

How Federal Policy Can Empower States and Communities to Provide Whole Child Education for All Students

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#WholeChildInvestments @LPI_Learning



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Children in the U.S.

- Each year, **46 million children** are exposed to violence, crime, abuse, homelessness, or food insecurity, as well as a range of other experiences that cause psychological trauma.
- More than half of American school children—**about 25 million**—live in low-income families and, increasingly, in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and racial isolation.
- **Almost 1 in 4** children experience an adverse childhood experience before they start school.
- Only **29% of students** feel their school provides a caring, encouraging environment.

Addressing These Challenges

Research on human development shows that the effects of such trauma can be mitigated when students learn in a positive school climate that offers long-term, secure relationships and that supports academic, physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development—an approach known as **“whole child” education**.

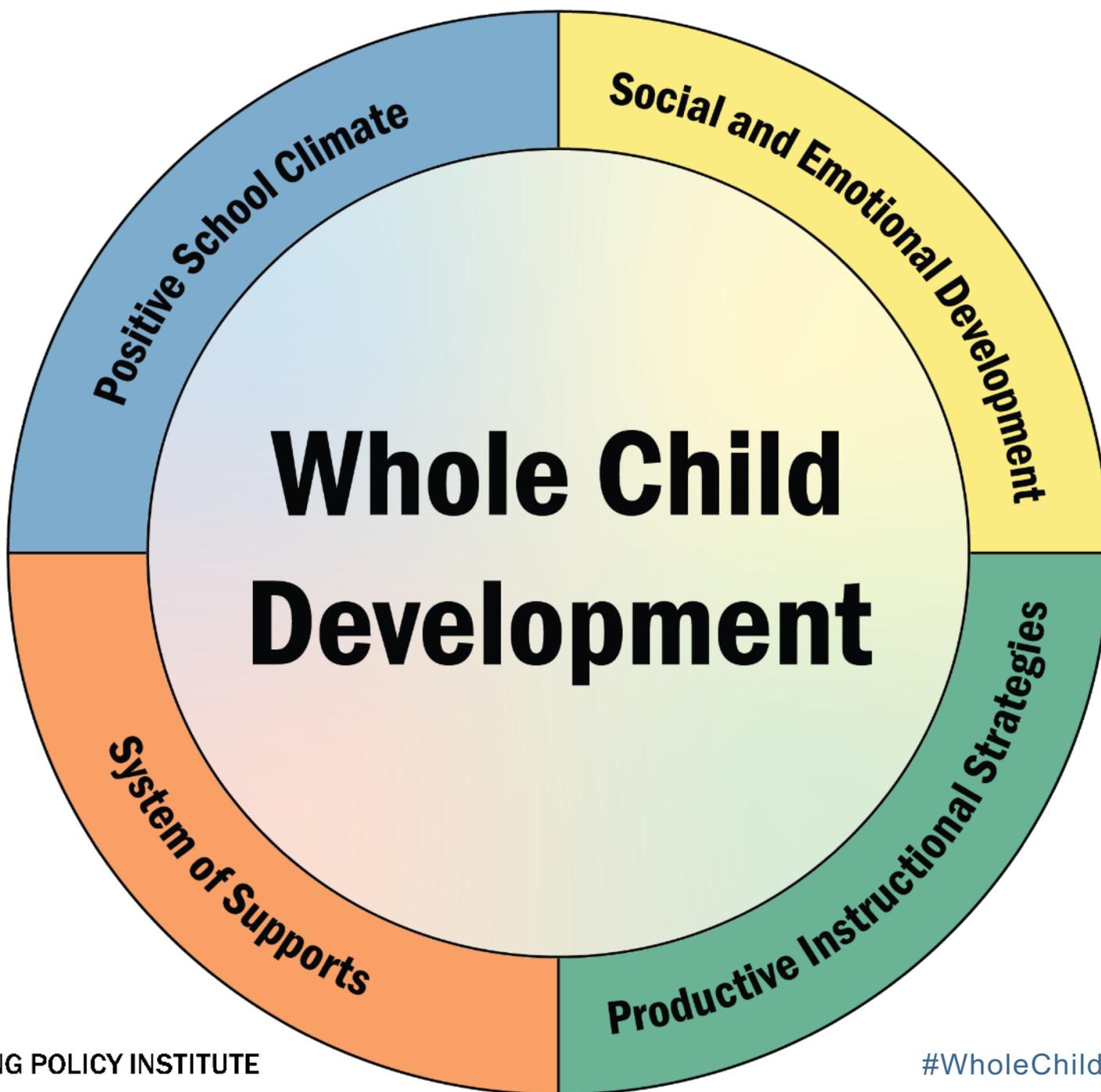
Such an environment boosts achievement for all children, regardless of their circumstances.

Research on Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning

- **SEL is linked to improved:** academic achievement, graduation rates, employment prospects, teacher retention, college and career-ready skills, school climate and safety – **Achievement gains persist over time.**
- **SEL is linked to decreased:** bullying (including prevention), violence, aggressive behaviors – **Creating safer schools.**
- Only **22 percent** of educators feel they are very prepared to teach social and emotional learning in the classroom.

Key Lessons From the Science of Learning and Development

1. The brain and development are malleable.
2. Variability in human development is the norm, not the exception.
3. Human relationships are the essential ingredient that catalyzes healthy development and learning.
4. Adversity affects learning and the way schools respond matters.
5. Learning is social, emotional, and academic.
6. Children actively construct knowledge based on their experiences, relationships, and social contexts.



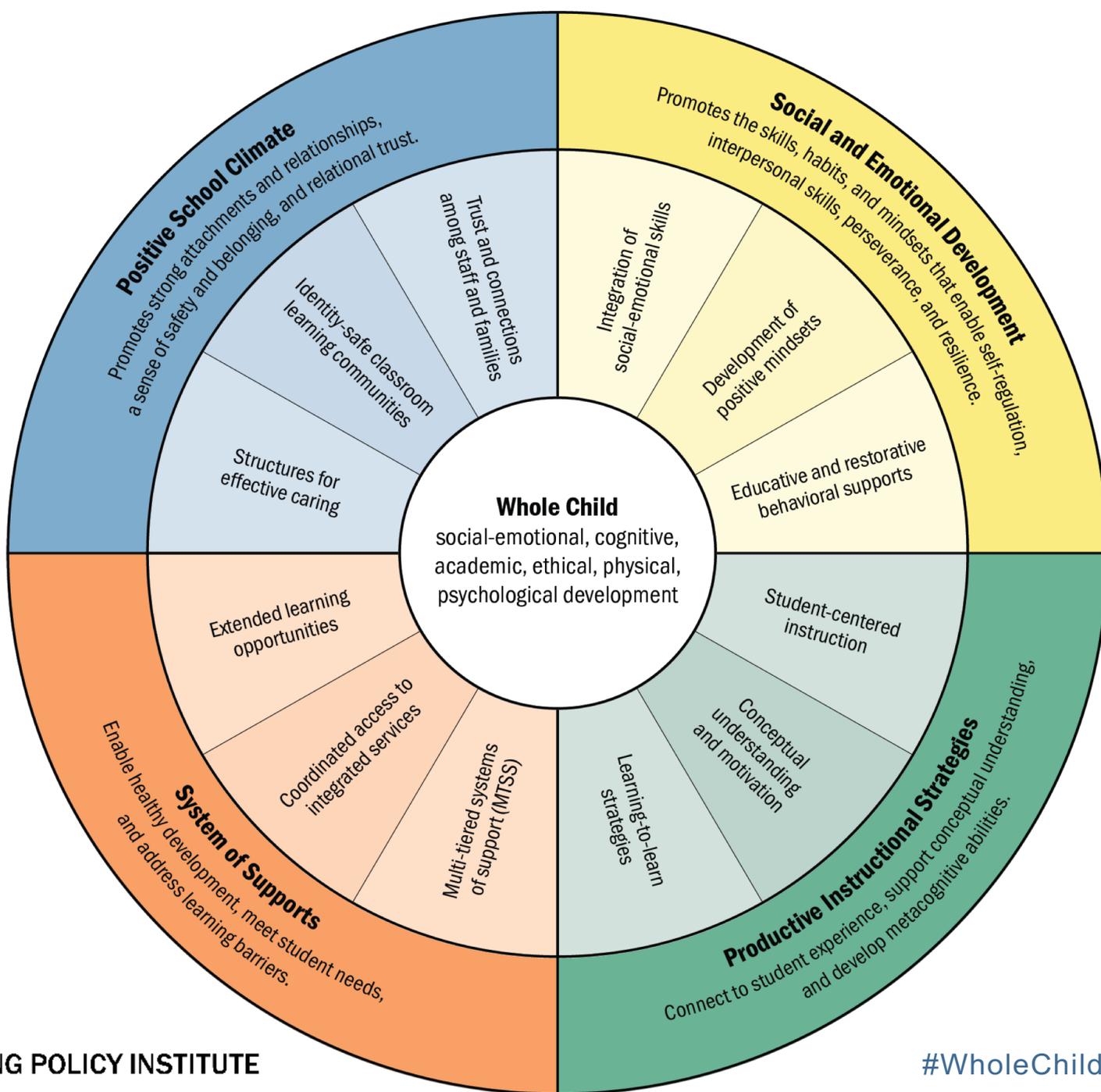
Whole Child Development

Positive School Climate

Social and Emotional Development

Productive Instructional Strategies

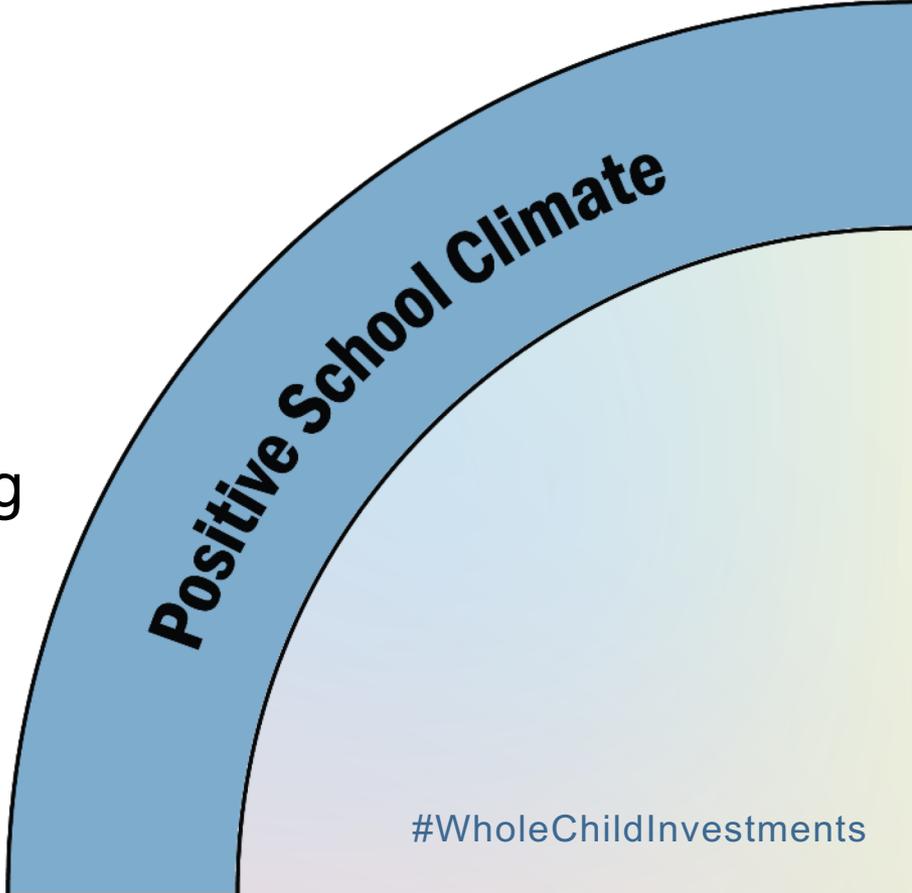
System of Supports



Promotes strong attachments and relationships, a sense of safety and belonging, and relational trust.

Examples include:

- Trust and connections among staff and families
- Identity-safe classroom learning communities
- Structures for effective caring

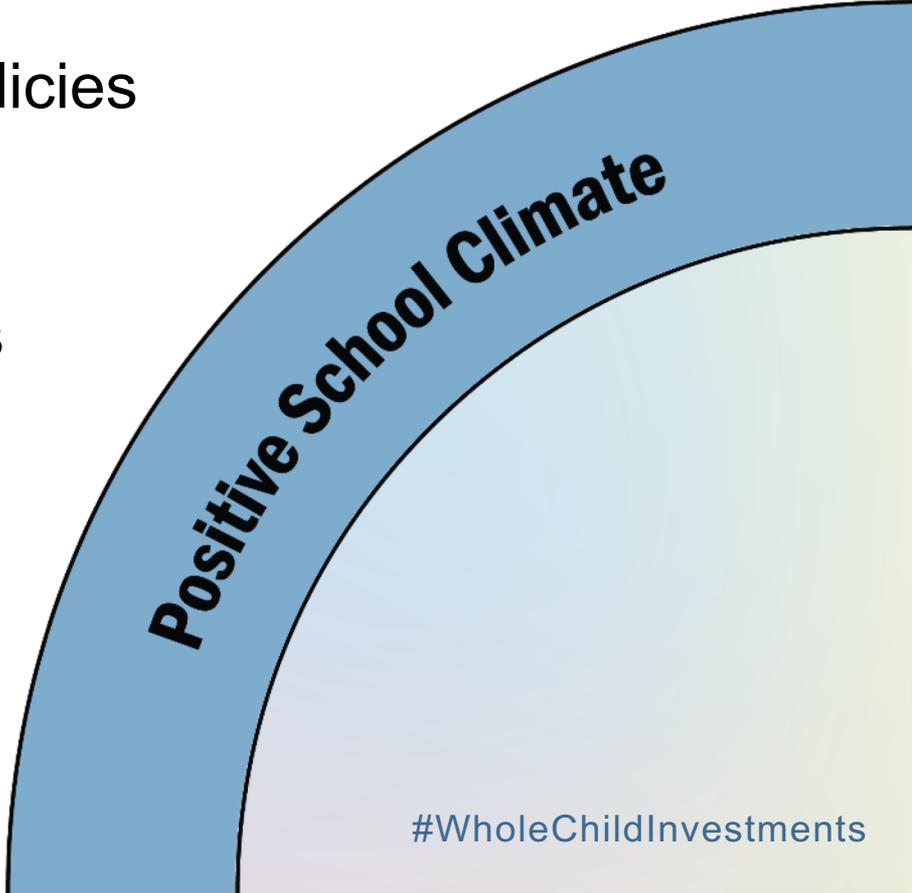


Positive School Climate

Promotes strong attachments and relationships, a sense of safety and belonging, and relational trust.

Policies include:

- Replacing zero-tolerance policies
- Explicit teaching of SEL
- Restorative justice programs



Positive School Climate

Exclusionary Discipline Practices

- Apply strong punishments for particular infractions such as removing students through suspensions and expulsions
- Over time applied to nonviolent and subjective offenses, such as:
 - willful defiance
 - talking in class
 - tardiness
 - truancy

The Impact is Disproportionate

African American male students:

8% of students enrolled and
25% of students suspended

African American female students:

8% of students enrolled and
14% of students suspended

African American students:

15% of students enrolled and
31% of students referred to law enforcement or arrested

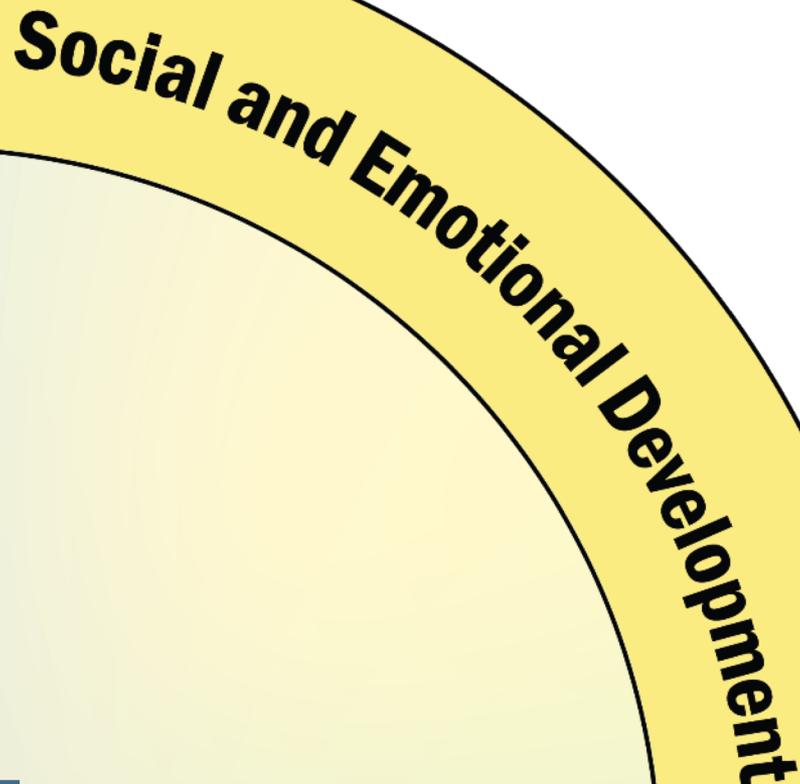
African American girls are **5.5 times** more likely and **Native American girls** are **3 times** more likely to be suspended than **White girls**.

LGBTQ students are **more likely** to be suspended than their **non-LGBTQ peers**.

These disparities are NOT due to student behavior

- Racial disparities in discipline rates are a function of the fact that students of color are often treated and punished more harshly when they engage in behaviors similar to those of their White peers.
- Students of color are suspended from school for fairly minor behavior that does not pose a serious threat to safety.
- Studies show that African American students receive harsher suspensions for more subjective and less serious behavior than their White peers.

Promotes the skills, habits, and mindsets that enable self-regulation, interpersonal skills, perseverance, and resilience.

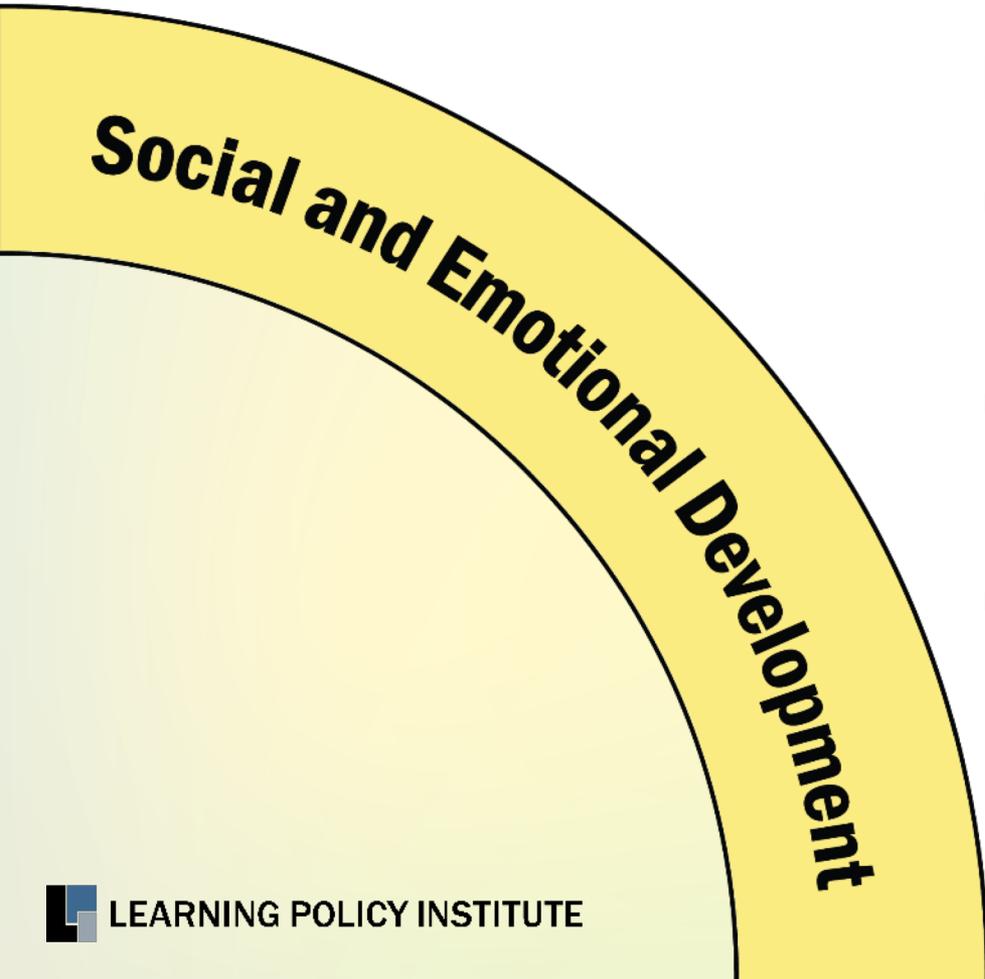


Social and Emotional Development

Examples include:

- Integration of social-emotional skillset
- Development of positive mindsets
- Educative and restorative behavioral supports

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Social and Emotional Development

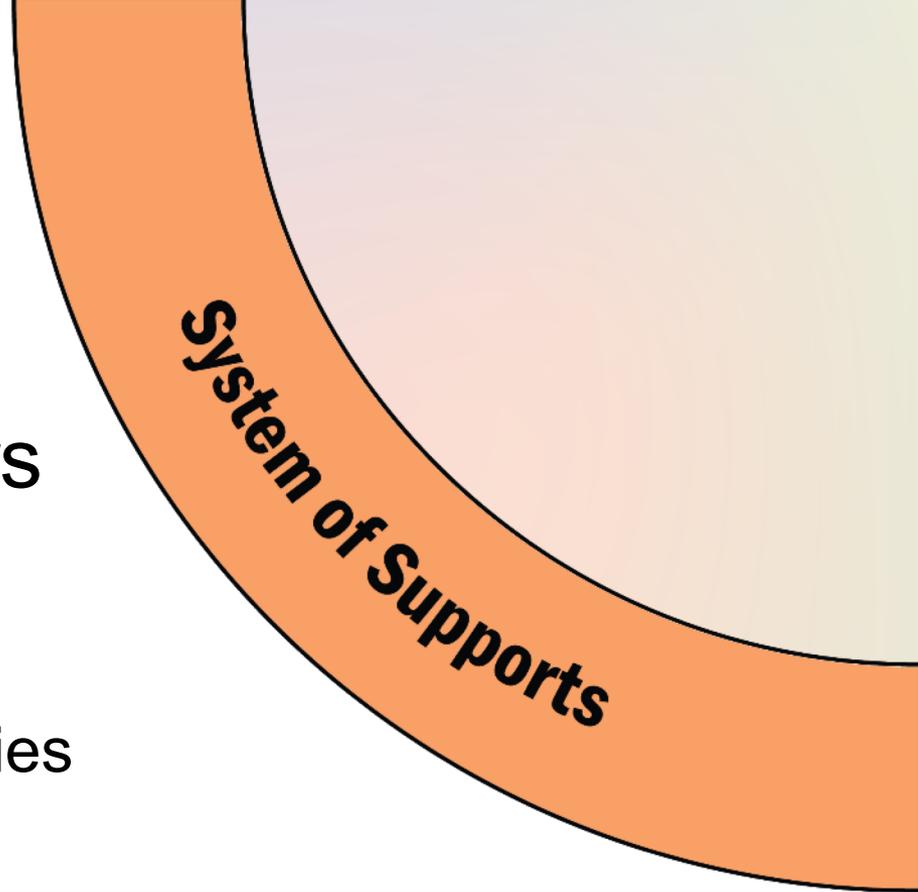
Policies include:

- Incorporating measures of school climate
- Adopting SEL guidance/ standards
- Incorporating SEL strategies in the the classroom

Enable healthy development, meet student needs, and address learning barriers

Examples include:

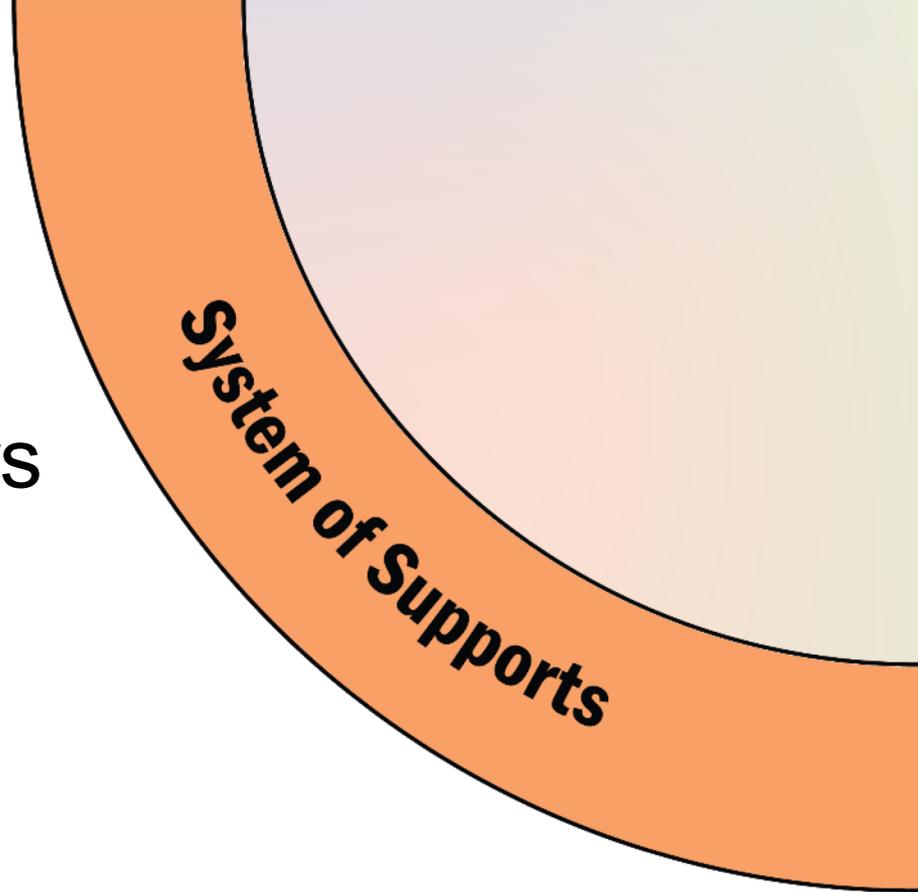
- Extended learning opportunities
- Coordinated access to integrated services
- Multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS)



Enable healthy development, meet student needs, and address learning barriers

Policies include:

- School counselors
- Social workers
- Psychologists
- Mental health professionals
- Afterschool programs



Four Pillars of Community Schools



A dedicated staff member coordinates support programs to address out-of-school learning barriers for students and families.

Mental and physical health services support student success.

Integrated Student Supports

Four Pillars of Community Schools



Enrichment activities emphasize real-world learning and community problem solving.

After-school, weekend, and summer programs provide academic instruction and individualized support.

**Expanded and Enriched
Learning Time and Opportunities**

Four Pillars of Community Schools



Promoting interaction among families, administration, and teachers helps families to be more involved in the decisions about their children's education.

Schools function as neighborhood hubs. There are educational opportunities for adults, and family members can share their stories and serve as equal partners in promoting student success.

Active Family and Community Engagement

Four Pillars of Community Schools



Parents, students, teachers, principals, and community partners build a culture of professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility using strategies such as site-based leadership teams and teacher learning communities

Collaborative Leadership and Practices

Community Schools

What the Four Pillars of Community Schools Look Like in Action

Enrichment activities emphasize real-world learning and community problem solving.

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Expanded and Enriched Learning Time and Opportunities

Collaborative Leadership and Practices

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Active Family and Community Engagement

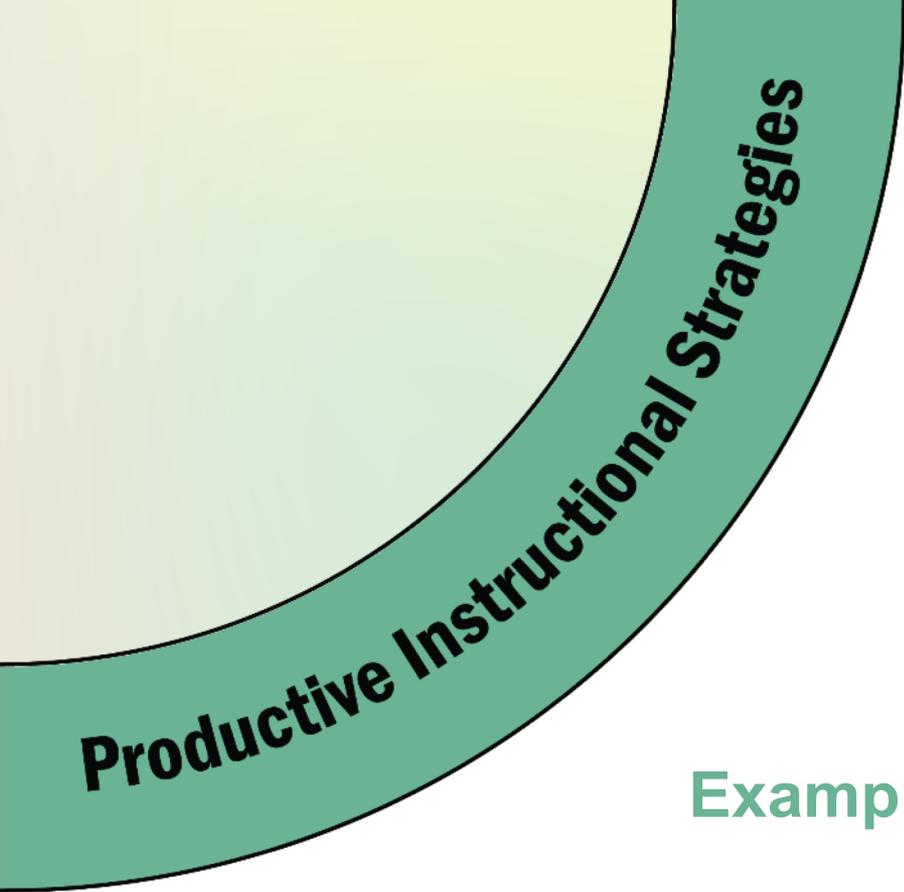
Mental and physical health services support student success.

Integrated Student Supports

Well-implemented models yield a wide range of benefits

- Increased academic achievement
- Increased attendance
- Higher graduation rates
- Improved peer/adult relationships and attitudes toward school
- Reduced racial and economic achievement gaps
- Cost-benefit savings of up to \$15 for every dollar invested

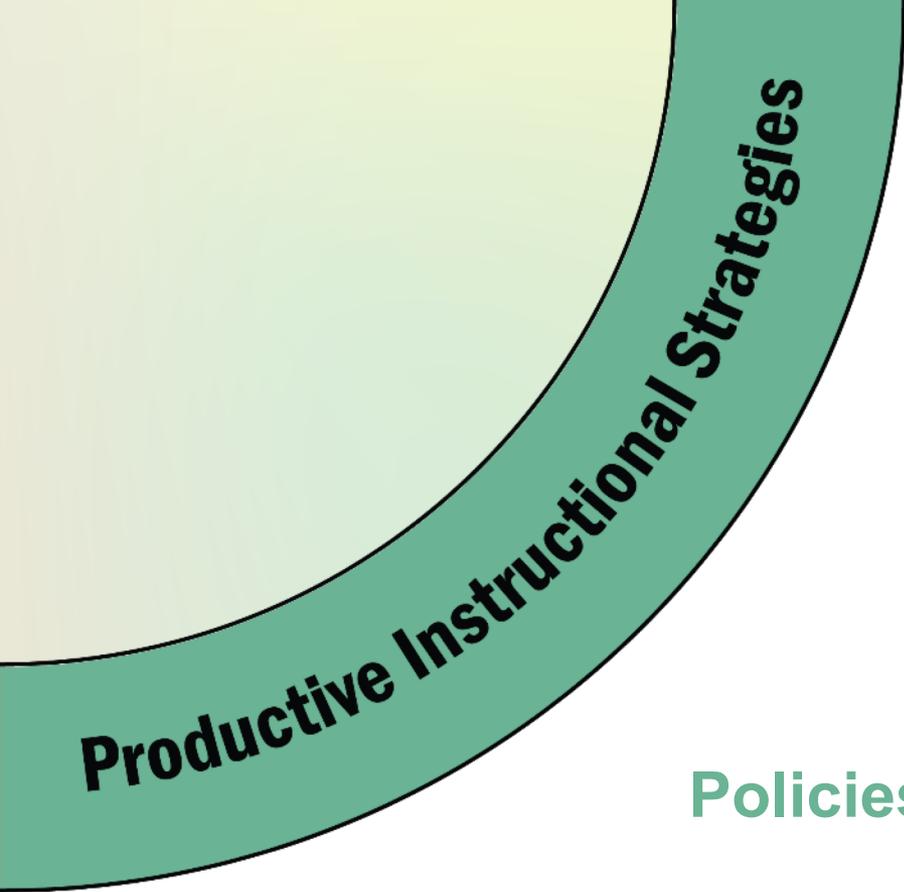
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Connect to student experience, support conceptual understanding, and develop metacognitive abilities.

Examples include:

- Student-centered instruction
- Conceptual understanding and motivation
- Learning-to-learn strategies



Connect to student experience, support conceptual understanding, and develop metacognitive abilities.

Policies include:

- Professional development on student centered practices
- High-quality pathways into teaching
- In-service development



Recommendations

1. Focus the System on Developmental Supports for Children



Include measures of school climate, social-emotional supports, and school exclusions in accountability and improvement systems.



Adopt guidance for social, emotional, and cognitive learning that clarifies the competencies students should be helped to develop and the practices that can help them accomplish these goals.



Replace zero-tolerance policies with discipline policies focused on social-emotional learning and restorative discipline.



Incorporate educator competencies regarding support for SEL and restorative practices into licensing and accreditation requirements.



Provide funding for school climate surveys, social-emotional learning and restorative justice programs, and revamped licensing practices to support these reforms.

2. Design Schools to Provide Settings for Healthy Development



Design schools for strong relationships by creating small schools & SLCs, advisory systems, teaching teams, looping teachers with students, and organizing schools with longer grade spans.



Develop multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), from universal designs for learning through academic & nonacademic supports available without labelling or delay.



Develop schoolwide norms and supports for identity-safe, culturally responsive classrooms that teach social, emotional, and cognitive skills.



Provide extended learning time to ensure that students do not fall behind, from tutoring models such as Reading Recovery, to after school supports and summer enrichment.



Provide integrated student supports through community school models and partnerships.



Design outreach to families through home visits and flexibly scheduled conferences; outreach and regular positive communication.

3. Ensure Educator Learning



Invest in educator wellness: preparation and mentoring that improve efficacy, mindfulness and stress management, SEL programs, and supportive administrations.



Design preparation programs that provide a strong foundation in practices that support development and learning—and how to design such school environments.



Offer in-service programs that help educators refine student-centered practices, use data about school climate & student outcomes to improve, problem solve around children's needs, and engage in collegial learning.



Invest in educator recruitment and retention through high-retention pathways into the profession that diversify the educator workforce, high-quality mentoring, and collegial environments for practice.



Federal Levers That Can Empower States and Communities to Provide Whole Child Education

Systems of Developmental Support and Settings Designed for Healthy Development

- **ESSA Title I:** funds target low-income schools and can be used to address resource inequities.
- **ESSA Title IV:** funds a wide range of programs that support students and provide opportunities for academic enrichment including:
 - Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants
 - National Activities for School Safety
 - Full-Service Community Schools
 - Education Innovation and Research

Ensure Educator Learning

ESSA Title II:

- Funds professional development that helps educators continually build on and refine student-centered practices that support SEL
- 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

IDEA: Funds programs and supports for students with disabilities

HEA Title II: Funds can support high-quality teacher residency programs

HEA Title III: Funds can support teacher preparation programs at HBCUs and other MSIs

CTE: Funds can support CTE teacher development

Moderated Discussion

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Learning Policy Institute Resources



Educating the Whole Child: Improving School Climate to Support Student Success

Linda Darling-Hammond and Channa M. Cook-Harvey



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