

CURRICULUM VITAE

Susan J. Davis, Ed.D.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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EDUCATION

Doctor of Education: Leadership in Educational Equity, University of Colorado Denver, December 2024.

- Dissertation: Mindfulness-Based Program Implementation through the Support of an Ecosystem for Community Wellbeing: The Power of Synergy and Interconnectedness

Master of Arts: School-Community Counseling, University of Phoenix

Bachelor of Arts: Psychology, Metropolitan State University of Denver

Associate of Arts: Liberal Arts, Colorado Northwestern Community College

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Scientist, Be CALM Trainer

Frank Porter Graham Institute | 2025–Present

- Lead and support implementation of Be CALM, a multi-tiered mindfulness-based social and emotional learning initiative in high schools, as part of a U.S. Department of Education–funded Education Innovation and Research (EIR) project.
- Lead professional development, coaching, and implementation support for school leaders and educators implementing whole-school mindfulness and wellbeing practices.
- Collaborate with research and implementation teams on school recruitment, implementation fidelity, data collection, and continuous improvement across participating schools.
- Contribute to research examining schoolwide implementation, educator social-emotional competencies, and factors supporting the sustainability of mindfulness-based programming in educational settings.

Postdoctoral Researcher

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill | 2024–2025

- Supported two large-scale, inter-institutional IES-funded randomized controlled trials examining SEL, inclusive practices, and outcomes for youth with disabilities.
- Coordinated multi-site research implementation and data collection across schools in North Carolina and Miami-Dade County, including consent, survey administration, and fidelity tracking.
- Collaborated with co-PIs on intervention evaluation and contributed to the development and refinement of quantitative survey instruments.

Independent Program Evaluator

Calm Minds, Kind Hearts | Eastern North Carolina | 2025

- Conducted mixed-methods program evaluation of a school-based mindfulness curriculum across two districts.
- Analyzed pre/post survey data using quantitative and qualitative approaches to assess student and teacher outcomes.
- Interpreted findings to evaluate program impact and inform recommendations for refinement and sustainability.
- Produced a technical evaluation report to support district decision-making and program scale-up.

Coordinator & Research Assistant, Prosocial Leader Lab

School of Education and Human Development, University of Colorado Denver | 2022–2024

- Coordinated research activities within the Prosocial Leader Lab focused on educational leadership, SEL, and mindfulness-based program implementation.
- Served as project coordinator for the Learning to BREATHE (L2B) study, supporting implementation and evaluation across school and community contexts.

- Supported multi-site data collection and survey design, including identification and integration of validated measures aligned with study constructs.
- Contributed to qualitative and mixed-methods analysis, including coding of student and educator data.
- Contributed to codebook development for qualitative and mixed-methods analysis and collaborated on dissemination of findings through reports, presentations, and manuscript development.
- Research Assistant Jan 2023-May 2023

RESEARCH SKILLS

Research Interests

Social and emotional learning, leadership, organizational change, mindfulness, compassion, principalship, school counseling, MTSS, mental health, wellbeing, equity, qualitative research, mixed methods, bullying, awe, spirituality, artificial intelligence

Research Methods

Mixed methods research; qualitative analysis (thematic coding, codebook development); survey design and administration (Qualtrics); randomized controlled trial (RCT) implementation; program evaluation; implementation science frameworks (MTSS, fidelity monitoring)

PUBLICATIONS

- Arif, M., Alam, U., Pagare, M., **Davis, S.**, Verma, G., Biswas, A., & Barbern, J. (2024). *Empowering predictions of the social determinants of mental health through large language model augmentation in students' lived experiential essays*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12729900>
- Davis, S.J.**, Lettis, B. M., Mahfouz, J., Vaughn, M. (2022). Deconstructing racist structures in K12 education through SEL starts with the principal. *Theory into Practice*, 61(2), 145-155. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2022.2036061>
- Davis, S. J.** (in press). Culturally aligned implementation of mindfulness programs through family, school, and community partnerships for holistic wellbeing. *Journal of Community Psychology*.
- Davis, S. J.**, Bassaj, R., Hall, L., Wilson, A., King, K., Ressler, M. B., & Mahfouz, J. (2026). Scaling Mindfulness for Youth Well-Being: A District-Community Partnership Model. *The Journal of school health*, 96(8), e70203. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.70203>
- Mahfouz J, Verma G, Douglass H, **Davis SJ**, Bassaj R, Galvan A, Jhong E and Alam MA (2026) From experience to evidence: a human-AI conceptual model for assessing and credentialing lived learning. *Front. Educ.* 11:1802418. doi: 10.3389/educ.2026.1802418
- Bassaj, R., Douglass, H., Davis, S. J., Mahfouz, J., Verma, G., Galvan, A., Jhong, E., & Alam, M. A. U. (Under Review) Beyond credentials: Mapping high-school and college students' experience narratives demonstrating skills. *Frontiers in Education*.
- Ressler, M. B., King, K. B., **Davis, S. J.**, Hall, L., Mahfouz, J., Wilson, A., & Bassaj, R. (Under Review). Mindfulness Meets the School Day: Inside the Emotional Labor of SEL Instructors. *Mindfulness*.
- Al Alam, M. A. U., Verma, G., Mahfouz, J., Bassaj, R., Douglass, H., **Davis, S. J.**, Jhong, E., & Galvan, A. (Under Revision). Designing a human-in-the-loop active learning system for reliable annotation of experiential student narratives in automatic microcredentialing. *Frontiers in Education*.
- Book Chapters**
- Davis, S. J.** (In Press, 2026). *The collaborative wellness framework: Leading for collective wellbeing in schools*. In *The Wiley Handbook of Wellbeing in Schools: School Leadership and Organizational Perspectives*. Wiley Publishing.

PRESENTATIONS

- Davis, S.J.** (November, 2026). Toward a Relational Theory of Educational Leadership: The Collaborative Wellness Framework as a Bridge Across Systems. University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, PA.
- Davis, S.J.** (Accepted, 2025). Leading through Ubuntu: Relational leadership for community wellbeing. University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) Annual Conference, San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- Davis, S.J.** (July 2025). Cultural Alignment in Leadership: Advancing Educational Reforms Through Community Partnerships. 2025 Annual Conference of British Educational Leadership, Management, and Administration Society (BELMAS), Brighton, UK.
- Davis, S.J.** (July 2025). Community Harmony and Educational Success: Ubuntu as a Transformative Leadership Philosophy. 2025 Annual Conference of British Educational Leadership, Management, and Administration Society (BELMAS), Brighton, UK. * **Best Conference Paper Award**
- Davis, S.J.** (April 2025). Mindfulness-Based Program Implementation through the Support of an Ecosystem for Community Wellbeing. 2025 Annual Meeting of American Educational Research Association (AERA), Denver, CO.
- Lasser, J., Hall, L., Hodson, C., Rodriguez, A., **Davis, S.J.**, Mahfouz, J. (April 2025). What are my students trying to tell me? A missing data problem. 2025 Annual Meeting of American Educational Research Association (AERA), Denver, CO.
- King, K., Ressler, M., Mahfouz, J., Hall, L., **Davis, S.J.**, Wilson, A., Panayiotou, G. (April 2025). Exploring factors impacting social emotional instructor efficacy. 2025 Annual Meeting of American Educational Research Association (AERA), Denver, CO.
- Coughlin, D., McDaniel, E., **Davis, S. J.**, & Rice, B. (2025, March). *Let's talk SEL: Turning language challenges into opportunities*. SEL Day Summit 2025.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URS2Z5FoGkA&t=1642s>
- Davis, S.J.**, Szczesny, T. (January 2025). SEL when you can't say SEL. SEL4NC and SEL4CO Webinar.
- Davis, S.J.** (2024, November). Fostering Mindful Connections: Enhancing Student Well-being through Family, School, and Community Partnerships. University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) Annual Conference, Los Angeles, CA.
- Davis, S.J.**, Marquez, A. (September 2024). SEL When You Can't Say SEL. Colorado Department of Education Conference: The Landscape of Wellbeing and Belonging. Colorado Springs, CO.
- Ul Alam, M.A., Pagare, M., **Davis, S.**, Verma, G., Biswas, A., & Barber, J. (2024, July). "Empowering Predictions of the Social Determinants of Mental Health through Large Language Model Augmentation in Students' Lived Experiential Essays" Paper presented at the Educational Data Mining (EDM) Conference. Atlanta, GA.
- Hall, L.; King, K.B.; **Davis, S.J.**; Wilson, A.; Summers, L.; Mahfouz, J. (2024, April). Self-efficacy reflected in instructor facilitation of adolescent stress reduction. 2024 Annual Meeting of American Educational Research Association (AERA), Philadelphia, PA.
- Davis, S.J.**; Wilson, A.; Hall, L.; King, K.B.; Summer, L.; Mahfouz, J (2024, April). Social emotional skill-building as a student pathway of empowerment. 2024 Annual Meeting of American Educational Research Association (AERA), Philadelphia, PA.
- Hall, L.*, King, K., **Davis, S.J.***, Mahfouz, J., Summers, L., Wilson, A., Juneja, A.*, Barley, D., Reist, R., & Smyth, A. (2023, November). Implementation of a school-based mindfulness program: Instructor perceptions of student development of mindfulness and compassion. 2023 Annual Meeting at University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA), Minneapolis, MN.
- Davis, S.J.**, Wilson, A., Hall, L., Mahfouz, J., King, K., Juneja, A., Summers, L., Smyth, A., Barley, D., Reist, R. (2023, November). Prosocial school leadership: Unleashing the potential of mindfulness-based programs. University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) Annual Conference, Minneapolis, MN.

- Davis, S.J.**, (2023, October). Building bridges to support student wellbeing. Colorado School Counselor Association 2023 (CSCA) annual conference, Loveland, CO.
- Davis, S.J.**, (2023, September) From the heart to the future: Exploring the intersection of social and emotional learning and career/academic plans. Colorado Department of Education Fall Conference, Colorado Springs, CO.
- Davis, S.J.**, Basch, B (2023, March). How to have empathy when you are short on time and empathy- Lessons from Colorado (SEL Day Summit-SEL4US).
- Davis, S.J.**, (2023, April). Building bridges to support successful schools. American Educational Research Association (AERA) roundtable research in progress, Chicago, IL.
- Davis, S.J.**, (2022, November). Deconstructing racist structures in K-12 education through SEL starts with the principal. 2022 Annual Meeting at University Council of Education Administration (UCEA), Seattle, WA.
- Davis, S.J.**, (2022, October). Foundations of SEL for true belonging. Colorado Association of Middle Level Educators (CAMLE), Longmont, CO.
- Davis, S.J.**, (2022, September). Foundations of SEL for true connection. Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Colorado Springs, CO.
- Davis, S.J.**, Cruz, V., Nelson, J., Quintana, Z. (July 29, 2021) Our Journey to Unlearning. Panel discussion. Educator Institute for Equity and Justice.

GRANTS

Davis Behavioral Health Grant (\$30,000)

Understanding the Influence of Learning to BREATHE (L2B) on Students, Teachers, Facilitators, and School Environment, Barley, D. (PI), Mahfouz, J. (Co-PI), **Davis, S.J. (Researcher)**
2022–2023

Honors and Awards:

- Best Conference Paper Award, British Educational Leadership, Management, and Administration Society (BELMAS), 2025
- Dissertation of the Year Finalist, Leadership for School Improvement (LSI) SIG, American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2025.
- Mindfulness-Based Program Implementation through the Support of an Ecosystem for Community Wellbeing: The Power of Synergy and Interconnectedness*

RELEVANT TRAINING (Selected)

- Mind & Life Summer Research Institute (SRI), Garrison Institute (2025)
- CASEL Fellows Academy (2023–2024)
- CARE for Educators (Train-the-Trainer), 2025
- CARE for Educators Retreat, 2022
- Mindfulness-Based Stress Management (MBSM), UNC–Chapel Hill (2025)

EDITORIAL BOARD

Journal for Trauma Studies in Education (March 2023-Current)

PEER REVIEWER

University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA)

American Educational Research Association (AERA)

2024, 2025 Annual Meeting SIG-International Studies

2024, 2025 Annual Meeting SIG-Social Emotional Learning

Journal for Trauma Studies in Education (March 2023-Current)

Journal of Prevention and Health Promotion (June 2024-Current)

Leadership and Policy in Schools (July 2025-Current)

TEACHING

Courses Taught

(Appalachian State University- Department of Counseling, Family Therapy, and Higher Education in the Reich College of Education)

HE 5920: Sociocultural Factors in Trauma Informed Leadership (Spring 2026)

Guest Lectures

Davis, S.J. (2025, October 14). Spirituality, Mindfulness, and Awe, in *Sources of Strength* Course. Department of Education. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Davis, S.J. (2025, February 27). Spirituality, in *Sources of Strength* Course. Department of Education. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Davis, S.J. (2024, November 05). Mindfulness, Creativity, and Awe, *Sources of Strength* Course. Department of Education. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) (2021- present)

American Educational Research Association (AERA) (2021 - present)

– Division A: Administration, Organization, and Leadership

– Leadership for School Improvement SIG

– Social and Emotional Learning SIG

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Board member. RISE Against Suicide, Boulder, CO (February 2021-2025)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

American Educational Research Association (AERA), Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) SIG.

Communications Co-Chair (2025–Present); Secretary (elected, 2026–2027).

SEL4NC (North Carolina). Leadership Team Member, November 2024–Present.

University of Colorado Denver. Teaching Assistant, Research Methods III (Fall 2022) and Learning and Human Development (Summer 2021), with Dr. Julia Mahfouz.

SEL4CO (Colorado). Chair, April 2022–November 2024.

PRACTICE-BASED EXPERIENCE

School Counseling and SEL Coordinator, St.Vrain Valley School District, April 2020-September 2024

Mental Health Interventionist, Soaring Heights PK-8, August 2019-March 2020

Director of Student Success / Counseling Department Head / School Counselor & Taekwondo Instructor,

Early College of Arvada, Arvada, CO, August 2008 – March 2019