



While academics are very important, they alone don't ensure a student's success after high school.

This month, I'd like to take some time to speak to you about social/emotional growth, which is another key outcome that will help measure progress of the Kansas State Board of Education's new vision.

Social/emotional learning is the process through which students and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions; set and achieve goals; feel and show empathy for others; establish and maintain positive relationships; and make responsible decisions.

The state of Kansas is a leader in social/emotional growth. In 2012, Kansas was the first state to implement Social, Emotional and Character Development standards.

As State Board members, as well as Kansas State Department of Education personnel, toured the state to find out what Kansans wanted for the future of education, we heard, particularly from the business community, there is a great need for employees who can make it to work on time and be accountable.

Students who lack conscientiousness, perseverance and the ability to communicate effectively — nonacademic skills — may find it more difficult to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce.

The board believes social/emotional growth in students should be measured locally. Social-emotional-character growth indicators can include attitude and behavior; attendance and program completion; bullying prevention; character development; volunteerism; and school-based mental health.

We understand social/emotional teaching is a function of the family, and we are here to support parents and others by reinforcing this learning in the classroom.

Research shows schools that incorporate social, emotional and character development have more student engagement, decreased suspensions and improved academic scores. Keeping students in school while building the skills they need to be successful in life is a win for everyone.

This new vision — Kansas leads the world in the success of each student — is a lofty goal, but one I know we will achieve. Together, Kansas Can

