

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 897

To support evidence-based social and emotional learning programming.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 13, 2015

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. MURPHY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To support evidence-based social and emotional learning programming.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Jesse Lewis Empow-
5 ering Educators Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) To succeed in school, students need to be
9 engaged. They need to know how to maintain focus
10 and effort in the face of setbacks, work effectively

1 with others, and be good communicators and prob-
2 lem-solvers.

3 (2) Social and emotional skills form a founda-
4 tion for young people's success not just in school,
5 but as healthy and caring adults, productive work-
6 ers, and engaged citizens.

7 (3) Not only can these skills be taught, they
8 can be taught in schools of every type to students
9 of every background by regular classroom teachers
10 who receive adequate training on methods for devel-
11 oping their own social and emotional learning skills
12 and integrating social and emotional learning into
13 the standard curriculum.

14 (4) Academic outcomes resulting from social
15 and emotional learning include greater motivation to
16 learn and commitment to school, increased time de-
17 voted to schoolwork and mastery of subject matter,
18 and improved attendance, graduation rates, grades,
19 and test scores.

20 (5) These positive outcomes increase in stu-
21 dents who are involved in social and emotional learn-
22 ing programming by an average of 11 percentile
23 points over students who are not involved in such
24 programming.

1 (6) Social and emotional learning programming
 2 also results in reduced problem behavior, improved
 3 health outcomes, a lower rate of violent delinquency,
 4 and a lower rate of heavy alcohol use.

5 **SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELEMENTARY AND SEC-**
 6 **ONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965.**

7 (a) **TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL TRAINING AND RE-**
 8 **CRUITING FUND.**—Part A of title II of the Elementary
 9 and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6601
 10 et seq.) is amended—

11 (1) in section 2113(c)(2)—

12 (A) in subparagraph (A), by striking
 13 “and” after the semicolon;

14 (B) in subparagraph (B), by striking the
 15 period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

16 (C) by adding at the end the following:

17 “(C) train teachers and principals in prac-
 18 tices that have demonstrated effectiveness in
 19 improving student achievement, attainment,
 20 and behavior through addressing the social and
 21 emotional development needs of students, such
 22 as through social and emotional learning pro-
 23 gramming.”; and

24 (2) in section 2123(a)(3)(B)(iii)—

1 (A) in subclause (I), by striking “and”
2 after the semicolon;

3 (B) by redesignating subclause (II) as sub-
4 clause (III); and

5 (C) by inserting after subclause (I) the fol-
6 lowing:

7 “(II) addressing the social and
8 emotional development needs of stu-
9 dents to improve student achievement
10 and attainment, such as through so-
11 cial and emotional learning program-
12 ming; and”.

13 (b) DEFINITIONS.—Section 9101 of the Elementary
14 and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801)
15 is amended—

16 (1) by redesignating the undesignated para-
17 graph following paragraph (39) and paragraphs (41)
18 through (43) as paragraphs (42) through (45), re-
19 spectively; and

20 (2) by inserting after paragraph (39) the fol-
21 lowing:

22 “(40) SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.—
23 The term ‘social and emotional learning’ means the
24 process through which children and adults acquire
25 the knowledge, attitudes, and skills associated with

1 the core areas of social and emotional competency,
2 including—

3 “(A) self-awareness and self-management
4 to achieve school and life success, such as—

5 “(i) identifying and recognizing
6 strengths, needs, emotions, values, and
7 self-efficacy;

8 “(ii) emotion regulation, including im-
9 pulse control and stress management;

10 “(iii) self-motivation and discipline;
11 and

12 “(iv) goal setting and organizational
13 skills;

14 “(B) social awareness and interpersonal
15 skills to establish and maintain positive rela-
16 tionships, such as perspective taking and re-
17 spect for others, communication, working coop-
18 eratively, negotiation, conflict management, and
19 help-seeking; and

20 “(C) decisionmaking skills and responsible
21 behaviors in personal, academic, and community
22 contexts, such as situational analysis, problem
23 solving, reflection, and personal, social, and eth-
24 ical responsibility.

1 “(41) SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING PRO-
2 GRAMMING.—The term ‘social and emotional learn-
3 ing programming’ refers to evidence-based classroom
4 instruction and schoolwide activities and initiatives
5 that—

6 “(A) integrate social and emotional learn-
7 ing into the school curriculum;

8 “(B) provide systematic instruction where-
9 by social and emotional skills are taught, mod-
10 eled, practiced, and applied so that students use
11 the skills as part of the students’ daily behav-
12 ior;

13 “(C) teach students to apply social and
14 emotional skills to—

15 “(i) prevent specific problem behaviors
16 such as substance use, violence, bullying,
17 and school failure; and

18 “(ii) promote positive behaviors in
19 class, school, and community activities;
20 and

21 “(D) establish safe and caring learning en-
22 vironments that foster student participation,
23 engagement, and connection to learning and
24 school.”.

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