The educational process can also dispel common myths about SEL, for example, that it is only for younger students, it is not necessary for academic achievers, and it is for students who don't learn to behave at home. At the same time, it's important to know that SEL is not a panacea that will solve problems of achievement, equity, and behavioral issues at school.

- **Approaches to Promoting SEL**

Schools can help students develop social and emotional competence through several types of approaches. These include:

- Direct and explicit teaching of SEL skills in free-standing lessons
- Integrating SEL in teaching practices to create a learning environment supportive of SEL
- Integrating SEL instruction into an academic curriculum
- Creating policies, organizational structures, and a positive culture and climate that supports students' social and emotional development

These approaches are not mutually exclusive. At the middle and high school level, SEL programming can happen in the context of regular curriculum and instruction activities, but it can also take place through activities such as health promotion and character education, or through prevention efforts such as those that target suicide prevention, violence, substance use, or dropout.
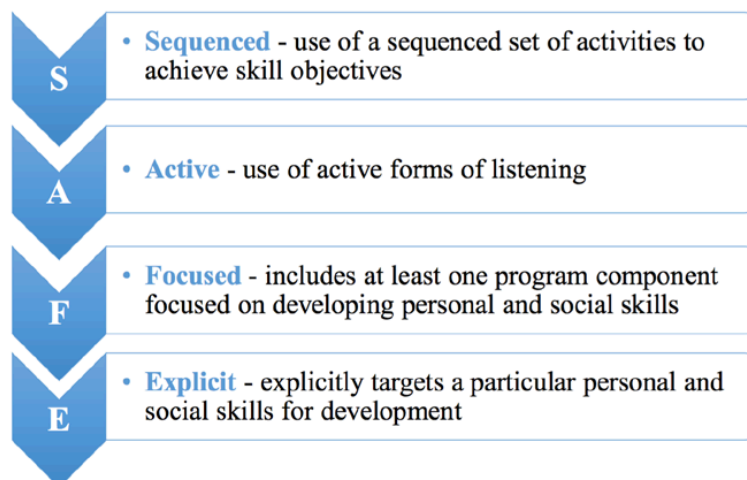
All approaches contribute to the short-term outcomes of skill acquisition, improved attitudes, and an enhanced learning environment, which in turn lead to behavioral and academic outcomes such as positive social behavior, fewer conduct problems, lower emotional distress, and improved academic performance, as listed below.

SEL Approaches from: http://www.casel.org/what-is-sel/approaches/

The development of effective SEL programs incorporates four elements referred to as "Sequenced, Active, Focused and Explicit (SAFE) practices" (Dymnicki, A., et al 2013)

CASEL SAFE Practices

- **S** • **Sequenced** - use of a sequenced set of activities to achieve skill objectives
- **A** • **Active** - use of active forms of listening
- **F** • **Focused** - includes at least one program component focused on developing personal and social skills
- **E** • **Explicit** - explicitly targets a particular personal and social skills for development

http://www.casel.org/what-is-sel/approaches

Students participating in SEL programming which apply the "SAFE" practices demonstrated (on average) "a 12 percentile increase in achievement" (Durlak, J. A., et al., 2010, p. 302). Implementation influences outcomes and requires the support of school leaders (Durlak J.A., et al, 2007). Effective SEL programming can enhance both the promotion of youth wellness and the prevention of suicide.

States and school districts are beginning to identify and define SEL standards for students and educators (found at:http://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/WhataretheKeyFeaturesofHigh-QualityStandards11816.pdf) Illinois, Kansas, and Alaska have all taken steps toward this end. California is currently in this process, collaborating with several other states to develop statewide standards that are comprehensive across the above four approaches.