Welcome and Introduction by Ms. Brenda Carrillo, Chair of SEL Committee, Student Services Director at PAUSD. She thanked the group for the interest in the committee and shared that there was strong interest in participating on this committee-over 60 people applied. Commented that the group was chosen to have a diverse cross section of school, stakeholder and experience represented. The agenda was then reviewed.

Dr. Denise Herrmann, Co-chair of SEL Committee and Principal at Gunn. Welcomed the group and thanked them for their time and participation. Shared that the group has a robust charge and mentioned that a third person may be joining the meetings as a facilitator.

The group introduced themselves including: their name, role, why they joined the committee and one thing they wanted the committee to know about them. Themes that emerged from the group were: understanding of the importance of SEL to mental health functioning, future professional success and career preparation, promoting a sense of belonging and positive school culture as well as general success in life.

Based on time constraints, the meeting agenda was shifted and the SEL activity was tabled to spend more time on the orientation portion of the agenda.

Orientation: Brenda reviewed the purpose of the committee and charge, the timeline for the work as well as communication. She reminded the group of need to remain open minded about the work ahead, given the diversity of our student body and the committee membership. The membership was then asked what questions they had about the committee’s work. The following questions were generated:

- A lot of places are doing training over the summer for teachers. Will people be tasked with taking courses over the summer? Are there SEL classes over the summer, so that we can take advantage before we come back in August?

- There are CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social & Emotional Learning) recommendations and reviews of SEL. There is a great article entitled “Teaching the Entire Child.”

- Are we going to recommend a program? Are we going to recommend a framework? Sometimes when people are passionate about certain things – then get their ideas pushed through quickly and maybe we go too quickly.
The concern is that we not feel rushed to push things through, because once it goes to the School Board, then it becomes big.

- Can we have sub-groups within the Committee (ie., PreK-5, Jr high, High school)? Is it possible to break off into smaller groups to better leverage our resources? Perhaps we only get to do an adequate job for K-5 by December. If we concentrate on small bits and get them right, then that might be a better way to go.

Denise clarified that yes, there will be sub-committees.

Brenda clarified if committee members have resources or links that they want to share, please forward them to her. Not everyone will have the time to read all resources. They will create a “Google doc” with the info.

- This district is “data rich”, so what data will be provided?

Brenda shared that it will probably be a combination of both, ie., study reports and data that we already have and then go “out in the field” to schools that already have a rich SEL program.

- How will we make decisions about how we go forward? Will things be decided by consensus?

- Sometimes schools implement a program that might be ok for the younger children, but is not as helpful at the middle school level. And sometimes schools have different names/jargon for similar programs. Is there an SEL program that spans the different grades?

- How do we plan for “buy in”? This will take buy-in. And this is a District that does not always “buy in.”

- Do we have metrics that show the success of these SEL programs? And for varying groups? What is an SEL program for one group may not be well received by a different ethnic group?

- SEL is very socially based. What might be considered socially acceptable in one community is not necessarily socially accepted in another community.

- How are we evaluating success?

- There are many things that you can teach under the umbrella of SEL. Sometimes we pick topics that can be a “slippery slope.” For example, grit is considered positively correlated with success. What are we teaching our students? Cheating can sometimes increase test scores, but it is not a positive thing to teach our students.

- Are we willing to bring up a different set of standards for success?
Denise shared that she has worked on committees that have generated reports in 10 weeks, but it may have been too rushed. They all couldn’t be at every meeting. They had a town hall meeting w/ 300+ people and got a lot of input. We need to honor these processes.

Brenda shared that committee members are invited to forward additional comments and resources. In the meantime, each member received a copy of “Promoting Social and Emotional Learning – Guidelines for Educators.” Chapter 1 was assigned reading with a follow up assignment to be emailed.

The group reviewed the meeting schedule and the June 29th and August 24th meeting dates were removed. August 24th is the Middle School “Back to School Night.” However, may keep August 24th as a retreat day. Denise emphasized the groups need to spend quality time together to move the work forward.

Brenda asked the group to participate in the Closure activity to get feedback from the group. The group filled out the Quadrant Sheet activity.

Questions/Comments transcribed from the white board:

- Are we a consensus driven group? Majority?
- Community input? Town halls?
- There’s a lot of training offered over the summer? Do we want to look at sending anyone? Buy-in?
- How are we defining success?
- Are we willing to re-define success?
- How are we supporting students who have to code switch?
- What programs do we already have?
- Success of current programs?
- Need to be clear about our deliverables.
- What are our priorities?
- What form will the recommendations to the Board be in? Framework?
- Curriculum? What?
- Concerns about going too fast
- Will there be focus groups? K-5? MS?
- What will be provided to us (data, research)?
- What will we have to find on our own?
- How will we make it accessible for all students?

** Next meeting is scheduled for August 3rd, 2016 - 6-7:30pm **

Transcriber: Bernadette M. St. John, J.D., Job Developer /Advocate at Palo Alto Unified School District