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SISTEMA TULSA IMPACT REPORT

Assessing Sistema's Impact on
Elementary Aged Youth



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Executive Summary

Sistema Tulsa (Sistema) is a youth-serving organization providing out-of-school time music programming aimed at nurturing community and improving lives through music. By adopting the El Sistema USA model, Sistema ensures barrier-free access to high-quality music education. In collaboration with local, national, and international partners, Sistema focuses on positive youth development (PYD), fostering students' skills, relationships, and environments.

In Spring 2024, Sistema launched an external evaluation assessing its impact on elementary students and the communities in which they live, learn, and play. The evaluation focused on answering the following questions:

1. Does Sistema cultivate the high-quality programming environment necessary to foster student skill development? If so, how?
2. What are the program experiences of Sistema's stakeholders?
3. What skills do Sistema's 3rd - 5th grade students gain in the program?
4. How does Sistema add value to and impact the communities in which students live, learn, and play?

The methodology employed a community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) approach, actively involving Sistema stakeholders (a community partner, Donors, Youth, Staff, Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) Educators) in a two-phase mixed methods study to evaluate Sistema's impact using community meetings, focus groups, surveys, and data collected by community partners. All data was analyzed by Rise Consulting.

Key Findings:

- **Enabling Environments:** Sistema creates a supportive environment where students feel safe, supported, and engaged, with opportunities for learning and skill development.
- **Program Experience:** Stakeholders appreciate the program, particularly for its concerts, community-building, and musical learning. Staff and parents note improvements in students' skills, confidence, and socialization.
- **Youth Skill Development:** Students develop critical skills, including executive function, self-regulation, perseverance, self-awareness, and self-expression.
- **Community Impact:** Sistema positively affects staff, students, and the broader community, enhancing teaching practices, fostering community and personal growth, and promoting equity and diversity.

Key Findings

Sistema's Environment

Observations, focus groups, and surveys demonstrate that **Sistema's culture and environment is one in which students feel encouraged and supported, fostering positive relationships with teachers and peers.** Through this enabling environment, **Sistema offers opportunities for students to learn and strengthen skills** in music, executive functioning, and self-regulation, perseverance, goal setting, self-expression and awareness, and creativity, **while also showcasing their talents and engaging in teamwork.**



Youth (94%), Staff (100%), and Parents (100%) reported that students feel like they belong at Sistema.



Youth (99%) and Staff (97%) said Sistema is a good place for learning.



Youth (88%) and Staff (100%) reported that students feel encouraged and supported by peers and teachers at Sistema.

Program Experience

In surveys and focus groups, Students, Staff, Parents, and TPS Educators praised Sistema's program, highlighting **student enjoyment. Students particularly value concerts, the sense of community, and the opportunity to learn and connect with music.** Staff and parents emphasize **Sistema's positive impact on students' skills, confidence, and socialization, with the community and accessibility being major strengths.**



Youth (90%), Staff (100%), and Parents (100%) reported that students enjoy being at Sistema.



Youth's top 3 Sistema favorites were: learning about music (70%), being with friends (69%), and playing in concerts (63%).



Staff and Parents praised Sistema's opportunity and equitable access; student skill development; and positive environment.

Key Findings

Student Impact

Surveys and focus groups demonstrated that Sistema significantly impacts students by enhancing their assets, agency, and engagement. **Since starting Sistema, students have improved: Music literacy; Social skills; Executive function and self-regulation; Academic achievement; Sense of empowerment; and Future aspirations.** Youth and Adults reported that **Sistema's impacts students' behavior and performance at home and school.**



Youth (94%) and TPS Educators (100%) reported that students learn a lot in Sistema.



Youth (94%), Staff (100%), and TPS Educators (100%) reported that Sistema helps students feel good about themselves.



TPS Educators (60%) reported that Sistema students' grades in school are better than non-Sistema students' grades.

Community Impact

Surveys and focus groups demonstrated that Sistema has had a positive impact on Youth, Staff, Families, and the Communities where students live and learn. **Staff reported large improvements in their teaching practices, learning new skills, and being part of a supportive community of music educators.** The program's **benefits extend beyond the classroom, fostering a sense of community, equity, and personal growth among students, as well as providing valuable musical opportunities** that might otherwise be inaccessible. Staff and parents highlighted **Sistema's role in empowering students, promoting diversity, and contributing to a sense of hope and pride in the community.**



Staff's teaching practices improved from "average" (mean=3.0) to "good" (mean=4.1) since working at Sistema.



Staff and TPS Educators reported that Sistema adds value to TPS by filling critical education gaps and building community.



TPS Educators (100%) reported that students not in Sistema would benefit from being in the program.

Overview

[Sistema Tulsa](#) (Sistema) is a youth-serving organization that provides out-of-school time music programming for Tulsa-area students. Sistema's mission is to nurture community and improve lives through the practice of music. Sistema adopted the [El Sistema USA model](#) of high-quality music education to fulfill their vision of a world in which all students have barrier-free access and opportunities. Recognizing the importance and power of collaboration, Sistema works with numerous community partners locally, nationally, and internationally to execute its vision.

Sistema's theory of change aligns the importance of high-quality instruction and nurturing environments to foster [positive youth development \(PYD\)](#). "PYD engages youth along with their families and communities so that students are empowered to reach their full potential. PYD approaches build youth skills, assets and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems" (USAID, 2016).

Ending its 9th year of programming, Sistema launched an evaluation to examine its program's impact on elementary students. Specifically, Sistema wanted to learn how stakeholders with direct engagement (Youth, Staff, Parents, and Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) Educators) experienced the program and the impact Sistema has made on elementary students (3rd-5th graders) as well as the communities in which they live, learn, and play.

Due to Sistema programming being held at 4 Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) elementary schools and The Opp's existing support of program evaluation with Sistema, representatives from TPS and The Opp were asked to support the design of the Spring 2024 evaluation.

Taking a collaborative approach with Sistema and its stakeholders, an evaluation study was launched to answer the following questions:

- 1 Does Sistema cultivate the high-quality programming environment necessary to foster student skill development? If so, how?**
- 2 What are the program experiences of Sistema's stakeholders?**
- 3 What skills do Sistema's 3rd - 5th grade students gain in the program?**
- 4 How does Sistema add value to and impact the communities in which students live, learn, and play?**

Evaluation Design

Sistema’s collaborative evaluation study emphasized the importance of stakeholder voice and was executed in two phases.

Phase 1: Engaging Stakeholders in Identifying Student Outcomes

Community partner meetings, focus groups with Youth and Staff, and Donor surveys were designed to gather stakeholder voices and inform outcome measurement.

Community meeting notes, focus group responses, and survey responses were analyzed for commonalities. A resulting list of constructs guided the survey design.

Phase 2: Examining Student Outcomes

To capture Sistema’s environment, programmatic experience and impacts, the evaluation plan resulted in the triangulation of data collected from Youth, Staff, Parents, and TPS Educators. Additionally, secondary data (program quality observations and youth SAYO surveys) from one of Sistema’s community partners, The Opp, were triangulated alongside the primary data collected for this study.

All surveys were developed to balance stakeholder voice, survey accessibility, survey fatigue, and quality data collection. All data collected were analyzed by Rise Consulting.

Evaluation results were shared with Sistema for collaborative interpretation and application to the program’s future. Additional details regarding the study’s methodology can be found in Appendix A.

Data Collected by Stakeholder Respondent	Youth	Staff	Parent	TPS	The Opp
Sistema's Environment					
Program Experience					
Student Outcomes					
Community Impact					

Youth Demographic

Variable (Total N)	Selected Response	%	N
Gender (N=98)	Girl	63%	62
	Boy	35%	34
	Prefer not to say	2%	2
Grade Level (N=97)	3rd grade	20%	19
	4th grade	39%	38
	5th grade	32%	31
	6th grade	9%	9
Program Year (N=98)	1st Year	34%	33
	2nd Year	47%	46
	3rd+ Year	19%	19
Sistema Location (N=97)	Main	32%	31
	Owen	13%	13
	Tisdale	19%	18
	Grissom	10%	10
	Mayo	26%	25
Race / Ethnicity* (N=94)	White	40%	38
	Black or African American	15%	14
	Native American	13%	12
	Hispanic or Latino	23%	22
	Other / I do not know	42%	30
Non-Sistema Music Class at School (N=95)	Yes	72%	68
	No	24%	23
	I'm not sure	4%	4

Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

*Percentages may not equal 100% due to multiple response options.

Staff Demographic

Variable (Total N)	Selected Response	%	N
Grades Taught (N=32)	3rd grade	88%	28
	4th grade	94%	30
	5th grade	94%	30
	6th grade	63%	20
	7th grade or higher	53%	17
Years Worked at Sistema (N=31)	1 year or less	42%	13
	2-3 years	29%	9
	4 or more years	29%	9
Sistema Location Worked* (N=32)	Main	91%	29
	Owen	22%	7
	Tisdale	16%	5
	Grissom	16%	5
	Mayo	19%	6
Attended Sistema as a Student (N=31)	Yes	16%	5
	No	84%	26

Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

*Percentages do not equal 100% due to multiple response options.

Parent Demographic

Variable (Total N)	Selected Response	%	N
Student English Language Learner (N=57)	Yes	75%	43
	No	23%	13
	I'm not sure	2%	1
Student Grade Level (N=57)	3rd grade	35%	20
	4th grade	42%	24
	5th grade	26%	15
	6th-8th grade	19%	11
Student Program Year (N=57)	1st Year	39%	22
	2nd Year	51%	29
	3rd+ Year	23%	13
Student Sistema Location (N=57)	Main	53%	30
	Owen	11%	6
	Tisdale	12%	6
	Grissom	5%	3
	Mayo	21%	12
Student Accommodations at School* (N=53)	IEP	6%	3
	504 Plan	4%	2
	Gifted and Talented	55%	29
	Free/Reduced Lunch	28%	15
	None	21%	11
Non-Sistema Music Class at School (N=57)	Yes	68%	39
	No	26%	15
	I'm not sure	5%	3

Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

*Percentages may not equal 100% due to multiple response options.

TPS Educator Demographic

Variable (Total N)	Selected Response	%	N
Role at TPS (N=14)	Homeroom Teacher	50%	7
	Specials Teacher (Art, GT, SPED)	21%	3
	School Counselor	7%	1
	Other	21%	3
Familiar with Sistema (N=14)	Yes	93%	13
	No	7%	1
	I'm not sure	0%	0
Ever Observed Sistema (N=14)	Yes	93%	13
	No	0%	0
	I'm not sure	7%	1
Able to Recognize Sistema Students (N=14)	Yes	93%	13
	No	7%	1

Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Results

Results from the evaluation are organized by research question and the PYD framework which emphasizes the importance of enabling environments for fostering quality experiences, student skill development, and community impact.

Notably, the majority of survey items offered respondents the option to select “I’m not sure,” reflecting uncertainty or a lack of a definitive opinion. While data were analyzed both with and without the “I’m not sure” responses, the data presented in this report focus solely on definitive responses, treating “I’m not sure” as missing. The decision to exclude non-definitive responses is a common technique used in survey research and was made collaboratively by the CBPAR team.

Sistema's Environment

An enabling environment “develops and supports student assets, agency, access to services, and opportunities, and strengthens their ability to avoid risks and to stay safe, secure, and be protected. Such an environment encourages and recognizes students while promoting their social and emotional competence to thrive” (USAID, 2016).

Recognizing the complexity of skills required to successfully play an instrument, Sistema's approaches aim to foster student [executive function and self-regulation](#) skills for their lifelong benefits through its enabling environment.

For the current study, an enabling environment is operationally defined by 5 characteristics derived from the [Forum for Youth Investment](#):

- 1 **Safety and Inclusion**
- 2 **Support for Positive Behavior**
- 3 **Supportive Relationships and Opportunities to Belong**
- 4 **Opportunities for Student Choice, Decision-Making, Leadership, and Reflection.**
- 5 **Opportunities for Learning and Skill Development**

Sistema's environment was assessed using program observations (conducted by The Opp); focus groups with Youth and Staff; and stakeholder surveys.

Program Observations. The Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) results identified that Sistema consistently engages in practices that foster the 5 characteristics of an engaging environment. In Fall 2023, Sistema's mean score was 4.5 out of a possible 5 points. In Spring 2024, this score was 5. These results were further supported by focus group and survey data.

“I would like to say that Sistema is a nice environment and you are [encouraging] for other people, and you are very kind.”

-Sistema Youth

Sistema's Environment

Safe and Inclusive. Sistema's environment is safe and inclusive. Both Youth and Staff reported that students feel safe and included at Sistema. However, they differed in their perceptions of students' comfortability in sharing how they feel.

	Youth	Staff
	% Yes	% Yes
Physical and Psychological Safety		
Do students feel safe at Sistema?	92%	100%
SAYO: I feel safe at this program.	92%	N/A
Do students feel comfortable showing or talking about how they feel at Sistema?	57%	97%
Inclusion		
Do you feel like everyone is included at Sistema?	86%	100%

Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected "yes."

"I love how [other staff] said it gives them that safe place. And it's so cool to me because music creates a safe place."
-Sistema Staff

Support for Positive Behaviors. Youth and Staff overwhelmingly reported that Sistema fosters respect, ownership, understanding, and diversity. Sistema provides support for positive behaviors through:

- A culture of being "Sistema PROUD."
 - (Perform, be Respectful, take Outnership, be Uunderstanding, and celebrate Diversity)
- Effective student engagement strategies.
- Effective student empowerment strategies.

Only 2% of surveyed Youth reported that they had not performed at a concert.

Sistema's Environment

	Youth		Staff	
	% Yes	N	% Yes	N
Respect				
Do students feel respected at Sistema?	89%	69	100%	31
SAYO: Kids here treat each other with respect.	97%	38	N/A	N/A
Ownership				
Do kids and teachers take ownership at Sistema?	97%	76	88%	29
Understanding				
Do you feel the kids and teachers at Sistema are understanding of everyone?	92%	70	97%	30
Diversity				
Do you think Sistema is a place for all kids?	92%	88	94%	16

Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected "yes."

"There's always someone there to help you, and there's always someone there when you're lonely to cheer you up if you're sad, and there's always someone there for you."

-Sistema Youth

Sistema's Environment

Evident in focus groups were the support strategies employed by Sistema Staff. Specifically, Sistema's reported culture of support for positive behaviors centers on strategies for student engagement and empowerment.

Student Engagement Strategies. Staff were asked in the focus group what strategies they employ to help students stay focused in the program. Staff reported strategies such as:

- Trying everything until finding something that works.
- Incorporating brain breaks with physical movement exercises throughout the lesson.
- Changing up activities to align with developmental attention span.
- Creating and playing games for interactive learning.
- Setting clear expectations through posting of daily agendas.
- Providing students with clear goals and directions for in-between tasks.
- Engaging students in co-creating the daily agenda.
- Balancing support needs that vary among students.
- Minimizing lectures and maximizing playing time.
- Normalizing making mistakes.
- Encouraging students to persevere.
- Creating a relaxed and fun environment to maximize learning.

In the focus group, Staff highlighted specific engagement strategies to improve students' mental flexibility, which included:

- Engaging students in different activities during rehearsal.
- Maintaining consistency in rehearsal practices.
- Engaging students in one task at a time.
- Modeling activities and tasks.
- Maintaining structure as a teacher.

"I think that you can try to prep them for [concerts] as much as they want. And until they have experienced one of the concerts, I see a huge change in the satellite kids after that Christmas concert. I mean, huge change."

-Sistema Staff

Sistema's Environment

"I really like doing the concerts. Because I like to hear all the other kids playing their music too, and I like having an audience, and also I feel so good after it."

-Sistema Youth

Student Empowerment Strategies. In focus groups, Staff reported that concert experiences were the most powerful strategy for student empowerment as Staff agreed the concert experiences lead to positive change by building buy-in. Staff prepare students for concerts by:

- Sharing the process with students ahead of time so they know what to expect.
- Igniting student imagination using fake audiences in rehearsal.
- Planning and organizing in advance.

Staff also reported using other student empowerment strategies such as:

- Setting clear expectations within the program.
- Creating and working towards common goals.
- Fostering a sense of community through inclusion and belonging within the "Sistema family."
- Encouraging students to showcase their capabilities and overcome their fears.
- Reminding students who they are.
- Building students up verbally through praise.
- Treating students as "more than just a number."
- Welcoming all students into the program.
- Striving for consistency of the program among sites.
- Improving students' sense of self.
- Being familiar with all students in the program (not just those they teach directly), so that time is dedicated to everyone.

"We do brain breaks. If I can tell they're getting antsy, we'll do some breaths or we'll do some movement exercises, so I'll put their instruments down. They'll jump up and down 10 times just so they can get their wiggles out and stuff. And that kind of recenters their attention and kind of helps them become more focused."

-Sistema Staff

Sistema's Environment

Supportive Relationships and Belonging. Sistema fosters healthy relationships. Youth feel encouraged and supported at Sistema and have made new friends.

Youth and Staff reported positive relationships among peers and program staff. 90% of Parents reported that their child had made new friends at Sistema.

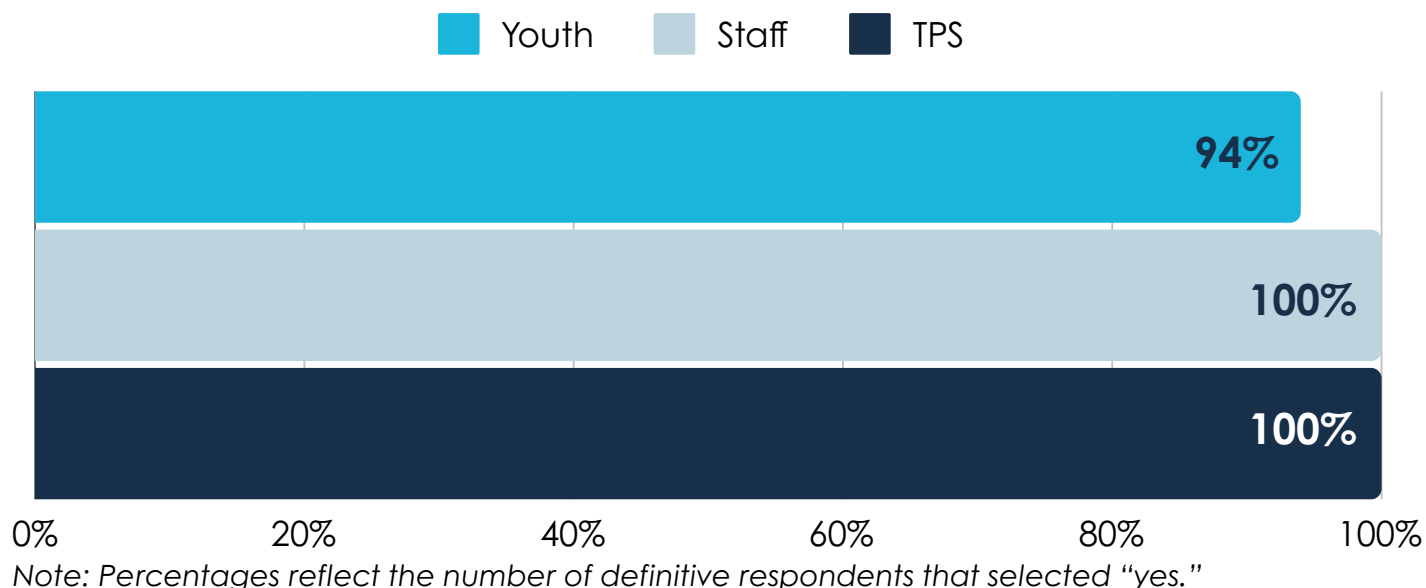
	Youth	Staff
	% Yes	% Yes
Supportive Relationships		
Do students feel encouraged and supported by the kids and teachers at Sistema?	88%	100%
Staff-Student Relationships		
Do staff have positive relationships with students?	N/A	100%
SAYO: Adults in this program care what I think.	97%	N/A
Do students like and trust their teachers at Sistema?	94%	100%
SAYO: There is an adult in this program who I can ask for help from.	95%	N/A
Peer Relationships		
SAYO: Kids here are friendly	98%	N/A
SAYO: Coming to this program has helped me to make friends.	74%	N/A
Have students made new friends at Sistema?	77%	N/A
Is it easy for students to make friends at Sistema?	63%	100%
Are students happy with the friendships they have made at Sistema?	87%	N/A

Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected "yes."

Sistema's Environment

Supportive Relationships and Belonging. Youth, Staff, and Parents reported that students feel a sense of belonging at Sistema.

Do students feel like they belong at Sistema?



In the focus groups, Youth reported that feelings of belonging were associated with:

- Having family-like friends at Sistema who care for and are nice to them.
- Learning instruments and playing music.
- Being a section leader and helping others.
- Being part of the group.
- Sharing an interest in and love for music.
- Being welcomed, included, and complemented by others.
- Teachers being kind, caring for, and spending time with students.
- Feeling happy and having fun at Sistema.

Youth reported that feeling neutral or not belonging at Sistema was related to being a beginner, being behind in the group, not feeling challenged, being too advanced, not having a stand partner, being competitive, and proneness to comparison traps.

"They welcomed me. They welcomed me when I came for the first time in the Boston Avenue."

- Sistema Youth

Sistema’s Environment

“At Sistema, you can feel happy.. [Sistema] shows you how community works. You never feel lonely. When I make a down, they encourage me to keep trying.. So it's because Sistema is kind of like a family.”

-Sistema Youth

Opportunities for Leadership, Showcasing, and Reflection. Through structured learning, activities, and encouragement of practice outside of the program, Sistema provides numerous opportunities for students to take on leadership roles, showcase their skills, and reflect on their performances.

Opportunities for Leadership. At Sistema, 90% of Staff reported that students take a leadership role. While only 59% of Youth reported personally being a leader at Sistema, 71% of Youth noted that students motivate and encourage one another to work together.

In addition to providing leadership opportunities in the program, 28% of Youth reported leadership at home through teaching family members how to play instruments.

	Youth	Staff
	% Yes	% Yes
Do students take a leadership role at Sistema?	59%	90%
Do students motivate and encourage one another to work together at Sistema?	71%	93%
Do students teach their family members how to play an instrument?	28%	N/A

Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected “yes.”

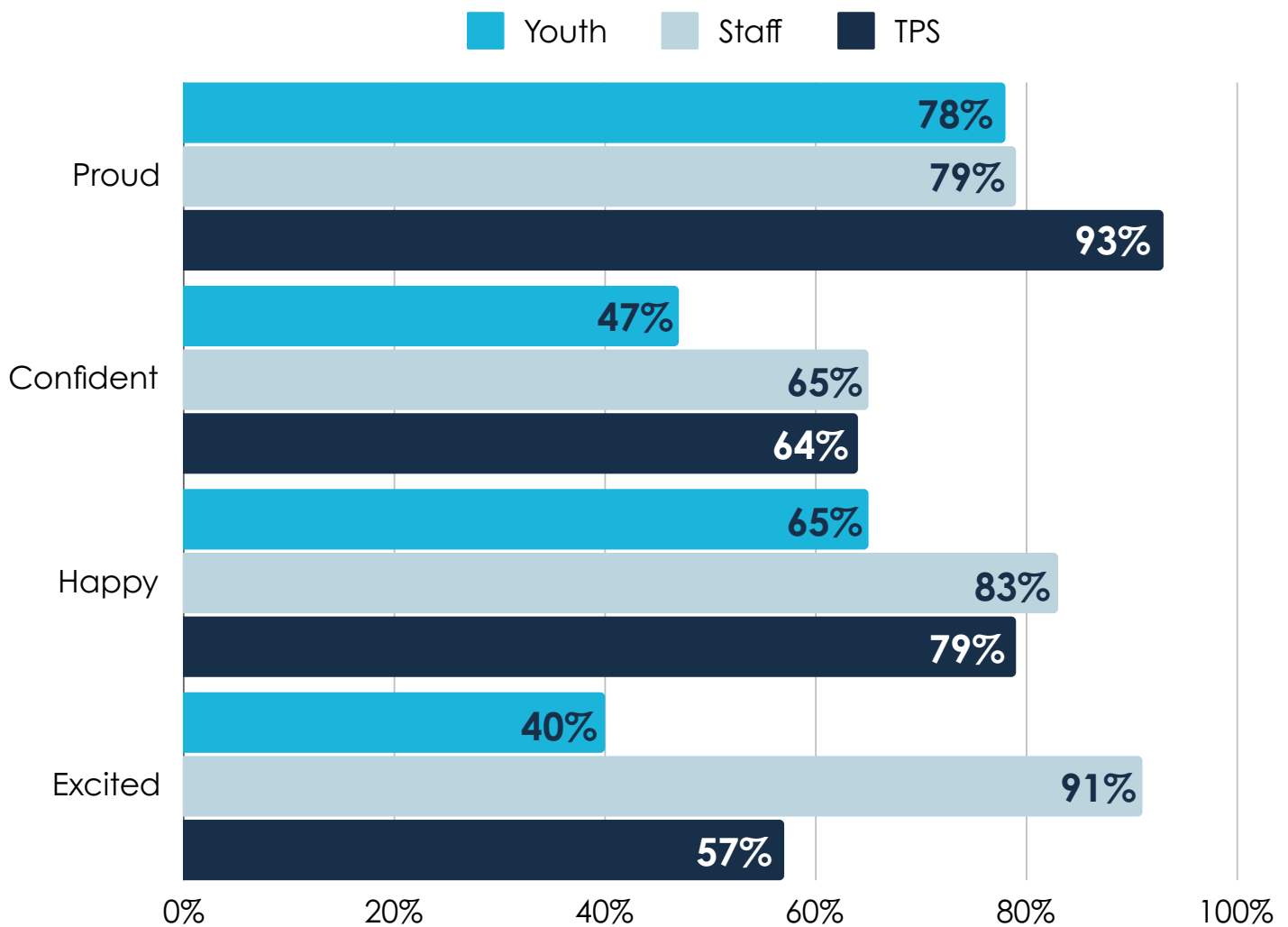
“I like being the section leader.”
-Sistema Youth

Sistema's Environment

Opportunities for Showcasing. Sistema's program includes opportunities to showcase students' skills to a large audience through concert performances.

Youth, Staff, and TPS Educators were asked to reflect on their perceptions of students' feelings after concert performances. The top feelings reported by each were: *Proud, Confident, Happy, and Excited.*

After students perform at a concert, how do they feel?



"The first concert I was doing my best, but in the second [concert], I knew something more. So by the [second concert], I saw some growth in Sistema."

-Sistema Youth

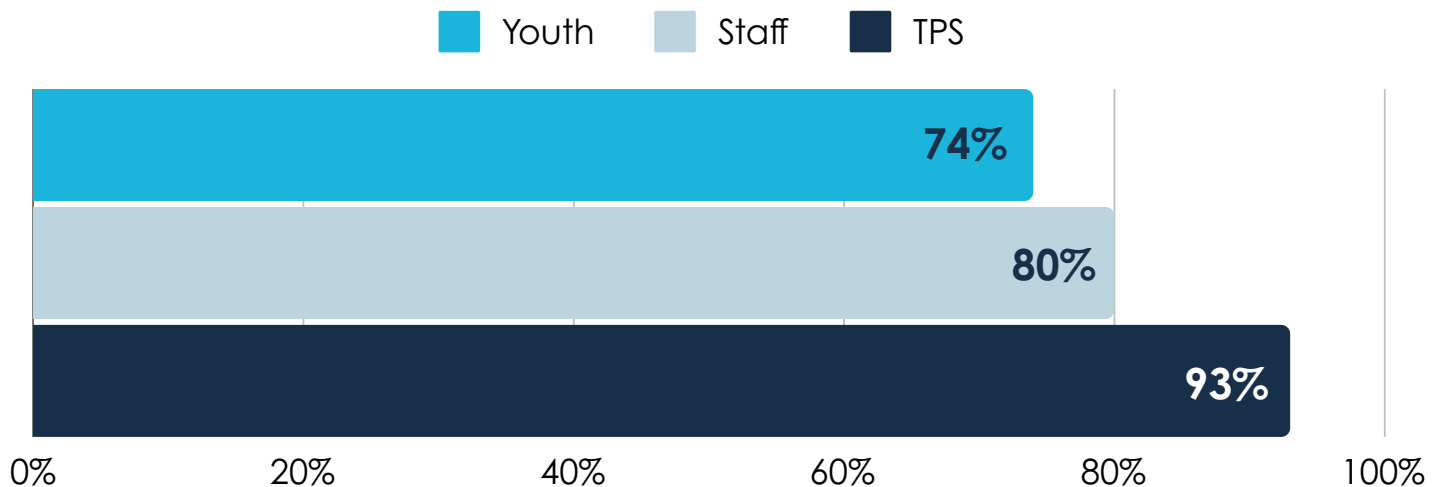
Sistema's Environment

"And I also love to see the gratification. Their faces light up after they've been working on a piece of music for months, and they're finally getting it like, "Oh, my God." Or even working at the concert, after, they really get adrenaline, the energy you feel after they know they've done really good, all that hard work. I love seeing that."

-Sistema Staff

[Opportunities for Reflection](#). Concert performances also offer opportunities for students to reflect on their performance and the process they went through. Youth, Staff, and Parents overwhelmingly reported that students engaged in self-reflection after concerts.

After a concert, do students think about what they could do better or differently next time?



Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected "yes."

"It's the fact that I've learned that much things, just to keep learning through the year, and at the end of the concert, it's kind of like using all of it to share with parents and show other people what we've learned through the whole year or the semester."

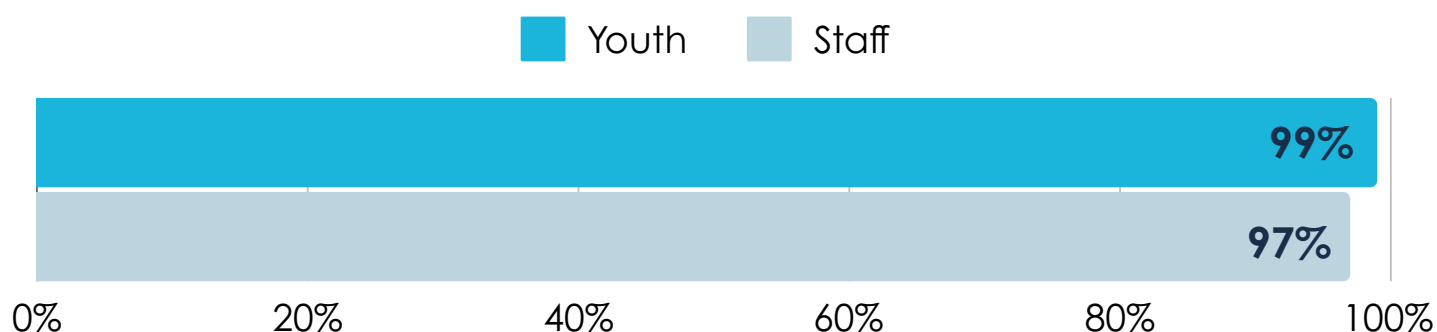
-Sistema Youth

Sistema's Environment

Opportunities for Learning and Skill Development. Sistema offers numerous opportunities for student learning and skill development. Skills include executive function, self-regulation, perseverance, goal setting, future planning, creativity, and self-expression.

Learning Space. Youth and Staff overwhelmingly reported that Sistema is a good place for learning.

Is Sistema a good place for learning?



Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected “yes.”

Youth reported Sistema's culture, music exposure and skill development, and the physical environment determined whether it was a good or bad place for learning. Specifically:

Sistema's culture included community and social support, teamwork, and togetherness. Community and social support were associated with kind and patient teachers, listening to other musicians, opportunities for one-on-one coaching, and demonstrations of “how community works.” Teamwork and togetherness included opportunities to perform with peers.

Music exposure and skill development included learning various genres of music, how to play instruments, and listening to instruments.

The physical environment was reportedly a good and bad space for learning. Having ample space, ample lighting, and distractions minimized were reported to be good characteristics.

However, crowded and small spaces, distractions, loudness, late starts due to gathering of instruments and materials, students practicing in the hall, and always staying together were reportedly bad or not good characteristics.

Sistema's Environment

Executive Function and Self-Regulation. Executive function and self-regulation skills “are the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully” ([Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2015](#)).

Youth, Staff, Parents, and TPS Educators all reported that Sistema provides students with opportunities to engage in and exhibit executive function and self-regulation skills through learning and music exposure. Notably, Youth were less likely than Adults to report ease in task switching, ability to focus, and engagement in emotion regulation strategies.

<i>How often are students able to remember musical notes, rhythms, and techniques on their instruments?</i>	None of the Time (0)	Some of the Time (1)	All of the Time (2)
Youth (Mean = 1.38)	0%	53%	47%
Staff (Mean = 1.35)	0%	65%	35%
Parent (Mean = 1.68)	0%	32%	68%

Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

	Youth % Yes	Staff % Yes	TPS % Yes
Is it easy for students to switch between tasks?	77%	94%	100%
Is it easy for students to ignore distractions and focus at Sistema/school?	52%	70%	88%
Are students able to adapt to unexpected changes?	86%	97%	N/A

Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected “yes.”

“I practice all day and I have time to stay focused because I want to actually learn about it, the notes, how it sounds, and I put all of that in my mind.”

-Sistema Youth

Sistema's Environment

What do students do to calm themselves down when they feel upset, angry, or frustrated?	Youth % selected	Parent % selected
Take deep breaths	59%	69%
Listen to music	46%	63%
Go outside	40%	55%
Color or draw	37%	33%
Play with toys or fidgets	35%	35%
Play instruments	16%	33%
Student does not calm themselves down	22%	6%

“I once saw these two people playing a duet on the flute [on TV], and I play the flute. So I'm not worried. The limits are above the skies.”

-Sistema Youth

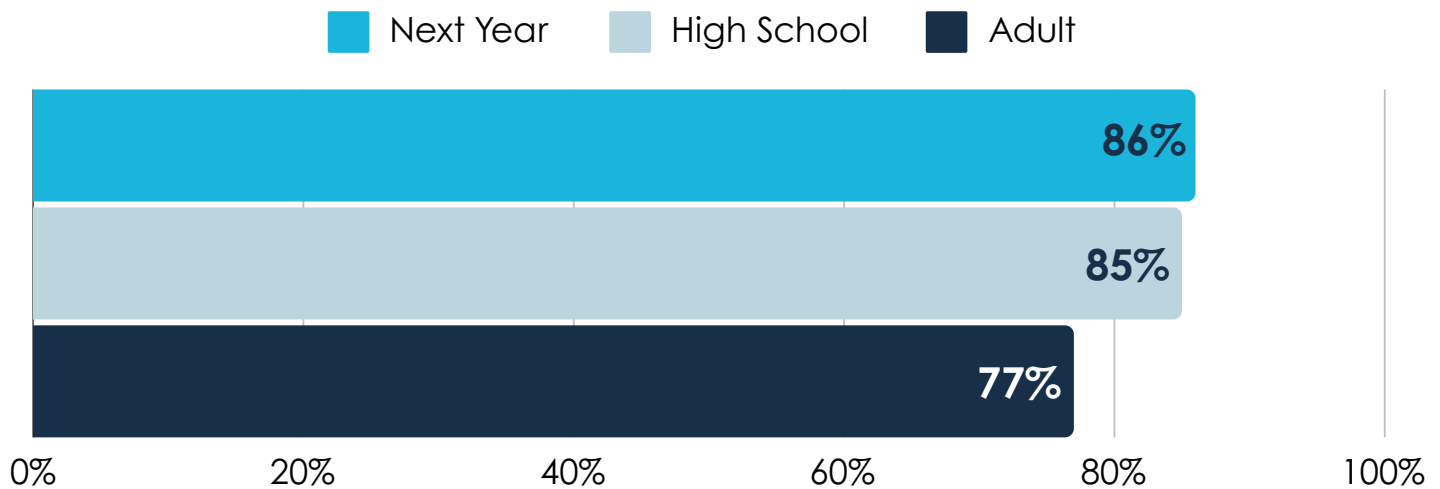
Perseverance, Goal Setting, and Future Planning.
 Sistema offers opportunities for perseverance, goal setting, and future planning. Youth, Staff, Parents, and TPS Educators all reported that students set goals and work to achieve them; however, Youth reports were lower than the Adult reports.

	Youth % Yes	Staff % Yes	Parent % Yes	TPS % Yes
Do students set goals for themselves and work to achieve them?	68%	97%	93%	100%
Do students continue practicing their instrument even when they find a new song or skill hard?	91%	93%	93%	N/A

Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected “yes.”

Sistema's Environment

Students' plans to play an instrument in the future



Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected "yes."

Self-Awareness. In focus groups, Youth demonstrated self-awareness in their ability to recall and recognize their emotions as well as rationalize why they felt how they did.

Youth were asked to describe how they felt before, during, and after concert performances. Despite feeling primarily difficult emotions (fear, worry, nervousness) before the start of the concert, Youth reported demonstrating leadership skills by working through those emotions and reported experiencing positive emotions (happiness, pride, excitement) after the concert was over.

Similarly, Youth reported experiencing mostly difficult emotions when asked to do something unexpected at Sistema; however, youth reported being able to work through those situations. As a result, Youth felt a sense of pride and accomplishment. See Appendix B for more details.

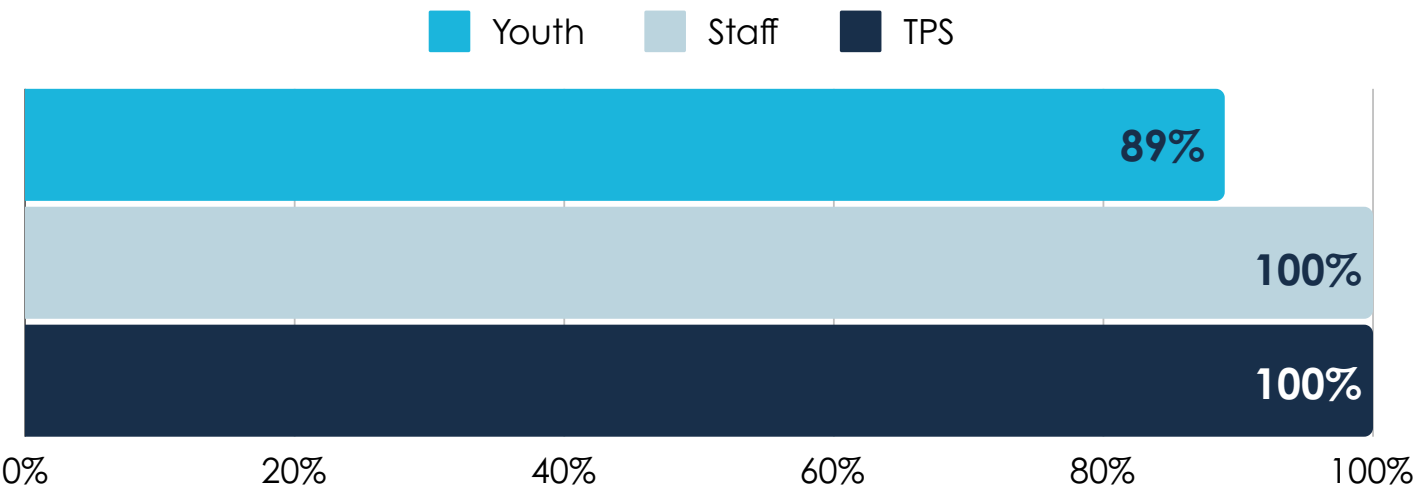
"What made me feel proud and successful was I did my first concert without crying. [When] I did my first play, I would get off the stage, I would start crying. I was so scared."

-Sistema Youth

Sistema’s Environment

Creativity and Expression. Youth, Parents, Staff, and TPS Educators consistently reported that music allowed student creativity. Youth and Staff differed in their reports that students make and express themselves through music.

Does music allow students to be creative?



Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected “yes.”

	Youth % Yes	Staff % Yes
Do students make their own music?	50%	90%
Do students express themselves through their own music?	45%	95%

Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected “yes.”

“I like playing my instrument, and I like learning new songs. I think Sistema is a good learning place because we can learn all types of things, and we learn how to play instruments, and play almost anything.”

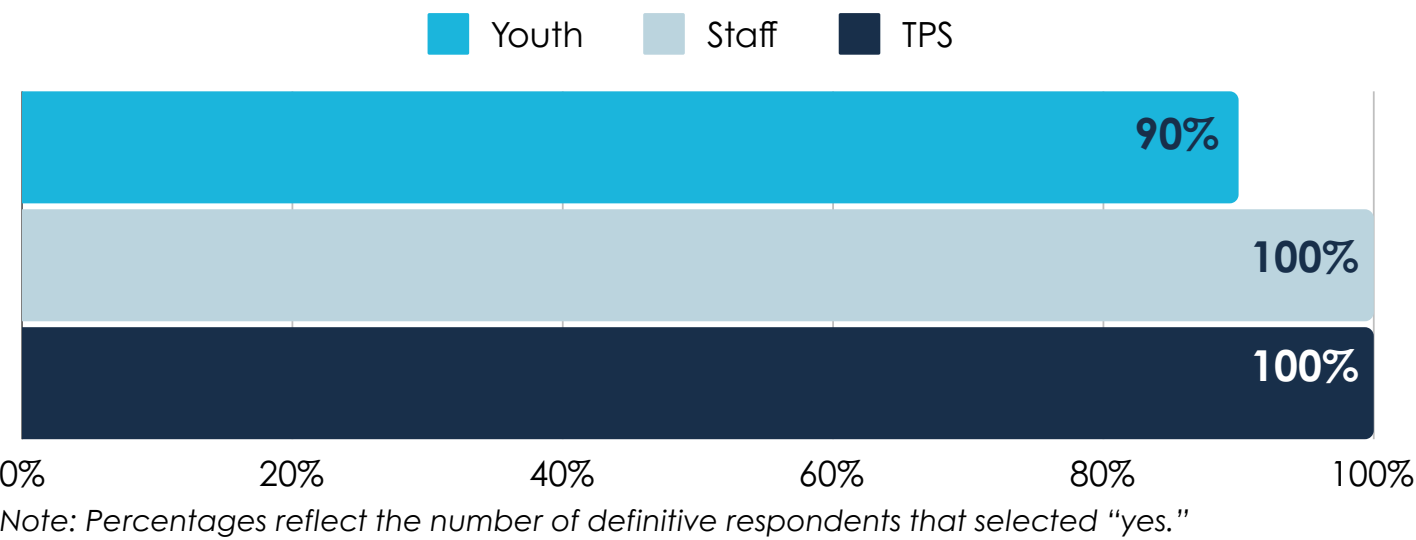
-Sistema Youth

Program Experience

Sistema’s program experiences were captured by Youth, Staff, Parents, and TPS Educators through surveys and focus groups.

Student Enjoyment. According to Youth, Staff, and Parents, students enjoy being at Sistema because of the concerts, social opportunities, sense of community, music exposure, and skill development. Staff, Parents, and TPS Educators enjoy the benefits Sistema offers for students and the Tulsa community.

Do students enjoy being at Sistema?



	None of the time %	Some of the time %	Most of the time %	All of the time %
How often does your student enjoy attending Sistema? (Parent report)	0%	4%	45%	51%
SAYO: I like coming to this program	5%	30%	30%	35%
SAYO: I have fun when I'm at this program	3%	35%	40%	23%

Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

“He loves the program and is proud of himself for learning new things. He has struggled with confidence in the past so we love to see it!”
- Sistema Parent

Program Experience

Sistema's Highlights. Youth, Staff, Parents, and TPS Educators reported praise about Sistema. Specifically, the community and culture; opportunities for music education; and student skill development were commonly reported as Sistema highlights.

Student Favorites. When asked to share their favorite time at Sistema, five themes emerged from Youth focus groups:

- Concerts were the overwhelming favorite for their offerings of opportunities for performance, fun, listening to other students play music, song selection, and feeling good afterward.
- Community included being with friends, playing games as a group at Boston Avenue and during summer camp, friendly teachers, and having fun with people.
- Being a musician included feeling prepared to play, tuning and playing instruments.
- Learning included learning something new, how to play instruments, fun lessons, and learning through peer engagement.
- Exposure and connection to music included reports of a love for music, evoked feelings when listening, exposure to instruments, and learning how instruments work together.

When asked what they liked most about Sistema, focus group Youth reported liking:

- The welcoming culture and community of peers and teachers.
- Brain breaks, games, and fun.
- Music exposure and skill development.
- Being challenged.
- Concerts.
- Outside time.
- Everything.

Surveyed Youth also reported that they *like/love Sistema* and that Sistema is:

- A great opportunity for learning and community.
- Cool, fun, and enjoyable.
- Encouraging, caring and kind.
- "The most amazing experience ever."

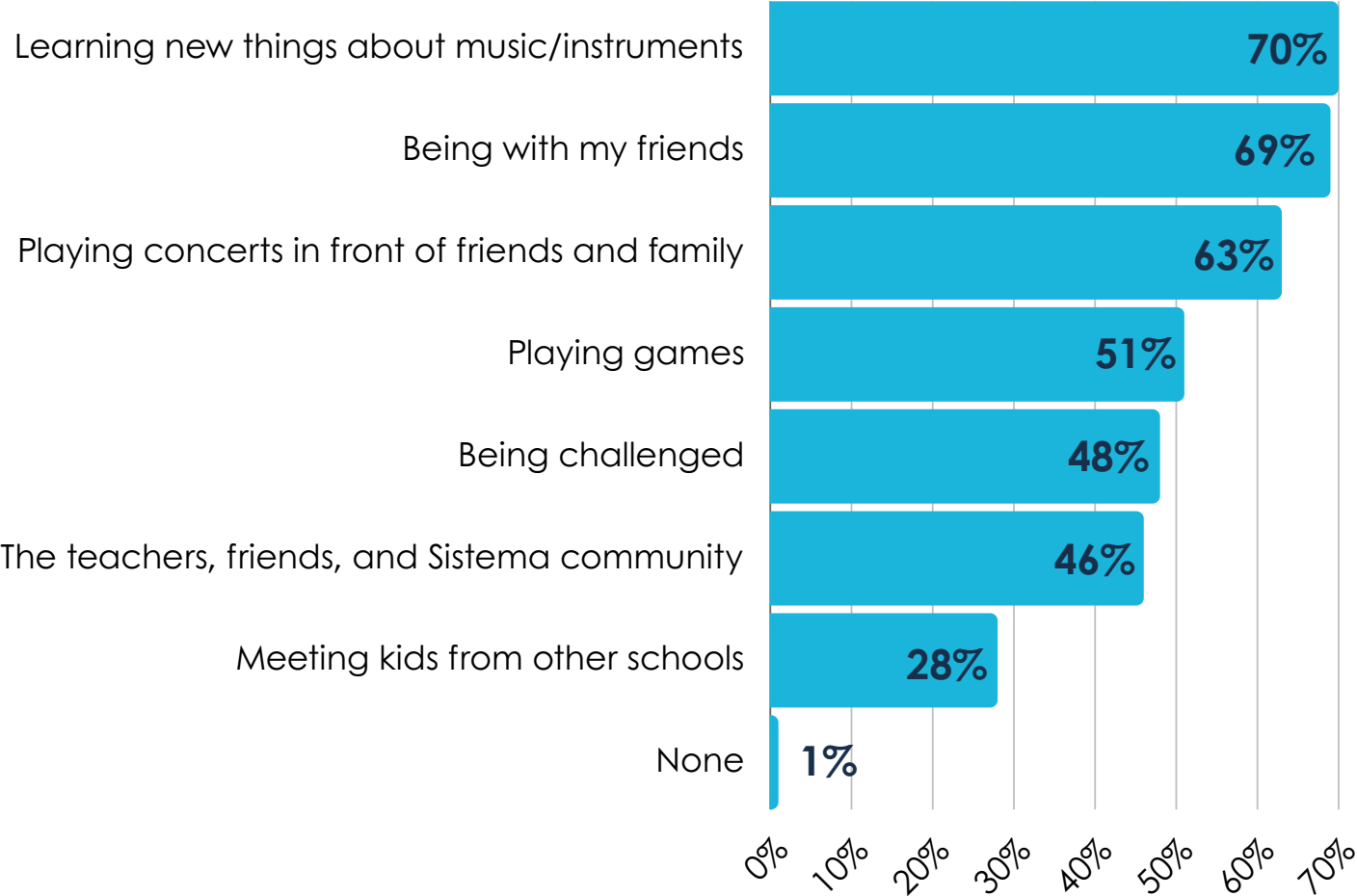
Youth's top three favorite things about Sistema were:

- Learning new things.
- Being with friends.
- Playing in concerts.

Other Youth reports included: wishing they could stay in Sistema forever; enjoying playing as a team; and thinking Sistema should stay the same.

Program Experience

What do students like most about Sistema?



“My favorite part about Sistema is my friends being there with me and I’m not the only third grader who attended it.”

-Sistema Youth

“There’s always someone there to help you, and there’s always someone there when you’re lonely to cheer you up if you’re sad, and there’s always someone there for you.”

-Sistema Youth

Program Experience

Staff Favorites. When asked what they like most about Sistema, focus group Staff commonly reported themes of opportunity and equitable access; skill development and talent discovery; and positive environments. Specifically, Staff reported that “Sistema changes [students’] lives” through:

Opportunity and Equitable Access. Sistema gives opportunity to a lot of students that wouldn't have the opportunity to do music otherwise by:

- Breaking financial barriers.
- Offering opportunities across Tulsa.
- Leveling the playing field through high quality music education and equipment.

Skill Development and Talent Discovery. Sistema students find their voice, discover their musical talents, and can go as far as they want to go by:

- Giving a direction to keep going with music - “The more you fuel the passion/flame, the brighter it will get.”
- Strengthening students’ skills related to socialization, problem-solving, music, perseverance, independence, teamwork, and coping.

Positive Environment. Sistema students prefer Sistema over other music programs. Sistema Staff are passionate about student learning; do not feel Sistema is “work;” develop positive relationships with students; and “would still be here even if they didn't get paid.”

Sistema:

- Is PROUD.
- Fosters a low-pressure and safe environment for learning and performing.
- Is a supportive community for everybody, where people belong, celebrate diversity, find their identity, and develop a sense of pride.
- Models “we're all in here together” and students feel like they are part of something when they play together.
- Rewards and recognizes students for their hard work.
- Staff and peers encourage student perseverance and trying new things.

“I came from a band program that cost a minimum \$2,000 a year to be a part of the program. So for me, the ability to give everybody access to music education, no matter how much it costs, where you live, where you go to school, we'll make it happen, I think it's something that is invaluable to a lot of people.”

-Sistema Staff

Program Experience

“What I like about Sistema the most is probably seeing the kids progress over time. I see the kids grow as people. And Sistema helps them with that because they learn how to deal with stress. They learn how to deal with problem-solving. And they get a sense of pride. Saying those guidelines every day, ‘We are Sistema PROUD.’ It’s a club that they belong to. A sense of belonging they get out of that.

-Sistema Staff

Parent Report. Parents reported that Sistema is excellently operated and run; provides opportunities for students; is incredible; and has been wonderful for their family.

Parents also reported that:

- They would love more students to experience the program.
- They appreciate the time Sistema has spent with their student.
- Siblings in Sistema bond through playing their instruments together.
- They have noticed growth in their student’s confidence and abilities.
- A no-cost program is valuable.
- Are grateful for Sistema.
- They look forward to seeing students mature with their instruments.
- The location at Boston Avenue is ideal.

“We absolutely love being a part of the Sistema program! I am proud of all that my children have accomplished and are thankful for the teachers who have invested in them.”

-Sistema Parent

TPS Educator Report. TPS Educators reported that Sistema is an amazing and wonderful program; they love Sistema; and are glad that Sistema exists. One TPS Educator reported that performances are amazing and another TPS Educator reported that the school is grateful for the opportunity that Sistema gives students.

“It’s an amazing program that gives students a chance to shine in ways that or school isn’t able to give, while helping to boost them academically.”

-TPS Educator

Student Impacts

According to USAID, positive youth development “builds skills, assets, and competencies; fosters healthy relationships; and strengthens the environment” (USAID, 2016). Assets are the “resources, skills, and competencies to achieve a desired outcome.” Agency is the perception and ability to employ one’s assets and aspirations to make or influence one’s own decision about their life; and set and work towards their own goals. Engagement is one’s ability to engage in experiences and demonstrate the transferability of skills from one engagement to another.

Results from the current study demonstrate that Sistema positively impacts:

- Student Assets as noted by reports of positive changes in:
 - Music literacy and expression.
 - Social skills.
 - Executive function and self-regulation.
 - Academic achievement.
- Student Agency as noted by reports of positive changes in:
 - Positive identity and self-efficacy.
 - Future aspirations.
- Student Engagement as noted by reports of positive changes in:
 - Behavior at home and school.
 - Increased school enjoyment and attendance.

Group differences were analyzed and reported in Appendix C.

“So then knowing that I can someday [play instruments like the professionals] and way more-- Sistema [taught] me I could do that and way more, so now I don't have to worry about learning too much or I can never learn again.”

-Sistema Youth

“Increased confidence, camaraderie with other school friends also in Sistema, a sense of achievement.”

-Sistema Parent

Student Impacts

General Learning and Skill Development. Youth and TPS Educators reported that students learn a lot in Sistema. Youth reported that Sistema offered an opportunity to “do something I’ve not done before.”

	Youth % Yes	TPS % Yes
Have students learned a lot at Sistema?	94%	100%
SAYO: Coming to this program has helped me to learn something new	97%	N/A
SAYO: Coming to this program has allowed me to do something I’ve not done before.	92%	N/A

Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected “yes.”

General Skill Development. Staff and Parents reported that students develop a multitude of skills related to music literacy; positive identity and self-efficacy; social competence; and executive function and self-regulation.

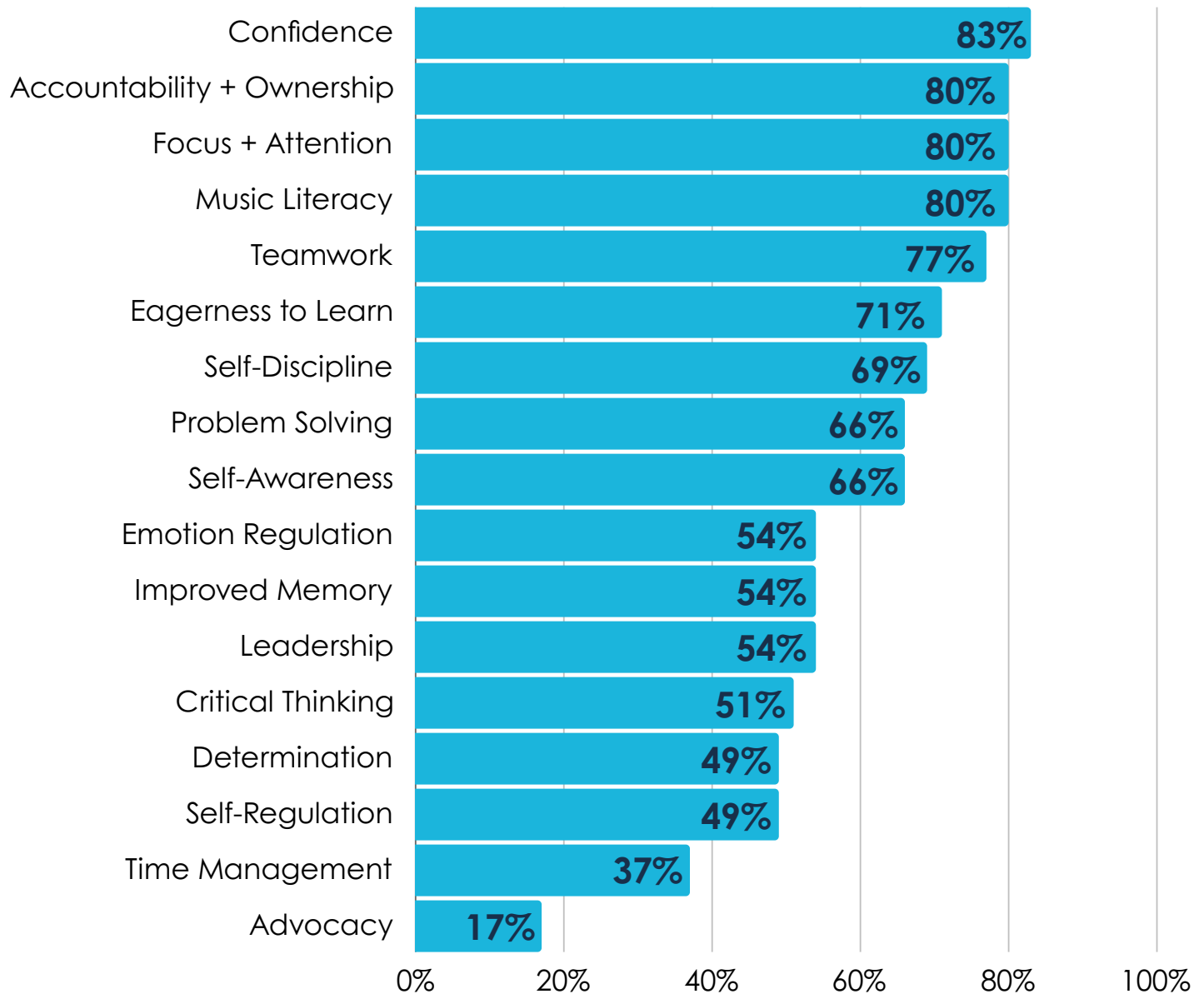
Staff Report. Staff were asked in a focus group about the skills and experiences they notice students coming into Sistema already having or lacking. Staff reported students begin the program lacking skills such as relaxation, discipline, self-awareness, self-accountability, and maturity. However, students reportedly have an eagerness and excitement to learn and a natural curiosity.

Staff overwhelmingly reported that, at Sistema, students gain skills related to:

- Confidence.
- Ownership.
- Focus and attention.
- Music literacy.
- Teamwork.
- Eagerness to learn.
- Self-discipline.
- Problem-solving.
- Self-awareness.

Student Impacts

What skills do students gain at Sistema?



Note: Percentages do not equal 100% due to multiple response options.

"I feel happy and excited because I like learning new things and different stuff. And I like having challenges because then I can always work through them, even if I may not get to them that week or maybe not even for a while because I don't have time to focus on my other stuff. But I can still try to work on it."

-Sistema Youth

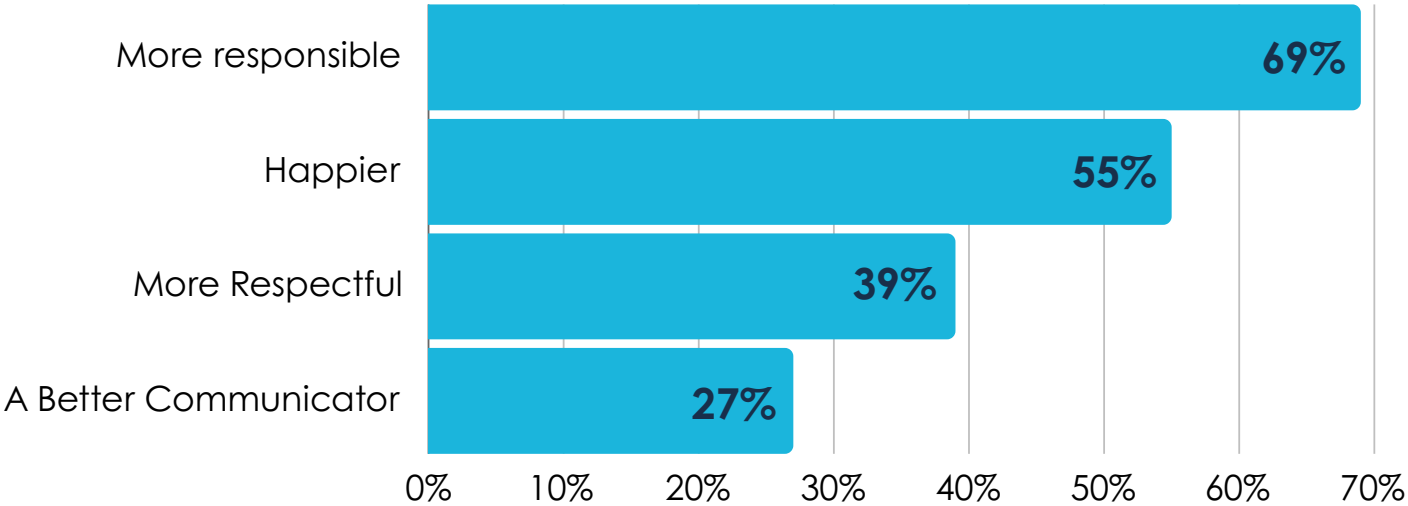
Student Impacts

Parent Report. Parents reported that Sistema has positively impacted their student's skill development and joy.

Parents also reported improvement in their student's:

- Music skills and literacy.
- Appreciation and love for the arts.
- Happiness.
- Confidence, pride, and sense of self.
- Responsibility.
- Perseverance.
- Social opportunities.

Since starting Sistema, my student is



Note: Percentages do not equal 100% due to multiple response options.

“He has learned so much about musical theory and how to read music. He feels confident figuring out how to play songs he enjoys and will obsessively play them over and over until he gets them right.”
-Sistema Parent

“My child has gained such an incredible love and respect for music.”
-Sistema Parent

Student Impacts

Changes in Music Skills. Youth and Parents reported that students' music skills had improved since they started Sistema. Youth reported developing new music skills.

In the survey, Parents reported that their students have developed more musical knowledge, built upon their music skills, and have more enthusiasm for playing instruments.

	Youth % Yes	Parent % Yes
Have students' musical skills gotten better since they joined Sistema?	99%	100%
Have students developed new music skills since they started Sistema?	98%	N/A

Impacts on Student Identity and Efficacy. Youth and Adults reported that Sistema positively impacts students' confidence, sense of empowerment, and sense of success.

	Youth % Yes	Staff % Yes	Parent % Yes	TPS % Yes
Does Sistema help students feel good about themselves?	94%	100%	N/A	100%
SAYO: Coming to this program has helped me to feel good about myself.	97%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Do students feel successful at Sistema?	96%	100%	100%	N/A
Do students feel empowered at Sistema?	97%	100%	100%	N/A
Are students more hopeful since they started Sistema?	N/A	100%	100%	N/A
Has Sistema taught students to work hard?	88%	100%	96%	N/A
SAYO: Coming to this program has helped me set goals for myself and work towards them.	85%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected "yes."

Student Impacts

Student Success. Focus group Youth reported concerts made students feel successful by:

- Teaching them they can learn new and hard things.
- Showing them the skill growth they have demonstrated since they started and the year prior.
- Allowing them to showcase their talents to their family and friends.

Student Empowerment. When asked what makes students feel empowered, Youth in the focus groups reported teamwork; perseverance and dedication; leadership opportunities and choice; learning, mastery, and skill development; self-confidence; and social support of teachers and family.

Specifically, students reported feeling empowered by:

- Working with peers.
- Practicing and fixing mistakes.
- Being the only player of a specific instrument.
- Knowing the “sky’s the limit.”
- Being supported, praised, and encouraged by Sistema teachers.
- Learning and mastering new music skills.
- Advancing to the next level in the program.
- Desire to perform without mistakes.
- Believing in self.
- Having choices in music and instruments.
- Encouragement from family.

Song selection (repeated songs, not having new songs) and doing something that others already know and do were associated with not feeling empowered. Students reported they would feel more empowered if they could perform new songs, including songs that others have not heard before.

“It’s the fact that I’ve learned that much things, just to keep learning through the year, and at the end of the concert, it’s kind of like using all of it to share with parents and show other people what we’ve learned through the whole year or the semester.”

-Sistema Youth

Student Impacts

Hope. Given the theory of change and research linking youth hope to later positive outcomes (e.g., well-being, happiness, meaning in life, belonging, relationships, physical and mental health). Hope was measured as a protective factor for students with trauma backgrounds (notably, focus group Staff described varying levels of trauma experiences among students). Snyder’s (1997) extensively validated Children’s Hope Scale was used to assess students’ overall hope, agency (positive beliefs and perception) and pathways (positive skills and assets).

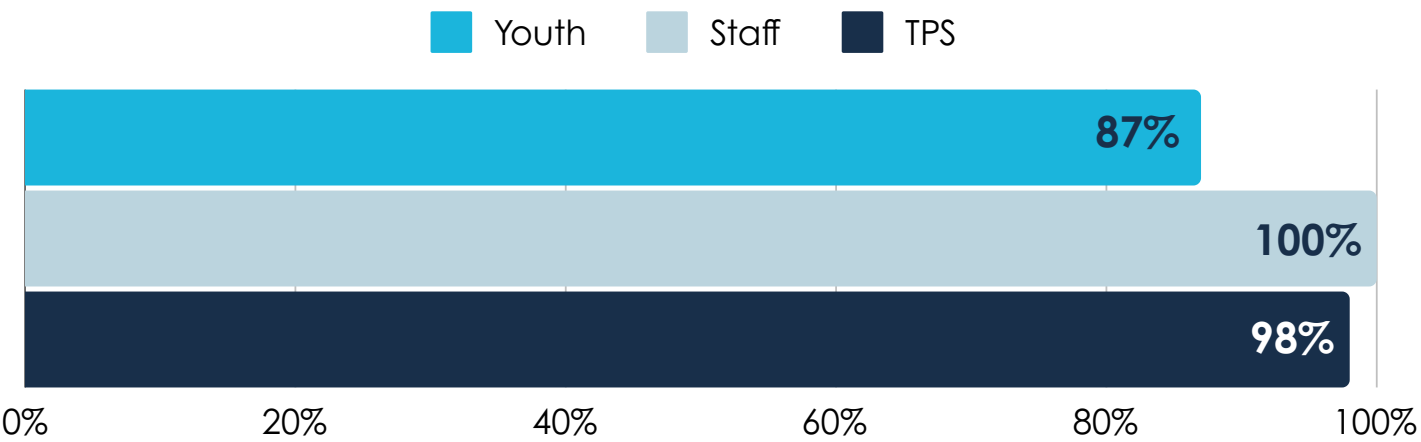
While half of students reported “slight” hope levels, 100% of definitive Staff and Parent reports indicated that students are more hopeful since they started Sistema. Youth reported higher levels of agency than pathway.

	Hope	Pathway	Agency
No or Low	5%	9%	7%
Slight	50%	49%	37%
Moderate	29%	24%	27%
High	16%	18%	29%

Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Impacts on Student Social Skills. According to Youth, Staff, and Parents, Sistema has taught students how to work with peers.

Has Sistema taught students how to work well with other kids?



Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected “yes.”

Student Impacts

Impacts on Executive Function and Self-Regulation. Since starting Sistema, students' behavior has reportedly changed. Generally, students have improved their memory and mental flexibility, adaptability, and self-regulation.

<i>Since they started Sistema...</i>	Staff % Yes	Parent % Yes
Have students' behavior improved?	N/A	49%
Are students able to adapt better when things change unexpectedly?	N/A	91%
Are students able to remember music concepts taught?	100%	N/A
Have students improved in their ability to manage impulses?	86%	N/A
Have students improved in their ability to focus?	64%	N/A
Have students improved in their ability to juggle different tasks?	97%	N/A

Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected "yes."

*"Both my girls have become more independent and responsible."
- Sistema Parent*

"Since starting Sistema, she is more confident. She is also able to set goals and see them through."

-Sistema Parent

Student Executive Function. In the focus group, Staff highlighted that indicators of working memory and mental flexibility skill change (or lack thereof) were dependent on the:

- Culture of the site.
- Lead teacher.
- Student seriousness and passion.
- Student decision to persevere.
- Attendance.

Student Impacts

Flexibility and Adaptability. All Youth in each focus group reported working through unexpected changes at Sistema. When asked how they work through unexpected changes, Youth reported persevering; gaining social support from friends and teachers; desiring to be challenged and switch things up; and the transferring of old skills.

Specifically, students:

- Asked for help from teachers and friends (majority of students reported).
- Enjoyed being challenged, switching up the routine, and learning new and different things.
- Went with “the flow” and “just did it.”
- Continued to try when finding the task difficult.
- Focused on the director.
- Spent more time practicing when needed.
- Remembered old notes and learnings to apply to the unexpected change.

Self-Regulation. In focus groups, many Youth reported having trouble staying focused all or most of the time, some reported trouble sometimes, and some reported no trouble focusing.

When asked what made focusing difficult, Youth overwhelmingly reported distractions such as:

- Sitting with friends.
- Loud sounds within and outside the practice space.
- Classmates playing around.
- Showcasing of other instruments that students desire to play.
- Not feeling challenged and feeling more advanced than other students in class.
- Student's prescription medication.
- Students working in the hall.

When asked how students stay focused, Youth reported that they:

- Have the desire and motivation to learn.
- Practice often.
- Imagine their family's support and pride.
- Close doors to block outside noises.
- Think about the music.
- Keep eyes on paper/notes and teacher.
- Avoid looking at classmates.
- Listen to the teacher.

Student Impacts

Impacts at Home. Since starting Sistema, some students have exhibited positive changes in behavior and relationships at home according to Youth and Parents.

Since they started Sistema...	Youth % Yes	Parent % Yes
Do students get along better with their parents or guardians?	30%	36%
Do students talk to their parents about Sistema?	79%	N/A
Do students make their parents proud by being in Sistema?	92%	100%
Do students get along better with their siblings?	23%	29%
Do students get into less trouble at home?	29%	35%

Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected “yes.”

Parents reported differences between 3rd-6th grade siblings in and not in Sistema, reporting that their Sistema children:

- Might have more resilience.
- Like meeting children more.
- Are no different because the non-Sistema child went to Harmony Project.
- Missed being in Sistema when taking a break from the program.

One Parent said, “It is hard to compare the two children since they have different learning styles, abilities to focus, interests. Our older child did play a band instrument in a (non-Sistema) group lesson setting before COVID stopped her lessons. She played online during COVID and had difficulty practicing and less discipline than our Sistema kid; but again, different circumstances and different kids.”

“We absolutely love being a part of the Sistema program! I am proud of all that my children have accomplished and are thankful for the teachers who have invested in them.”
- Sistema Parent

Student Impacts

Impacts at School. Since starting Sistema, some students have exhibited positive changes in student behavior, relationships, and engagement at school as noted by Youth and Parents.

Since they started Sistema...	Youth % Yes	Parent % Yes
Are students able to focus more at school?	27%	43%
Are students' grades better at school?	32%	25%
Do students go to school more?	18%	18%
Do students like going to school more?	27%	38%
Do students get along better with their teachers?	22%	22%

Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected “yes.”

“My child is more responsible, and grades are getting better.”
-Sistema Parent

Sistema v. Non-Sistema Students at School. TPS Educators were asked to report on differences in student behavior, performance, and social skills for Sistema students compared to students not in Sistema. Overall, Sistema students perform the same or better at school compared to students not in Sistema.

Compared to non-Sistema students at school, Sistema students reportedly exhibited:

- Stronger executive function and self-regulation skills.
- Increased academic achievement.
- Higher school engagement.
- Stronger social skills.
- Stronger sense of belonging.

“Sistema students, as a whole, definitely seem a lot stronger as individuals. There are some who don't fall into the stronger group of kiddos. But as a whole, they are more creative, positive, goal-setting, centered, and education-focused students.”
-TPS Educator

Student Impacts

Compared to students not in Sistema...	% Worse / Less	% Same	% Better / More
Sistema v. Non-Sistema Students: Sistema PROUD			
Do you feel respected by Sistema students more, less, or the same?	0%	33%	67%
Do Sistema students take more, less, or the same amount of ownership?	0%	46%	55%
Do you feel Sistema students have more, less, or the same amount of understanding of everyone?	0%	33%	67%
Sistema v. Non-Sistema Students: Executive Function and Self-Regulation			
Are Sistema students able to retain and remember teachings at school better, worse, or the same?	0%	54%	46%
Are Sistema students able to adapt when things unexpectedly change better, worse, or the same?	0%	36%	64%
How would you rate the ease of switching between tasks or activities for Sistema students: Better, worse, or the same?	0%	45%	55%
Do Sistema students focus at school more, less, or the same?	0%	40%	60%
Do Sistema students behave better, worse, or the same in school?	0%	8%	92%

Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

“[Sistema students] reading scores go up, they are motivated to do well and be well behaved because other kids look up to them.”

-TPS Educator

Student Impacts

<i>Compared to students not in Sistema,</i>	% Worse / Less	% Same	% Better / More
Sistema v. Non-Sistema Students: Academic Achievement			
Are Sistema students' grades in school better, worse, or the same?	0%	40%	60%
Do Sistema students improve academically at faster, slower, or the same rates?	0%	56%	44%
Do Sistema students perform in school better, worse, or the same academically?	0%	50%	50%
Sistema v. Non-Sistema Students: School Engagement			
Do Sistema students go to school more, less, or the same?	0%	18%	82%
Do Sistema students like going to school more, less, or the same?	0%	10%	90%
Sistema v. Non-Sistema Students: Social Skills and Belonging			
Do Sistema students have a stronger, weaker, or the same sense of community and belonging at school?	0%	0%	100%
Do Sistema students get along with other kids their age at school more, less, or the same?	0%	17%	83%
Do you get along with Sistema students at school more, less, or the same?	0%	64%	36%
Compared to other students, do Sistema students work with other kids their age better, worse or the same?	0%	31%	69%

Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Student Impacts

TPS Educators were asked to elaborate on any differences, or lack thereof, between Sistema students and students not in Sistema (non-Sistema students). Sistema students reportedly exhibit more:

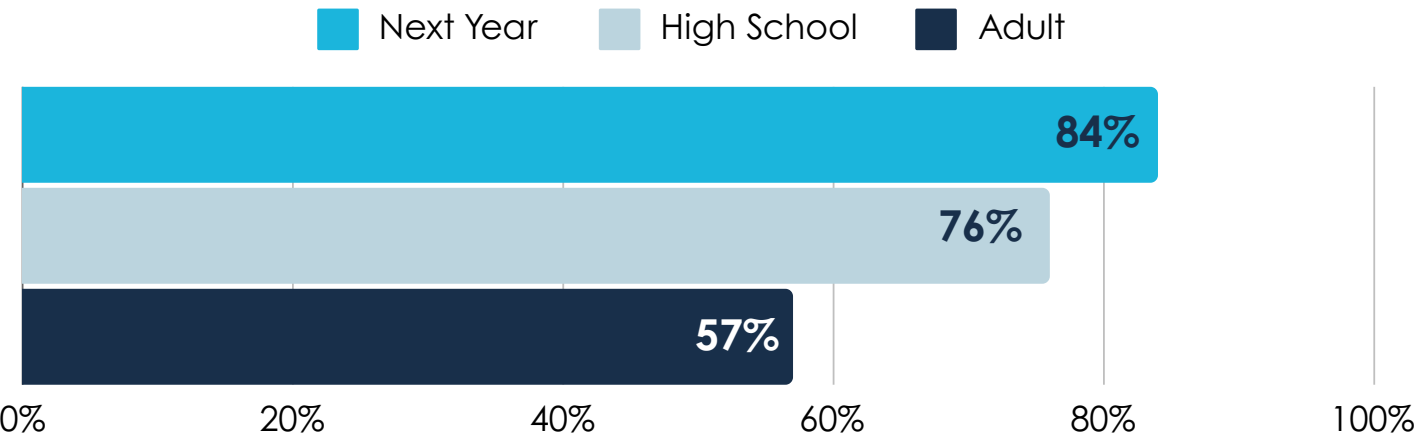
- Perseverance.
- Problem solving.
- Creativity.
- Positive attitudes.
- Goal-setting.
- Centeredness.
- Focus on education.
- Reading literacy.
- Motivation.

Sistema students reportedly exhibit lower levels of behavioral challenges. One TPS Educator reported that better behavior was associated with having Sistema to look forward to each week. Sistema students look forward to coming to school; look forward to being a part of Sistema; and are likely to be in a gifted and talented program at school.

Future Aspirations for Youth. Youth and Parents reported aspirations for music in the students' futures. Youth have aspirations for continuing to play instruments next year and through high school.

Of those that provided a definitive response, 69% of Youth reported wanting to stay in Sistema through high school and 100% of parents reported that Sistema will help their child succeed in the future.

Do you want your student to continue playing an instrument in the future?



Note: Percentages reflect the number of definitive respondents that selected “yes.”

Community Impact

Sistema reportedly adds value to and has positively impacted stakeholder Schools and the Communities in which students live, learn, and play.

Staff Impact. Sistema Staff reported being positively impacted by their work at Sistema. Specifically, Staff reported improvements in teaching practice and having learned new skills and knowledge since starting at Sistema.

Impacts on Staff Teaching Practices. On a scale of 1=very poor to 5=excellent, Sistema teaching Staff reported that their teaching practice was “average” (mean = 3.0) before working at Sistema. Since working at Sistema, teaching Staff reported their teaching practice as “good” (mean = 4.1).

Of those that provided a definitive response, 100% reported that “teaching in a community with other music educators has helped [their teaching] practices as a music teacher.”

	Very Poor %	Poor %	Average %	Good %	Excellent %
Before working at Sistema, I felt my teaching practice was...	9%	9%	52%	30%	0%
Now that I've worked at Sistema, I feel my teaching practice is..	0%	0%	9%	74%	17%

Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

“Since I started working with Sistema, I have learned that children thrive in an environment where they feel respected, are supported, and feel like they can be open. I have learned that just spending time and giving attention to students means the world to them. I have learned that Sistema Tulsa is a great place for kids to learn and grow.”

-Sistema Staff

Community Impact

Impacts on Staff Learning and Skill Development. Surveyed Staff reported improved knowledge and skills related to: Communication; Leadership; Teaching (team teaching, classroom management, discovery of teaching enjoyment, lesson planning, creativity in teaching approaches, learning from senior teachers); Relationship Building; Music; Collaboration and Teamwork; Organization and Process Management; Problem Solving; Empathy; Patience; Flexibility; Time Management; Self-Compassion; "and so much more." Specifically, Staff learned:

- *"Children thrive in an environment where they feel respected, are supported, and feel like they can be open."*
- *"Spending time and giving attention to students means the world to them."*
- *"Sistema Tulsa is a great place for kids to learn and grow."*
- *"Sistema Tulsa has taught me more than I could ever articulate on a survey. It has helped encourage me to keep going in my teaching career, to try new ideas in the classroom, to be empathetic and form personal relationships with the students, and to listen to students and other adults better."*
- *"That it is okay to make mistakes at work. Sistema is big on owning our actions, but living into the truth that we are always in process."*
- *"That they are wonderful people who support programs like this so all children can succeed!"*
- *"I came to Sistema as a veteran teacher and had skills that I developed over many years of teaching. Sistema has helped me keep and even further a few skills. I learn from the younger generation and I think they learn from me."*

"I think Sistema is much different than school programs in that teachers work alongside their students. Also, we don't encourage chairs. They can exchange parts. Age or ability isn't an issue, they work together. Everyone contributes and they help each other!"

-Sistema Staff

Community Impact

Community Impacts. Sistema offers a host of benefits to the community. Staff, Parents, and TPS Educators reported that Sistema provides equitable opportunities for high-quality music education and youth skill development. Sistema reportedly brings hope and value to schools and communities.

Staff Report. When asked about Sistema's benefits, Staff reported:

- Deep admiration and love for Sistema;
- Pride in being a part of Sistema;
- Belief that Sistema is a wonderful program with high accessibility;
- Appreciation for Sistema's flexibility and commitment to its staff and students;
- Sistema makes a HUGE difference in the kids' lives and has seen many Children become more mature and benefit from the program.

Staff were also asked to report Sistema's benefits. Each option provided was selected by at least 70% of Staff, indicating that Sistema provides a multitude of benefits.

	% Selected
Provides opportunities for students who wouldn't otherwise be able to participate in music	96%
Celebrates and encourages diversity	96%
Reduces financial barriers for students' extracurricular activities	96%
Creates a lifelong impact	87%
Fulfills potential, talent, and passion among students	86%
Fosters skills development among students	83%
Fosters growth among students and teachers	83%
Encourages students to overcome their fears	83%
Promotes independence	78%
Fosters physical and psychological (emotional) safety for students	74%
Is for everybody	70%

Note: Percentages do not equal 100% due to multiple response options.

Community Impact

Staff also reported on the benefits specific to Sistema's Main Hub and Satellite locations.

Main Hub Benefits. Sistema Staff reported the benefits of Sistema Main Hub include a supportive environment where students build confidence, form lasting friendships, and grow both musically and personally through mentorship, leadership opportunities, and a strong sense of community. Specifically, benefits of Main Hub include:

- Providing an environment for students to grow and take ownership in.
- Cultivating a safe community where students can spend time focused on music with like-minded students who are invested in learning an instrument.
- Setting consistent expectations for students and staff that help student behaviors.
- Offering students a group of safe adults who serve as teachers and mentors.
- Providing opportunities to learn to be a part of a music ensemble which may not be available at school.
- Challenging students to learn new and difficult things.
- Teaching students how to work hard, both independently and in groups.
- Teaching students how to handle failures and grow from mistakes.
- Building confidence in students, both in their musical abilities and their social interactions with peers.

Satellite Benefits. Sistema Staff reported the benefits of Sistema Satellite Sites include providing valuable musical opportunities for students who might not otherwise have access to music education; and fostering a positive environment where students develop skills and build relationships through collaborative learning. Specifically, the Staff reported:

- Offering quality musical opportunities that many area elementary students don't otherwise have access to.
- Providing students a place where they can express themselves through music.
- Emphasizing collaboration over competition.
- Creating opportunities to develop organizational skills.
- Encouraging students from all over Tulsa to work towards shared goals.
- Fostering a sense of belonging and ownership.
- Providing opportunities for student concert performances.

Community Impact

The following quotes are directly from surveyed Staff regarding the benefits of Sistema's **satellite** locations:

"Students thrive in a supportive environment where they feel welcome. Families have the comfort of knowing their children are in a place where they are challenged to grow, yet supported. Schools have increased attendance and participation when they have students involved in an after-school program. And there is a stronger sense of community when the community comes together at performances to support them."

"Community engagement, kids collaborating with each other, and having an affordable way to learn music. There are probably so many other benefits, but these are the first few that come to mind. Learning an instrument is SO expensive and it is so awesome that Sistema offers it for free. The benefits of learning an instrument and especially participation in an ensemble as a young person are so amazing, and the kids definitely have a leg up on their academics and musicality by participating in Sistema. They also have the opportunity to make so many new friends that they would not have had otherwise."

"I think one of the best things Sistema offers is that it is a FREE program for students to borrow instruments when families may not be able to purchase an instrument of their own. Students are also getting the experience to perform with groups and be a part of a team and grow from that."

"Kids can dream to reach goals in their regular classrooms, and also continue with their education."

Community Impact

"I think the satellites give us the opportunity to serve kids who may not be able to come to the main hub on a weekly basis due to issues like access to transportation."

"Satellites help make the program more accessible (not all families can afford transportation to the main site) and help provide music education in some schools that don't have music."

"The actual time after school for students in an educational setting can help parents that have work later than the school day, the family gets to be involved in something for their students that they would otherwise miss, students get started early on instruments that are complex and take years to master, the community (meaning multiple families and the teachers) connects in a way that wouldn't exist without Sistema, and these satellite communities get to be connected to the similar efforts going on all around Tulsa. It builds solidarity and cooperation through music."

"The benefits are a more direct relationship to music. There were many students where I off-handedly said 'oh you'll learn more about that in school,' but they didn't play music at their school. Many talented students had the opportunity to engage in a new skill thanks to Sistema."

"Tulsa area elementary schools, for the most part, do not have instruments such as brass, woodwinds, or strings, that are available for group playing. Sistema is offering this for free, which is amazing."

Community Impact

Parent Report. Parents reported that Sistema brings hope to students, families, and communities through student empowerment, music exposure, and skill development by:

- Empowering students to engage with music through equitable access.
- Giving students a community of role models, teamwork, and opportunities to develop and strengthen social skills.
- Providing students with opportunities to develop their sense of success, confidence, pride, and motivation.
- Exposing students to diversity of people, backgrounds, and cultures.
- Fostering love and appreciation for the arts.
- Keeping students out of trouble in the community.
- Helping to build skills necessary for academic performance.
- Overcoming performance anxiety.
- Providing students with opportunities to develop their sense of self.
- Conjures up excitement for the future.
- Gives students and their parents hope for their community.
- Encouraging self-discipline among students.

School Impacts. Surveyed Staff reported that Sistema fills gaps in Tulsa Public Schools. TPS Educators reported that Sistema adds value to their schools by fostering a sense of community and belonging; opportunities; and student skill development by:

- Fostering a community of musicians.
- Creatively strengthening students academically.
- Adding a sense of pride, purpose, and confidence within students.
- Allowing “tools to be sharpened.”
- Encouraging students to try new things, persevere to achieve their goals, and excel.
- Offering a “powerful opportunity” to kids as music learning benefits are scientifically proven.
- Giving the students a sense of belonging.
- Building community within schools.
- Offering schools with musical performances.

Of the TPS Educators surveyed, 100% reported that they believe students not currently enrolled in Sistema would benefit from being in the program.

“It’s an amazing program that gives students a chance to shine in ways that our school isn’t able to give, while helping them academically.”

-TPS Educator

Conclusion

The evaluation of Sistema's out-of-school time music program highlights its enabling environment and positive program experiences as well as its vast impact on students, Schools, and the Tulsa community.

By aligning with the PYD Framework and the CDC at Harvard's Model of Executive Function and Self-Regulation, Sistema has nurtured a space where students are encouraged to develop musically and grow socially, emotionally, and cognitively. The program's holistic approach appears to have empowered students to build critical life skills while fostering a sense of belonging and community.

Youth.gov highlights research on PYD approaches to student learning and skill development are associated with increased likelihood of long-term skills and behaviors which include:



Increased civic engagement



Less risky behaviors



More successful transition into adulthood



Healthier lifestyle choices

Many youth in Tulsa experience indicators of adversity. Hope, being a protective factor against adversity, was assessed in this study. While youth reported lower than average hope levels, Staff and Parents reported that students were more hopeful since starting Sistema. Notably, Youth report higher levels of agency (positive beliefs and perception) than pathways (positive skills and assets). Youths' report of higher agency is reflective of the belief in their individual ability to initiate and sustain action toward desired goals. Data indicates that Sistema provides a unique opportunity for strengthening students' pathways through its demonstrated success in promoting PYD - specifically by developing student skills and assets that promote students' identification of paths toward reaching their goals.

Stakeholders commonly reported that Sistema's approach to equitable opportunities through free programming and offering high quality school-based options fosters community impact. Further scaling of Sistema's satellite programming could offer more students opportunities for skill development and long-term impacts.

Implications

The current evaluation supports research highlighting the intrinsic value of music education as a powerful catalyst to effect social and cognitive change through the musical experience, which is impacted by the musical environment (Varkøy, 2015).

For stakeholders in out-of-school time and youth programming spaces, Sistema's success in cultivating an environment where students feel safe, welcomed, supported, and capable of achieving their full potential illustrates the importance of designing youth programming around these elements.

By fostering assets (skills and competencies), agency (student empowerment and leadership), and engagement (active participation in learning and community), programs like Sistema contribute to positive student outcomes that extend beyond the immediate context of the program, including improved academic performance, social skills, and future aspirations.

Limitations

The evaluation has several limitations including:

Lack of Baseline Data and Comparison Groups: The limited baseline data and comparisons with non-Sistema youth restricts the ability to isolate program-specific outcomes and distinguish them from external influences.

Limitations of Self-Reported Data: Self-reported data is subject to several biases, including:

- Social Desirability Bias: Respondents may answer in ways they perceive as more socially acceptable.
- Recall Bias: Participants' recollections of their previous status may be over- or understated.
- Representation Bias: Those more engaged with Sistema may be overrepresented, while less-engaged stakeholders may be underrepresented.

Broad Evaluation Focus: The wide-ranging focus of the evaluation meant that some outcomes were assessed using only one or two items, limiting the depth of understanding for those outcomes.

Limited Generalizability: The findings are not generalizable to the broader Sistema youth population, as this evaluation only included data from elementary-aged students.

Limitations

Treatment of Response Options: Responses of “I’m not sure” were treated as missing data, which could skew the results. Additionally, the limited response options (yes/no/I’m not sure) restricted the ability to assess the frequency and intensity of outcomes.

Typical Youth Development: Youth development typically involves a complex interplay of influences, including family, community, and environmental factors; thus limits understanding of the impacts driven solely by Sistema.

Recommendations for Future Evaluation

To more fully capture Sistema’s impact, future evaluations should consider:

- Engaging participants from all grade levels.
- Collecting baseline data.
- Narrowing the focus of outcomes measured.
- Including a comparison group of non-Sistema youth.

Data-Driven Recommendations

Recommendations are derived from stakeholder reports and research. See Appendix D for a full list of stakeholder recommendations.

In addition to the stakeholder recommendations, Rise Consulting is suggesting the following data- and research-driven recommendations for Sistema:

1 *Continue to support critical student skill development by:*

- Enhancing opportunities for leadership, voice, and choice.
- Helping students to identify and name behaviors such as when they are taking on leadership roles, expressing themselves, and engaging in self-regulation.
- Introducing music-inspired strategies for self-regulation such as playing instruments and listening to music.
- Tailoring engagement strategies to meet the needs of students at varying skill levels to ensure beginners and advanced students feel challenged and included.
- Promoting peer connections through intentional peer-to-peer learning and opportunities for collaboration.
- Cultivating a distraction-free environment for teaching and learning.

Data-Driven Recommendations

2

Provide paid professional development opportunities for staff to sustain passion for teaching by:

- Offering workshops and educational opportunities that focus on student engagement and empowerment strategies; student leadership, voice, and choice; and trauma-informed classrooms.
- Setting up additional opportunities for staff-to-staff learning and development through continued team teaching and mastermind-type workshops.
- Incorporating staff wellness and recognition to promote healthy and well staff and reduce future burnout.
- Cultivating a distraction-free environment for teaching and learning.

3

Continue to promote family and community engagement to deepen stakeholder connections by:

- Providing opportunities for families and communities to participate in Sistema through concerts, rehearsals, and other community-focused events.
- Developing more opportunities for student-family music engagement at home.

4

Increase the number of satellite sites to expand equitable opportunities for Tulsa's students by:

- Expanding community outreach and education about Sistema and the program's impact on students through relationship-building within communities.
- Strengthen community partnerships to create additional opportunities for students to engage with and grow critical life skills.

5

Sustain continuous learning and improvement processes to ensure effective and high quality service delivery to maximize Sistema's resources and impact by:

- Designing process evaluation procedures that assess program quality and experiences during program delivery.
- Developing impact evaluation processes that assess short-term and long-term student impact.

APPENDIX A: Methodology

Community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) is a collaborative approach to research that actively involves community stakeholders and researchers in the research process. CBPAR recognizes the expertise of stakeholders with lived experience and regards each member of the evaluation team with the same value. CBPAR in program impact evaluation takes the same approach in evaluating the impact of programs, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder voices and leveraging results to inform decision-making processes.

Stakeholders, critical for understanding Sistema Tulsa's impact on students and the community, were invited to participate in the mixed methods study, which was executed in two phases.

- Phase 1: Identifying Student Outcomes
- Phase 2: Assessing Student Outcomes

Phase 1 Identifying Student Outcomes

Phase 1 employed a mixed methods approach to engaging Community Partners, Donors, Youth, and Sistema staff. Community Partner meetings, Donor surveys, Youth focus groups, and a Staff focus group were conducted to gather stakeholder voices and inform outcome measurement.

Community Partner Meetings: Community Partner meetings were held in January and May 2024. Meeting agendas were collaboratively developed to achieve the meeting results of understanding student outcomes of interest and available data to examine such outcomes.

Donor Surveys: Anonymous Donor surveys were collaboratively developed and disseminated to Donors via email in April 2024 to understand the student outcomes that are of most interest and hold the most importance to them as well as their preferences for learning about student outcomes. A total of 21 Donors responded to the survey.

Youth Focus Groups: Youth focus groups were facilitated by Rise Consulting in March 2024 with Youth at Main Hub and 2 satellite sites selected at random: Mayo and Tisdale. Youth at the focus group sites were randomly selected to participate. Of the 18 Youth selected (6 per site), 15 attended the focus groups (3 from Main Hub; and 6 from each respective satellite site). Focus group instruments were designed to understand student experiences in the program, student outcomes, and develop survey instruments that use familiar language to align with student literacy levels.

APPENDIX A: Methodology

Staff Focus Group: The Staff focus group was facilitated in March 2024 at Main Hub. All 12 Staff who work with elementary school students at Main Hub and at least one of the satellite sites were invited to participate and 100% attended the focus group. Staff focus groups were designed to understand experiences with students in the program, student outcomes, and guide survey instrumentation development.

Phase 1 Data Analysis

Focus groups were analyzed for commonalities (themes) using thematic analysis (line-by-line). Interrater reliability (reliability of focus group results) was determined through coding and analysis meetings with the Rise Consulting team.

Community meeting notes, focus group responses, and funder survey responses were triangulated for commonalities. A total of 4 research questions were derived from Phase 1:

1. Does Sistema cultivate the high-quality programming environment necessary to foster student skill development? If so, how?
2. What are the program experiences of Sistema's stakeholders?
3. What skills do Sistema's 3rd - 5th grade students gain in the program?
4. How does Sistema add value to and impact the communities in which students live, learn, and play?

Phase 2 Data Collection

To answer the research questions developed in phase 1, triangulation of data from focus groups, surveys, and secondary data collected externally was critical.

All surveys were intentionally and collaboratively developed to incorporate stakeholder-focused constructs while balancing survey accessibility and responsiveness of the time and effort being asked of stakeholders alongside the need to obtain quality data. Furthermore, surveys were intentionally designed with consistency in item wording to allow for confidence in data triangulation and limit bias in the interpretation of results from differently worded items.

Stakeholder experience and student outcome data was collected in phase two through surveys with Youth, Staff, Parents, and TPS Educators.

APPENDIX A: Methodology

Staff, Parent, and TPS Educator surveys were completed online. All stakeholders were informed of the purpose of the evaluation, voluntary nature of the evaluation process, and their right to withdraw at any time. Adult consent and youth assent were obtained before the start of all data collection processes. Staff, Parents, and TPS Educators were entered into a raffle for a \$100 Amazon gift card (one card for one raffle winner per stakeholder group).

[Youth Survey.](#) Of the 112 Youth expected to take the survey, 97 completed it. The total response rate was 86.6% and ranged from 81.3% at Owen to 96.2% at Mayo.

To create an environment that allowed students of varying literacy levels to participate in the survey, each item was read aloud by the survey administrator. Students were allowed to move ahead of the group, if desired. To combat survey fatigue and promote focused attention, brain breaks were intentionally given every 10 minutes.

Youth surveys had a total of 3 administrators. Survey administrators varied by site. Sistema's Director of Education administered Youth surveys at Main Hub, Grissom, and Mayo. Sistema's Sectional Leader administered surveys at Main Hub and Owen. The Lead Teacher/Site Liaison administered the survey at Tisdale. At least 2 adults remained in the room at all times during survey administration.

Youth were observed to have mixed reactions while completing the survey: some were focused and some were distracted. Youth also varied in reading and comprehension levels and some Youth needed explanations of certain words. A lot of restlessness was observed.

[Staff Survey.](#) All Staff who worked for Sistema during the 2023-2024 school year were asked to complete the survey. Of the 43 Staff asked to take the survey, 32 completed it. The total response rate was 74.4%.

[Parent Survey.](#) Parents of 3rd - 5th grade youth were asked to complete the survey at several timepoints to include at the Sistema concert in May and again via email from Sistema staff. Of the approximately 112 Parents asked to take the survey, 57 completed it. The response rate is estimated to be 50.9%.

[TPS Educator Survey.](#) All principals, counselors, homeroom teachers (3rd-5th grade only), music teachers (if different than Sistema faculty), ELL, SPED, teacher assistants/paras, GT/Spark teachers, or any other teacher who may have close contact with a student enrolled in a Sistema satellite program were asked to complete the survey. Of the estimated 68 asked, 14 completed the survey. The response rate was approximately 20.6%.

APPENDIX A: Methodology

Phase 2 Analysis

All data collected were analyzed by Rise Consulting.

Stakeholder Surveys. Stakeholder surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics and group differences (chi-square, t-Test, and ANOVA) using IBM SPSS.

Hope Scale. Following published guidelines for creating the hope variable, the Children's Hope Scale was computed into 6 different variables: full hope scale ($\alpha = .82$); hope: agency scale ($\alpha = .71$); hope: pathway scale ($\alpha = .73$); full hope level; hope: agency level; and hope: pathway level. The 3 hope scales (full hope, agency, and pathway) were computed as continuous variables. The 3 hope scale levels (full hope, agency, and pathway) were computed as categorical variables.

Descriptive statistics were conducted on all survey data. Survey items with "I'm not sure" responses were computed into new variables, treating such responses as missing to analyze definitive responses.

Chi-square tests were run on all yes/no (dichotomous) variables to assess group differences by site (Main Hub, Owen, Tisdale, Grissom, Mayo), Main Hub students and satellite students, year in program (1st year, 2nd year, or 3rd+ year), and grade level (3rd, 4th, and 5th grade). Variables used in chi-square tests were recoded to treat "I'm not sure" responses as missing. No significant differences were found among the 5 sites or grade levels.

t-Tests were conducted on 3+ response items to assess differences between MH and satellites. Variables used in t-Tests were recoded to treat "I'm not sure" responses as missing.

ANOVAs were conducted to assess group differences on 3+ response items by site, grade level, and program year. Variables used in ANOVAs were recoded to treat "I'm not sure" responses as missing.

Evaluation results were shared with Sistema for collaborative interpretation and application to the program's future.

APPENDIX B: Youth Self-Awareness

In focus groups, Youth demonstrated self-awareness in their ability to recall and recognize their emotions as well as rationalize why they felt how they did. Self-awareness is highlighted through Youth responses to the questions: “How do you feel before, during, and after concert performances?;” “When you’re asked to do something unexpected at Sistema, how do you feel?;” and “How do you feel and what do you do when you make a mistake?”

How do you feel before, during and after concert performances?

Before. When asked how they felt before performing at a concert, students expressed a mix of primarily difficult emotions and some positive emotions.

Difficult emotions included feeling scared, frustrated, worried, nervous, underwhelmed, bored, and sore.

- Worry, fear, nervousness, and frustration were related to being a perfectionist and concerns about messing up, making a mistake, and not doing well.
 - One student noted that teachers and friends help to calm their nerves prior to concert performances.
- Fear was also associated with their first concert experience.
- Underwhelm was related to song selection and having previously memorized the songs.
- Boredom was also related to waiting for the concert to begin.
- Soreness was related to carrying the instruments.

Positive emotions included feeling excited, hopeful, happy, and not scared. These were associated with liking the stand partner, getting to see who will sit together, and eating cookies after the concert. One student reported that excitement disappears once the concert starts and nervousness kicks in.

APPENDIX B: Youth Self-Awareness

During. When asked how they felt during the concert, students reported a mix of difficult emotions and positive emotions.

Difficult emotions included feeling worried, scared, bored, nervous, not feeling challenged, sad, surprised, stage fright.

- Worry and fear were associated with concern for making a mistake and the first concert experience.
- Boredom was associated with waiting for everything to be over.
- Nervousness was associated with concerns of hitting the wrong note.
- Not feeling challenged was associated with having previously memorized songs and desiring more challenging pieces.
- Sadness was associated with being away from family during the concert. Fear was associated with the first concert experience.
- Surprise was associated with playing correctly.
- Stage fright was associated with fear of messing up in front of the audience.

Positive emotions included feeling excited, happy, and surprised.

- Excitement and happiness were associated with performing at a concert for the first time, seeing how younger students performed, and playing an instrument.
- Surprise was associated with playing correctly.

After. When asked how they felt after the concert, students reported a mix of mostly positive and some difficult emotions.

The *positive emotions* included feeling accomplished, proud, confident, happy, excited, great, relieved, and surprised.

- Accomplishment, pride, confidence, happiness, excitement, and greatness were associated with having accomplished something cool and hard, doing a good job, performing at a concert for the first time, being proud of everyone, the concert has concluded, and Sistema showing students that they can do what they put their minds to.
- Relief was associated with being done with the concert.
- Surprise was associated with having accomplished something that students wanted to do.

APPENDIX B: Youth Self-Awareness

The *difficult emotions* included feeling sad, scared, tired, and underwhelmed.

- Sadness was associated with the concert being over.
- Fear was associated with performing at a concert for the first time.
- Tiredness was associated with concert days being long.
- Underwhelm was associated with song selection.

When you're asked to do something unexpected, how do you feel?

Students were asked how they felt when they were asked to do something unexpected at Sistema and reported a mix of positive, neutral, and difficult emotions.

Positive emotions included excited, glad, good, great, happy, pleasant, proud, and relieved. These emotions were associated with having worked through something unexpected, changing things up, having mistakes corrected by the teacher, feeling challenged, and learning new things.

Neutral emotions included no big deal and not worried. These emotions were associated with changes that did not impact them in a big way.

Difficult emotions included disappointment, freaked out, scared, surprised, weird, different, and worried. These emotions were associated with desiring more challenging songs, making mistakes while playing an instrument, and navigating the increasing difficulty level in music skills.

How do you feel and what do you do when you make a mistake?

When asked how they feel when they make a mistake, all 3 FG students from Main Hub reported feeling silly and 2 reported feeling embarrassed. All 3 FG students reported asking teachers for help, working harder, trying to fix mistakes, and practicing frequently when they make a mistake. After fixing their mistake all 3 FG students reported feeling happy, and excited. Two reported feeling proud.

APPENDIX C: Group Differences

Group differences were assessed in the Staff focus group as well as using statistical analysis. Notably, few outcomes had enough variance to run statistical tests, which means that youth responded very similarly across the program. Therefore, for most outcomes, significant group differences are undetectable.

In the Staff focus group, Staff reported that student skills and experiences tend to differ by site and grade level. Statistical analysis found group differences by site and program year. No statistically significant differences were found among grade levels.

Staff Reported Site Differences

In focus groups, Staff reported that the skills and experiences range by site. These skills and experiences include communication, teamwork, self-advocacy, comprehension, maturity, and adaptability. “Some kids know how, and some kids don’t.”

While the physical space is different for each Sistema site, Staff report notable differences between Main Hub and Satellite students. Specifically:

- Students' ability to work through unexpected changes varied by site.
- Main Hub students are thought to develop self-awareness and self-ownership, and become supportive of teachers and peers.
- Main Hub students are more focused and less distracted during rehearsals.
- Main Hub students (who attend regularly) tend to retain more musically from rehearsals, participate more enthusiastically, and behave with more maturity.
- Main Hub students seem to improve more overall than Satellite students.
- Main Hub students, compared to Satellite sites, reportedly have higher levels of focus, maturity and adaptation.
- Satellite students are more comfortable around each other, leading to issues with talking during rehearsal and student drama, than Main Hub students.
- Satellite students are reportedly more argumentative and do not feel part of the goal compared to Main Hub students.
- Satellite students are not as prepared nor as advanced as Main Hub students.
- Satellite students do not want to attend programming on Fridays.
- Owen was reportedly a site with regression of students' working memory skills.
- Owen was reportedly having trouble with the basics.
- Owen reportedly experienced difficulty in splitting into sectionals.
- Grissom students reportedly communicate and have better teamwork than other sites.

APPENDIX C: Group Differences

Per Staff, the main reasons for differences in student behavior and skill development are:

- Main Hub has the advantage of being separated from the students' school site and offering a new learning environment with different expectations.
- Main Hub's teacher-student ratio is lower.
- Main Hub students have less distractions than Satellite students.
- Main Hub students are held to higher standards than Satellite students.
- Main Hub students are able to adapt easier due to Main Hub being separate from school culture.
- Non-TPS students reportedly have less trauma and wealthier families than TPS students.
- TPS students have varying levels of traumatic experiences.
- Satellite students may be more comfortable "at home" in their school and thus more comfortable acting out.
- Satellite sites are more disorganized than Main Hub.
- Satellite site Staff do not have control over the environment or space.
- Students' mental flexibility is dependent on the culture and behavioral expectations of the site; and students' difficulty in moving beyond the basics.

Significant Main Hub v. Satellite Differences. Some significant differences were found between Main Hub and Satellite students. Specifically, chi-square tests identified Main Hub Youth were more likely to report:

- Feeling respected at Sistema ($p < .05$);
- Feeling encouraged and supported by kids and teachers at Sistema ($p < .05$);
- Sistema taught them how to work with other kids their age ($p < .05$).

While not statistically significant, Youth at Main Hub were more likely to report feeling empowered at Sistema than students at satellite sites ($p = .053$).

t-Tests were conducted to assess differences between Main Hub and Satellite students on the change outcomes (e.g., better, worse, same items).

- Main Hub students had a significantly lower mean on the outcome variable, "*Since you started Sistema, do you get along with your teachers at school more, less, or the same?*" ($p < .05$).

No other statistically significant differences were found between Main Hub and Satellite students.

APPENDIX C: Group Differences

Significant Differences by Site. ANOVAs found group differences among the sites.

- Grissom students were significantly more likely than Owen students to remember musical techniques all of the time ($p < .05$)
- Mayo students were significantly less likely to report improved ability to focus at school since starting Sistema than Owen, Grissom, and Tisdale students ($p < .05$, respectively).
- Tisdale students were significantly more likely to go to school more since starting Sistema than Main Hub ($p < .05$) and Mayo ($p < .01$) students.

No other statistically significant differences were found between sites.

Grade Level Differences. Grade level differences in maturity level and skill set were reported by focus group Staff.

- Staff noted 3rd graders lacking maturity and 5th graders having a “certain skillset.”

Staff also reported that students’ variation in maturity level and skills are not always in alignment with their age or grade level.

No statistically significant differences were found among grade levels.

Program Year Differences. ANOVAs were conducted to assess group differences among program years (1st, 2nd, or 3rd+ year).

- Students in their 3rd or higher year of the program were statistically more likely to have a music class at their school ($p < .05$).

While not statistically significant, group differences on the variable, “*Can you express your thoughts and feelings through your own music making?*” were approaching significance with 1st year students reporting “no” more than 2nd and 3rd+ year students. 3rd+ year students reported “no” less frequently than 1st and 2nd year students.

No other statistically significant differences were found among program years.

APPENDIX D: Recommendations

Sistema youth and staff were asked to provide recommendations for opportunities for program improvement.

Youth Reports

When asked what they liked least about Sistema, focus group Youth reported not liking:

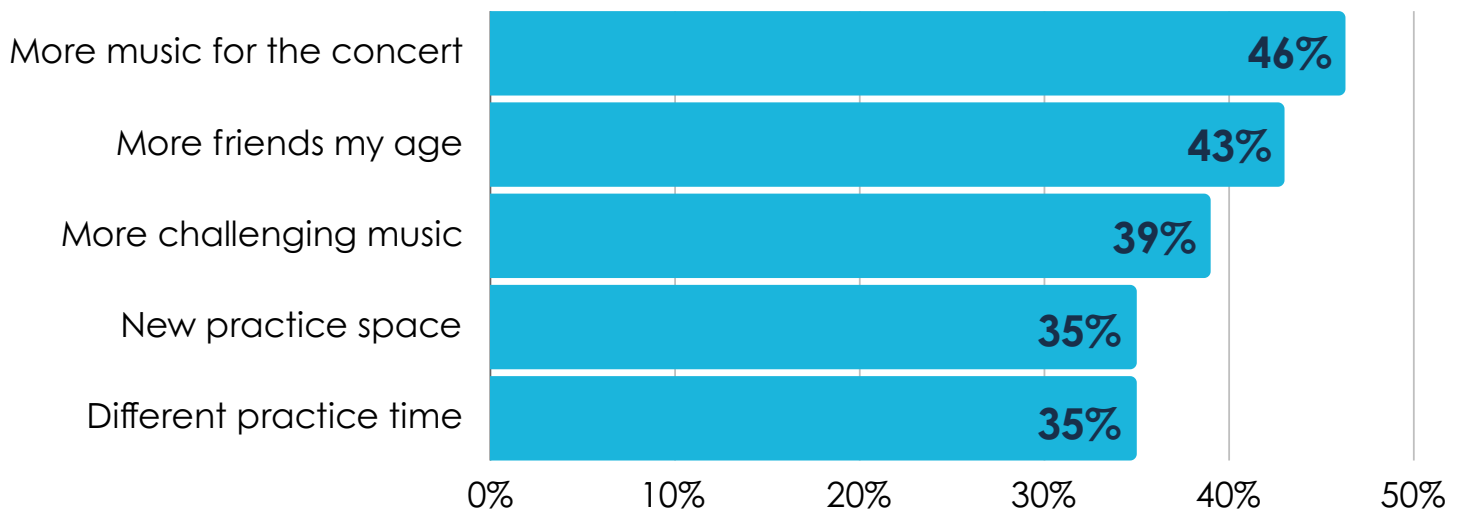
- Having to get music stands out in preparation for class.
- Being crammed together in the classroom.
- Repetition in learning the same skills/music.
- Feeling exhausted after school.
- Forgetting their instrument (notably not Sistema's fault, per student).
- Being ignored by friends.
- The snacks.
- "Nothing."

One surveyed Youth reported they like Sistema, but don't want to rush with putting together the music. One Youth reported preferring not to be in the program. One Youth suggested ending at 4pm instead of 4:30pm or offering Sistema during class time. One student reported feeling as though a teacher was "really mean" and that they felt like they "can't do anything".

Youth Reported Recommendations

- Provide ample space and more efficient storage processes and spaces would improve the learning space at Sistema.

What would students change about Sistema?



Note: Percentages do not equal 100% due to multiple response options.

APPENDIX D: Recommendations

Staff Reports

Surveyed Staff were asked to report what they would like to change about Sistema. Staff reported recommendations for improving the Sistema Program include:

Teacher Support and Development

- Opportunities for Paid Professional Development

Program Structure and Consistency

- Curriculum Implementation
 - Develop a structured curriculum for strings with clear progression levels.
 - Conduct initial playing tests/auditions to accurately group students by skill level.
- Class Structure
 - Separate 3rd graders from older students (4th and 5th graders) as they are not developmentally ready to be in the same program.
 - Allocate more section time to focus on different instruments rather than large group instruction.
- Rehearsal and Concert Preparation
 - Begin planning for summer concerts earlier to ensure teachers have the necessary materials and plans.
 - Rehearsal Etiquette: Standardize rehearsal etiquette across all instruments (e.g., no eating during rehearsal).
 - Ensure rehearsal space is available for all groups for practice before final rehearsals.
 - Longer rehearsal times to allow for adequate preparation.
- Curriculum Enhancements
 - Introduce classes or electives on music theory, history, and songwriting, and explore other music genres (e.g., jazz, pop, modern).
 - Incorporate technology such as MIDI and other tools to prepare students for future success.

Communication

- Improve communication regarding student absences and changes.
- Provide teachers with an updated list of student names by class/group.

APPENDIX D: Recommendations

Student Experience and Engagement

- Social Interaction
 - Provide more opportunities for students to interact in social settings (e.g., parties, games).
 - Offer leadership opportunities for students, building on current practices.
- Brain Breaks and Focus
 - Implement more frequent brain breaks for younger students or those with lesser-developed attention and self-regulation skills.
 - Students' technology usage negatively impacts their ability to stay focused.
- Student Pride and Progress
 - Staff observed that students take pride in being part of a collective, especially when the focus is not solely on "getting it right."
 - Recognize that students have shown improvement since the first year of satellite sites.

Satellite Sites and Main Hub Coordination

- Consistency and Expectations
 - Set and reinforce collective Sistema expectations across all sites to avoid Satellite students reverting to school expectations.
 - Standardize programming and procedures to ensure that Satellite students receive the same educational opportunities and program consistency as those at the Main Hub.
 - Include EP Fundamentals at Satellite Sites
- Access to Resources
 - Improve access to Main Hub location and resources for Satellite students, particularly for concert preparation.
 - Ensure timely distribution of music materials from Main Hub to Satellite Sites.
- Perception and Engagement
 - Address the perception at Satellite Sites that Sistema is a childcare program rather than an enrichment program.
 - Increase Sistema advertising across Tulsa Public Schools to enhance program visibility and awareness.

APPENDIX D: Recommendations

- Communication and Logistical Challenges
 - Improve communication between Satellites and Main Hub.
 - Address the challenge of teaching students who are tired after a long school day, making it difficult to retain new information.
 - Evaluate the impact of rehearsal spaces on student focus and attitudes, particularly at satellite sites like Owen.

Site-Specific Recommendations: Owen

- The culture and educational expectations were not successful this year, possibly due to the rehearsal space.
- Suggested improvements include working with teachers on conducting and rehearsal strategies, increasing maturity expectations, and separating Sistema time from school day distractions.

Rise Consulting's Data and Research-Driven Recommendations

The following recommendations are derived from stakeholder data and research-based practices for promoting PYD and critical life skills such as executive function and self-regulation.

Sustain and Improve Student Skill Development

- Enhance Student Leadership Opportunities
 - Increase opportunities for students to take on leadership roles, ensuring all participants can develop these skills.
 - Help students to recognize leadership opportunities and when students demonstrate leadership.
- Enhance Opportunities for Student Voice and Choice
 - Increase opportunities for students to make decisions and share their perspectives in the program.
 - Help students recognize when choices are provided and how they contributed.
 - Consider opportunities for student music selection.
- Minimize Classroom and Outside Distractions
 - Implement strategies to help students manage distractions and improve focus, both in and out of the classroom.
 - Leverage the student-reported strategies for staying focused. For example, one teacher uses a family audience drawn on the whiteboard for rehearsal - this could be incorporated throughout as students say thinking about and focusing on their family helps them stay focused.

APPENDIX D: Recommendations

- Strengthen Emotional Expression Support
 - Implement strategies to help youth feel more comfortable expressing their emotions, such as regular check-ins or creating designated safe spaces.
 - Introduce listening to music and playing instruments as a strategy for emotion regulation.
 - Help students to recognize and identify their emotions and when they engage in regulation strategies.
- Enhancing Student Engagement and Creative Expression
 - Tailor engagement strategies to meet the needs of students at different skill levels, ensuring that both beginners and advanced students feel challenged and included.
 - Since youth reported varying levels of enjoyment, consider conducting regular check-ins to better understand and address individual needs and preferences, potentially through more personalized or diverse activities.
 - Introduce new and challenging music pieces to maintain student engagement and empowerment, addressing the desire for fresh experiences.
 - Facilitate more structured activities focused on building friendships.
 - Encourage more opportunities for students to create and express themselves through music by incorporating more student-led projects or compositions into the program.
 - Encourage continued involvement in the program through high school by highlighting the long-term benefits and success stories of alumni, thereby reinforcing future aspirations.
 - Explore transportation options to transport satellite students to Main Hub for concert preparation and rehearsals.

Sustain and Improve Staff Passion and Skill Development

- Supporting Staff Well-Being
 - Provide professional development opportunities and resources that support their well-being and continued passion for teaching.
- Increasing Peer Mentorship Opportunities
 - Consider additional opportunities for teachers to learn from one another through co-teaching, team teaching and mastermind-type workshops.
- Enhancing Professional Development and Staff Support
 - Continue offering professional development opportunities for staff, focusing on areas like leadership (for students and staff); student voice and choice; student emotion regulation; and teaching to varying developmental levels to further strengthen their teaching practices and maintain high-quality instruction.

APPENDIX D: Recommendations

- Implement additional resources and training for staff to support students with varying levels of trauma better, enhancing their overall well-being and hope.
- Support teachers in designing engaging and interactive transitioning activities to help satellite students make a physical and mental transition into the Sistema classroom (e.g., walk around the building outside then engage in a mindful moment upon classroom entry before engaging in teacher-led discussion/review of Sistema expectations and how they differ from the school expectations).
- Support teachers in designing instruction to align with developmental skill level or restructuring the program to separate into grade bands of no more than 2 years (e.g., 3rd and 4th; or 4th and 5th) to reduce discrepancies in variations.

Engaging Stakeholders

- Continue to implement and design new initiatives to engage parents and community members more actively in the program, such as volunteer opportunities, workshops, and community events, to strengthen the sense of ownership and support for the program; sense of community; and family connections.

Sustain Continuous Learning and Quality Improvement Processes

- Conduct ongoing evaluations of the program's implementation and impact on students, staff, and the community to ensure continuous improvement and to identify areas where additional support or resources might be needed.
- Disseminate evaluation findings to community stakeholders including Youth, Staff, Parents, Community Partners, Donors, out-of-school time providers, and youth service providers.

Contact

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