



HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES

STATE OF MICHIGAN

Appropriations Requests for Legislatively Directed Spending Items

1. The sponsoring representative's first name:
Steve
2. The sponsoring representative's last name:
Frisbie
3. The cosponsoring representatives' names. All cosponsors must be listed. If none, please type 'n/a.' A signed letter from the sponsor approving the co-sponsorship and a signed letter from the member wishing to co-sponsor are required. Attach letters at question #9 below.
N/A
4. Name of the entity that the spending item is intended for:
Starr Commonwealth
5. Physical address of the entity that the spending item is intended for:
13725 Starr Commonwealth Road in Albion, MI 49224
6. If there is not a specific recipient, the intended location of the project or activity:
In addition to the physical location noted above (Starr Commonwealth's Albion campus), Student Resilience & Empowerment Center program services will also be delivered at the Battle Creek Family YMCA, located at 182 Capital Ave NE, Battle Creek, MI 49017
7. Name of the representative and the district number where the legislatively directed spending item is located:
Steve Frisbie, District 44
8. Purpose of the legislatively directed spending item. Please include how it provides a public benefit and why it is an appropriate use of taxpayer funding. Please also demonstrate that the item does not violate Article IV, S 30 of the Michigan Constitution. Community Mental Health Programs in Michigan receive 28,000+ crisis calls monthly, highlighting the critical demand for mental health support services and programs. Notably, youth struggling with mental health crises are often undiagnosed or misdiagnosed, and schools are not equipped to address the range of mental health related student issues. When these students are expelled or drop out of school, it makes them 3

times more likely to be in the juvenile justice system within a year and 8 times more likely to later be incarcerated than those who ultimately graduate high school. Research also shows that 1 in 20 ER visits list a mental health crisis as the primary diagnosis, 1 in 5 law enforcement calls involve mental health, and up to 50% of fatal police encounters involve individuals with mental health challenges. Without expanded community-based options, youth in crisis face increased risk of school violence, expulsion, arrest, institutionalization, and suicide.

To address the growing youth mental health epidemic, Starr Commonwealth launched a school-integrated, not-for-profit Student Resilience & Empowerment Center (“The REC”). The REC operates out of the Battle Creek Family YMCA, with summer programming on Starr’s historic campus in Albion. The REC serves Calhoun County middle schoolers struggling to address their mental health and find a successful pathway to and through high school and into adulthood. The REC was piloted over the past 2 ½ years with local, county and federal support, with some incredible results (as shared in the attached program evaluation). Over 250 youth have enrolled in the program to date, with a large majority graduating and returning to their schools with improved academics, increased engagement in class, and fewer disciplinary encounters.

This funding will enable this program to continue throughout fiscal year 26, enabling money needed for staffing, program marketing, leasing costs, and partner training. This funding is not a violation of Article 4 Section 30 of the Michigan Constitution because the organization is a nonprofit.

9. **Attach documents here if needed:**

Attachments added to the end of this file.

10. **The amount of state funding requested for the legislatively directed spending item.**

750000

11. **Has the legislatively directed spending item previously received any of the following types of funding? Check all that apply.**

["Federal","Local"]

12. **Please select one of the following groups that describes the entity requesting the legislatively directed spending item:**

Non-profit organization

13. **For a non-profit organization, has the organization been operating within Michigan for the preceding 36 months?**

Yes

14. **For a non-profit organization, has the entity had a physical office within Michigan for the preceding 12 months?**

Yes

15. For a non-profit organization, does the organization have a board of directors?

Yes

16. For a non-profit organization, list all the active members on the organization's board of directors and any other officers. If this question is not applicable, please type 'n/a.'

Chair Randy Neumann, Vice Chair Simon Bisson, Secretary George Goodman, Lisa Miller, Treasurer Sean Silver, Erick Stewart, Dr. Kara Van Dam (Please see attached document for trustees)

17. "I certify that neither the sponsoring representative nor the sponsoring representative's staff or immediate family has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the legislatively directed spending item."

Yes, this is correct

18. Anticipated start and end dates for the legislatively directed spending item:

Start Date: October 1, 2025. End Date: September 30, 2026.

19. "I hereby certify that all information provided in this request is true and accurate."

Yes

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STUDENT RESILIENCE & EMPOWERMENT CENTER

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April 18, 2025

FY26 State of Michigan Legislatively Directed Spending Request

Supplemental Program Evaluation Attachment

Overview:

This attachment includes a comprehensive program overview and 2-year evaluation of the Student Resilience & Empowerment ("The REC"), which reflects the goals, objectives, strategic partnerships and outcomes outlined in the application. This Report highlights successful planning, enrollment and youth participation in the program during its pilot launch, along with marked improvements in student progress, including social, emotional, behavioral and academic improvements.

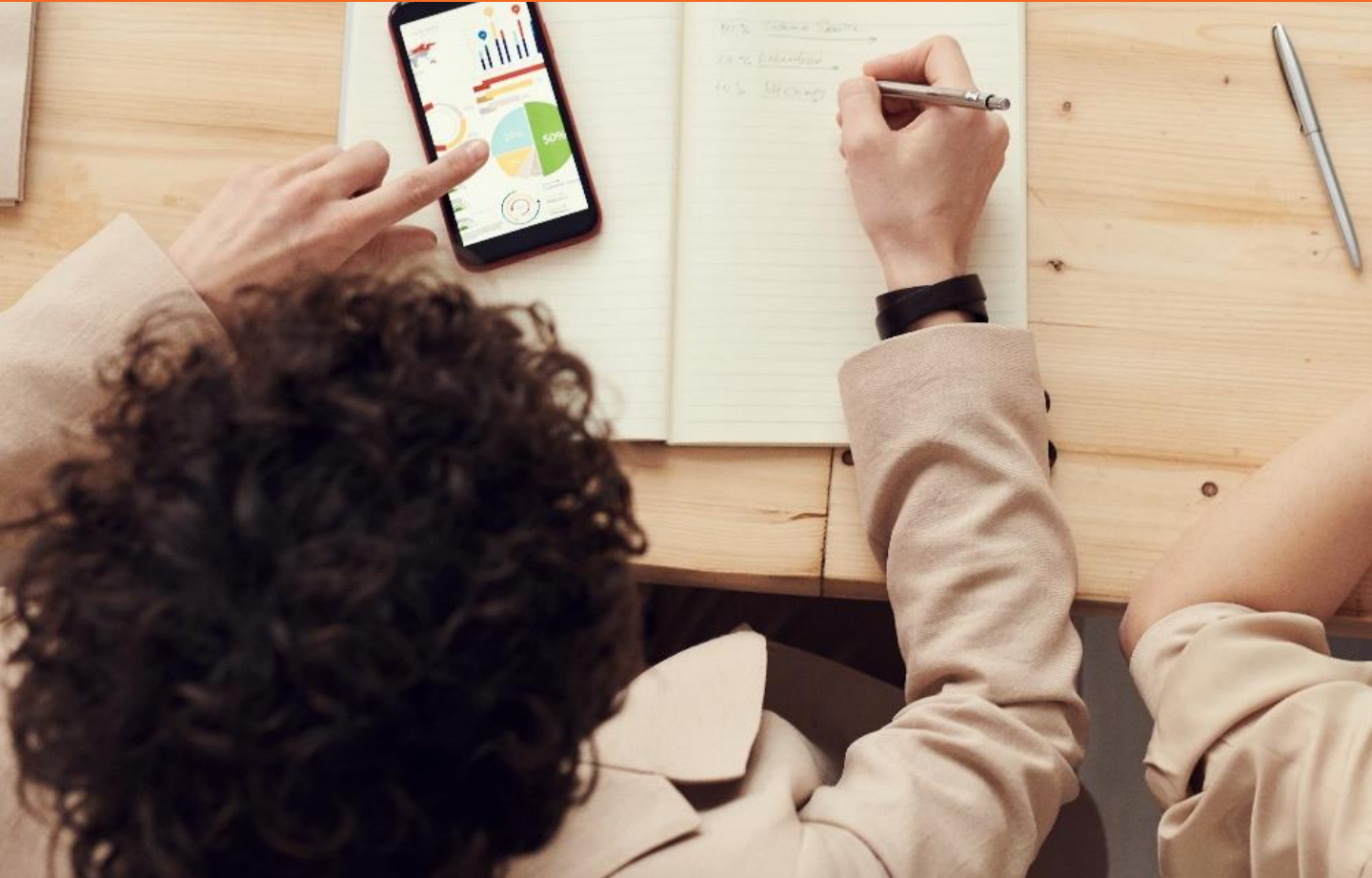
Throughout the first year of programming (2022-23), comprehensive planning and partnership collaboration took place, a limited capacity of staff were hired, program spaces at the YMCA were renovated and improved, students were enrolled and continuous progress improvements were made to streamline programming from enrollment through graduation. The program grew entering its second year, including the addition of summer REC programming on Starr's Albion campus, and there were ultimately 212 students enrolled and 187 graduated during this 2-year evaluation period (note that this report does not include a full account of 2024-25 and an additional 45 youth enrolled). A total of eight Calhoun County schools have participated in the program since it launched in 2022.

This program overview and summary of outcomes were shared with Representative Steve Frisbee when he visited the REC program in early 2025.



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Program Report

October 2022 through September 2024

Program Summary and Results Across School Districts

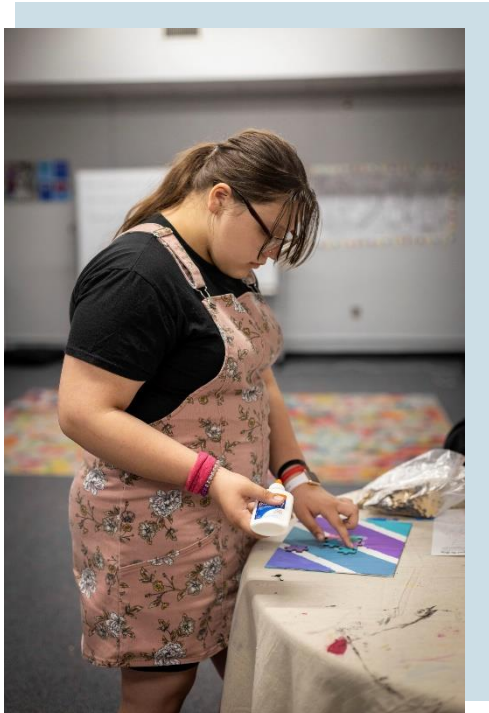
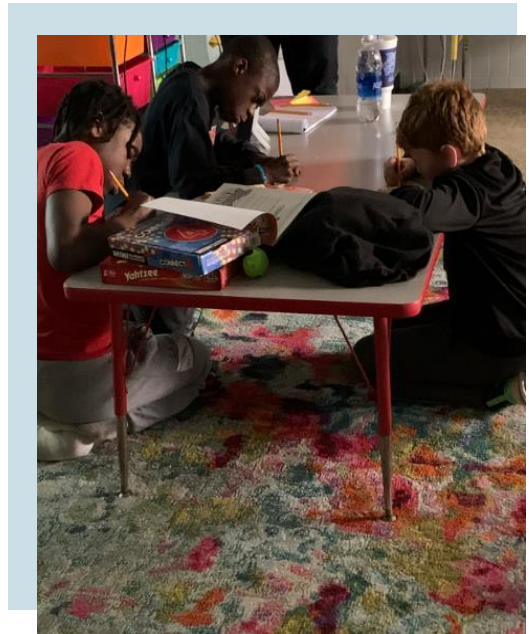


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Based on a growing demand to support the social, emotional, and mental health needs of middle school children in Calhoun County, Starr Commonwealth and a collaborative of community partners launched the Student Resilience & Empowerment Center (REC), a county-wide, school-based behavioral health program.

This immersive, half-day program built on existing collaborations between Starr and local schools, who together with the YMCA, and Calhoun County's public mental health provider, Summit Pointe, are implementing a model that integrates behavioral health care into the school day. The REC program provides middle school students access to supports so they can learn, practice, and master new coping strategies for emotional awareness and regulation that can lead to improved health and wellbeing.



The Student Resilience & Empowerment Center:

-  Matches students to a continuum of holistic supports and services (academic and behavioral health).
-  Provides behavioral health services that will support and improve students' social and emotional skills.
-  Offers experiences that will foster students' development of resilience characteristics.
-  Offers strength-based opportunities that allow students to see their own progress and builds their self-efficacy (growth mindset).
-  Offers, monitors, and proctors academic opportunities that will improve student academic engagement in school.
-  Makes more accessible individual and family behavioral health services to students as needed.
-  Creates a multidisciplinary "Advisory Team" that consists of school-based staff, community & service providers, and Student Resilience & Empowerment Center staff to work together alongside the student and their family in creating supportive plans that increase students' success from a whole-child, trauma-responsive approach.



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Starr Commonwealth's theory of change is that when trauma-informed and resilience-focused adults work within trauma-informed and resilience-focused systems, the health and well-being of children will improve. Starr and its collaborating partners, Summit Pointe, the Battle Creek Family YMCA, and local schools believe that when you look beyond behaviors and treat a child with dignity and respect as well as provide a sense of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity, it can change a child's heart and mind. Ultimately, this can help build resilience and impact a child's life.

The Student Resilience & Empowerment Center (REC) is committed to creating an entire system of support for every student and their family who partakes in the program. This system of support is designed to act as an "interdisciplinary team" working through a resilience-focused lens to ensure the individual strengths and needs of each child are being met. These supports include equitable access to behavioral health services as needed. The goal is to remove as many barriers as possible for every family in accessing these services.

The REC Center programming provides a continuum of care for students by:

- Training school staff on how to identify when students are in need of additional supports.
- Providing a highly specialized, integrated approach to behavior intervention that includes SEL, mind-body skills, movement, and peer-to-peer support for students outside of the distractions of their typical classroom environment.
- Offering a structured, unique learning environment to prime students for success in their typical classroom.
- Monitoring students' responses to intervention to ensure program fidelity, measure student progress, and determine a student's need for continued, specialized care in the program.

Personalized Program Activities

- Academic Services
- Behavioral Health Services
- Community Meetings
- Mindfulness Activities
- Guided Movement Activities
- Relationship Building
- Sensory-Based Activities
- Social-Emotional Learning
- Executive Functioning Skill Building



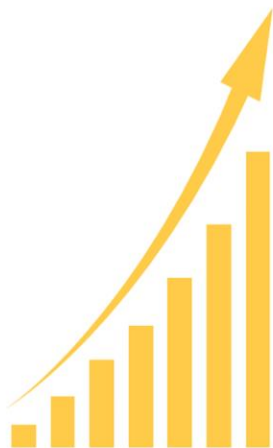
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REC Services

All services are recommended on an individualized basis through a growth planning process. The growth plan is created in partnership with the student, family, and interdisciplinary team.

The purpose of this plan is to evaluate the strengths and needs of the child and their family from a holistic, trauma-responsive approach. The growth plan includes behavioral health, psychological, social, and cognitive goals as applicable to the student. This growth plan serves as the guide for which level of care and the frequency of services recommended by the team will support the overall growth and development of the child.



DESIGNED TO IMPROVE

- Resilience characteristics
- Engagement in school/class
- Academic engagement
- Social and emotional skills
- Peer to peer relationships
- Growth mindset
- Self-confidence



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A WEEK AT A GLANCE



Program Elements

Mind Body Skills
Peer to Peer Group Support
Family Engagement
Sensory-Based Intervention

CASEL aligned SEL Learning
Academic Support
Behavioral Health Support
Response Ability Pathways (RAP)
& Cultures of Respect



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Program Spaces

Sensory Room

- Students apply their self-awareness & self-regulation skills they've learned in the sensory room by engaging with a wide variety of **sensory-based interventions** to meet their unique needs.
- The **sensory tools and interventions** range from big body movements (e.g., yoga and guided exercises), to aroma therapy, physical textures, alternative lighting, diverse seating, guided imagery, sensory paths, etc.
- In this space students are supported via **co-regulation** to learn how each sensory tool helps them achieve regulation so they can transfer those skills to different environments.





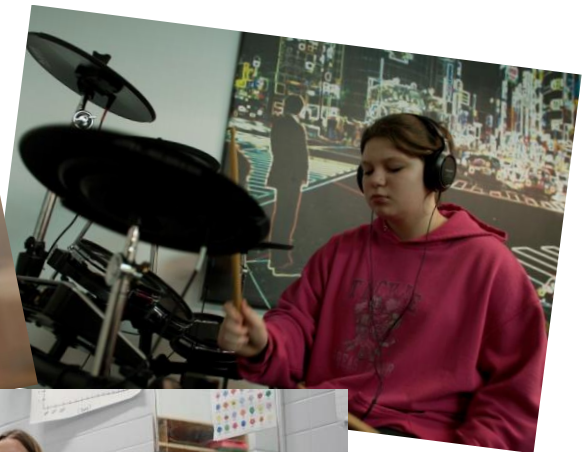
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Program Spaces

SEL Integrated Classroom

- Students engage in **whole-group and individual based learning** that emphasizes **social emotional development** simultaneously with the crucial **executive functioning skills** required to be successful at school independently.
- While in the classroom, students have the opportunity to experience **peer-to-peer support** to practice new skills related to balanced literacy through classroom novels that promote **belonging** and characteristics of **resilience**.
- The room is intentionally designed to be a model **trauma-responsive and resilience-focused environment** that proactively meets student's sensory needs while they learn.
- Through explicit SEL lessons, students also practice essential **balanced literacy skills** in order to be successful throughout their educational journey.





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Program Spaces

Makerspace

- All students participate in **Service-Learning Projects** related to solving real-life problems connected to their community.
- Students have **access to a wide variety of resources** such as arts & crafts, computer/graphic design, team-based drafting tables/white boards, and more where their individual ideas are brought to life to help serve others in the community.
- Students are encouraged to bring forward problems in their world they wish to see solved and ask their group to help develop possible solutions, **creating problem-solving plans** in the Makerspace.





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Programming Staff



Katie Carpenter *Director of Student Resilience & Empowerment Center*

- Master's of Arts – Human Services
- 12 years serving youth in Starr Commonwealth Programs
- 15 years experience working with youth
- Certified Trauma and Resilience Trainer
- Certified Resilience Coach



Jess Hess *Teacher*

- Master's of Arts – The Practice of Teaching
- 13 years teaching experience
- 17 years working with students in a school setting
- Certified Trauma Practitioner
- Certified Resilience Coach



Tony Bentley *Senior Resilience Coach*

- Bachelor's of Arts – Psychology
- 14 years serving youth on Starr's campus
- 16 years serving children in various settings
- Certified Trauma & Resilience Trainer
- Certified Resilience Coach



Kristi Wichmann *Senior Resilience Coach*

- Master's Degree – Organizational Psychology
- 26 years experience serving Starr youth
- 26 years experience working with youth



Derricka Smith *Resilience Coach*

- Master's Degree in Psychology
- 1.5 years experience serving Starr youth
- 3 years working with youth
- Certified in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)
- Certified Trauma Practitioner



Josh Smith *Resilience Coach*

- Associate's Degree – General Studies
- Associate's Degree – Criminal Justice
- 12 years experience serving youth on Starr's campus
- 14 years experience serving children in various settings
- Certified Trauma Practitioner
- Certified Resilience Coach



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Programming Staff (Cont.)



Jon Hamlin *School Success Specialist*

- Bachelor's of Arts – Criminal Justice
- 8 years experience serving youth on Starr's campus
- 10 years experience working with youth
- Certified Trauma Practitioner
- Certified Resilience Coach



Heather Ottinger *Resilience Coach*

- 13 years experience serving Starr youth
- 13 years experience working with youth
- Certified Trauma Practitioner
- Certified Resilience Coach

Supporting Staff



Erica Ilcyn *Director of Education Partnerships & Program Consultant*

- Bachelor's Degree – Special Education: Learning Disabilities, Emotional & Behavioral Disabilities
- 5 years public school district administration leadership experience
- 5 years teaching experience
- Certified Trauma & Resilience Trainer
- Certified Trauma Practitioner
- Certified Resilience Coach



Will Weeks *Resilience Coach*

- Bachelor of Arts
- 5 years education experience (Dean of Students, Assistant Dean of Students, Building Substitute)
- 5 years Resilience Coach experience
- Certified Trauma and Resilience Trainer
- Certified Resilience Coach



Elijah Armstrong *Associate Resilience Coach*

- 20 years experience working with children and families in various mentorship roles
- Provides push-in school support
- Certified Trauma Practitioner



Baloo *Certified Canine Good Citizen*

- 4 years experience working with children
- Specializes in social and emotional support
- Provides unconditional support for REC students
- Sometimes works as a pillow for REC students



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Program Evaluation



To ensure efficacy and adherence to the goals set forth by the REC program, Starr Commonwealth's Research, Evaluation, and Innovation (REI) Team conducted ongoing evaluation to measure mid-year and annual progress, monitor the program's effectiveness, and assess its sustainability. To accomplish this, the Evaluation team utilized measurement tools including:

1. *General Education Checklist* – data provided by the student's school
2. *Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM)* – administered to the student
3. *Circle of Courage: Supports and Strengths Scale* – administered to the student
4. *Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ-8)* – administered to the student and their family/caregiver

For continuous improvement, Starr's Evaluation Team added two quality improvement methods to identify ways to improve upon the program:

- *Surveying of, and interviews with REC program staff*
- *Satisfaction survey deployed to school representatives*

Program Reach

From **October 1, 2022** through **September 30, 2024**, students from eight school districts in southwest Michigan have participated in the Student Resilience & Empowerment Center (SREC) or the Summer Student Resilience & Empowerment Center (Summer SREC) – serving over 200 students.



* Of the 212 program participants, 187 students completed the program as planned. Twenty-four (24) students left the program early (e.g., moved out of district, suspended from school, behavior challenges preventing transportation, stopped attending), while one (1) student is currently enrolled in the SREC program (i.e., they were enrolled in the SREC program at the start of the 2024-2025 school year).

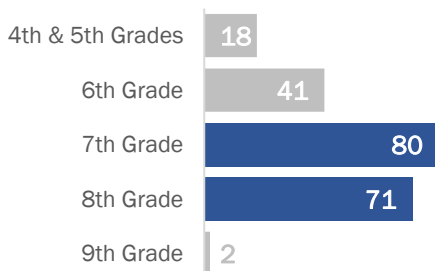
Student Demographics

The following is demographic information for the **212 students** who **enrolled** in the SREC and Summer SREC programs:

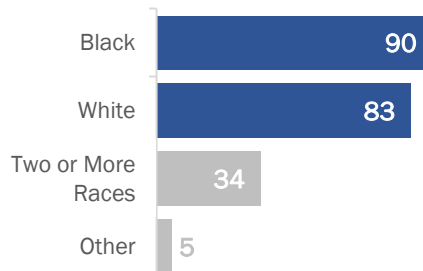
Enrolled Students: Program Year



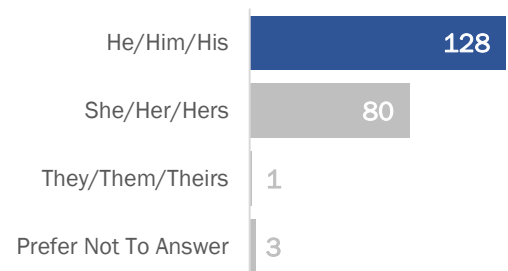
Enrolled Students: Grade



Enrolled Students: Race



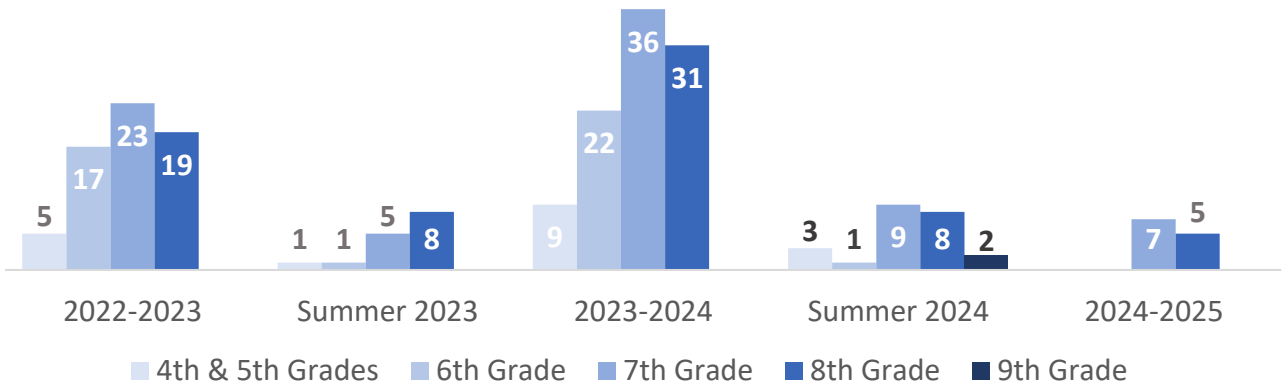
Enrolled Students: Pronouns



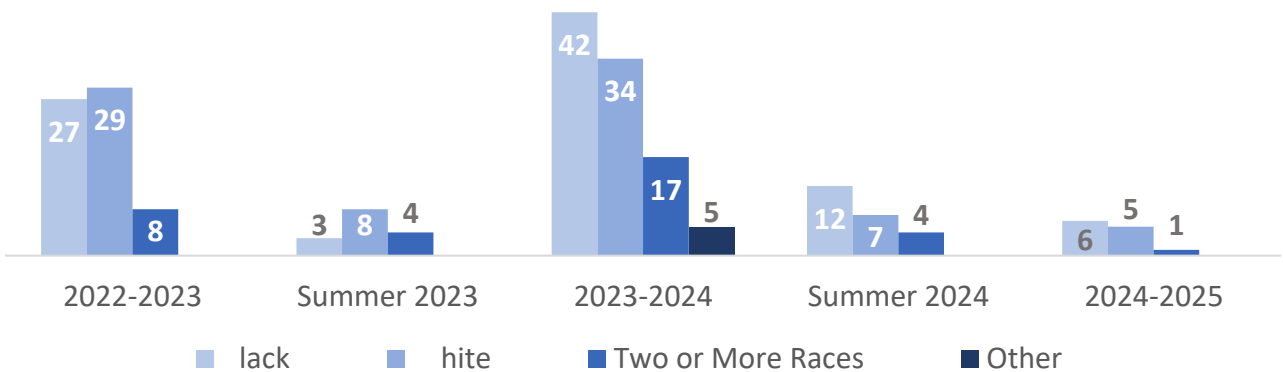
Student Demographics, Cont.

Below is the demographic information of the students enrolled in the SREC program by school year or summer offering.

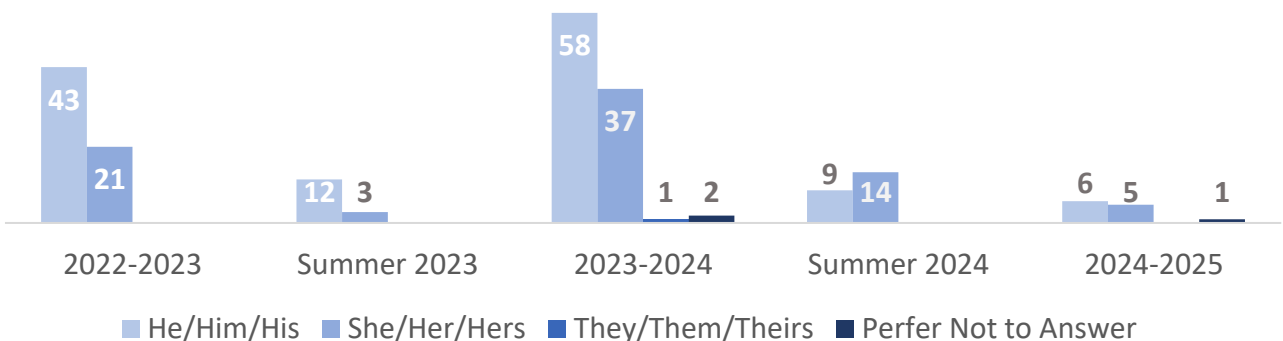
Enrolled Students: Grade by Program Year



Enrolled Students: Race by Program Year



Enrolled Students: Pronouns by Program Year



Student Outcomes

The Student Resilience and Empowerment Center (SREC) is an immersive half-day program that supports middle school students as they learn, practice, and master **emotional awareness** and **regulation**. Results suggest an increase in protective factors that support students as they navigate life challenges.

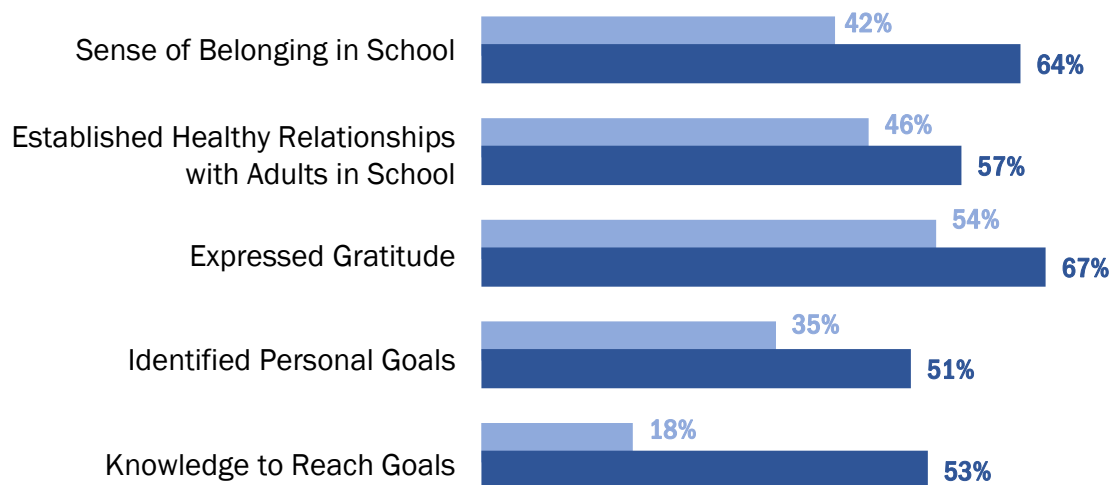
SREC students reported the SREC program helped to **improve their social skills, support their thinking processes** (e.g., making good decisions, thinking before they act), and helped to **improve their grades**.

65%
of students
maintained or increased their
GPA

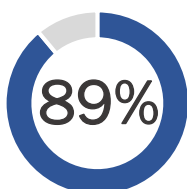
65%
of students
maintained or decreased their
disciplinary referrals

61%
of students
maintained or decreased their
tardies to class

After students completed the SREC program, school representatives reported an increase in the percentage of students who **appeared to have a sense of belonging** and **established healthy relationships with adults in school, expressed gratitude**, and **practiced goal-setting** from **pre-** to **post-** program.



Student Satisfaction



... of students indicated they were mostly or very satisfied with the **amount of help they received**.

... of students indicated the services they received **helped them to deal more effectively with their problems**.

... of students indicated if they were to seek help again, **they would come back to the SREC program**.



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Continuous Improvement: Stakeholder Feedback



Full implementation of programming has revealed that the timeframe of the program may be closer to 8-10 weeks as opposed to 6-8 weeks. School partners have requested to extend the time of students in the program to allow for greater success.



Continue to support students while they are in their home schools so they can transition the skills they learned in REC to their classroom environment.



Continue to structure programming that is aligned with state standards as well as leverages the power of the *Response Ability Pathways* (RAP) and *Cultures of Respect* (new *Positive Peer Culture*) curricula.



Continue frequency, level, and quality of communication and coordination with partners on logistics as well as monitoring student needs and progress.



Continue to develop ways of grouping students that mitigate logistical barriers such as transportation while still providing an exemplary therapeutic experience.



Continue to streamline the referral process while still receiving needed information and admitting students fitting program criteria as efficiently as possible.



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Overall Impact on Students

Feedback from School Representatives Across School Districts



“The Rec provides services to our students that are not available in a regular educational setting. Students are **given the tools** they need **to be successful in a traditional educational environment** and **apply the skills in their every day life.**”



“I’ve seen the results of the program and how it has **helped our kids work through difficult situations** that they otherwise wouldn’t have been able to work through.”



“The support has been great and in particular, the weekly discussions about student needs and having an **alternative to address our students’ behavioral concerns that does not involve punishment or sending kids home/out of school** has been refreshing.”



“One student in particular, we have **seen tremendous turnaround at school.** He is able to take personal responsibility for his actions, and able to respond more appropriately to teachers.”



“We have seen **growth** in a student’s **ability to emotionally regulate and de-escalate,** understanding this is a process.”





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REC Staff Survey

There were 13 REC staff members that completed a Staff Survey, which asked respondents to reflect on the program.

At the end of the REC program,

100 %

of the REC staff agreed or strongly agreed that the REC students presented improvements in...

RESILIENCE

92%

of REC staff agreed that students were **engaged** in the program.

92%

of REC staff agreed or strongly agreed that **student engagement improved** over the course of the REC.



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Overall Impact on Students Across School Districts

Sample Comments from REC Staff

“I believe the impact the REC has on the students is a *[sic]* **positive, healthy, and empowering.**”

“I feel we are doing good work on **building strong relationships with students** and getting them to participate in the program.”

“I believe most students benefit from the program and are **taking new skills back to school/home** after they finish programming.”

“One student checked his grades one day and when he found an ‘**A-**’ was so excited that he ran around and told the whole REC Team.”

“A student who is often withdrawn and not actively engaged found a space with some adults here to **talk through some of the really hard things going on at home.**”

“The REC Team was able to work in collaboration with the district to **advocate for two students who were facing expulsion** and come up with plans that all parties agreed on to **keep them at the REC and in school.**”





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Overall Impact on Students Across School Districts (Cont.)

Sample Comments from REC Staff

"[Student] benefited socially for this program. [His] mom reported better behavior at home; better able to self-regulate and slow down. [He was] engaged in more physical activities. [He] loved Baloo our therapy dog and we believe that helped him come out of his shell. We were also able to help talk through [his] hesitations about starting a new medicine for a new diagnosis."



"[Student] had great gains in self-regulation especially during competitive activities. He also improved in his social interactions with peers overall. Our program was also able to support him during his grief from the recent passing of his grandmother."

"It was rewarding when going into [School District] Schools to hear from teachers and principals [say] that they were seeing results and change in our students who attended the program. Specifically, there was one student...who school staff saw a big change in his overall demeanor. Staff reported that he was more pleasant and seemed happier about being at school. He seemed more engaged and part of the school."



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Testimonials

"We greatly appreciate our partnership with STARR on The REC program which has **improved** student's ability to access their education by **providing them with the skills they need to be successful in school**. In line with our equity imperative, the **REC program is successfully closing the opportunity gaps for many of the students it serves**, helping us to make progress on our goal of reducing and eventually eliminating the use of exclusionary practices."

- District Superintendent



"The REC helped with my grades and helped me meet new people."

- REC Student

"We have seen the work being done at REC carrying over in the classroom setting!"

- School Representative

"The Student REC program has initiated **colossal change** in my son this semester. The amazing staff **helped identify key challenges** that stand between my son and success. Change is difficult, frustrating, and at times uncomfortable, but the **positive reassurance, hands on support** and **dedication** within this group is unmatched. I am so very thankful to be a part of this program, and to those special individuals chosen to lead it."

- Parent of REC Student



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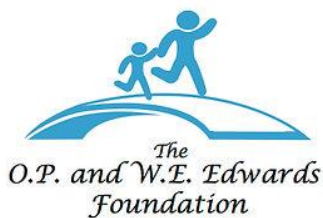
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HARRY A. & MARGARET D.
TOWSLEY FOUNDATION



Cronin Foundation



Feldpausch Foundation
To share our family's spirit of caring

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John Zanetti Foundation**



Esperance Family Foundation



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