Student Success Skills

June 2021

Background

The Student Success Skills Framework (SSS) was developed in the 2017-2018 school year. Staggered implementation began in September 2020 and January 2021 with the expectation that SSS instruction would take place for a total of 40 minutes per week over 2+ days. SSS outlines FCS established standards for the skills necessary to demonstrate mastery of academic and interpersonal skills needed for college, career, and life success. The Student Success Skills fall into these categories:

- Adulting Skills
- Soft Skills
- Social Emotional Learning

This FCS graphic captures the specific skills:

The district contracted with RethinkEd, an evidence-based program to teach Student

Success Skill standards. The lessons are very scripted and designed to be delivered by classroom teachers. The content is centered around success skill-building and is not therapeutic or mental health in nature.

Evaluation Questions

The Student Success Skills program evaluation addressed the following questions:

1) What conditions, when fully established, lead to comprehensive implementation?
2) Is the Student inventory valid and reliable?
3) What are the perceptions of school staff/teachers around implementation?

Methodology and Data

DPE administered surveys to school leaders, teachers, students, and district staff to examine implementation and perception about Student Success Skills.
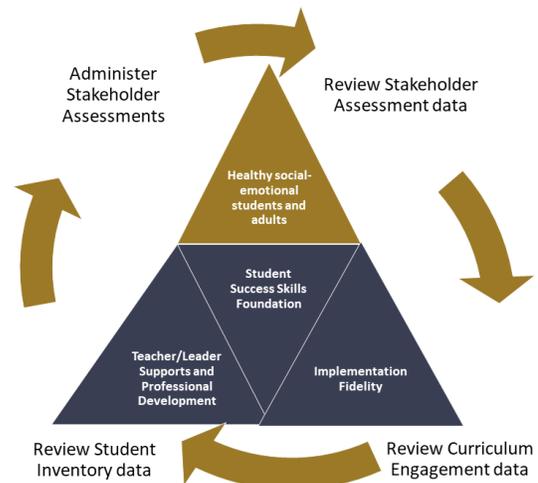
DPE developed a Student Inventory, a survey to assess how students rated themselves on each SSS standard. The Student Inventory was administered from January through February 2021, with a total of 41,044 responses.

Table 1: Student Inventory Response Rate by School Level

School Level	Response Rate
High School	53%
Middle School	84%
Elementary School	73%

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to determine whether the Student Inventory was a valid and reliable instrument.

At the end of the Spring 2021 semester, teachers and school champions completed the Student Success Skills Implementation survey. Approximately 2,400 teachers and school champions completed the survey about the current implementation level of Student Success Skills. DPE aggregated the survey responses to address evaluation questions one and three.

Results

Conditions for Implementation

One of the elements for successful implementation was to ensure instruction was synchronous. 86% of teachers reported teaching Student Success Skills synchronously, regardless of students being remote or in-person. The majority of teachers (87%) access the ReThink-Ed videos for weekly lessons directly through the ReThink-Ed platform. Moreover, 93% of teachers reported following the recommended scope and sequence.

Figure 1: Percent of Teachers Using Synchronous Instruction to Teach SSS
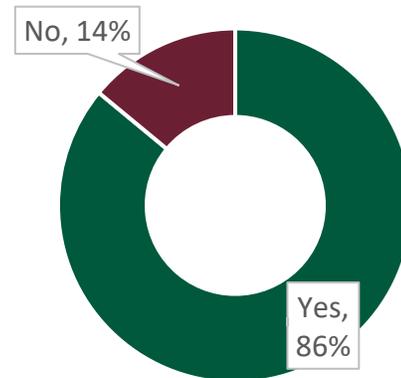
78% of teachers felt prepared to teach Student Success Skills. Teachers are expected to teach SSS 2-3 times a week for 15-20 minutes to implement with fidelity. 53% of teachers followed the recommended instructional frequency. The vast majority of teachers reported that they were able to deliver one lesson per week. The most common time teachers reported implementing the SSS curriculum takes place during the homeroom period.

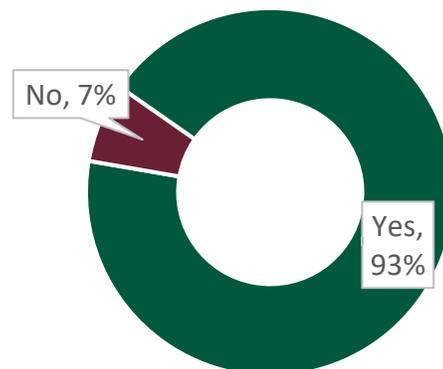**Figure 2: Percent of Teachers Implementing the Recommended Scope and Sequence**
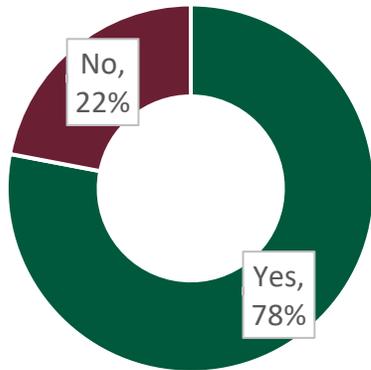
Figure 3: Percent of Teachers That Felt Prepared to Teach Student Success Skills

No, 22%
Yes, 78%

About half of school champions reported that their school has begun to use some implementation and disaggregated outcome data to track progress toward Student Success Skills goals and monitor outcomes. Staff are developing the skills necessary to engage in cycles of continuous improvement. 27% of school champions reported that they are not yet using data in this way, and staff has not yet gained the necessary skills to engage in continuous improvement cycles.

Figure 4: Percent of Teachers Following the Recommended Instructional Frequency

No, 47%
Yes, 53%
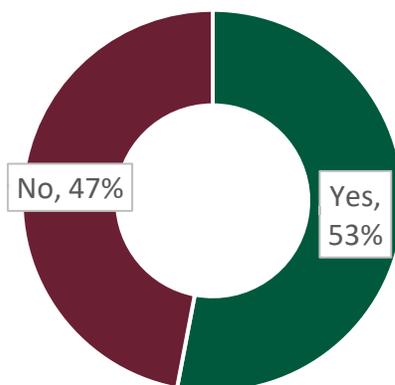
Validity & Reliability of the Student Inventory

The confirmatory factor analysis revealed that inventory is valid but needs improved reliability. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.09 indicates a mediocre fit. The

confirmatory factor index (CFI) of 0.5 is acceptable but could be higher. The Cronbach Alpha of 0.29 is very low and should be 0.7. These findings indicate that the Student Inventory is valid but needs to be improved to achieve higher reliability.

Perception of Implementation

Overall, teachers felt that Student Success Skills was the right work. Teachers felt supported by their assistant principals, school champions, and department chairs. Most teachers felt the content was relevant. Some high school teachers shared that the delivery was geared towards younger students and could be adapted to fit a more mature audience.

Teachers stated that they needed more time to prepare for and deliver the lessons. Some teachers report that better-equipped personnel or staff might conduct lessons. Teachers also advocated for clearer expectations for implantation. Teachers requested more professional development on the following topics:

- engaging students
- navigating the website
- modeled lessons
- implementation expectations

Limitations and Considerations

Limitations should be considered when unpacking the results. While the implementation survey was able to capture a representative sample of teachers, the responses did not capture

all teachers in the district, which may have influenced the survey results.

Student Success Skills was implemented for the first time during the COVID-19 pandemic. The additional stressors caused by the pandemic and school adaptations throughout the year may have influenced implementation and staff's ability to respond to the surveys.

Conclusion

At the teacher level, we find that most conditions are in place for successful implementation. Staff perceptions of the program are quite positive, with a desire for additional professional learning, time for planning, and more explicit expectations around implementation.

More work is needed to ensure teachers are following the instructional frequency recommended for successful implementation. Moreover, more work around schools' use of data to track their progress would also be beneficial to improve and monitor implementation. Increased school support could help with these recommended improvements.

Lastly, additional refinement of the Student Inventory is recommended to increase the reliability of the tool. The Student Inventory's reliability would likely improve by increasing the number of items for each SSS domain.