

To the Editor:

This letter is to inform all citizens in A-H [Anoka-Hennepin] District 11 about a dangerous program—under the banner of safe schools—that is coming to school districts all around the country. This latest educational fad is called Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). It is a program run by the far left that seeks to abolish children’s “biased” views on a variety of topics including gender norms, family, LGBT and Islam by tracking their attitudes and feelings.

On January 25th I attended the MN Safe and Supportive Schools Conference sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Education/School Safety Technical Assistance Center. SEL was the centerpiece of this conference and is being promoted nation-wide by the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

The keynote speaker, Karen VanAusdal, shared that “CASEL’S Collaborating District Initiative (CDI) is at the forefront of national efforts to make SEL an integral part of pre-K through grade 12 education.”

The goal is to develop and implement SEL standards and assessments in all grades, all subjects, by all teachers. VanAusdal stated that in order to experience positive change, a school district must be saturated with SEL. This includes hiring a director, SEL specialists, and holding on-going training for all professionals in the district.

SEL instructors plan to train all teachers in “mapping cultural values” which means identifying a student’s “personal cultural values and preferences” in several categories. 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.

There will be no “safe space” under SEL for teachers and children whose views regarding human sexuality and family are based on religious teachings or traditional beliefs. They will experience emotional conflict because their values will be targeted for change by the methods and lessons used in SEL. This mind manipulation violates the private right of conscience.

Let’s protect our district and steer clear of Social and Emotional Learning. We don’t need another irresponsible social experiment that weakens academics, harms kids emotionally, and tracks them for life.

Barb Anderson
Champlin, MN