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Social and Emotional Learning: Your Children are at Risk

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Hello. My name is Barb Anderson and I am a board member of the Child Protection League. The topic of our webinar today is **1.** Social and Emotional Learning and how it will harm your child. Your Children *are* at Risk.

The purpose of this webinar is to awaken, inform, and mobilize parents to push back against this dangerous and latest educational craze that is moving at breakneck speed into school districts all across Minnesota and the nation.

I will cover the following five areas: **2.**

- I. What is Social Emotional Learning (SEL)?
- II. Organizations Creating and/or Funding SEL programs
- III. SEL curricula and who promotes them
- IV. Surveys, data, and assessments
- V. Alternatives to SEL and what you can do

I. What is Social Emotional Learning (SEL)? **3.**

SEL is a form of therapy where educators are taught to retrain the emotions, attitudes, and behaviors of on school-age children with unknowing parents. The process is emotional manipulation based on subjective criteria. What could possibly go wrong?

In the medical world, this would require legal consent from the patient or from the responsible adult. SEL, however, bypasses all the typical protection laws. Parents are unaware that their children are being covertly screened for mental-health issues by non-medical educators in non-medical contexts.

SEL transforms public schools from academic institutions into therapeutic institutions for diagnosing and treating *perceived* social-emotional problems. Doctors are warning about the extremely sensitive nature of evaluating a child's social-emotional makeup and having inadequately trained teachers and staff implementing techniques designed to alter children's psyches.

4.The Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is the organization that developed this nation-wide initiative for pre-K through 12.

5. Currently the states that are participating in SEL are California, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Washington. But this keeps changing. An additional 11 states have applied. Tennessee and Georgia, however, had originally applied but withdrew from SEL.

6. In 2017 the Minnesota Safe and Supportive Schools Conference was held at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul Campus on January 25th of that year. It was sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Education and the School Safety Technical Assistance Center. SEL was the focus of this conference.

The keynote speaker, Karen VanAusdal, said **7.** SEL instructors train teachers to ‘map’ students’ cultural values. This means identifying a student’s “personal cultural values and preferences.” This information is collected in a data dashboard and measured to see whether an individual demonstrates change in regard to attitudes, feelings and behaviors. The results are entered into a national SEL data bank.

Van Ausdal stated that in order to experience positive change, a school district **8.** “must be saturated with SEL.” She said their goal is to develop and implement SEL standards and assessments in all grades, all subjects, by all teachers.

CASEL breaks down SEL into **9.** five Core Competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

10. According to the SEL report *New Vision for Education*, the goal is to “introduce SEL early and embed it in the core curriculum throughout a child’s schooling.”

(New Vision of Education: Fostering Social and Emotional Learning through Technology P. 5)

This document admits: “...stakeholders still lack consensus on the definition of SEL...” (page 5) In other words, here we have a 35-page paper promoting SEL when no one knows exactly what it is, and yet everyone is being told they must do it.

Few *legislators* understand what SEL is all about even though it has been incorporated into Minnesota law through the 2014 MN Safe and Supportive Schools Act (aka the "Bullying Bill"). It is crucial for elected lawmakers to become aware of the dangers of SEL. because social-emotional learning is being prioritized and deeply embedded into education policy.

According to the SEL report entitled *Equity & Social and Emotional Learning: A Cultural Analysis* (page 3), it is their hope that through *transformative* SEL education they will be **11**. “viewing children and youth as the next generation...to reflect our interest in making *explicit* issues such as power, privilege, prejudice, discrimination, social justice, empowerment, and self-determination in the field of SEL” for the “development of justice-oriented, global citizens.” This is alarming. All of these topics will be woven through SEL curricula at all grade levels.

12. The SEL *New Vision for Education* report states (P. 24) that “Global organizations such as the OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank are well positioned to help advance the international agenda.”

SEL indoctrinates students to support left-wing social justice causes with values that often differ from the values and viewpoints learned in the home. Children whose views regarding human sexuality and family that are based on religious teachings or traditional beliefs, will experience emotional conflict because their values will be targeted for change by SEL trainers and teachers. SEL is taking our educational system into dangerous waters by undermining the moral and character values of a large population of families.

SEL violates a child’s conscience, and interferes with the child’s ability to follow his sense of right and wrong by learning to be non-judgmental about all behaviors. When a child seeks to do what is right, he grows in moral character and develops the self-control that is necessary for learning. Every child in America has the right to freedom of conscience, thought, and religion. SEL undermines these rights. This is social engineering at taxpayer expense.

Social-emotional learning is being praised as the new *science* in education. **13**. SEL research, however, is disconnected from science, disconnected from common sense, and disconnected from academics.

The focus is taken off of goals for academically achieving students and emphasizes their feelings and attitudes instead. Academic content takes a back seat to teaching affective and non-cognitive attitudes, values, and beliefs based on government-approved attitudes. This is a huge, significant paradigm shift for the US educational system that will *not* prepare our children for college and future careers.

14. The SEL *New Vision of Education* report *admits* to the following problems with SEL:

1. More screen time for children replacing human interaction
2. It’s hard to measure SEL consistently

3. Difficulty holding educators accountable due to lack of measurement
4. Already stretched funding
5. Insufficient time to teach academic skills (isn't that why we send our kids to school?)
6. Confusing array of SEL definitions and terminology

These are six good reasons *not* to implement SEL in the public schools.

II. Organizations Creating and/or funding SEL programs

15. The SEL initiative, as noted earlier, is led by CASEL. CASEL lobbies state legislatures and Congress to have states implement SEL into their education policy.

The mammoth K-12 education establishment is partnering with corporate education cronies to mold the minds of your children through curricula and psychological assessments. Businesses are encouraged to partner with SEL to develop policies that link SEL to business needs. They can make a profit on schools by ensuring that children will fit into their future workforce needs.

Some of the CASEL and SEL funding partners, foundations, and charitable trusts include: **16.**

1. The Federal government, through the Institute of Education Sciences (the research arm of the U.S. Department of Education)
2. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
3. The 1440 Foundation (promotes Buddhist yoga and “mindfulness”) According to CASEL, their goal is to “develop and pilot measures for collecting data on mindfulness practices.” Your children will be the guinea pigs!
4. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (promotes socialized medicine and climate change warnings)
5. The NoVo Foundation (a leftist organization that promotes transgender rights. They are “dedicated to catalyzing a transformation in global society, moving from a culture of domination to one of equality and partnership.” Their goal is to help create a “balanced world.” This means taking down America!
6. State dollars—meaning taxpayers!

Yes, cost is a great concern. SEL implementation requires **17.** the hiring of a director, SEL specialists, and on-going training for all teachers in each school district.

III. SEL curricula examples and who promotes them:

18. Welcoming Schools is a project of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) is a national LGBT advocacy group for LGBT rights and all sexual/gender identities and is a major player in promoting SEL.

Welcoming Schools was not developed at the request of parents and teachers, but at the urging of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) of Greater Boston who partnered with the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). HRC also partnered with the National Education Association to promote the *Welcoming Schools* curriculum as a way to create so-called safe and supportive school climates across the country.

This curriculum is the centerpiece of SEL and the Safe and Supportive Schools Act that was signed into law in Minnesota in 2014.

Welcoming Schools includes six hours of LGBT training for teachers. In many school districts *Welcoming Schools* has replaced academic training in professional development courses for educators.

Teachers are taught the beauty of homosexual love, how to view their students as gender neutral, how to teach these radical ideas to children, and how to introduce LGBT- inclusive children's books. These lessons clash with constitutionally protected First Amendment Free Speech and Religious Liberties.

AMAZE for elementary children is a SEL-based curriculum that "imbeds anti-bias theory and social emotional learning." "Anti-bias" education requires students (and their teachers) to check their preconceived notions—their biases—at the schoolhouse door, and affirm all expressions of identity.

AMAZE instructors use kids' books for young children that cover different "family structures" including gay and lesbian family members, religion, and gender expression and identity. Life-size dolls are used in the classroom to manipulate the emotions of a child.

19. Mindfulness Meditation, derived from a Buddhist religious practice, is used in classrooms under the guise of making students more tolerant and less judgmental by emptying children's minds of all thoughts. Children sit with their legs crossed and eyes closed. Negative side effects can include bringing the mind into an altered state of consciousness. Students can also encounter a sensation of being disconnected from one's body or from reality. There are real potential dangers from Buddhist mindfulness meditation.

IV. **20. Surveys, data, and assessments**

Students are tested on a regular basis to look for improvement in retraining their emotions and values. Children that don't have the right social-emotional skills will be remediated by SEL through the computer with adaptive curriculum assessments that are embedded in the curriculum. Their social-emotional "skills" are tracked and adjusted as needed until a child's beliefs line up with the preconceived viewpoints the promoters seek to advance.

21. Some trainers may choose to have schools use wearable devices for students such as smart watches, wristbands, headsets, or apps to regulate and track a student's physical response by noting a fluctuation in stress and emotion.

Teachers complain that lengthy assessments to re-train students shorten the academic day and take valuable time away from academic lesson planning.

Educators know that even though they are required to fill out "confidential" surveys of their SEL activities, principals can read their responses. This often leads to some teachers making false or exaggerated claims to give the appearance of success. A psychologist admits that the measurements are "fakeable, imprecise, and they have a thousand biases."

All of these mental health assessments are a **22.** bureaucratic nightmare that will bog down the public school system with increased paperwork and administrative costs.

23. The paperwork will *not* be protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) since the assessments are administered by teachers. The school district can share the assessments of your child's mental health with anyone. Parents are not asked for permission before their children are screened, nor do they have any say over where the records end up.

Another danger of SEL is that untrained people will assign labels to your children that will be preserved *forever* in a government data system. All of the data will become a permanent part of the child's academic record. This collection of data is a **24.** violation of privacy, and interferes with the fundamental private rights of conscience to which every American is entitled.

Schools are institutions of learning, not mental health facilities. SEL assessments are nothing more than psychological evaluations and should not be conducted under the guise of improving educational outcomes for pre-K-12 students.

V. Alternatives to SEL and what you can do

25. What can you do?

1. Refuse to let your children take state standardized tests.
2. Refuse any social emotional screening tool like Devereaux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA)
3. Tell your school board to reject SEL
4. Notify your state Representatives and Senator to stop SEL
5. Contact the MN Department of Education and Commissioner and tell them you do not want your children psychologically tested, profiled, and tracked. Tell them to focus on academic achievement testing only.
6. If your child's public school is becoming saturated with SEL, get out now! Parents lost the battle for control of the public school curriculum long ago. Protect your child and seek other options for their education.

School districts can reject SEL. SEL is *not* a federal mandate even though the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) contains provisions to *support* social-emotional learning.

Parents, you must proactively stave off the introduction of social and emotional learning initiatives in your school district because they will put your child's future at serious risk. SEL is an irresponsible social experiment that weakens academics, harms kids emotionally, and tracks them for life.

Conclusion

This video is intended to be a useful tool for all interested parties to use to share with state and federal lawmakers, congressional and state legislative staff, education policy makers, school board members, teachers, and parents and taxpayers who will also share this information.

The question is, **26** who *should* be instilling values, attitudes, and beliefs in children, and monitoring their emotions? The answer is **27** parents—with the assistance of churches—certainly not the government through the public schools.

In the story of the **28**. *Pied Piper of Hamelin*, the piper played a magical melody that lured children away from their parents, leading them through a door in a mountain that closed behind them. Parents must not allow their children to be led away by the luring call of SEL trainers. SEL closes the door to individual thinking, common sense, family values, and turns students into the next generation of leftist activists.

29. Aristotle said, "All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind are convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth."

The fate of *America* depends on the whether we *win* this education battle for the minds of *our* youth. Thank you.