I believe that the term social-emotional learning has gotten hijacked in the past few years from what teachers are actually honoring, modeling, and expecting in classrooms. Classroom teachers have historically been expected to model and assess whether students demonstrate a certain emotional and social expectation of community that exists in our democratic society and republic system of government.

My report card in the 1970s contained examples of the teachers' responsibility to grade "social-emotional characteristics" of my performance. For example, my grade school report card included 9-week assessments of:

1. Consideration of Others
2. Thoughtfulness
3. Conscientiousness
4. Reliability
5. Punctuality
6. Obedience
7. Respectful behavior given to teachers, aides, schoolmates

In junior high my report card contained these things:

Obedience – Willingness to follow directions, law & order

Dependableness – Honesty, keeping of promises, promptness, loyalty, willingness to co-operate and compromise with others, self-control

Courtesy – Courtesy to associates and teachers, respect for rights of others, acceptance of different views, fair play, cheerfulness

Cleanliness – of person, of clothes, of behavior, of speech

Thrift – Respect for property, care of books, furniture and building, care of own property; consideration for the property of others; recognition of the value of time

When teachers and parents think of social-emotional learning they likely think of things like the above, along with things like perseverance and grit, when a student is feeling frustrated or mad. They feel it is part of their historical responsibility to teach/model these good character traits when students are in their first of many life's experience of participating in community.

I hope this is helpful.

by State Super Intendent
of Department of Public Instruction