Bipartisan legislation supporting students' positive development and academic success through social and emotional learning will be introduced in the 113th Congress by Representative Tim Ryan (D-OH).

The Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act of 2013 will expand the availability of evidence-based programs that teach students social and emotional skills, such as self-control, goal-setting, collaboration, conflict resolution, and problem-solving. More than two decades of scientific research has shown these skills to improve academic achievement and promote positive school climate.

“Social and emotional competencies aren’t ‘soft skills,’” explained Rep. Ryan. “They are essential skills. They are the foundation for all the other skills young people need to be successful in school and in life.”

**Summary of the Academic, Social and Emotional Learning Act of 2013**

The Act defines social and emotional learning (SEL) and SEL programming, identifies core areas of social and emotional competency, and amends the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to allow funding for teacher and principal training and professional development to be used for SEL programming.

**What is Social and Emotional Learning?**

Through explicit skills instruction, curriculum, teacher pedagogy, and school-wide programming, evidence-based SEL promotes the development of core personal competencies:

- **Self-awareness**— knowing your strengths and limitations
- **Self-management**— being able to stay in control and persevere through challenges
- **Social awareness**— understanding and empathizing with others
- **Relationship skills**— being able to work in teams and resolve conflicts
- **Responsible decision making**— making ethical and safe choices

**What Does the Research Say About the Benefits of Social and Emotional Learning?**

Decades of research by many prominent scholars has shown the positive impact of SEL. A meta-analysis of 213 evaluation studies of SEL in schools (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011) showed that students receiving quality SEL programming, versus those who do not, would:

- score an average of 11 percentile points higher on standardized tests;
- show improved self-esteem and commitment to school;
- engage in less classroom disruption and delinquent acts; and
- experience less depression and anxiety.

In the workplace, people must be able to work well with others, communicate, embrace diversity, solve problems and act professionally. In life, people must be able to contribute to thriving communities and healthy neighborhoods. A significant and growing body of research is shedding light on the importance of social and emotional skills, in addition to academic learning, in building a broad set of competencies students will need to be successful in the 21st century (Pellegrino et al., 2012).