

# Oral Defense Announcement

## University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the co-authored dissertation for the degree  
Doctor of Education in Educational Practice

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## The Impact of Social-Emotional Competence on Academic Achievement and Career Success within Urban School Systems

**Date:** March 18, 2024

**Time:** 4:00 p.m.

**Place:** Remote

### Abstract

This dissertation investigates the critical role of social-emotional learning (SEL) in urban education through the lens of educators working in a diverse middle school setting in St. Louis, Missouri. With a focus on understanding educators' perceptions and experiences, this study aims to explore the effectiveness of SEL programs in addressing the various needs of students, particularly those from marginalized communities. The researchers use a qualitative approach, utilizing surveys with open-ended questions to gather insights from middle school teachers, counselors, support staff, and administrators. The study dove into various aspects of SEL implementation through rigorous data collection and analysis, including its impact on teaching strategies, classroom dynamics, and professional development initiatives.

Ethical considerations are carefully addressed, ensuring participant confidentiality and informed consent throughout the research process. Data analysis follows a systematic approach, including open coding, development of themes, and creation of a comprehensive codebook that includes meaningful insights. The researchers' findings highlight the significance of SEL in promoting whole-child development, fostering positive relationships, and dismantling the adverse effects of socio-economic disparities and trauma experienced by many urban students. Researchers gathered from the research that educators understand the importance of having a SEL curriculum in place and recognize its ability to improve academic success, career readiness, and overall well-being.

Overall, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the correlation between SEL, urban education, and student success. Prioritizing educators' voices and experiences offers valuable insights for policymakers, school administrators, and practitioners seeking to create inclusive and supportive learning environments that empower all students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

### Defense of Dissertation Committee

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