

The Social-Emotional Learning Component of City Year's Whole School, Whole Child Service Model: A Focus on the Middle Grades

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The Whole School, Whole Child (WSWC) service model is City Year's school-based comprehensive approach to improve the conditions that help students stay in school, progress in school, and complete school. The WSWC model emphasizes social-emotional learning (SEL), which is the process of developing self-management and interpersonal skills in the context of safe, caring, well-managed, and engaging environments. WSWC activities aim to promote students' experience of a positive school climate and school connectedness; students' self-perception as capable and committed learners; and student community/civic mindedness. Corps members (CMs) are City Year's greatest assets. CMs are young adults (typically ages 18–24 year old) from diverse backgrounds who mentor, tutor, and coach students at-risk for dropping out of school. Additionally, CMs provide universal interventions including support to teachers in the classrooms, schoolwide projects, service learning, and after-school programs. This paper summarizes the SEL activities conducted by CMs with a special emphasis on middle school students (ages 11 to 14). Pathways of growth, metrics for success, and considerations for assessing program impact are also discussed.

Introduction

In recent decades, there has been an increasing public awareness to make it an educational priority to help students stay in school, progress in school, and complete school.

There is sufficient research to enable early identification of students at risk for leaving school. Some of the common reasons for school dropout include poor academic achievement, disciplinary infractions, and family-related reasons (Dalton, Glennie, & Ingels, 2009; Hammond, Linton, Smink, & Drew, 2008). Early intervention efforts can help at-risk students complete their education and prepare for the workforce. In the absence of early interventions, they are more likely than their peers to experience poverty and get involved in crime, violence, and drug abuse as they grow up (Moretti, 2007; Muennig, 2007; Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, & Palma, 2009).

City Year Whole School, Whole Child (WSWC) model addresses this educational priority. The model recognizes that academic learning is influenced by student social-emotional adjustment and psychological well-being. The intervention approach mobilizes young adults (City Year corps members) to serve as role models for at-risk youth in high poverty schools. Building on their “near peer-age,” these young adults bridge the gap between youth and traditional authority figures and connect to students in a way that teachers often cannot. From before the first bell rings until the last student leaves the after-school program, they work with students to improve their attendance, behavior and academic coursework. As mentors, corps members teach students that their goals are worth the effort and help students push their limits. Corps members push for an “I can” attitude and strive to help every student understand that no matter where they come from, they can be anything.

The Whole School, Whole Child service model is a holistic set of services for students in grades 3 through 9. This paper focuses on social-emotional learning activities at junior high/middle schools (grades 6 through 9). The purpose of this paper is to explain the social-emotional component of the WSWC model and the research supporting it. The paper begins by describing the importance of social-emotional learning and the unique

social-emotional challenges faced by middle school students. The rest of the paper describes the mechanisms and expected outcomes of the model. These includes assets used, program activities, metrics for success, and pathways to growth.

The Importance of Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is the process of developing self-management and interpersonal skills in the context of safe, caring, well-managed, and engaging environments. As defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), “SEL is the process of acquiring and effectively applying the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to recognize and manage emotions; developing caring and concern for others; making responsible decisions; establishing positive relationships; and handling challenging situations capably” (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 234). Students learn SEL skills by practicing and applying these skills in positive social interactions in and out of the classroom.

A growing body of research shows that SEL is an important part of student development. It facilitates academic growth (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2007), positive school climate, and caring communities, and prepares students to become responsible citizens (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg 1997; Wilson, Gottfredson, & Najaka, 2001). Three large-scale reviews of the research on the impact of SEL programs on elementary and middle-school students show that SEL is an effective approach for promoting a variety of positive student outcomes (the three reviews are summarized in Payton et al., 2008). Specifically, these reviews found that SEL programs improved students’ social-emotional skills, social behaviors, and emotional well-being, and reduced the frequency of conduct problems. In addition, SEL programs yielded an average gain of 11 to 17 percentile points on achievement test scores.

SEL is a central focus of the Whole School, Whole Child model, operated by City Year. City Year provides an array of universal (tier 1) and selective (tier 2) SEL services. Universal SEL services are delivered to all students and focus on strengthening the learning environment. Selective SEL services are provided to students who do not respond to the universal services and have an increased risk for school failure and dropout.

A Focus on the Middle Grades

This paper focuses on early adolescence (ages 11 to 14), a time when students are undergoing many physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes, coupled with the demands associated with the transition to middle school. Early adolescents engage more frequently in self-reflection and self-assessment compared to younger children (Pletsch, Johnson, Tosi, Thurston, & Riesch, 1991; Schwartz, 2008). During this time, peer groups also become more salient (Bukowski, Hoza, & Boivin, 1993) and students are faced with the challenge of self-regulating and self-managing their behavior in the face of challenges such as peer use of drugs and alcohol, gangs, and other sources of negative influence and potential peer pressure (Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, 2005). Additionally middle school students may express increased anxiety and stress because of rapidly increasing academic demands. Although these challenges occur for all student groups, they are particularly great for disadvantaged children (Becker & Luthar, 2002) who often exhibit deteriorating academic interest (Lepper, Sethi, Daldin, & Drake, 1997; Stipek, 1997) and increased levels of emotional distress (McLoyd & Wilson, 1990; Ripple & Luthar, 2000) as they transition to middle school. Taken together, these challenges emphasize the importance of SEL in middle school students' lives.

The problems students experience in middle school can be attributed, at least in part, to a lack of fit between the developmental needs of adolescents and the organizational structure of the

traditional middle school (Eccles, Wigfield, Midgley, & Reuman, 1993; Roeser & Eccles, 1998). A middle school student is typically assigned to a team of teachers and moves from classroom to classroom over the course of the school day. Consequently, these students have less opportunity to develop close relationships with specific teachers. Overall, they experience a less personalized environment compared to elementary school. At the same time, middle schools place a greater emphasis on self-regulated discipline and academic accomplishment than do elementary schools. Researchers have argued that there is a mismatch between this structure and focus and students' developmental status since young adolescents benefit from close relationships with adults while at the same time they need opportunities to become decision makers and have a voice and sense of autonomy in their environment (Eccles, Wigfield, Midgley, & Reuman, 1993). Researchers have compared the behavior of sixth graders in K–6 schools, where they experienced a more personalized environment to the behavior of sixth-graders in middle schools. Findings showed that sixth graders in middle schools had substantially more behavior problems than their peers, suggesting that the reduced personal contact with teachers may have contributed to the social-emotional challenges faced by students (Cook, MacCoun, Muschkin, & Vigdor, 2008).

To help address these issues, City Year has developed a menu of SEL activities and programs that are developmentally appropriate and that aim to help both the universal student population and students at risk for dropping out of school. The next sections describe the goals, assets, activities, and anticipated outcomes of the SEL component of the City Year Whole School Whole Child model.

The Social-Emotional Component of the City Year Whole School, Whole Child Model

The City Year Whole School Whole Child (WSWC) model recognizes the importance of promoting non-academic student outcomes including self-esteem, social-emotional skills, and communication skills. In addition, the model emphasizes the need to ensure that all students learn in a safe, supportive, and caring environment. Finally, the WSWC model aims to encourage students to contribute to their communities and to develop good citizenship skills.

City Year Goals

The City Year Whole School, Whole Child model aims to bring a positive change to schools serving economically disadvantaged students. As part of this change, schools should become a place where students experience positive school climate and school connectedness; students should feel capable and committed to their academic goals; and students should develop a sense of community/civic mindedness. These goals are further described below.

Positive School Climate

A positive school climate is characterized by a warm and supportive setting that is also orderly, and is experienced as being safe. The National Research Council (NRC) has identified eight factors as essential for adolescent development. Schools that have a positive school climate generally provide three of the eight factors: physical and psychological safety, appropriate structure, and positive social norms (2001).

Many schools that have a positive school climate build on the connection between students and teachers (see school connectedness, below, as a related concept), and provide both positive behavioral supports and opportunities for social and emotional learning which in turn contribute towards a positive school climate. In schools with positive school climates students

are caring, cooperative and understanding; they agree with and follow the school rules; and they are respectful towards peers and adults (Osher et al., 2008; Osher et al., 2010).

Although positive school climate benefits from social skills training and social-emotional learning programs, efforts should also focus on broader contextual changes in the school (Rhodes, Camic, Milburn, & Lowe, 2009). Some of the schoolwide or systemic mechanisms for building a positive school climate include providing targeted support tailored to the needs of at-risk students, helping teachers appreciate the importance of students' sense of connectedness to school, and building partnership with parents and the community (Sugai & Horner, 2009).

School Connectedness

School connectedness refers to the extent to which students are bonded to the school and feel accepted, respected, included, and supported at their school (Goodenow & Grady, 1993). School connectedness addresses two additional factors identified by the NRC (2001): supportive relationships and opportunities to belong. School connectedness develops when students consistently receive emotional support from caring adults (Blum & Libbey, 2004). In fact, student perceptions of teacher warmth and supportiveness can accurately predict student engagement (Ryan & Patrick 2001). Students who feel connected to their school are more likely to feel engaged, to work hard, and to be involved with positive activities in and outside of school time (Kirby, 2001; Klem & Connel, 2004).

A model developed by the Seattle Social Development Group (Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004; Hawkins, Guo, Hill, Battin-Pearson, & Abbott, 2001; Hawkins, Smith, Hill, Kosterman, & Abbott, 2007), suggests that a strong bond to school serves as a protective factor against behaviors that violate socially accepted standards. This bond includes a sense of attachment, commitment, and a personal investment in the school as a

community. The model also suggests that students who are emotionally connected to peers and teachers and who value learning and high academic performance often adopt prosocial values.

The most important thing to note here is that sense of connectedness, or bonding to school, has a positive impact that goes beyond the immediate academic and social growth of the young adolescent. It places the adolescent on a trajectory associated with positive outcomes in high school and in young adulthood (Hawkins et al., 2001; Hawkins et al., 2007).

Researchers report similar evidence for after-school programs. Hirsch's (2005) study of urban after-school programs found that the relationships between youth and staff were the most fundamental strength of the programs. These after-school programs served as a "second home" for youth participants. The primary reason for the programs' success was the quality of relationships with staff rather than the physical characteristics of the sites.

National research findings can shed light on factors that contribute to students' sense of connectedness. For example, analyses of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (ADD Health) found that positive classroom management techniques, student participation in extracurricular activities at school, tolerant disciplinary policies, and small school size were significantly associated with a greater sense of connectedness to the school (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002). Additional research suggests that cross-age mentoring (Karcher, 2008), positive relationships among students and staff, and involving secondary school students in decision-making (Waters, Cross, & Runions, 2009) also significantly contributed to greater sense of school connectedness.

Capability and Commitment

Academic engagement and efficacy build on two other factors identified by NRC as essential for positive adolescent development (2001): support for self-efficacy development and

opportunities for skill-building. Similarly, the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) posits that a sense of competency and relatedness can contribute to students' motivation to persist in their academic efforts. Studies have demonstrated a strong linkage between students' sense of academic self-efficacy and their ability to stay goal orientated and persist in using adaptive learning when they experience a challenge or a failure. Similar results were found for general education students (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007) and students with learning disabilities (Elbaum & Vaughn, 2003).

Student motivation is a key driver of academic effort (Wigfield & Wentzel, 2007). Survey research has identified achievement motivation and school engagement as two key variables associated with academic achievement (Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000), and student engagement has been identified as critical to dropout prevention (Lehr, Johnson, Bremer, Cosio, & Thompson, 2004).

Community/Civic Mindedness

Community/civic mindedness is defined here as attitudes and behaviors related to involvement in and contributing to the school and the larger community. Community/civic minded students show a concern for the well-being of members of their community and are willing to contribute by giving or doing something for the school and the larger community. In addition, these students follow school rules, are law abiding, and understand the importance of good citizenship. By giving back to their communities, adolescents also gain something for themselves. Benefits of civic engagement may include better ethical reasoning, character values, higher self-esteem, and healthy life habits and choices (Irby, Ferber, & Pittman, 2001; Michelsen, Zaff, & Hair, 2002; Deakin Crick, Taylor, Tew, Samul, Durant, et al., 2005; Lerner et al., 2008). Most important, adolescents gain the spirit of service, which will enable them to

contribute to their community throughout adulthood. According to research supporting the Seattle Social Development Project (SSDP), students who are provided with opportunities for greater involvement with their schools, who develop the competency or skills they need for fuller participation with their schools, and for whom skillful participation is constantly reinforced, ultimately develop strong bonds with their schools (Hawkins, Guo, Hill, Battin-Pearson, & Abbott, 2001).

City Year Assets

Corps members (CMs) are City Year's greatest assets. CMs are young adults (typically ages 18–24 year old) from diverse backgrounds who stay with City Year for a minimum of one year. During the 2009–2010 school year, 1,090 Whole School, Whole Child corps members delivered interventions to more than 13,000 students at 131 schools. Before entering schools, CMs receive comprehensive training in relevant topics such as tutoring techniques and behavior management. Throughout the year, CMs participate in additional professional development meetings.

CMs serve in schools full-time both during school and after school. Their overarching goals are: to build a safe and supportive social-emotional environment within the schools, mentor students at-risk for dropping out of school, provide behavior coaching for students with chronic behavior problems, and promote the City Year goals outlined earlier in this paper.

CMs aim to accomplish the aforementioned goals by establishing “near-peer” relationships with students and using these relationships to inspire students to become the best they can be. One of the theoretical frameworks supporting this approach is Bandura's social-learning theory, which posits that people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modeling (Bandura, 1997). Research shows that middle school students are easily

influenced by the behavior of individuals they perceive as role models, whether it is prosocial or antisocial behavior (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Reischl, in press). Through their positive relationships with students and modeling of positive interpersonal communication, CMs may counteract the negative influence of aggressive and delinquent role models (including older siblings, peers from school or the neighborhood, or other young adults).

City Year Activities

City Year CMs are trained to lead a wide range of activities to promote the social-emotional growth of middle school students. Tier 1 activities include use of common routines (e.g., Power Tools), behavior support in the classroom, encouragement of a growth mindset, and schoolwide service projects). Tier 2 activities include the 50 Acts of Leadership behavior coaching program and mentoring. The following section provides a brief description of these activities as well as the rationale behind their inclusion in the City Year WSWC service model.

Tier 1 Activities

Use of Common Routines (Power Tools)

Power Tools are interaction routines aimed at increasing positive energy and motivation, ensuring social inclusion, and improving self-control and respect for the rights and feelings of others.¹ Researchers and practitioners have recommended the use of common routines in elementary and secondary schools to establish a safe and orderly environment (Epstein et al., 2008; Pedota, 2007). Routines, when appropriately designed, can contribute to social-emotional development. For example, providing opportunities for inclusion of socially isolated or rejected students can begin to lay the foundation for further positive peer interactions.

¹ See Appendix A for a list of City Year Power Tools.

Routines can also promote a caring and supportive environment. The Responsive Classroom (RC), a teaching approach that seeks to influence social, emotional, and academic attainment in elementary and middle school students, uses morning greetings and other routines to build positive teacher-student and student-student relationships. A comparative study of teachers' use of the Responsive Classroom practices showed the positive effects on students' reading achievement, greater closeness between teachers and children, better prosocial skills, more assertiveness, and less fearfulness (Rimm-Kaufman, & Chiu, 2007). Finally, another type of routine is chants or cheers to promote school spirit. Although this form of routine has not yet been investigated by researchers, it is widely used by secondary schools to promote a sense of school connectedness.

Encouraging a Growth Mindset

The concept of mindset (Dweck, 2006a) adds another dimension of social-emotional development. Individuals with a "growth mindset" believe that a person's true potential is not determined by biology or genes; through passion, work, and adequate academic support or training, they can expand their abilities and reach their goals. Research shows that students with a growth mindset put more effort into their studies and are less likely to give up in the face of challenge or failure than are their peers (Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003; Good & Aronson, 2007). One way to encourage a growth mindset is to provide feedback that links academic performance to level of effort (Halpern et al., 2007); students who realize that their successes and failures are a direct result of their work and practice, rather than a biological trait, are more likely to persist in their academic efforts and take on challenges (Halpern et al., 2007).

Schoolwide Service Projects

CMs plan, organize, and lead service learning projects both as part of the regular school day and as part of after-school programs. Explicit instruction of community mindedness and character values, in conjunction with an effort to integrate those values into everyday activities, is an effective practice to promote social-emotional growth, positive behavior, and academic growth (Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, & Smith, 2006). Research has shown positive effects of programs that include service learning components (e.g., Leming, 2001; Lerner et al., 2008). Specifically, researchers have found statistically significant impact of such programs on improved social skills, lower levels of problem and delinquent behavior, better cooperation skills in the classroom, improved psychological well-being, and better ability to set goals and adjust behavior to reach these goals (Deakin Crick et al., 2005; Irby et al., 2001; Lerner et al., 2008; Michelsen et al., 2002). Middle and high school students who engage in high-quality service-learning programs also show increased personal and social responsibility, communication skills, acceptance of cultural diversity, a sense of social and academic competence, positive work attitudes, career aspirations, and increased academic achievement (Billing, 2000).

Tier 2 Activities

50 Acts of Leadership Behavior-Coaching Program

The 50 Acts of Leadership program aims to promote social-emotional skills and core values including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. As part of this program, students meet during lunchtime with CMs in small groups or individually. Activities may include conversations about key concerns, self-reflection, artistic expression (e.g., poetry, music, drawing), games, and team-building

exercises. The rationale for this tier 2 program is a consistent research finding showing that the most common trait separating students with chronic behavior problems from other students is lack of social-emotional skills (Bullis, Walker, & Sprague, 2001). Intensive, long-term, and explicit instruction of social-emotional skills has been shown in past research to have positive effects in the context of targeted interventions. A meta-analysis of 108 studies assessing intervention programs that targeted individually identified children showed an overall educationally meaningful, statistically significant positive effect (Wilson & Lipsey, 2007). Nearly all the programs investigated were “pull-out” programs, delivered outside the classroom to small groups or individual students. The approaches represented in this group included behavioral programs, social skills training, and counseling programs. Many of the behavioral programs for selected students involved an in-class component (e.g., behavioral contracts monitored by a teacher).

Mentoring

The most recognized activity implemented by CMs is mentoring. It is widely acknowledged that supportive relationships with adults, including parents, teachers, and mentors, have an important role in shaping adolescents' behavior, motivation, and life satisfaction (e.g., Suldo et al., 2009; Wentzel, 1998). Mentoring relationships can promote adolescents' sense of self-worth, scholastic competence, academic achievement, self-regulation skills, and positive relationships with parents (Rhodes, Spencer, Keller, Liang, & Noam, 2006). Including mentoring as a component in violence-, and drug-, and dropout-prevention programs often results in greater program effectiveness (Sinclair, Christenson, Evelo, & Hurley, 1998; McPartland & Nettles, 1991; Rollin, Kaiser-Ulrey, Potts, & Creason, 2003), especially if potential differences related to differences in age are minimized (Malmgren, Ottino, & Amaral, 2010).

As mentors, CMs provide attention, guidance, emotional support, and caring over an extended period of time (that is, at least one school year). CMs have a consistent presence at school and are attentive to their focus students throughout the school day. The consistency and frequency of meetings with focus students aligns CMs' mentoring practice with the characteristics of the most effective mentoring programs (Dubois, Halloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002; Dubois & Karcher, 2005). As near-peer mentors, CMs may be perceived as easier to approach than older mentors. Therefore, they may be more likely to form trusting relationships with focus students. Studies conducted by Karcher (2005; 2008) have shown that cross-age mentoring can promote school engagement and connectedness, gains in social skills, self-management, and self-esteem.

CMs close relationships with students position the mentors to handle dysfunctional attitudes such as "I don't care" statements. In the classroom, an "I don't care" attitude or statement may trigger teacher anger, coercion, punishment, or avoidance of students. Corps members can mitigate these reactions through individualized attention to students. For example, they can find out what lies behind such statements and identify current difficulties that lead to the observed student behavior.

Metrics for Success

As described in previous sections, there is a sufficient research base that demonstrates the effectiveness of the activities carried out by CMs. In the following sections, we describe in more detail the specific student outcomes that are conceptually aligned with City Year activities.

Improved School Climate

A good example of conceptualizing the school climate that is expected to result from City Year activities is the Conditions for Learning framework, developed by Osher and Kendziora

(2010). According to this framework, conditions for learning consist of four main domains:

(a) *school safety*: an overall school climate in which students feel physically and emotionally safe; (b) *challenge*: building a supportive, engaging community and pressing for high academic expectations; (c) *student support*: establishing effective student supports that aim to ensure that children's basic needs are met and that the significant adults in their lives work collaboratively to encourage, support, and nurture them; and (d) *social and emotional learning*: promoting social and emotional skills through regular practice and modeling among adults and students in the school, and placing a high value on conflict resolution, communication, caring, appreciation for diversity, problem-solving, and teamwork.

Another good example of conceptualizing school climate is the climate measure used in the evaluation of the Comer's School Development Program (Cook, Murphy, & Hunt, 2000). The evaluation of this comprehensive school reform program utilizes four domains of outcomes. The first domain is Social Relationships with Adults in School, indicating a perception of adults' behavior as caring and respectful. The second is Social Climate Among Students, including the use of positive problem-solving strategies, the perceived physical safety of students, pride in the school, comfort in interpersonal contexts at school, and personal feelings of belonging in the school. The third is Academic Relationships with Adults in School, which consists of teachers' encouragement of academic success, teachers' concern with children's learning, teachers' behaviors to motivate students to learn, and the extent to which achievement is recognized in school assemblies. The fourth domain is Academic Values Among Students, which consists of valuing academic performance, accepting school values, and personally valuing education.

Roeser and Eccles (1998) suggested that, when measuring school climate, it is important to assess how the school climate is perceived by students, rather than how it is perceived by

adults or outsiders. This psychological construct, referred to as “meaning making,” is the functional meaning of the environment to the individual students. Roeser and Eccles found that perceptions of positive teacher regard were associated with increases in middle school students’ academic values, feelings of academic competence, academic achievement, and self-esteem. These perceptions were also associated with decreases in depressive symptoms, anger, and truancy.

Improved School Engagement

Researchers have suggested that school engagement includes both a behavioral component and an emotional component (Finn & Voelkl, 1993). The behavior component is often measured by direct observations and administrative data, and may include attendance, participation during class, homework completion, and participation in school-related activities (e.g., Finn & Rock, 1997; Johnson, Crosnoe, & Elder, 2001). The emotional component includes school identification, attachment, and bonding, and is typically measured by survey items such as “I feel proud of being a part of my school” (Ruiz, 2009), “Teachers and staff at this school care about me” (LeCroy & Krysik, 2008), “There is real school spirit” (Lee & Smith-Adcock, 2005), and “I like school” (Henry & Slater, 2007). School engagement has been consistently found to be a protective factor that is associated with improved academic achievement (Ruiz; LeCroy & Krysik) and reduced problem behavior in middle school (Hawkins et al., 2001; Henry & Slater; Lee & Smith-Adcock).

Improved Prosocial Values, Positive Behavior, and Good Citizenship

In addition to keeping students on track for graduation, the Whole School, Whole Child model aims to prepare students to take their place in society as responsible adults, aware of themselves and others, with well-developed reflective and critical abilities and the motivation

and enthusiasm to live an active, engaged life. To reach these long-term goals, students need to develop the knowledge and skills to reflect on their own moral and citizenship values and to have opportunities to test them within their school environment and as part of service learning.

Students also need to understand the power of their emotions and those of others, and the value of interpersonal respect, kindness, empathy, and caring. Just as important, students need to integrate their moral, social-emotional, and civic capacity into their emerging self-identity and see those qualities as part of who they are.

Examples of existing measures used in the character education and social-emotional learning research include sense of responsibility and concern for the welfare of others in school and in the community in general, and disposition of students toward greater community involvement (Leming, 2001). Data on improvement in interpersonal competence can be gathered through self-, teacher, and peer reports, and include multiple indicators, such as taking an active role in resolving personal difficulties or problems; being admired and sought after by peers; showing coping skills and ability to adapt to different situations; and getting along easily and comfortably with adults (Solomon, Battistich, Delucchi, & Solomon, 1989). Additional examples of interpersonal skills in the classroom include cooperation (e.g., helping others, sharing materials), assertion (e.g., asking for additional information, expressing respect for other's feelings), and self-control (e.g., responding appropriately to teasing) (Hennessey, 2007). Finally, behavioral indicators of prosocial values may include students' spontaneous helpfulness, concern for others, cooperation in the classroom, support and encouragement for other students, affection, inviting others to join activities, and thanking or praising other students (Battistich, Solomon, Watson, Solomon, & Schaps, 1989).

Improved Goal-Setting and Self-Regulation Skills

Social-emotional learning programs for adolescents emphasize self-management of actions by setting goals and creating plans to reach these goals (Zimmerman, 2002). This developmental goal is partly based on the expanding cognitive ability of young adolescents—a more sophisticated level of thinking that includes hypothetical reasoning, metacognition, and the ability to consider moral, social, and political issues (Lee & Freire, 2003).

One indicator of students' readiness to set goals and manage their own behavior is their increased ability to self-reflect and become more aware of their own feelings, abilities, and the maladaptive behaviors that have inhibited their progress to date. Another part of this readiness is social awareness—understanding what others feel and want, and understanding the perspective of others. Students can build on their self-awareness and social awareness to set goals and to self-regulate behavior. Goal setting involves both short-term goals (e.g., performance goals, learning goals, peer-social-approval goals, and friendship goals) and long-term goals (e.g., educational aspirations). In terms of pathways of influence, accomplishing higher self-efficacy and a greater sense of belongingness can contribute to students' motivation to set goals for themselves and to pursue their goals (Nelson, & DeBacker, 2008).

Researchers have consistently pointed at the link between self-confidence and goal setting. Students self-evaluate what they would like to accomplish and what they think they can accomplish. The result of this self-evaluation is the level of effort invested by the student in an academic task or behavior improvement (Dweck, 1999). The academic and social results then further affect students' self-confidence.

There is sufficient research evidence to support a link between mentoring relationships with CMs and students' goal setting. This link may be mediated by attitudinal change that may

include higher self-esteem and the belief that everyone can improve his or her abilities through effort and persistence (Dweck, 2006; Good, Aronson, and Inzlicht, 2003; Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck (2007).

Finally, an important social-emotional skill that enables students to persist and reach their goals is self-regulation. Self-regulation is defined as the general ability to perform the emotional and cognitive internal processes to maintain resiliency while learning from academic and social disappointments (Zimmerman, 2002). A key part of self-regulation is managing emotions, which is an important antecedent for higher order cognitive processes such as problem solving and decision-making (Koole, 2009). Negative emotional states may hinder higher level cognitive processes such as interpretations of social situations and decision-making (Blanchette & Richards, 2010). Students who better self-regulate their emotions are able to think and reflect on the consequences of an act before engaging in that act (Lynam & Miller, 2004), appraise social situations in a positive manner (Lemerise & Dodge, 2008), and persist in the face of challenge and failure (Zimmerman).

Pathways to Growth

The most important element in the activities conducted by City Year is the close relationships that develop between CMs and students. The formation of these relationships and their positive characteristics, including trust, feeling inspired by the CM as a role model, and seeing the relationship as a strong motivator for personal growth, is a mediating outcome that needs to take place. On the basis of the nature of activities conducted by City Year CMs, we can hypothesize several positive outcomes, including improved interpersonal skills, improved peer relationships, positive school climate, and feelings of school connectedness. These outcomes, in turn, will promote the development of achievement motivation and civic engagement. Research

shows that the development of close relationships with individuals who value learning has a positive impact on middle school students' achievement motivation (Nelson & DeBacker, 2008). Similarly, research by Zaff, Malanchuk, and Eccles (2008) shows that, in environments that provide opportunities to participate in civic activities and have a climate in which community participation is a social norm, adolescents will become responsible citizens and civic-minded adults.

Another path of growth is based on longitudinal research by Eccles and her colleagues (e.g., Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000; Denissen, Zarrett, & Eccles, 2007). According to this research, middle school students' decisions to engage in learning in the classroom depend on whether they feel able to meet the challenges presented to them, whether they see purpose and value in classroom activities, and whether they feel safe and cared for by others in the setting. These conditions may be met through mentoring practices of CMs. Once these conditions are met, they may motivate adolescents to have fewer negative peer affiliations, fewer problem behaviors, and greater focus on academic learning, which will lead to statistically significant improvement in grades and test scores. The resulting higher achievement levels may, in turn, reinforce students' motivation and interest in learning, thus placing them on a trajectory of further positive growth.

Conclusion

The Whole School, Whole Child model aims to promote positive youth development outcomes, high school graduation, and preparation of students to become healthy and economically self-sufficient adults with good family and social relationships, who contribute and give back to their communities. The research consistently shows that these goals are likely to be met if students accomplish four important developmental milestones: experience of a positive

school climate, school connectedness, capability and commitment, and community mindedness. These milestones are consistent with the research on adolescent development (e.g., Osher et al., 2008; Osher et al., 2010). Longitudinal analysis conducted by Gambone, Klem, and Connell (2002) confirms that these factors can have a significant impact on long-term positive developmental outcomes. The specific analysis conducted by Gambone and colleagues included two groups of developmental factors. One group included learning to be productive; to connect with adults, peers, and society's institutions; and to navigate through diverse settings, relationships, and the lure of risky behavior. The second group included supportive relationships with adults and peers; challenging and engaging activities and learning experiences; and meaningful opportunities for involvement and membership. Both had significant importance in advancing youth's intellectual and emotional growth.

It should be noted, however, that in planning to identify and measure student outcomes as a result of the Whole School, Whole Child model implementation, several key considerations need to be taken into account. First, as sites may vary in their needs and implementation approach, it is recommended that expectations for observable improvements be established on the basis of data collected on the number of hours and content of activities led by CMs. Second, we recommend that outcomes be outlined for specified subgroups of students likely to participate most in City Year activities, in terms of length, intensity, or individualized services. For example, some outcomes may apply to focus students who have mentoring relationships with CMs, but not to all students in the classroom. Third, student outcomes may be mediated by other ongoing practices, policies, and projects that take place at the school. For example, the impact of City year activities may be intensified in schools that have formed professional learning communities around reducing behavior problems and promoting a positive school climate, as

those schools may support and add to City Year practices. Finally, different outcomes can be expected at different time points. For example, City Year may observe immediate impact on mediating outcomes, such as improved motivation to learn, whereas some other outcomes may not show observable improvements until a significant amount of time has passed and some necessary preliminary conditions for learning have been met.

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Appendix A: City Year Power Tools

Strong circles (Power Tool)	A tool for mobilizing large and small groups, a “Strong Circle” is formed when participants stand in a tight, perfectly formed circle with “no one inside and no one outside.” This provides an equal forum for all members of the group to participate fully and share information effectively.
Hands up (Power Tool)	Used for quieting a large, loud group to begin a class, meeting or event, this tool is performed by raising one’s hand, signaling all group members to respond with their hands raised and voices silent. Once the tool is effectively introduced, a leader or facilitator can powerfully and quietly get the attention of a group.
Physical Training (Power Tool)	One of City Year’s signature activities is Physical Training, commonly called “PT.” PT is performed at all City Year events and often used as a Power Tool to exhibit City Year’s spirit, discipline, purpose and pride. Corps members often engage students in PT as part of a morning greeting or unite the school community in performing a unified activity or allow students at recess or after-school to release excess energy before they need to refocus.
Power Greeting (Power Tool)	A tool used during morning greeting at schools and before City Year events, Power Greeting (cheering, welcoming, and clapping) helps to set the tone, and makes everyone feel welcome and energized for the day ahead.
NOSTUESO (Power Tool)	An acronym for a group discussion facilitation technique—“No One Speaks Twice Until Everyone Speaks Once”—this tool helps ensure inclusive input from an entire group or classroom, and prevents a situation in which a few people dominate a discussion or brainstorm. With students, this helps reinforce turn taking and ensures that every student has a voice.