



# Trauma-Informed Resilient Schools Training

## EVALUATION RESULTS

**April 2022**

External Evaluation conducted by the Community Technical Assistance Collaborative (CTAC), a program of the Ginsberg Center at the University of Michigan




STUDENT LIFE  
EDWARD GINSBERG CENTER  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



## Purpose:

Starr Commonwealth engaged University of Michigan's Community Technical Assistance Collaborative (CTAC) Team to conduct **an external evaluation** of the effectiveness of its *Trauma-Informed Resilient Schools* training and support as part of its Resilient Schools Project initiatives.

CTAC facilitated interviews with key informants including teachers and a school social worker working at a school with a long-standing partnership with Starr. Data gathered was used to **assess the changes the school personnel have noticed as a result of Starr's training, and how Starr has impacted their ability to carry out trauma-informed, resilience-focused practices.**



# Key Informant Interview Participants

## N = 3

CTAC conducted interviews with *three* elementary school staff members whose school is participating in Starr's Resilient Schools Project, receiving Starr training and support for the past 4 years.

### Interview Participants:


- 1 “veteran” teacher (white, female) very familiar with Starr's training
- 1 “new” teacher (white, female) new to Starr's training
- 1 school social worker (Black, male) familiar with Starr's training





## Summary of Findings:

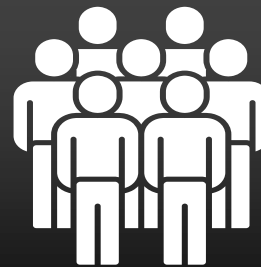
Overall, interviewees had **positive sentiments** to share about Starr. *Four Themes* emerged that highlight **changes teachers and staff have noticed** as a result of Starr's training, as well as **Starr's impact** on their trauma-informed, resilience-focused pedagogy:

1. Strong Foundation, Authentic Relationship Building, and Teacher & Staff Morale and Efficacy Development
  2. Student Adaptation & Functioning and Academic Engagement
  3. Development of Safety, Structure, and Community
  4. Combating Negative Outcomes and Impacts of Trauma
- 



# School Context

- **Public Title I elementary school (PreK-5) in a large suburban area within Southeast Michigan**
- **Interviewees estimate that school staff are mostly white, with a few Latinx, Black, and Arab members**





# School Context


- **Public Title I elementary school (PreK-5) in a large suburban area within Southeast Michigan**
- **Student Body**
  - **28% Black, 43% Hispanic\*, 23% white, 6% Bi/Multiracial**
  - **Approximately equal split of male and female students\*\***
  - **94% of students eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch**
  - **Interviewees estimate about 40% of students come from immigrant families/speak a language at home other than English**



\* The terminology "Hispanic" is taken directly from the Institute of Education Science (IES), rather than being derived or imposed by the evaluator.

\*\* IES does not collect data on non-binary students.

Source: CCD Public School Data, 2020-2021 School Year



## Methods

### Interview protocol development

- Adapted from previous protocol, which investigated COVID's/non-Starr influences' impact
- Designed to mirror Starr's language and training goals
  - Based on a review of Starr's website; recent white paper (Levin et al., 2021); and survey tools Starr administers (e.g., TISQ and ARTIC measures)



## Methods

### Line-by-line qualitative analysis of 3 Key Informant Interviews

- Interviewed between November and December 2021
  - Reported race, gender, estimate of staff ethnic/racial composition, estimate of percentage of immigrant and bi/multilingual families





## Topics Covered in the Protocol



School, Colleagues, and  
Starr Commonwealth



Students' Social-Emotional  
Well-Being and Academics




Interviewee's Self-  
Perception and Starr  
Commonwealth



Trauma-Informed,  
Resilience-Focused  
Sustainability



## Research Questions

1. What changes have teachers and staff noticed as a result of Starr Commonwealth's trauma-informed, resilience-focused training?
  2. How has Starr training and support impacted teachers' and staff members' sense of pedagogical efficacy in the area of trauma-informed, resilience-focused care?
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**Findings -  
Overall,  
interviewees  
had positive  
sentiments to  
share about  
Starr.**

*“Every [resource Starr has provided] working.”* (Veteran Teacher)

*“... Starr has done nothing but positive things for me as a teacher.”* (New Teacher)

*“... I couldn’t imagine not having [Starr]... I’ve been very thankful for them.”* (Social Worker)

**Findings -  
*Four Themes*  
highlighted  
changes teachers  
and staff have  
noticed as a result  
of Starr's training,  
as well as Starr's  
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trauma-informed,  
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pedagogy.**

## Themes



Strong Foundation, Authentic  
Relationship Building, and Teacher  
& Staff Morale and Efficacy  
Development



Development of Safety,  
Structure, and Community

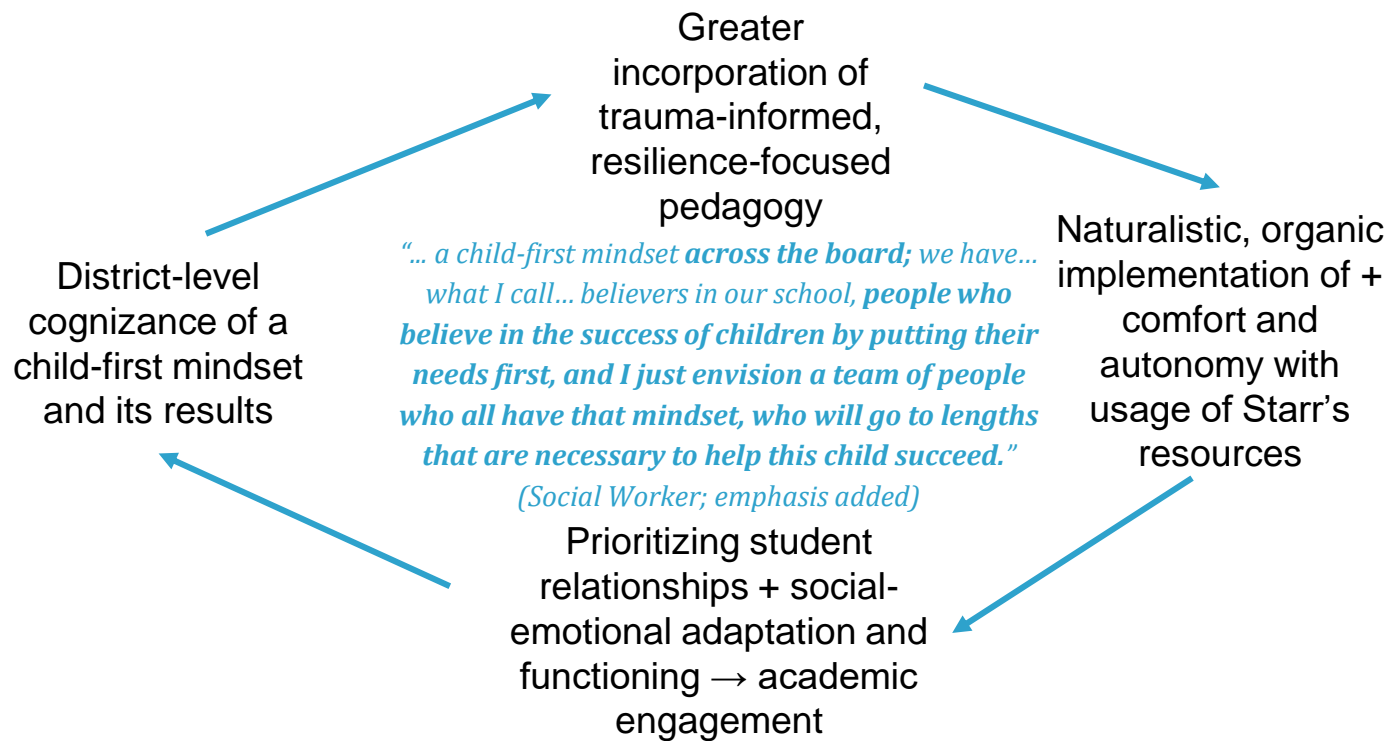


Student Adaptation &  
Functioning and Academic  
Engagement



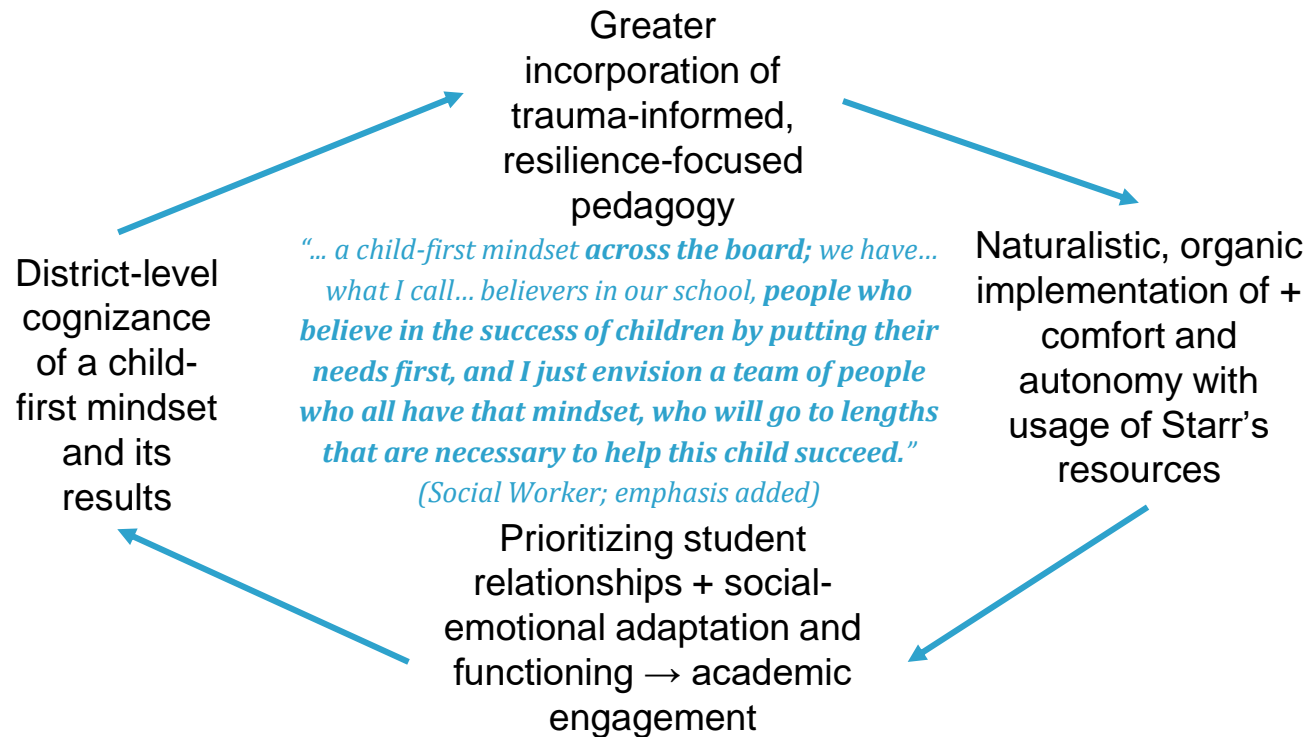
Combating Negative  
Outcomes and Impacts of  
Trauma

**Findings**  
**Theme 1:**  
**Strong**  
**Foundation,**  
**Authentic**  
**Relationship**  
**Building, and**  
**Teacher and**  
**Staff Morale**  
**and Efficacy**  
**Development**



**Findings**  
*Theme 1:*  
**Strong  
Foundation,  
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Staff Morale  
and Efficacy  
Development**

- **Successful implementations require and further cultivate school staff working well together → morale.**
- **Starr as a catalyst for pursuing greater trauma-informed, resilience-focused professional development → sustainability and efficacy.**



## Findings

### Theme 2:

## *Development of Safety, Structure, and Community*

*“... I’ve seen more kids feel more connected and have more ownership to the school, to their behaviors. ... if you emphasize those things, ... it’s gonna increase kids’ social-emotional learning and [the] opportunit[ies they have] to show empathy and compassion and care for one another.” (Social Worker)*

Findings  
Theme 2:  
*Development  
of Safety,  
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- **Starr recognizes that a student’s one-off good relationship/s with a teacher or within a classroom don’t always mean a broader sense of school community. So, Starr emphasizes building school connectedness + connection between students and their peers.**



**Findings**  
**Theme 3:**  
**Student**  
**Adaptation &**  
**Functioning**  
**and Academic**  
**Engagement**

*“... in the Starr training, we’re not allowed to [tell] students to go to the calm-down corner - they have to [choose] to go there on their own, and I think that’s very powerful... the rest of the class just continues as usual - ... most of the class is oblivious, actually, because they’re just so used to it.”*

*“[My students] come to school happy, ready to learn, excited to learn, feeling like... they’ve mastered something, ... like they belong; [Starr] has just made such a... difference [and]... change in [their] behavior.”* (New Teacher)

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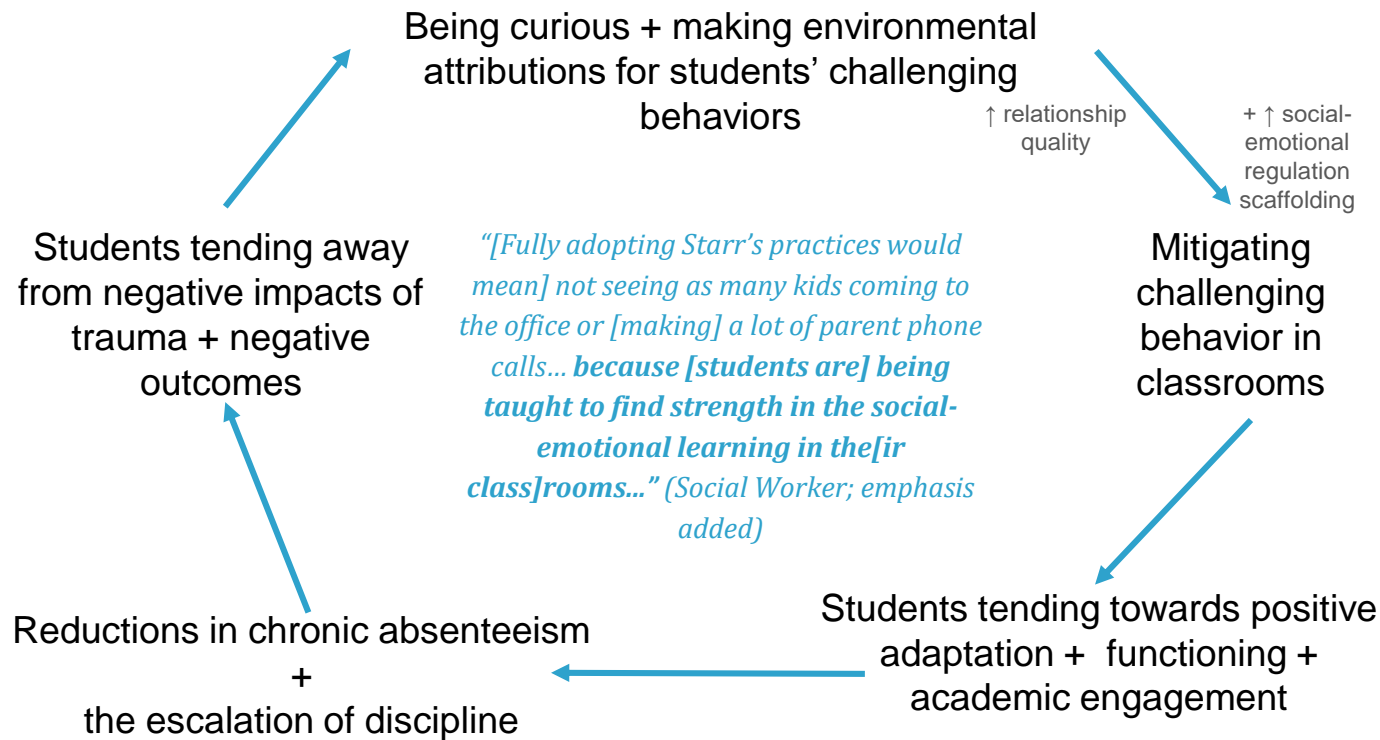
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- **Scaffolding self-regulation, often via consistent routines**
- **Using Starr’s strength-based vocabulary, particularly the Circle of Courage → common language + ethos for scaffolding**
- **Taking breaks from academic work → prioritizing social-emotional regulation → students mentally and physically ready to learn**

# Findings

## Theme 4: Combating Negative Impacts of Trauma and Negative Outcomes





This evaluation was conducted by the Community Technical Assistance Collaborative (CTAC), a program of the Ginsberg Center at the University of Michigan. For more information on CTAC or this evaluation please contact our team at [ginsberg.ctac@umich.edu](mailto:ginsberg.ctac@umich.edu).

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