



SCHOOL-CONNECT, 3RD EDITION PILOT STUDY

Student and Teacher Survey Results

for the 2013-2014 School Year

In May 2014, all Austin Independent School District students participating in a one-year or one-semester class using a pilot version of *School-Connect: Optimizing the High School Edition (Third Edition)* completed a 30-item satisfaction and outcome survey (N = 730 students from 48 MAPS classes at five different AISD high schools). A significant majority of students were in 9th grade with small percent of 10th and 11th graders. In conjunction, participating MAPS teachers (N=26) completed a 97-item survey asking about their implementation level, student outcomes, and program satisfaction. The student and teacher surveys were used as both a process measure to assess implementation fidelity and curriculum quality and as an outcome measure to assess impact on students' social, emotional, and academic skills and attitudes.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

In summary, the surveys showed that students who were in “medium to high implementation” classes (received 20 or more School-Connect lessons) had significantly higher overall satisfaction rates and impact effects than students in “low implementation” classes (received fewer than 20 School-Connect lessons) on all student self-report items (e.g., class enjoyment, application of knowledge and skills, improvement in relationship skills, emotional management and academic outcomes) ($p < .001$). Teachers who participated in the School-Connect trainings all reported high satisfaction with the training and follow-up. A majority of teachers (76%) reported that they were “very satisfied” or “highly satisfied” with the School-Connect program. On the student self-report surveys, **88.9%** of students from “medium to high implementation classes” said they “enjoyed taking this class”, **88.6%** said they “learned a lot in this class,” **76.8%** said the “class had helped me in school,” and **81%** agreed or strongly agreed “all students should have this class.” The combined results from the teacher and student surveys suggest that teachers who expressed higher levels of satisfaction with the *School-Connect* program and allocated more time for teaching *School-Connect* lessons had students who expressed higher levels of satisfaction and positive program impacts than students in “low implementation” classes.

IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW:

Five AISD high schools offered MAPS classes with an emphasis on social and emotional learning (SEL) and integration of the *School-Connect, Third Edition (S-C)* during the 2013-14 school year. Each campus used the curriculum in different ways with different subsets of the student population:

- School A and School B used S-C with approximately 50% of the incoming freshmen, most of whom had been identified as academically at risk.
- School C used S-C with all freshmen except for students already assigned to an AVID class.
- School D used it with a variety of intervention classes for 9th and 10th grade students.

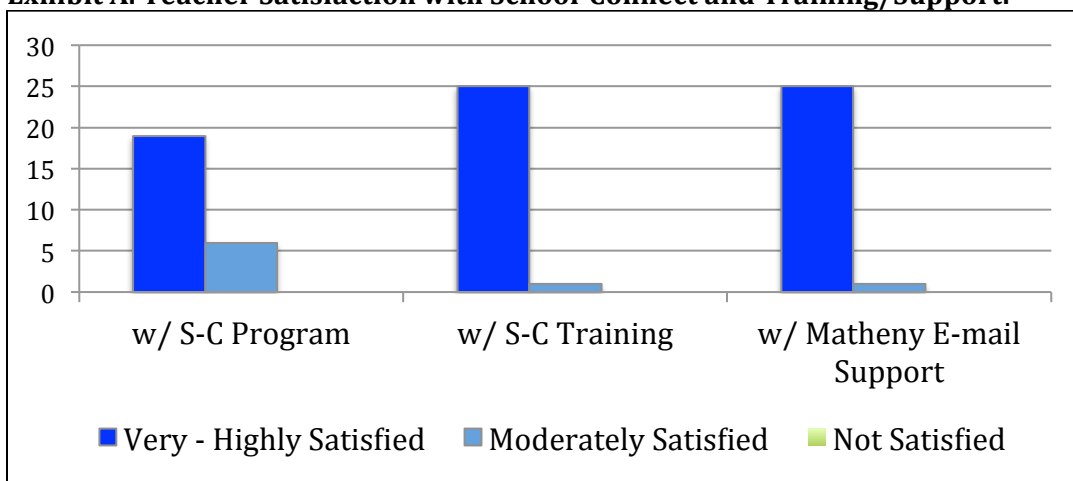
- School E integrated S-C into a 90-minute block math class.

Each school had teachers who chose to be “high” implementers (implemented more than 40 lessons), “medium” implementers (implemented 20 – 40 lessons), and “low” implementers (implemented fewer than 20 lessons).

TRAINING OVERVIEW:

As part of the pilot, School-Connect Co-Author, Keeth Matheny offered 1.5-hour to 4-hour trainings to participating teachers on each of the three *School-Connect, 3rd Edition* modules. Of the participating MAPS teachers, 16 attended all three trainings, eight attended two of the three trainings, and two attended one or fewer trainings. On the end-of-year teacher survey, 25 out of 26 MAPS teachers (96%) said they were “very satisfied” or “highly satisfied” by the training (Overall average = 3.42 out of 4.0). Likewise, 24 out of 25 MAPS teachers (96%) noted they were “very satisfied” or “highly satisfied” with Mr. Matheny’s ongoing support through his weekly PLC (Professional Learning Community) e-mails with additional coaching, teaching ideas, and recommended resources (Overall average = 3.29 out of 4.0).

Exhibit A. Teacher Satisfaction with School-Connect and Training/Support:



PROGRAM SATISFACTION AND IMPACT AS REPORTED BY MAPS TEACHERS:

When asked about their overall satisfaction with the School-Connect program, 20 of 26 teachers (76%) reported being “very satisfied” or “highly satisfied” with the program and six (24%) reported being “moderately satisfied.” None of the teachers said they were “not satisfied” (Overall average = 3.0 out of 4.0). When asked about their perception of students’ overall satisfaction with the program, 12 of 25 said their students were “very satisfied” to “highly satisfied” and 10 said their students were “moderately satisfied.” Only two teachers, both of whom reported being low implementers, said their students were “not satisfied.”

MAPS teachers reported that the greatest improvement in students’ social, emotional, and academic skills and attitudes they observed were evident in:

- Classroom climate
- Emotional management
- Respecting others
- Problem-solving skills

Within the end-of-the-year MAPS teacher survey, teachers rated each lesson they used on a grading scale from A+ to F. The lessons that received the highest average ratings (A- or greater) were (* = highest ratings):

- Lesson 1.1: Getting to Know You
- Lesson 1.2: Creating First Impressions
- Lesson 2.1: Understanding the Teenage Brain*
- Lesson 2.2: Being Aware of Emotions
- Lesson 2.4: Managing Emotions
- Lesson 2.5: Defusing Anger
- Lesson 2.6: Coping with Stress
- Lesson 2.9: Recognizing Character Strengths
- Lesson 2.10: Outsmarting Media Advertising*
- Lesson 2.13: Exploring Career Options
- Lesson 2.16: Planning for College*
- Lesson 2.20: Fighting Off Victimitis
- Lesson 3.1: Developing Positive Relationships
- Lesson 3.2: Standing in the Other Person's Shoes
- Lesson 3.3: Empathizing with Others
- Lesson 3.4: Appreciating Diversity
- Lesson 3.5: Debunking the Myths of Womanhood*
- Lesson 3.6: Debunking the Myths of Manhood*
- Lesson 3.12: Dealing with Gossip
- Lesson 3.13: Addressing and Preventing Bullying
- Lesson 3.14: Managing Social Media & Cyberbullying*
- Lesson 3.18: Forgiving Others and Ourselves*
- Lesson 3.19: Understanding Healthy Dating

The School-Connect lessons that received lower average ratings (B or below) were:

- Lesson 1.6: Playing Plan-O-Rama
- Lesson 2.14: Going on a Mission, Part I
- Lesson 2.15: Going on a Mission, Part II
- Lesson 3.15: Negotiating an Agreement
- Lesson 3.16: Refusing and Persuading

[NOTE to the reader: These lessons have since been significantly revised for the final version of School-Connect, 3rd Edition.]

In the comment sections of the survey, MAPS teachers reported both positive and constructive feedback:

- Curriculum is extremely clear and user-friendly. My students enjoyed it and I really saw improvements.
- The students enjoyed lessons with scenarios/videos followed by discussion. They were a very opinionated/story telling group.
- Worked fine - but was hard around EOC testing time since we had to focus on their writing skills

- I think most of the content is excellent and would benefit many students. If I teach this class again I will do a better job of getting students to buy in. Most of the year we were focused on improving writing skills for STAR test.
- Outstanding, impactful, relevant
- Just a big thank you. My life was made easier because of you. My home life has improved drastically because of the time you freed up for me.
- Amazing lessons and content, very informative.
- The content is excellent. I loved the lessons about the brain and the power of thought.
- One of the main issues was that most of my students were gone (taken out of class) most of the year for tutoring. It was frustrating.
- I enjoyed observing the kids dialogue regarding their feelings as it relates to their emotions and stress and about "triggers" they were able to identify.
- I felt that the lessons would often start in a direction that had a specific purpose, of course, but my students would drive conversations in another direction which I kind of liked... very flexible curriculum.

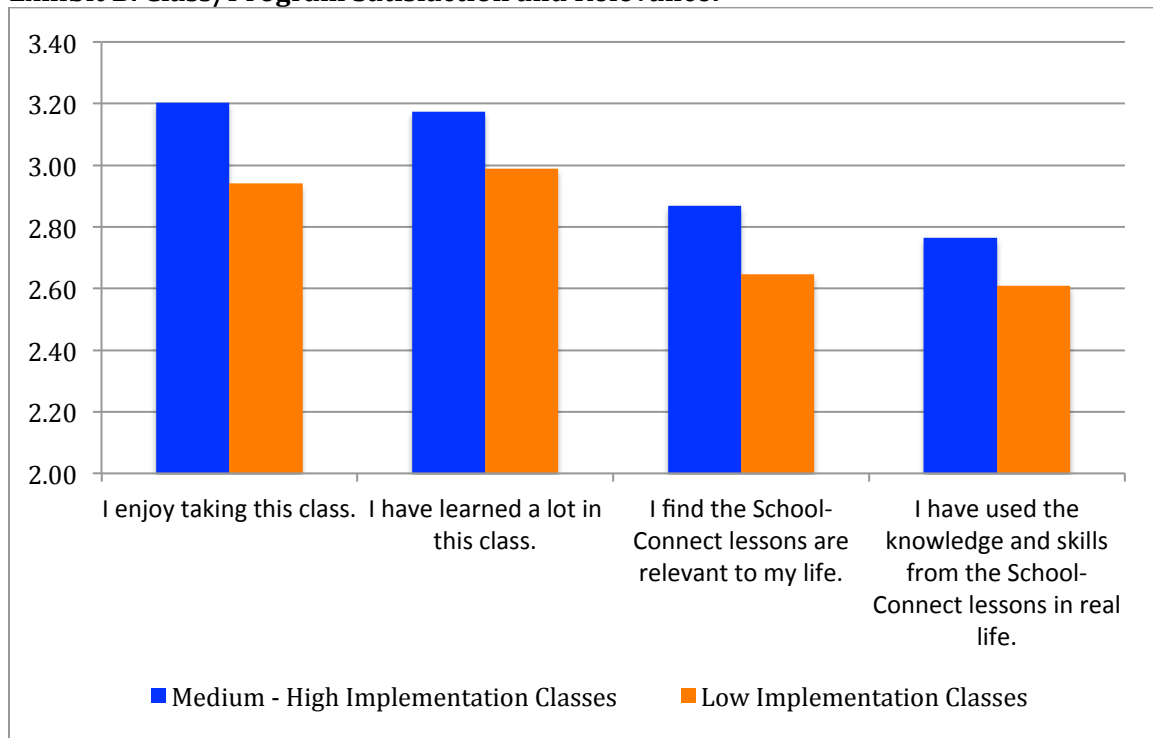
STUDENT END-OF-YEAR SURVEY RESULTS

All students participating in MAPS classes were asked to complete a 30-item self-report survey with 26 Likert-scale items and four open-ended questions about their overall satisfaction with the MAPS class and School-Connect curriculum and the impact of the class instruction on their social, emotional, and academic skills, attitudes, and behaviors. In total, 730 students from 48 MAPS classes completed student surveys. After analyzing the teacher surveys and the student surveys, the students' results were separated into two categories: 1) "medium to high implementation classrooms" and 2) "low implementation classrooms." The "low implementation classrooms" were classes in which the teacher taught fewer than 20 School-Connect lessons and/or a majority of the students were pulled out of the class for another academic interventions.

The following graphs show the differences between students in "medium to high implementation" classes (N = 459) compared to students in "low implementation" classes (N = 271) on key items within the student self-report survey. In every category, students in higher implementation classrooms reported higher average levels of "agree" or "strongly agree" to each statement compared to the lower implementation class students.

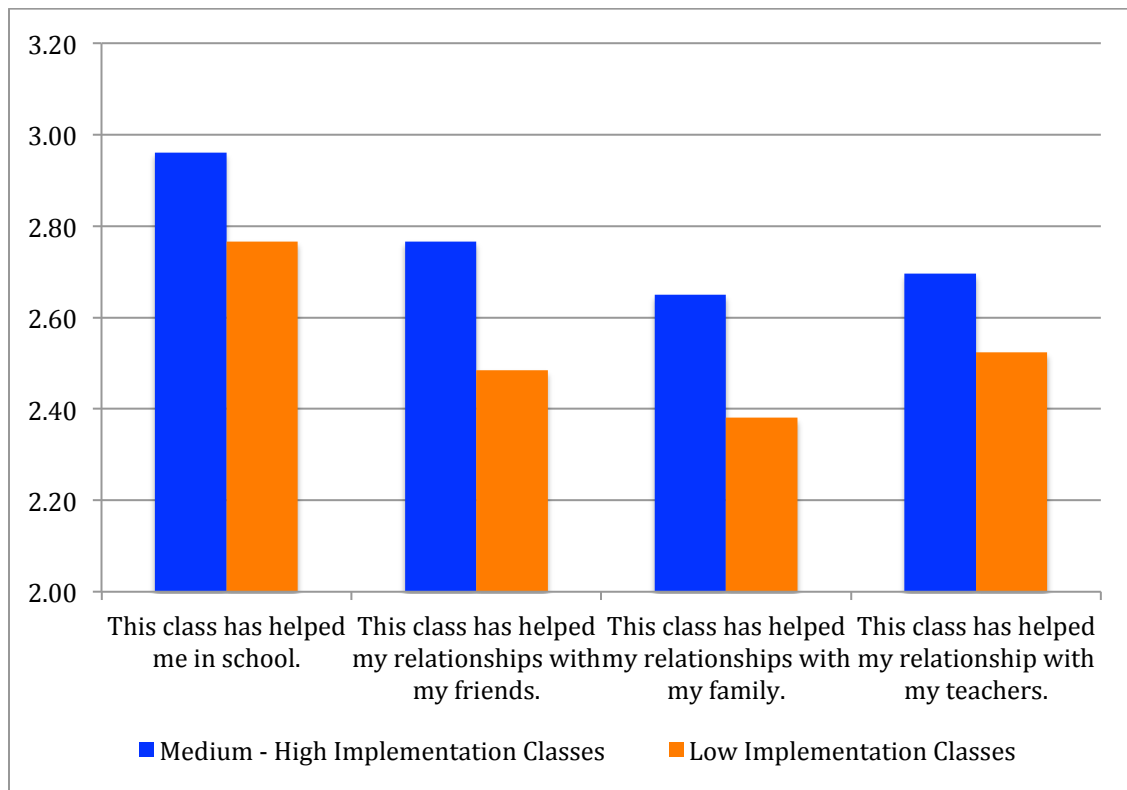
[See graphs of the following pages...]

Exhibit B. Class/Program Satisfaction and Relevance:



Items 1, 2 & 3: $p < .001$; Item 4: $p < .01$

Exhibit C. Class Impact Regarding School and Relationships:



Items 1, 2 & 3: $p < .001$; Item 4: $p < .01$

Exhibit D. Class Impact Regarding Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Skills:

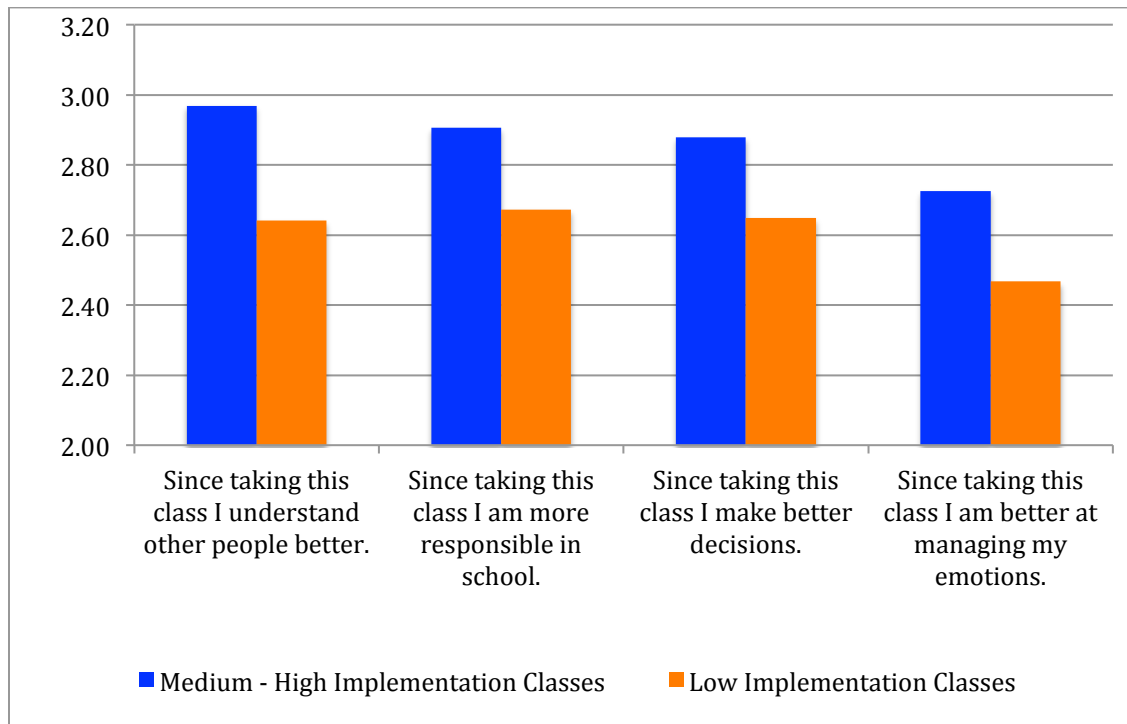
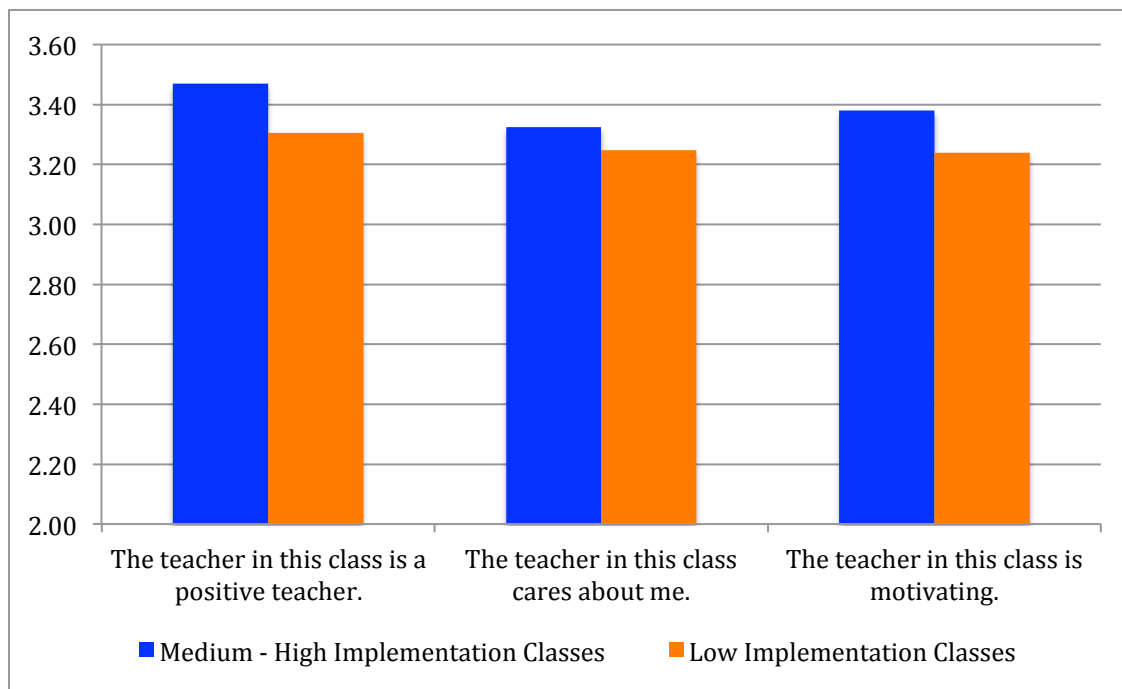


Exhibit E. Class Impact Regarding SEL Skills and Program Satisfaction:



Items 1, 2, 3 & 4: $p < .001$

Exhibit F. Student Rating of Teacher Characteristics:



Items 1: $p < .001$; Item 2: $p > .01$ (Not Significant); Item 3: $p < .01$

Note: Student rating of teacher characteristics are not as significantly different as other items, possibly suggesting that teacher characteristics were less of a factor than program characteristics in student reported academic and SEL outcomes.

Exhibit G. Overall Average of All 26 SEL and academic impact and satisfaction Likert-scale items:



Average of all items $p < .001$

Across all Likert items, students who received 20 or more *School-Connect* lessons within their MAPS class had higher average ratings than students who received fewer than 20 lessons. For each item, a strong majority of “medium to high implementation” classroom students endorsed a positive response. For example:

1. I enjoy taking this class.
 - (88.9% “agree” or “strongly agree”)
2. I have learned a lot in this class (88.9% “agreed” or “strongly agreed”)
 - (88.6% “agree” or “strongly agree”)
3. I find the School-Connect lessons are relevant to my life.
 - (72.5% “agree” or “strongly agree”)
4. I have used the knowledge and skills from the School-Connect lessons in real life.
 - (67.1% “agree” or “strongly agree”)
5. This class has helped me in school.
 - (76.8% “agree” or “strongly agree”)
6. I feel comfortable in this class.
 - (92.8% “agree” or “strongly agree”)
7. Since taking this class I am more responsible in school.
 - (73.1% “agree” or “strongly agree”)
8. Since taking this class I am better at managing my emotions.
 - (67.3% “agree” or “strongly agree”)
9. Since taking this class my grades have gone up.
 - (65.7% “agree” or “strongly agree”)
10. I think all students should have this class.
 - (81.0% “agree” or “strongly agree”)

STUDENT RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS:

When asked to “*please write at least three things you learned from this class,*” “medium to high implementation” class students, consistently listed key aspects of social and emotional learning:

- How to apologize
- How to manage emotions
- Study habits
- I've learned that failure is a key to success
- I have learned how to manage time
- How to fight off victimitis
- I have learned how to see the perspective of others

- Relationship skills
- Relationship management
- How not to cause more conflict
- How to disagree without being disagreeable
- How to create a good first impression
- I learned how to organize the classes in the planner
- How to control my "monkey brain"
- To have a growth, not fixed, mindset
- The power of thought
- I have learned how to make a real apology
- Pop culture's "beauty" is not true beauty
- Eye contact
- I learned how to be a lot better about my grades
- I learned to keep my priorities straight
- How to communicate my feelings
- I learned that being a good listener is a good thing
- It takes up to 20 interactions to change a first impression
- How bad bullying really is
- How to take effective notes
- How to cope with stress
- I learned how to go through tough situations
- That it is important to talk to your teachers
- Always stay on top of my grades
- I learned how to control my anger if anything happened
- The benefits of going to college
- Teen dating and relationships
- I learned how not to let peer pressure get to you
- Dealing with gossip
- I have learned how to prepare myself for tests
- How to step back and manage my emotions
- My relationship with my mom is way better
- I've learned to push myself to the goals I want for myself

In response to the question, *"What are your overall thoughts about the School-Connect curriculum and this class?"* **"medium to high implementation"** class students listed predominantly positive responses as well as some ideas and suggestions. For example:

- I feel that it impacted me positively, and given me the tools to succeed and be happy.
- I think that it's an awesome class and a lot more schools should have this class
- It is a really good class it really helped me learn how to better myself and I think it would be really good for incoming freshmen to take it. It really helps get you on your feet for high school.
- I like this class because I feel comfortable talking with people I don't know
- It is very helpful/interactive
- I wish I would have had space for a cred I needed instead of a wasted credit. I'm now behind. Thanks!

- I think this curriculum is extremely helpful and benefits every freshman. We learn how to deal with life and our experiences better
- Its good for me and been helping me with grades
- This class helps you outside of school when you want to learn more and teaches you life lessons
- I think that people need this class especially think that if they're having problems managing their lives
- I really like how we do hands on activities. Those are always very memorable.
- That I don't need it and I don't know why were talking about our feeling and emotions in math class
- I have very positive connections when I enter this class. It makes me feel comfortable.
- I think it is great. Maybe change up the worksheets sometimes and the class would be better
- My overall thoughts in this class is that it will help me in the future and how to act like an adult
- I think the School-Connect curriculum teaches us a lot about other people and ourselves
- If you have the right teacher it can be really cool
- It may help certain students, the teacher needs to be funny or cool to keep the students attention
- I have loved this class since day 1. It has helped me with problems that I found myself facing and I knew how to solve them.
- We should keep it all through high school!! I loved it 100%

SUMMARY AND APPLICATION:

In most cases, teachers who reported being very or highly satisfied with the curriculum and using a majority of lessons, had students who were more satisfied with the curriculum and the class. Vice versa, teachers who were less enthusiastic about the SEL aspect of the class, had fewer students choose positive responses on the Likert-scale items and open ended questions. This result suggests that positive program impacts in SEL skill development are relatively dependent on:

- a) the teacher's affiliation with SEL concepts and instruction and
- b) the time allotted to teach SEL concepts in the classroom setting.

Going forward, **AISD would benefit from selecting teachers and class settings in which the teachers value integrating SEL into classroom instruction and have the time in their class setting to complete 20 or more *School-Connect* lessons.** From all teachers who participated in the program, training and follow up PLC Notes e-mails and support were viewed as a positive influence on program implementation and impact.

If you have any questions about this report, please contact Julea Douglass, Ph.D. with School-Connect (phone: 310-922-5148; e-mail: jdouglass@school-connect.net)