

Findings about Student and Teacher Outcomes

Illinois Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Hubs

The Illinois Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Hubs provide schools and districts with professional development, training, resources, and support for SEL, mental health, and trauma-responsive educational approaches that meet local needs.¹

This study by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) examined school participation in SEL Hubs and associated outcomes during the 2022–23 and 2023–24 school years.²

Nearly 75% of Illinois schools participated in SEL Hub activities; about one quarter were very engaged.

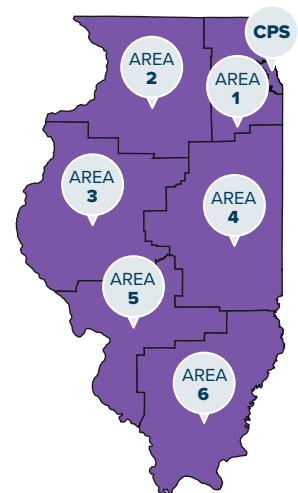
17% of schools participated in one activity in one year

19% of schools participated multiple days in one year

12% of schools participated up to 4 days, across two years

25% of schools were **very or highly engaged**, participating in SEL Hub activities 5 or more days across the two school years

Illinois SEL Hubs



Schools that most frequently participated in SEL Hub activities tended to have fewer resources and greater needs—even before the pandemic.

Schools that were very or highly engaged in SEL Hubs were more likely to:



- Be located in **rural areas**
- Exhibit **lower average scores** on measures of school climate
- Have **lower average achievement test scores** in mathematics and English language arts
- Have **lower average operating expenses per pupil**

In general, compared with schools that did not engage in SEL Hubs, schools that were engaged with SEL Hub activities showed significantly:³



Lower rates of
chronic absenteeism
(about 1% lower)



Higher **math achievement**
equating about 1-3 months of
extra learning in math⁴



Higher rates of
teacher retention
(about 1% higher)

Engagement with SEL Hubs showed mixed relationships with other student outcomes and measures of school climate.

For many outcomes, there was no relationship with SEL Hub engagement. However, in some instances (including some measures of school climate and student disciplinary incidents), we observed negative relationships with SEL Hub engagement. Notably, schools that engaged with SEL Hubs often were significantly lower in these areas even before the pandemic.

These findings suggest that schools engaged with SEL Hubs may need additional resources to strengthen relationships and improve discipline.

About the study

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

The study aimed to generate actionable insights for educators and policymakers on pandemic recovery.



For more details
about the study, visit
[Evaluation of the
Learning Renewal –
SEL Programs](#)

¹ The SEL Hubs assist schools participating in the Resilience Supportive Schools Illinois (RSSI), formerly the Resilience Education to Advance Community Healing (REACH) Initiative.

² This study used publicly available ISBE school report card data, student-level administrative data, and SEL Hub participation records from regional offices of education. Participation was measured by the number of unique days school staff engaged in SEL Hub activities during the 2022–23 and 2023–24 school years. Schools were categorized into five engagement levels—ranging from minimally engaged (one day in one year) to highly engaged (eight or more days across both years)—with CPS schools excluded due to incomplete participation data. The characteristics and outcomes of schools with different levels of SEL Hub engagement were compared with the characteristics and outcomes of schools that did not engage with SEL Hubs, The Resilience Education to Advance Community Healing Initiative, or Community Partnership Grants.

³ Because the analyses controlled for schools' baseline characteristics and 2018–19 student and teacher outcomes, the results show how SEL Hub engagement is related to outcomes after accounting for pre existing differences across schools.

⁴ Relationships between SEL Hub engagement and math achievement ranged from .03 to .06 standard deviations across school years and levels of engagement. Grade-level equivalency is based on empirical benchmarks from Hill, C. J., Bloom, H. S., Black, A. R., & Lipsey, M. W. (2008). Empirical benchmarks for interpreting effect sizes in research. *Child Development Perspectives*, 2(3), 172–177. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1750-8606.2008.00061.x>