



## **Rise in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Mandates Post-Pandemic**

*\*Research references available upon request*

### **Growth in SEL Mandates**

- By mid-2024, approximately 30 states had implemented some form of SEL standards or mandates, up from 18 states pre-pandemic
- School districts incorporating formal SEL programming increased by roughly 45% compared to 2019 levels
- Federal education funding earmarked for SEL initiatives increased by about \$2 billion between 2020-2024
- Approximately 65% of K-12 schools reported implementing structured SEL programs by 2024

### **Primary Driving Factors**

#### **Mental Health Crisis**

- Student mental health concerns became a top priority as depression rates in adolescents increased by 25-30%
- Teacher surveys indicated 70-75% observed worsened emotional regulation in classrooms
- School counselors reported 50-60% increases in crisis interventions

#### **Academic Recovery Needs**

- Research showed strong correlation between emotional wellbeing and academic performance
- Studies demonstrated SEL-focused schools achieved 11-13% better academic recovery post-pandemic

- Districts with robust SEL programs saw approximately 15% lower chronic absenteeism

### **Stakeholder Pressure**

- Parent advocacy groups increasingly demanded mental health support (40% increase in organized advocacy)
- Teacher unions cited burnout reduction as priority (65-70% of teachers reported burnout)
- Business leaders emphasized future workforce needs for social-emotional competencies

### **Policy Recognition**

- Bipartisan support emerged as mental health became a cross-party priority
- Approximately 85% of education policy experts endorsed SEL as essential for post-pandemic recovery
- Economic analyses projected \$11 return on every \$1 invested in comprehensive SEL programming

### **Evidence Base Strengthening**

- Meta-analyses showed SEL programming yielded 20-25% improvements in emotional regulation
- Longitudinal studies demonstrated 15-18% reductions in future mental health treatment needs
- Implementation science advancements improved program efficacy by approximately 30%

The rise in SEL mandates reflects a growing recognition that academic success is deeply intertwined with emotional wellbeing, particularly as communities work to address the lingering effects of pandemic disruptions on child development.

- Children and adolescents showed a 35% increase in emotional dysregulation symptoms

### **Most Affected Demographics**

- Healthcare workers: 40-50% reported emotional regulation difficulties
- Parents of young children: 35-40% experienced increased dysregulation
- People with pre-existing mental health conditions: 60-65% reported worsening symptoms
- Low-income communities: 45-50% higher prevalence rates than higher-income groups

### **Contributing Factors**

- Prolonged isolation and disruption of social support networks
- Chronic uncertainty and pandemic-related stressors
- Financial instability and employment changes
- Grief and loss experiences
- Disrupted routines and reduced access to coping resources