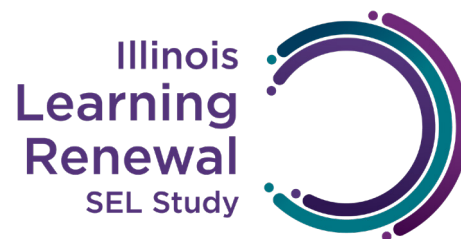


Implementation Study Findings



Illinois Learning Renewal SEL Study

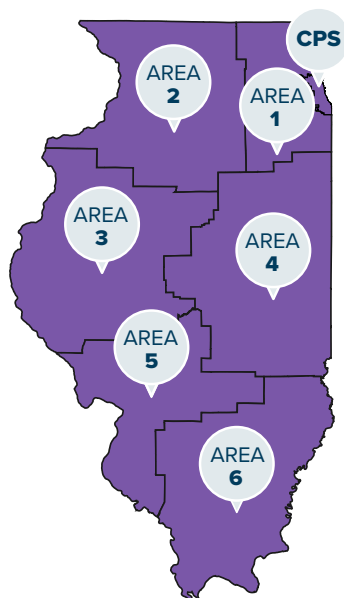
This study by the American Institutes for Research, in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education, examined implementation of social-emotional learning (SEL) across the state and within schools through longitudinal interviews and school case studies. As part of our research, we conducted 113 interviews with regional leaders and SEL coaches and 78 interviews with school staff from January 2023 to May 2025. Key findings from those interviews are highlighted in this infographic.

Illinois Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Hubs

SEL was the center of Illinois' multicomponent approach to accelerating learning and recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of these efforts, the Illinois SEL Hubs deliver social-emotional learning and trauma-responsive supports directly to schools and districts.



SEL Hub Areas



“

School staff look to us for strategies, and we can't always provide them. So, it's nice knowing that someone else – the SEL Hub – is offering those resources and strategies for staff, whether it's about bullying, self-regulation, trauma, or restorative practice.

— District leader

”

How did SEL Hubs support widespread SEL adoption across the state?

- **Leveraged regional infrastructure to centralize SEL resources.** The SEL Hub structure was organized within six Regional Offices of Education (ROE) and Chicago Public Schools. Using Illinois' long-standing ROE and Intermediate Service Center networks strengthened trust and credibility and broadened access to SEL expertise and resources.
- **Flexible support.** Empowered regions, districts, and schools to choose SEL supports that fit their needs.
- **Collaboration.** Enabled communication and sharing of SEL strategies across regions, helping schools—especially in rural areas—access expertise and adapt to local needs.

Who made SEL Hubs work?



SEL coaches, often funded by the SEL Hubs, played a pivotal role in helping schools find appropriate resources, coordinate trainings, and advance SEL goals. Their support was especially critical in rural schools, where they helped fill gaps in capacity and facilitated access to SEL opportunities.



Regional offices played a critical role in connecting schools to SEL resources, organizing trainings, and offering hands-on support—especially in rural areas.



School leaders were one of the most important drivers of SEL success in schools, motivating staff through clear communication, integrating SEL into professional learning schedules, and providing practical supports like substitute coverage and incentives.

SEL Hub activities focused on understanding trauma, teaching coping mechanisms, and restorative practices to support student well-being. These activities helped students build emotional skills and resilience and foster positive relationships in school.

About the study

The *Evaluation of the Learning Renewal—Social Emotional Learning Programs for Supporting Pandemic Recovery With Illinois State Board of Education* (ISBE) is a research–practice partnership between ISBE and the [American Institutes for Research®\(AIR®\)](#).

The study aims to provide useful feedback about effective strategies for implementing and scaling SEL programs.



For more details about the study, please visit the project page on the [RESTART Network website](#).