



# Lake County Schools R-1 Project Dream Evaluation Report

Submitted to:  
**21<sup>st</sup> CCLC**

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Date of Report: **October 15, 2021**  
Dates of Service: **October 12, 2020 - May 27, 2021**

Program Name(s): **Project Dream at West Park Elementary School**  
Cohort: **VIII**

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## Program Description

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### Program History

Project Dream through the Lake County School District encompasses both After School - Project Dream and Friday - Project Dream. At the program's conception, the district used a five-day week calendar for students and programs ran after school only on Mondays through Thursdays. When the district began using a four-day week calendar, Project Dream added a full-day of Friday programming to fill a need in the community to provide a safe, enriching environment for students during on this day. With the addition of Friday programming, an opportunity was presented to incorporate a social-emotional learning curriculum into the program in partnership with a local, youth-serving agency. This curriculum connected to the social-emotional learning curriculum teachers use Monday-Thursday. Project Dream after school and Friday offerings are mainly funded through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Grant Program; donations, district funds, and partnerships also sustain programs. Currently, After School - Project Dream takes place Monday through Thursday when school is in session. Friday - Project Dream programs take place on most Fridays throughout the school year. Families have come to rely on Project Dream offerings as a safe, enriching place for their child to be during out-of-school time hours.

### Program Vision

Working together with community partners, we will create a healthier, safer, more prosperous Leadville where children are empowered to learn, encouraged to explore, challenged to grow, and inspired to lead.

### Program Mission

The Lake County School District challenges students to reach their fullest potential through personal, engaged and rigorous learning in the classroom and beyond. Through Project Dream we engage families, school staff, and our community to provide students with a variety of enriching activities, positive relationships in a Crew-like setting, and tools for greater social-emotional and academic success, all designed to complement the students' school day.

### Program Goals and Objectives

- **Academic Achievement:** Provide opportunities for academic enrichment to help students meet state and local academic standards.
- **Essential Skills:** Offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students.
- **Commitment to School:** Support increased attendance rates and overall commitment to school.
- **Family Engagement:** Offer families of students served by opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education.

### Program Activities

- **After School Programs for K-2:** Academic Interventions, STEM, Outdoor Club with Get Outdoors Leadville!, Art Club, Gym Games
- **Friday Programs for K-2:** Full-day programming which includes a social-emotional learning curriculum, literacy, Spanish lessons, and activities with community partners such as Get Outdoors Leadville! and the Lake County Public Library
- **Programs for Adults:** GED/ESL courses through the local community college, Family Learning Institutes, volunteer opportunities through the Parent Mentor Program

### Demographics

West Park Elementary School (now known as Lake County Elementary School, name change in school year 2021-2022) is a rural school located high in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. In the 2020-2021 school year, 204 students attended the K-2 school. Of those students, approximately 57% qualified for free or

reduced lunch, 59% identified as Hispanic/Latino while 38% identified as white with the remainder identifying as Asian/Two or More Races. 33% of the student body were English Learners.

## Evaluation Background

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### Evaluated Components

During the 2020-2021 school year, programs not only had to adapt along with the changing COVID-19 guidelines, but it was also necessary that programs respond to the most pressing needs of students. When schools began in-person instruction in September of 2020, students had not stepped foot in school since March earlier that year. With this six-month hiatus from schooling, many students were lacking connection with their teachers and peers and lost critical social-emotional skills needed for success in school. Thanks to research by Jones and Dolittle (2017), we know that social and emotional learning (SEL) matters not only for success in school but success in life. At this young level, students are learning basic social-emotional skills such as how to get along with their peers and how to show responsibility for themselves while in the classroom.

When the Lake County School District returned to school in the fall of 2020, all schools remained on a hybrid schedule where students attended school every other day. With this huge amount of time now constituting as out-of-school time, Project Dream programs decided to forgo typical after school and Friday programs to instead run full-day programming for any student that was not in school Monday to Thursday based on their hybrid schedule. Project Dream staff realized there would be a social-emotional learning gap for students and made closing that gap a focus of programming. This decision followed the recommendation of Mahoney and Weissberg (2018) where they found that school based SEL programs have a positive impact on academic, social, and life outcomes for students. All Project Dream staff that worked with West Park Elementary students were trained in the Random Acts of Kindness SEL curriculum which they taught daily, meaning students who attended programs received instruction in this curriculum two days per week.

This evaluation sought to determine the efficacy of the Random Acts of Kindness curriculum on students' social-emotional skills as measured by the Teacher Survey distributed through EZ Reports at the end of the school year. A social-emotional component is written into the grant performance measures stating, "Students who participate in the SPARK after school curriculum for 30 days or more during will demonstrate positive growth in *Getting along well with other students* as measured by the 21st CCLC Teacher Survey, increasing by 5% annually." This evaluation goes beyond that performance measure as the Random Acts of Kindness curriculum was implemented in addition to the SPARK curriculum in response to a high need for students to grow in their social-emotional skills coming out of the pandemic.

The evaluation uses the following items from the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Teacher Survey to measure growth in social-emotional competencies: *Behaving well in class* and *Getting along well with other students*.

### Purpose of Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to examine the efficacy of the Random Acts of Kindness curriculum on student's social-emotional skills for those students who participated in the curriculum for 30 days or more.

The following questions were addressed during the evaluation:

- **Research Question 1:** Was there an increase in Project Dream participants' social-emotional competencies over the course of the 2020-2021 school year?
- **Research Question 2:** Did students who received more instruction in the Random Acts of Kindness curriculum see a larger increase in their social-emotional competencies than those who received less instruction?

- **Research Question 3:** Were the differences in social-emotional competency growth greater for English Learners or students who qualified for free/reduced lunch?

### **Evaluator Details**

The Out of School Time Director conducted this evaluation using data from the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Teacher Surveys completed by the students' classroom teachers. The Director also gained input from the school's Site Supervisor throughout the evaluation process. Project Dream began running full-day programming and implementing the Random Acts of Kindness curriculum in October of 2020. Implementation continued until May of 2021. This report includes students who attended West Park Elementary School during the 2020-2021 school year and participated in programs with Project Dream.

## **Evaluation Methods**

### **Evaluation Design**

To measure effectiveness of the Random Acts of Kindness curriculum on students' social-emotional skills, post-survey data was used from the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Teacher Survey. Students who participated in the curriculum for 30 days or more were compared with students who participated in the curriculum for less than 30 days. This year all leaders were trained in SPARK, connected to the grant goal, which was utilized in conjunction with the Random Acts of Kindness social emotional curriculum as both promote social-emotional skills, but the Random Acts of Kindness curriculum offers additional lessons which program staff thought would be beneficial due to the need for post-pandemic social-emotional growth. This curriculum serves to increase optimistic thinking, decision making, personal responsibility, goal-directed behavior, relationship skills, social awareness, self-management, and self-awareness (SRI RAK Summary, 2014). Random Acts of Kindness teaches six core kindness concepts: Respect, Caring, Inclusiveness, Integrity, Responsibility, and Courage and aligns directly with the well-known CASEL Core Competencies ([www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)). In order to teach this curriculum most effectively, Project Dream staff participated in feedback and observation cycles with a staff member of the partner organization Full Circle, who both recommended the curriculum and has used it for several years.

### **Evaluation Areas of Interest**

Of specific interest in this evaluation was the growth students displayed in their social-emotional competencies over the course of the year. Particularly, we sought to know if there was a difference in the social-emotional growth of students who received more lessons from the Random Acts of Kindness curriculum than those who received less and if there were any notable differences for English Learners or students who qualified for free/reduced lunch.

### **Evaluation Tools and Data Used**

Colorado Department of Education (CDE) teacher surveys are distributed at the end of the school year for any student who has attended Project Dream programming. These surveys are distributed to the student's classroom teacher. Teacher surveys show the growth of a student through the following 10 measures: turning in homework, completing homework to teacher's satisfaction, participating in class, volunteering, attending class regularly, being attentive in class, behaving well in class, academic performance, coming to school motivated to learn, and getting along well with others. This survey was chosen as it is a data set readily available and evaluators did not want to cause survey fatigue for teachers or students especially with the burnout staff and students felt during the 2020-2021 school year. This survey was also chosen because each teacher evaluates all students in their class. We believe this, instead of survey data from parents, provides less biased data for the evaluation.

A complete list of teacher survey items can be found in the appendices.

## Results

### Demographics of Participants

The analysis included a total of 167 students. In the control group, students that attended Project Dream programs less than 30 days, there were 58 students. In the treatment group, students that attended Project Dream programs for 30 days or more, there were 109 students. Of the students included in the control group 43% were male and 57% were female, 38% were English Learners and 57% qualified for free or reduced lunch (FRL). In the treatment group 44% of participants were male and 56% were female, 39% of the participants were English Learners and 52% qualified for free or reduced lunch (FRL). In both groups, students ranged from kindergarten to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

Group	Number	Male	Female	English Learners	FRL
Control	58	43%	57%	38%	57%
Treatment	109	44%	56%	39%	52%

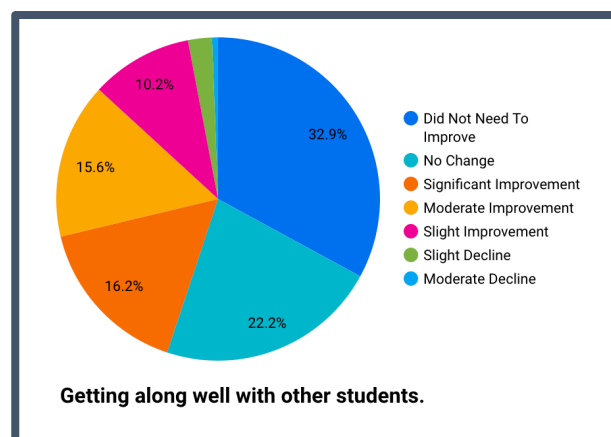
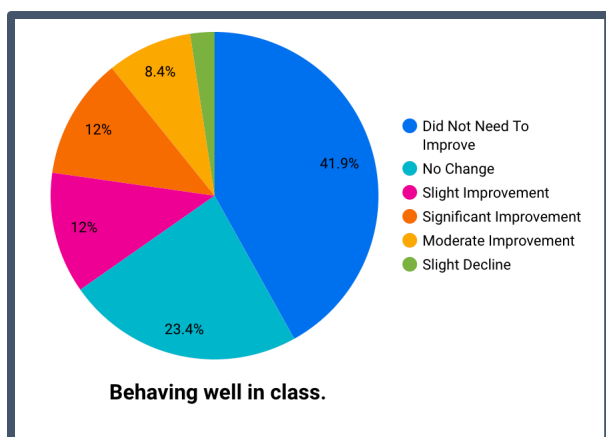
### Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using percentage comparisons on the teacher surveys distributed at the end of the school year.

### Findings

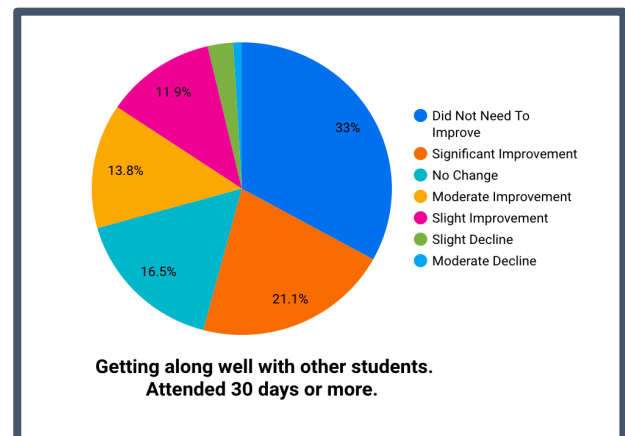
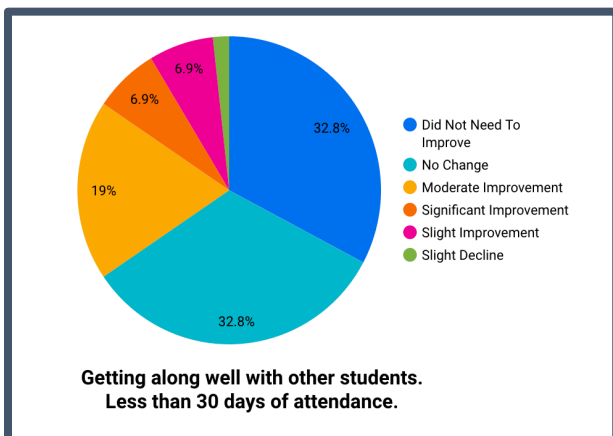
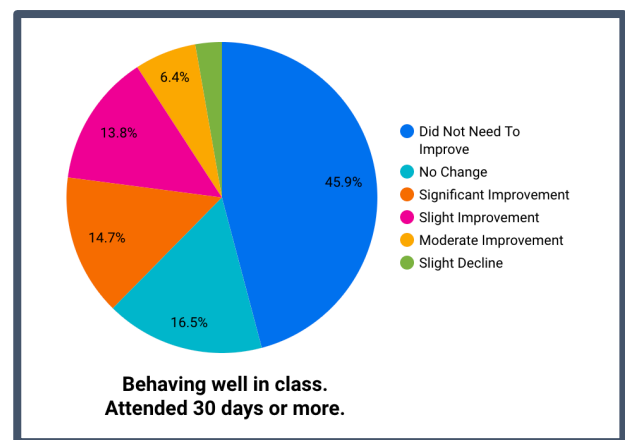
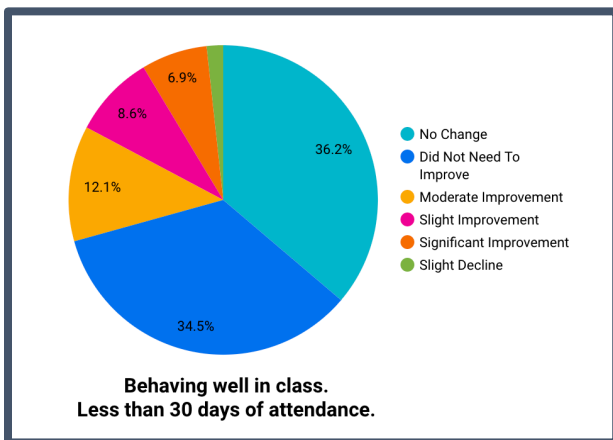
**Research Question 1:** Was there an increase in Project Dream participants' social-emotional competencies over the course of the 2020-2021 school year?

As seen in the charts below, 32.4% of all Project Dream participants showed an improvement in *Behaving well in class*, 41.9% did not need to improve in this measure, for 23.4% of participants no change was noted, and 2.4% of students declined in this measure. In addition, 42% of Project Dream participants showed improvements in *Getting along well with other students*, 32.9% did not need to improve, 22.2% saw no change, and 3% declined. The data show that of Project Dream participants who could use improvement in their social-emotional competencies, more students improved than those who declined or saw no change.



**Research Question 2:** Did students who received more instruction in the Random Acts of Kindness curriculum see a larger increase in their social-emotional competencies than those who received less instruction?

Regular attendance is determined by the number of days students attended programs. Students who attended programs less than 30 days are considered non-regular attendees and students who attended 30 days, or more, are considered regular attendees of the program. When comparing students who received 30 days or more of instruction in the Random Acts of Kindness curriculum to those who received less than 30 days instruction in the curriculum, differences were noted. When analyzing improvements for *Behaving well in class*, 27.6% of students who attended less than 30 days showed improvements while 34.9% of students who attended 30 days or more showed improvements. In both groups, a few students did decline in this skill, 1.7% of non-regular attendees declined slightly and 2.8% of regular attendees declined slightly. When analyzing *Getting along well with other students*, 32.8% of non-regular attendees showed improvements while 46.8% of regular attendees showed improvements. Again, 1.7% of non-regular attendees declined in this measure and 3.7% of regular attendees declined.

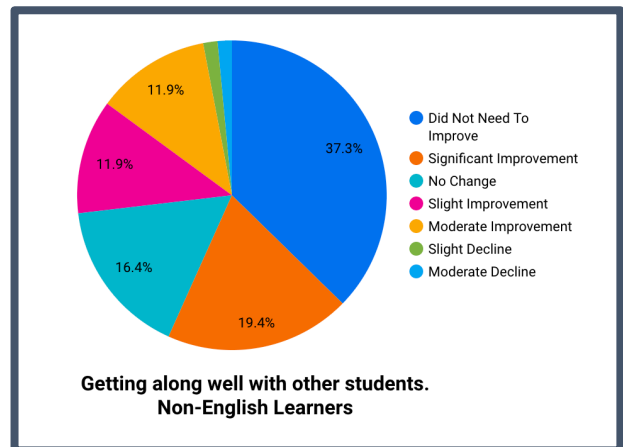
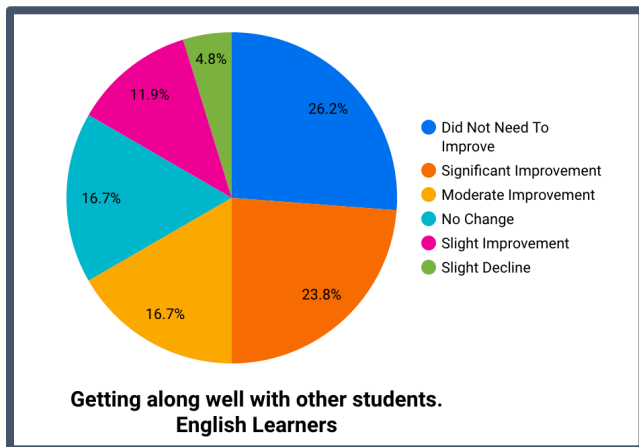
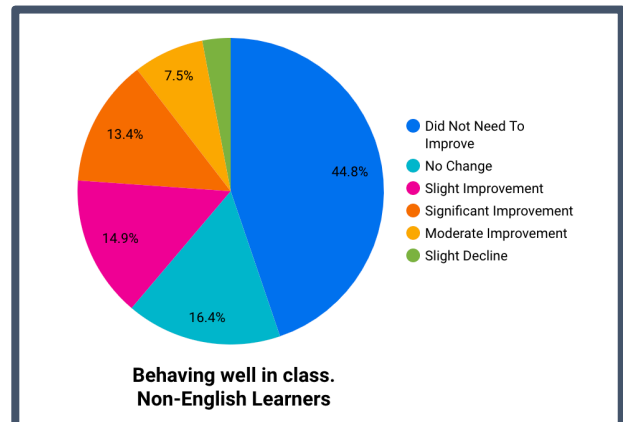
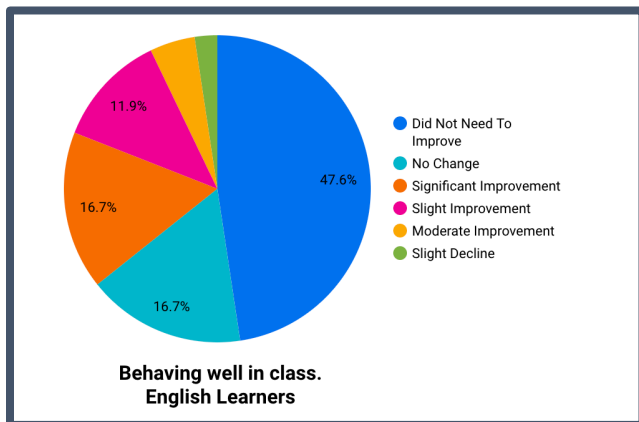


**Research Question 3:** Were the differences in social-emotional competency growth greater for English Learners or students who qualified for free/reduced lunch?

To analyze Research Question 3, survey data from regular attendees only was used to compare the various subgroups of students. Seen in the charts below, when it came to growth in their social-emotional competencies, some differences were not noted amongst subgroups of English Learners and students who qualified for free/reduced lunch when compared to non-English Learners and students that did not qualify

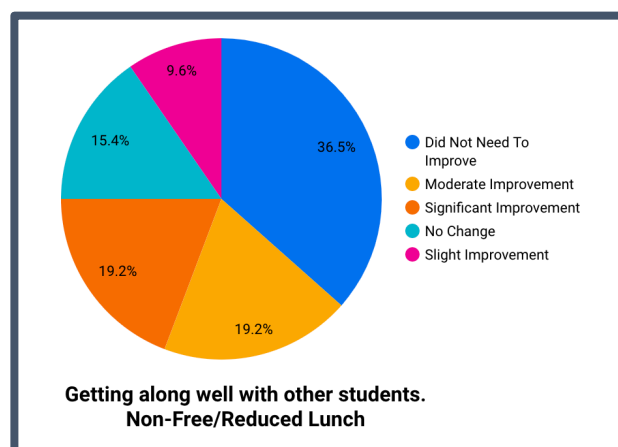
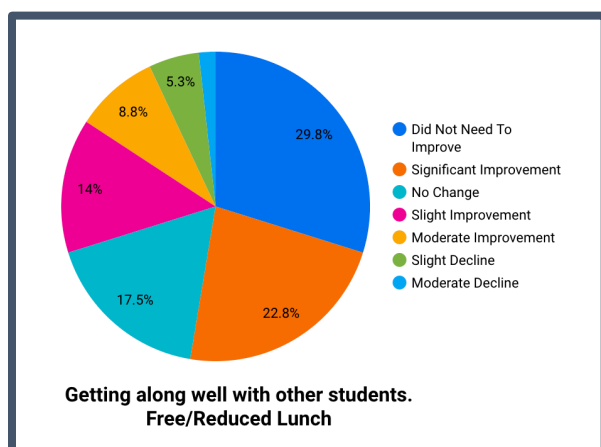
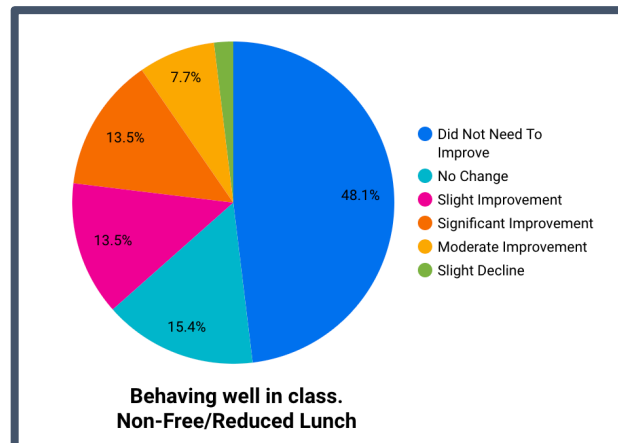
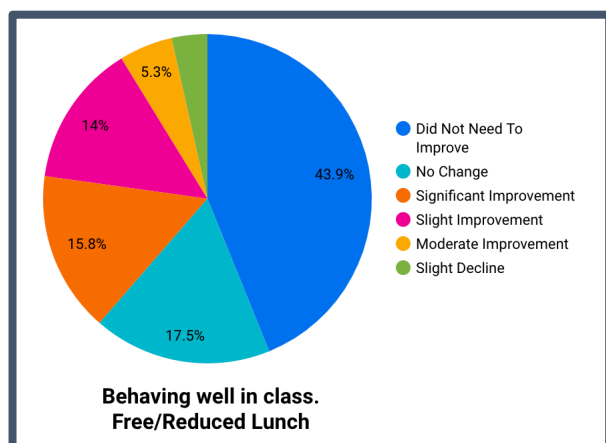


for free/reduced lunch. Of regular attendees, 33.4% of English Learners showed slight to significant improvements in *Behaving well in class* compared to 35.8% of regular attendees who were non-English Learners. The most striking difference in this portion of the data analysis was the difference in improvement amongst English Learners and non-English Learners in *Getting along well with other students*. As noted in the charts below, 52.4% of English Learners showed slight to significant improvements compared to 43.2% of non-English Learners.



When analyzing students who qualified for free or reduced lunch, no large differences were seen. Of students who qualified for free or reduced lunch and attended programs regularly, 35.1% improved in *Behaving well in class* and 45.6% of regular attendees improved in *Getting along well with other students*. Of students that did not qualify for free or reduced lunch, 34.7% improved in *Behaving well in class* and 48% improved in *Getting along well with other students*.





This analysis ties to the Essential Skills goal Project Dream has to offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students. Additionally, the Random Acts of Kindness curriculum built on the goal set using SPARK, that “Students who participate in the SPARK after school curriculum for 30 days or more during will demonstrate positive growth in *Getting along well with other students* as measured by the 21st CCLC Teacher Survey, increasing by 5% annually.”

## Conclusion

During the evaluation it was learned that some Project Dream participants did not need to improve their social-emotional competencies but of those who did, participants did show improvements and very few showed declines. Of those who attended Project Dream 30 days or more, larger increases were observed in social-emotional competencies than those who attended 30 days or less showing that regular attendance was important for growth in social-emotional skills. When observing data from students who qualified for free or reduced lunch or were English Learners, most differences were small. The most notable difference was found between English Learners and non-English Learners in *Getting along well with other students* where English Learners had a 9.2% increase over non-English Learners.

Throughout the evaluation, it was clear that the Random Acts of Kindness curriculum did help students improve in their social-emotional competencies. The curriculum connected to the Habits of a Learner students are taught in school and reinforced those habits while students were not in school. It was clear in

the evaluation that students who attended the program more regularly benefitted more from this curriculum, as evidenced in the evaluation of Research Question 2. The only significant difference noted for subgroups was for English Learners when measured on *Getting along well with other students*. This may be because students were able to practice interactions with their peers during their non-school days and carry those skills over to the school day. Unfortunately, we were not able to see results for students who attended school each day because that was not an option in the 2020-2021 school year. There is a chance students would have grown even more if they were able to have the consistency of being in the same building each day with the same adult. However, with the model followed during the 2020-2021 school year, students had another caring adult in their lives who encouraged positive behavior and interactions. As we know from past research, when a student has loving, caring adults in their lives their outcomes in various areas increase (Fisher, 2018).

With these findings, Project Dream programs will continue to use the Random Acts of Kindness curriculum during Friday programs and encourage consistent attendance. Because of the differences noted for regular attendees, programs will focus more on regular attendance encouraging both students and parents to consistently attend programs. Programs will also focus on training and continuous professional development on the Random Acts of Kindness curriculum to assure this curriculum is implemented with fidelity.

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## References/Appendices

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### References

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## Evaluation Plan

Research Question	What is being measure? (Outcomes/ Outputs)	Indicators/Measures	Staff	Use/ Dissemination	Timing
<b>Research Question 1:</b> Was there an increase in Project Dream participants' social-emotional competencies over the course of the 2020-2021 school year?	<i>Social-emotional competency growth</i>	<i>Colorado Department of Education End-of-Year Teacher Survey through EZ Reports</i>	<i>Grant Manager, Program Director, Site Supervisor, Teachers</i>	<i>Results to be annually shared with internal team and curriculum partners for discussion</i>	<i>Survey distributed each spring, results shared in the fall</i>
<b>Research Question 2:</b> Did students who received more instruction in the Random Acts of Kindness curriculum see a larger increase in their social-emotional competencies than those who received less instruction?	<i>Social-emotional competency growth for regular attendees</i>	<i>Colorado Department of Education End-of-Year Teacher Survey through EZ Reports</i>	<i>Grant Manager, Program Director, Site Supervisor, Teachers</i>	<i>Results to be annually shared with internal team and curriculum partners for discussion</i>	<i>Survey distributed each spring, results shared in the fall</i>
<b>Research Question 3:</b> Were the differences in social-emotional competency growth greater for English Learners or students who qualified for free/reduced lunch?	<i>Social-emotional competency growth for subgroups</i>	<i>Colorado Department of Education End-of-Year Teacher Survey through EZ Reports</i>	<i>Grant Manager, Program Director, Site Supervisor, Teachers</i>	<i>Results to be annually shared with internal team and curriculum partners for discussion</i>	<i>Survey distributed each spring, results shared in the fall</i>

## Summary of Evaluation Process

Program Component	Positive Factors	Challenging Factors	Effective Activities/Services	Areas of Improvement
<i>Random Acts of Kindness Curriculum</i>	<i>Increase in social-emotional competencies</i>	<i>Unsure if the curriculum was implemented with fidelity for every group of students</i>	<i>Coaching on the curriculum throughout the year, alignment with school-day SEL curriculum</i>	<i>Additional professional development around the curriculum</i>
<i>Regular Attendance</i>	<i>Students who attended regularly saw greater increases in social-emotional competencies</i>	<i>Students not able to attend regularly due to a variety of factors</i>	<i>Space for every student to attend the program</i>	<i>Encouraging more students to attend regularly</i>
<i>Subgroup Participation</i>	<i>Mostly consistent growth for all students</i>	<i>Unsure why growth was consistent</i>	<i>A curriculum that is relatable for all students</i>	<i>More differentiation for English Learners</i>

## Colorado Department of Education Teacher Survey

Teachers are asked to fill out the following survey for any student who has attended After School - Project Dream 30 days or more.

*Response Anchors: Did Not Need To Improve, Significant Improvement, Moderate Improvement, Slight Improvement, No Change, Slight Decline, Moderate Decline, Significant Decline*

1. Turning in his/her homework on time.\*
2. Completing homework to your satisfaction.\*
3. Participating in class.\*
4. Volunteering (e.g., for extra credit or more responsibilities).\*
5. Attending class regularly.\*
6. Being attentive in class.\*
7. Behaving well in class.\*
8. Academic performance.\*
9. Coming to school motivated to learn.\*
10. Getting along well with other students.\*