

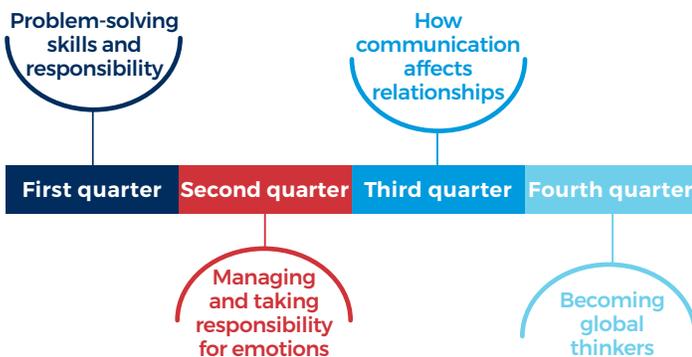
THE POSITIVE EFFECT OF TEACHING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING SKILLS

East High School in Salt Lake City, Utah, knows diversity. Located in a sanctuary city, the school educates a large number of undocumented refugees, with **43 languages spoken** in its hallways and socio-economic **backgrounds ranging from wealthy to homeless** (more than 60 percent of students use the free-and-reduced-lunch program, compared to 37 percent statewide and 52 percent nationwide).

East High's unique student population multiplies the challenges of preparing students for college and career. The solution: relying heavily on teaching and assessing Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skills, which has made a "night-and-day difference," according to Principal Greg Maughan.

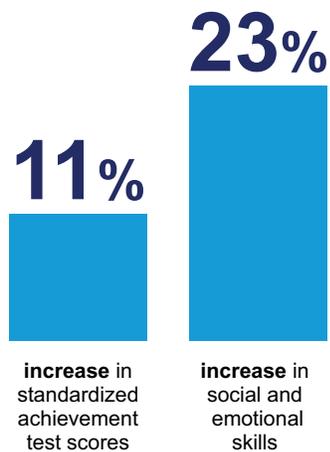
"Teaching SEL transforms the relationship between adults and students."

East High pioneered an SEL-based curriculum, titled **"Techniques for Tough Times."** The credit-bearing course is led by teacher Leigh VandenAkker, who co-authored a book of the same name. The yearlong class arms students with skills required throughout their lives, focusing on a different skill set each quarter:

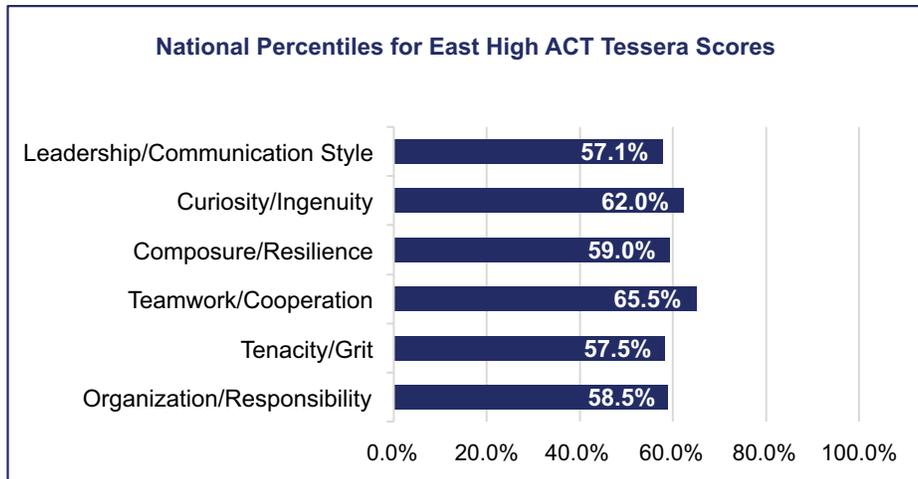


The course incorporates ACT® Tessera™ assessments, which measure students' progress in these behavioral skills. Tessera results are also used in professional development, helping teachers identify social and emotional areas for improvement in what they teach. "It empowers teachers, and they feel uplifted because they're learning from their students as well," said VandenAkker.

Results of teaching social and emotional skills



Source: "The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions"



Hundreds of students take the Techniques class each year, and East High is pleased with the results. **On average, East High students score higher than students in the national sample in all six constructs measured by Tessera.** In the Teamwork/Cooperation and Curiosity/Ingenuity categories, the average East High student ranks in the 65.5 and 62 percentiles, respectively.

ACT research shows instruction in social and emotional skills results in improved academic achievement and greater preparedness. In fact, ACT research shows a strong correlation between the six SEL constructs measured by Tessera assessments and high school GPA.

Maughan says SEL skills also make students more engaged and thoughtful learners. “Kids are now used to lightning-speed access to information,” he said.

“It’s important we not only help students gain access to that information but give them the skills to synthesize that content in a way that’s deeper and meaningful. Being able to blend content knowledge into communication and collaboration skills helps students cross the threshold into success.”

For schools and districts looking to develop their own SEL programs, the *ACT Tessera Teacher Playbook* provides actionable lessons for teachers, allowing them to integrate SEL techniques into their classrooms. Its curriculum and activities are designed to help students continue to develop their social and emotional skill strengths and to improve on their weaknesses.

Tessera Skill	Correlation with High School GPA
Tenacity/Grit	.41
Organization/Responsibility	.38
Teamwork/Cooperation	.27
Composure/Resilience	.25
Curiosity/Ingenuity	.21
Leadership/Communication Style	.19

*For comparison, the correlation between the ACT and first-year college GPA is 0.37.