



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** Res 0147-2018, **Version:** \*

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### Res. No. 147

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.7063/ S.5563, legislation regarding the creation of a pilot program to improve social and emotional learning in schools.

By Council Members Dromm, Maisel and Ayala

Whereas, Social and emotional learning (“SEL”), also called whole-child education, is a systematic and evidence-based approach to teaching students integral skills, like understanding and managing emotions, setting and achieving goals, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and avoiding negative behaviors; and

Whereas, SEL provides an all-hands framework inviting educators, family members, school leaders, and community partners to coordinate, value, and support their students’ social, emotional, and academic learning, connecting students with their world outside of school; and

Whereas, Education efforts focused on academic performance have for too long pushed SEL skills aside, but educators and researchers are beginning to understand that content knowledge alone is not sufficient to prepare students for life after high school whether students continue onto higher education or enter the workforce; and

Whereas, Passing standardized tests may not translate into future success, and studies show that when SEL is integrated into schools, students learn adaptive life skills that help their personal development as well as their academic performance, such as stress management, addressing mental and emotional health needs, making responsible choices, and contributing constructively to society; and

Whereas, SEL is a specific approach to education that aims to help all students, including those from vulnerable communities, become more active participants in their learning, more empowered and more engaged citizens in everyday life by teaching them how to empathize, collaborate, and resolve conflict; and

Whereas, SEL addresses risk factors that can create barriers to learning, such as poverty, racism, violence and drug use, absent parents, behavioral or cognitive disorders, and exposure to the juvenile justice or foster care system; and

Whereas, Schools utilizing SEL can more readily confront such issues both preventatively and in early intervention measures to promote healthy development and to assist students with chronic or severe problems; and

Whereas, SEL includes an adapted support system for students growing up in adverse environments and helps to cultivate conditions that are most conducive to learning, such as emotional and physical safety, meaningful and caring connections, high expectations, and school participation and engagement; and

Whereas, Educators teaching SEL create a supportive and trusting school environment where students feel safe and have the opportunity to thrive, thereby developing a culture in which students and teachers exchange respectful, positive interactions that strengthen their relationships and motivate each other to do their best; and

Whereas, In a meta-analysis of 213 studies involving more than 270,000 students, those who participated in SEL programs showed an 11-percentile-point gain in academic achievement compared to those in their cohort who did not participate in SEL programs, as reported in the journal *Child Development* in January 2011; and

Whereas, Participating students also showed improved classroom behavior, better ability to cope with stress, and more positive attitudes about themselves, their classmates, and school generally; and

Whereas, While the federal No Child Left Behind Act relied heavily on students' scores on standardized math and reading tests to determine success in schools, the Every Student Succeeds Act, which was enacted in December 2015 to replace No Child Left Behind, now requires states to incorporate broader and non-academic measures, such as social and emotional skills, along with standardized test scores into their accountability systems; and

Whereas, A.7063, sponsored by Assemblymember Vivian E. Cook, and its companion bill S.5563, sponsored by Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., would direct the Commissioner of Education to establish in each school system or district in New York State a pilot program aimed at improving SEL in at least one school within their system or district; and

Whereas, Under the implementation of this legislation in New York City, the Council of the City of New York would strongly urge the Department of Education to establish a pilot program in at least one school within each community school district to bring these benefits to students; and

Whereas, The advantages of SEL in education are numerous, including improvements in grades and attendance, decreases in suspensions and bullying, and other emerging attributes as research continues; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.7063/ S.5563, legislation regarding the creation of a pilot program to improve social and emotional learning in schools.

LS# 4325  
JA  
1/11/18