



Building
Equitable
Learning
Environments
Network



INSIGHTS FROM THE CAREGIVER COMMUNITY: BUILDING AUTHENTIC SCHOOL AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS



**Partner with
caregivers and
communities**



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ABOUT THE BELE LEARNING SERIES

The Building Equitable Learning Environments (BELE) network is a diverse collaborative of organizations working to advance equity in education. These organizations range from academic institutions to fellow intermediary organizations. BELE partners share a bold vision of thriving youth, families, caregivers, and communities—and of education systems that are co-created with those they are intended to serve—to foster academic, social, emotional, and cognitive growth and well-being. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and the National Equity Project (NEP) are part of the BELE Network research and learning team, and are responsible for documenting the network learnings, which are grounded in seven “Essential Actions” and reflected in shared annual aims.

Within BELE, we are producing a series of briefs documenting insights from our efforts to understand how the implementation of equity initiatives in our BELE partner districts show evidence of social and emotional learning (SEL) in service of equity and excellence and equity leadership. These briefs highlight the conditions necessary to begin and sustain the work of systemic transformation.

In this series, we explore our learnings with our partner districts, aligning each paper to one of seven BELE Essential Actions. These Essential Actions describe the changes and processes necessary to realize systemic transformation and are meant to give educators, caregivers, and practitioners concrete actions for centering student experience in education.

The goal of this learning series is two-fold:

1. To share our action research agenda, and the collaborative learnings of CASEL, NEP, and our partner districts¹ regarding the conditions necessary to create and cultivate transformative and equitable learning environments.
2. To provide education practitioner-facing recommendations for those looking to begin equivalent work in their district or school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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¹ All learning partners and districts will be referred by pseudonyms to protect anonymity.

As part of the BELE Network, CASEL works alongside school districts that seek external collaborators to co-design sustainable models for equitable learning environments adaptable to their local context. They align coaching assistance, network resources and tools, and research capacity with district practitioners' expert knowledge of their learning communities, key stakeholder relationships, and access to learning environments to formulate, implement, and test student and adult-level frameworks that are both scalable and adaptive. Underpinned by a collaborative approach, these research-practice partnerships allow cultivated relationships with districts already committed to the work of equity to develop solutions to the ever-present challenge of equitable learning for all students. Technical assistance from CASEL and learning partners help to actualize the following **BELE Essential Actions**:



Make systems human-centered



Invest in staff



Transform teaching and learning



Measure what matters



Empower BIPOC² youth



Create equitable policies



Partner with caregivers and communities

These Essential Actions describe the changes and processes necessary to realize systemic transformation and are meant to give educators, parents/caregivers, and practitioners concrete actions in centering student experience in education. They are designed to support teachers, principals, district and state leaders, community leaders, and young people to use the power we each carry to help create a more equitable, humanized system that supports the learning and development of young people and allows them to be healthy and whole.

CASEL offers a technical assistance model increasing the capacity of people to achieve thriving, self-determining, educated, and just communities. CASEL's approach to this level of capacity-building is through systemic social emotional learning implementation; these partnerships are predicated on the reality that our organization uses a set of action-oriented principles that align with the BELE Essential Actions in guiding their coaching and technical assistance to districts.

This shared framing can help ensure that ALL students meet universal goals of whole child well-being and academic excellence (bele.org, 2022). These actions are supported by extant literature and field-based evidence serving as a set of practices, processes, and conditions that the BELE Network has collectively identified as imperatives for transforming the education system and ensuring that all students, regardless of background or origin, are afforded high-quality educational experiences.

² BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, and people of color



HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS LEARNING BRIEF

This brief will discuss learnings around the fourth **Essential Action: Partner with Caregivers and Communities**, with a particular focus on caregiver engagement. This Essential Action focuses on partnering with caregivers to transform students' daily experiences of school, create a web of support that holds up students and their families, and allow all to be healthy and whole (bele.org, 2022). Families are students' first teachers and hold valuable knowledge to help schools enrich their academic, social, and emotional learning. In order for schools to holistically educate students, school leaders and educators must engage caregivers as codesigners of their learning environments. This means creating opportunities that center the experiences of students and caregivers, lead to collaborative relationships with caregivers, and result in authentic school-family partnerships with a shared mission to build equitable learning environments. This BELE Essential Action includes the following guidance (bele.org, 2022):

- Build mutually trusting relationships with caregivers that foster understanding and appreciation across cultures and other differences.
- Engage in ongoing, reciprocal learning with all caregivers to ensure that policies and practices are equitable and supportive of their students and their unique needs.
- Prioritize the well-being of students and their families in policy and resource allocation decisions, especially BIPOC and other underserved families.
- Develop and advance a shared vision of student and community success and well-being.
- Share information and resources and collaborate across schools and families in support of student learning and development.
- Codesign and cogovern schools with caregivers.

Overview: The SEL Dialogue Series for Caregiver-School Partnerships



This brief highlights key learnings from CASEL's piloted SEL Dialogue Series for Caregiver-School Partnerships, which took place at Golden Eagle Academy in Chicago, Ill., during the spring of 2022.

CASEL's SEL Dialogue Series for Caregiver-School Partnerships was developed to support schools and community partners who wish to engage parents and caregivers in conversations about the social and emotional growth of children and adults within schools, homes, and the broader community. The current edition of the series supports the desire of schools and community partners to develop authentic partnerships where parents and caregivers share power in co-designing equitable learning environments for all children.



The Caregiver Series offers 10 sessions, 60 minutes each, that are designed to help caregivers and staff grow together as partners while supporting children as they practice social and emotional skills. Each session begins with a welcoming conversation and includes a reflection of the prior discussion, an activity-based dialogue, and an optimistic closure. The series includes resources that foster dialogue about SEL topics, such as articles, videos, or other informational pieces. Caregivers learn with the intention of acquiring new skills to use at home with their children/teenagers and at school with educators. They also aim to build capacity to engage in collaborative school-caregiver partnerships.

Session	Session Topics
1	Introduction to Coalition
2	Extending Aspirations (Hopes and Dreams)
3	Gratitude
4	Understanding Your Child's or Teen's Development
5	Emotional (and Other) Safety
6	Managing Stress With Mindfulness
7	Fighting Fair/Facing Conflicts or Tensions
8	Responsible Decision-Making
9	Helping Kids Deal With Fear
10	Parent-Teacher Conversations

The Caregiver Series Pilot: Golden Eagle Academy

Golden Eagle Academy has a strong standing in the local community. It is a public high school located in Chicago with a student population that is 98 percent Latine and Black, and has 90 percent of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. Eight caregivers who identified as Latine participated in the dialogue series. The series was cofacilitated in a hybrid format (virtual/in-person) by the school's parent coordinator and a parent of Golden Eagle Academy who also held a voluntary role in the school community.



To ensure that caregivers could openly and honestly dialogue about their and their children's or teens' experiences at home and in school, the principal, educators, and additional staff did not participate in the series with the caregivers. CASEL staff, series facilitators, and the school's leadership met after sessions 1, 3, and 9 to gather a sense of how caregivers were building community in the sessions, and of the caregivers' knowledge around SEL and partnership. We collected data via pre-and post-series surveys, weekly feedback surveys, and an end-of-series focus group. The data captured caregivers' thoughts about authentic caregiver-school partnerships, perceptions of the school's inclusiveness, and their understanding, confidence, and frequency of using SEL. We completed two interviews with the series facilitators and a data debrief with the school's principal. The following learning questions guided our evaluation of the series:

1. How does participation in the SEL Dialogue Series for Caregiver-School Partnerships contribute to the development of authentic partnerships between educators and students' families?
2. How can conversations about children and adult SEL growth among educators and caregivers help to improve student learning and growth in school, at home, and in their community?
3. In what ways are parents and caregivers engaged in the codesign of equitable learning environments after participating in the caregiver dialogue series?
4. What preconditions are necessary for the successful implementation of the caregiver series?

Findings From the Pilot

Our mixed method pilot study included the following findings:

1. By the end of the series, **caregivers experienced overall growth** in their understanding of SEL, their frequency using SEL, and in ideas around engaging in authentic school-family partnerships.
2. Caregivers expressed **increased knowledge and use of SEL practices at home** with their children to improve student-parent relationships after participating in the series.
3. Caregivers have a strong **desire to improve relationships and collaborate with educators** and school staff but are not confident engaging staff in SEL conversations.
4. Caregivers who have stronger understandings of SEL were more likely to identify opportunities for collaboration and **reported feeling more included in their school community**.

This brief also highlights four key insights that surfaced as strategies to create authentic partnerships between caregivers, educators, and school leaders:

1. School leaders can increase the willingness of families and caregivers to engage in partnership when they demonstrate a commitment to creating a responsive school culture.
2. To build authentic school-family partnerships, consider providing opportunities for caregivers to create community with each other, without the presence of school leaders, educators, or staff.
3. Parents desire authentic relationships with educators that are rooted in SEL practices to collaboratively improve students' education.
4. Time and space for caregivers to refine their own SEL skills among themselves, with their children, and with educators can empower them to partake in more leadership roles within the school.

INSIGHT

1

School leaders can increase the willingness of families and caregivers to engage in partnership when they demonstrate a commitment to creating a responsive school culture.

A school leader shows their commitment to create a responsive school culture by leveraging resources to identify the needs and aspirations of students and families/caregivers and fostering belongingness in the school environment (Khalifa, Gooden & Davis, 2016).

School leaders who intend to create this kind of school culture must center the experiences of students and their families by 1) addressing their needs and 2) creating opportunities to codesign learning environments. Historically, parents of racially marginalized identities have been made to feel unwelcome, lacking pertinent knowledge, and disruptive to physical school spaces (Ishimaru, 2019). However, students' academic success, social and emotional development, mental health, and levels of engagement are improved when caregivers are empowered by educators to positively affect schools (Sheridan et. al, 2019).

The principal at Golden Eagle Academy indicated a commitment to creating a responsive school culture by including parents and caregivers in shaping school decisions. The principal relies on the Local School Council (LSC), a governing board composed of parents and community members, to collaborate around school improvement. Caregivers shared that while they did not always agree with the LSC's decisions, they recognized it as central to the school's culture and an opportunity to positively influence Golden Eagle Academy.

Prior to participating in the series, only one of the participants had been an elected member to the LSC. However, caregivers who participated in the dialogue series felt a sense of responsibility to use their knowledge to benefit other families. Some caregivers applied to be LSC members and three additional caregivers were elected. Others expressed a willingness to partner with additional parents and educators to 1) teach others about the content that they had learned in hopes of creating a more SEL-driven school community and 2) collaborate with educators to improve the learning environment.

Solidifying needed resources is another way the principal worked to create a responsive school culture. With the increasing cost of higher education, data demonstrating low college retention of first-generation and students of color, and caregivers' aspirations for their children to succeed academically, a pertinent need for Golden Eagle's community includes resources that enable access to higher education.

In 2022, the principal secured a highly sought-after scholarship, which provides funding covering full tuition, room and board, fees and living expenses, and mentorship to graduating seniors who attend partnering colleges and universities. Caregivers who participated in the series communicated that their principal's diligence to secure the scholarship for students demonstrated a commitment to their academic success. Parents expressed that gratitude to the school's leadership motivated them to participate in the series, and they felt a responsibility to "show up" as a part of the school's community. This is exemplary of reciprocal relationships between school leaders and caregivers.



“Algo que es muy interesante es que la [Beca] comenzó automáticamente a construir comunidad entre todos los padres. Muchos de los padres que entraron en la sesión dijeron, cuando me llamaron para hacer esto pensé como ‘por qué no’.

Creo que no todos hubieran dicho que no antes, pero habrían dudado y tardado un par de días en pensar en formar parte de esto. Pero todos dijeron que pensaban que si [el principal] era capaz de hacer posible esta [beca] sentían que ahora era su responsabilidad presentarse. Usted sabe, presentarse como padres, presentarse para arriba para la escuela, presentarse para arriba para la comunidad y así sucesivamente.”

—Madre y Facilitadora de la Serie

“Something that’s very interesting is that the [scholarship] automatically started building community amongst all of the parents [at the start of the series]. A lot of the parents that came into the session said, when I was reached out to do this I thought, like, ‘why not’.

I don’t think that they would have all said no previously, but they would have hesitated and taken a couple of days to think about being a part of this. But they all said that they thought if [principal] was able to make this [scholarship] possible, they felt like it was their responsibility now to show up. You know, show up as parents, show up for the school, show up for the community, and so forth.”—Mother and Series Facilitator

As school leaders aim to create school environments that are responsive to and involve reciprocal relationships with caregivers, it is important that:

- School leaders develop an understanding of the values of students and caregivers who are a part of the school community.
- School leaders acquire resources that help them identify and address the needs of students and caregivers in the school community.
- School leaders and staff provide opportunities for caregivers to participate in creating, implementing, and assessing decisions in the learning environment.

INSIGHT 2

To build authentic school-family partnerships, consider providing opportunities for caregivers to create community with each other, without the presence of school leaders, educators, or staff.

With increasing momentum around family and caregiver engagement, it is important to address existing power dynamics between school leaders and caregivers that can undermine the potential for school-family partnerships.

School leaders risk engaging in partnerships that are not representative of students' and families' goals when they do not acknowledge existing hierarchies between them and historically marginalized parents and caregivers (Ishimaru, 2019). This results in school environments that underserve the academic, social, and emotional needs and aspirations of students.

Caregivers grew more confident to advocate for their children, became more critically aware of the school's culture, and brainstormed strategies for school improvement with other caregivers while participating in the dialogue series. Caregivers' capacity for engaging in authentic partnerships increased as they established a shared understanding and commitment to their goals and aspirations for their children's/teens' learning environment. The school should provide caregivers with a parent-owned space that remains uninhabited by staff, allowing parents to build community around their shared experiences without consequence.

In the 'Introduction to the Coalition' session, caregivers set community agreements to establish how they would interact with each other to create a culture that valued inclusion and differences in opinion. This allowed participants to be vulnerable and learn from one another during the series. Caregivers shared that they initially felt fearful and hesitant to participate in the series. Largely, parents attributed these feelings to their unawareness that other families were experiencing similar issues at home and school around their children's/teens' development. However, caregivers were interested in finding community, learning strategies to improve relationships with their children and teenagers, and learning if others were having similar experiences.

“*Separado de un grupo de padres que nunca he visto antes, fue un reto porque habla de nuestro aprendizaje social-emocional y de nuestro estado mental y también de nuestros hijos. Abrir con otra persona fue muy difícil. Una vez que empezamos a ir y conocernos virtualmente, empecé a sentirme cómodo y tratar de abrir sobre situaciones personales... Al principio no pensé que tuviera experiencias similares a las de otros participantes, pero aprendí mucho de ellos porque tienen muchas experiencias y niños mayores. Nos permiten saber qué tipo de situaciones encontraron en sus propias familias, [nos dijo] cómo resolver problemas, cómo entender a nuestros hijos... fue un reto al principio.”—Una madre*

“*Being a part of a group of parents I've never seen before ... It was challenging because it [the series] talks about our social and emotional learning and mental state and also our children. Opening up with another person was very difficult. Once we started getting going and knowing each other virtually, I started getting comfortable and trying to open up about personal situations... at the beginning I didn't think I had similar experiences as other participants, but I learned a lot from them because they have a lot of experiences and older children. They let us know what kinds of situations they encountered in their own families, [told us] how to resolve problems, how to understand our children... it was challenging at first.”—Mother*



Parents who participated in the series all had similar experiences in their upbringing, parenting, and interactions with educators. These shared experiences shaped the goals and aspirations that caregivers had for their children's and teenagers' education. Their aspirations were profoundly connected to their intent of parenting in a way that prepared their children for success and well-being beyond high school.

Parents shared about challenges they faced in attempting to collaborate with educators to improve the learning environment for their children and teenagers. Before beginning the series, parents expressed having no one to discuss this with. After completing the series, they shared that they had more confidence in advocating for their children because they had realized that they "were not alone" in their experiences. One parent shared that it helped her feel more "human":

“ *Esta [experiencia] me ayudó a ser un humano. Me sorprendió, ya que todos tenemos experiencias similares y estoy muy tranquilo. La idea de compartir con los demás, especialmente en torno a las emociones, fue un reto al principio y aprendí mucho y noté que “no estás solo”, muchos otros están tratando con experiencias similares. Ahora mismo, estoy feliz, y estoy feliz de conocer a todos”—Una madre*

“ *This [experience] helped me to be a human. I was surprised since we all have similar experiences, and I'm very 'keep to myself' and quiet. The idea to share with others, especially around emotions, was challenging at first, and I learned a lot and noticed that 'you're not alone,' a lot of others are dealing with similar experiences. Right now, I'm happy, and I'm happy that I got to know everyone.”—Mother*

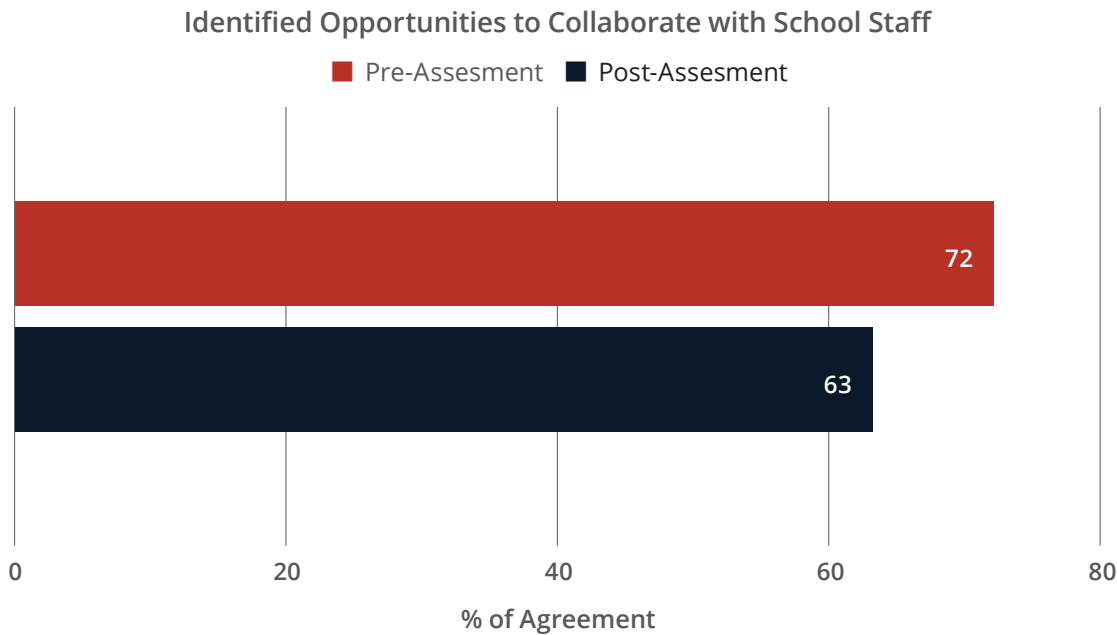
Another caregiver shared that by knowing others are facing similar challenges, they are able to support each other:

“ *En mi experiencia aprendí que no estamos solos. Nuestra familia, pensamos que [los desafíos en casa y en la escuela] eran sólo nosotros, pero también les estaba sucediendo a otros. Esto me permitió conocer a otros padres y familias. Mi experiencia es que no estamos sólo en esta taza [sostiene una taza] y ahogándonos en ella solo, estamos juntos y apoyándonos unos a otros para nadar.”—Un padre*

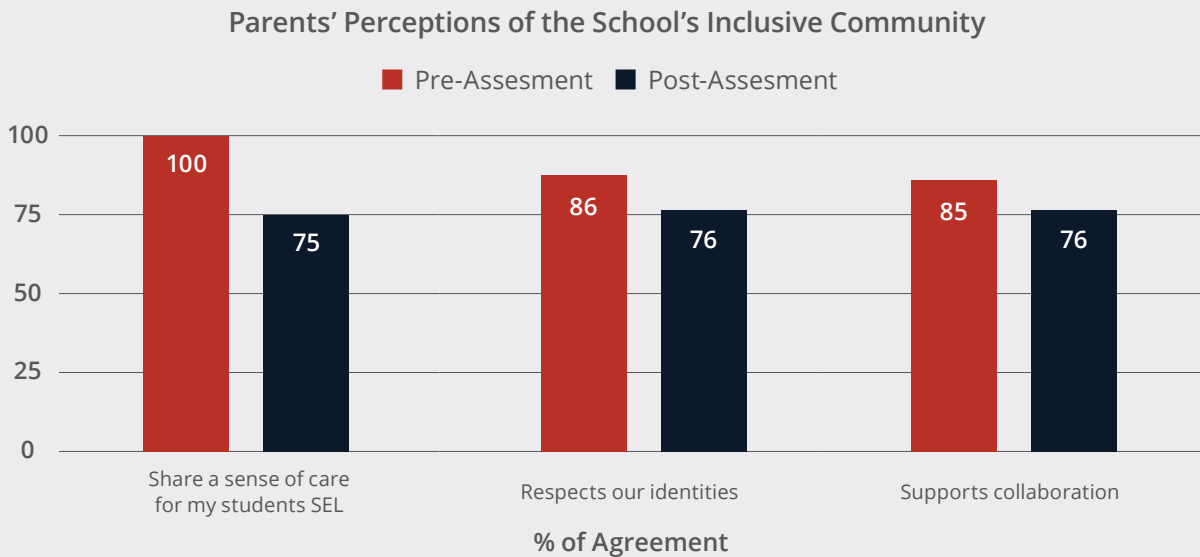
“ *In my experience, I learned that we are not alone. Our family, we thought it [challenges at home and school] was just us, but it was happening to others as well. This allowed me to meet other parents and families. My experience is that we are not just in this cup [holds a cup] and drowning in it alone; we are together and supporting each other to swim.”—Father*

Caregivers' understanding of collaboration evolved during the series, and they subsequently shifted how they identified opportunities to collaborate with educators. They grew critical of the school's lack of inclusiveness and identified areas of growth that required school leadership, educators, parents, and students to collaboratively improve school culture.

The findings below suggest that when provided with opportunities to engage with one another without fear of consequence by educators and school leaders, caregivers are able to openly share about their experiences and determine directions for school improvement.



Pre- and post-survey data showed that caregivers’ perceptions of Golden Eagle Academy as having an inclusive school community decreased by the end of the series. Correlational data showed that caregivers who were able to identify opportunities for collaboration with school staff were more likely to feel that the school’s community was inclusive. Given the discussions between parents about their aspirations and their identified challenges to collaboration, fewer parents perceived the school as inclusive in the post-series survey.



Initial steps to provide these opportunities include:

- Parents should be regularly provided with time and space to confer about their experiences and ideas for improvement, without school staff being present.
- Parents and school leadership should identify a person who is not considered a staff member to lead parent and caregiver outreach to create an inclusive space. In schools with students who are diverse by race, language, and nationality, it is important to ensure that this person is equitably oriented.
- Formal governing boards (e.g., Parent Teacher Associations or Local School Councils) should be required to consult with parents and caregivers in this space about any decisions that will be taken to school leaders, in addition to school leaders providing additional partnership opportunities with caregivers.



INSIGHT

3

Parents desire authentic relationships with educators that are rooted in SEL practices to collaboratively improve students' education.

Reciprocal communication among caregivers, educators, and school leaders is fundamental to build collaborative relationships towards equitable school improvement.

Traditionally, educators communicate with historically marginalized parents for reasons regarding student discipline, but caregivers who participated in the series desired reciprocal, positive communication among students, parents, and educators.

“*[Cuando] creo que las relaciones de confianza con los padres... [Los maestros] sólo le envían una nota cuando su hijo ha hecho algo mal, pero debe haber un programa donde las familias pueden reunirse y desarrollar una relación con los maestros que se basa en habilidades sociales y emocionales, por lo general sólo hablamos 4-5 palabras. Deberíamos hacer un evento de comunicación en torno a las relaciones sociales y emocionales al menos cada dos meses.*”—Un padre

“*[Teachers] only send you a note when your child has done something wrong, but there should be a program where the families can meet and develop a relationship with teachers that is based in social-emotional skills. We usually only talk 4-5 words. We should do a communication event around social-emotional relationships at least every two months.*”—Father

Additionally, caregivers suggest that these communication opportunities be rooted in competencies of SEL. When drawing upon examples, caregivers shared that their school's principal often holds informal, open conversations in which parents are able to talk about things occurring in the school and inquire about school decisions. Parents valued these conversations as non-punitive and relational, which helped them feel comfortable engaging with the principal. Caregivers feel that this relationship with educators does not often exist. During the final focus group, caregivers shared potential strategies for improving relationships among caregivers and educators rooted in SEL practices.

“*Por ejemplo, puede ser ceremonias conscientes para los estudiantes que se están desempeñando bien en clase, o reconocer a todos los estudiantes que están haciendo su mejor esfuerzo—pasar las clases o hacer progreso. Hay maneras de establecer relaciones con los maestros, como no sólo reunirse con ellos, sino también con los padres, los estudiantes y los maestros. Las actividades deben ser alrededor de la interacción con la comunidad y el uno con el otro socialmente.*”—Una madre

“*For example, it can be award ceremonies for students that are performing well in class, or recognizing all the students that are doing their best effort—passing classes or making progress. There are ways to establish relationships with teachers, like not just meeting with them but parents, students, teachers coming together. The activities should be around interacting with the community and each other socially.*”—Mother



Caregivers felt that SEL is important for all stakeholders and can be an impetus of change in Golden Eagle's school community. They discussed the possibility of SEL to create a shared vision for school improvement, which is fundamental to building authentic school-family partnerships.

“Pero cuán importante es [la serie] para el SEL para todas las personas, para nosotros como padres, estudiantes y maestros. Para mí, [SEL] es interesante hablar y produjo una visión de que «si todos hacemos esto juntos, podemos comunicarnos juntos». Nosotros [los participantes de los cuidadores] no nos conocíamos unos a otros al principio y ahora me considero buenos amigos, con gran respeto. Imagine el impacto de los resultados en la comunidad con otros interesados.”—Un padre

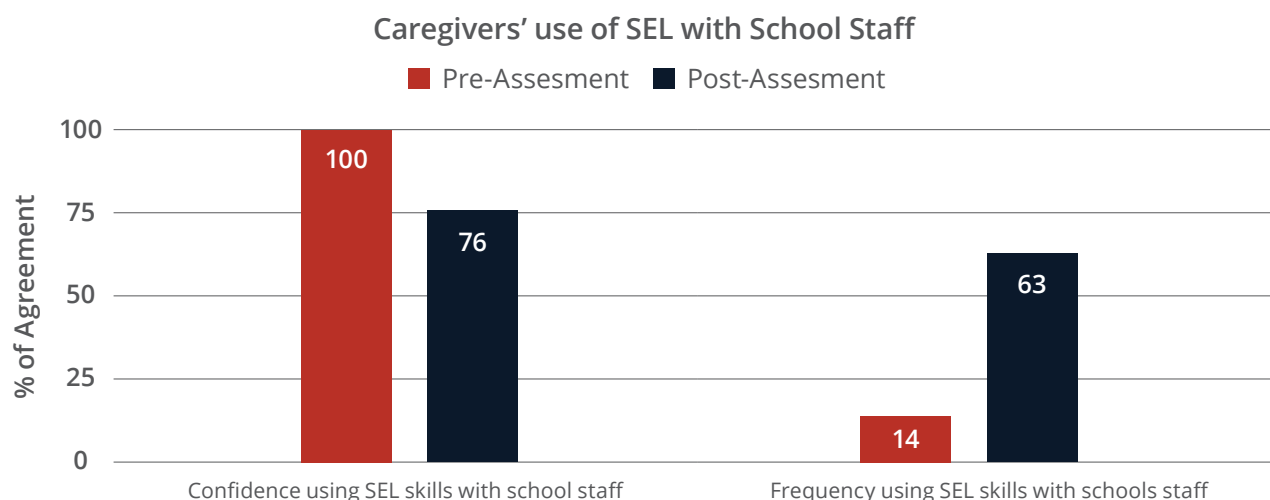
“But how important is [the series] for the SEL for all people, for us as parents, students and teachers! For me, [SEL] is interesting to talk about and it produced a vision that ‘if we all do this together, we can communicate together.’ We [caregiver participants] didn’t know each other at the beginning, and now I consider us good friends, with great respect. Imagine the impact of the results in the community with other stakeholders.”—Father

Over the course of the series, caregivers’ understanding of, confidence with, and frequency in using SEL at home grew, and they felt SEL helped them to create collaborative relationships with their children. One mother discussed the role of SEL in developing healthier communication with her children:

“...me ayudó a tener un estado mental saludable y me enseñó a negociar contratos con mis hijos en lugar de simplemente gritarles.”—Una madre

“...helped me have a healthy state of mind, and taught me to negotiate contracts with my children as opposed to just yelling at them.”—Mother

Caregivers desired similar SEL-driven relationships with educators, which is further evidenced in our post-survey data. In the survey, caregivers reported increased frequency practicing SEL with school staff, although they reported a decrease in confidence.



After participating in the series, caregivers had increased their understanding of the importance of SEL in developing positive caregiver-school partnerships. Although caregivers felt confident practicing these skills at home, they felt less confident using them at school despite their increased frequency of practicing them with school staff. This could be attributed to educators being unreceptive to their approach, or caregivers' and educators' unfamiliarity with using these skills effectively to engage adults. Also, these findings point to effects of prior-stated challenges to collaborating with educators. Educators and caregivers need reciprocal, culturally responsive relationships to engage in collaborative school improvement.

These findings indicate a need for a school culture that is inclusive of SEL in its daily practices. Some recommendations include:

- School leaders should normalize the use of SEL in the school's daily practices and policies. This should be exemplified in adult-adult, adult-student, and student-student interactions among leaders, educators, caregivers, community members, and students.
- Educators and caregivers should be provided resources, collaborative learning opportunities, and school-sponsored social events to develop their SEL skills.
- SEL learning opportunities and social events for students and adults should be representative of students' and caregivers' cultural values, beliefs, and practices.
- School leaders and educators should regularly engage students, caregivers, and members of their communities in the neighborhoods outside of the school building to improve relationships and communication.



INSIGHT

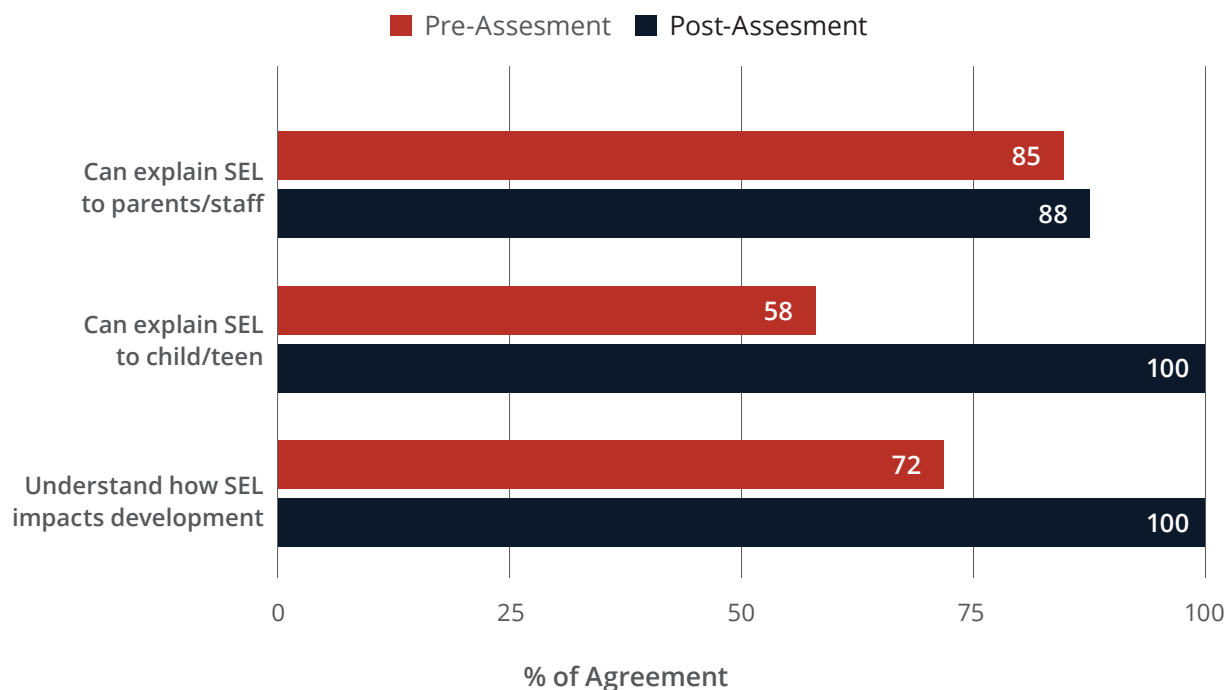
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Time and space for caregivers to refine their own SEL skills among themselves, with their children, and with educators can empower them to partake in more leadership roles within the school.

An overarching takeaway from the prior insights speaks to how caregivers' engagement in the dialogue series contributed to feelings of parent empowerment, resulting in increased leadership at Golden Eagle Academy.

Caregiver leadership is exemplified formally through participation on the Local School Council (LSC), and informally through the ways they took initiative to improve the school environment. Findings from the series demonstrate that as caregivers' understanding of SEL increased, they felt that it was a tool to help them engage with educators. This is evident in the pre- and post-series survey data that illustrates parents' increased understanding of SEL and frequency in using SEL practices with school staff. This is in addition to prior evidence of caregivers' desire for SEL-driven relationships and collaboration with school stakeholders.

Growth in Caregivers' SEL understanding



School leaders who want to engage caregivers through empowering partnerships can largely benefit from SEL programming that increases agency and belonging among caregivers. Parents' participation in CASEL's dialogue series allowed them to draw upon their own knowledge and experiences to meaningfully identify with the SEL competencies.



CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The CASEL model of systemic SEL features authentic family and caregiver partnerships as an essential ingredient in promoting young people’s academic, social, and emotional competence development. To build these partnerships, parents and educators must foster mutually trusting relationships with one another and engage in ongoing learning to ensure that policies and practices are equitable and supportive of all students. In prioritizing these partnerships, we prioritize the well-being of students and their families. The *SEL Dialogue Series for Caregiver-School Partnerships*³ serves as both intervention and practical resource in reimagining the ways that parents and caregivers not only partner but co-create healthy and strong learning environments for their youth.



3 Interested in the CASEL SEL Dialogue Series for Caregiver-School Partnerships, please contact info@casel.org

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