

SCDS faculty pictured together during IFSEL this past summer.
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INVESTING IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE IMPACT OF

The most memorable moment was when I learned that SEL can't be done if I'm not whole. Maya Christina Gonzalez was a presenter that spoke to my mind, heart, and soul. She stated that, 'If I am strong, you are strong. If you are strong, I am strong.' This resonated with me, as I firmly believe that I, as a teacher, should be well along my road of self-actualization before I try to lead a class."

—GRADE 3 TEACHER DION COOK

"Social and Emotional Learning is essential to empowered interaction and development for our students and ourselves as teachers." —GRADE 4 HUMANITIES TEACHER EMILY ALPERN FISCH

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is one of the cornerstones of an SCDS educational experience, and not just for the students, but for faculty as well. This past August, eight SCDS faculty attended the Institute for Social and Emotional Learning (IFSEL) summer session in Hillsborough, California to join a cohort of 120 other K-12 educators, administrators, and counselors for four days of inspirational and informative workshops. "The work we did was important, not just for us as teachers and members of a school community, but for our students and their families. Much like SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted), IFSEL believes that emotional grounding and openness are key to learning curriculum and other life skills," Grade 5 Humanities Teacher Jane Hesslein shared.

Attending IFSEL has not only turned into somewhat of a tradition for SCDS, but provides opportunity for unparalleled insight, reflection, and preparation for a new school year. "I felt so fortunate to have been given the opportunity to engage in this professional development with both seasoned and new colleagues from SCDS the summer before joining this community," Grade 4 Humanities Teacher Emily Alpern Fisch said. "It is a testament to the environment that I am about to enter that the school would invest in me to attend this institute before even stepping into the classroom to ensure that I felt prepared, knowledgeable, and exposed to one of the tenets of their mission."

Over the course of SCDS's most recent school year, 100% of faculty participated in professional development in some way, shape, or form ranging from IFSEL and the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) People of Color Conference to Wired for Reading training and Marcy Cook Math workshops. Director of Advancement Andrea Sanders expressed her gratitude for the role the SCDS community plays in supporting professional development. "Fundraising to ensure our faculty can attend workshops, conferences, and seminars to enrich their curriculum and bring lessons to life brings extra meaning to the work that we do. Participation in SCDS's Annual Fund serves to strengthen our community and make growth opportunities such as these possible."

Seattle Country Day School looks forward to continuing the IFSEL tradition—along with other professional development opportunities—to infuse incoming faculty with fresh energy to inspire the students they teach. "Professional development is a very important part of the culture of SCDS and it promotes life-long learning which directly impacts the school in new and generative ways," Intermediate and Middle School Head and Director of Professional Growth K-8th Grade Dan Sweeney explained. "Shared professional development experiences have directly resulted in cross-division projects and collaboration that would not have come to fruition without time away from school to learn and think about curriculum in new and innovative ways. The majority of SCDS faculty have attended the SEL Institute and, as a result, benefit from shared vocabulary, vision, and experience."