

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Prepared for Baltimore City Public Schools

November 2018



In the following document, Hanover Research provides a framework for an upcoming evaluation of Baltimore City Public Schools social emotional learning programming that was launched in the 2018-19 school year.

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INTRODUCTION

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED APPROACH

Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) requested the assistance of Hanover Research (Hanover) in evaluating the social emotional learning (SEL) programming implemented at select school sites during the 2018-19 school year. This document briefly describes Hanover's approach to conducting program evaluations and outlines a suggested methodological approach for the upcoming SEL evaluation.

As part of the 2017 *Blueprint for Success*, BCPS identified **Student Wholeness** as one of three key areas to improve student outcomes district wide.¹ Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, BCPS began a pilot student wholeness program focused on social-emotional learning at 20 school sites. These *SEL Intensive Learning Sites* have received specialized training and coaching from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), as well as financial and technical support for a Wholeness Specialist and Student Wholeness Room. While each site's training has focused in CASEL's SEL framework, each of the 20 SEL Intensive Learning Sites will have a high-degree of autonomy in developing and implementing a plan for integrating SEL practices. These plans will be submitted to the district's Student Wholeness Department in November 2018.

The series of projects proposed in this document present a multi-method approach to evaluating BCPS's SEL pilot program. This approach draws upon feedback from a wide-range of stakeholders and data sources, allowing for a comprehensive overview of the program's efficacy as it is scaled across the district. Figure 1 on the following page provides an overview of the projects, which are described in greater detail in the remainder of this outline.

Please note that this document serves as a *preliminary* proposal to define the intended scope of work and identify key research questions. Hanover will continue to work with BCPS to finalize the scope of the research questions and methodologies prior to undertaking any analysis. Hanover welcomes feedback from BCPS and will modify its proposed scope of research and overall approach as requested.

¹ "Building a Generation: City Schools' Blueprint for Success." Baltimore City Public Schools.
<https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/blueprint>

Figure 1: Overview of Proposed Research

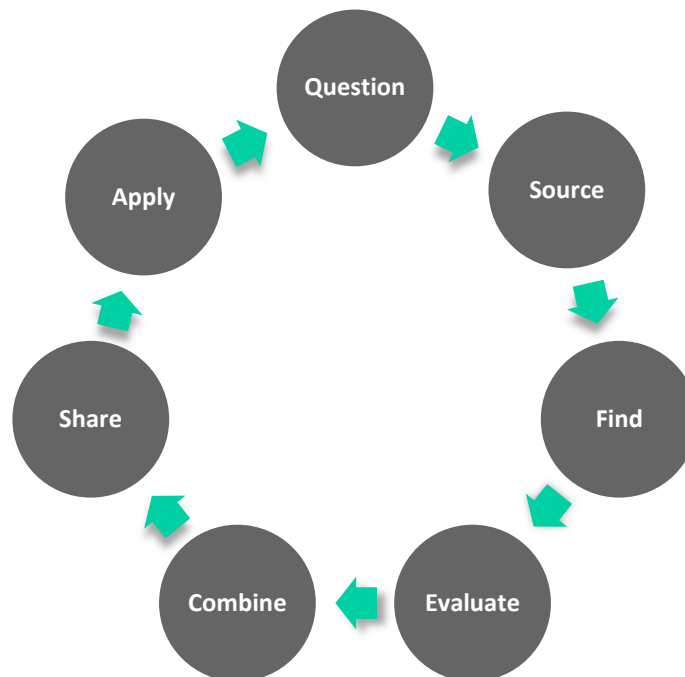
PROJECT	METHODOLOGY	DESCRIPTION
SEL Instructional Logs	Data Collection	Hanover will design an online data collection instrument for Wholeness Specialists to fill out at regular intervals. This instrument will focus on collecting information critical to the operation of the Wholeness Rooms and effective school-wide SEL programming.
SEL Implementation Interviews	In-Depth Interviews	Hanover will conduct in-depth interviews with a sample of teachers, Wholeness Specialists, and administrators working to implement SEL programming at their schools. These interviews will provide additional insight into the day-to-day SEL practices happening at schools.
SEL Implementation Survey	Survey	Hanover will design, administer, and analyze a survey to determine how SEL programming is being implemented in schools. This survey will also determine the perceived impact of SEL programming and to identify challenges and solutions encountered during implementation. The survey will be distributed to staff, teachers, and administrators.
Analysis of SEL Student Data*	Data analysis	Hanover will conduct an analysis of BCPS student data to examine trends in SEL indicators, such as behavior and academic records.

*Project dependent on availability of data. Once BCPS sends all available data files, Hanover will provide a scope that provides a detailed methodological approach that may include more than one analysis and deliverable.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION

Program evaluations offer school districts the opportunity to critically assess their new or existing programs to determine their overall effectiveness. This effectiveness can be measured through a variety or combination of lenses, such as student achievement, fidelity of implementation, and/or faculty engagement, for example. Across all of these contexts, however, program evaluations provide **(1) actionable information for key personnel, (2) transparency and accountability within the division, and (3) the opportunity for data-driven, evidence-based decision making.** Thus, Hanover can leverage a mixed-method approach, using several of our core capabilities such as survey design and administration, focus group facilitation, and quantitative data analysis, to offer districts a holistic examination of their programs.

Figure 2: Evidence-Based Practice Framework



Often, program evaluations help school districts make sense of the data that they already collect and combine that existing data with additional information derived from various analytical methods. Together, these findings provide divisions the information to understand how programs are working – or not working – for their participants and can facilitate critical mid-course corrections to enhance the programs without waiting until it is too late. At the end of the process, Hanover produces a final report that synthesizes the program evaluation, bringing attention to the most salient points and conclusions. In this way, **effective program reviews and evaluations provide a framework for systematic and recurring rigorous analysis within a school system, and can be completed on the premise that it is vital to continuously meet and assess goals.** Thus, the application of informed

research and research methods through program evaluations can lead to more effective use of system resources and stronger outcomes relative to school and district objectives.

HOW ARE PROGRAM EVALUATIONS CONDUCTED?

Hanover performs program evaluations using a **mixed-methods approach** that capitalizes on our qualitative and quantitative capabilities. Through a series of analytical approaches that aim to address client questions about overall program effectiveness—or more specific questions related to implementation or outcomes—Hanover can comprehensively examine multiple facets of division programming.

TYPES OF EVALUATIONS

Broadly, there are two types of evaluations in which Hanover categorizes various approaches: **(1) formative** and **(2) summative**. Each type of specific assessment relies predominately on a specific methodological approach; for example, Implementation Evaluations may require qualitative analyses such as stakeholder surveys, while Outcome Evaluations may necessitate more quantitative methods such as regression analyses. Overall, a *formative evaluation* will explain how divisions can change or improve the operation of a program, while a *summative evaluation* seeks to identify the measurable results or effects of a program (thus, it is more focused on the actual outcomes of a program).

Figure 3: Different Types of Program Evaluations

FORMATIVE EVALUATION	SUMMATIVE EVALUATION
➤ Needs assessment ➤ Evaluability assessment ➤ Structured conceptualization ➤ Implementation evaluation ➤ Process evaluation	➤ Outcome evaluation ➤ Impact evaluation ➤ Cost-effectiveness analysis ➤ Secondary analysis

PLANNING FOR EVALUATION

In forming the “big picture,” administrators typically begin by specifying the purpose and the goals of the program under examination. The nature of the program and the administrator’s vision of what constitutes a successful outcome will influence the evaluation design. Likewise, evaluations rely on well-defined questions related to program implementation and program impact. Hanover traditionally includes the following questions in evaluation frameworks:

- **What are you planning to evaluate?** In order to ensure accurate records are maintained, list the program under evaluation on a dedicated planning document. This should include: Program title and brief description of the program, program

eligibility selection criteria, and potential confounding variables for the participating students (factors outside of the program under evaluation that may influence the program's effects). Partners have consequently depended on Hanover Research's program evaluation expertise during this stage of the planning process.

- **What is the purpose of the proposed evaluation?** Clearly stating the purpose of the impending evaluation enables all individuals responsible for the process to share an understanding of why the evaluation is critical, and it enhances the focus on a single set of questions that need to be investigated. To mitigate the risk of political influences, we recommend an objective third-party analysis.
- **Who will use the evaluation? How will they use it?** Not only is it important for the analysis to be completed by an organization with a reputable research background and from a neutral standpoint, it is also imperative that it addresses all the questions that key stakeholders may have.
- **What key research question(s) will the evaluation seek to answer?** Creating a list of questions can provide stakeholders with a focused scope and helps the evaluator prioritize analysis and recommendations in a summary report. Partners will typically task Hanover Research to assist with creating such a list of questions and the necessary data points to ensure the validity and reliability of the report.
- **When is the evaluation needed?** It is important to consult with administrators and staff tasked with conducting the evaluation and to assess realistic timelines and available bandwidth. For several partners, Hanover Research has served as the dedicated source for program evaluations, resulting in a significant increase in the number of distinct program evaluations completed within each academic year.
- **What stages are required for this evaluation? When will each stage be completed?** By creating a map of the necessary stages of an analysis, and by assigning responsibilities and timelines to those stages, everyone can easily be held accountable as the evaluation progresses. Many of our partners have relied heavily on Hanover Research's dedicated project managers to direct the evaluation process so that our partners can carry out their primary day-to-day responsibilities.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

BACKGROUND

The following evaluation framework draws on previous conversations with BCPS about their goals as well as Hanover’s expertise in program evaluation. Important to note, this evaluation is intended to be formative in nature. Hanover recommends a mixed-method approach to address the following key research questions:

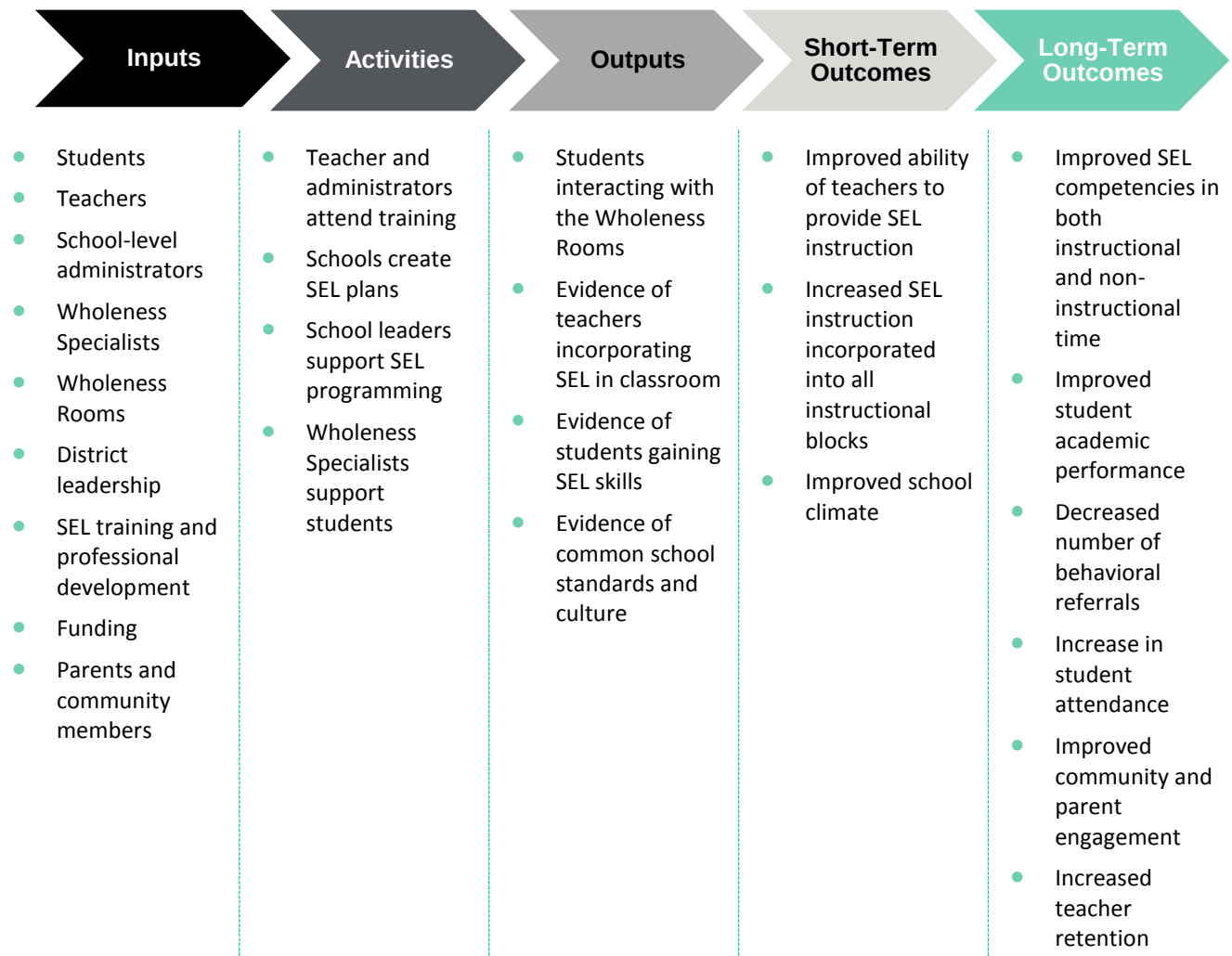
- ✓ How is SEL programming being implemented in individual schools?
- ✓ How, if at all, are teachers embedding SEL in their classroom lessons?
- ✓ To what extent do stakeholders perceive a shift in school culture?
- ✓ What is the impact of the Wholeness Rooms on student learning, behavior, and SEL competencies?
- ✓ To what extent, if any, does SEL programming influence stakeholders’ engagement with their school?
- ✓ What, if any, are the barriers to implementing SEL programming in schools? How can the district help school leaders and teachers overcome these barriers?

PROPOSED LOGIC MODEL

Program evaluations rely on specific logic models to ensure that all elements of a program are considered. This model ensures that evaluators understand the “big picture,” as well as the key evaluation questions to ask and how to structure the overall evaluation design.

Figure 4 on the following page presents Hanover’s proposed logic model for evaluating SEL programming at BCPS.

Figure 4: Logic Model for Social Emotional Learning Program Evaluation



OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED WORK

In order to address the research questions for this evaluation, Hanover proposes a series of projects (Figure 5) that contribute to our understanding of each research question through qualitative and quantitative data. The following sequence of work is based on the proposed research questions and logic model. Each project is described in further detail in the subsections below.

Figure 5: Proposed Research Sequence – SEL Evaluation

PROJECT	METHODOLOGY	DESCRIPTION
SEL Instructional Logs	Data Collection	Hanover will design an online data collection instrument for Wholeness Specialists to fill out at regular intervals. This instrument will focus on collecting information critical to the operation of the Wholeness Rooms and effective school-wide SEL programming.
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METHODOLOGY

WHOLENESS INSTRUCTIONAL LOGS

To understand how Wholeness Specialists are interacting within their Wholeness Rooms and, more broadly, within the school, Hanover proposes creating an instructional log to allow for the collection of key information at regular intervals. These online instructional logs will allow for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, and can be modified on a regular basis to be responsive to feedback from Wholeness Specialists, teachers, and administrators.

While the log would likely include some consistent data points from week to week, it may also ask Wholeness Specialists to reflect more broadly on certain elements of the program at irregular intervals. These questions would be designed to collect qualitative information on the programs implementation, while encouraging the Wholeness Specialist to reflect on their own practice.

Figure 6: Potential Data Points for Instructional Logs

POTENTIAL WEEKLY DATA POINTS	POTENTIAL IRREGULAR DATA POINTS
- Number of students entering the Wholeness Room - Average contact time with students - Activities conducted with students	- Challenges faced during the week - Successes with individual students - Additional training needs - Fidelity of implementation

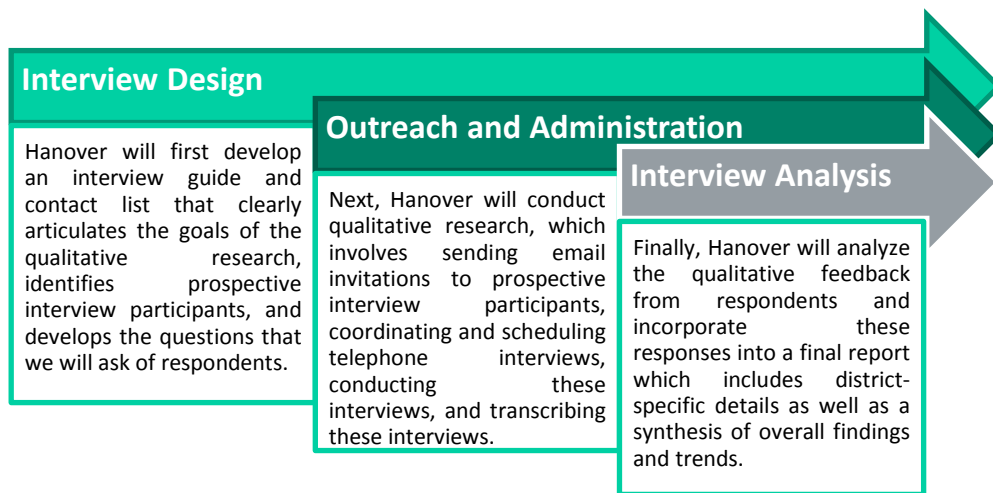
The entries in these instructional logs will be made available in real time using an online dashboard. Hanove Research will also provide periodic summary reporting.

SEL IMPLEMENTATION INTERVIEWS

To identify successful practices and areas for improvement, Hanover proposes conducting a series of in-depth interviews (IDIs) with teachers, Wholeness Specialists, social workers, counselors, and administrators from SEL Intensive Learning Sites. IDIs will allow Hanover to gain more detailed information about how SEL programming is being implemented on-the-ground. For example, interviews could address the following questions:

- How is SEL programming being implemented in individual schools?
- How are teachers embedding SEL in their classroom lessons?
- Are teachers able to embed the Wholeness Room in their practice?

In order to collect the most valuable and reliable information through interviews, Hanover follows a three-step protocol for conducting and analyzing qualitative research:



Hanover will work with BCPS to identify potential interviewees and schedule interviews.

SEL IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY

Hanover will administer a survey to BCPS students, parents, staff, teachers, and administrators in all SEL Intensive Sites. The survey will address the following questions:

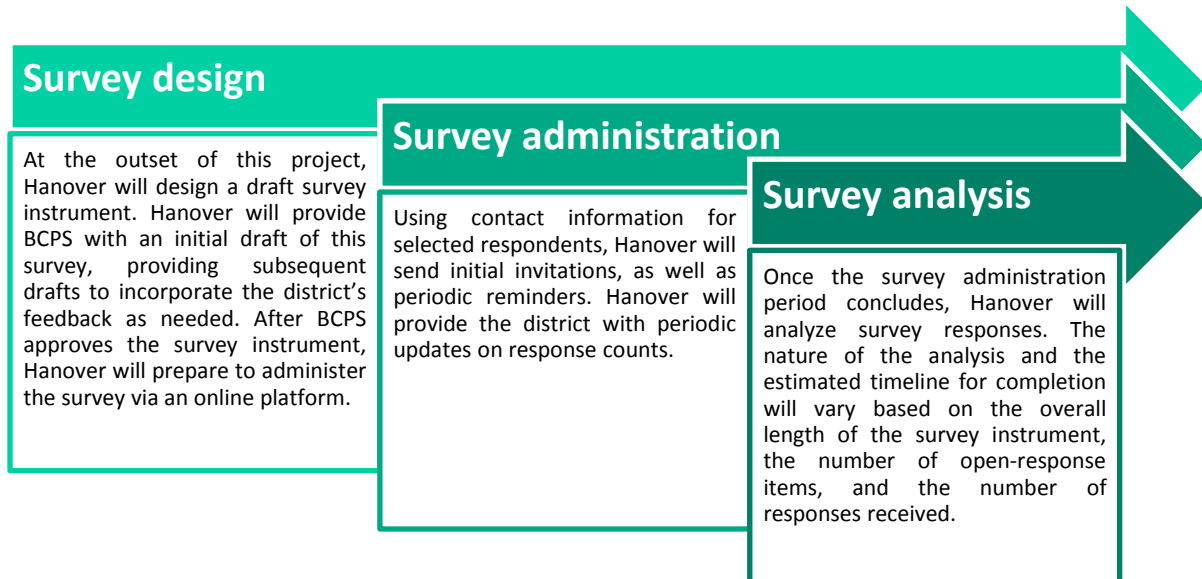
- How is SEL programming being implemented in individual schools?
- How are teachers embedding SEL in their classroom lessons?
- To what extent do stakeholders perceive a shift in school culture?
- What is the impact of the Wholeness Rooms on student learning, behavior, and SEL competencies?
- To what extent, if any, does SEL programming influence stakeholders' engagement with their school?
- What, if any, are the barriers to implementing SEL programming in schools? How can the district help school leaders and teachers overcome these barriers?

The survey will be administered to staff at all SEL Intensive Sites, and results can be disaggregated by school and school level. Hanover recommends developing survey questions specific to each stakeholder group, including the following:

- A **staff** survey will be designed for all school-based staff at SEL Intensive Sites. This survey will gather feedback on how schools are collaborating with district-level staff to implement SEL programming, the efficacy of the Wholeness Rooms, and perceptions of how SEL is being embedded into school culture.
- A **teacher** survey will be distributed to classroom teachers to determine how they are embedding SEL into their classrooms, as well as their perception of SEL-related professional development, and interaction with the Wholeness Specialists and Wholeness Rooms.

- An **administrator** survey will collect additional feedback from school- and district-level administrators on the implementation of SEL programming at their school and/or district-wide.

The survey process will proceed in the following stages:



ANALYSIS OF SEL STUDENT DATA

This project will focus on evaluating data on student-level outcomes, including academic and behavioral indicators. This analysis will examine trends by school and student demographic characteristics.

This project will seek to answer the following questions:

- What are the current trends in students' academic and behavioral outcomes?
- What, if any, impact is the SEL program having on students' academic and behavioral outcomes?
 - To what extent are changes occurring across different student populations?

Depending on the student-level data available from BCPS, this analysis may include data points such as state or district standardized tests, grade point averages, attendance, and behavioral records. The research questions and scope of this project will be adjusted based on data availability and BCPS' needs. Based on the agreed upon scope of work, this may be expanded to include more than one analysis and deliverable.

PROPOSED PROJECT SEQUENCE

Hanover recommends the generalized timeline presented in Figure 7, below. This timeline will allow for the collection of key information at strategic points during the pilot phase for the SEL Intensive Sites.

Figure 7: Recommended Project Sequence

PROJECT	APPROXIMATE TIME FRAME
SEL Instructional Logs	Fall 2018
SEL Implementation Interviews	Winter 2019
SEL Implementation Survey	Spring 2019
Analysis of SEL Student Data	Summer 2019

PROJECT EVALUATION FORM

Hanover Research is committed to providing a work product that meets or exceeds client expectations. In keeping with that goal, we would like to hear your opinions regarding our reports. Feedback is critically important and serves as the strongest mechanism by which we tailor our research to your organization. When you have had a chance to evaluate this report, please take a moment to fill out the following questionnaire.

<http://www.hanoverresearch.com/evaluation/index.php>

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4401 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 400

Arlington, VA 22203

P 202.559.0500 F 866.808.6585

www.hanoverresearch.com