

# Social Emotional Learning in Montgomery County



Montgomery County  
Department of  
Health and Human Services

The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is committed to the social emotional health of students in Montgomery County. HHS has two methods of supporting social emotional learning (SEL) using the curriculum, Second Step:

## SECOND STEP

Second Step is a research-based social emotional learning curriculum with units intended to help K-8 students build empathy, emotion management, friendship skills, and problem-solving skills over 22-25 lessons. Students' skill development is reinforced through brain builder games, weekly theme activities, reinforcing activities, and Home links. Second Step connects new skills to other instructional areas (literacy, arts) and provides a structure for every day of the school week.

The purpose of this report is to compare data from two cohorts of students - one that experienced provider-led instruction in Second Step, and one that experienced teacher-led instruction in the 2021-2022 school year.

Contracted Provider-led in instruction:

- Funding from PA's Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP)
- Montgomery County Office of Drug and Alcohol contracted agencies deliver Second Step lessons in classrooms

Teacher-led instruction:

- Funding: 3-year grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) called STOP Violence and Mental Health Training Program awarded to HHS
- Grant activities support the expansion of the capacity within Montgomery County to deliver the Second Step program
- Teachers are trained to implement the program in their own classrooms

## PARTICIPATION IN 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR



**7 School Districts**

Provider-led Cohort: 7 Districts  
Teacher-led Cohort: 7 Districts



**58 Schools**

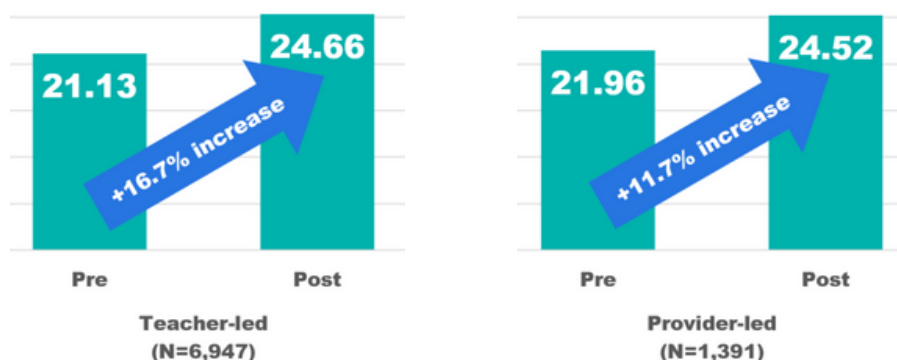
Provider-led Cohort: 15 Schools  
Teacher-led Cohort: 43 Schools



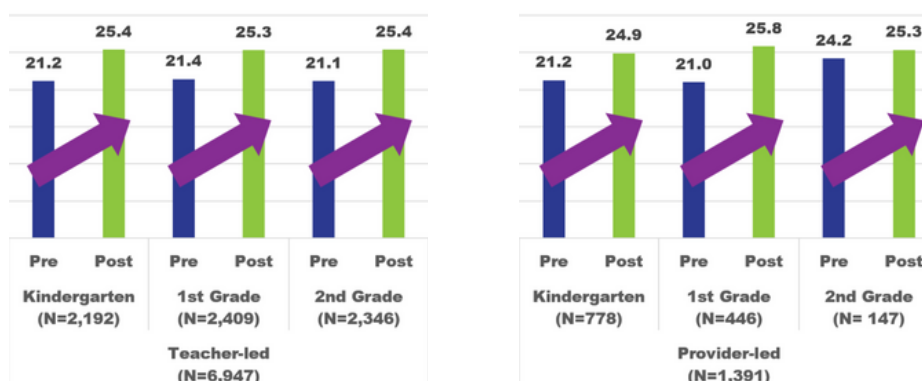
**25,600 Students**

Provider-led Cohort: 22,060 Students  
Teacher-led Cohort: 3,540 Students

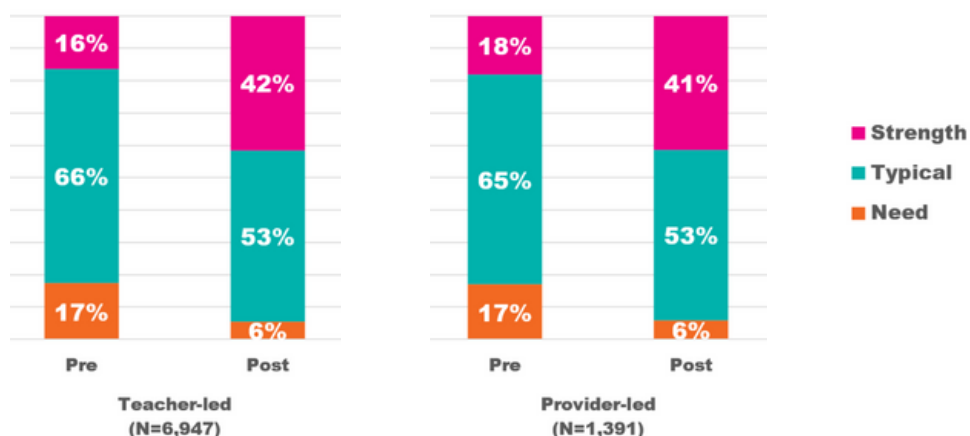
## TOTAL STUDENT SCORES ON THE DESSA-MINI



## STUDENT SCORES ON THE DESSA-MINI EVALUATION TOOL BY GRADE



## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL CAPACITY CATEGORIZATION



## CONCLUSION

A comparison of means test (t-test) indicates that the increase in average student score on the DESSA-mini from pre-Second Step to post across the county is statistically significant. This level of statistical significance means that there is virtually no possibility that the change in scores was due to error or chance, but can confidently be attributed to the Second Step intervention.

## METHODS OF ANALYSIS

This analysis is a comparison of the student-level outcomes from each method of Second Step curriculum delivery (one provider-led, one teacher-led). Data were analyzed using descriptive (frequencies, means) and inferential (comparison of means t-test) statistics. The cohorts can be compared on total scores on the DESSA-mini, score by grade, social emotional category distribution, and change in each of these measures from pre-implementation to post.

Questions?

[katie.kucz@montgomerycountypa.gov](mailto:katie.kucz@montgomerycountypa.gov)

\*Data are inclusive of K-8 grades, but DESSA Mini comparison data are only for K-2 grades