Students Taking Action Together:
Build Citizenship, Civility, SEL, Purpose, and Character in Social Studies

Maurice J. Elias and Samuel Nayman

Rutgers University
Rutgers Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab
(www.secdlab.org)

https://twitter.com/SECDLab

Please follow the lab @SECDLab for updates and information on the latest projects and events

848-445-2444   maurice.elias@rutgers.edu

www.edutopia.org/profile/maurice-j-elias

NJPSA/FEA Conference Center Webinar
Monroe, NJ
January 9, 2018

Will Our Students Lead or Follow?

- Recent social and political events raise questions about civil discourse, mutual respect and empathy, and the depth of knowledge of how our democracy works, and provide challenges to those of us in education to address these questions.

- We can no longer wait to address these questions and the means to do so already exist in our schools.

What is Needed to be College, Career, Community, & Life Ready... in 2028?

Did you know?

We are preparing our students for an uncertain future! But one constant will be the importance of caring interpersonal relationships, civil discourse, and a commitment to democratic citizenship and the

skills to enact it.

Can We Prepare Our Students to Lead and Follow… and Listen?

- The Helping People Get Along Better Fund believes there is a pedagogy of civility and engagement that can be taught.

- The contexts for that teaching are social studies, history, civics, addressing school-based and community and world problems, and interventions in Tier 2, where we seek to inspire and empower troubled students.

Citizenship Requires Organization. Action, Skills, and Character

- Our students will inherit the instruments of democratic government, and *we need them to be ready*.
- To be ready, *they need social-emotional and character development competencies*.
- They also need their time in schools to provide them with *opportunities to organize for meaningful social action* directed at real school and community problems.
- This is aligned with *social studies/civics/history/current events/addressing school issues* in the present curriculum.

# Students Taking Action Together (STAT): The Civility Project

- The SECD Lab at Rutgers is undertaking a project to take a basic social action instructional strategy, which we call STAT, and adapt it for use as part of everyday instruction and attempts to address current events and school problems
- It is an approach to your existing content and concerns- not an add on

New Jersey Social Studies Standards Are Forward Looking and are More than SS Standards
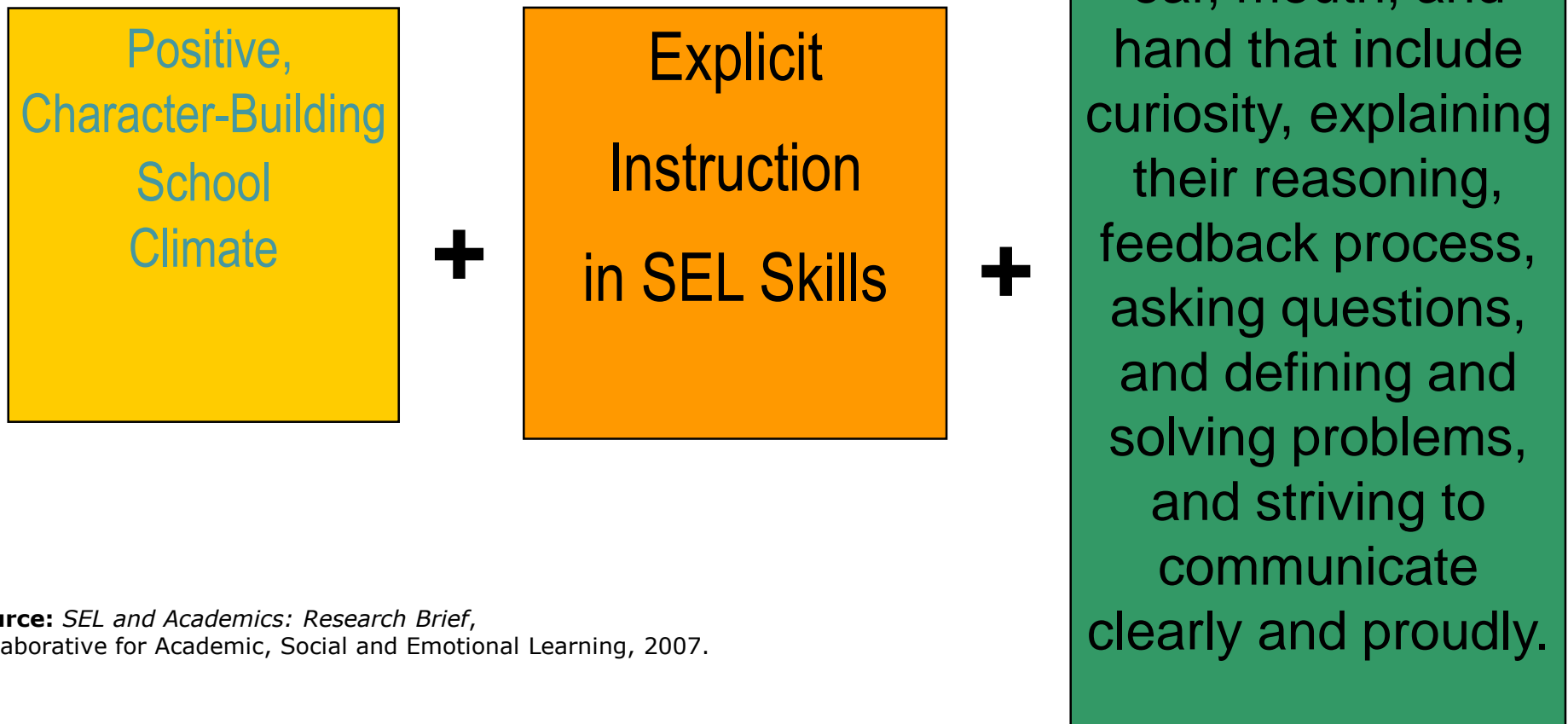
- **Mission**: *Social studies education provides learners with the knowledge, skills, and perspectives needed to become active, informed citizens and contributing members of local, state, national, and global communities in the digital age.*
- **Vision:** An education in social studies fosters a population that:
- Is civic minded, globally aware, and socially responsible.
- Exemplifies fundamental values of American citizenship through active participation in local and global communities.
- Makes informed decisions about local, state, national, and global events based on inquiry and analysis.
- Considers multiple perspectives, values diversity, and promotes cultural understanding.
- Recognizes the implications of an interconnected global economy.
- Appreciates the global dynamics between people, places, and resources.
- Utilizes emerging technologies to communicate and collaborate on career and personal matters with citizens of other world regions.

The NJ State Board of Education is Forward Looking: Resolution on the SEL Competencies, August 2017
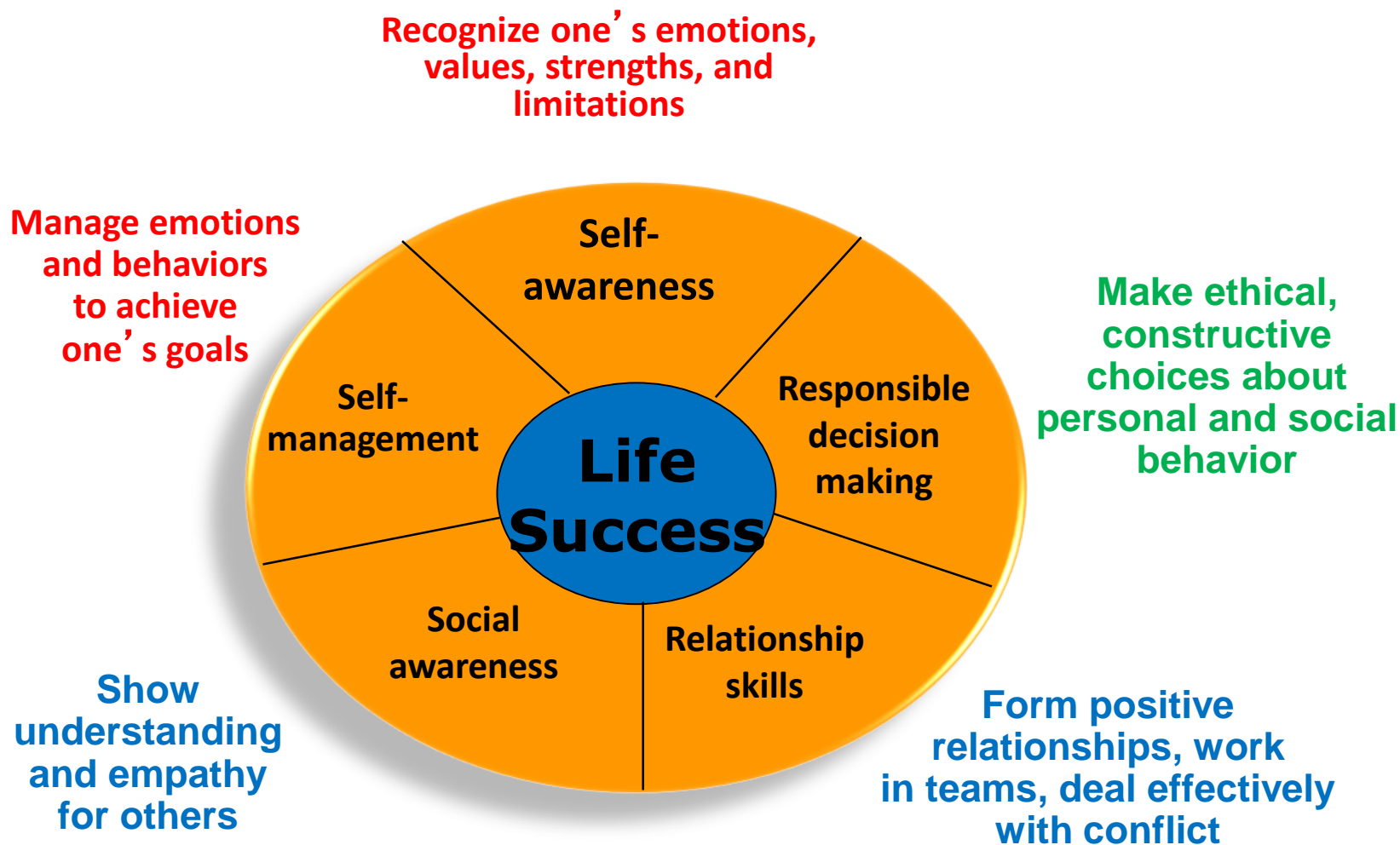
We Know How Students Can Truly Achieve: Climate, Character, and SEL Competencies

True achievement in school and in life integrates the intellectual, emotional, and social facets of learning.   These are inextricably interconnected.

| Positive, Character-Building School Climate | **+** | Explicit Instruction in SEL Skills | **+** | Habits of mind, eye, ear, mouth, and hand that include curiosity, explaining their reasoning, feedback process, asking questions, and defining and solving problems, and striving to communicate clearly and proudly. |

Source: *SEL and Academics: Research Brief*, Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, 2007.

Benefits of SECD

Good Science Links SECD to the Following Student Gains:

- Social-emotional skills

- Improved attitudes about self, others, and school

- Positive classroom behavior

- 10-11 percentile-point gains on standardized achievement tests

And Reduced Risks for Failure:

- Conduct problems

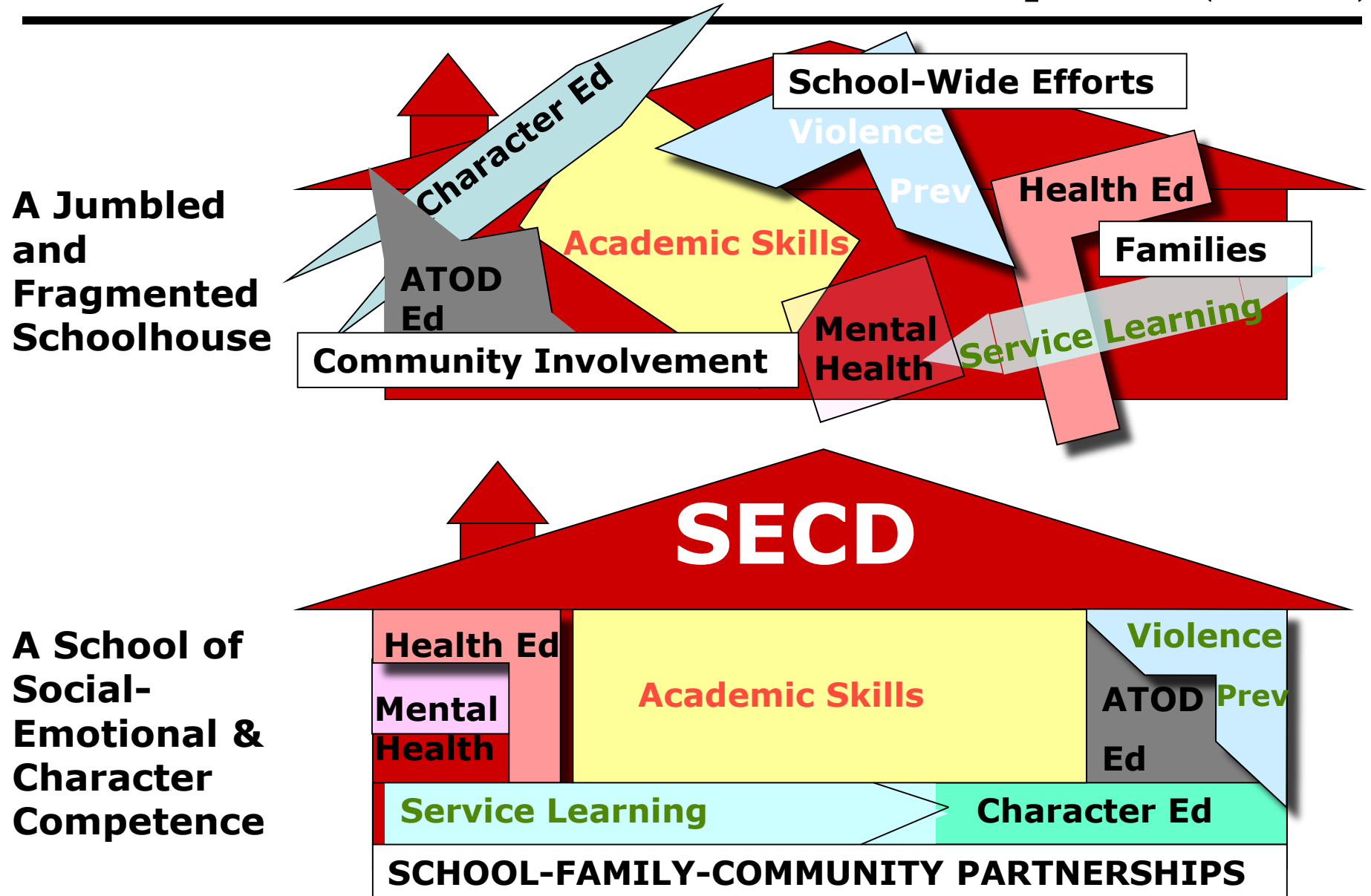- Aggressive behavior

- Emotional distress

Source: Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., & Schellinger, K. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development*. (available at www.casel.org) and M. Berkowitz & M. Bier, *What works in character education.* (Washington, DC: Character Education Partnership, 2006) (available at www.characterandcitizenship.org.)
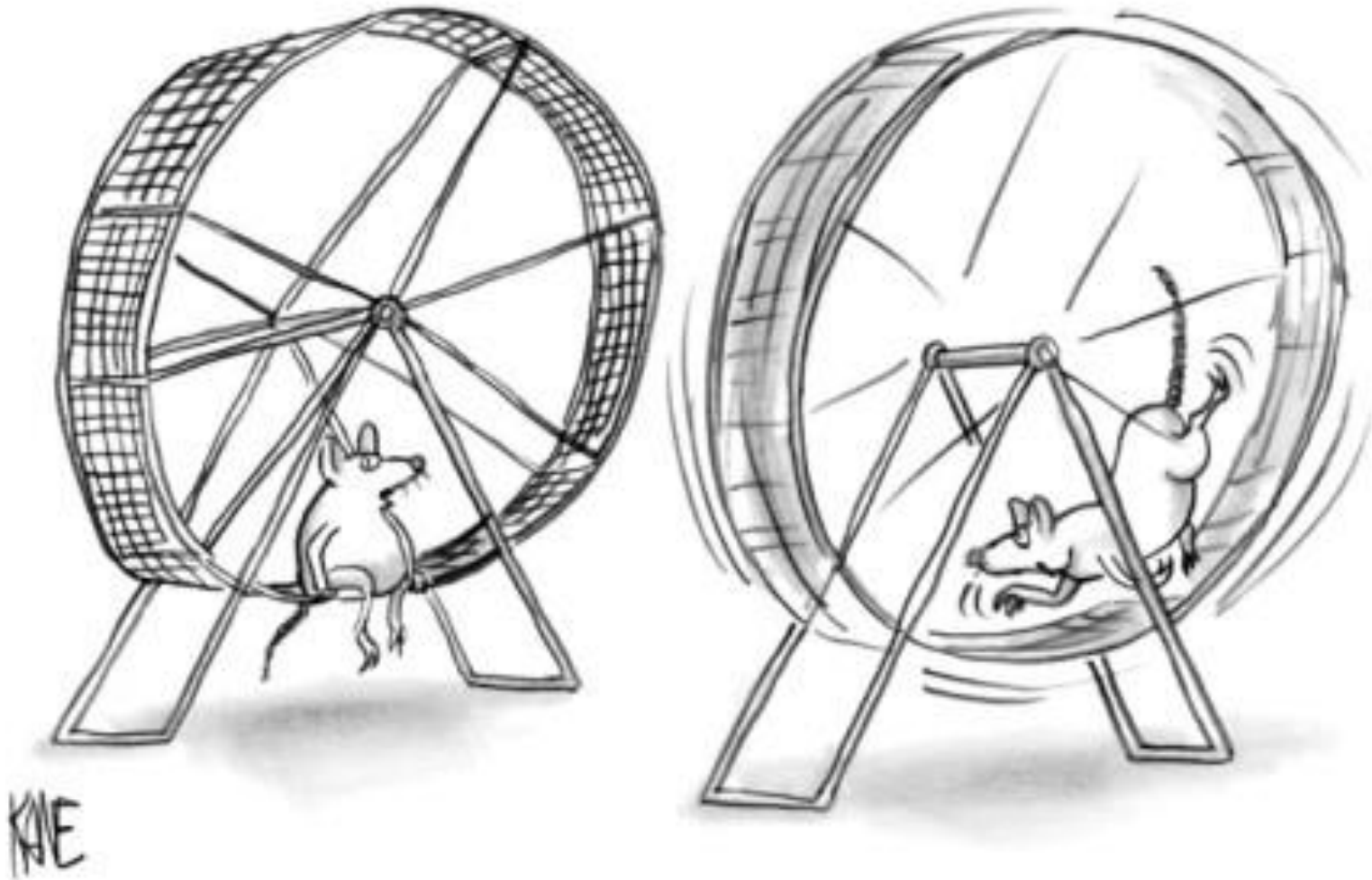
Redirect our Priorities Toward Preparation for College Completion"+" and Career Continuity

College and Career success are mediated by EQ at least as much as IQ.

Students must be prepared for citizenship by understanding our democracy and its history and by living it in the present in our schools (Dewey)

We must Turn our Jumbled Schoolhouses into Places that Synergistically Promote Education for Democracy through Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD)
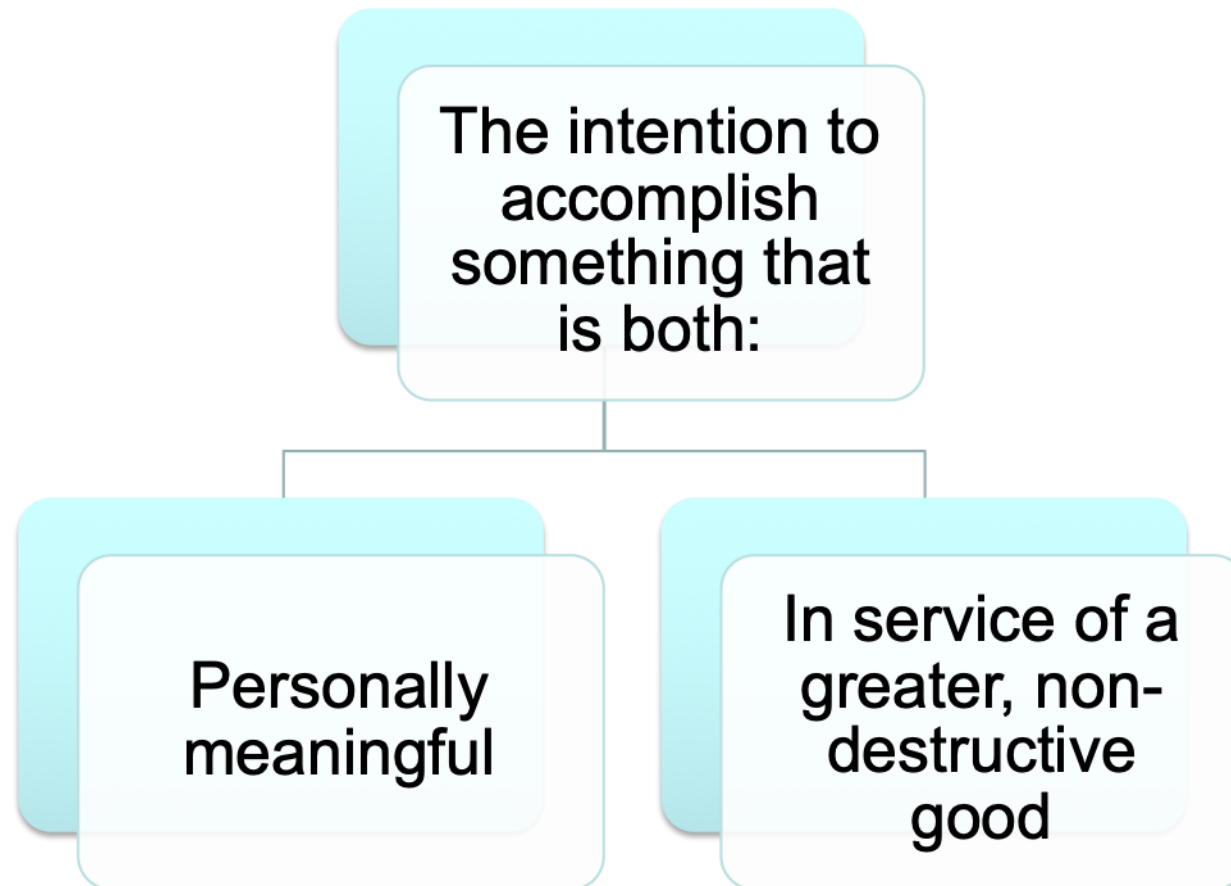
A Jumbled and Fragmented Schoolhouse

Character Ed

School-Wide Efforts

Violence Prev

Health Ed

Academic Skills

ATOD Ed

Families

Community Involvement

Mental Health

Service Learning

A School of Social-Emotional & Character Competence

SECD

Health Ed

Violence

Mental Health

Academic Skills

ATOD Ed

Prev

Service Learning

Character Ed

SCHOOL-FAMILY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

"I had an epiphany."

Let's stop doing the same old thing…

Basic to Humanity: Belief in Oneself as an Agent of Positive (Noble) Purpose

The intention to accomplish something that is both:

- Personally meaningful
- In service of a greater, non-destructive good

SECD, Purpose, Mindset, & Social Action

Social-emotional and character development (SECD) competencies are as <u>basic, foundational, and essential</u> to academic achievement as reading competence, and must be fostered in schools of character that focus on supporting and actualizing students' sense of positive purpose. When students have a positive purpose and a mindset of contribution, they are willing to learn and cooperate for social action.

The Possibilities for Youth Action Are Greater Than We Might Realize

Students Taking Action Together (STAT): The Civility Project

- One of the purposes of STAT is to build students' SECD to create dialogue and civility among diverse students, and a sense of empowerment and civic engagement.

- Another purpose is to foster deeper thinking and engagement about issues in the classroom, school, community, and world.

Students Taking Action Together (STAT): Partner in Civility

- The STAT approach is ideal for partnerships between **school support personnel** and those teaching social studies and related classes, as well as language arts

- **How**: Co-teaching; supporting instruction; using STAT approaches in disciplinary and Tier 2 contexts to conduct respectful debates and build communication, problem solving, and SECD skills students need for humane interpersonal effectiveness.

Brief Reflection:

- *How did you learn about democracy and how it works?*

- *How satisfied are you with the education you had in history and civics?*

- ***What were your best instructional experiences in those areas?***

Focal Social-Emotional Skills in the STAT Approach

1. Empathy
2. Perspective Taking
3. Communication
4. ***Social Problem Solving***
5. Emotion Regulation

Students Should be able to Think, Speak, and Act on Statements Like These: **Yes-No-or Maybe**

- All schools should have metal detectors for the protection of students and staff.

- Students should participate in school committees about bullying, drugs and alcohol, and discipline.

Pedagogy to Promote Critical Thinking, People Getting Along Better, and Being Civil & Civically Engaged

- **(a) Peer Opinion Sharing**: Yes-No-Maybe
- **(b) Respectful Empathic Debate**: asking students to argue from the perspective of all sides of an issue, especially ones they disagree with, perhaps regarding specifics of how a situation was handled, or the specific actions taken
- **(c) PLAN Problem Solving:** an overall framework for analyzing all issue, to provide a repeated strategy that can become internalized

STAT in Action: Video Examples from www.secdlab.org/STAT

- **(a) Peer Opinion Sharing**: Yes-No-Maybe

- **(b) Respectful Empathic Debate**: asking students to argue from the perspective of all sides of an issue, especially ones they disagree with, perhaps regarding specifics of how a situation was handled, or the specific actions taken

General STAT Instructional Strategies

- **(e) Responsible Listening**: having to summarize the positions one just heard

- **(d) Collaborative Creativity**: how else could the problem have been viewed? What other solutions might have been considered? How were/are obstacles dealt with creatively?

- **(f) Audience-Focused Communication**: how can students be prepared for and share what they have learned with others? Write a letter to a newspaper? Have a meeting? Create an artistic or musical depiction? Reach out to an elected official?   Some other kind of social action? How can they learn to monitor the success of their plans, and make improvements as needed for the future?

Audience-Focused Communication and Social Action

- Key to the approach is for **students to create products they have to prepare, deliver, and defend collaboratively**. These might be social action improvements in their classrooms or schools, or they might be alternative solutions to historical problems or proposed solutions to current events.

- A part of the learning process that creates flexibility is for **students to get feedback on what they create and have the opportunity to modify in light of feedback**. This will include situations where their ideas are not supported.

PLAN Problem Solving
Social Action Strategy

STAT uses the **PLAN** social action strategy applied to existing curriculum content; it is not an "add on"

1) creating a problem description (**P**),
which defines the issue being discussed,

2) brainstorming a list of options (**L**) to solve the problem,

3) developing and acting on an action plan to solve the problem (**A**), and

4) noticing successes as part of ongoing evaluation and refinement (**N**).

See the PLAN Graphic Organizer in the PLAN materials, and PLAN overviews in *The Front Page* and *Educational Viewpoints* articles at www.secdlab.org/STAT

Example of STAT in Action

- **Example #1: Current Problem in the School**
  - **Note: We recommend using this topic to introduce STAT to students**

  - **Topic:** Cafeteria food

-        Start with a Yes-No-Maybe or debate, and then have students consider the problem from different perspectives, using the PLAN framework

Example #1 of STAT in Action

- Consider a debate, or a Yes-No-Maybe discussion, based on this statement:

   There is nothing students can do to change the food that is served in the cafeteria. These are adult decisions only.

- P: What are the problems related to the food in the cafeteria? What are the issues from the perspective of teachers, administrators, those involved in food preparation and serving? What feelings do they have? What are the perspectives and feelings of different student groups?

- L: What options do different groups consider to be acceptable ways to resolve the problem? What are the pros and cons of these ideas? What seem most/least realistic?

-

Example #1 of STAT in Action

- A: How can the idea be carried out? Who has to do what? When? Where? What obstacles to the plan might be faced? How can these be addressed? How will we know if the plan is being successful? How can we use feedback to improve the plan?

- N: (after the plan is tried:) How did it work out? What consequences were considered that could have been anticipated? What can be learned from these experiences that can be used in the future, for this or other kinds of school issues?

- ***This framework can be used for other school issues, such as bullying, drugs, gangs, cheating, discipline***

Examples of STAT in Action

- **Example #2: Social Studies/History class**

  – **Topic: the Civil War**

Example #2 of STAT in Action

- Consider beginning with a debate, or a Yes-No-Maybe discussion on this question, based on this statement:

  All through history, many countries have had slaves. What the South was doing was no different.

- Then, with background reading from your current curriculum, consider the problem from different perspectives, using the PLAN framework

Example #2 of STAT in Action

- P: How did the North and the South define the problem in the country? What were the issues, from each perspective? Who were the key people involved in making important decisions?

- L: What were their goals? What options did they consider to be acceptable ways to resolve the problem? What did they ultimately decide?

- A: How did they carry out their plan? What obstacles did they encounter? How did they deal with them?

- N: How did it work out? What can be learned from their experiences that are relevant to the present?

Examples of STAT in Action

- **Example #3: Current Events**

  - **Topic: Low Voter Turnout**

Example #3 of STAT in Action

- Consider beginning with a debate, or a Yes-No-Maybe discussion, based on this statement:

People should not be able to vote unless they can prove they have a real understanding of the issues in an election.

- Follow up with an analysis using the PLAN framework, with research/readings as appropriate:

Example #3 of STAT in Action

- P: How do different groups in the community define the problem? Who are the various voting groups in the community? Do all individuals want to see all different groups of voters increase their voting? What are the issues, from each perspective? Who are the key people involved in making important decisions?

- Note: At this point, it might be valuable to invite diverse community members to come to the class/classes/school to speak about these issues.

- L: What are the goals of different groups with regard to increasing voter turnout? What options did they consider to be acceptable ways to resolve the problem? What are they currently doing?

Example #3 of STAT in Action

- A: How are they carrying out their plans? Who is involved? What obstacles are they encountering? How are they dealing with them?

- N: How is it working out? What has been successful so far? What has not? What can be learned from these experiences that are relevant for future action?

Fostering Growth Mindset and an Expanded Sense of Possibility: Learn to Frame Small, Time-Limited Goals

- Make clear connections between short-term goals and larger values/virtues

- Phrase in positive terms
  - (What you will do, not what you won't)

- Make *performance/process-based*, rather than *outcome-based*

- Think and act SMART: Specific, Measurable, Active, Realistic, Time-Framed

Why Participate the STAT Project!?!

- Create respectful learning and work environments
- Build problem solving skills and empathy systematically
- Promote youth voice, empowerment, service
- Lead youth toward social action in the school, community, and globally
- Improve social-emotional and academic success
- *Provide feedback to improve the procedures*

Troubleshooting 1

What obstacles do you see in asking teachers to implement procedures such as STAT and what could the role of student support services personnel be in supporting implementation?

Troubleshooting 2

What obstacles do you see in widening participation in STAT to include behavior problem and classified students in school-related service and wider community and social action?

The Larger Picture: Integration of SECD into Social Studies and Other Lessons
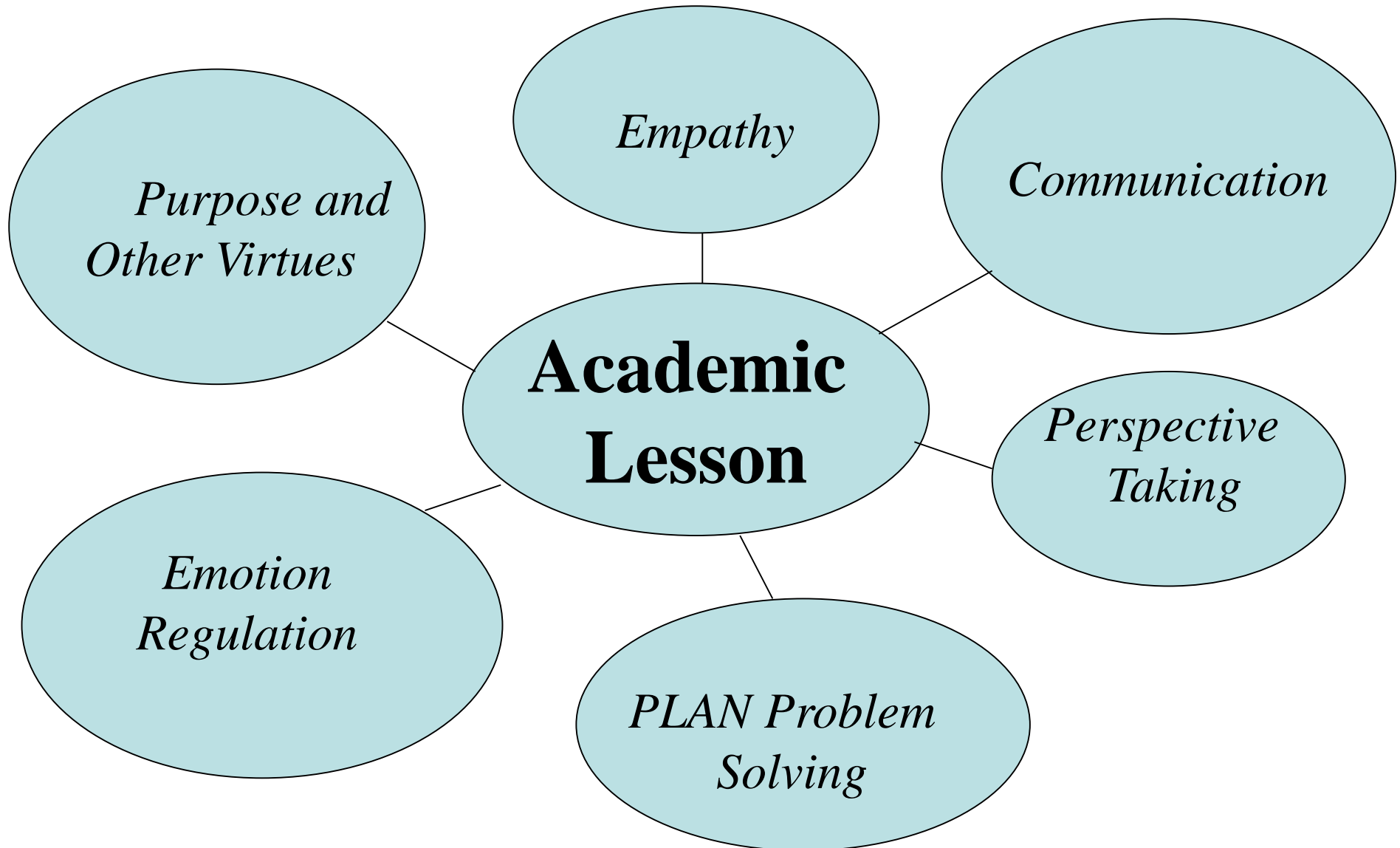
For STAT Materials & SECD Lab Information

- *www.secdlab.org/STAT*
- For Support or Questions about Implementation:
  - STAT.SECDLab@gmail.com
- https://twitter.com/SECDLab

Please follow the lab @SECDLab for updates and information on the latest projects and events.

- For ongoing information about SECD:
  - *www.edutopia.org/profile/maurice-j-elias*
  - *SELinSchools.org*

Sarge on the Banks, Watching and Looking to the Future– It's Our Turn to Affirm Our Beliefs in Equity and Decency

"Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do."

John Wooden