

100 West 10th Street, Suite 704 Wilmington, Delaware 19801 T: 302.571.1536 F: 302.571.1538 www rodelfoundationde.org

# Overview: Measuring SEL May 2017

#### Introduction i

Educators have grown increasingly interested in measures of personal qualities other than cognitive ability—including self-control, grit, growth mindset, gratitude, purpose, emotional intelligence, and other beneficial personal qualities—that lead to student success. These social and emotional learning (SEL) qualities range from behaviors (e.g., self-control) and beliefs (e.g., about the nature of intelligence) to skills (e.g., interpersonal communication and conflict resolution). This memo outlines approaches to SEL measurement in order to serve as a baseline for further discussion and research that are needed to understand the distinct advantages, limitations, and appropriate uses of existing and yet-to-be-developed measures.

# Common Approaches to Measuring SEL?

What can we measure?

#### **Beliefs**

(Motivational factors)

- Can I get smarter?
- Do my teachers and peers respect me?
  - Is there value in what I'm being asked to do?

#### **Skills**

(Self-regulation factors)

- Cognitive: Handling impulses, sustaining attention
- Emotional: Managing emotions and behavior
- Social: Interacting effectively with others

### Student Status

...on these beliefs and skills

#### **School Conditions**

...that foster these beliefs and skills

# How can we measure?

# Self-report questionnaires

- Survey tools completed by students or by adults (e.g. teachers or parents) about students

Vast majority of current measures

See example below

# Performance tasks

- Controlled situations designed for teachers to observe meaningful differences in certain student behaviors

See example below

# Student perception surveys

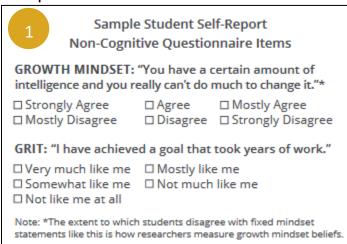
- School climate surveys assessing safety, student engagement, and other environmental factors

- Student and/or teacher designed surveys about their classroom

# Analysis of school resources and other school climate measures

- Resource ratios (e.g students per counselor)
- Access to quality instruction
- Presence of evidence-based programs and curricula
- Incidents (e.g., discipline, bullying and harassment)

## Examples: iii



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# Sample Non-Cognitive Performance Task

The most famous example of a performance task in psychology is Dr. Walter Mischel's "Marshmallow Test", which assesses delayed gratification. In this task, preschoolers are presented with a smaller pile of treats and a larger pile of treats. The children are then told that they can have the smaller pile now, or they can receive the larger pile if they wait for the experimenter to come back in the room. The amount of time children can wait has been found to predict later life outcomes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>i</sup> American Educational Research Association. (2015). Measurement Matters: Assessing Personal Qualities Other Than Cognitive Ability for Educational Purposes <a href="http://journals.sagepub.com/stoken/rbtfl/hixxiPxVRpaxg/full">http://journals.sagepub.com/stoken/rbtfl/hixxiPxVRpaxg/full</a>

ii Chart adapted from: Quay, Lisa. Presentation to the Education Funder Strategy Group. (July 2016). Mindset Scholars Network.

iii Mindset Scholars Network. (2015). Current Frontiers of Non-Cognitive Measurement: Insights for Policy and Practice <a href="http://mindsetscholarsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Current-Frontiers-of-Non-Cognitive-Measurement.pdf">http://mindsetscholarsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Current-Frontiers-of-Non-Cognitive-Measurement.pdf</a>