

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017



Connect • Collaborate • Learn

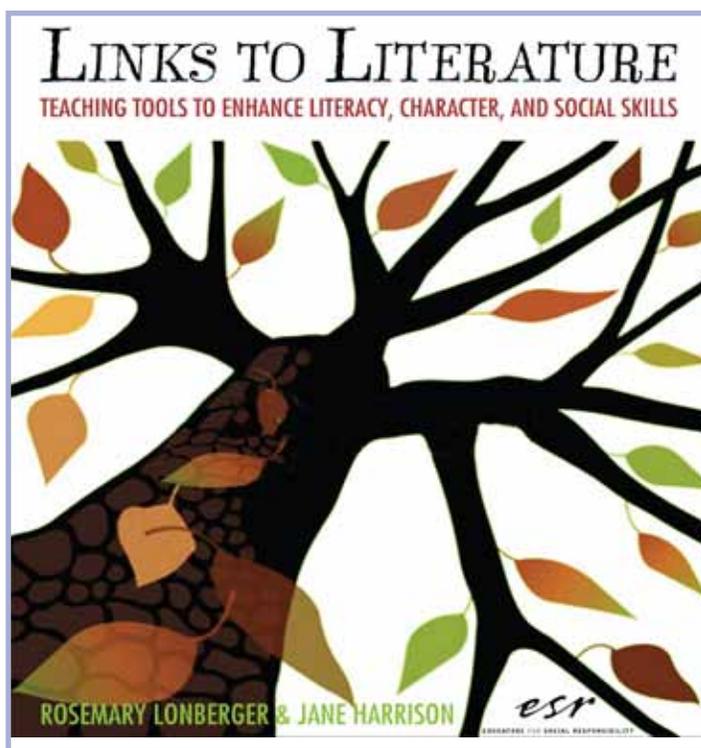
*Formerly known as
Educators for Social Responsibility*

Mission Statement

Engaging Schools collaborates with educators to create school communities where each and every student develops the skills and mindsets needed to succeed and make positive contributions in school, work, and life.

Books to help empower youth, and more

Last year we consolidated our office libraries and identified over 650 books that needed a new home. We donated them to More than Words (MTW), an organization in Boston that empowers youth as they learn to operate a business.



MTW serves young people who are in the foster care system, court-involved, homeless, and/or out of school. Through the two-year program, they achieve stability, income, and growth through their training and employment at the MTW warehouse and retail bookstores. They also attain high school diplomas, GEDs, and success in college. MTW offers them ongoing support through graduate and alumni programs.

We also donated 1,220 extra teaching materials and curricula to First Book, a Pennsylvania-based social enterprise that provides new books to schools and programs attended by children from low-income families. The organization was especially pleased to receive professional materials for use by program staff and teachers who work with children in need.



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Message From the Executive Director

Dear Friend,

There is mounting evidence that support for social and emotional learning (SEL) is growing. I am excited to see this momentum build given what we know about its importance for the success of young people, as well as how it helps to foster a more respectful and inclusive society. One example of this increased interest is a National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development comprised of esteemed education, civic, and business leaders that was established at the Aspen Institute to explore how to integrate SEL into the fabric of schools.

A panel of 28 distinguished social scientists recently unanimously endorsed a set of consensus statements on SEL and the research behind them. Harvard University Professor and Engaging Schools' board member, Stephanie Jones, a participant on the panel, said, "This body of research demonstrates what parents have always known—the success of young people in school and beyond is inextricably linked to healthy social and emotional development."

Engaging Schools has been a leader in the field of SEL for 20 years and a pioneer in developing and implementing SEL in secondary schools where it is least understood. To add to the growing momentum, we released a white paper entitled *Embedding Social and Emotional Learning in High School Classrooms* and distributed it to over 20,000 educators, including many who are leading SEL implementation at state, district, and school levels.

We build a compelling case for why we need to move beyond SEL as an "add-on" and instead use an integrated approach where the foundation is the classroom—the place where we can reach all students, every day, all year long. Please see page 2 for more about our approach.

Our approach to SEL contributes to equity, one of our core values, in several important ways. First, it supports every student to experience a safe, inclusive, and engaging learning environment. Second, it directly engages teachers in practices that support developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive teaching. Third, it helps all students gain understandings and learn behaviors that enhance their capacity to succeed in school, career, and life. Finally, as we have shown for years, SEL is key to a restorative and accountable approach to discipline, which is the alternative to a punitive and exclusionary approach that disproportionately impacts African-American students, special education students, and others.

Engaging Schools is pleased to collaborate with so many committed educators each year. Last year we worked directly with educators from more than two hundred schools, mostly in low-income, underserved communities. We reached tens of thousands of others by distributing our resource guides, and through communications like white papers, our E-news and website, and conference presentations. I am deeply grateful to our many supporters and partners who share our commitment to creating caring, engaging, and equitable schools, and make this work possible!

Thank you!



Embedding Social and Emotional Learning in High School Classrooms

We recently published and widely disseminated a white paper called *Embedding Social and Emotional Learning in High School Classrooms*. After over 15 years of narrow focus on standardized academic test performance throughout the country, there is now a great need for effective ways to make social and emotional learning a part of the fabric of every school.

While these skills are a familiar component of many elementary school curricula, they are not commonly included in many middle and most high schools. We have developed a framework for secondary schools that enables any subject-matter teacher to teach SEL skills simultaneous with math, chemistry, English, and so on, every day, all year long. We wrote our white paper to influence school and district leaders by building a case for why it is critical to bring SEL into middle and high schools and to show how it can be done.

What is Social and Emotional Learning?

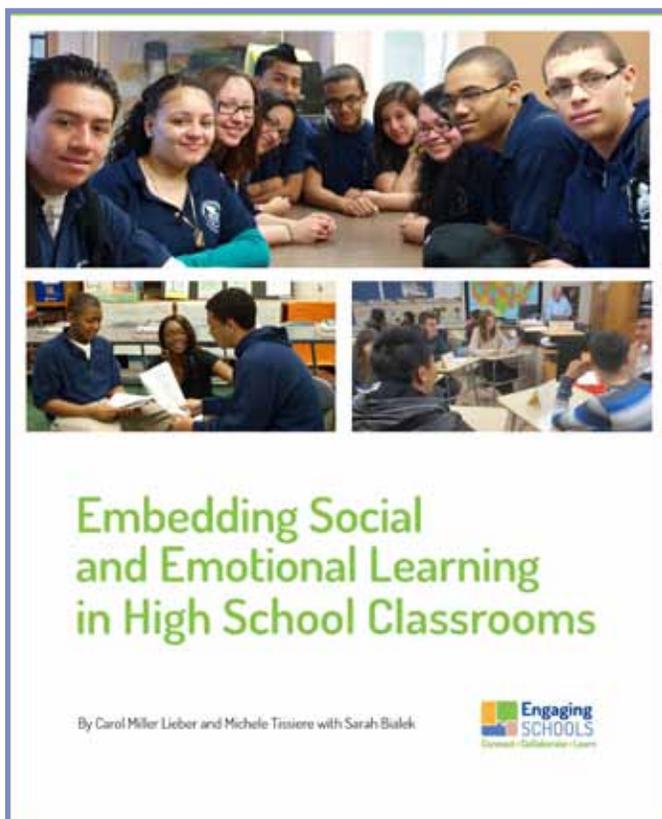
The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning authoritatively defines SEL as “the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.”

A comment we received from a state education leader right after releasing the paper affirmed the need for this resource:

“I work closely with our alternative education programs as well as our struggling traditional schools. When talking SEL and behavior with the secondary schools I work with, I often hear folks groan and then say ‘not in the high school.’ It seems SEL is not viewed as having potential to be successful. Hence, the white paper is great! I wondered if Engaging Schools would present the key ideas from Embedding Social and Emotional Learning in High School Classrooms to a gathering of secondary educators? I believe many want to know how to do this!”

The framework we outline in the paper includes four core skill sets: self-awareness, self-management, social efficacy, and academic efficacy. It utilizes the latest research on student learning to offer a unique and wider set of skills we call “Learning and Life Competencies,” which build on those most closely associated with SEL.

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Embedding Social and Emotional Learning in High School Classrooms

Examples of places we have helped schools implement SEL

- In **Syracuse, NY** we are working with teams of ninth grade teachers who have identified problem behaviors in their students that become barriers to academic success in the classroom. Teams then identify specific Learning and Life Competencies that counter problem behaviors. At the beginning of the school year, desired target behaviors are modeled, taught, practiced, and assessed in team members' classrooms.



- As part of recalibrating discipline policies and practices, we worked with four high school climate and culture teams in **Chicago, IL** who aligned their schoolwide and classroom expectations to Learning and Life Competencies that focused on social efficacy. Target behaviors included, "I respect the dignity of each person and their rights to be heard, to be valued, and to learn in a safe classroom," and "I work cooperatively with others and do my fair share of the work."

- At High Point Academy in **Denver, CO** we worked with middle school staff to improve teaching practices to engage and build relationships with students within classrooms. We also helped implement an advisory program that supported students to develop their self-awareness and social and academic efficacy. Students set goals, monitored, assessed, and discussed their academic progress through written and oral self-reflections and conferencing.

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It is rooted in our commitment to helping high schools create more equitable, engaging, and culturally and developmentally responsive environments where young people can experience meaningful learning and positive social interactions.

Authors Carol Miller Lieber and Michele Tisiere are veteran educators, school leaders, teachers of teachers, and authors. Carol has worked on the field

staff and designed programs for Engaging Schools, and Educators for Social Responsibility before it, for many years. She has written or co-written many of our most popular publications. Michele, too, has authored several works for Engaging Schools and serves as our director of programs, rooted in her deep experience partnering with school and district leaders to bring about school change.

The Critical Role of Leadership

School and district leaders play a critical role in establishing schoolwide discipline and student support systems that are fair, respectful, accountable, and restorative. They are the ones who set the tone and expectations for the entire staff, guide the development of systems and policies that align with the school's mission and vision, and are responsible for ensuring that teachers have the support and skills they need.

Engaging Schools places a high priority on working with district leaders, principals, and school leadership teams. One of the ways that we do so is through institutes where leaders from many places come together to experience our work, deepen their understanding, reflect on their beliefs, and learn the fundamentals of creating schoolwide discipline and support systems.

Last year we held institutes that engaged more than 200 school and district leaders in **North Carolina, upstate New York, Connecticut, New York City, and Chicago**. In North Carolina, we conducted an institute in the fall that laid the foundation for another step when we went back in the spring to help leaders focus on just

one part of the schoolwide discipline system—how to create or refine a Code of Conduct, Character, and Support.

We also worked more deeply with leaders within their schools. In **Syracuse, NY**, where we have helped many schools improve their discipline and student support systems, we engaged in additional conversations with leaders at Henninger High school about what to do when students are struggling academically. The school, which serves 1,900 students, implemented many changes such as starting academic advising for every student and adding more support for 9th graders. As one indicator of success, the school's four-year graduation rate increased from 49 to 61 percent in just three years. The school's vice principal had this to say about our support:

"I just wanted to send my deepest thanks for the knowledge and excitement you brought to Henninger HS and to myself as an administrator, modeling day-to-day work backed by research and best practices. I learned so very much in our administrative work sessions. Please know that your time and hard work is truly cherished."



Carol Miller Lieber checks in with a group of principals from New York and Chicago at an Engaging Schools leadership institute sponsored by the Cahn Fellows program at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Other examples of our work with leaders include a four-day training for the school-climate-discipline team at Antioch High School in **Nashville** that helped them understand the causes of disparities in school discipline, bring a systems change lens to creating a positive school culture and climate for all students and staff, and create a professional development plan for the rest of the school. Principal Jose Duarte of Fuller Middle School in **Framingham, MA** gathered 16 of the school's leaders together to learn from Engaging Schools how to create a restorative culture throughout their school. And new principals and assistant principals in the **Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC** district participated in Engaging Schools sessions focused on schoolwide disciplinary and student support structures, and restorative practices.

Safe Public Spaces in New York City Middle Schools

We have completed the first year of a two-year study of our Safe Public Spaces (SPS) program. Our research partners, the American Institutes for Research and the Research Alliance, are collecting data on 24 New York City middle schools over two years to learn how well SPS helps schools provide a safer environment to their students.

The schools range in enrollment from 239 to 1,878 students and are located in all five boroughs of New York City. In all, the schools in the study enroll over 20,500 students.

Within each of the 12 intervention schools, administrators, teachers, safety agents, aides, front office staff, and student support staff are trained in strategies to provide students with increased physical safety and emotional well-being, as well as stronger connections to the adults in their schools.

Last year, Engaging Schools' field staff provided professional development and follow-up coaching to intervention schools in four strategies. (See below for more information.) The 12 control schools did not receive training.

One intervention school is the Anning S. Prall Intermediate School with 1,100 students and 140 adults located on the north shore of Staten Island, NY. Assistant Principal Joe Pecoraro described how the SPS program has helped make dramatic improvements. "We were on the borderline of New York's 'persistently dangerous' category two years ago. We were already committed to addressing our high



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Safe Public Spaces Techniques

Meeting and Greeting – a ritual in which teachers stand at their classroom doorways to welcome and greet students individually by name during passing time and at the start of the school day. They connect with their students through personalized comments and questions, focused eye contact, and friendly gestures. Physical presence in the doorway also supports students' safe transition from one place to the next.

Managing Hotspots – adults stand in congested areas, places perceived as unsafe, or areas where students persistently engage in inappropriate behaviors. They engage in friendly verbal exchanges with students who pass and watch for and address potential flare-ups before they become incidents.

Using Effective Reminders and Directives – verbal techniques to help keep traffic flowing and prevent "clumping" by positively encouraging students to get to their next destination. Adults maintain a relaxed posture; limit physical movement; keep their eyes receptive and focused; and use a firm, assertive, respectful, and optimistic tone.

- "Monica and Pilar, enjoy your conversation and keep moving along. We want everyone to get to class on time."
- "Are those new glasses, Jason? Very cool. Katie, how's it going? Let's keep moving; have a fabulous fifth period."

Defusing Students who are Emotionally Charged – understand how to evaluate students' emotional state when they are angry or agitated, and implement a range of responses to help students safely calm themselves.

Adults understand that it is important to not take a student's behaviors personally; instead, they ground themselves in the knowledge that they have the skills and strategies to support a student who is having a hard time. They empathize with the student and appreciate that once he/she is triggered, it is very challenging to de-escalate without support. They understand that intense emotions get in the way of the student's ability to think rationally.

Safe Public Spaces in New York City Middle Schools

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suspension rate, but were spinning our wheels at the time we had a presentation about SPS. The principal and I exchanged looks as though to say, 'Did they read our minds? This is exactly what we need.' It's been a great fit. We were ready to engage kids with more of a coaching mentality, and get to know and support them as individuals, which is what this program is all about. It was easy to convince the staff to do something that

didn't require a lot of paperwork and just asked them to be nice, caring people. The whole staff has bought into it."

Joe reports that suspensions are greatly reduced and academics have improved, while student surveys show that school climate and culture are better. The school has improved so much that it has become a resource for other schools.



"The kids have certainly seen a big difference. They realize that around every corner there is going to be somebody to say good morning or give positive directives. The substantial increase in adult presence has resulted in a decrease in serious incidents. The sixth graders definitely adjusted to the school a lot quicker than they have in the past. And I notice little things, like how the kids take ownership in the hallways. We used to have a hard time keeping student work on display. Now the hallways are print-rich."

– Joe Pecoraro
Anning S. Prall Intermediate School

Financial Summary

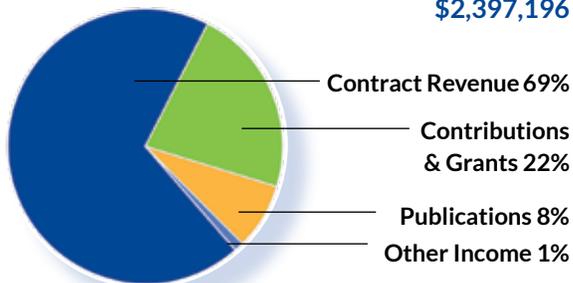
July 2016 – June 2017

Revenues & Support

\$2,397,196

Expenses

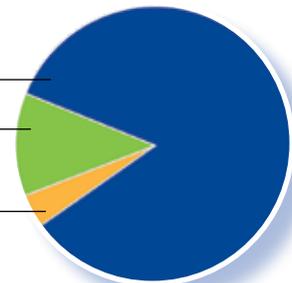
\$2,308,653



Program Services 84%

Management & General 12%

Fundraising 4%



Net Assets	6/30/17	6/30/16
Unrestricted	\$ 1,550,328	\$ 1,461,785
Temporarily Restricted	222,314	313,272
Net Assets at End of Year	\$ 1,772,642	\$ 1,775,057

These figures are derived from Engaging Schools' audited statements, full copies of which are available upon request.

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