

Need for Clayton Model

Data from teachers, administrators, caregivers, and students indicate that SEL Specialists fill a key role in the lives of students and teachers that other school staff could not fill, and are a critical supplement to supports being offered across schools.

For students, SEL Specialists:

- Help them identify behaviors and interactions and develop ways to more appropriately interact,
- Teach and help them develop problem solving and self-regulation strategies, and
- Help them feel that their concerns are taken seriously.

For teachers, SEL Specialists:

- Provided trauma-informed support to students that they were unable to provide,
- Fulfill a role that school counselors and social workers cannot, and
- Made meaningful impact on classroom through whole-class support.

For caregivers, SEL Specialists:

- Increased school-based resources and provided supports to caregivers, and
- Lowered and removed perceived stigma concerning mental health.

CONCLUSION

The Clayton Model Pilot Program's second year demonstrated significant positive impacts on students, schools, and teachers. The program's flexible implementation, collaboration with school stakeholders, and focus on SEL skill development contribute to its success as a valuable resource to address school, student, and school-wide social, emotional, and mental wellbeing challenges. WRI will continue its evaluation on the impact of the program on schools and students.

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Senator Walter Rand Institute
for Public Affairs

wrand@camden.rutgers.edu | 856-225-6566
rand.camden.rutgers.edu

THE CLAYTON MODEL PILOT PROGRAM YEAR 2



**CHILD
CONNECTION
CENTER**
A CLAYTON
MODEL PROGRAM



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CLAYTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT began development of The Clayton Model in 2009, establishing Child Connection Centers (CCC) that provide universal, trauma-informed, school-based social-emotional learning (SEL) programs provided by SEL Specialists in elementary schools in Southern New Jersey. In May 2021 the New Jersey Legislature and Governor passed P.L.2021 c.85 establishing the five-year Clayton Model Pilot Program in the New Jersey Department of Education. Since 2021, New Jersey has supported the expansion of the Clayton Model to nine elementary schools in Gloucester County. The Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs (WRI) began evaluation of the program in 2013, expanding and enhancing evaluation in 2021 with the passage of P.L.2021 c.85. This report includes information on Year 2 (2022-2023) of the evaluation including methods and key findings.

METHODS

In 2022-2023 WRI expanded evaluation to include process, fidelity of implementation, and student and school impact to answer two research questions:

- How does the Clayton Model implementation affect pilot schools?
- How does the Clayton Model implementation affect student outcomes?

To answer these questions WRI collected data across nine implementing school sites that included:

- Teacher (n=113), school staff (n=136), and SEL Specialist (10) pre- and post-school-year surveys,
- End-of-year surveys with caregivers (n=37) and students (n=96),
- Semi-structured in-depth interviews with teachers (n=15) administrators and staff (n=9) and CCC staff (n=11), and
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) surveys both pre- and post-student-engagement from teachers (n=262) and caregivers (n=175).

RESULTS

Student Impact

- Caregivers SDQ analysis indicate statistically significant reductions in emotional problems, hyperactivity and inattentiveness, peer problems, and overall difficulties, and a significant positive impact on student's lives.
- Teacher SDQ analysis indicates statistically significant positive overall impact on student's lives.

Teacher Impact

- Statistical analyses indicate a positive impact on teacher classroom management skills when SEL Specialists met individually with teachers.
- Positive effects on student peer relationships observed by teachers.
- Many teachers benefitted from helpful strategies, resources, and supports provided by SEL Specialists.

School Impact

- CCC integration in school processes positively affects school climate and morale.
- SEL Specialists become integral members of school teams.
- Positive impact on school-wide events, classroom dynamics, and team decision-making processes.

Program Processes

- Flexible program adapts to student needs addressing anxiety, trauma, and home-life issues,
- Collaboration with school stakeholder systems improved,
- Emphasis on building collaborative relationships between the CCC, schools, and caregivers.

Fidelity of Implementation

- Monthly professional development for SEL Specialists enhanced communication and support among CCC staff,
- SEL Specialists demonstrated tailored support for students; received positive feedback from SEL Coordinator and SEL Specialists.

