Kelly Linker,
Research Specialist
Melissa Karakus,
Senior Research Associate

Office of Research and
Evaluation

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THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

Second Step

Year 3 Evaluation Report 2017-2018

Key Findings

The Second Step curriculum is a Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program implemented in grades K-8 in twelve SDP schools. Teachers receive Second Step kits with detailed weekly lessons and reinforcement activities. To deliver the program with fidelity, teachers in all grades should deliver all of the required lessons and the reinforcement activities. Similarly, students should be in class to receive the instruction. This report includes findings from year 3 of the evaluation, including:

- 112 teachers (53%) across all 12 schools delivered Second Step at some time during the 2017-18 school year.
- 2,771 students (43%) across all schools received at least one Second Step lesson.
- The biggest challenge that teachers experienced was having enough time to complete Second Step lessons.
- Eight of the twelve schools in this study experienced an increase in attendance from their baseline year, and five schools experienced an increase in the percent of students with zero suspensions from their baseline year.

Contents

Why this study?

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which children acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.[1]

SEL can take place at all ages – from preschool through high school. The short-term goals of SEL programs are (1) to promote students' self-awareness, social awareness, relationship, and responsible decision-making skills and (2) to improve student attitudes and beliefs about self, others, and school. These in turn provide a foundation for better adjustment and academic performance, as reflected in more positive social behaviors and peer relationships; fewer conduct problems, less emotional distress, and improved grades and test scores.[2]

Although Pennsylvania has SEL standards, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) does not implement a SEL curriculum District-wide. Instead, SEL programs are part of a tiered approach to supporting positive behaviors in SDP called Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS), led by the Office of School Climate and Safety (OSCS). PBIS approaches and strategies set behavioral norms and expectations, teach and model these expectations, incentivize positive behavior, and use data to inform decisions around behavior. The PBIS framework has three tiers: universal, targeted and intensive. The first tier, universal, requires that schools develop and teach norms and expectations around behavior. SEL programs are considered Tier 1 strategies in SDP.

Second Step is a specific SEL program implemented in selected schools with the support of grant funding from the William Penn Foundation. In November 2015, SDP was awarded a grant to pilot the implementation of the Second Step curriculum at 15 elementary schools, beginning with seven Cohort 1 schools in the 2015-2016 school year and continuing through the 2016-17 school year. Eight additional Cohort 2 schools were selected to begin in the 2017-18 school year through a competitive application process.

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[1] Definition used by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) as described in "Core SEL Competencies" Retrieved from: https://casel.org/core-competencies/
[2] "SEL Impact" https://casel.org/impact/.

The Second Step Program in SDP

Curriculum

The Second Step curriculum is a SEL program researched and developed by the Committee for Children, a non-profit organization based in Seattle. The program is designed for students in grades K-8 with a focus on promoting students' self-regulation skills, which has been linked to improved academic and behavioral outcomes.[3] The middle school program (i.e., grades 6-8) also emphasizes the development of skills for decreasing aggression and preventing both bullying and substance abuse. These skills are taught by school staff with the use of Second Step kits, which provide the resources needed to deliver the lessons. For grades K-5, the kits include lesson cards, posters, a CD and DVD; for middle school, the lessons are online. Once a school district purchases the kits, they have ongoing access to Second Step's extensive online resources, including training for teachers and other school staff, parent home links, reading materials, recommendations for books that reinforce the Second Step lessons, and an online community forum.

As part of the Second Step curriculum implementation in SDP, teachers also have access to assorted activities meant to engage students and offer additional reinforcement of the lessons. In SDP, one popular resource was Mind Yeti, an online tool that includes guided mindfulness sessions to help students calm down, focus their attention, and get ready for the next activity. Teachers also used puppets from the kits to reinforce skills for grades K-5. For example, Puppy and Snail were used to teach students how to slow down and focus. Students also learned several strategies early in the year that carried throughout all lessons. For example, one early Second Step lesson taught students how to use their "attent-o-scopes", which involved students pretending to form binoculars with their hands to focus on an item or activity and continuing that focus after they place their hands back in their laps. Students also learned the Listening Rules: "Eyes Watching. Ears Listening. Voice Quiet. Body Still," which are used in the beginning of each lesson to direct focus.

Second Step developers suggest that schools schedule a "Second Step" day every week for each grade level to teach a Second Step Lesson. Lessons for students in K-5th grade are 20 to 40 minutes long and follow a script that is printed on the back of the lesson cards provided in the kit. Lessons in 6th-8th grade are 50 minutes long and are divided into two 25-minute sessions. On the remaining days of the week, teachers are expected to reinforce the lessons by using scripted five-minute "mini-lessons." Table 1 provides further details of the Second Step curriculum breakdown by grade level.

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[3] Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D. & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1): 405–432. Retrieved from http://www.cfchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/research/durlak-weissberg-et-al-sb-meta-analysis-2011.pdf.

Table 1. Second Step Curriculum Details by Grade

Grade	# of Units	# of Lessons	Lesson Length	Skills Taught
Kindergarten		25		
First	4		20-25 minutes	Skills for Learning, Empathy, Emotion Management, Problem Solving
Second		22		
Third				
Fourth	3			
Fifth			35-40 minutes	
Sixth		26		Mindsets and Goals; Values and Friendships; Thoughts, Emotions, and Decisions; and Serious Peer Conflicts
Seventh	4		25-minutes	
Eighth		25		

Note: Lessons delivered weekly.

Program Support

As part of the implementation of Second Step in SDP schools, a Multi-Tiered System of Supports Specialist (MTSS Specialist; hereafter referred to as the SEL Coach) was hired in March 2016 to focus solely on this initiative. The SEL Coach supports successful program implementation by working with schools on all aspects of Second Step, including developing a school-wide implementation schedule, ensuring that lessons are delivered, providing feedback on the delivery of lessons, and reinforcing the lessons.

What the Study Examined

Following previous reports that examined the progress of Cohort 1 schools in 2015-16 and 2016-17, this report reflects on the progress Cohort 1 and 2 schools have made in the implementation of Second Step during the 2017-18 school year. Specifically, the report will first review the demographics of the schools delivering Second Step. Next, overall findings are shared including implementation data and general themes regarding implementation across schools. Lastly, conclusions and recommendations are presented. Where appropriate, comparisons of results are made with the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years.

Guiding this evaluation and report are the following research questions:

1. How many teachers implemented Second Step at each school, across how many grades?
2. How many students received Second Step lessons, across how many classes?

3. How many Second Step lessons were taught?

4. Did any schools implementing Second Step experience an increase in attendance and/or a decrease in suspensions?

In addition to these four primary questions, ORE assessed the extent to which the Second Step program was implemented with fidelity in each school and noted any challenges or successes regarding Second Step implementation.

To answer the first three research questions, ORE utilized the following fidelity instruments: the *Second Step Implementation Preparedness Survey* and the *Lesson Completion Checklist.* These forms are provided as part of the Second Step curriculum and are recommended by the Second Step developer to assess the degree to which schools have implemented the program. Each instrument is to be completed by school staff delivering the program. Below is a brief description of each instrument:

- *Second Step Implementation Preparedness Survey* – teachers and staff answered questions at the beginning of the school year about their preparedness to begin teaching and reinforcing lesson content. The form asks questions under the categories of *Motivate*, *Prepare*, and *Train*. The goal of administering this survey was to help the SEL Coach identify areas of support for the school year.

- *Lesson Completion Checklist* – teachers and staff answer a series of questions about the implementation of the program after each unit is completed. The form captures dosage, fidelity, and reinforcement. ORE adapted the K-5 form for middle school grades instead of the *Middle School Lesson Tracking Form* provided by Second Step so that ORE would have similar information from all grades. Teachers filled out a version of the checklist in Google Forms that also asked about successes and challenges so that staff would not have to submit the *Lesson Reflection Logs* or the *Success Stories Logs* (used in past years).

The *Lesson Completion Checklists* were used to determine the total number of lessons taught by each teacher. The SEL Coach provided lists of teachers implementing Second Step at each school, which ORE used to pull rosters for each teacher that implemented Second Step. ORE then matched the *Lesson Completion Checklists* with the rosters to estimate the total number of students who received Second Step programming.

As part of the evaluation plan, ORE conducted phone interviews with staff members implementing the Second Step curriculum at three schools (Cook-Wissahickon, Hackett, and Meade). At Cook-Wissahickon, ORE interviewed the Dean of Students who delivers all the Second Step lessons for the school. ORE interviewed one teacher from Hackett, two teachers from Meade, and the Climate Manager at Meade. ORE also reviewed observation notes provided by the SEL Coach.

District administration data were analyzed to assess any school-level changes in attendance and suspensions.

What the Study Found

Twelve schools delivered the Second Step program in 2017-18

Seven Cohort 1 schools implemented the program in 2015-16 and 2016-17. Three schools from Cohort 1 did not continue the program in the 2017-18 school year: Feltonville A&S, Houston, and Pennypacker. An additional eight Cohort 2 schools began implementing the program in 2017-18. Two schools who were initially selected to be part of Cohort 2 did not implement the program in 2017-18: Hamilton and Richard Wright. Demographic details for each of the participating schools in 2017-18 are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographics of Second Step Schools 2017-18

School	Grade	Enrollment	White	Black/African-American	Hispanic/Latino	Asian	Multi-racial/Other	Sp.Ed.	ELL
Cohort 1									
Barton	K-2	713	3%	24%	58%	4%	11%	5.3%	16.0%
Cook-Wissahickon	K-8	466	41%	40%	5%	1%	12%	12.2%	0.9%
Farrell	K-8	1,132	36%	15%	19%	15%	15%	11.5%	21.6%
Peirce	K-6	482	1%	96%	1%	0%	0%	9.5%	0.2%
Cohort 2									
Anderson	K-8	481	2%	90%	1%	0%	6%	11.4%	0.2%
Cayuga	K-5	487	4%	25%	64%	1%	7%	11.1%	17.2%
Feltonville Intermediate	3-5	761	3%	23%	61%	4%	8%	11.2%	20.8%
Gompers	K-8	340	3%	87%	2%	0%	8%	20.9%	0.6%
Hackett	K-5	370	62%	10%	14%	1%	12%	24.3%	1.4%
Meade	K-8	375	1%	91%	3%	0%	4%	16.5%	0.3%
Sharswood	K-8	547	48%	10%	14%	17%	11%	19.9%	11.9%
Waring	K-8	290	2%	80%	9%	1%	8%	14.5%	2.4%

Note: Data from School Profiles (https://dashboards.philasd.org/extensions/philadelphia/index.html).

Note: The Multi-racial/Other category combines the following race/ethnicities: Multi-racial/Other, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

Implementation Across Schools

Implementation Preparedness Survey

Teachers at schools implementing Second Step in the 2017-18 school year received a link to the survey via email. ORE initially sent the link in the beginning of October 2017, and non-responding teachers received several reminders before the survey closed in the middle of December. The overall response rate (31%) was similar to response rates for other ORE other teacher surveys, though Cayuga and Waring had higher response rates (Table 3).

Table 3: Response Rates Were High at Cayuga and Waring

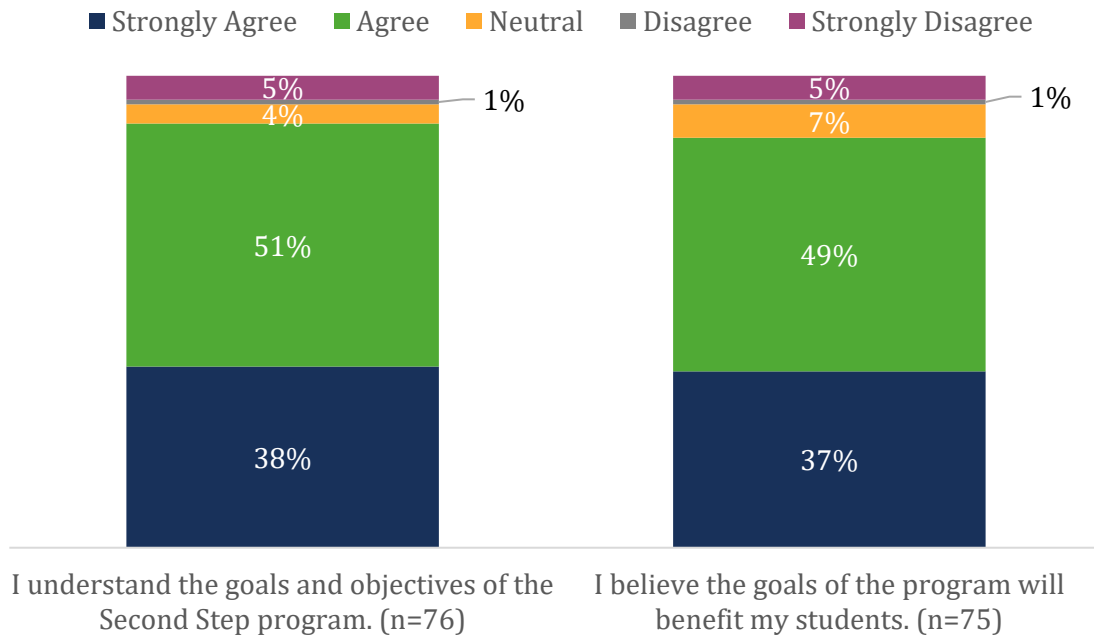| School[1]	Number of Teachers Who Responded	Percent of Teachers Who Responded
Anderson	8	42%
Barton	6	21%
Cayuga	13	57%
Farrell	8	21%
Feltonville Intermediate	2	7%
Gompers	5	28%
Hackett	6	32%
Meade	6	33%
Peirce	2	10%
Sharswood	11	42%
Waring	11	61%
Overall	78	31%

[1]Cook-Wissahickon is not included since all lessons are given by the Climate Manager.

Second Step breaks out the questions on the Implementation Preparedness Checklist into three categories: *Motivate*, *Prepare*, and *Train*.

Motivate: Teachers who Responded were Motivated to Implement Second Step

Two questions on the checklist gauge teachers' motivation around the Second Step program. Teachers generally said they understood the goals and objectives of the Second Step program (89% strongly agreed or agreed) and believed the goals of the program would benefit students (86% strongly agreed or agreed; Figure 1). These results did not vary by school.

Figure 1: Teachers Understood the Goals of Second Step and Believed it Would Benefit Students

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neutral   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree

I understand the goals and objectives of the Second Step program. (n=76)

I believe the goals of the program will benefit my students. (n=75)

Prepare: Teachers were Prepared to Implement Second Step Except at Gompers

Six questions on the checklist gauge how well teachers are prepared to implement the Second Step curriculum, from understanding their role to having access to materials. Teachers generally were aware of the overall implementation plan, understood their role in the process, and knew the implementation tasks for which they were responsible (Figure 2). However, 75% of responding teachers from Gompers said they were not aware of the overall implementation plan for their school and 50% said they did not know the implementation tasks they were responsible for and how to carry them out.

Teachers also said they had or knew how to get the materials and equipment they needed to teach Second Step content and had scheduled a specific time to deliver the lessons (Figure 3). However, 50% of responding teachers from Gompers said they did not have a specific time scheduled to deliver the lessons.

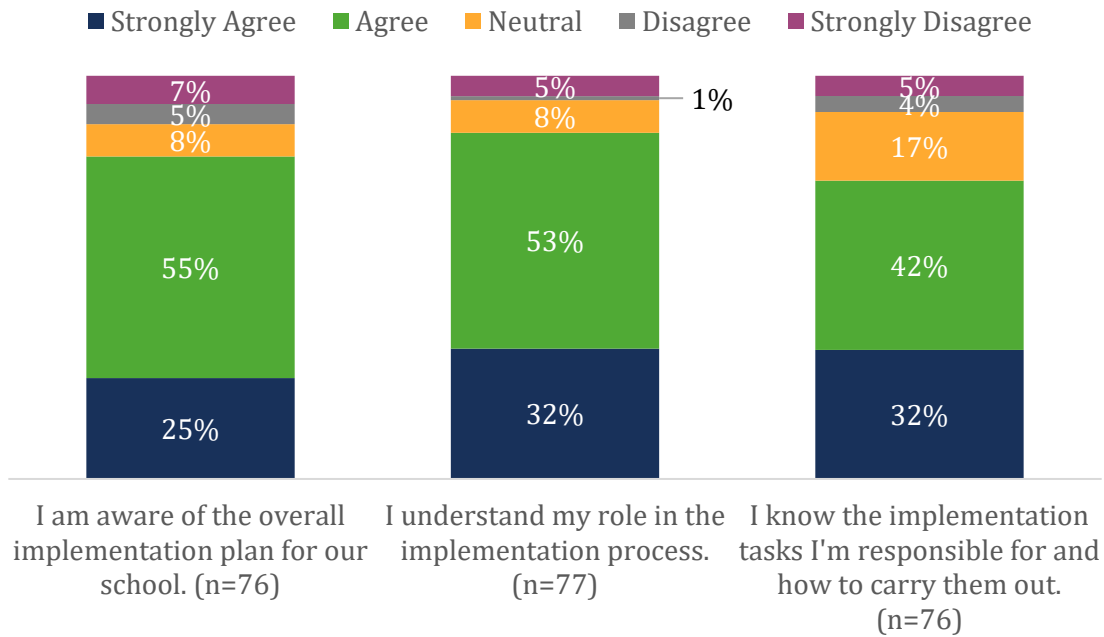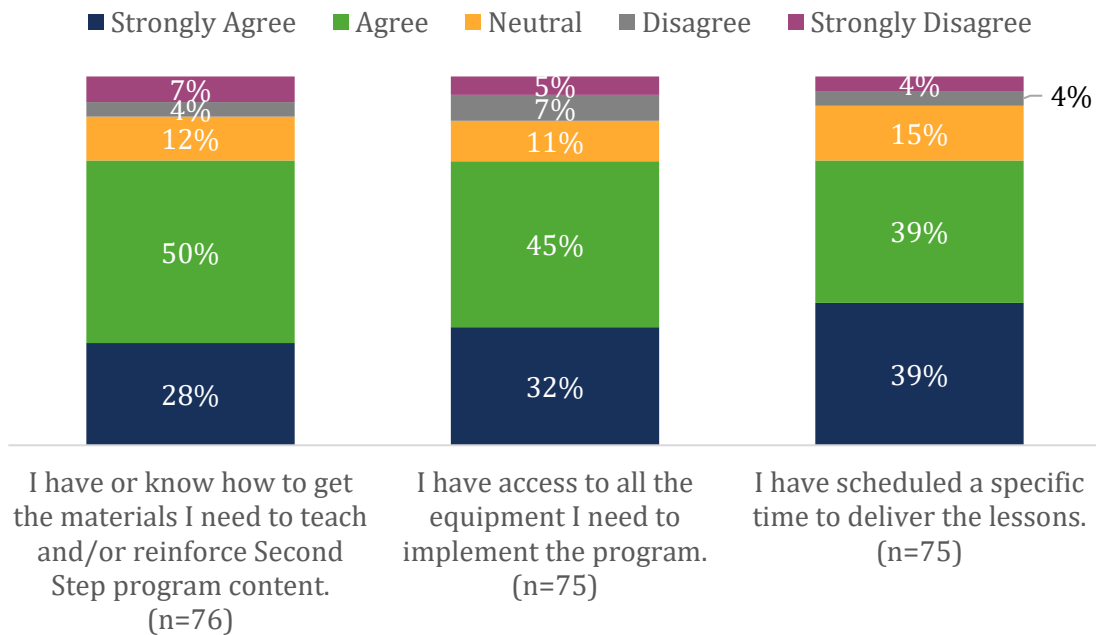Figure 2: Teachers Understood the Implementation of Second Step

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

	I am aware of the overall implementation plan for our school. (n=76)	I understand my role in the implementation process. (n=77)	I know the implementation tasks I'm responsible for and how to carry them out. (n=76)
Strongly Disagree	7%	5%	5%
Disagree	5%	1%	4%
Neutral	8%	8%	17%
Agree	55%	53%	42%
Strongly Agree	25%	32%	32%

Figure 3: Teachers Have Access to Needed Materials and Equipment

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

	I have or know how to get the materials I need to teach and/or reinforce Second Step program content. (n=76)	I have access to all the equipment I need to implement the program. (n=75)	I have scheduled a specific time to deliver the lessons. (n=75)
Strongly Disagree	7%	5%	4%
Disagree	4%	7%	4%
Neutral	12%	11%	15%
Agree	50%	45%	39%
Strongly Agree	28%	32%	39%

Train: Half of Teachers Felt Adequately Trained to Teach Second Step Lessons

The last category of the checklist contains two questions that gauge whether teachers are appropriately trained to implement Second Step. While 74% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that it is important to implement all four core elements of the Second Step program, 57% did not feel adequately trained to teach Second Step lessons (Figure 4). Additionally, 50% of responding teachers from Gompers did not feel adequately trained to teach Second Step lessons.

Figure 4: Just Over Half of Teachers (57%) Felt Adequately Trained to Teach Second Step Lessons

I believe it is important to implement all four core elements of the Second Step program. (n=74)

I feel adequately trained to teach and/or reinforce Second Step lessons. (n=75)
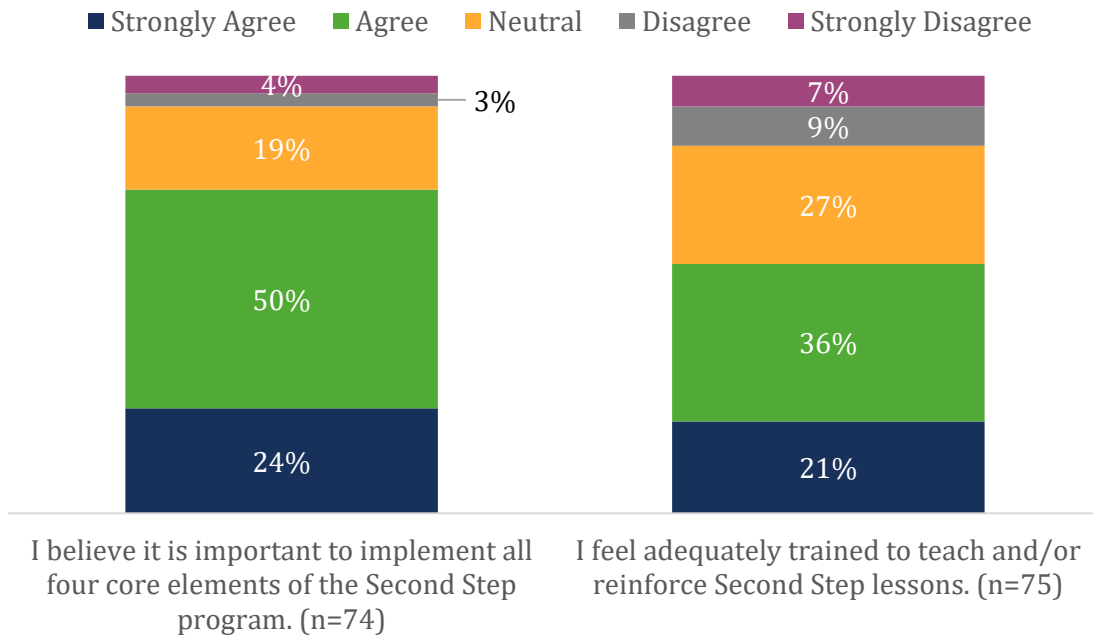
Descriptive Information Regarding Implementation

Limitations in Interpreting Descriptive Data

The total number of teachers and students included in the findings is based upon the receipt of implementation materials. The absences of these materials does not necessarily mean Second Step programming was not delivered at any specific schools. Based on discussions with the SEL Coach, informal observations from District staff, and interviews with teachers, the findings presented in Tables 4-5 may be an underestimate of the total number of teachers and students that participated in Second Step during the 2017-18 school year.

For the year 3 evaluation, we switched to using electronic forms instead of paper checklists in an attempt to increase return rates and make data analysis easier. Additionally, we hoped to eliminate validity concerns from previous years when teachers sometimes submitted checklists months after completing a unit. While fewer teachers submitted implementation fidelity documentation in 2017-18 than in 2016-17, the checklists were submitted in a more timely fashion so the validity of the data was improved. However, there was a limitation in assessing true fidelity across schools as some schools submitted very few checklists.

In interviews, we asked teachers about completing checklists online in the 2017-18 school year. Teachers agreed that electronic forms were easier than paper, but cited time and other conflicting responsibilities as being the likely barriers to teachers not submitting checklists.

Lesson Completion

Results show that all twelve schools in 2017-18 submitted *Lesson Completion Checklists* (Table 4), although Peirce only submitted one form that did not show any lessons completed. ORE used submitted implementation materials to verify that teachers delivered Second Step lessons. If a teacher did not submit documentation for a particular unit or lesson, ORE did not count the teacher as having delivered the lesson. However, anecdotal evidence (based on interviews with teachers and observations conducted by the SEL Coach) suggests that teachers were delivering lessons but not submitting the *Lesson Completion Checklist*, meaning the numbers presented below are likely an underrepresentation of what occurred in schools. A total of **112 teachers (53%) across all schools were verified as having delivered Second Step** at some time during the school year. Eleven of the twelve schools chose to have teachers deliver the lessons, while at Cook-Wissahickon the Dean of Students delivered lessons to select grades.

Because Second Step was primarily taught during homeroom or a teacher's prep period, it is assumed that the number of classes in which lessons were delivered is equivalent to the number of teachers who delivered the program (with the exception of Cook-Wissahickon). For those schools where student count data was available, an **estimated total of 2,771 students (43%) were verified as having received Second Step** programming. ORE also reviewed Second Step delivery by grade based on submitted checklists (Table 5). Across grades, **Kindergarten had the highest number of teachers delivering Second Step.**

Table 4. Number of Teachers who Delivered Second Step and Number of Students who Received Second Step by School 2017-18

School	Grade	Total Student Enrollment	Number of teachers who delivered Second Step[1]	Percent of teachers who delivered Second Step[2]	Number of students who received Second Step[3]	Percent of students who received Second Step	Total number of lessons taught	Average number of lessons taught per teacher
Cohort 1								
Barton	K-2	713	16	62%	376	53%	156	10
Cook-Wissahickon	K-8	466	1*	N/A*	274	59%	29	29
Farrell	K-8	1,132	12	60%	391	35%	80	7
Peirce	K-6	482	1	5%	22	5%	0***	0
Cohort 2								
Anderson	K-8	481	4	21%	77	16%	19	5
Cayuga	K-5	487	16	80%	344	71%	156	10
Feltonville Intermediate	3-5	761	5	19%	119	16%	26	5
Gompers	K-8	340	7	47%	104	31%	19	3
Hackett	K-5	370	14	100%	318	86%**	197	14
Meade	K-8	375	11	73%	282	75%	115	10
Sharswood	K-8	547	11	52%	206	38%	65	6
Waring	K-8	290	14	93%	258	89%	195	14
Total		**6,444**	**112**	**53%**	**2,771**	**43%**	**1,057**	**9**

*Cook-Wissahickon decided that all lessons would be delivered by the Dean of Students instead of individual teachers.

[1]Total based on the number of teachers from each school who submitted at least one Lesson Completion Checklist.

[2]This calculation excludes special education teachers who may have received materials; they were not expected to deliver Second Step with fidelity.

[3]Total based on the number of teachers who submitted at least one Lesson Completion Checklist (checklists where the teacher name was blank were excluded from this column). Each checklist was associated with a homeroom; the number of students included on the roster for each homeroom with a Second Step fidelity checklist was summed to determine the total number of students who received Second Step.

**This number does not reflect 100% of students because it is based on teachers who submitted a Lesson Completion Checklist, which were not sent to special education teachers.

***One teacher at Peirce submitted a Lesson Completion Checklist but did not mark any of the lessons for that unit as complete.

Source: Enrollment data from School Profiles (https://dashboards.philasd.org/extensions/philadelphia/index.html), rosters as of March 2018

Table 5. Number of Teachers who Delivered Second Step and Number of Students who Received Second Step by Grade 2017-18

Grade	Total Student Enrollment	Number of teachers who delivered Second Step[1]	Percent of teachers who delivered Second Step[2]	Number of students who received Second Step[3]	Percent of students who received Second Step	Total number of lessons taught	Average number of lessons taught per teacher	Range of lessons taught
K	924	25	74%	556	60%	304	12	3-24
1	843	19	56%	467	55%	159	8	1-23
2	847	19	61%	399	47%	156	8	0-24
3	840	15	50%	347	41%	143	10	1-28
4	904	10	31%	242	27%	84	8	0-15
5	849	13	50%	349	41%	101	8	3-22
6	461	7	64%	166	36%	44	6	0-19
7	405	4	40%	115	28%	24	6	5-7
8	371	4	44%	130	35%	42	11	4-25
Total	**6,444**	**116**	**53%**	**2,771**	**43%**	**1,057**	**9**	**0-28**

Note: Cook-Wissahickon has one staff member delivering lessons to multiple classrooms in 1st, 4th, and 6th-8th grades, and was counted as one teacher per grade.

[1]Total based on the number of teachers from each school who submitted at least one Lesson Completion Checklist.

[2]This calculation excludes special education teachers who may have received materials; they were not expected to deliver Second Step with fidelity.

[3]Total based on the number of teachers who submitted at least one Lesson Completion Checklist (checklists where the teacher name was blank were excluded from this column). Each checklist was associated with a homeroom; the number of students included on the roster for each homeroom with a Second Step fidelity checklist was summed to determine the total number of students who received Second Step.

Source: Enrollment data from School Profiles (https://dashboards.philasd.org/extensions/philadelphia/index.html), rosters as of March 2018

Lesson Fidelity

Within the *Lesson Completion Checklists*, teachers responded to questions about the extent to which they taught lessons and implemented components of the program. Possible answers to questions were Never, Occasionally, Often, and Always. ORE coded these responses with scores from 0 to 3 and calculated the mean response for each question. Mean scores were reverse coded where appropriate; for example, when asked how often they leave out or skip parts of the lesson, a "Never" response indicates higher fidelity than an "Often" response. When assessing the level of fidelity, a score of 2.6 to 3.0 indicates high fidelity, a score of 2.0 to 2.4 indicates moderate fidelity, and a score below 2.0 indicates low fidelity.

Most teachers who submitted *Lesson Completion Checklists* completed Second Step lessons in order (Table 6; by school, this ranged from 94% to 100%). However, teachers generally did not complete all sections of the lessons as these percentages ranged from 64% to 96%. This is supported by most schools scoring low or moderate fidelity for the question about leaving out or skipping parts of the lesson. Schools scored moderate or high fidelity for changing the lesson from the way it was written and adding new materials to the lesson. For completing the additional activities that go along with lessons (Daily Practice activities, Using Skills Every Day, Home Link activities, and Academic Integration activities), most schools scored in the low to moderate fidelity range with the exception of Waring.

Table 6. 2017-18 *Lesson Completion Checklist* Results[1]

	Barton	Cayuga	Cook-Wissahickon	Farrell	Feltonville Intermediate	Gompers	Hackett	Meade	Sharswood	Waring
Second Step Lessons delivered										
Range of lessons completed	2-24	3-22	29	0-16	0-10	0-5	4-23	5-24	1-15	5-28
Were the lessons taught in order? (% "Yes" responses)	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	95%	94%	100%
Percentage of lesson sections completed	70%	81%	96%	81%	65%	75%	74%	83%	64%	91%
Responses to Lesson Completion Checklist					*Mean Scores*[1]					
To what extent did you leave out or skip parts of the lesson?*	1.9	1.9	2.4	2.1	1.8	1.7	1.8	2.3	1.8	2.3
To what extent did you change the lesson significantly from the way it was written?*	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.5	2.7	2.4	2.8
To what extent did you add new material to the lessons?*[2]	2.3	2.1	2.1	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.1	2.6	2.7
To what extent did you complete the Daily Practice activities with the class?^	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.0	1.7	1.9	1.5	2.4

	Barton	Cayuga	Cook-Wissahickon	Farrell	Feltonville Intermediate	Gompers	Hackett	Meade	Sharswood	Waring
To what extent did you reinforce lesson skills and concepts as explained in the Using Skills Every Day sections?^	1.8	2.1	1.3	1.4	2.2	1.5	2.1	2.2	1.9	2.6
To what extent did you send out the Home Link activities?^	0.2	1.2	0.3	0.3	1.6	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.5	1.7
To what extent did you use the Academic Integration Activities?^	0.9	1.5	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.7	1.0	1.3	0.8	1.3

[1]Anderson is not included due to the small number of forms submitted. A school needed at least five checklists in order to meet the threshold for inclusion.

[2]Scores range from 0 (lowest) to 3 (highest) where 2.6 to 3.0 = High; 2.0 to 2.4 = Moderate; below 2.0 = Low.

[3]While adding new material might not be detrimental to the lesson, ORE reverse-scored this item to assess fidelity of implementation.

*Indicates question is reverse-coded.

^Question is only asked of K-5 teachers.

Successes and Challenges of Implementing Second Step

The *Lesson Completion Checklists* asked teachers about successes and challenges of implementing the Second Step units. We also discussed successes and challenges in interviews with teachers and reviewed notes from observations conducted by the SEL Coach. The successes that teachers mentioned in the checklists fell into four major categories: students using the skills they learned, Second Step materials, the content of the Second Step lessons, and student engagement. Teachers shared successes around students learning to identify their emotions, thinking about the feelings of others, and having a common language to discuss those feelings. For example, teachers said, "It helped the children learn to identify and talk about their feelings and avoid conflicts" and "The accidents lesson is always a successful lesson. I often hear students using the language from that lesson when they accidently bump into someone or accidently bother a classmate."

Teachers also mentioned specific parts of the Second Step materials or lessons that went well, such as the videos, whole class discussion, scenarios, or the puppets. One teacher said, "My students really enjoy our Second Step time. They like the accompanying videos and songs. They respond really well to the photos of real students handling real problems." Another teacher shared, "Students like when we have scenarios where we make a decision and then click on the box to see the outcome/consequence." Teachers also said the content of the Second Step lessons was relevant to their students and often related to situations occurring in their classrooms. For example, "The topics are very relevant and easy to weave throughout the school day" and "It was very helpful because it coincided with the problem solving issues that typically come up at this time of year." Lastly, teachers mentioned student engagement with the lessons as another success, such as "They are really engaged and enjoy discussing the situations the children in the photos find themselves in! They can always relate and we end up having great conversations."

All of the school staff members we interviewed said they would recommend the Second Step program. Some also had success stories to share from their classes. One teacher shared that her students were able to point out a character being empathetic in books they read. Another mentioned changes in student behavior during recess or other free time. For example, one student who struggled with anger when he lost a game now handles those situations more positively. Teachers also seemed to like having Second Step scheduled as the first thing in the morning when students were most attentive. Another aspect that anecdotally worked well was having a counselor or other point person in the school be knowledgeable about Second Step and serve as a resource for teachers.

The biggest challenge that teachers experienced was having enough time to complete Second Step lessons. This was also echoed in the interviews we conducted, and the Dean of Students at Cook-Wissahickon said that this is the reason he is administering lessons instead of teachers. Furthermore, some teachers may view Second Step as an additional task on top of their regular responsibilities. One teacher said, "The units are easy and the program is set up well, it is just hard for us to fit it in among all of the other necessities that have to be taught." Another stated, "Finding the extra time in the day to fit the Second Step lessons into a jam packed curriculum."

Additionally, some of the successes identified by teachers were also listed as challenges (Second Step materials, students using the skills they learned, and engagement), and some teachers said they did not experience any challenges. For materials, most of the comments mentioned challenges either accessing the online lesson components or not having all of the materials (such as Snail the puppet or not having a CD drive on the computer to play the CD with songs). While teachers mentioned seeing students apply the skills taught in Second Step, this could also be a challenge, especially having students apply the skills consistently. One teacher said, "I found that while doing the lesson, my kids are very receptive and understanding of the concepts. However, when it came to applying them in real life situations, they seemed to not apply what was learned." A few comments also mentioned that students found some of the lessons to be silly and would not take them seriously. Observation notes indicated that students may be less engaged if they feel the Second Step content is redundant, either from a previous lesson that year or similar content in a previous year. Student behavior issues may also affect the success of the lesson.

Outcomes of Attendance and Suspensions

Research suggests that a focus on SEL may be related to improvements in school attendance[4]. ORE reviewed end-of-year (EOY) attendance data between the baseline and 2017-18 school year (SY) for Cohort 1 (Figure 5) and Cohort 2 (Figure 6) schools. The baseline year for each cohort is the year prior to implementation. Attendance data reflects the percentage of students who attended at least 95% of enrolled days. In Cohort 1, three of the four schools experienced an increase in attendance between SY 2014-15 (baseline) and SY 2017-18. One school, Peirce, experienced a decline in attendance. Five schools in Cohort 2 experienced an increase in attendance, two experienced a decline, and one experienced no change in attendance from baseline. Both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools may be implementing other programs designed to improve attendance, so it is not possible to make a causal connection between implementation of Second Step and changes in attendance.

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[4]Zins, J. E., Bloodworth, M. R., Weissberg, R. P., & Walberg, H. J. (2004). The scientific base linking social and emotional learning to school success. *Building academic success on social and emotional learning: What does the research say*, 3-22.

Figure 5. Three of the Four Cohort 1 Schools Experienced an Increase in Attendance since Baseline
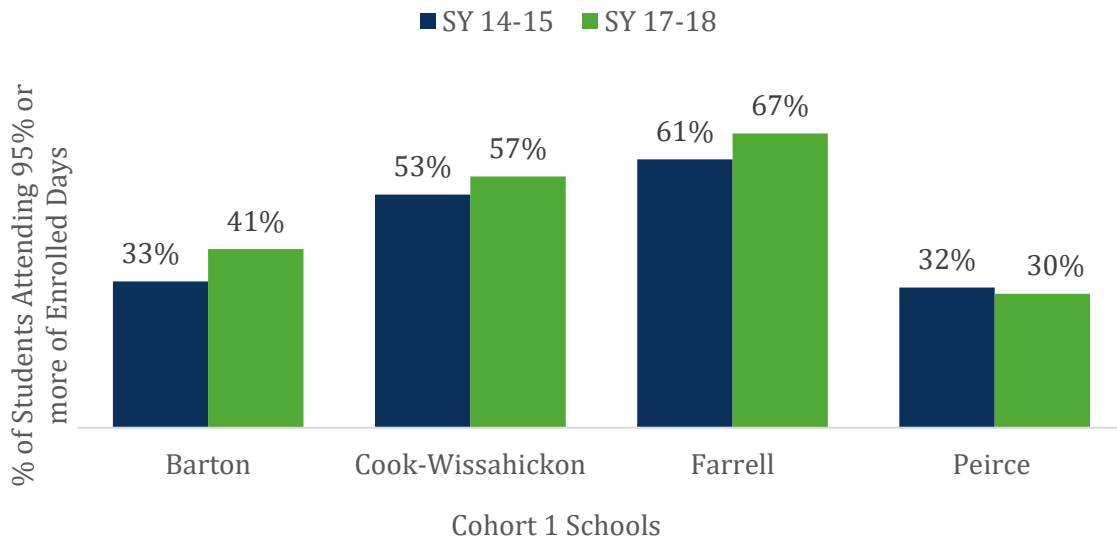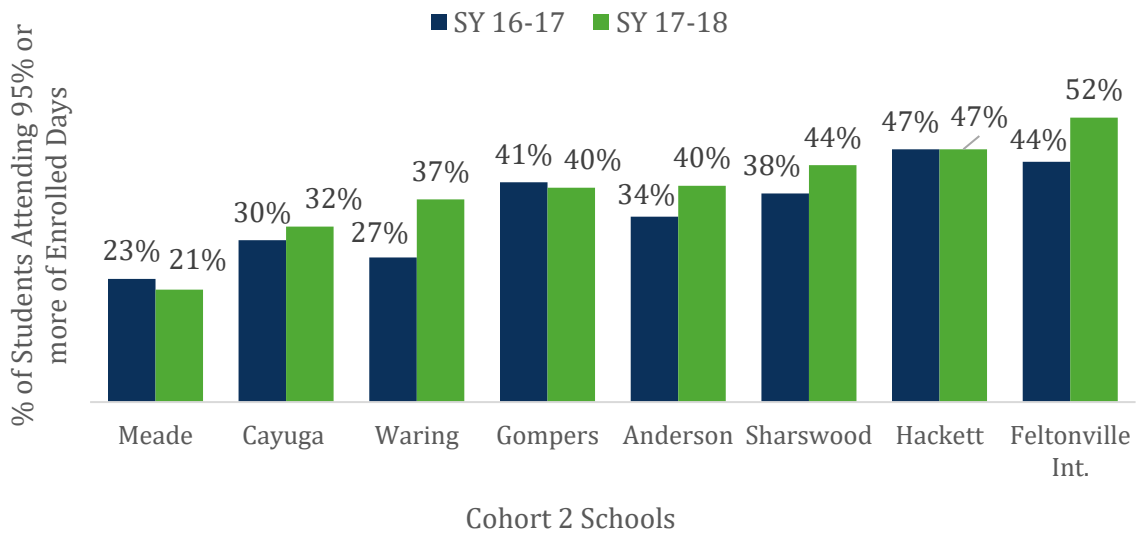

Figure 6. Five of the Eight Cohort 2 Schools Experienced an Increase in Attendance from Baseline

A second outcome examined was a reduction in suspensions as this outcome is also conceptually related to the implementation of SEL programs. One school in Cohort 1 experienced an increase in the percent of students with zero suspensions, while the three other schools experienced a decrease (Figure 7). Half of the schools in Cohort 2 experienced an increase in the percent of students with zero suspensions. Three schools experienced a decrease in the percent of students with zero suspensions, and one school (Hackett) experienced no change (remaining at 100% of students with zero suspensions for both years).

Figure 7. One Cohort 1 School Experienced an Increase in the Percent of Students with Zero Suspensions
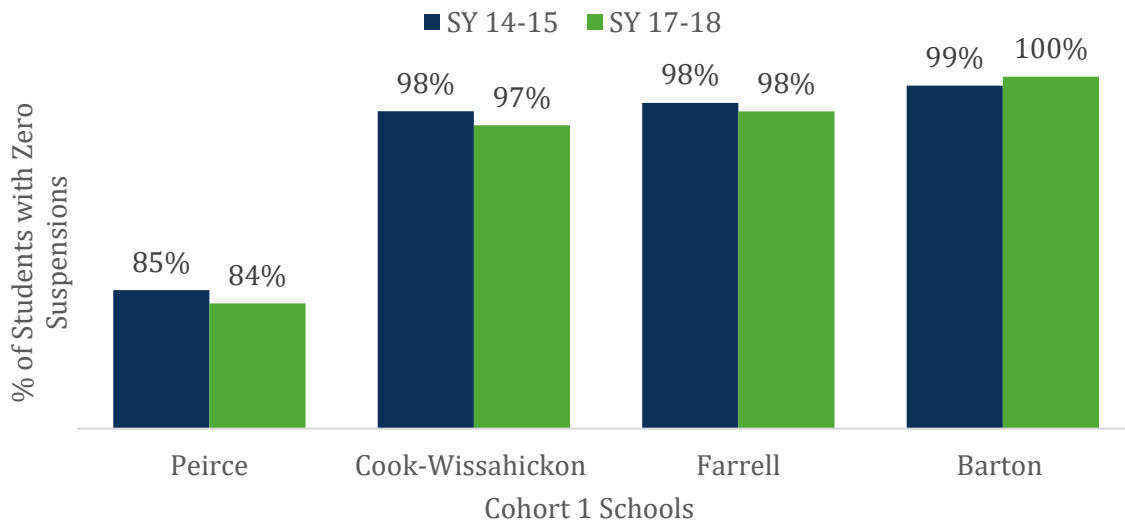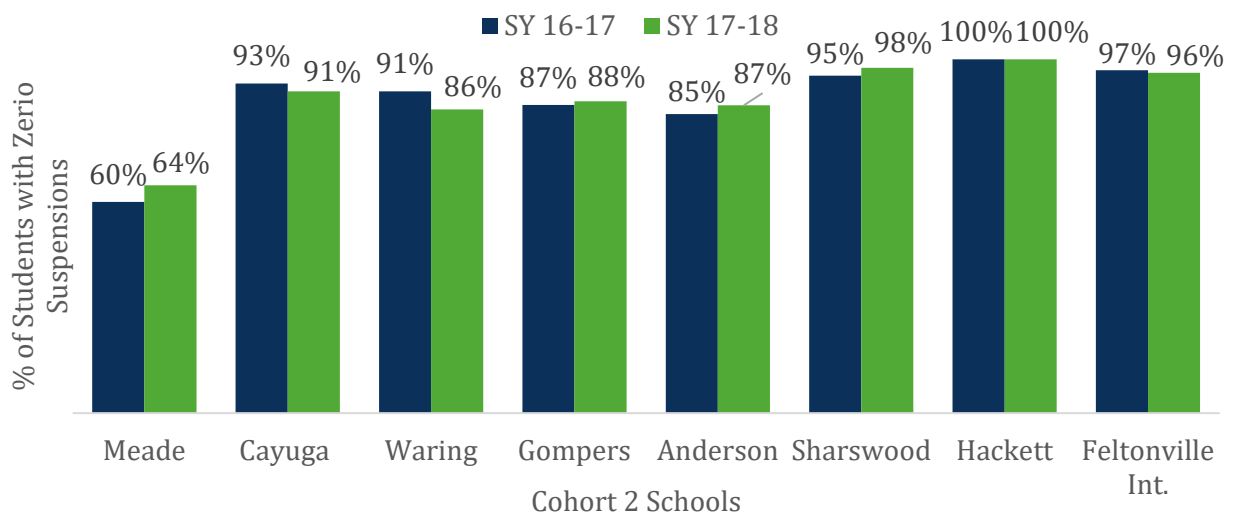

Figure 8. Half of the Cohort 2 Schools Experienced an Increase in the Percent of Students with Zero Suspensions

Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, the majority of schools implementing Second Step in the 2017-18 school year provided implementation fidelity documentation. However, a lower percentage of teachers submitted documentation than in the previous year. This decrease may be related to the transition this year to a new electronic form of documentation. An accurate reflection of how well teachers and schools are implementing Second Step becomes challenging when teachers do not submit the forms. While we received less forms this year, the validity of the data increased as teachers submitted the forms shortly after completing the unit. Additionally, interviews with teachers confirmed that teachers would prefer an electronic form, but that teachers struggle to find the time to submit the forms. Teachers also listed time as a challenge to completing Second Step lessons. Eight schools experienced an increase in attendance from their baseline year, and five schools experienced an increase in the percent of students with zero suspensions from their baseline year. Based on the results of the Year 3 evaluation, ORE recommends the following:

1. As the submission of documentation is a critical piece to assessing program fidelity, teachers should complete *Lesson Completion Checklists* during a designated time, such as grade-group meetings.

2. For schools that have not already done so, ORE recommends identifying a staff member to lead the implementation of the program. While the SEL Coach supports all schools, it would be beneficial to have a staff member at each school to serve as a "point person" for the program who can readily assist teachers with progress monitoring and troubleshoot any issues.

3. Ensuring a designated time for all teachers to deliver the Second Step lessons in schools where this has not been done. As time was indicated by teachers to be a barrier to implementation, making sure that there is protected time for the program may help to alleviate this concern.

As the District prepares to scale up the Second Step program with additional schools, ORE will continue to examine fidelity and monitor outcomes.