

Closing the Efficacy- Effectiveness Gap In Social- Emotional Learning Programs

Jennifer L. Fleming, M.S.

Paul A. LeBuffe, M.A.

Devereux Center for Resilient Children
Villanova, PA

Presented at the Annual Conference for
Advancing School Mental Health
October 3, 2013

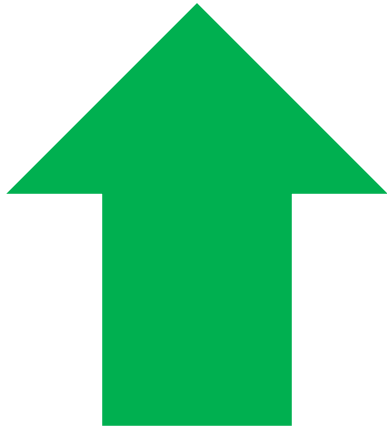
Devereux Center for Resilient Children (DCRC)

Our mission is to promote social and emotional development, foster resilience, and build skills for school and life success in all children from birth through school-age, as well as to promote the resilience of the adults who care for them.

Today's Objectives

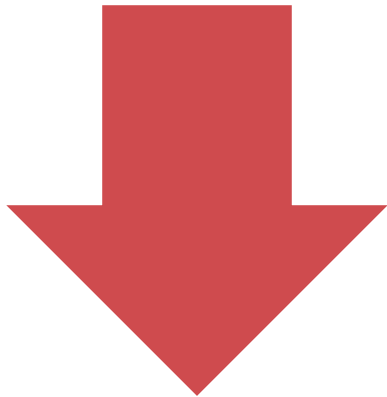
1. Identify common barriers to conducting implementation and outcome evaluations of SEL programs
2. Describe ways to address potential barriers to measuring implementation fidelity
3. Describe ways to enhance outcome evaluation during and following the implementation of an SEL program

Benefits of SEL



Student gains:

- Social-emotional skills
- Improved attitudes about self, school, and others
- Positive classroom behavior
- Average of 11 percentile point gain on academic achievement tests



Reduced risks for failure:

- Conduct problems
- Aggressive behavior
- Emotional distress

However...

- To have their desired impact, SEL programs need to be delivered accurately and with sufficient intensity.
- “The most effective intervention will not produce positive effects if it is not implemented. Thus, assessments of performance are a critical component of implementation.”
 - Fixsen, D. L., Naoom, S. F., Blase, K. A., Friedman, R. M. & Wallace, F. (2005). Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, The National Implementation Research Network (FMHI Publication #231).

Evaluation is Essential

- Regular and ongoing evaluation of practices and outcomes is an essential component to SEL.
- “Effective SEL programming...Incorporates continuing evaluation and improvement. It continues gathering data to assess progress, ensure accountability, and shape program improvement.”
 - Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2003). *Safe and sound: An educational leader's guide to evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs*. Chicago, IL: Author.

But what barriers may we face and how
do we overcome them?

District-Wide SEL Implementation in Allentown, PA

- Located in mid-sized city
- Third largest urban school system in PA
- Current enrollment is about 17,200 students
- Diverse student body – 65.7% Hispanic ethnicity
- 86% of students eligible for free or reduced priced lunch

Pennsylvania



Allentown's Social-Emotional Learning Initiative (2011-2014)

- Elementary Schools:
 - Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum being delivered in pre-K through 5th grade classrooms in 12 schools
- Middle Schools:
 - Second Step curriculum being delivered in 6th through 8th grade classrooms in 4 middle schools
- DCRC's role is to monitor implementation fidelity and evaluate the impact of the initiative

Challenge #1: Ensuring commitment and clear communication for evaluation efforts

Challenge #1: Commitment and Communication

- SEL programming needs to be a school and district priority
- Strong leadership is essential to the success of SEL – from the district administrators through school administrators
- Commitment must be made from the start to collect and utilize implementation and outcome data
- This commitment must be clearly communicated to all school staff consistently and regularly

Formed a District Steering Committee

- Formed district SEL leadership team with representation from the district (administrators, principals), PATHS, Second Step, and DCRC
 - Responsible for overseeing, guiding, and supporting the initiative
 - Developed a District Commitment Form
 - Included within was commitment to collecting, reviewing, and planning with implementation and outcome data

Allentown SEL Initiative Leadership Team District Commitment Form Academic Year 2013-2014

Directions: Please have the individuals that have been selected to participate in your Leadership Team review and sign this commitment form.

In signing this form, I acknowledge that:

1. I will support the mission of the SEL Initiative:

Mission Statement: As a primary component of the Allentown School District's 14-point resiliency plan, the Social-Emotional Learning Initiative will use developmentally appropriate, evidence-based practices to promote a rigorous and caring classroom climate and five key social-emotional skills: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. These skills will help ensure that all Allentown School District students become career, college, and citizen ready.

2. I will facilitate a successful SEL implementation by:

- Attending and actively participating in monthly District Leadership Team meetings.
- Identifying SEL as one of the top district goals for school improvement.
- Allocating funds to support the SEL initiative for a minimum of five years.
- Ensuring SEL Providers have adequate time to train school personnel.
- Ensuring each SEL program has appropriately trained coaches for each school.
- Ensuring each school has been trained on and is using Sapphire, an on-line data management system for decision-making and reporting.
- Ensuring SEL coaches continue receiving technical assistance from SEL providers.
- Ensuring schools collect requested baseline, midpoint, and posttest data.
- Ensuring schools collect, interpret, and action plan around SEL data.
- Assisting, interpreting, and facilitating strategic planning using data reports.
- Participating in trainings by SEL providers to coaches and school personnel.

I have read the District Commitment Form and understand my responsibilities as a member of this team.

Printed Name	Title	Signature
1.		
2.		
3.		

District Steering Committee - continued

- Members of the SEL Leadership Team are primary communicators about the initiative to school administrators and staff
 - Time is set aside to discuss why data is being collected, when it will be collected, and what is being collected
 - Principal meetings
 - Teacher training at beginning of year
 - Refresher/kickoff events
 - Working with the teachers' union - requirements are considered and informed
 - e.g., no classroom observations
 - School board is informed and updated regularly

Challenge #2: Developing an evaluation plan

Challenge #2: Developing an Evaluation Plan

- Evaluation of an SEL program needs to include:
 - Implementation/Formative data: to determine how well the program has been implemented and improve program delivery
 - Outcome data: to evaluate the impact of the program in your school/district
 - Should consider various outcome measures
- Many programs provide tools and guidance for collecting data

Challenge #2: Developing an Evaluation Plan

- It is helpful to utilize implementation data from a variety of sources:
 - Teacher self-report
 - Principal self-report
 - Coach observations/feedback
- It is helpful to collect implementation data regularly
 - Following training
 - Beginning, middle, end of school year

Sample Evaluation Plan

Date	Data to be Collected
August 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of training (# of staff trained; satisfaction with training)
September 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher Lesson Surveys begin Coach observations begin
October 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pretest data collection for teachers to complete assessment on students' social-emotional competence (DESSA)
November 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher implementation survey
January 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midyear data collection for teachers to complete assessment on students' social-emotional competence (DESSA)
February 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher /principal implementation survey
June 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End of year data collection for teachers to complete assessment on students' social-emotional competence (DESSA) Teacher/principal implementation survey

Challenge #3: Ensuring staff time and resources are available for data collection

Challenge #3: Ensuring Staff Time and Resources

- Teachers have many demands placed them
- Periodic surveys and assessments may not be prioritized by school administration
- Districts may face difficulties in getting high teacher data completion rates
 - Without high rates of completion, it's difficult to accurately measure implementation fidelity

Ensuring Data is Collected

- Secure protected time for teachers to complete data during in-service days
- Minimize the burden on teachers by preparing all data collection resources ahead of time
 - Paper packets/instructions prepared
 - Online data collection systems set-up
- Enlisting principals in supporting data collection
 - Communication always comes directly from principals
 - Principals are provided with data completion rates for their school, which are reported to the district

Ensuring Data is Collected

- Reminders as to why data is being collected (instruction letter)
 - “Thank you to all preK-5th grade teachers for your hard work with the PATHS program this year! We’ve had a very successful year due to your continued dedication, support, and excellent implementation of PATHS. To wrap up the year, we have one last round of data collection. Your participation is very important and will allow us to evaluate the impact of the initiative on students’ social-emotional competence and behaviors targeted by the PATHS program. It will also help us plan for next year. We truly appreciate your time in completing these measures. Time has been set aside for you to complete the forms on Tuesday, June 18. Please have all forms completed by the end of that day.”

Ensuring Data is Collected

- Thanking teachers at every opportunity
 - Data collection instructions and email communication
 - Providing incentives during data collection (bagels, sheet cakes)
 - Rewarding teachers who completed 80% or more of their data throughout the school year (PATHS bags)

Challenge #4: Reporting and using the data

Challenge #4: Reporting and Using Data

- Collected data will not be useful unless it is compiled and reported
- Once data is compiled, structures must be in place to ensure data is reviewed and used to enhance program implementation

District Data Sharing Policy

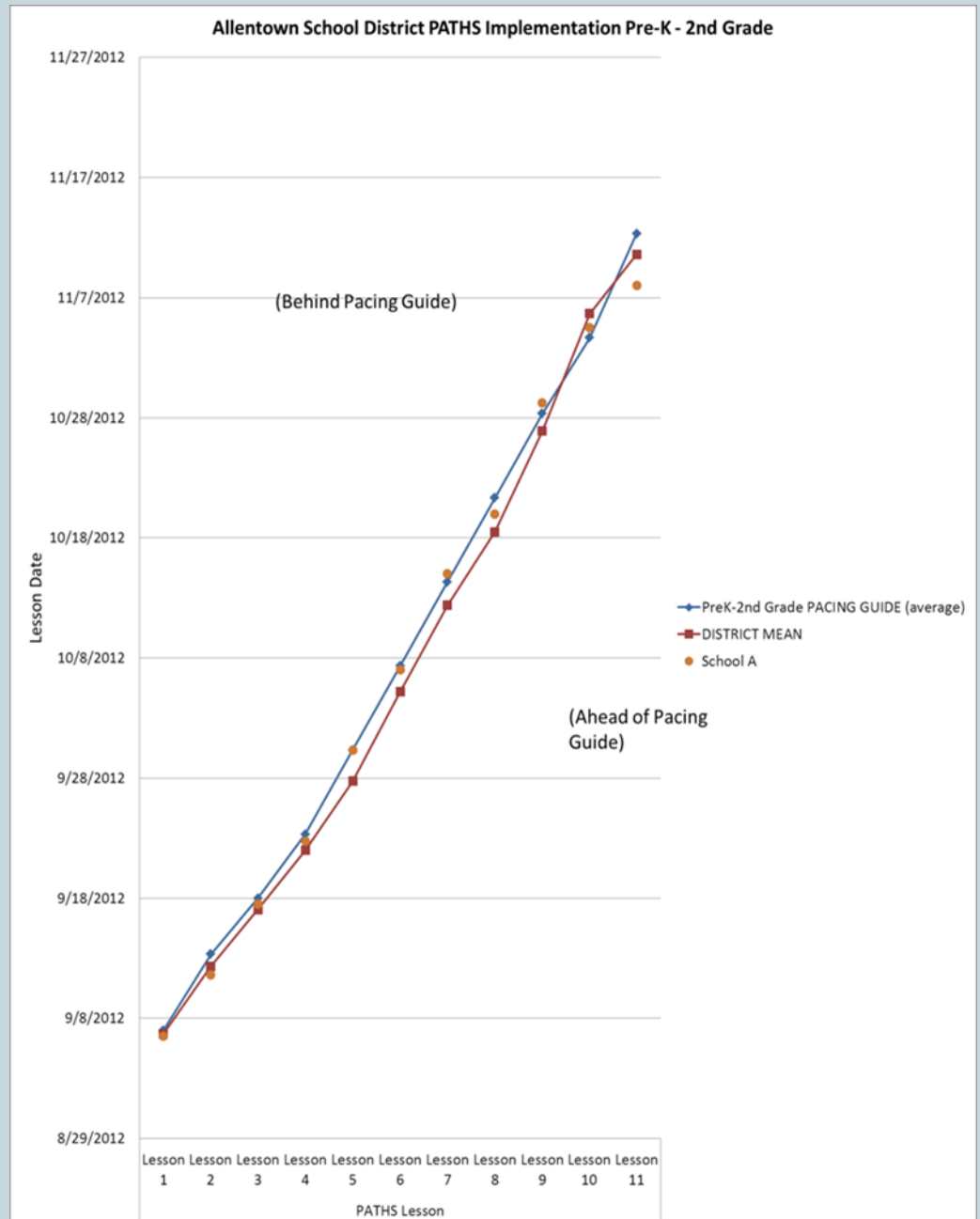
- Developed a data sharing policy with the district
 1. DCRC will never share data at the individual teacher level and will not share identifying information (e.g., teacher names) when reporting data to ASD.
 2. DCRC will share both **completion totals and content** of district level data with the SEL Leadership Team and schools.
 3. DCRC will **only share completion totals** of school level data (not content) with the SEL Leadership Team.
 4. DCRC will share **completion totals and content** of school level data with only that school. School level data will not be shared with other schools or with the Leadership Team. If a principal, when reviewing completion totals, requests the names of teachers who did not complete assessments or surveys, DCRC will provide that information.

Reporting Implementation Data

- Three examples:
 - Lesson Pacing
 - Coach observation feedback
 - Teacher feedback

Individual School Implementation Data – School A

	Average No. of Teachers Completing Form 1-6	Average No. of Teachers Completing Form 7-11	Total No. of Teachers Implementing PATHS	Percent Completion
School A	7.7	6.4	11	64.1%
DISTRICT				45.5%
Your elementary school places 7th in your percent completion.				



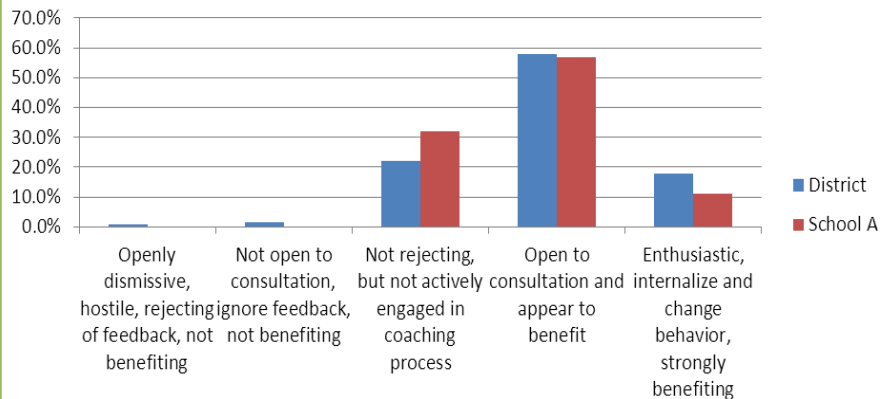
Individual School Implementation Data – Coach Feedback

Time 1

“Area of Strength”

- Your teachers are engaged and collaborative in the coaching process and seem to benefit overall.

The teachers are open to consultation with you and benefit from the process. They are receptive to feedback and open to suggestions.

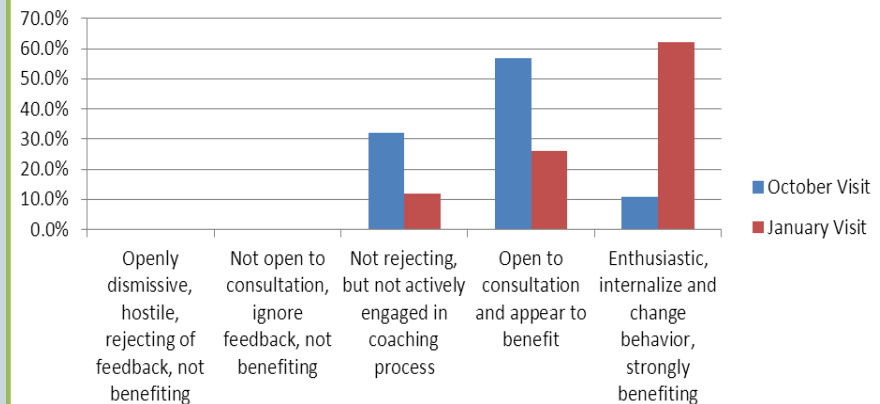


Time 2

“Area of Strength”

- The teachers have remained (and actually have become more) open to consulting with the coach and benefitting from the coaching process.

The teachers are open to consultation with you and benefit from the process. They are receptive to feedback and open to suggestions.



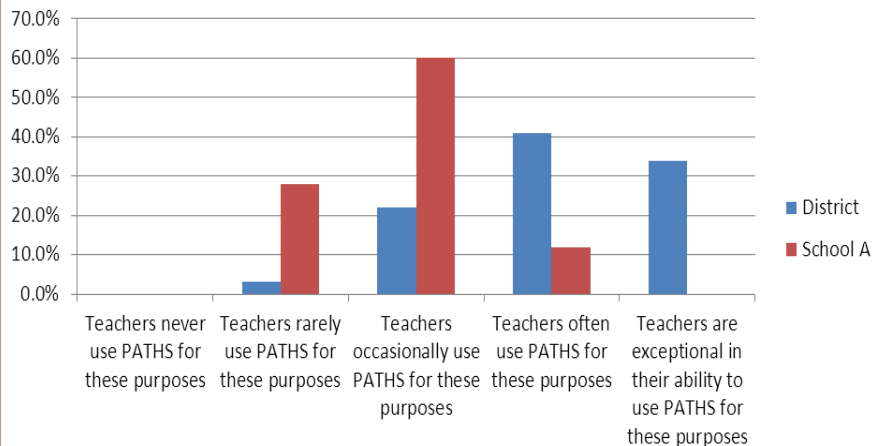
Individual School Implementation Data – Coach Feedback

Time 1

“Area for Growth”

- Your teachers may need some extra support in extending PATHS strategies into everyday experiences, such as when managing conflicts between children.

The teachers use PATHS as part of their strategies for managing conflicts, and to help build positive relationships between children.

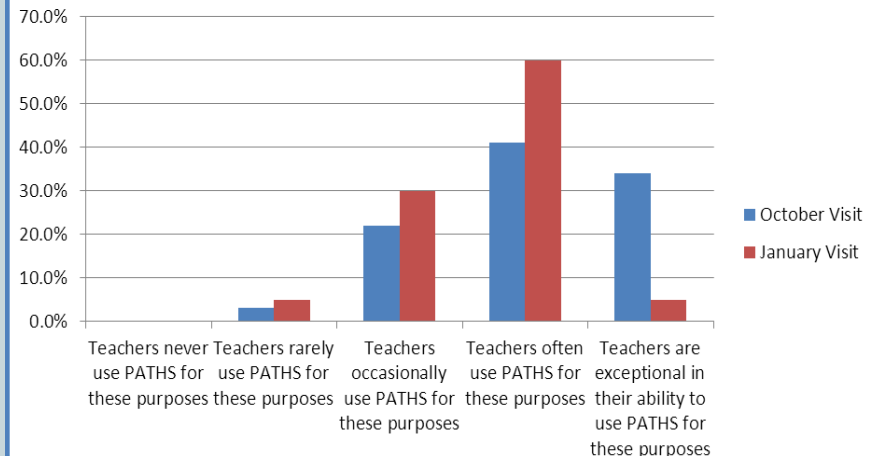


Time 2

“Area of Improvement”

- October data indicated that your teachers could use additional support in extending PATHS strategies outside the lessons. January data indicates that they have improved in this area. Great work!

The teachers use PATHS as part of their strategies for managing conflicts, and to help build positive relationships between children.



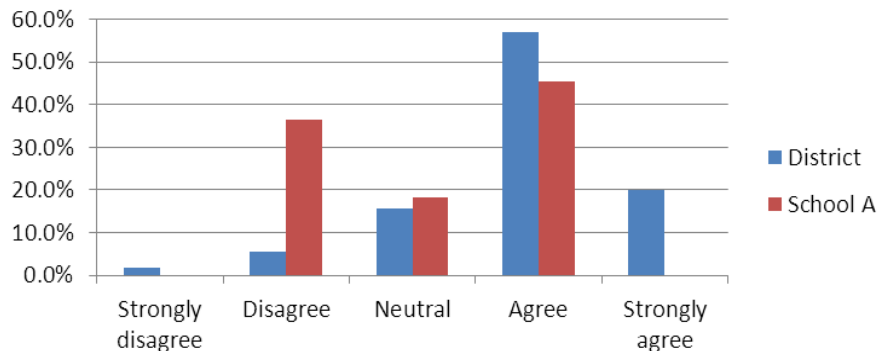
Individual School Implementation Data – Teacher Feedback

Time 1

“Area for Growth”

- As teachers continue to deliver high quality PATHS lessons, it is also important to make PATHS not just a classroom priority but also a school-wide priority. The administration may want to incorporate SEL into the school day; this way, students will be able to use these skills in their daily lives.

In my school, students experience elements of PATHS throughout the school day, rather than just during the PATHS lessons.

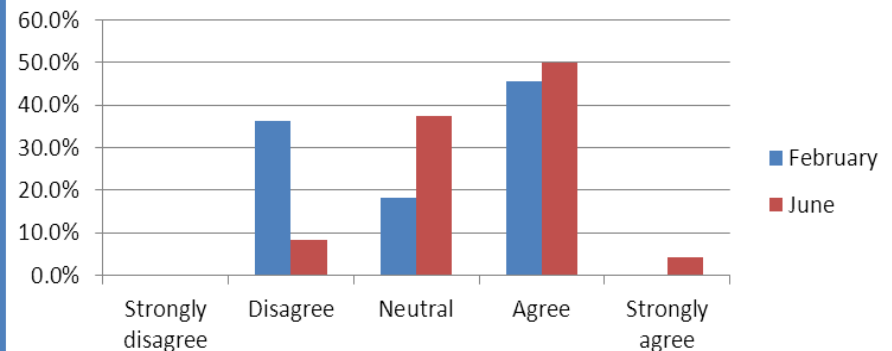


Time 2

“Area of Improvement”

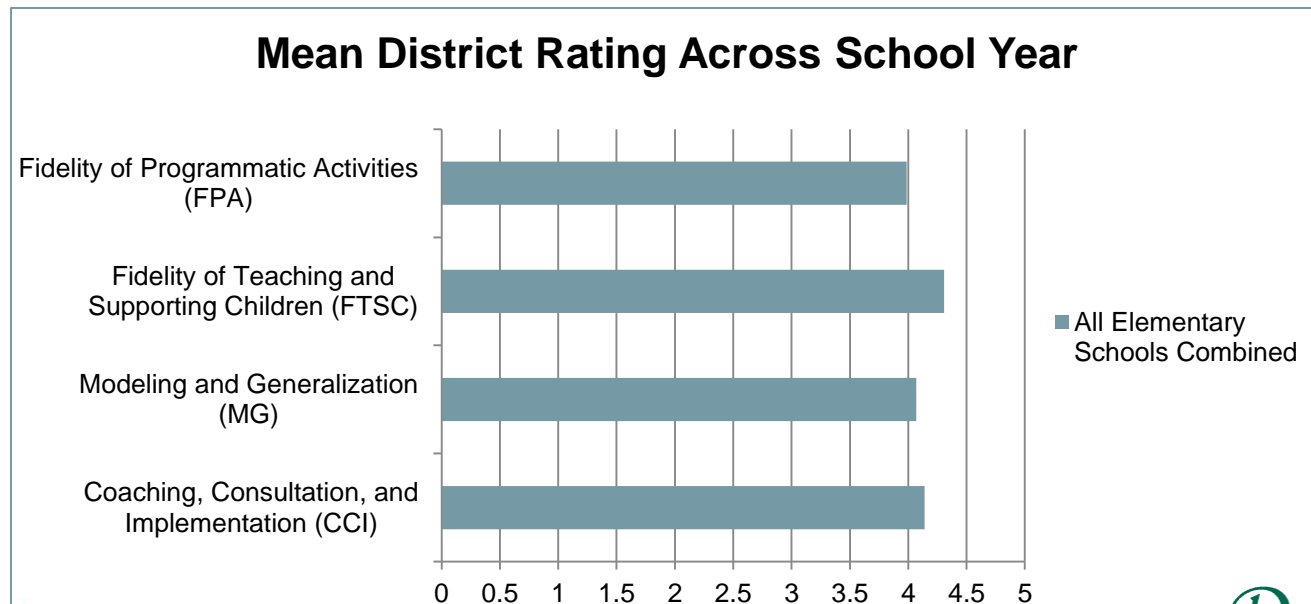
- February data indicated that PATHS was being delivered during classroom lessons, but is not often experienced by students throughout the school day. June data indicates that they have improved in this area. Great work!

In my school, students experience elements of PATHS throughout the school day, rather than just during the PATHS lessons.



Overall Implementation Fidelity

- Teachers report:
 - 98% of lessons are taught as written or with only minor deviations
 - In 97% of lessons, students understood the main point
- Coaches report:



Using Implementation Data

- Formed school SEL teams with representation from principals, assistant principals, counselors, and teachers
 - Responsible for discussing how implementation is going and reviewing implementation data
 - Problem-solving any barriers to implementation or areas for improvement
 - This year, we are supporting teams in providing technical assistance related to effective meeting structures and data-based decision making (based on principles of PBIS)

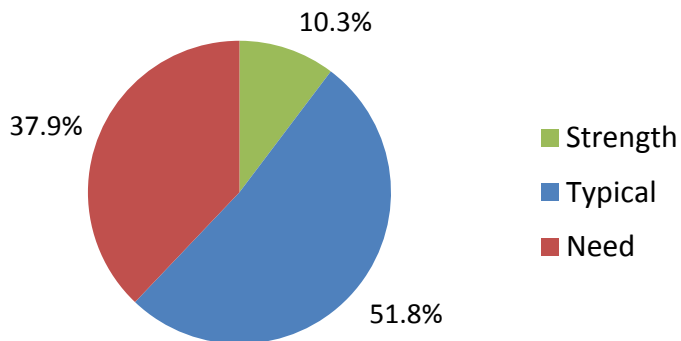
Reporting Outcome Data

- Tips for reporting outcome data:
 - Can be analyzed and reported in a variety of ways
 - Statistical tests (ANOVAs, *t*-tests)
 - Descriptives and frequency distributions
 - Can be aggregated at a variety of levels
 - District level
 - School level
 - Classroom level
 - Individual child level
 - How it is reported may be different depending on the audience (principals, school board, funders, etc.)
 - Stories are often as important as numbers

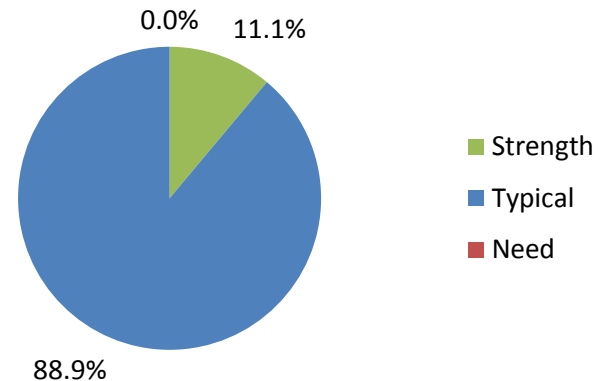
School Level DESSA Results

- High proportion of students in the Need range on Self-Management at the beginning of the school year
- Following school-wide promotion of Self-Management during the school year

Self-Management Pre

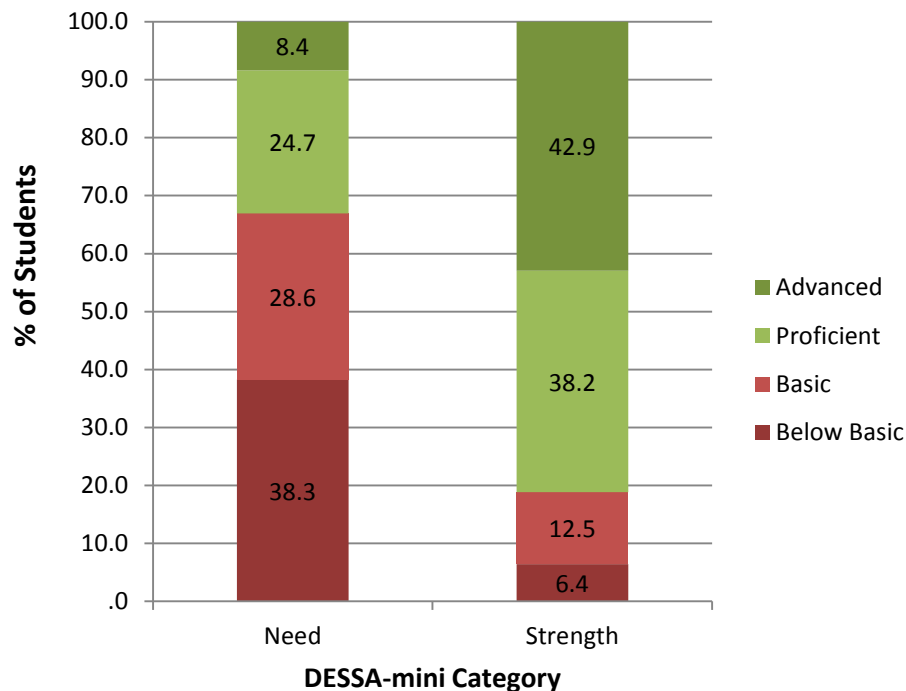


Self-Management Post

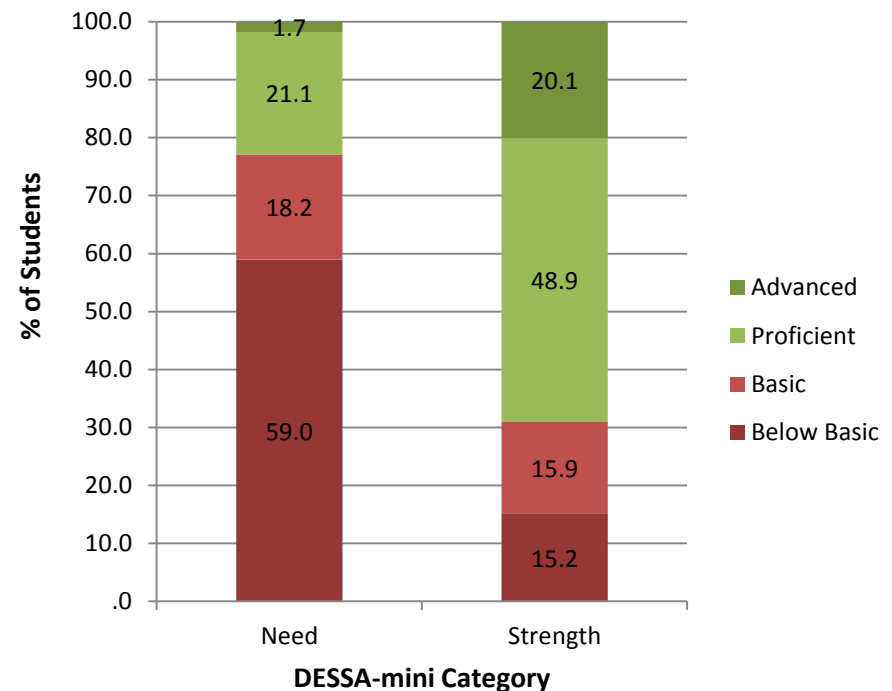


Relationship Between Academic Achievement and Social-Emotional Competence

% of Elementary Students by PSSA Math and DESSA-mini Categories



% of Elementary Students by PSSA Reading and DESSA-mini Categories



Teacher Experiences

“Throughout the PSSAs, my students came to me and said how calm they felt after doing the Control Signals procedure during a difficult problem. I had about five students tell me how it made them feel better and they made great solutions to the problems .”
– 4th grade teacher

“My students have done so well with this curriculum. My students are actually giving compliments to each other. During my parent-teacher conferences, a few of my parents said their children are calmer at home. They actually verbalize the consequences and choose the better solutions to problems!”
– 4th grade teacher

71% of elementary teachers
Agreed or Strongly Agreed
that their students were
benefitting from PATHS.

82% of elementary and 90%
of middle school teachers
reported being committed to
the promotion of SEL in their
classroom.



Student Experiences



“Once we went to Dorney Park and there was a line for a ride and only one seat left. My cousin got the seat and I felt mad. I wanted to throw a fit but I did turtle instead.” —
2nd grader

“I used Turtle when my sister was mean to me and I wanted to kick her. I went into my shell and I didn’t want to kick her anymore.”
— PreK student

“I choose to talk to the person, to hear their side of the story, and try to solve the problem without fighting.”
— Allentown 6th grader



Challenge #5: Sustaining motivation and showing appreciation

Challenge #5: Sustaining Motivation and Showing Appreciation

- It may take several years to demonstrate the positive effects in your own school or district
- Continued commitment and dedication to the programing and data collection is essential
- Data collection fatigue may result, impacting the accuracy of your findings

Showing Appreciation

- Teacher Appreciation Day – May 7

Dear Mrs. Wheeler,
On National Teacher Appreciation Day I want to thank you for both your ongoing support and participation in the Allentown School District SEL Initiative implementing PATHS, but also for the wonderful work you do each day to help strengthen and stretch the minds of students. Each one of us is touched by teachers throughout our lives. Your effort supports the intellectual and social-emotional capacities of students today, and into the future. This meaningful work that you take on every day is appreciated. Thanks for all you do!

Sincerely,

Rebecca Guzie, PATHS Coach

Showing Appreciation

- Awarding a School of the Month



Showing Appreciation

- Monthly newsletter highlighting positive accomplishments, providing tips and strategies, etc.



Showing Appreciation

- Providing thank you notes to teachers and staff at end of school year
- Providing a small gift at end of the school year to teachers and administrators (notebooks)
- Sharing data and positive impacts found with all school staff



QUESTIONS?

Contact Information

Jennifer Fleming

jflemmin2@devereux.org

610-542-4477

Paul LeBuffe

plebuffe@devereux.org

610-542-3090

Devereux Center for Resilient Children

www.CenterForResilientChildren.org