



CHART a Path to Positive Mental Health

Summary Results, 2024-2025

June 2025

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This report was prepared by Sharp Insight, LLC on behalf of Story Tapestries.

June 2025

Program Background

During the 2024-2025 academic year, Story Tapestries implemented CHART a path to positive mental health (CHART), an initiative that offers a unique approach to supporting mental health and wellness, especially for adolescents. Expert teaching artists who are trained in trauma-response practices lead youth through songwriting, poetry, dance, and visual arts experiences that help them to explore their emotions, their perceptions, and to discover new perspectives. Youth learn valuable skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, and social awareness – setting the groundwork for a stronger community built on authentic relationships that are critical to mental health and wellness. The Story Tapestries team works directly with guidance counselors, social workers and certified health professionals to utilize an arts approach to support schoolwide culture, practices and policies that support the social-emotional development of young people.

Program and Evaluation Participation

During the 2024-25 program year, the Story Tapestries CHART program reached a total of approximately 1,100 individuals. Engagement by activity type and site are listed below:

- Professional development workshop (Suburban Hospital): 30 educators
- Quarterly sessions with arts therapist (CREATE Arts Center): 20 educators
- Coaching sessions with Ed Reed: 15 educators
- Body is Good Workshop (George Mason University mental health fair): 20 children/families
- Neelsville Residency - 250 at Family Night; 6 cohorts of 25 students (150 total); 10 kids did the afterschool sessions
- Odessa Shannon - 250 at Family Night; 3 cohorts of 25 students (75 total)
- Jackson Road Elementary School - STEAM Night with art and mental health activity (~330 attendees; 206 4th grade and 5th graders
- Clarksburg High School - 3 classrooms of emerging multilingual learners (~32 students)

To support the evaluation of this initiative, Story Tapestries engaged Sharp Insight LLC, an external evaluation firm. In 2024-25, a mixed-methods evaluation approach was implemented, grounded in the following methods:

A **program survey** was administered to participants, teaching artists, and site staff to capture satisfaction and program impact, particularly on social emotional learning outcomes. This survey obtained 50 respondents (36 participants, 11 artists, and 3 site staff).

A **professional development survey** was administered after participants completed Story Tapestries professional development workshops to assess perceived value of arts integration and skill acquisition. This survey obtained 22 responses.

A **participant feedback survey** was administered to capture participant satisfaction and program impact (knowledge and skill acquisition, social emotional development). Three versions of this tool were utilized: elementary (17 responses), middle (229 responses), and high school (9 responses).

A **discussion group moderator's guide** for participants and site staff was implemented to capture key successes and suggestions for improvement. Fifteen discussion groups were carried out; eight with students/participants (n=223), six with staff/organizations (n=22), and one with teaching artists (n=7).

In addition to the above tools, Story Tapestries provided Sharp Insight with program data such as information about program attendance and sites. The following report provides a summary of the CHART evaluation findings, including program satisfaction, outcomes, and recommendations.

Performance Measures

In 2024-25, Story Tapestries established three grant measures for CHART program participation. As presented below, all three of these were exceeded by the end of the program year.

Grant Measures	Results
MET: 90 students will participate in CHART programming (Neelsville & Odessa Shannon)	257 students participated in CHART programming
MET: 20 educators will receive professional development	50 educators received professional development
MET: 150 community/family members will be reached	850 community/family members were reached

The CHART evaluation plan also included the following outcomes and performance measures.

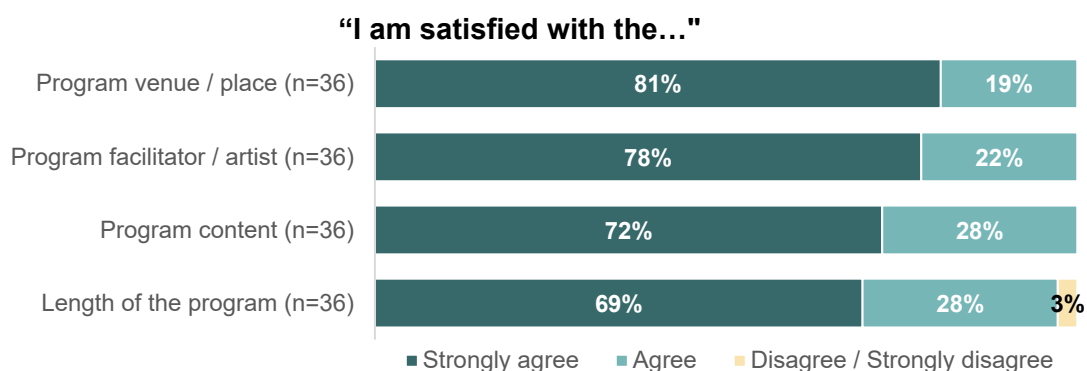
Performance Measures	Results
MET: 60% of youth plan to use the tools they learned	95% average agree or strongly agree to future action items
MET: 70% of respondents agree or strongly agree with satisfaction items	94% average agree or strongly agree to satisfaction items
MET: 75% of youth in CHART programming will increase their knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy related to the use of the arts to support their mental health and well-being	98% average agree or strongly agree to knowledge items
	93% average agree or strongly agree to skill acquisition items
	98% average agree or strongly agree to self-efficacy items
MET: 85% of teachers will increase their knowledge, appreciation, and comfort implementing arts integrated lessons.	100% average agree or strongly agree on relevant items

Satisfaction with CHART Programming

Participant Satisfaction from Program Survey

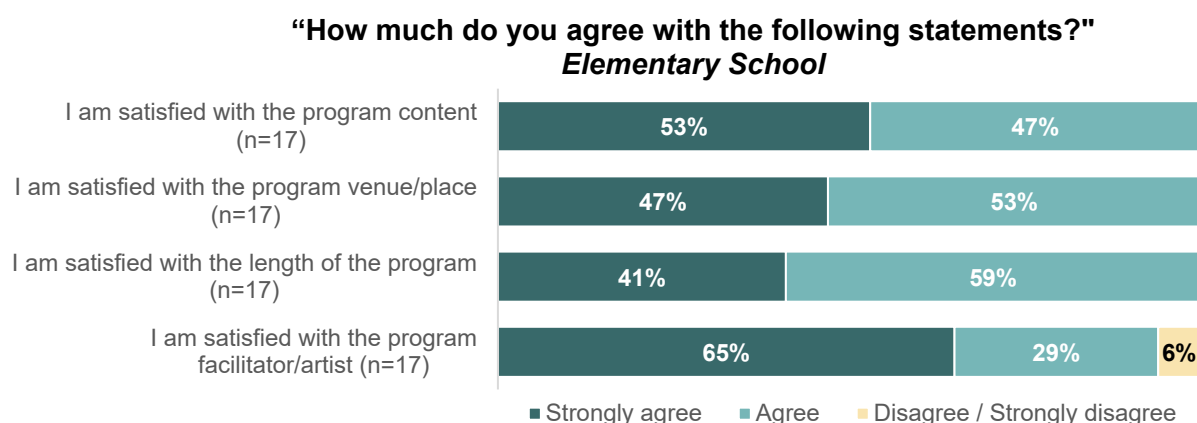
Participants were surveyed about their satisfaction with aspects of the program. In fact, 95% of participants agreed or strongly agreed they would recommend the Story Tapestries program; the remaining responses were "N/A." All respondents strongly agreed or agreed they were satisfied with the venue, program facilitator, and content. Satisfaction with the length of the program was also high with 97% agree or strongly agree responses.

95% of participants said they would recommend the CHART program (n=36)

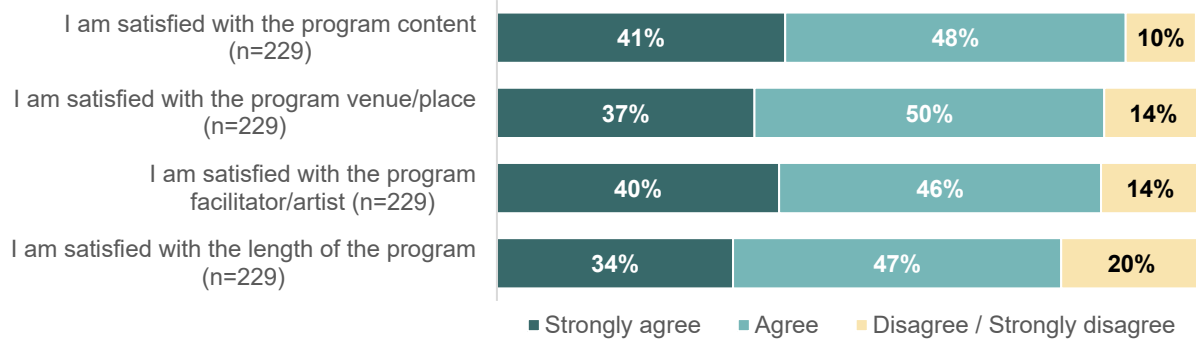


Participant Satisfaction from Exit Surveys

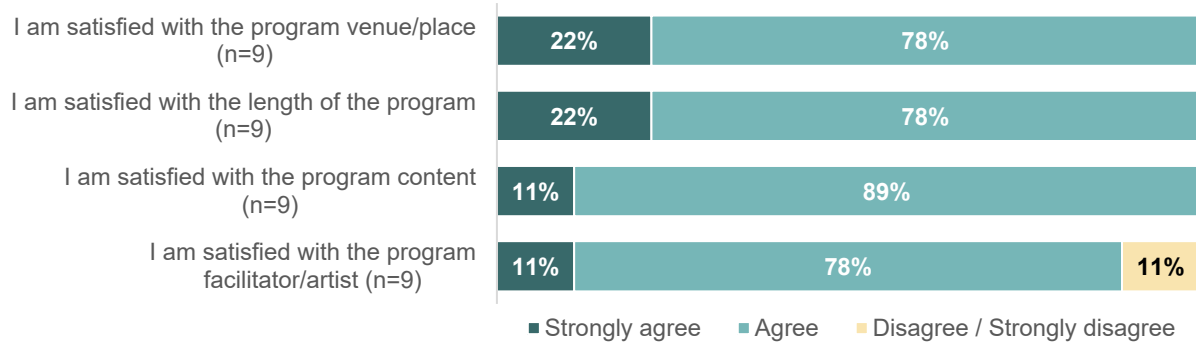
Participants were surveyed about their satisfaction with aspects of the program. Elementary, middle, and high school students were all largely satisfied with the program content, venue, length, and facilitator/artist.



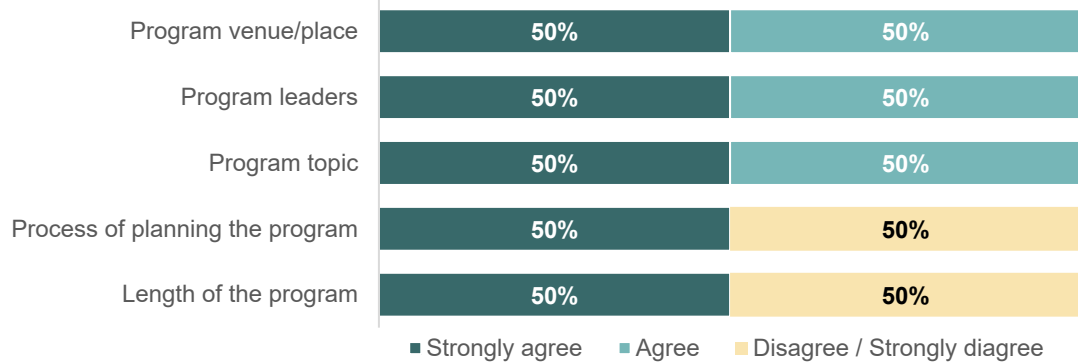
"How much do you agree with the following statements?"
Middle School



"How much do you agree with the following statements?"
High School



"I am satisfied with the..."



Artist Satisfaction from Program Survey

Artists were not asked the same satisfaction items but were asked to rate the planning and communications related to the program. Eighty-two percent said the planning and communication was very clear or extremely clear (n=11).

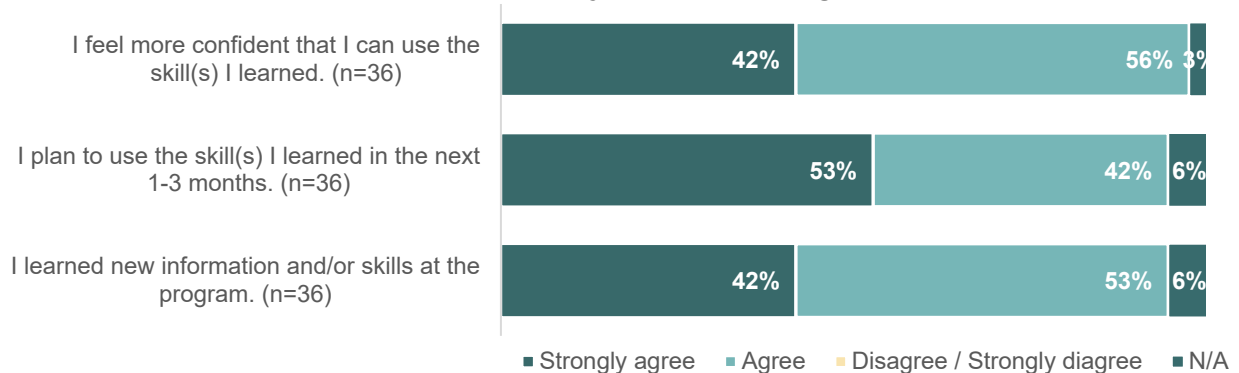
82% of artists said the planning and communication for the program was very clear or extremely clear (n=11).

CHART Program Impacts

Participant Perspectives on Impacts from Program Survey

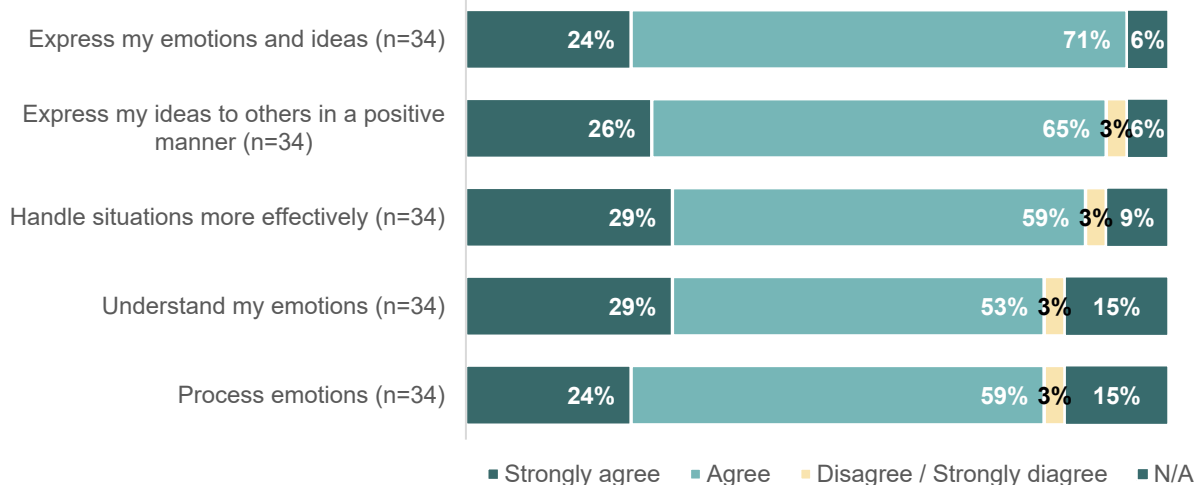
On their program survey, participants were asked about the impacts of taking part in the program. Most respondents agreed with the three outcome statements, including that they planned to use the skills learned within the next 1-3 months, that they learned new information and/or skills at the workshop, and they felt more confident that they could use the skills they learned.

"How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Story Tapestries program?"

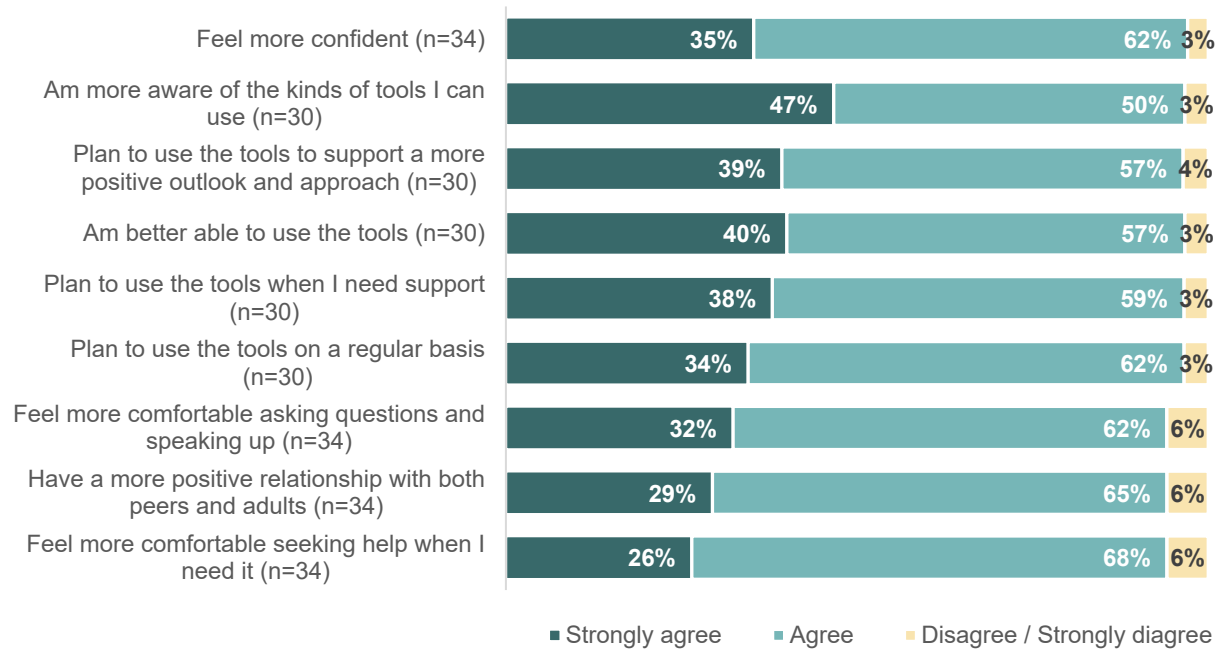


The survey also asked about increases in the ability to use the arts for social-emotional outcomes. Excluding N/A responses, all participants stated that they are better able to express their emotions and nearly everyone agreed or strongly agreed with all other items, including those related to the use of tools learned in the program.

"Because I participated in this Story Tapestries program, I am better able to use the arts (e.g., visual art, music, dance, or theatre) provided in the sessions to..."

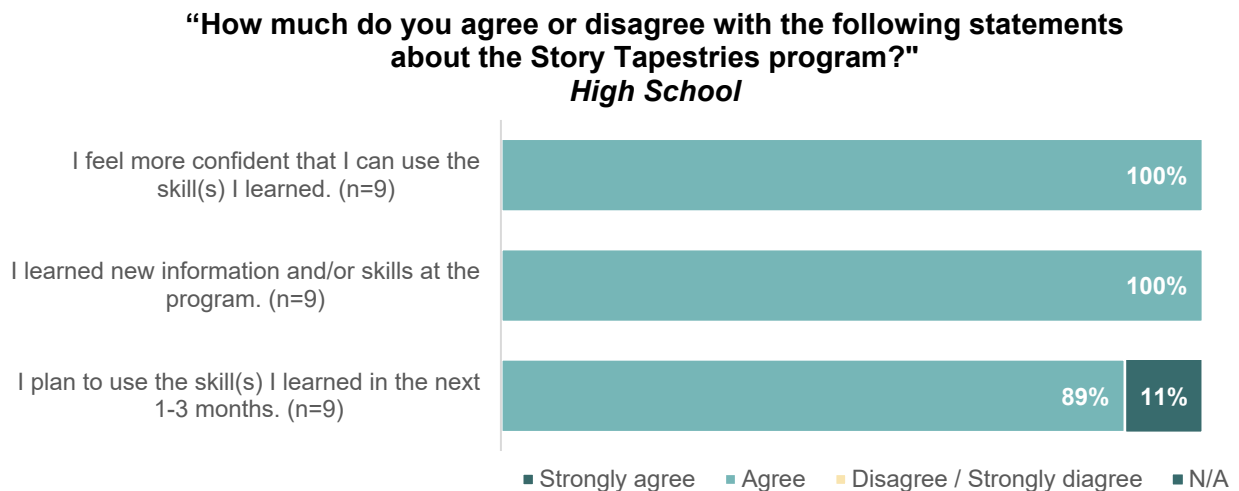
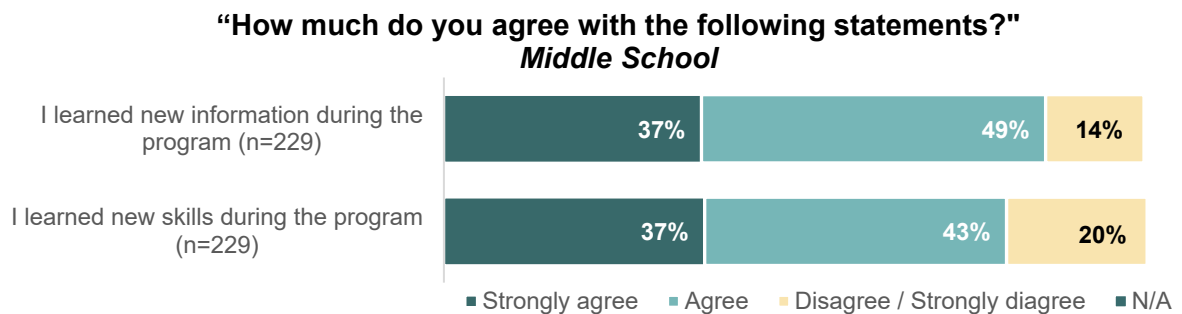
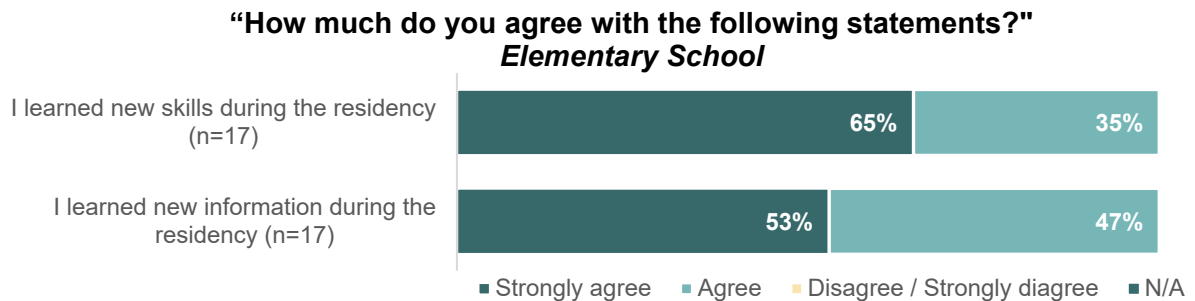


“Because of the Story Tapestries program about using the arts and mental health tools, I...”



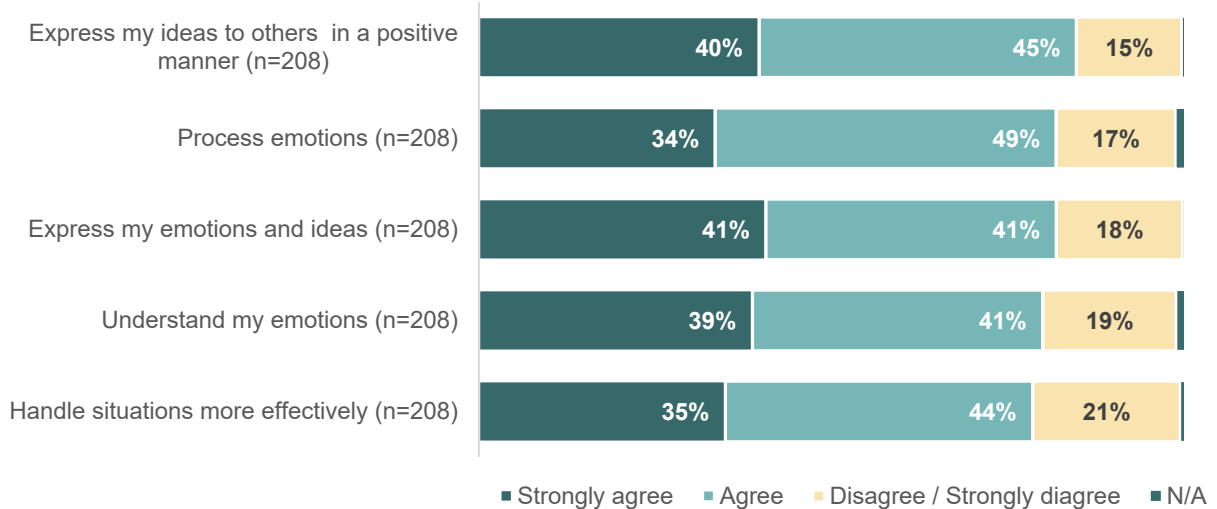
Participant Perspectives on Impacts from Exit Survey

On their exit survey, participants were asked about the impacts of taking part in the program. Most respondents agreed with the outcome statements, including that they planned to use the skills learned within the next 1-3 months, that they learned new information and/or skills at the workshop, and they felt more confident that they could use the skills they learned.

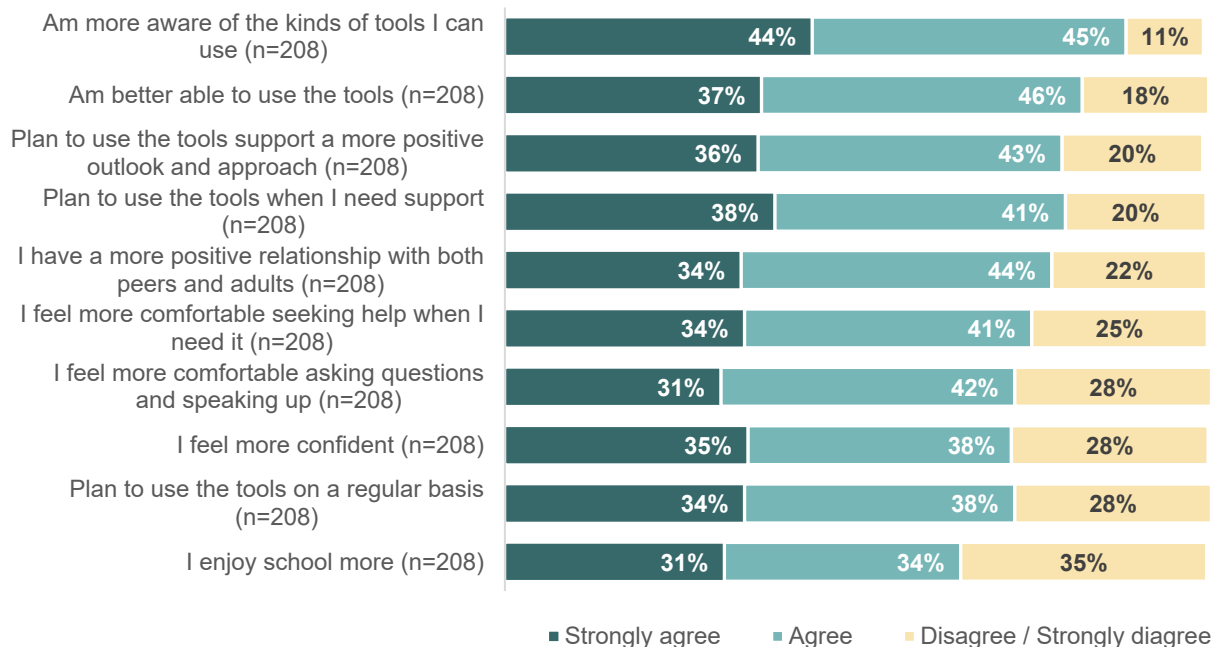


The surveys for middle and high school students also asked about increases in the ability to use the arts for social-emotional outcomes. The percentage of agree and strongly agree answers for middle school students ranged from 65% (*I enjoy school more*) to 89% (*I am more aware of the tools I can use*). For high school students, the percentages ranged from 67% (*I feel more comfortable asking questions and speaking up*) to 100% (multiple items).

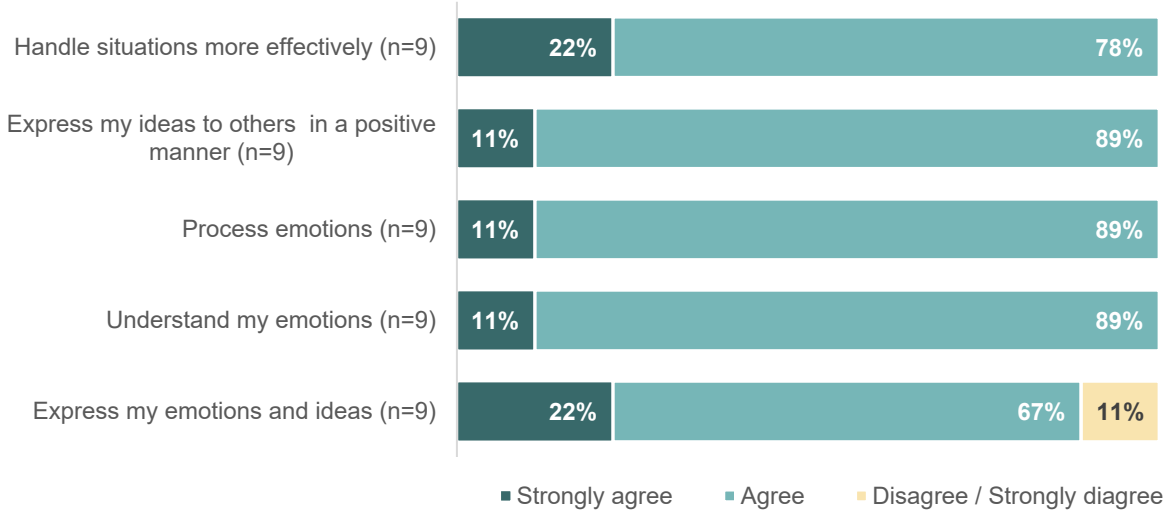
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Middle School



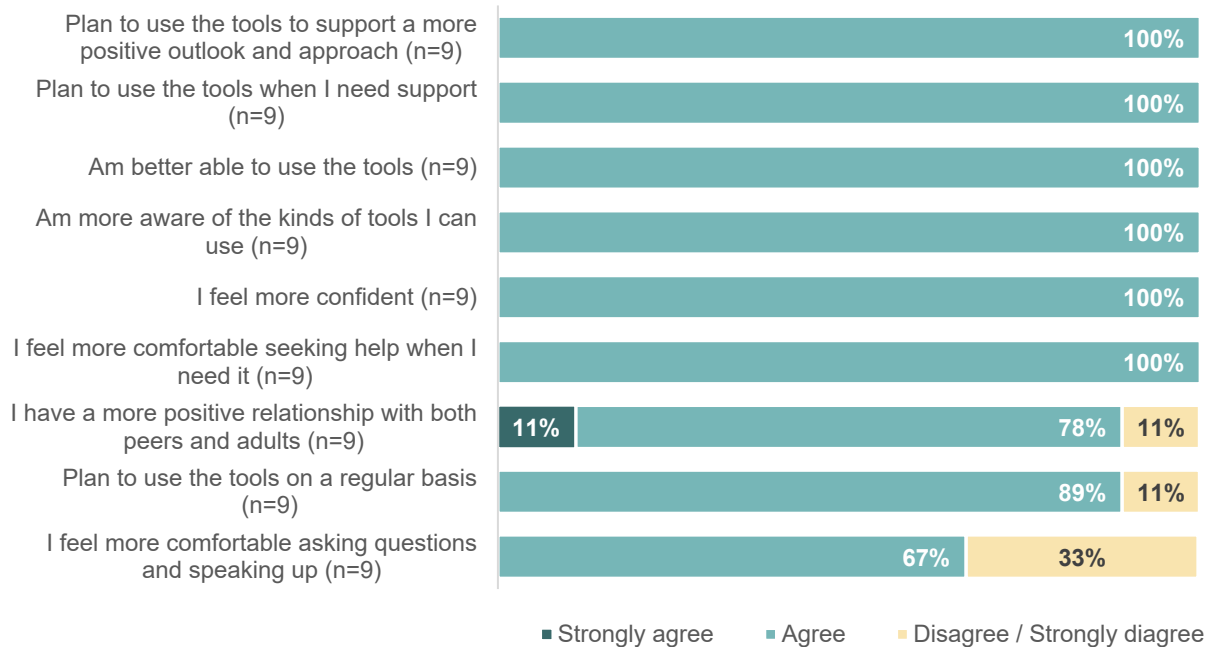
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High School

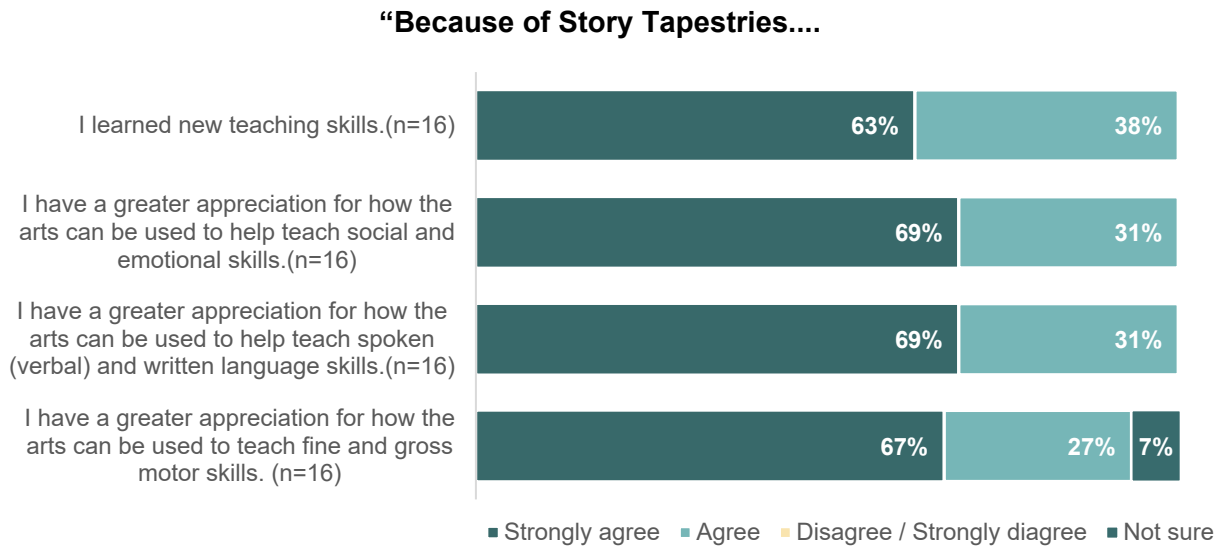


“Because of the Story Tapestries program about using the arts and mental health tools, I...”
High School



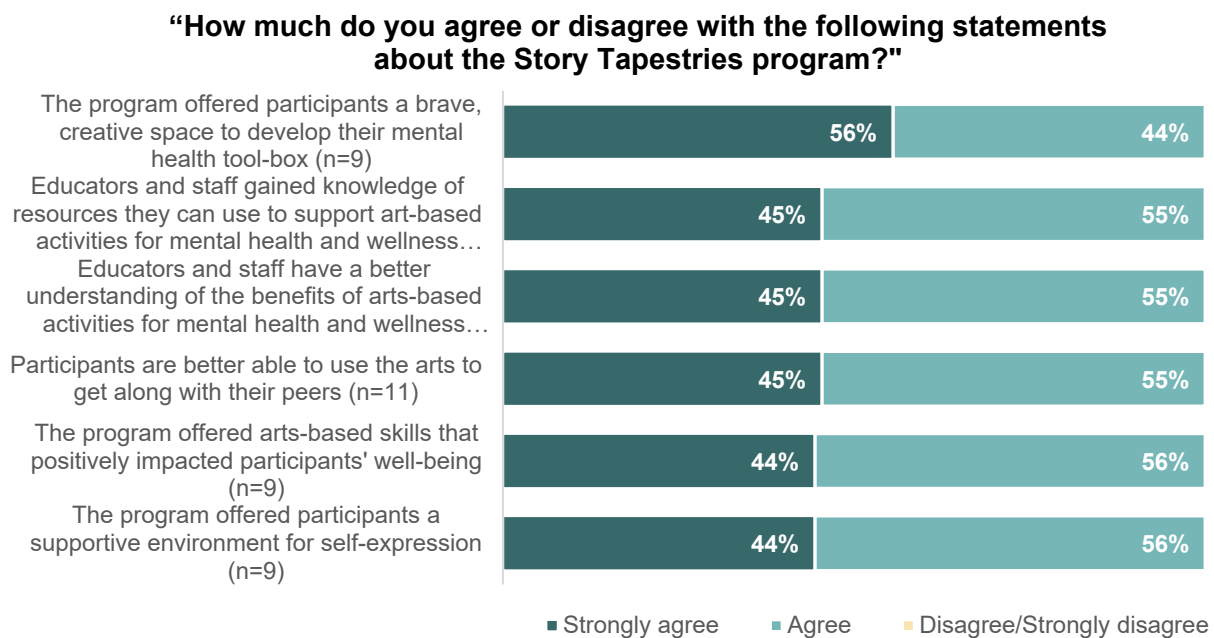
Professional Development Survey

All respondents agreed or disagreed with three of the four items capturing the impact of their professional development session. The fourth item saw a high level of agreement with a couple “not sure” responses.

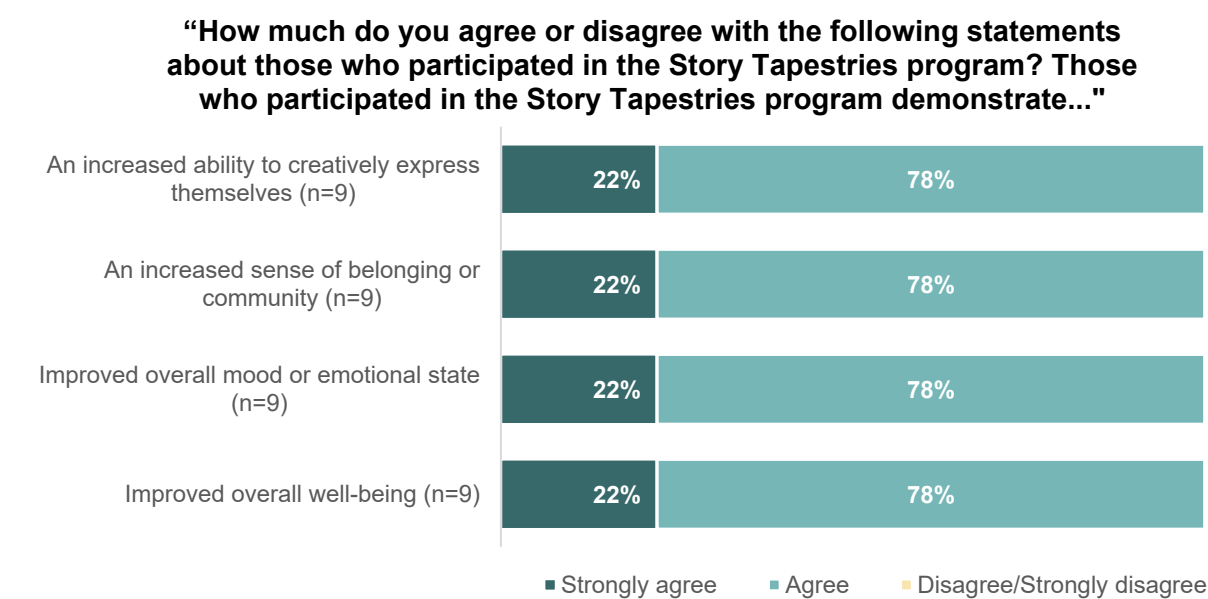


Artist Perceptions of Participant Impact from Program Surveys

Eleven teaching artists answered survey questions about the Story Tapestries program and its impact on the participants. All strongly agreed or agreed with each of the statements; agreement was strongest for the item *the program offered participants a brave, creative space to develop their mental health tool-box*.



Nine teaching artists unanimously agreed that those who participated in CHART programming demonstrate increased ability to creatively express themselves, increased sense of belonging, improved overall mood, and improved overall well-being.



Participant Focus Groups

What Comes to Mind When You Think of Story Tapestries?

When asked what comes to mind when you think of Story Tapestries, participants provided a variety of words, most common being “fun”, “art”, “color”, and “creative”.



Participant Perspectives on How Story Tapestries Makes a Difference

Overall, participants expressed high satisfaction with the program, reporting that activities were enjoyable and meaningful. They appreciated learning to express themselves through art, with several noting that the program helped them manage their stress and emotions. Participants particularly enjoyed creating motion in photography, making explosion books, drawing, and working with pastels. Additional favorite activities included writing poems, skits, and raps. The program provided creative opportunities for self-expression while also supporting participant's personal growth.



"I learned new drawing skills - how to draw emotions and values."

"It was fun, but it made me appreciate that doing random art projects is good for my stress."

"I learned how to be creative."

Participant Perspectives on Most Helpful/Useful Activities

Participants reported a variety of responses when asked which activities were most helpful or useful. Activities mentioned included taking photographs of flowers, shaving cream art, working with tissue paper and Play Doh, and creating the explosion books. Related to regulating their emotions, participants enjoyed creating finger puppets and acting out their emotions in addition to engaging in the physical exercises.



"I liked everything, putting my emotions in my book, drawing."

"I can make art and still engage with my friends."

"The pop-up book let me express my feeling and have conversations with other people"

Staff Focus Groups

What Comes to Mind When You Think of Story Tapestries?

When asked what comes to mind when you think of Story Tapestries, center staff provided a variety of words such as “supportive”, “expressive”, and “connection”.



Impact on Organization or Organizational Staff

Overall, center staff expressed general satisfaction with the program and found the program staff helpful throughout the experience. Center staff reported that they learned more about their students during the program and valued the opportunity to know them beyond their academic performance. Some center staff reported that they enjoyed watching the artists' work together and enjoyed seeing their different teaching styles. Some students struggle with their confidence and relationship building, but the program staff showed the center staff different ways to communicate and interact with students in ways that increased their self-esteem. Center staff also reported enjoying the activities such as singing and poetry, and found value in incorporating movement and art into their regular curriculum.



"This was a great opportunity for me to learn more about and connect with my students."

"[The sessions] gave me time to circulate and be hands on to address things like the culture in the room."

"[The program] cut the time for me to know how to get into my students and how to make them successful and support them. It added another level to my professionalism."

How Story Tapestries Makes a Difference for Students

Center staff said that participants liked the program and were excited about their activities, which helped them arrive on time for sessions. Staff saw that the program teachers showed participants how to work together as a team and express themselves. The program helped participants grow emotionally by teaching them ways to handle their feelings. The program also gave students a chance to use special tools and materials they don't usually get to work with, which made their learning more interesting and creative.



"One student really took time to draw himself and thoroughly enjoyed using his artistic skills to show how he viewed himself."

"I saw students with appreciation - learning for curiosity's sake, not to meet expectations."

"For my class - it was really great to see them open up - a lot of growth from beginning to end. Early on they were reserved, then [later] they were flourishing."

Teaching Artist Focus Group

How Story Tapestries Makes a Difference for Students

Teaching artists expressed that the participants underwent personal growth as a result of the program. Initially, participants were apprehensive and kept to themselves at the start of sessions. As the program progressed, creative writing activities helped participants become more comfortable and less reserved. This comfort translated into increased confidence as participants created art and learned to express themselves and their emotions in English. By the program's end, participants had developed an overall sense of confidence and demonstrated more extroverted, outgoing energy in their interactions.



"Students have never had adults ask them what their emotions mean..."

"Emerging multilingual learners gained much confidence."

"[The program] cut the time for me to know how to get into my students and how to make them successful and support them. It added another level to my professionalism."

Impact on Teaching Artists & Center Staff

Teaching artists reported gaining valuable classroom management strategies through the program, including preparing curriculum in advance and taking time to reflect on improving their teaching approach. The program sessions offered breaks from traditional classroom routines, which helped teaching artists build confidence when working with large groups.

The program provided opportunities for teaching artists to explore therapeutic arts and incorporate these techniques into their instruction. This experience helped them develop an interdisciplinary mix of teaching strategies, including group work, individual instruction, paired activities, and both seated and movement-based learning, which enhanced their overall capacity to work with children.

Additionally, the program created space for teaching artists to receive constructive feedback from school counselors and leadership, who provided valuable advice on effective classroom management techniques.



"Traditional classroom management relies on extroverted students to carry dialogue and participation. This program offered opportunity for introverted students to open up and step into their courage because participation felt safe and comfortable."

"I really enjoyed the art mindfulness workshops w/ CREATE art centers. It was lovely to be in relaxed, creative community. I gained perspective. It was therapeutic and reinforcing."

Suggestions for Program Improvement

Participant Suggestions for Program Improvement from Program Survey

Participants were asked what they would improve about the program on their surveys. Of the 23 responses to the program survey, most of them were requesting longer sessions or more movement-based activities. On the exit surveys, elementary (n=17 responses), middle (n=95), and high school (n=5) students also most frequently requested longer sessions.

Participant Suggestions for Program Improvement from Focus Groups

Participants provided several suggestions to improve the program. The most common recommendation was extending the program through longer sessions or meeting twice weekly, allowing more time for each project and lesson. Some participants suggested incorporating unconventional materials like scratch boards and acrylic markers. Additional suggestions included providing snacks and offering more praise or rewards to encourage active listening and participation. Participants noted that maintaining calm engagement among all attendees was sometimes challenging, expressing preference for a quiet environment that would support better focus on their creative projects and improve the overall learning experience.



"Could we go outside for some activities?"

"Encourage them [students/participants] to let their feelings [show] more - not to be afraid"

"I liked the class. [...] If you do good, you get candy or prizes."

Staff Suggestions for Program Improvement from Focus Groups

Staff offered several suggestions for program improvement. First, they recommended incorporating more movement activities into the program. Second, staff noted that longer and more frequent sessions would improve the program's success, as increased consistency would result in greater participant engagement and impact. Third, staff agreed that the program should include dedicated time for the staff and teaching artists to reflect on activities. Finally, staff had differing perspectives on staffing: some suggested having diverse program staff that reflect the participants' backgrounds, while others emphasized the importance of maintaining one consistent staff member throughout the program.



"I think one of the main things that I felt was that we just needed a little bit more time. It just felt a little bit rushed, sometimes like we needed a little more time to maybe finish something or to have a little bit of a deeper reflection."

"It would have been beneficial to have the continuity of the same teacher throughout."

"Scheduling is really hard, but I do think that if it was more than once a week; kids need consistency. That alone would give more impact."

Teaching Artist Suggestions for Program Improvement from Focus Groups

Teaching artists provided several recommendations for program improvement. They suggested incorporating mid-program check-ins to allow for adjustments during subsequent sessions and increasing the budget for session supplies. Artists also recommended preplanning meetings with teaching staff to prepare curriculum and establish consistent expectations among all instructors.

A key suggestion involved creating a shared grant summary that all stakeholders help develop, ensuring everyone understands program expectations. Teaching artists emphasized that program teams should be consulted before developing and implementing components, rather than having grants written separately and then expecting others to implement them. This collaborative approach would help everyone feel comfortable with implementation and share in the program's success.

Additional recommendations included spreading professional development throughout the school year instead of concentrating it at the beginning, and establishing quarterly meetings with executive directors for ongoing support and communication.

Regarding budget and program focus, teaching artists requested increased funding for supplies. They also noted that since the program aims to improve participants' mental health, showcasing artwork publicly could interfere with the safe space created for participants to express their social and emotional needs.

"Be sure to ask teachers what they need for in advance planning steps [...] practice intention with integrity [...] the more we can ask teachers for input the better the program will be [...] having check-ins midway through the program."



"Maybe have artists do more pre-observations of classes and students [...] schedule a class day to assist, support and observe [...] to meet teachers where they are and guide an intentional framework at start of school year for setting norms and expectations and getting to know students and needs."

"Schedule professional development opportunities with teachers in the fall / early in the school year so that teachers have a prior understanding and expectation for planned residency activities with the students."

"Need to close the communication / feedback loop between grant writing, reporting and implementation [...] provide a grant summary that everyone works from, so that everyone has a working understanding of the expectations for the program [...] what does the school think the program accomplishes? Do teachers understand the objectives?"

Conclusion

During the 2023-24 program year, the Story Tapestries **CHART a path to positive mental health (CHART)** program supported over 250 students, 50 educators, and approximately 850 community/family members. Through this programming, participants increased their knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy related to the use of the arts to support their mental health and well-being. For the students, nearly all reported high likelihood of using the tools they learned from the program. The professional development offered also bolstered teachers' self-reported knowledge, appreciation, and comfort implementing arts integrated lessons

Evaluation data highlighted multiple successes of the CHART program. Story Tapestries far exceeded the grant measures related to participation and engagement. Program and exit surveys revealed very high levels of participant outcome attainment and both participant and staff satisfaction. Focus group data supported these positive findings, with participants highlighting opportunities for self-expression and staff emphasizing students growing more comfortable expressing themselves in new ways. The primary suggestion for improvement, especially from the students, was more time/longer sessions.