
   - Advisory periods

Instead of looking at a punitive approach for everything and also having a blanket zero tolerance policy, we have more case-by-case responses to students.... That's what we do with restorative practice, to sort of to disrupt our punitive ways that we were used to going about responding to discipline.

School administrator
Six Categories of SEL Strategies

3. Elective courses and extra-curricular activities
   • Courses like music or PE support communication & relationships
   • Student clubs
   • After-school programs

4. Classroom practices and curricula
   • Creating a positive classroom environment
   • Structures to promote growth mindset
   • Modeling communication and mindsets
Six Categories of SEL Strategies

3. Elective courses and extra-curricular activities
   - Courses like music or PE support communication & relationships
   - Student clubs

So we really put an emphasis on how making mistakes is the only way to we can learn, how mistakes are really put in this special place where we applaud them, look at them ... So we go through all of that to talk about how these things make your brain grow... And every so often throughout the year we will pick...our favorite mistake and have the students do error analysis on those mistakes.

-Math teacher
Six Categories of SEL Strategies

5. Hiring, organizing, and training personnel
   • Staff leadership teams
   • Using non-instructional staff
   • Opportunities for adults to learn about SEL

6. Measurement and data use
   • Use of CORE survey data to guide school efforts
   • School- or staff-led data collection efforts
Common Themes among Outlier Schools

• Building on existing assets
  • Using strengths such as a well-developed sports program or a music program as a vehicle for promoting SEL

• Implementing with intention
  • Deliberate structure of trainings, roles, and expectations
  • Investment of staffing and financial resources

• Promoting student agency and leadership
  • Using youth-led efforts such as kindness clubs, student-led lessons, and buddy programs
Research Questions

• How do educators define social-emotional learning?
• What strategies do schools use to enact and support various conceptions of SEL?
• How do districts support schools’ SEL practices?
District Support for SEL

- Priorities and Frameworks
- Staffing
- Programs and Curricula
- Training
- Measurement and Data Use
Implications for Policy and Practice

• Build common understandings and alignment regarding SEL
• Make the connection between SEL and racial equity intentional and explicit
• Develop frameworks for embedding SEL in academic content areas
• Consider the full range of SEL strategies
Reflections: Olabayo Allen-Taylor

• Introduce yourself and your role
• Tell us about your school context and the students your school serves
• How does your school define social-emotional learning?
• What are some of the specific ways that your school works to advance social-emotional learning?
• Are there any reflections you would like to share on the work we presented in the SEL practices study?
SEL in LAUSD
Susan Ward Roncalli

• Social Emotional Learning Facilitator

• Health Education Programs

• Division of Instruction
LAUSD

• District serves 618,970 students in over 1000 schools and learning centers spread out over 710 square miles (2017)
• Over 157,000 English learners
• 74% Latino, 9.8 % white, 8.4 % African American, 6% Asian
LAUSD
• Over 4,000 foster youth.
• 499,283 students are eligible for reduced/free lunch.
• Trauma screening of 572 LAUSD students, 88% reported experiencing three or more traumatic events in their lifetime, 55% of whom showed symptoms of PTSD, depression, or anxiety.
Social Emotional Learning Definition

• Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

• https://achieve.lausd.net/socialemotionalleARNING
SEL Implementation Teams and Plans

• The six SEL facilitators work with 73 schools.
• Each school has a team of 3-5 teachers and staff. Team members can earn up to 40 hours for work on developing and implementing the school plan.
• This team uses data to develop an SEL implementation plan for the year.
Implementation Plans Are Data Based

• Our team works with each site to look at data as they develop their plans.
• Most schools base their plans on data from the LAUSD School Experience Survey
• Some utilize an SEL Rubric I developed with Transforming Education
• [https://achieve.lausd.net/Page/8397](https://achieve.lausd.net/Page/8397)
Summative and Formative Goals

• Our SEL teams write summative and formative SMART goals based on the SEL construct they decide to concentrate on.

• We ask them to measure growth towards their goals twice during the year.

• They send us this formative data and we meet with them to discuss it.
Revised SEL Implementation Plans

• The school site SEL implementation plans are living documents.

• Schools revise the plans based on formative data.

• If a strategy is not helping them to meet their goals, they meet to revise their plan.
Cross District Collaboration

• High Schools met to share promising practices and problems of practice in February

• These conversations allowed schools to share resources they had developed at the school sites
Culminating Activity-SELebration Transforming Practice Conference

• Second annual SEL conference was last Thursday.

• Every school created a display of their work for the year.
Policy

• Board Resolution
• Board informative
• SUMS MTSS Work
• SEL part of SPSA Plan
• Discipline Foundation policy revision
Collaborations

Academic English Mastery Program (AEMP) support for standard English learners. Focus on integrating SEL with culturally and linguistically proficient pedagogy.

School Mental Health- integrating SEL and Trauma informed healing educational practices.

Performing and Visual Arts- focus on integrating SEL into Arts instruction
Reflections

• Brief validated a lot of what I observe at school sites

• Adult interactions very important

• Schedule to meet the SEL needs of students also key.
What is SEL and how do the CORE districts work to support it?

Measuring Social Emotional Learning through Student Surveys in the CORE Districts: A Pragmatic Approach to Validity and Reliability

How does CORE measure SEL and are the measures valid and reliable?
Validity is a journey, not a destination

Pragmatic approach
1. How well were the measures designed?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Does a scale produce consistent scores over time when no changes have actually occurred?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content validity</td>
<td>Does each survey scale cover appropriate indicators of that topic or construct? (And do they omit indicators of related but distinct constructs?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face validity</td>
<td>Do the items within each scale appear to measure the construct they are supposed to measure? In other words, if taken at face value, do the items seem like appropriate indicators for that scale?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structural validity</td>
<td>Does a scale that was designed to represent a single construct represent just that one construct or do its psychometric properties suggest it is measuring more than just one construct?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representativeness</td>
<td>Do the items within a scale provide a representative cross-section of that construct?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best practices</td>
<td>To what extent are survey items written in ways that adhere to best practices and thereby minimize measurement error to the extent possible?</td>
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## 2. How well do the measures fit the context?

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<tr>
<td>Floor/ceiling effects</td>
<td>How well do the items on a scale spread respondents out across a range of responses for a particular population?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference bias</td>
<td>To what extent do respondents answer a survey scale differently based on the local peer norms?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measurement invariance</td>
<td>Does one subpopulation of respondents interpret the items of a survey scale as meaning the same thing as a different subpopulation?</td>
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3. With what level of fidelity were the data acquired?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey administration practices</td>
<td>How well did the survey administration motivate students to answer each item to the best of their abilities?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisficing</td>
<td>To what extent did students engage in strategies to avoid putting effort into completing the survey with fidelity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social desirability bias</td>
<td>To what extent were students trying to present themselves in a favorable light as they answered (rather than striving to provide truthful responses)?</td>
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4. To what extent are the measures being used appropriately?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis and measure creation</td>
<td>How appropriate are the decisions made during measure creation, data analysis, and reporting given the intended use of the survey data?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convergent and discriminant validity</td>
<td>How well does a measure correlate with other, related measures that it should theoretically correlate with? How well does a measure demonstrate a lack of statistical relationships with measures that it is theoretically distinct from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictive validity</td>
<td>How accurately does a measure predict future outcomes that we might care about?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generalizability</td>
<td>Given the nature of the construct and the nature of the population, to what extent are the results likely to generalize to other related constructs and/or other populations of respondents?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequential validity</td>
<td>What are the intended and unintended consequences of a particular use of survey scores?</td>
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1. How well were CORE’s measures designed?
Policy Analysis for California Education

Researchers ∙ Educators ∙ Measurement Experts ∙ Stakeholders

Meaningful
Measureable
Malleable
Pilot testing
Item revision

BEST PRACTICES
CONTENT VALIDITY
FACE VALIDITY
REPRESENTATIVENESS OF ITEMS

Researchers ∙ Educators ∙ Measurement Experts ∙ Stakeholders
Factor analysis shows that items on the survey are measuring distinct, separate constructs.
Scale reliability is high, indicating that the items are consistently measuring the construct.

Note, however, that reliability is low for growth mindset in early grades – could be the low number of items (4) or negatively phrased questions.

Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of the SEL constructs at each grade level (Meyer, Wang, & Rice (2018))
1. How well were CORE’s measures designed?

OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS

- Do students answer differently depending on their mood, or recent events (like a big test)?
- How stable are students’ responses across time?
- How different are students’ responses if questioned at multiple points during the school year?
2. How well do CORE’s measures fit the context?
FLOOR/CEILING EFFECTS

This could be an issue, since the SEL questions are on a 1-5 Likert scale, although even the raw data has a good spread.
However, Item Response Theory (IRT) models can smooth out the data and produce a more even distribution.

Distributions of Raw Scores, Scale Scores, and True Scores of Self-Management (Grade 8) (Meyer, Wang, & Rice (2018))
MEASUREMENT INVARIANCE

Recall: This just means that all students are interpreting and responding to the questions in the same way.

Particularly important in the case of SEL as we see big differences by gender...
MEASUREMENT INVARIANCE

And other student subgroups, even within the same school.

However, using Differential Item Functioning Analysis (DIF), researchers have shown that student subgroups are not responding differently to items within the scales.

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SEL Gaps by Student Demographics, Overall vs. Within Schools (Hough, Kalogrides, and Loeb, 2017)
**REFERENCE BIAS**

SEL and ELA are less correlated within school than overall, but if students in higher performing schools rated themselves more critically, the opposite would be true. Provides evidence against reference bias.

Student-level correlations between social-emotional skills and English language arts (ELA) test scores in CORE District middle schools, overall and within schools (West, 2016)
2. How well do CORE’s measures fit the context?

OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS

- Are students from different cultural backgrounds, or of different races/ethnicities, answering the surveys the same way?
- Are students who don’t speak English fluently able to interpret and respond to the SEL surveys as intended?
- Do students in different grades interpret the items the same way?
3. With what level of fidelity were CORE’s data acquired?
SURVEY ADMINISTRATION
CORE allowed for multiple modalities (paper, computer), and most districts work with an external provider.

SATISFICING
• Response rates are high
• Missing item rates range from 1% to 7% per construct, with higher rates in the early grades

SOCIAL DESIRABILITY BIAS
• Student responses are kept confidential
• Demographic questions are not asked until the end
• Survey administrators stand at the back of the room
3. With what level of fidelity were CORE’s data acquired?

OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS

- How much effort are students putting into the surveys?
- Are different survey administration procedures more effective at getting “good” data?
- Are students giving socially desirable responses (e.g., girls should be modest) or reporting their actual perspectives?
4. To what extent are CORE’s measures being used appropriately?
CONVERGENT VALIDITY

SEL is related to student, parent, and staff reports of the school culture-climate reports.

Students’ SEL reports are related to their persistence on adaptive tests.

Students’ SEL reports are highly correlated with teacher reports of the same student.
**PREDICTIVE VALIDITY**

SEL is related to other academic and non-academic outcomes at the school level.

Student-level growth mindset is related to improvement in academic outcomes.

School-level correlations of average student social-emotional skills and indicators of academic performance and behavior for CORE district middle schools (West, 2016)
ANALYSIS AND MEASURE CREATION

The measurement team has created a scale that:
1. Provides robust measurement along a continuum of low to high scores
2. Provides valid measurement of scores for all students, including those with missing data
3. Supports the option of modifying the set of survey questions over time to allow for continuous improvement in the quality and utility of survey items

Can we construct an SEL value-added model?
• Researchers have shown promising results: there is variation in the extent to which schools contribute to improvement in SEL constructs, and school effects on each construct are related to each other and academic outcomes
• However, model fit is weaker than for academic outcomes, and there isn’t much across school variation
CONSEQUENTIAL VALIDITY

• The inclusion of SEL measures in an accountability system can change both how the measures are used (e.g., gaming) and how schools are identified for improvement
• CORE’s measures were designed to be part of an accountability system but they were never used that way

SURVEY AS INTERVENTION

• Nonetheless, educators say that including SEL in school performance measurement systems indicated to them that it was an important school and district goal
• Additionally, could contribute to high response rates
4. To what extent are CORE’s measures being used appropriately?

Outstanding Questions:

- What is the school effect on SEL, compared to the teacher or classroom effect?
- How short can the instruments be and still capture useful information?
- Do interventions that increase SEL lead to improvements in academic outcomes?
- Can what we have learned from CORE be generalized outside of the CORE districts?
Guidance for those considering SEL measurement

• What constructs do parents, educators, and students value most in your school/district? What are you trying to accomplish through SEL measurement?

• What is your preference between simple metrics (which are easier to understand) and more sophisticated measures (which provide more information)?

• What can you do to ensure (or improve) survey administration procedures to improve data quality?

• How can you ensure the data will be used appropriately?
  • As a flashlight, not a hammer
  • To support and not scapegoat vulnerable populations
Reflections: Barbara Richardson

• Introduce yourself and your role
• Tell us about your district context
• How does your district approach SEL practice and measurement? How far along are you in the process?
• Across the studies and practices you have heard about today, what are some of your ideas about how to use them to advance practice within your own district?
Reflections: Christine Olmstead

• Introduce yourself and your role
• Tell us about your county context
• How does your county approach SEL practice and measurement in your work with districts and schools?
• Across the studies and practices you have heard about today, what are some of your thoughts about the implications for supporting SEL at scale?
http://www.edpolicyinca.org/projects/core-pace-research-partnership/sel

hjhough@stanford.edu