- **Why is SEL important in mental health promotion and suicide prevention?**

Two SEL programs have measured the short term or long term effects on suicidal behaviors among their students. Each found profound reduction in suicidal ideation and attempts. A study of the "Skills for Life Programme for Adolescents", a Dutch program, showed "that the intervention was a significant predictor of decreased suicidality" in the short term (Gravensteijn C. et al., 2011, p. 10). The "Good Behavior Game", which is implemented in the first and second grades, has been studied for decades. This program reduced by one half rates of suicidal ideation and attempts occurring by age 19-21 (Good Behavior Game (GBG), 2017) & (NREPP, SAMHSA, Good Behavior Game)

Students contend "with significant social, emotional, and mental barriers that prevent them from succeeding in both school and life" (Dymnicki, A. et al., 2013, p. 4). The CDC's 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, SAMHA's 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, and the 2012 National College Health Assessment show "that many high school and college students are engaged in health-risk behaviors" which are "major contributors to the leading causes of death among persons aged 10-24 years" (Dymnicki, A. et al., 2013, p. 4). Suicide is the second leading cause of death in the United States for this age group (CDC 2014). SEL addresses some of the barriers to learning and to health.

- **How does SEL influence development?**

One way to approach the best fit for SEL programming is to identify how SEL can positively influence expected developmental tasks according to the age of the students. In the table below, competences are listed in order of introduction by school level. In the preschool years, the competencies listed (e.g., beginning to learn how to self-manage and behave in groups) are foundational for further growth in elementary school. SEL programming needs to continue to address these foundational competencies in elementary school, in addition to others (e.g., showing and sharing emotions, as well as having more complex relationships). This structure continues to build in middle and high schools.

Developmental Tasks of Social and Emotional Competence Pre K - 12

Preschool	• Become and be socially and academically engaged • Manage emotions (appropriately for a young child), especially with adult support • Stay connected to adults, while beginning to develop peer relationships • In play and learning, pay attention and follow directions, wait, sit still, and effectively join and leave groups
Elementary	• Become increasingly successful at navigating peer relationships and friendships independent of adult support • Show and share emotions appropriately, and with appropriate people
Middle School	• Form closer relationships with peers of both genders • Manage increasingly complex academic content and tasks, with increasing independence from adults • Effectively manage transitions to middle and high school • Increase independence from adults
High School	• Begin preparing for adult roles (e.g., become more nurturing to younger children, begin preparing and practicing for work roles) • Develop an ethical value system that allows for responsible decision-making and responsible behavior toward self and others