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Creative Learning Initiative (CLI)

Annual Evaluation Report 2014–2015



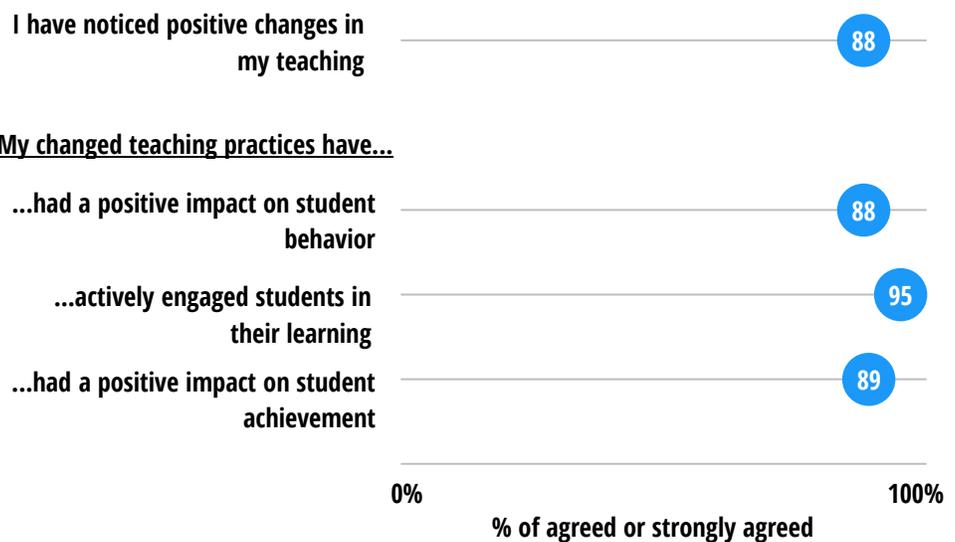


Executive Summary

The Creative Learning Initiative (CLI) provided a group of Austin Independent School District (AISD) schools with an opportunity to incorporate increased arts and creative teaching into their campuses. Between 2012 and 2015, thousands of educators at 36 AISD schools participated in the CLI and received intensive training and ongoing technical support to create arts-rich schools and to implement creative teaching across the curricula. Data suggest participating in the CLI had a positive impact on students, including increased student access to arts opportunities, improved student attendance, decreased discipline incidents, and better academic performance.

The CLI participants reported positive experiences with program activities. They valued the professional development opportunities to learn about creative teaching strategies. Teachers reported benefiting from the instructional approach of arts-based strategies and reported positive effects for both teachers and students. **Most teachers reported positive changes in student engagement, behavior, and student achievement.**

As a result of the arts-based instruction workshop, almost 90% of teachers reported positive changes in their teaching.



Source. 2014-2015 Creative Learning Initiative November Workshop and Follow-up Implementation Survey

Examination of the CLI program revealed several systemic and programmatic challenges, including:

- Schools across the district continue to face limited access to theater, dance, and media arts instruction through arts teachers; however, community arts partners helped increase students' access to instruction in these areas.
- Model lessons that demonstrate the connection between arts-based strategies and academic content are in great demand.
- The time and energy commitments required to develop and implement arts-based instructional strategies can be a challenge to teachers who use arts-based instruction less than once a week
- Teachers can be uncomfortable implementing some arts-based strategies
- Access to afterschool programs in the arts for every student remains limited across the district in both CLI and non-CLI campuses.
- While most educators in the CLI want the program, most educators not participating in CLI do not know or are unsure.

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Purpose

This report presents findings from the 2014–2015 school year, the second year of comprehensive data collection of the Creative Learning Initiative (CLI) in the Austin Independent School District (AISD). The following sections describe the implementation of program activities (e.g., professional development activities and community arts partnerships), and detail the impact the initiative had on students at participating schools.

Background

In 2011, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts selected Austin, Texas, as the seventh partner city for Any Given Child, a competitive program that helps leaders from the education, arts, philanthropy and civic government sectors create a strategic long-range arts education plan for students in kindergarten through grade 8. Austin joined existing partnerships in Sacramento, California; Springfield, Missouri; Portland, Oregon; Las Vegas, Nevada; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Sarasota, Florida. The Any Given Child planning process resulted in the creation of a collective impact partnership called the Creative Learning Initiative (CLI), jointly governed locally by the AISD, the City of Austin, and MINDPOP, an arts partnership dedicated to expanding creative learning in Austin, representing over 50 arts and cultural agencies. MINDPOP serves as the managing partner of the initiative.

The CLI works to assure that every student has access to the arts and receives maximum benefits from creative learning. Using a collective impact model that combines the resources of the school district, the city, MINDPOP, institutions of higher education, local arts groups, and the Kennedy Center, the CLI model takes a systemic approach to assuring equitable access and impact. The CLI model supports each level of the education system, from the classroom to the campus, the district, and the community, both in and out of school. Examples of support include:

- Professional development opportunities for teachers
- Campus planning support for principals
- Curriculum development support at the district level
- Policy recommendations at the board level
- Asset mapping at the city level
- Professional development opportunities for arts partners to align their programs with school needs
- Parental supports

The plan includes a staged implementation schedule to achieve arts-rich schools. The program staff and evaluators developed a common definition of an arts-rich school that includes nine features:

- Access to sequential fine arts (music, dance, visual arts, drama and digital media)
- Creative teaching across the curriculum
- Arts partnerships
- Access to arts learning after school
- Professional development
- Communication
- Arts and creative campus leadership
- Facilities
- Community-building through the arts

The robust program model, designed through a process led by Dr. Brent Hasty of MINDPOP, represents best practices in instructional theory, systems change and arts education.

The CLI professional development model

Professional development activities play a central role in the CLI model. In arts-rich schools, general classroom teachers know how, when, and why to use creative teaching strategies to engage students in learning. Administrators at schools participating in the initiative commit to scheduling two professional development workshops for their entire teaching staff. The workshops were developed in partnership with discipline area experts including Katie Dawson from Drama for Schools, Krissie Martie from Forklift Dance, Emily Cayton and Hanna Zurco from The Contemporary Austin, Dr. Megan Alrutz from The University of Texas at Austin, Marcelo Teson and Charlie Lockwood from Texas Folklife Resources, and others.

The initiative’s professional development model takes an instructional approach, rather than a curricular one. The professional development model provides teachers with research-based techniques derived from the arts that meet criteria established to maximize teacher adoption rates and student impact. The creative teaching techniques selected for inclusion in the program provide opportunities for development or generation of ideas, analysis and synthesis, mental and physical modeling, point of view, and translation of

The CLI Program Goals

ideas using different symbol systems, as well as the opportunity to share ideas with others. The workshops focus on how to successfully facilitate the specific arts-based strategies, when to use the strategies within the lesson cycle or in the curricula, and why to use a particular strategy for cognitive or academic gains.

The CLI professional development model extends the skill-based workshops with on-going coaching opportunities. A cadre of coaches provide arts-based instructional support to prekindergarten (pre-K) through 5th-grade teams and individual teachers during seven or eight visits to each school per year. During each visit, the coach plans, models, or co-teaches lessons that integrate arts-based strategies with core curriculum content.

During planning sessions, the coach works with the grade-level team to develop their skills in the selection of an appropriate arts-based technique to achieve specific learning objectives. Together they select the strategy and then plan an effective lesson outline. During the modeling or co-teaching sessions, the coach demonstrates specific techniques or strategies in the classroom. After the modeling or co-teaching, the coach and teacher reflect on the experience and discuss the implementation of the instruction.

In addition to the coaching provided by the CLI coaches, several arts organizations provide similar coaching. Although each organization offers a slightly different approach, they all include multiple visits, ranging from four to ten sessions per year. Additionally, they all include planning and modeling. Some programs, such as Forklift, even move beyond co-teaching to independent teaching with the coach serving as an observer. All the coaching models focus on increasing the instructional skills of teachers in implementing arts-based strategies.

The CLI community arts partnership model

Principals use an annual campus inventory to assess the breadth and depth of the arts partnerships with community arts partners. The CLI recommends that each grade level develop partnerships with two community arts organizations and that at least one of these partnerships includes a multi-visit experience. Principals evaluate their partnerships on the variety of art forms, seeking a broad distribution among music, dance, theater, visual arts, and media; exploring a variety of cultural heritages; and the combination of types of artistic experiences (e.g., interpretive as an audience member or gallery visitor, and creative experiences). Campuses receive financial support to help secure these partnerships.

Through ongoing professional development activities that teach educators to engage students through integration of arts-based strategies into core subject instruction, partners from higher education, arts organizations, and philanthropy join with AISD. The CLI aims to achieve four broad goals:

- Create arts-rich schools for all students
- Create a community network that supports and sustains the arts-rich life of every child
- Develop leaders and systems that support and sustain quality creative learning for the development of the whole child
- Demonstrate measurable impacts on students, families, and community



2014–2015 AISD Creative Learning Initiative (CLI)

Service Areas

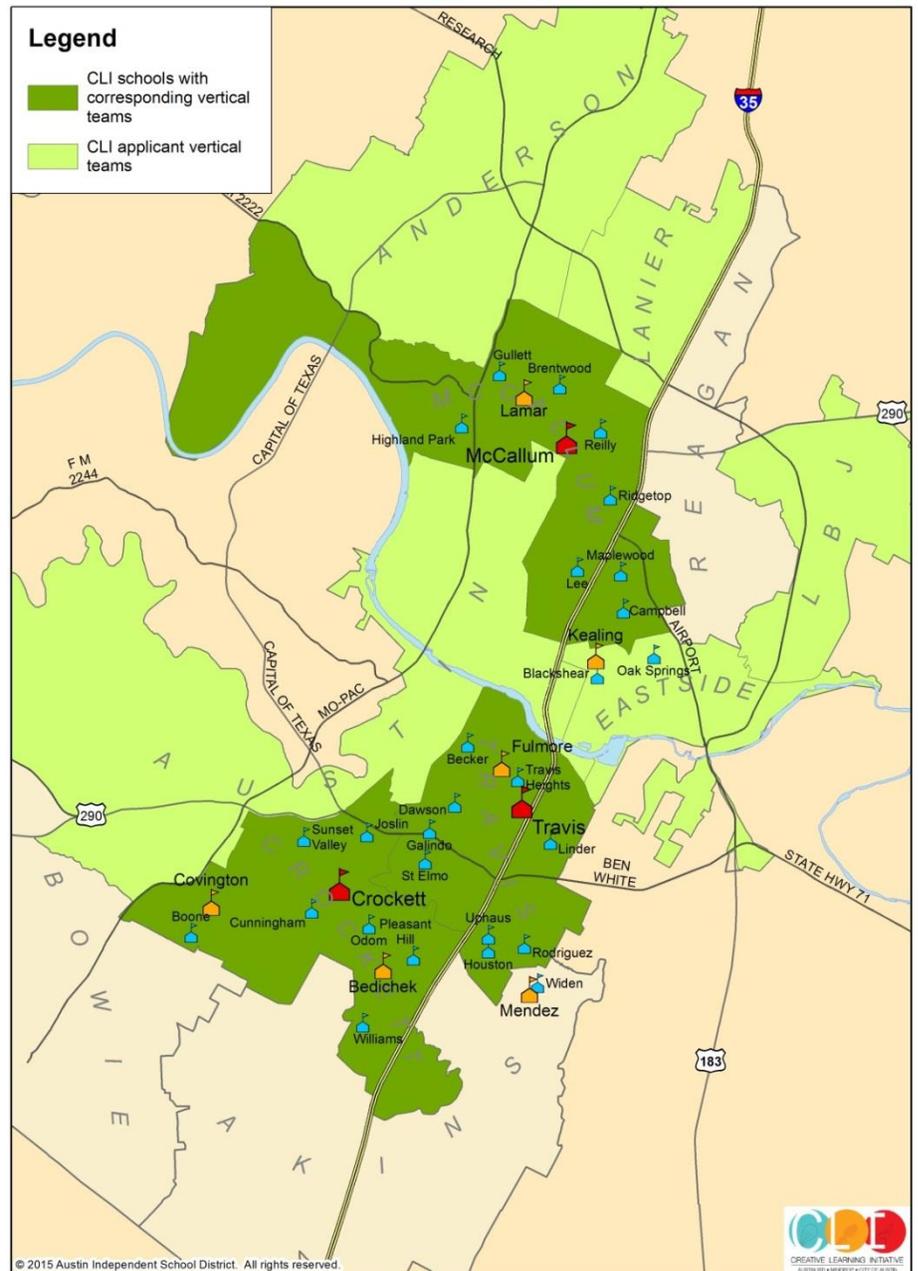
Beginning in the spring of 2012, a pilot implementation including intensive professional development activities for select teachers and campus instructional leaders on the topic of arts integration occurred at four campuses in the McCallum vertical team. The remaining nine campuses in the vertical team participated in the initiative in 2012–2013. Using a staged implementation model, the second and third vertical teams were added in 2013–2014 (11 campuses at Travis) and 2014–2015 (12 campuses at Crockett), totaling 36 campuses.

A fourth vertical team will be added in 2015–2016 (eight campuses at Eastside Memorial). The goal is to accomplish districtwide implementation by 2021–2022.

Vertical teams are selected to join the CLI through a competitive application process that involves participation from all vertical team principals, CAC Co-Chairs, teachers, and community members.

An evaluation committee comprised of parents, teachers, and principals from currently participating campuses evaluates and ranks the applications in order of demonstrated need and commitment to prioritizing the pursuit of an arts-rich education for all students.

Since 2013–2014, four vertical teams have applied every year for implementation, with only one being selected for implementation. At the end of 2014–2015, 72% of AISD vertical teams were either participating or had applied to become part of the CLI.



Key Findings for the CLI

Findings indicated positive outcomes associated with the CLI. The following sections describe evidence closely linked to the key program outcomes:

- Program impact on the district
- Students' access to fine arts instruction
- Integration of community arts partnerships
- Use of creative teaching across the curriculum
- Program impact on schools and students

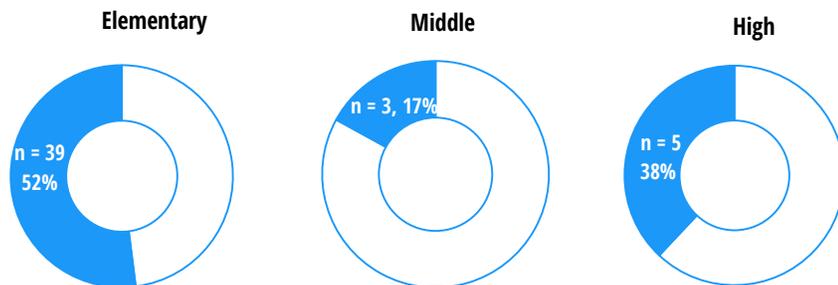
What was the impact of the program on the District?

Austin ISD exceeded the benchmark goal for schools meeting the arts-rich standard.

One of the primary goals of the program is to achieve arts-richness for all AISD schools by 2022-2023. Over the three years of program implementation in three vertical teams, we expected 30% of AISD schools to reach the level of being arts-rich. Our findings indicated that 37% of AISD schools were arts-rich.

Figure 1.

Approximately half of AISD elementary schools who submitted Innovation Configuration Mapping data were arts-rich, whereas the proportion of arts-rich schools at the middle and high school levels was lower.



Source. 2014–2015 AISD Elementary/Secondary Innovation Configuration Mapping (ICM)

Note. One hundred and six AISD principals submitted ICM data for their campuses. Among the schools included, 75 were elementary schools, 18 were middle schools, and 13 were high schools.

The Innovation Configuration Mapping (ICM) developed by program staff and evaluators served to assess the arts-richness of the AISD campuses. ICM includes nine components that help the campus leaders understand the program expectations for the arts-richness of the campus. ICM serves as a reflective tool for campus leaders to make progress toward the desired results and to monitor their implementation of the program. ICM describes variations for each component in terms of campus actions that are **arts-rich, arts-involved, arts-emerging, and arts-uninvolved.**

Figure 2.
Nine components of an arts-rich campus

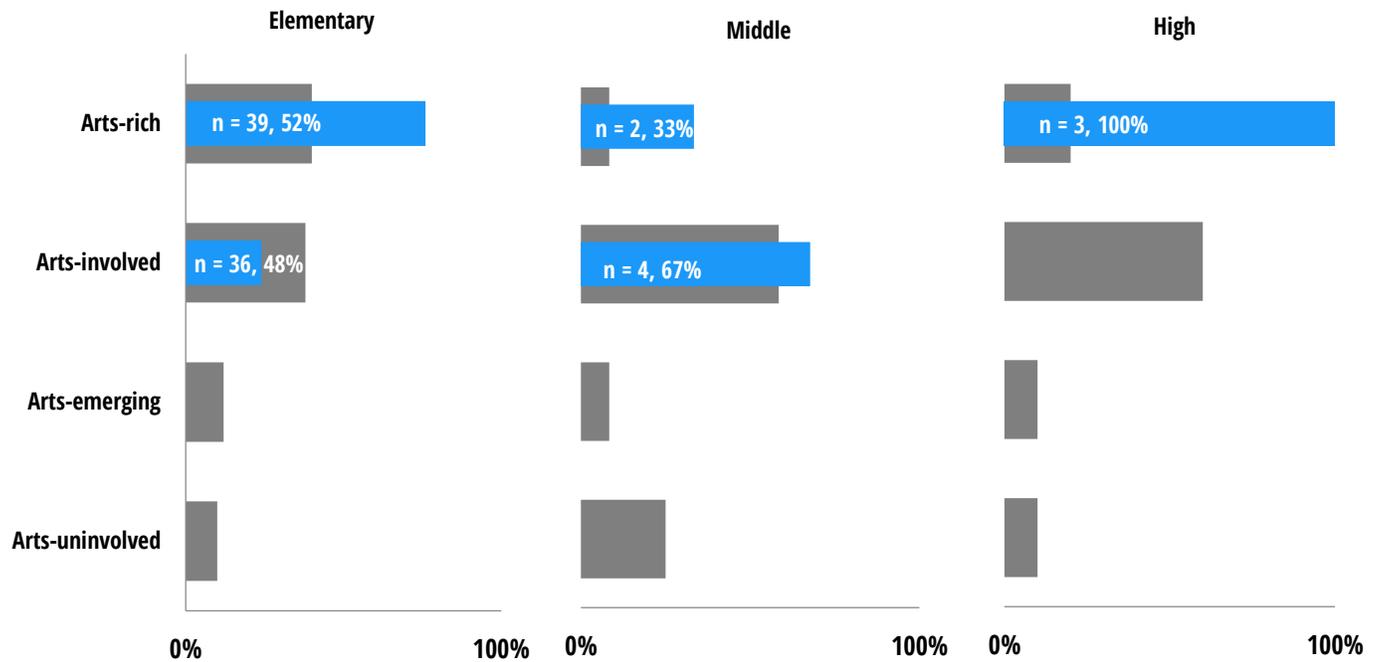


Source. MINDPOP. 2014–2015 AISD Elementary/Secondary Innovation Configuration Mapping (ICM)

The majority of CLI campuses reached the level of being arts-rich.

Figure 3.

The proportion of CLI campuses that were arts-rich was greater than that of non-CLI campuses at all school levels.



Source. 2014–2015 AISD Elementary/Secondary Innovation Configuration Mapping (ICM)

Many teachers at CLI and non-CLI campuses wanted the CLI at their campus.

The CLI was in high demand at CLI campuses and was in demand from those educators at non-CLI campuses that expressed an opinion. This finding was consistent with the map on page 4 indicating that many vertical teams have applied to participate in the CLI.

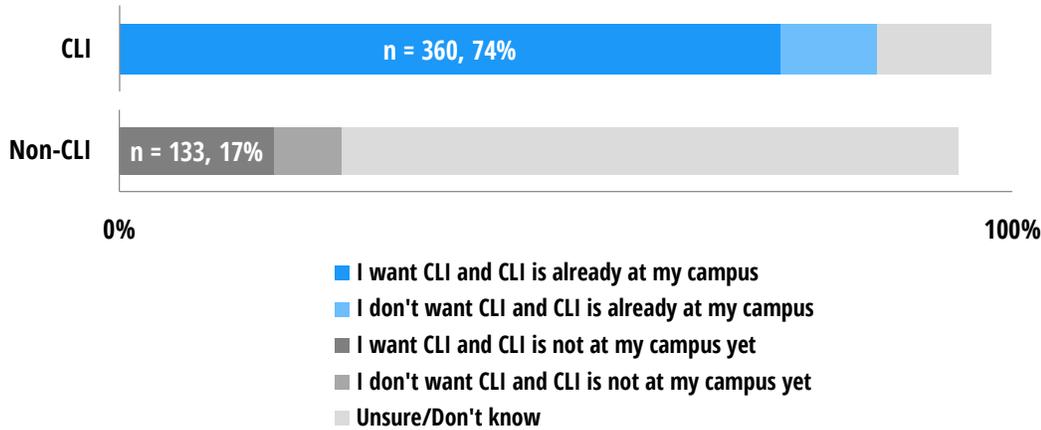
Findings generated from the district-wide Employee Coordinated Survey revealed that the majority of educators at the CLI campuses liked the program and wanted CLI at their campus. Many CLI participants felt that, although they were knowledgeable about arts-based strategies, they were still interested in learning more about the strategies.

While many educators at non-CLI campuses indicated an interest in learning more about the CLI arts-based strategies, the majority reported not knowing or being unsure if they wanted CLI at their campus.

Figure 4.

The majority of respondents who had participated in CLI continued to express a desire to have CLI at their campus.

Very few respondents did not want CLI.



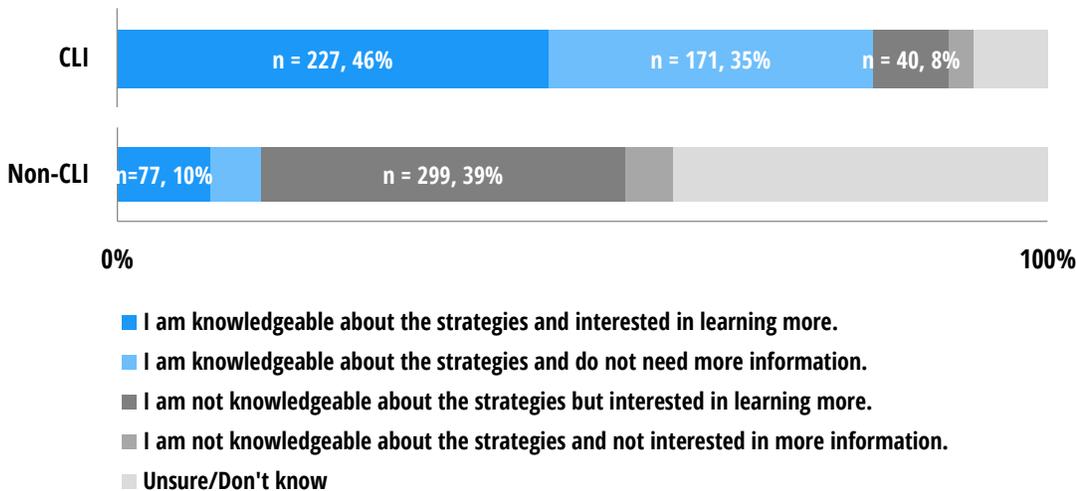
Source. 2014–2015 AISD Employee Coordinated Survey

Note. 3% of CLI respondents misidentified their CLI participation and 6% of non-CLI respondents misidentified their CLI participation. Therefore, these respondents were not included in the figures above.

Figure 5.

The majority of respondents who had participated in CLI felt knowledgeable about the strategies and wanted to learn more about them.

Many who had not participated in CLI indicated an interest in the learning more about the strategies.



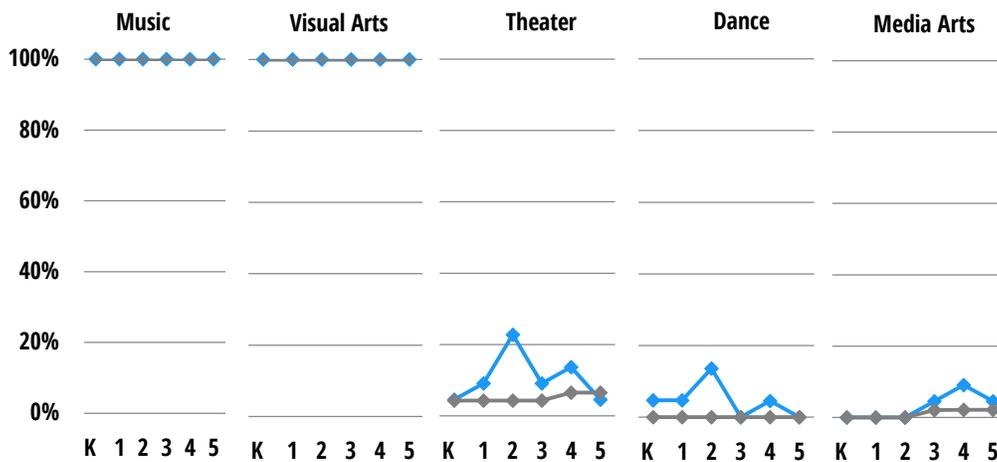
Source. 2014–2015 AISD Employee Coordinated Survey

Has students' access to fine arts instruction increased?

Access to music and visual arts remained high while access to theater, dance, and media showed limited growth.

AISD requires offering music and visual arts instruction for at least 45 minutes every 3 days at the elementary school level. All AISD campuses met the district standard, regardless of CLI status. However, AISD students across the district had limited access to theater, dance, and media arts education, although they were more likely to experience these art forms at CLI campuses in certain grade levels. Media arts classes continued to be the least available class during the school day.

Figure 6.
Students at CLI campuses had greater access to theater, dance, and media arts than did students at non-CLI campuses.



Source. 2014–2015 Elementary School Arts Inventory

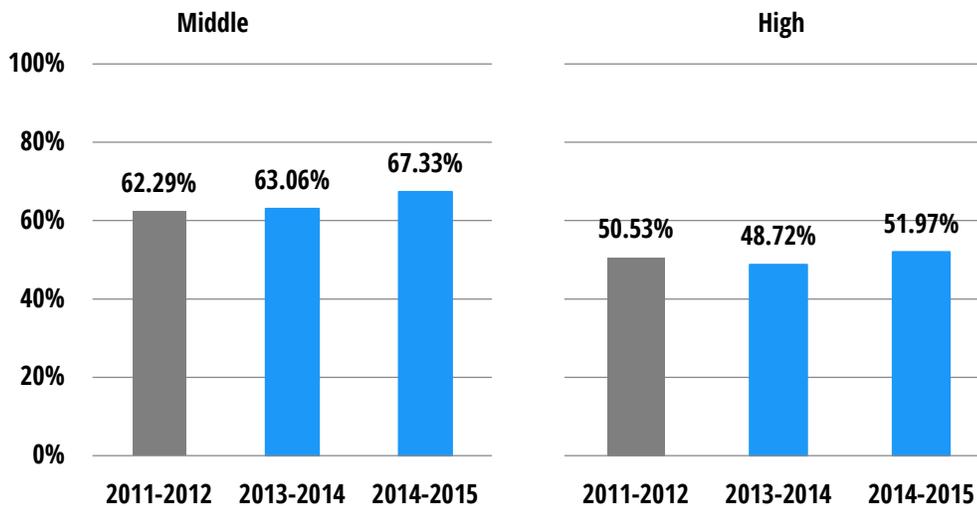
Note. Twenty-five CLI campuses and 51 non-CLI campuses were included for analysis. K means kindergarten.

AISD students' enrollment rates in fine arts classes in 2014–2015 increased from previous years.

The percentage of AISD middle and high school students enrolled in fine arts classes appeared higher in 2014–2015 than previous years. The percentage of AISD middle and high school students enrolled in fine arts classes increased from 2013–2014 to 2014–2015. Results from the 2011–2012 school year, prior to the CLI implementation, served as baseline data to better understand changes between the baseline year and the two most recent years of program implementation.

Figure 7.

The percentage of AISD students enrolled in fine arts classes increased steadily from the baseline year (2011–2012) to 2014–2015 at the middle school level.



Source. AISD Student Class Enrollment Record 2011–2012, 2013–2014, and 2014–2015

How have community arts partners increased students' access to creative learning?

CLI campuses provided students more creative learning opportunities than did non-CLI campuses during both in- and out-of-school time through community arts partners.

CLI campuses provided students with more community arts opportunities in each art form and built partnerships with multiple arts partners in more grade levels than did non-CLI campuses. Community arts partners are essential in providing students with in-school and out-of-school arts experiences. In collaboration with arts partners, schools are able to move from being arts-involved to being arts-rich. This year, CLI campuses established or maintained partnerships with 70 community arts partners, which was 43% more than did non-CLI campuses.

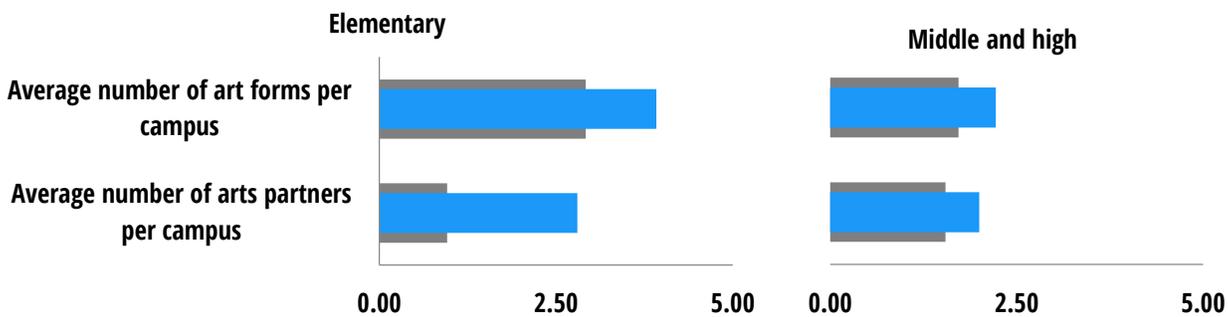
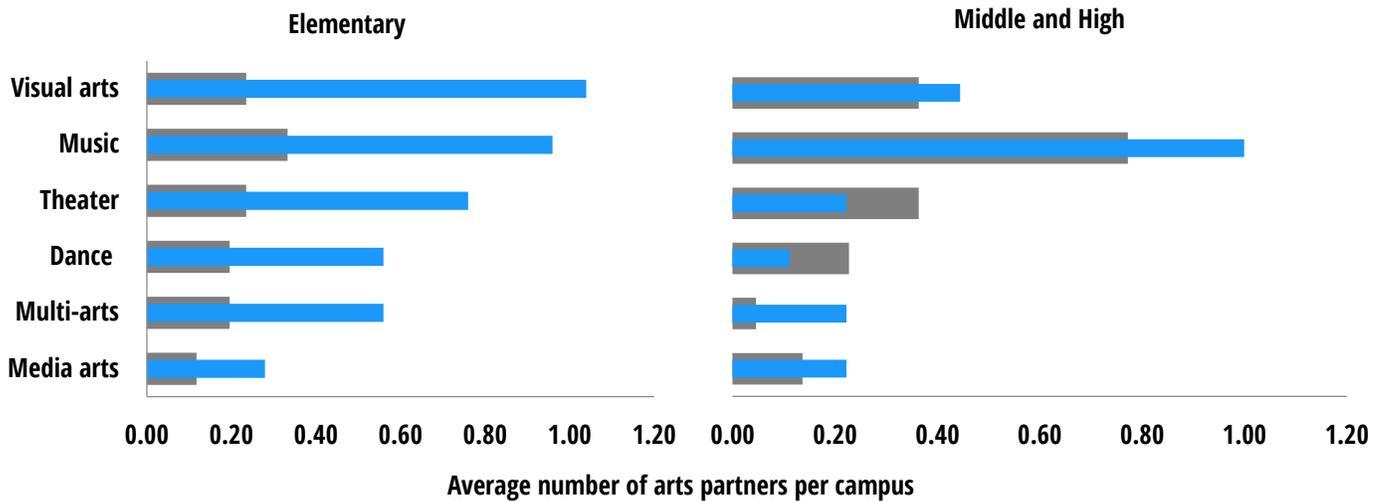
School with more community arts partners had greater student engagement than schools with fewer arts partners.

Community arts partners exerted a positive impact on student engagement. The number of community arts partners at CLI campuses was found to be significantly positively correlated with student engagement ($r = .40, p < .05$). In other words, the more community arts partners the CLI campuses worked with during school time, the more engaged students

were in the school. Student engagement scores were derived from questions on the 2014–2015 student climate survey (See Appendix C).

Figure 8.

The average number of school-time arts partners and art forms was greater at CLI campuses than that at non-CLI campuses, except at the secondary school level, where the average number of arts partners in theater and dance¹ at CLI campuses was lower.



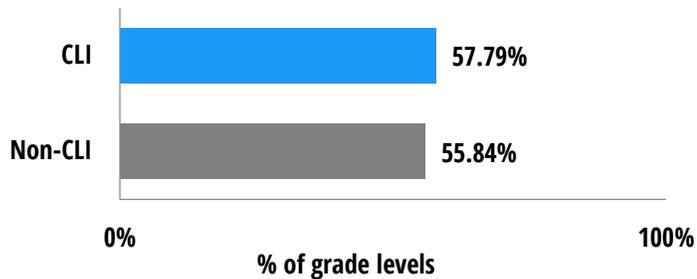
Source. 2014–2015 Elementary School Arts Inventory, 2014–2015 Secondary School Arts Inventory

Note. At the elementary school level, twenty-five CLI campuses and 51 non-CLI campuses were included for analysis. At the middle and high school levels, nine CLI campuses and 22 non-CLI campuses were included for analysis.

¹ Arts partnerships are driven by arts specialists in the discipline. In 2014–2015, 33% of theater specialists at CLI middle schools were half-time employees, while all theater specialists in non-CLI were full-time employees. Similarly, 67% of dance specialists at CLI middle schools were half-time employees and one CLI campus did not even have an arts specialist, while all dance specialists in non-CLI were full-time employees. The leadership team addressed this issue in 2015–2016.

Figure 9.

During afterschool time, the average percentage of grade levels in which students had access to two or more art forms was slightly greater at CLI elementary schools than that at non-CLI elementary schools.

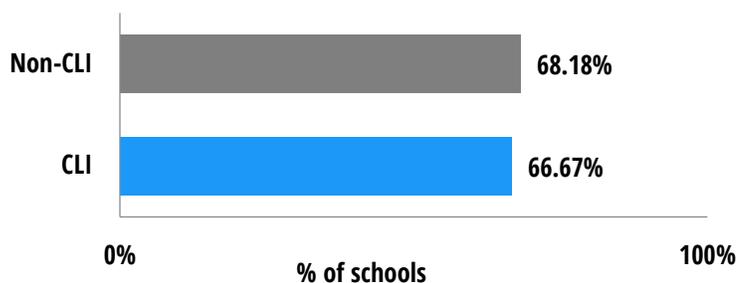


Source. 2014–2015 Elementary School Arts Inventory

Note. Twenty-five CLI campuses and 51 non-CLI campuses were included for analysis.

Figure 10.

During afterschool time, the percentage of secondary schools at which arts instruction was provided in two or more art forms, for two or more ability levels, was slightly lower at CLI schools than at non-CLI schools.



Source. 2014–2015 Secondary School Arts Inventory

Note. Nine CLI campuses and 22 non-CLI campuses were included for analysis. Ability levels included beginning, intermediate, and advanced.

How has the use of creative teaching impacted teachers and improved learning?

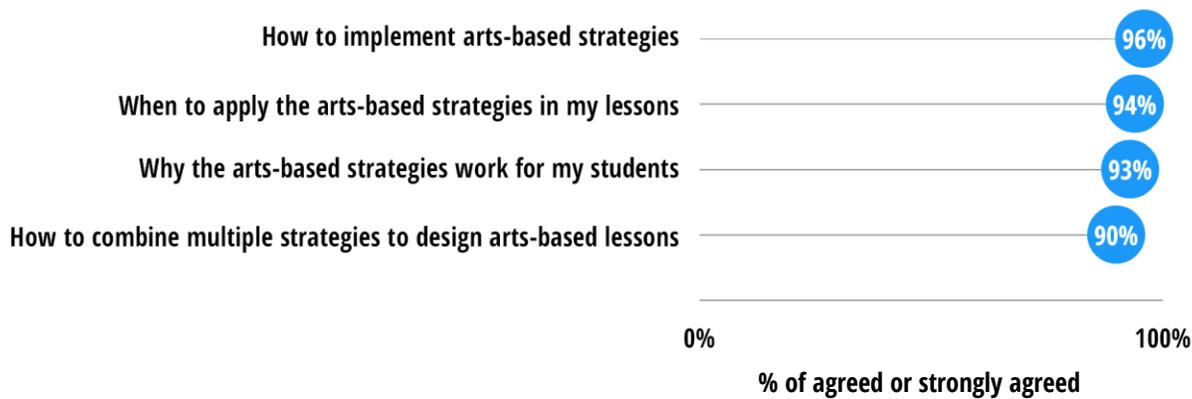
CLI participants reported that professional development activities increased their instructional skills and student learning.

More than 2000 educators received arts-based instruction training in the August and November 2014 workshops, and 600 teachers obtained ongoing one-on-one coaching from the CLI coaches in 2014–2015. The CLI participants completed the surveys after the workshops, a follow-up implementation survey, and a coaching survey to provide information about the impact of arts-based strategies on their teaching and on student learning.

The overwhelming majority of participants perceived the arts-based instruction workshops as effective for both increasing their conceptual understanding of arts-based instruction and increasing their instructional skills in implementing this instruction. The CLI participants reported that the one-on-one support from the CLI coaches provided valuable hands-on experiences in implementing arts-based instruction, and the practice of this approach was conducive to improving students' learning.

Figure 11.
The vast majority of the 214 respondents receiving CLI coaching support agreed that their coaching experience increased their skills in using arts-based strategies.

My coaching experience increased my understanding/skills about...



Source. 2014–2015 Creative Learning Initiative Coaching Survey

At the end of 2014–15, CLI coaches were asked to evaluate teachers' fluency in using arts-based instruction. The coaches' ratings of teachers' fluency was consistent with the teachers' self-reported ratings. Among 520 teachers, the majority were able to generate ideas about how to implement creative teaching strategies (73%), when to use creative teaching strategies (66%), and why to use creative teaching strategies (83%). According to coaches, approximately 50% of teachers reported improving their arts-based strategy implementation skills over the course of the year.

The comments provided by the CLI participants reflected the enjoyable, informative, and inspiring nature of the workshops. The workshop participants felt motivated to learn arts-based instruction and appreciated the creative ideas for integrating the arts-based instruction into different content areas. The CLI participants provided a variety of scenarios in which they felt the use of arts-based instruction in their classroom had been successful. The subjects they cited included reading, writing, math, and science.

I appreciate that this workshop was useful in concrete ways. I immediately went back to my classroom and began implementing the strategies.

-CLI teacher

The CLI teachers who received support from the CLI coach appreciated the pleasant working experience with their coaches. They recognized the positive impact of the CLI coach on their capacity to master arts-based instruction and the benefit to students' learning. Seeing the value of the CLI coach, teachers indicated an interest in obtaining more opportunities to co-teach with their coaches. One teacher commented,

I would love to have my coach more. She is such an asset. She has many ideas and can always make things relevant to prekindergarten. I wish I could team teach with her every day!

The CLI participants indicated that the arts-based strategies created a good learning environment in which to engage students and improve their learning. Participants emphasized that the arts-based strategies were helpful in engaging students who usually did not participate in the class and who struggled with learning. Participants' comments

Every time when drama-based instruction is used, it allows students who are not always successful on pencil and paper tasks to excel and show their understanding of a concept.
-CLI teacher

about the effects of arts-based instruction on students comprised three themes: 1) **increased student engagement**, 2) **strengthened understanding of concepts**, and 3) **increased level of joy in learning**.

Teachers also cited some challenges to implementing arts-based instruction, including special education classroom settings, time management, classroom management, and alignment with curriculum.

On the 2015 CLI August workshop survey, in response to the prompt "If you are hesitant to use a strategy shared in the arts-based instruction workshop in your classroom, how could the program help?" one teacher stated,

I teach Adapted Art. Most of my students are nonverbal. Many are aggressive and others are medically fragile. My focus is on their individual education plan goals. I have a strong background in music and theater as well as visual arts. This training as utilized is not something I can implement in my classroom. That said, this is spectacular for a general education.

Teachers' concerns about the increased connection between arts-based strategies and academic subjects supported the literature addressing the importance of aligning arts with subject content learning to promote best practices in the classroom (Arts Integration Solution, 2011). One teacher indicated,

Our facilitator had a wonderful demeanor and did a great job of offering activities that kept us engaged. I could totally see his activities taking place in a Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) or life skills class. However, it was still hard for me to see when we could do the activities in a resource setting where most kids come to class for intensive reading or math instruction for a mere 30 to 40 minutes.

While users of different levels all agreed that the impact of arts-based instruction was significant, frequent users reported a more positive impact.

The users of arts-based instruction at different levels unanimously reported the impact of arts-based instruction on their profession was positive. The CLI participants used the arts-based instruction at different frequencies (e.g., less than once a week, 1 to 4 times a week, 5 or more times a week). Approximately half of the participants (52%) used arts-based instruction at least once a week.

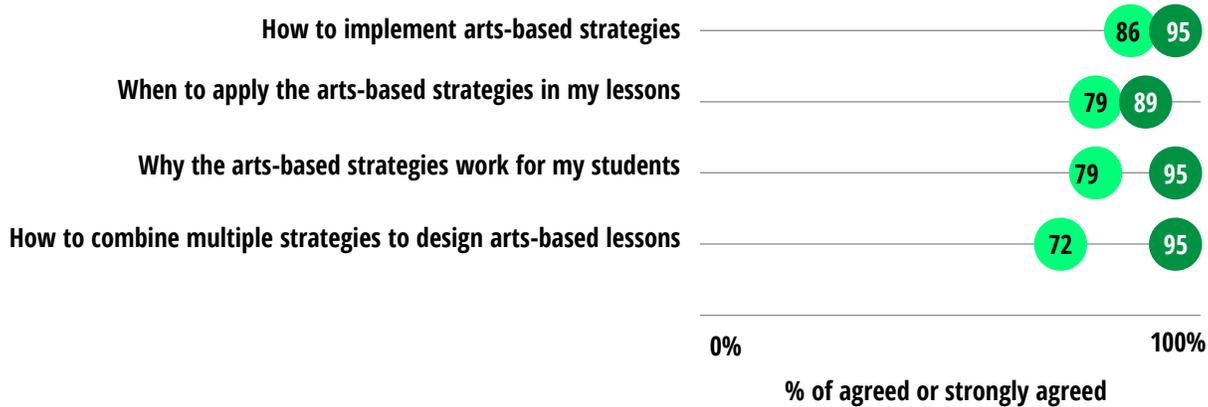
Participants' ratings of arts-based instruction were dependent on the frequency of use. The CLI participants who used the arts-based instruction more frequently were more likely than those who used it less frequently to report that the arts-based instruction training and their coaching experiences had a positive impact on their professional growth and on students' learning.

Low frequency users (less than once a week) reported that their coaching experience increased their skills in how to implement arts-based strategies. However, high frequency users (5 or more times a week) reported their coaching experience increased their skills in not only how to implement arts-based strategies, but also in how to combine multiple strategies to design arts-based lessons. These data suggest that teachers gaining additional higher-order skills during the coaching experience and transforming how they teach used the arts-based strategies more frequently.

Figure 12.

Teachers providing arts-based instruction **greater than 5 times a week** reported that their coaching experience increased their implementation skills more than teachers providing similar arts-based instruction **less than once a week**.

My coaching experience increased my understanding/skills about...

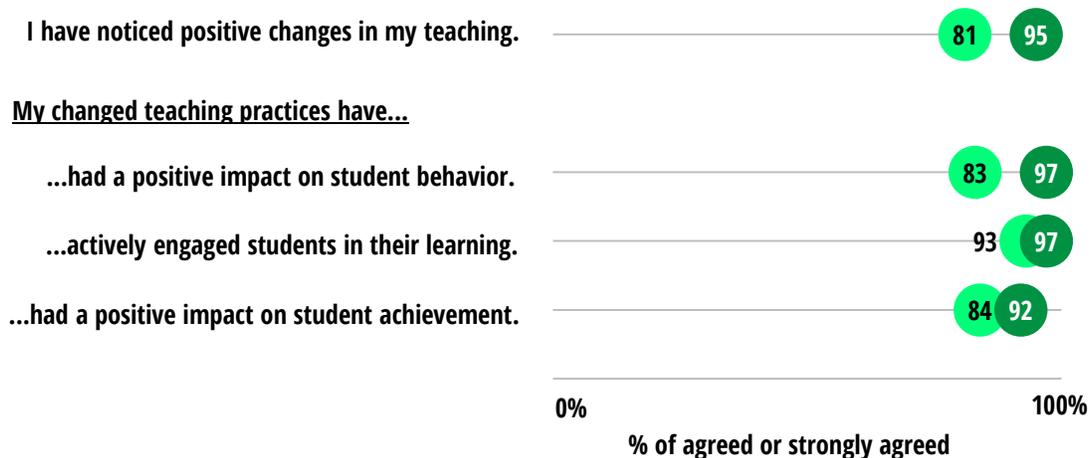


Source. 2014–2015 Creative Learning Initiative Coaching Survey

Note. Twenty respondents using using arts-based instruction ≥ 5 times a week and 29 respondents using arts-based instruction less than once a week were included for analysis.

Figure 13.

Teachers providing arts-based instruction **greater than 5 times a week** reported that the instructional workshop had a more positive impact on their teaching, as well as on students' learning than teachers providing arts-based instruction **less than once a week**.



Source. 2014–2015 Creative Learning Initiative November Workshop and Follow-up Implementation Survey

Note. Thirty-seven respondents using using arts-based instruction ≥ 5 times a week and 242 respondents using arts-based instruction less than once a week were included for analysis.

High frequency users more focused on student impact and collaboration with colleagues than did low frequency users.

Across all 36 CLI campuses at all stages of implementation, on average, teachers' concerns about the arts-based instruction were relatively consistent over time, with only slight variations. However, campus and individuals' results² showed more variation over time. The evaluators used the pre and post Stages of Concern Questionnaires (SoCQ) to measure changes in teachers' concerns about their implementation over time. The SoCQ, developed by researchers at the University of Texas at Austin and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, was adopted to gather information about how teachers felt about the arts-based instruction and where they were in the implementation.

The disaggregation of pre- and posttest results by frequency of use demonstrated that the variance in the concerns of teachers was more dependent on their frequency of use of arts-based instruction than on development of change over time. Table 1 presents the typical expressions of concern about the arts-based instruction. Research indicated that when a change effort is in its early stage, teachers are very likely to have self-concerns. During the early period of use, teachers become more intensely concerned about tasks and how to manage a task. When teachers are more involved in the implementation, have more intense concerns about the effects on students, and what can be done to improve the program, they reach the impact level of concerns (Hord, Rutherford, Huling, & Hall, 2006).

Table 1.
Stages of concern: typical expressions of concern about arts-based instruction

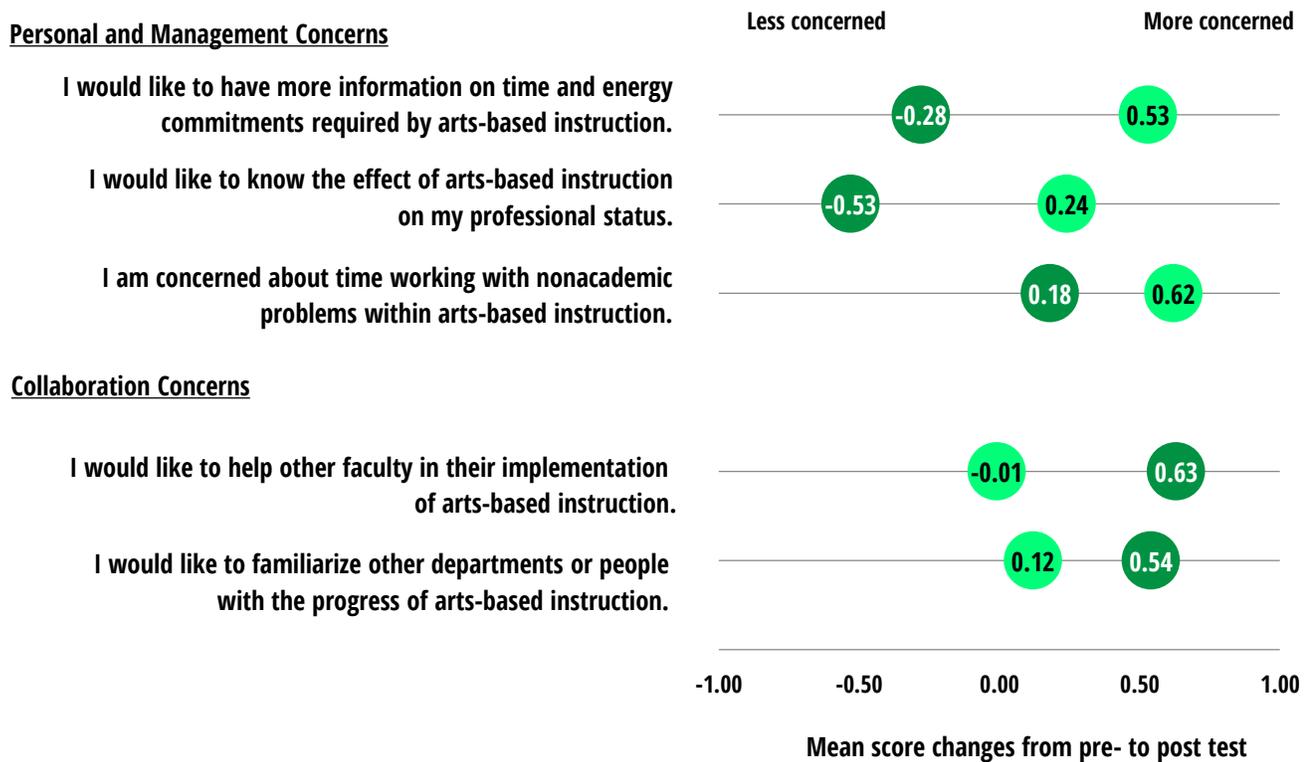
	Stages of Concern	Expressions of Concern
I M P A C T	6 Refocusing	I have some ideas about something that would work even better.
	5 Collaboration	I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what other instructors are doing.
	4 Consequence	How is my use affecting kids?
T A S K	3 Management	I seem to be spending all my time getting materials ready.
S E L F	2 Personal	How will using it affect me?
	1 Information	I would like to know more about it.
	0 Unconcerned	I am not concerned about it (the arts-based instruction).

Source. Hord, S. M., Rutherford, W. L., Huling, L., & Hall, G. E. (2006). *Taking charge of change*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL).

² Campus results will be shared with the campus leaders for administrative support for implementation of arts-based instruction. Individual results will be shared with teachers so they can work with their CLI coach to address individual needs and to monitor implementation.

Our data supported the research findings (Hord, Rutherford, Huling, & Hall, 2006). We found that changes in teachers' concerns about the arts-based instruction were associated with their level of use of the practice. Frequent users of arts-based instruction appeared to be more confident in their ability to manage the instruction than did less frequent users. Therefore, frequent users were less likely to have intense self-concerns and task concerns (e.g., personal well-being and time management) than were less frequent users. The frequent users were moving toward the stage at which they were concerned about improving the effectiveness of the instruction. This group was more interested than were less frequent users in collaborating with other teachers to improve their use of the instruction.

Figure 14. Respondents providing arts-based instruction **greater than 5 times a week** decreased basic implementation concerns at the post-test and were more focused on impact concerns, while respondents providing arts-based instruction **less than once a week** increased basic concerns.



Source. 2014–2015 Creative Learning Initiative Stages of Concern Questionnaire

How has the program impacted students' engagement and achievement?

Students had better attendance when teachers were more proficient in creative teaching.

In the previous section, data suggested a high degree of variability in frequency of using arts-based strategies in the following aspects: understanding of arts-based instruction, concerns about the implementation of arts-based instruction, and skills in implementing creative teaching. Variability in teachers' implementation skill levels influenced students' access to creative teaching and student performance.

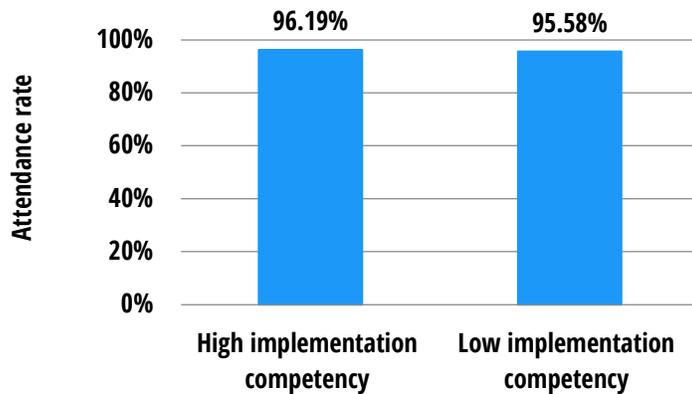
Our findings showed that teachers' increased implementation competency in creative teaching was a determinant of students' attendance at school. In this section, students' engagement was measured by students' observable behaviors, such as their attendance at school.

We used a sample of teachers ($n = 542$) who obtained one-on-one coaching support to examine the relationship between teachers' implementation competency in creative teaching and students' engagement. Using factor analysis to cluster related items, the evaluators identified three distinct factors to represent the eight items in the Coach Observation of Teacher Implementation Survey: 1) teachers' receptivity and interest in the CLI, 2) teachers' implementation competency in creative teaching, and 3) teachers' improvement in implementation skills³.

Teachers' implementation competency in creative teaching positively correlated with students' attendance rates, and significantly predicted students' attendance rates ($p < .05$). In other words, students were more likely to attend school when their teachers were more proficient in creative teaching.

³ Two of the three factors (i.e., teachers' receptivity and interest in CLI and teachers' implementation competency in creative teaching) included more than one item. We used Cronbach's alpha to test whether the items within each factor were related. The alphas were high: .93 for teachers' receptivity and interest in CLI (3 items), and .92 for teachers' implementation competency (4 items), meaning that the items within each factor were highly related.

Figure 15.
Students had better attendance when their teachers were more proficient in creative teaching.




A district wide attendance rate increase of .61 (96.19-95.58) would result in 4 million dollars revenue.

Source. 2014–2015 Creative Learning Initiative Coach Observation of Teacher Implementation Survey, AISD Student Attendance Records 2014–2015

Students whose teachers were more competent in implementing arts-based strategies had better academic outcomes.

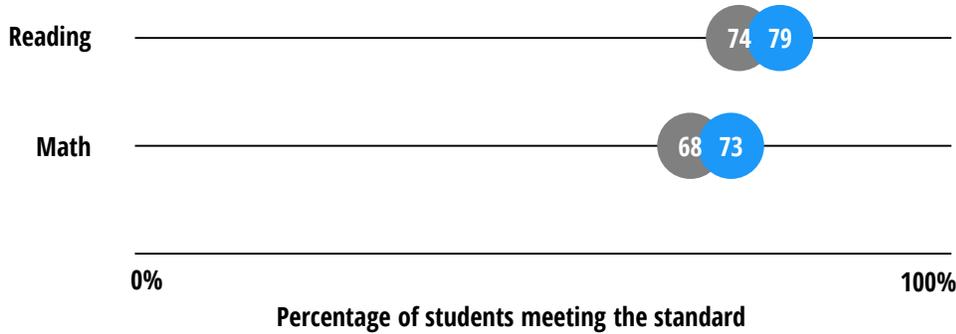
Our relationship analysis demonstrated that teachers’ implementation competency predicted students’ STAAR reading and math passing statuses, as well as STAAR advanced reading and math passing statuses. This finding supports teachers’ beliefs that their practice of arts-based strategies had positive impacts on student learning (see pages 15-16).

Again, we studied the teachers ($n = 542$) who obtained one-on-one coaching support to assess how well the teacher attribute of *implementation competency* predicted students’ STAAR passing statuses in mathematics, reading, and science. While no significant relationship between implementation competency and students’ science passing status was found, this could be related to the anecdotal information provided by teachers that creative teaching was difficult to incorporate into science curriculum and was most frequently used within the math and reading context, where significant effects were discovered.

Specifically, teachers’ implementation competency was significantly positively related to students’ STAAR reading passing status ($p < .05$) and STAAR advanced reading passing status ($p < .05$). Teachers’ implementation competency was also significantly positively related to students’ STAAR math passing status ($p < .05$) and STAAR advanced math passing status ($p < .05$).

Figure 16.

Students were more likely to meet the STAAR reading and math standards when their teachers' implementation competency level was **high** than when their teachers' implementation competency level was **low**.

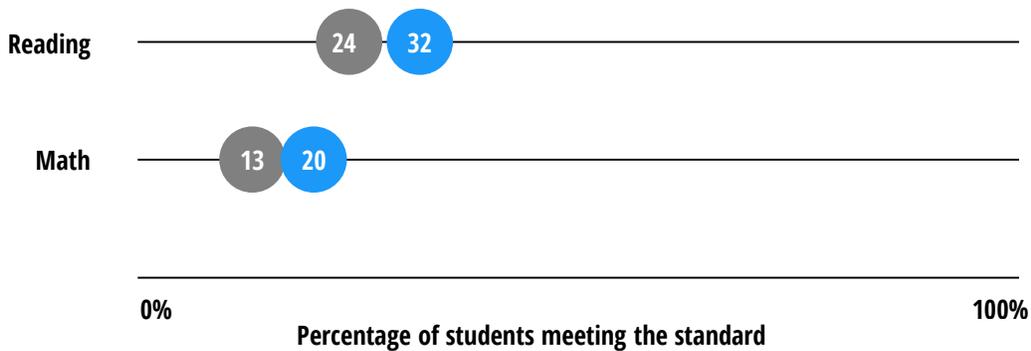


Source. 2014–2015 Creative Learning Initiative Coach Observation of Teacher Implementation Survey, AISD Student STAAR Records 2014–2015

Note. Teachers' implementation competency was positively related to students' STAAR science passing status, but not significant. Teachers' implementation competency level was divided into high and low at the median point.

Figure 17.

Students were more likely to meet the STAAR advanced reading and math standards when their teachers' implementation competency level was **high** than when their teachers' implementation competency level was **low**.



Source. 2014–2015 Creative Learning Initiative Coach Observation of Teacher Implementation Survey, AISD Student STAAR Records 2014–2015

Note. Teachers' implementation competency was positively related to students' STAAR advanced science passing status, but not significant. Teachers' implementation competency level was divided into high and low at the median point.



Conclusion

Data presented in this report indicate positive outcomes associated with the Creative Learning Initiative for the Austin Independent School District. The CLI teachers reported that professional development activities had a positive impact on their capacity to implement creative teaching. Students' attendance rates were higher when their teachers were more competent in implementing creative teaching. Community arts partners not only increased students' access to arts opportunities, but also significantly correlated with students' engagement. On average, CLI campuses were more able to build arts partnerships in each art form than were non-CLI campuses.

CLI demonstrated a bright image across the district. Employees at both CLI and non-CLI campuses had positive attitudes toward the program. Students were more likely to meet the STAAR reading and math standards, and to meet the STAAR advanced reading and math standards when their teachers were more competent in implementing arts-based strategies.

Any challenges associated with the CLI centered largely on management strategies associated with implementing the arts-based instruction. Some teachers reported frustration with their attempts to build connections between arts-based strategies and the curriculum when working with special populations. This is not surprising because arts-based instruction is a new instructional approach that integrates arts into the classroom for non-arts teachers. Time and commitment are needed to sustain the practice.

Recommendations

Teachers' concerns about the implementation of the arts-based instruction, along with the positive relationship between teachers' practices and student achievement provide some direction for future program refinement.

- **Increased distribution of instructional resources.** Teachers expressed a desire for more access to coaching support and model lessons that integrate arts-

based instruction. Available resources in a written or digital format might be an effective strategy to remind teachers of arts-based strategies and to sustain their implementation.

- **Increased administrative support in providing instructional leadership.** Given some respondents' concerns that they were overwhelmed by other initiatives and spent little time on arts-based instruction, teachers would benefit from campus leadership providing explicit permission and expectations for using arts-based instruction.
- **Increased clarity regarding the instructors' roles in implementing arts-based instruction.** Teachers would benefit from increased explanation about how their instructional practice changes when implementing arts-based instruction. By providing teachers with a thorough understanding of the impact of arts-based instruction on their teaching practices and professional roles, the program would increase the likelihood that teachers would use arts-based instruction.
- **Increased opportunities for collaboration.** Because teachers expressed their desire to collaborate with other instructors in implementing arts-based instruction, the program should create more opportunities for collaborative work. The facilitators/coaches could create a more collaborative environment in which teachers share practices, help their colleagues in their implementation of arts-based instruction, and coordinate their efforts with others to maximize the effects of arts-based instruction.
- **Increased understanding of why the arts-based strategies work for students.** If teachers know how to implement arts-based strategies well, they will be more likely to understand why the arts-based strategies work for their students. Results indicated that infrequent users did not tend to agree that their coaching experience increased their understanding about why the arts-based strategies work for their students, even though these users seemed to understand how to implement arts-based strategies. This finding suggests coaches should spend more time teaching teachers about this perspective.
- **More opportunities to increase the use of arts-based strategies.** When teachers used the arts-based strategies more frequently, they were less likely to have self-concerns and management concerns. Instead, they were more likely to reach the impact concerns about student achievement and collaboration to improve their practice. In addition, they were gaining additional higher-order skills and transforming how they teach. Their fluency in using arts-based strategies was also related to students' engagement and academic achievement. Therefore, we recommend the program provide more opportunities for teachers to increase their use of arts-based strategies.

- **Increased awareness among non-CLI educators.** Most educators who were not participating in the CLI did not know or were unsure about the CLI. We recommend two possible approaches. At non-CLI campuses, community arts partners played a critical role in providing students with arts opportunities. Community arts partners should share more information about the initiative and its benefit to students as well as how, when, and why to use arts-based strategies. Additionally, the CLI should create an informational campaign that includes concrete experiences with arts-based instruction to provide educators examples of how they might benefit from participation. This campaign might take the form of informational workshops, staff meeting visits, or video and print materials.
- **Increased students' access to arts education during after school time.** Access to afterschool programs in the arts for every student remains limited across the district in both CLI and non-CLI campuses. Data suggests unequal distribution of afterschool programs in the arts across the district. The CLI is well positioned to take a leadership role in solving this problem. The leaders of the CLI should work with campus leaders and community arts partners to develop a comprehensive plan to provide students access to afterschool arts opportunities in more grade levels in both CLI and non-CLI campuses. Increased attention should focus on access to dance and media arts for students of different ability levels (e.g., beginning, intermediate, and advanced).

Appendix A

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation measured the level of implementation of program activities and explored the relationship between these program activities and the desired outcomes. The research questions that guided the 2014–2015 evaluation (i.e., preliminary and short-term outcomes) were:

1. What impact did the creative learning professional development workshops have on teachers' capacity to implement high-quality arts-based instruction in their classrooms?
2. What impact did small-group “intensives”, (i.e., intensive training, and one-on-one coaching) have on teachers' capacity to implement high-quality arts-based instruction in their classrooms?
3. How did teachers progress through the stages of arts-based instruction innovation? How did this progress relate to the overall implementation at the campus and district level?
4. What resources and steps were needed to scaffold each individual and each campus as a team on to the next level of implementation of arts-based instruction?
5. In what ways did the program increase students' access to fine arts instruction and creative learning opportunities during both in- and out-of-school time?
6. What impact did the implementation of arts-based instruction and access to arts have on student outcomes?

To address the evaluation questions, a variety of evaluation measurements were collected, including surveys, Stages of Concern Questionnaires, campus arts inventories, innovation configuration mapping (ICM) rubrics, coach observations of teacher implementation, and archival student records (Table 1).

Table A1.

Evaluation activities

Evaluation measure	Subject	Research question addressed
Professional development workshop survey	Individual teachers and principals	1
Follow-up professional development workshop survey	Individual teachers and principals	1
Coaching survey	Individual teachers	2
Pre and post stages of concern questionnaire	Individual teachers	3 and 4
Elementary/secondary school ICM rubrics	Campus arts specialists and principals	5
Elementary/secondary school arts inventory	Campus arts specialists and principals	5
Coach observation of CLI teacher implementation	Teachers being coached	1, 2 and 6
Archival student records	Student	6

Source. Creative Learning Initiative Annual Evaluation Report 2014–2015

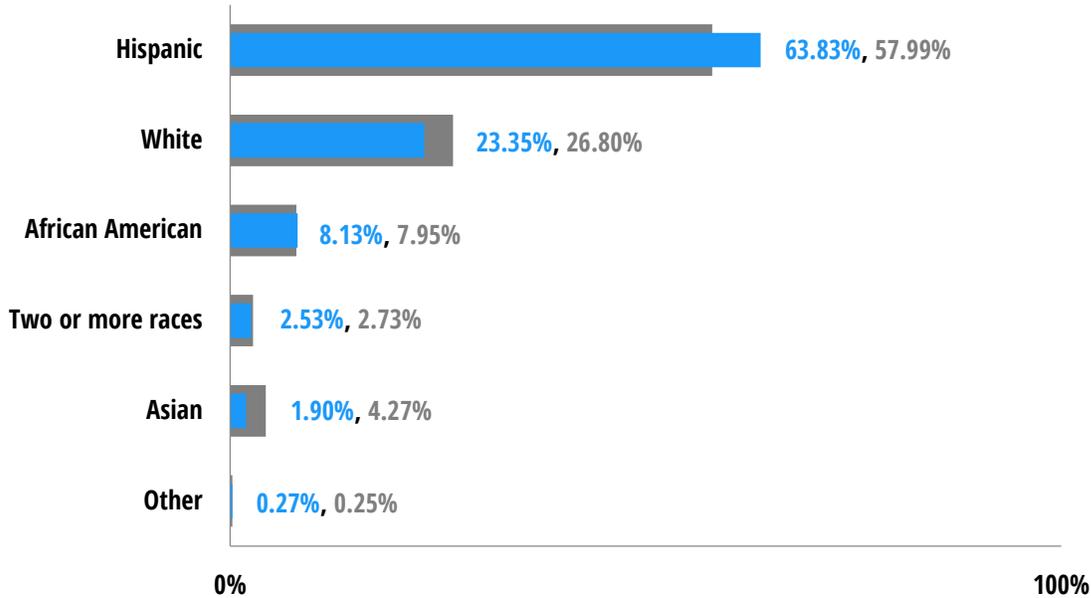
Note. ICM means Innovation Configuration Mapping. CLI means Creative Learning Initiative.

Appendix B

Students' demographic information at CLI and non-CLI campuses

Figure B1.

The percentage of students in different ethnic groups at CLI campuses was similar to that at non-CLI campuses.

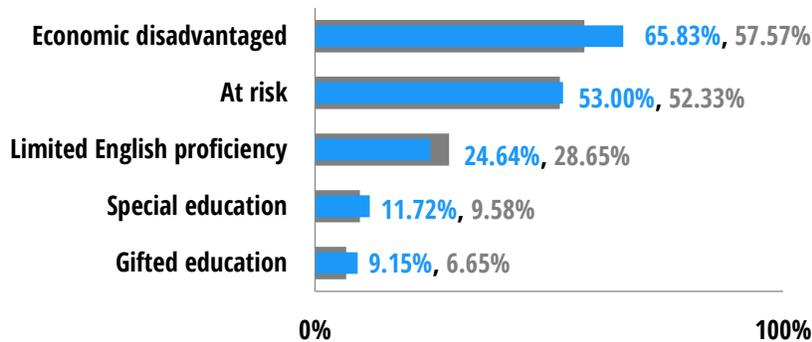


Source. 2014–2015 AISD Student Demographics Records

Note. Other includes American Indian or Alaska native and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.

Figure B2.

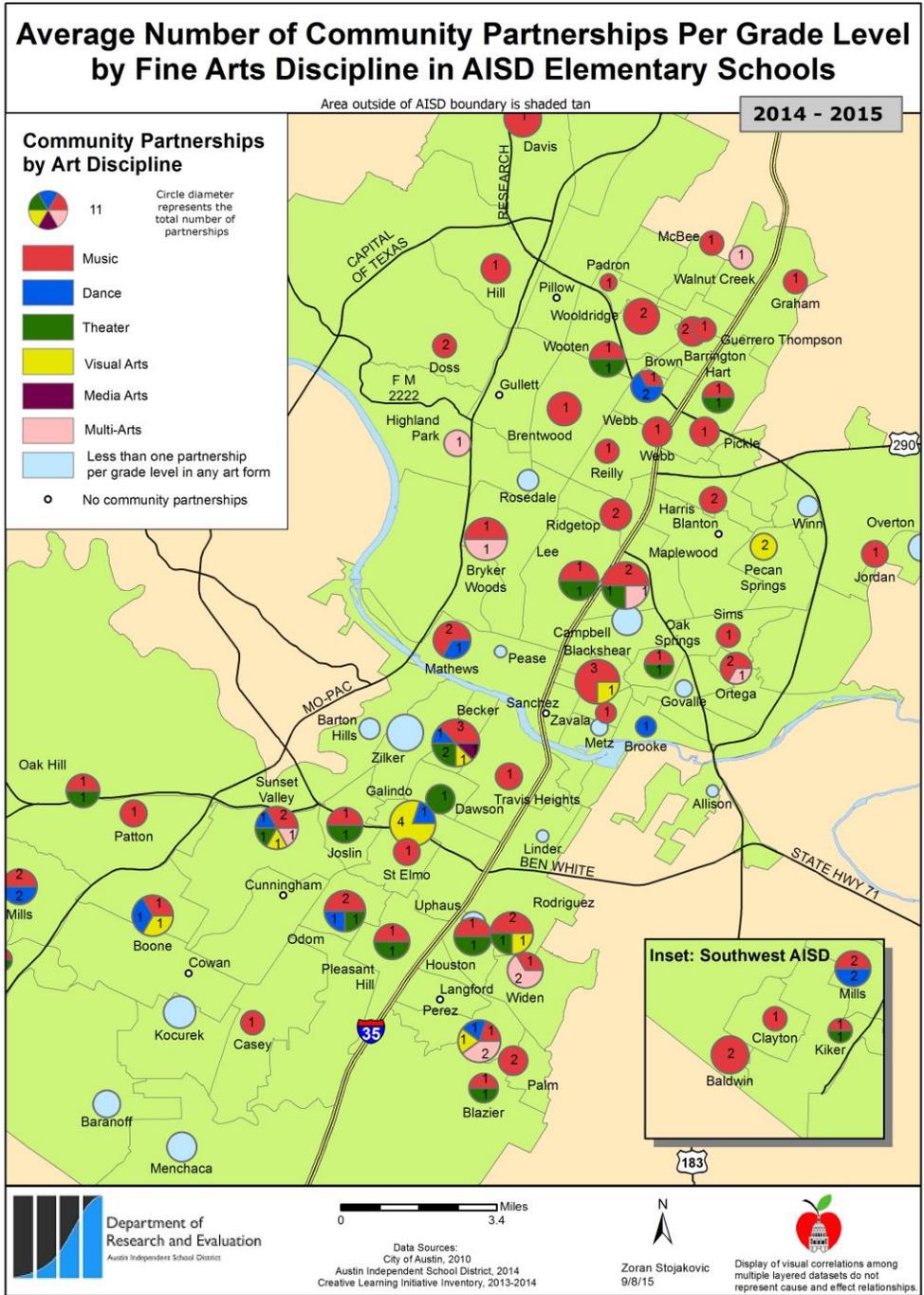
The percentage of students who were economic disadvantaged or at risk, participated in special education or gifted education, and had limited English proficiency at CLI campuses was similar to that at non-CLI campuses.



Source. 2014–2015 AISD Student Demographics Records

Appendix C

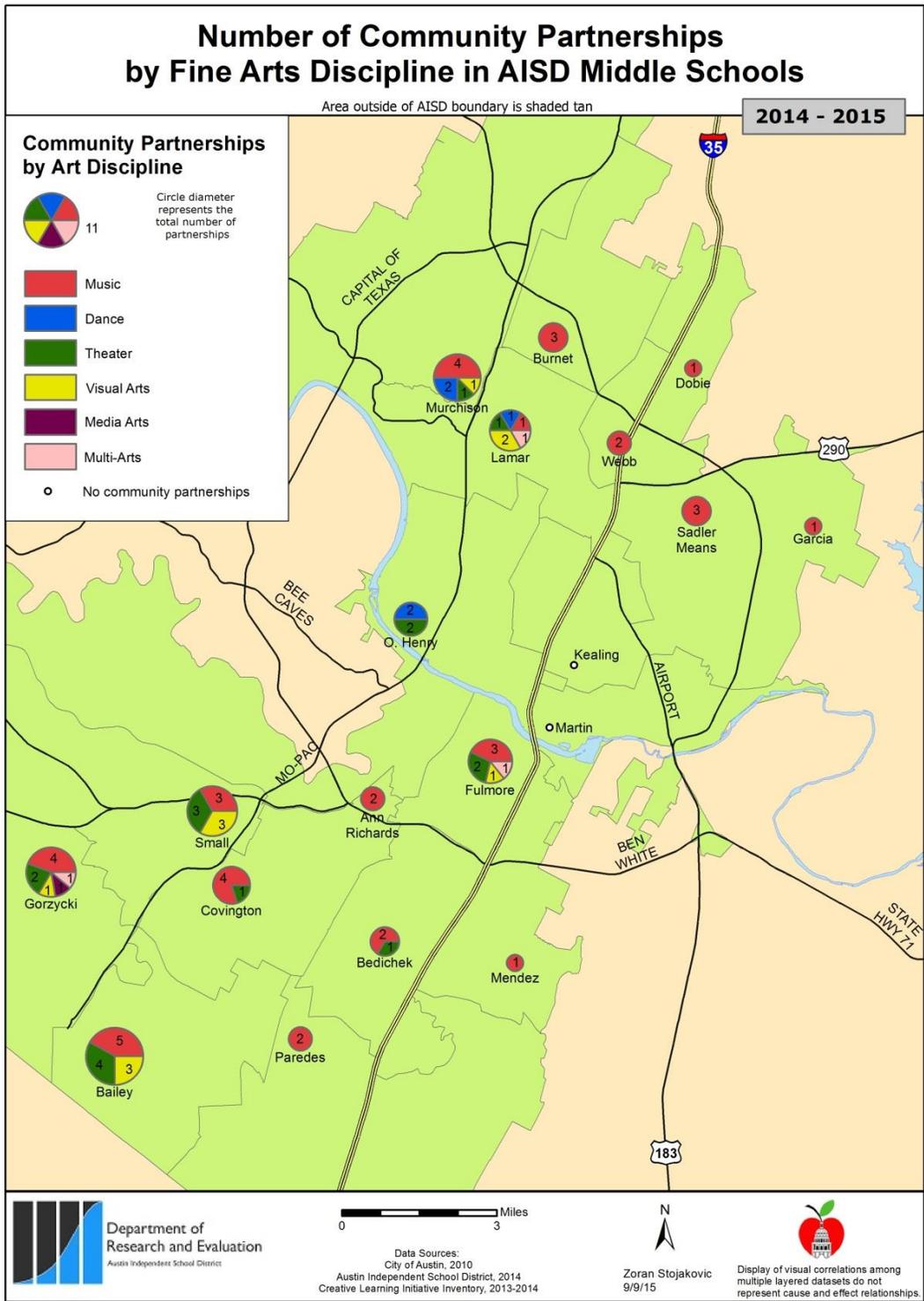
Many AISD elementary schools had multiple arts partners per grade level



Source. 2014–2015 Elementary School Arts Inventory

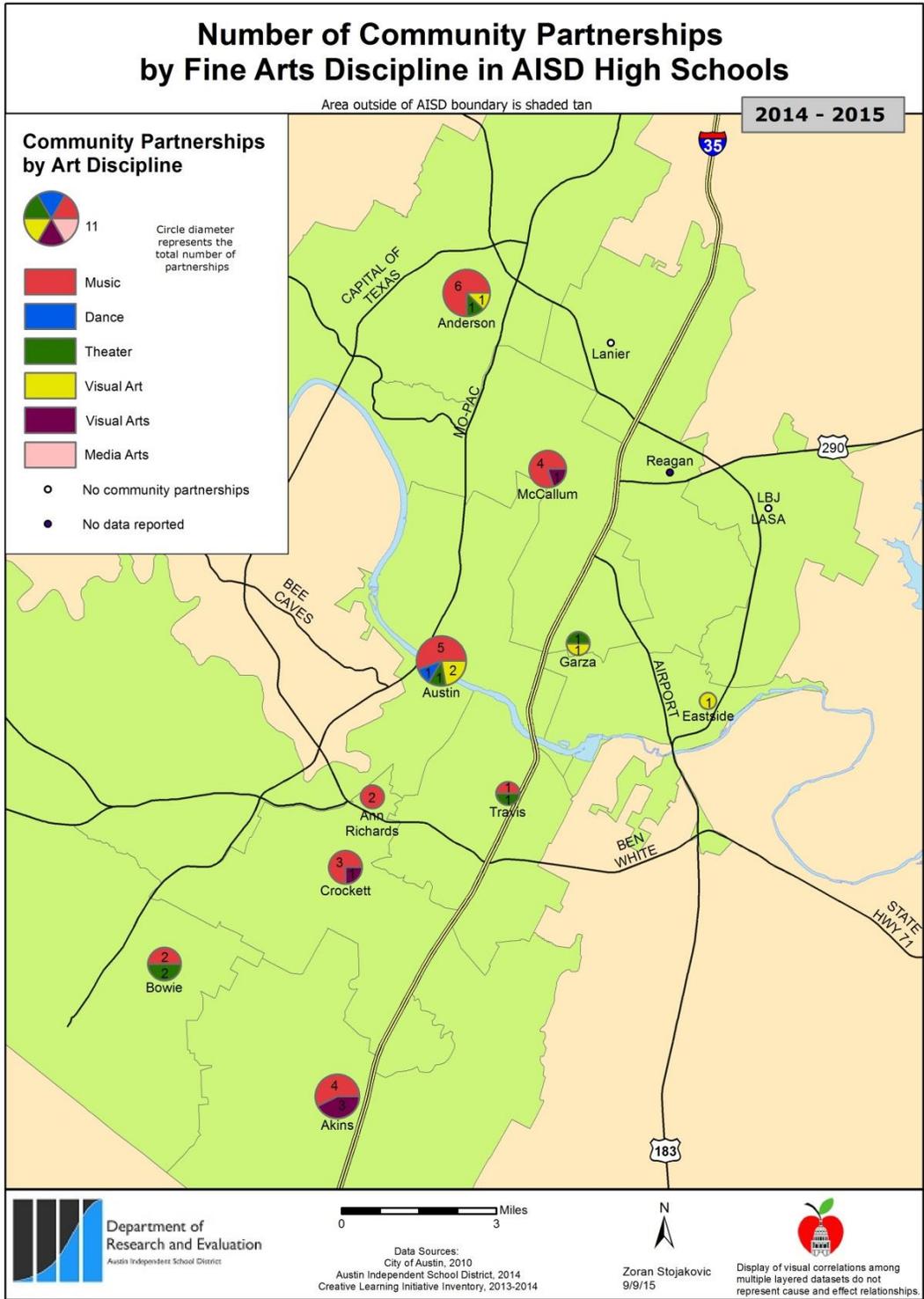
Note. Schools reporting their data are included in the map.

Many AISD middle schools had multiple arts partners in at least two art forms



Source. 2014–2015 Secondary School Arts Inventory
Note. Schools reporting their data are included in the map.

A few AISD high schools had multiple arts partners in at least two art forms





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Research and Evaluation
Austin Independent School District

0 3 Miles

Data Sources:
City of Austin, 2010
Austin Independent School District, 2014
Creative Learning Initiative Inventory, 2013-2014

N

Zoran Stojakovic
9/9/15



Display of visual correlations among
multiple layered datasets do not
represent cause and effect relationships.

Source. 2014–2015 Secondary School Arts Inventory
Note. Schools reporting their data are included in the map.

Appendix D

Student engagement was best associated with CLI program implementation at the elementary school level.

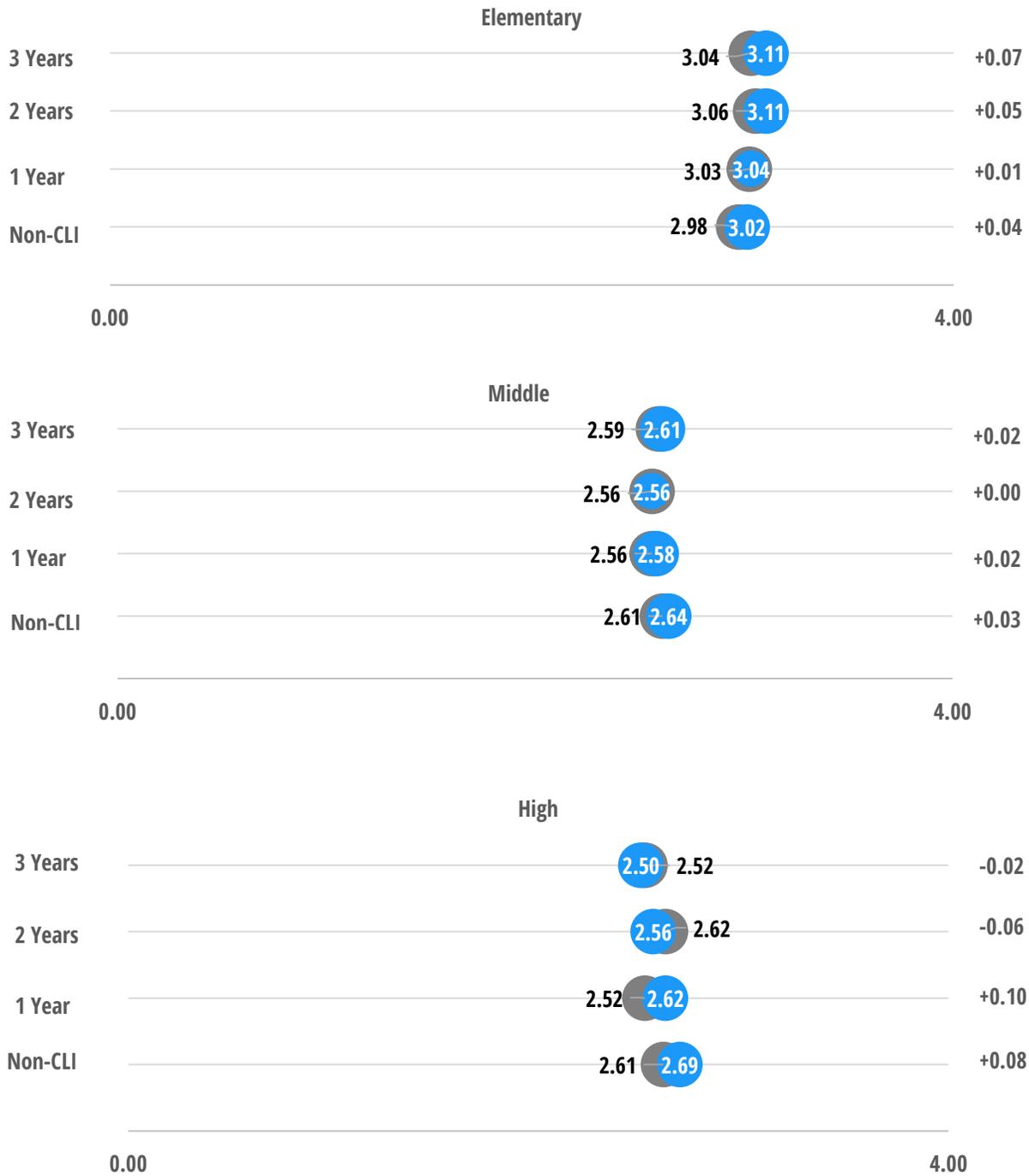
The AISD Student Climate Survey served to compare student engagement between cohorts who had been participating in the CLI for 1 to 3 years and those who never participated in the CLI. The results in the school year of 2011–2012, prior to CLI implementation, served as baseline data to compare with results in the current school year of 2014–2015. Student engagement in this section was measured based on seven items:

- I like to come to school.
- I enjoy doing my schoolwork.
- My homework helps me learn the things I need to know.
- My schoolwork makes me think about things in new ways.
- I have fun learning in my classes.
- My teachers connect what I am doing to my life outside the classroom.
- I receive recognition or praise for doing good work.

Results indicated that at the elementary school level, the more years the CLI campuses had participated in the program, the more engagement scores increased from 2011–2012 to 2014–2015. At the middle school level, the engagement scores increased at all CLI campuses; however, this increase was not as high as that at non-CLI campuses. At the high school level, student engagement scores increased only at CLI campuses who had participated in the program for 1 year; this increase was greater than that at non-CLI campuses.

Figure D1.

Between 2011–2012 and 2014–2015, student engagement scores improved at elementary and middle schools, but showed mixed results at high schools. Especially at CLI elementary schools, student engagement scores improved most, with a steady increase for each successive year of program participation.



Source. AISD Student Climate Survey 2011–2012 and 2014–2015

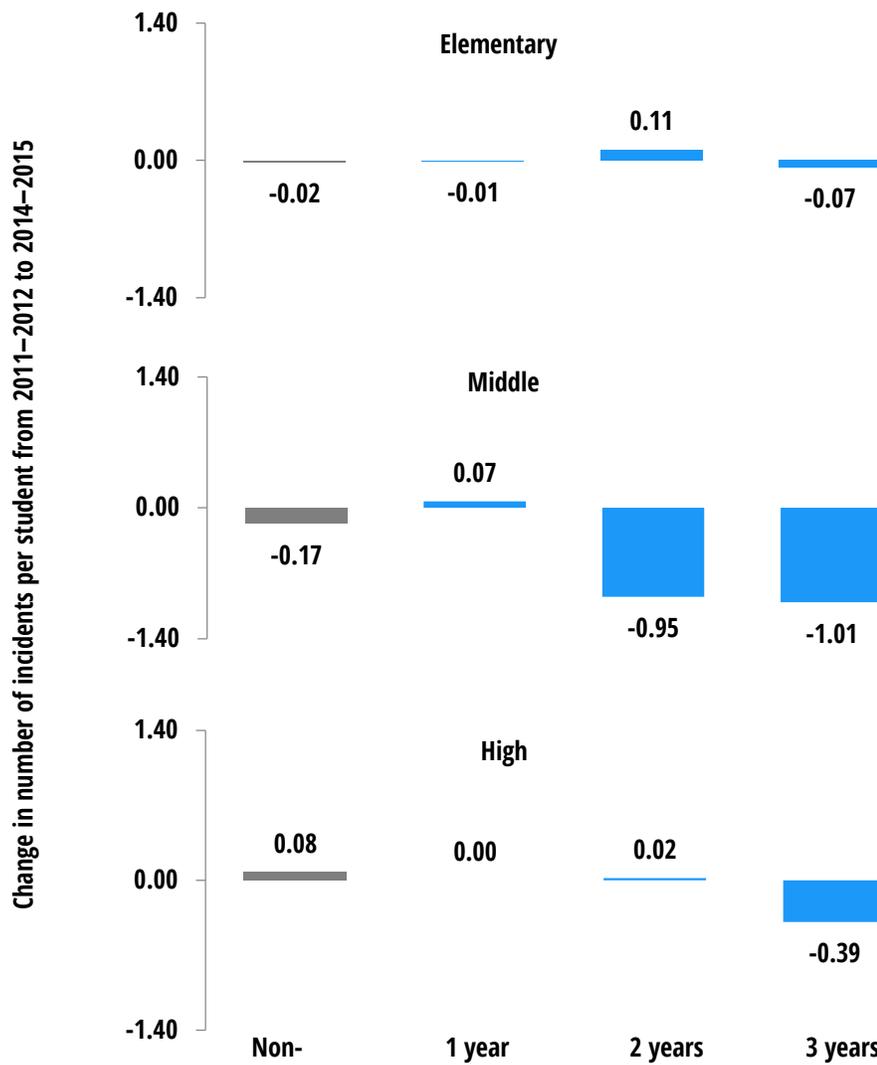
Note. Response options ranged from 1 = never to 4 = a lot of the time.

Student discipline incidents was associated with more years of CLI program participation

Between 2011–2012 and 2014–2015, CLI campuses that had participated in the program for 3 years demonstrated better performance in student discipline incidents than did those that had participated for 1 or 2 years, as well as at non-CLI campuses. For example, the average number of discipline incidents per student and the average campus percentage of student discipline decreased most at these campuses.

Figure D2.

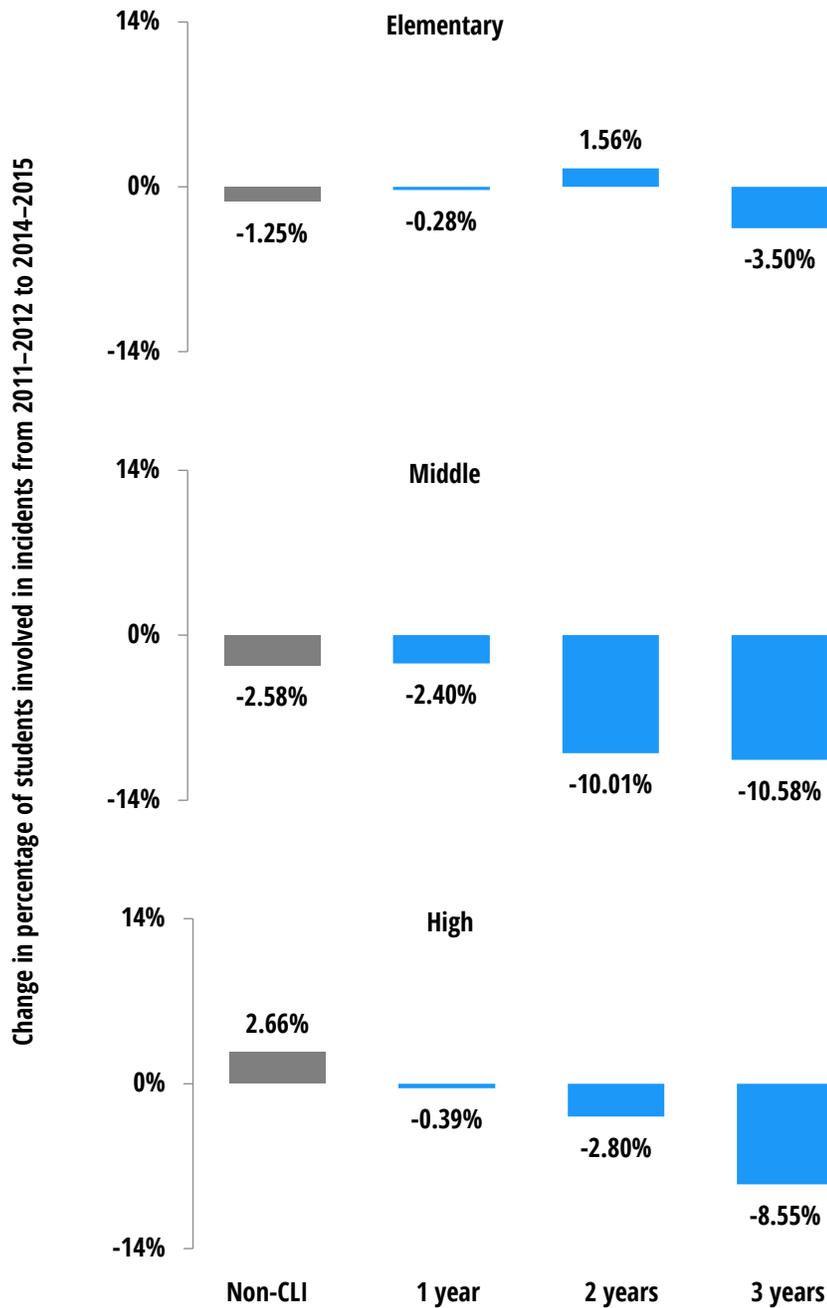
Between 2011–2012 and 2014–2015, the average number of discipline incidents per student decreased most at all school levels of the CLI campuses that had participated in the program for 3 years, but showed mixed results at CLI campuses that had participated in the program for 1 or 2 years, as well as at non-CLI campuses.



Source. AISD Student Discipline Records 2011–2012 and 2014–2015

Figure D3.

CLI campuses that had participated in the program for 3 years, 2011–2012 through 2014–2015, showed the greatest reduction in discipline incidents. The decreases at the middle and high school levels were steady for each successive year of program participation. Non-CLI campuses showed mixed results.



Source. AISD Student Discipline Records 2011–2012 and 2014–2015

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Hord, S. M., Rutherford, W. L., Huling, L., & Hall, G. E. (2006). *Taking charge of change*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL).

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