

### Open Circle Outcomes:

- ⇒ Students who successfully recognize and manage emotions, show empathy, build positive relationships, and make responsible decisions
- ⇒ Safe, caring, and highly engaging school climates
- ⇒ School communities united by a common SEL vocabulary, strategies, and expectations for student behavior
- ⇒ Teachers with improved classroom management and facilitation skills
- ⇒ Trusting, collaborative relationships among staff in schools

### Open Circle is a leading provider of evidence-based professional development and curricula for social and emotional learning (SEL) in Kindergarten through Grade 5.

Since its inception in 1987, Open Circle has reached nearly half a million children and trained over 10,000 teachers, administrators, and school support staff members. Open Circle is currently used in over 250 schools across more than 100 communities in the Northeast.

SEL is the process of developing essential social and emotional skills, knowledge, and attitudes related to:

- **Self-awareness:** recognizing one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and limitations
- **Self-management:** managing emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goal
- **Social awareness:** showing and understanding empathy for others
- **Relationship skills:** forming positive relationships, working in teams, dealing effectively with conflict
- **Responsible decision-making:** making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior

SEL helps children by promoting their health and well-being and contributing to the prevention of violence, truancy, bullying, and drug and alcohol abuse. In addition, SEL is associated with significant gains on academic achievement tests.

### Open Circle's Impact

Two recent research studies have demonstrated the substantial positive impact of Open Circle. The studies showed significant increases in children's self-assertiveness, higher levels of social skills and self-control, fewer problem behaviors, and fewer incidents of physical aggression. These findings were reiterated in a 2008 survey of 670 teachers who have participated in Open Circle training. A majority of participants reported:

- More students deliberately using Open Circle skills (e.g. calm breathing, distinguishing between dangerous, destructive and annoying behaviors) outside of Open Circle meetings.
- Increases in students' self-control, cooperation, problem solving, and effective communication.
- Decreases in teasing, bullying, and exclusion of peers.
- More time spent on academics and less time spent on discipline.



a program of the Wellesley Centers for Women

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### Teachers and principals say:

*"Since we implemented Open Circle, I have seen a huge difference in children's ability to resolve their own conflicts and monitor their own behavior."*

*"Open Circle has really helped me understand how to work a classroom to achieve high academic success."*

*"Open Circle provides children and adults with a common language and expectations that are essential to learning."*

*"All of the training facilitators were wonderful, warm, and excellent role models."*

*"We've used other SEL programs that don't work as well because kids are not taught the skills."*

**What makes Open Circle unique?** Our research-validated track record, our commitment to quality, our adherence to best practices, and our innovation.

Open Circle offers:

- **Skill-Building and Community-Building:** Open Circle addresses *both* key elements for effective SEL implementation: skill-building for social and emotional competency *and* community-building to create safe, caring, and highly-engaging learning environments.
- **S.A.F.E. Curriculum:** The *Open Circle Curriculum* meets CASEL's "S.A.F.E." standard with its 34 **S**equenced and grade-differentiated lessons, **A**ctive learning tools (e.g. role-plays, games), **F**ocused time for SEL (two 15-minute Open Circle meetings per week), and **E**xplicit social and emotional skill development.
- **Whole-School Approach & Sustainability:** Open Circle initiated the best practice of training entire school communities to support SEL. We also led the field in creating programming to help schools sustain SEL by helping schools form multi-departmental teams to develop plans to assess, broaden, and deepen their SEL work.
- **Unmatched Professional Development:** Open Circle excels at providing high-quality professional development that respects the unique needs of adult learners. Our core programs include both training and in-school coaching visits spaced across the school year to provide a cycle of learning, practice and reflection.
- **Evidence-Based and Nationally-Recognized:** Schools can fund Open Circle through state and federal grants because it is a research-based program with clear evidence of effectiveness. Open Circle is listed in the *U.S. Department of Education Expert Panel Guidebook of Exemplary and Promising Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools Programs* and has been designated as a "Select" program by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning.

**Open Circle's mission is to work with school communities to help children become ethical people, contributing citizens, and successful learners. By helping schools implement Open Circle, we foster the development of relationships that support safe, caring, and respectful learning communities of children and adults.**