



Collaborating with Community Partners to Advance Social and Emotional Learning

Over the past six years, Austin Independent School District (AISD)—which serves more than 84,000 pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students across 129 schools—has made it a district priority to provide comprehensive educational experiences. As one of the first urban education districts in the nation to commit to the development of the whole child, AISD is receiving widespread national and local recognition for its implementation of Social Emotional Learning (SEL).

Together We Achieve

Throughout its SEL implementation efforts, AISD's Social and Emotional Learning Department has emphasized collaboration within campuses, district departments, and student service systems, as well as with community and national organizations. Through these partnerships, SEL instruction, programming, and curricular elements are enhanced and aligned with all opportunities available to students.

SEL concepts are integrated into school-day academic curriculums and teacher training opportunities, and later reinforced through Austin out-of-school time providers. Joint professional development opportunities are offered to ensure that AISD staff and community partners can learn from one another.

Because the impact of SEL extends beyond the classroom, the role of community partners is an important aspect of the AISD model. Examples of AISD's SEL partnerships include:

- *Communities In Schools (CIS)*: works with high needs AISD students during the school day to reinforce and further develop SEL skills. Through campus-based dropout prevention programs and special projects, CIS creates a network of volunteers, social services, businesses, and community resources that work together to break down barriers and help students succeed. Last year, 99 percent of the students intensively served by CIS stayed in school.
- *Extend-A-Care for Kids (EAC)*: serves over half of Austin's elementary schools after the school day ends. EAC's primary objectives are to enhance the cognitive, social, and physical development of Texas children, to assist working families in becoming self-supporting, and to reduce the number of Central Texas children who fall victim to or commit crimes as a result of inadequate adult supervision. SEL specialists have trained over 200 out of school time staff to use effective adult language and around the use of Peace Areas and Peace Paths with students.
- *Creative Action Project (CAP)*: provides drama and arts focused programming during the school day as well as during the out of school time hours. Through interactive classroom performances, afterschool arts residencies and community-based programs, CAP's team of professional Teaching Artists inspire youth to be creative artists, courageous allies, critical thinkers, and confident leaders in their community. CAP staff work with the SEL team to use similar vocabulary when speaking with students and to develop lessons that use drama to build students' SEL skills.