El Sistema Oklahoma Research

2014-15 Report

- Demographics
- Parent/Guardian Perceptions
- Participant Perceptions
- School Personnel Perceptions
- Development of Self-concept and Self-regulatory Behavior

Michael A. Raiber, Ph.D.
Oklahoma City University

Forward by Robyn Hilger
Executive Director, El Sistema Oklahoma

Table of Contents

Table of Contents 2

Forward 5

Chapter 1 8

Introduction 8

Focus of the Report 11

Chapter 2 12

Demographics 12

Chapter 3 20

Parent/Guardian perceptions of *El Sistema Oklahoma* 20

Data Collection 20

Data Analysis 21

Results 22

Qualitative data analysis 28

Discussion 35

Chapter 4 38

Participant perceptions of *El Sistema Oklahoma* 38

Data Collection 38

Data Analysis 39

Results 39

Discussion 49

Chapter 5 57

School personnel perceptions of *El Sistema Oklahoma* 57

Data Collection 58

Data Analysis 60

Results 61

Discussion 65

Chapter 6 69

Development of self-concept and self-regulatory behavior 69

Self-concept as possible selves 69

Implications of possible selves for *El Sistema Oklahoma* students and teachers 71

Measuring possible selves 72

Data Collection 73

Data Analysis 73

Results 75

Discussion 76

Bibliography 79

Forward

El Sistema Oklahoma (ESO) is a non-profit 501(c)3 founded by Cathy and Phil Busey through a creative partnership that includes St. Luke's United Methodist Church and the Wanda L. Bass School of Music at Oklahoma City University. These original partners have provided leadership for the success of El Sistema Oklahoma since its inception. Inspired by El Sistema in Venezuela, the mission of the Oklahoma-based initiative is to serve the community by engaging children and their families in an ensemble-based music program so they can share the joy of music making and grow as responsible citizens. The guiding vision has been to create and foster social change in the Oklahoma City community through an after-school music program. El Sistema Oklahoma began its first program year on September 3, 2013.

The capacity to leverage the considerable financial and in-kind resources of the original partners, beginning as early as 2011, has been vital to ESO's successful start and ability to focus on the delivery of the mission to the community. In June of 2015, El Sistema Oklahoma was granted its own 501(c)3 status, which will enable ESO to increase opportunities for additional community support and partnerships to serve the children in the program.

The original partners continue to be the guiding leaders, playing a vital role in the successful operation of the organization. Phil and Cathy Busey provided the founding gifts to launch El Sistema Oklahoma and have led the design and development of the program since its inception. The Busey's remain committed to providing vital financial and leadership support for the organization's daily operations and growth. They have

leveraged not only their personal resources, but those of their company to provide additional resources including graphic design, website expertise, and legal counsel. Additionally, the Busey Chair of Music Education at the Wanda L. Bass School of Music at Oklahoma City University was funded to provide necessary music education expertise and solidify the university partnership with ESO. Cathy Busey serves as the Chairman of the El Sistema Oklahoma Board of Directors.

St. Luke's United Methodist Church provides in-kind services for accounting, human resources management, facilities management, communications/videography, and strategic organizational support. ESO benefits from a substantial focus on missions from St. Luke's in areas such as school supply drives, congregational giving, and volunteerism. ESO families benefit from access to mission services such as eye screenings/glasses for children, healthcare vans, and activities such as 'Dinner with Love', which provides fully cooked meals to the most needy families on Christmas Eve.

The Wanda L. Bass School of Music provides in-kind services for professional office and conference space, facility use for program performances and gatherings, and strategic organizational support. Additionally, the school established the Busey Chair of Music Education, a funded chair position, which provides a full-time, tenured professorship whose instructional load includes university music education duties and duties with El Sistema Oklahoma. After a substantial revision of music education degree requirements, new coursework integrates the undergraduate instrumental music education curriculum with ESO by having courses meet on the ESO campus. Additionally, composition projects with the university student composers have resulted in two, world-premiere performances of pieces written for ESO.

It is through the commitment of these original partners that the vision to create and foster social change in the Oklahoma City community has started to be realized in only a short 24 months of operation. El Sistema Oklahoma has had the ability to utilize the considerable resources of one of the United States' most prominent and fastest growing United Methodist Churches, one of the nation's most recognized schools of music, and the entrepreneurial spirit, leadership, and financial backing of Phil and Cathy Busey. Our early and on-going success in delivering our mission is directly attributable to the unique strengths and collaborative abilities of these original partners. We are proud to share this report with the community and to celebrate the success of our children, families, volunteers, faculty and staff and partners.

Robyn Hilger

Executive Director, El Sistema Oklahoma

September 9, 2015

Chapter 1

Introduction

El Sistema Oklahoma works primarily with children and families from an underserved and disadvantaged population within the Oklahoma City Public Schools I-89 District (OKCPS). Oklahoma City Public Schools is the largest urban school district in the state, serving 45,745 students. 89.6% of the district's student population qualifies for Free or Reduced Price meals (Oklahoma City Schools, 2014).

The attendance zone for ESO students in the first two years of operation was determined by several factors. First, all service site schools are within 2.5 miles of the El Sistema Oklahoma campus so families could engage with all program offerings. Second, these service sites are part of a feeder pattern that OKCPS organizes to serve the inner northwest quadrant of the district. This area is considered part of the 'inner-city' and 'urban core' of Oklahoma City. The major attendance feeder pattern culminates at Northwest Classen High School. The zone includes 10 elementary schools and 1 middle school. School choice, at the middle school level, is prevalent within this attendance zone. Students who start with ESO at the elementary level, may or may not attend the feeder pattern middle school. To date, ESO students have attended 10 additional choice middle schools, outside of the feeder pattern. Finally, the district's only community school, David R. Lopez Community School at Edgemere, was included in the ESO attendance zone as this school is within the mileage range (less than 2.5 miles). It is not within the Northwest Classen High School feeder pattern, however the goals of the community school model match the ESO mission.

Students have been admitted to ESO through one of three entry points. One entry point has been through principal recommendation. In both 2013 and 2014, the principals of the seven elementary schools (grades 3-6), who met both mileage and feeder pattern criteria to be considered a service site, were asked to recommend students who could benefit from ESO's offerings. Principals were asked not to consider musical ability or academic achievement as a primary determining factor for their recommendations, but rather suggest students who would be most impacted by an intensive five-day a week program aimed at supporting social change through music education. These same principals were informed that ESO should not be considered as a reward program for high achieving or well-behaved students. ESO leadership believes that while already high achieving students can and will benefit from attending, students who do not enjoy high achieving outcomes in their daily school lives stand to benefit at an even greater rate from program offerings. In the first year, this process yielded approximately 70% of the total enrollment. The remainder of the first-year student population resulted from an open enrollment process where families from one of the seven elementary service sites were allowed to enroll their children without principal recommendation. The entire process resulted in 98 students enrolled.

In the second year, all students who were enrolled in ESO for 2013-14 were encouraged to continue in the program for the 2014-15 program year. This moved the grade distribution of returning students to grades 4-7. Additional enrollment came first from siblings and family members in grades 3-7 of returning students. After these enrollments were accommodated, the previous year's enrollment process was enacted resulting in 176 students enrolled for the 2014-15 program year.

In the first year, curricular offerings included classes in instrumental technique, music literacy, creative musicianship, large group sectionals, and one full symphony orchestra. With faculty help, students began their ESO engagement with the opportunity to explore every instrument offered for study (i.e., flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, percussion, violin, viola, cello, and bass). After exploring all the instruments while faculty members assessed their probable fit for each instrument, the students were asked to select three instruments they would be happy learning to play. The faculty compiled their assessments of student abilities and the student preference information to assign students to their instrument sections. After selection was accomplished, students were assigned their schedules. In addition to their classes, students met in full orchestra rehearsals every week for the entire program year. Full orchestra rehearsals are an especially important feature of ESO, as the orchestra serves as the metaphor for the entire ESO community, requiring all, including faculty, to unify their efforts for the benefit of the ensemble.

In 2013-2014, the entire student enrollment was included in one full symphony orchestra. Eleven faculty members taught all class offerings. This required some instrumental teachers to teach more than one instrument and to serve as teaching assistants in the music literacy and creative music classes. In the second program year (2014-15), two orchestras were formed. Returning students, with one year experience, met exclusively in *Orquesta Alegría* while students in their first year, met exclusively in *Orquesta Nueva.* The ESO faculty was expanded from 11 to 19 members. This expansion allowed for dedicated teachers on each instrument, additional sections of

music literacy and creative music classes, and full-time teaching assistants. Other than these additions, there were no other substantial changes to the curriculum.

Focus of the Report

This report details data from four collection instruments that were administered at various times throughout the 2014-15 program year. These instruments include: (a) The Parent/Guardian Survey, (b) The Participant Survey, (c) the Teacher/Administrator Survey, and (d) The Possible Selves Survey. The first instrument was used to collect demographic data from families. The next two instruments were used to measure stakeholder perceptions of their experiences with ESO students, faculty and staff. The instruments were also used to collect data concerning perceptions of program effectiveness in terms of meeting stated missions and goals. The teacher/administrator survey was constructed to collect data concerning program perceptions particularly related to the interface between ESO and Oklahoma City Public School sites with whom they interact. The Possible Selves survey was used to collect data related to students' self-regulation abilities. All methods, analysis, and results are reported exclusively in terms of the data from each individual instrument. No interactions were investigated. This report serves as a baseline for stakeholder perceptions concerning program effectiveness as well as an initial investigation into the program's potential impact on student self-regulation.

Chapter 2

Demographics

El Sistema Oklahoma (ESO) recognizes the impact of efforts made by faculty and administration are greatly influenced by the context in which that work is completed. The demographic factors that contribute to the contexts in which ESO students and families find themselves are complex. This chapter reports on a number of demographic factors that have been found to influence student achievement (McAdams, 2010).

The demographics reported in this chapter represent the population enrolled during the program's second year (2014-15). Data were collected via a student demographic data sheet (The Parent/Guardian Survey) that was completed by an adult for each child in the program. Completion of this form was a compulsory part of the enrollment process and was therefore collected for all students enrolled (N = 176). The form asked for the student's name, school, age and gender. Additionally, respondents were asked to indicate if two parents, one parent, or a guardian headed the child's household. Ethnicity/race data were collected using U.S. Census Bureau classifications. Yearly income data was collected via a graduated scale from below $20,000 to above $61,000. Respondents were also asked to indicate if their child received free or reduced meal subsidies. Data concerning the child's first language and the primary language spoken in their home were also collected. Finally, family mobility data were collected.

The majority of students (n = 142) attended elementary schools. One family of a second year student indicated that their child was elementary age, but they had

elected homeschool as their educational option for the year. The entire elementary population (*n* = 143) constituted 81% of the total student population. The remaining students (*n* = 32) attended one of 10 different middle schools. (Please refer to the information on school choice in the introduction). One respondent did not report school attendance on the form. The elementary population was distributed over eight school settings as follows: (a) Cleveland (19%, *n* = 33), (b) Gatewood (18%, *n* = 32), (c) Kaiser (15%, *n* = 26), (d) Linwood (11%, *n* = 19), (e) Sequoyah (10%, *n* = 17), (f), Putnam Heights (5%, *n* = 8), (g) Edgemere (3%, *n* = 6), (h) Sacred Heart (>1%, *n* = 1), (g) home school (>1%, *n* = 1) (see Table 1.) The middle school population was distributed over 10 schools: (a) Belle Isle (8%, *n* = 14), (b) Classen School of Advanced Studies (3%, *n* = 5), (c) Taft (2%, *n* = 4), (d) Parmelee (1%, *n* = 2), (e) Mustang North (1%, *n* = 2), (f) North East Academy (>1%, *n* = 1), (g) Dove Science Academy (>1%, *n* = 1), (h) ASTEC (>1%, *n* = 1), (i) St. John's (>1%, *n* = 1), and (j) Independence (>1%, *n* = 1) (see Table 1.)

Table 1. Schools Attended

School	*n*	Percentage
Elementary Schools		
Cleveland	33	19%
Gatewood	32	18%
Kaiser	26	15%
Linwood	19	11%
Sequoyah	17	10%
Putnam Heights	8	5%
Edgemere	6	3%
Sacred Heart	1	>1%
Home School	1	>1%
Middle Schools		
Belle Isle	14	8%
Classen SAS	5	3%
Taft	4	2%
Parmelee	2	1%
Mustang North	2	1%
North East Academy	1	>1%
Dove Science Academy	1	>1%
ASTEC	1	>1%
St. John's	1	>1%
Independence	1	>1%
Did not respond	1	>1%

The distribution of students by age was as follows: (a) 8 years old (14%, *n* = 25), (b) 9 years old (30%, *n* = 52), (c) 10 years old (35%, *n* = 44), (d) 11 years old (19%, *n* = 33), (e) 12 years old (8%, *n* = 13), (f) 13 years old (3%, *n* = 5), and (g) 14 years old, (>1%, *n* = 1) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Students by Years of Age

Age	*n*	Percentage
8	25	14%
9	52	30%
10	45	25%
11	34	19%
12	14	8%
13	5	3%
14	1	>1%

The distribution of students by grade was, (a) third grade, (23%, *n* = 41), (b) fourth grade (26%, *n* = 45), (c) fifth grade (26%, *n* = 45), (d) sixth grade (19%, *n* = 33), and (f) seventh grade (7%, *n* = 12) (see Table 3).

Table 3. Students by Grade

Grade	*n*	Percentage
3	41	23%
4	45	26%
5	45	26%
6	33	19%
7	12	6%

The gender distribution among the total student population was 47% (*n* = 83) male and 53% (*n* = 93) female.

The majority (64%, *n* = 112) of respondents reported living in two-parent families. Those reporting to live in single parent families constituted 30% of the population (*n* = 53). Those living in a guardianship represented 3% of the population (*n* = 5). Six (3%) did not respond to this query.

Family education levels were determined by the highest level of schooling completed by the head of household. The reported levels were as follows: (a) did not complete high school (13%, *n* = 22), (b) high school graduate (28%, *n* = 50), (c) GED (6%, *n* = 11), (d) associate or technical degree (16%, *n* = 29), (e) bachelors degree (14%, *n* = 24), (f) masters degree (10%, *n* = 18) and (g) doctorate (1%, (*n* = 2) (see Table 4). Eleven percent (*n* = 20) chose not to respond to this question. Of those who did report, 47% (*n* = 83) of heads of household reported high school equivalency or less as the highest level of education attained.

Table 4. Education Level – Head of Household

Level	*n*	Percentage
Did not complete high School	22	13%
High school graduate	50	28%
GED	11	6%
Associate or technical degree	29	16%
Bachelors degree	24	14%
Masters degree	18	10%
Doctorate	2	1%
Did not respond	20	11%

Reporting racial and ethnic make-up of the total population allowed respondents to indicate mixed race/ethnicity for their children, as respondents could check all categorical listings that applied to their child's background. This resulted in categorical percentages that total to more than 100%. This likely allowed parents/guardians to more accurately reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the population than to force respondents to select only one racial/ethnic category. Respondents report that 51% (*n* = 89) of the total population identify, at least partially, as 'white non-Hispanic.' Those who identify as 'Mexican' comprised 22% (*n* = 38) of the population while 19% (*n* = 33) identified as 'Black or African American.' Those who identified as 'Native American' constituted 16% (*n* = 28) of the population, while 15% (*n* = 27) identified as 'Asian.' The remaining racial/ethnic identities represented significantly lower percentages of the total population. They include: 'Central American' (5%, *n* = 9), 'Hispanic Other' (3%, *n* = 5), 'Puerto Rican' (2%, *n* = 3), 'South American' (1%, *n* = 2), and 'Arab' (written in on the form) (1%, *n* = 1) (see Table 5). Two respondents (2%) chose not to reply to this question.

Table 5. Race/Ethnicity of Total Student Population

Race/Ethnic Category	*n*	Percentage
White (non-Hispanic)	89	51%
Mexican	38	22%
Black or African American	33	19%
Native American	28	16%
Asian	27	15%
Central American	9	5%
Hispanic Other	5	3%
Puerto Rican	3	2%
South American	2	1%
Arab	1	1%
Did not respond	2	2%

Family socio-economic status was measured in two ways. First, respondents indicated the range of the family's income on graduated scale. Respondents reported that 27% (*n* = 47) of ESO families made less than $20,000 per year while 24% (*n* = 42) report a yearly income of between $20,000 and $30,000. Another 20% (n = 35) report making between $31,000 and $40,000 per year. Those who reported yearly incomes of between $41,000 and $50,000 represented 7% (*n* = 13) of the population while 3% (*n* = 5) reported making between $51,000 and $60,000 per year. Fourteen percent (*n* = 24) of respondents indicated that their family had a yearly income of more than $60,000. Ten (6%) respondents chose not to respond to this question (see Table 6).

The second measure used to determine students' socio-economic status included reports of families who qualify for the federally subsidized meal program in either the 'reduced' or 'free' categories. Respondents indicate that 8% (*n* = 14) of families qualify for subsidies at the reduced rate and 72% (*n* = 127) qualify for fully subsidized or 'free' meals.

Table 6. Reported Yearly Family Income

Income Level	*n*	Percentage
Below $20,000	47	27%
$20,000 - $30,000	42	24%
$31,000 – $40,000	35	20%
$41,000 - $50,000	13	7%
$51,000 - $60,000	5	3%
Above $60,000	24	13%
Did not respond	10	6%

Recent research supports that English language learners not only have academic barriers in the classroom, but that growing restrictive language policies are limiting necessary resources (i.e., services, funding, time, and information) available to these children (Iddings, Combs, & Moll, 2013). With ESO's stated focus of providing necessary resources for all children to succeed, data concerning each child's first language and the primary language spoken in the home were collected. Respondents indicated that English was the first language for 82% (*n* = 145) of the student population. 13% (*n* = 22) reported Spanish was their child's first language. Other reported first languages were Vietnamese (2%, *n* = 4), Luo (a Kenyan dialect) (2%, *n* = 2), Chinese (2%, *n* = 2), and Laotian (1%, *n* = 1) (see Table 7). Reported primary languages spoken in the home include: (a) English (68%, *n* = 119), (b) Spanish (14%, *n* = 25), (c) Vietnamese (7%, *n* = 12), (d) Mixed [English and another] (7%, *n* = 13), and (e) Chinese (2%, *n* = 4). Three (2%) did not respond to this question (see Table 8).

Table 7. Child's First Language

Language	*n*	Percentage
English	145	82%
Spanish	22	13%
Vietnamese	4	2%
Luo (Kenyan)	2	1%
Chinese	2	1%
Laotian	1	>1%

Table 8. Primary Language Spoken in the Home

Language	*n*	Percentage
English	119	68%
Spanish	25	14%
Mixed (English and another)	13	7%
Vietnamese	12	7%
Chinese	4	2%
Did not Reply	3	2%

The detrimental effects of residential instability on academic achievement among urban elementary and middle school students have been documented in recent research (Voight, Shinn, & Nation, 2012). Recognizing varying family dynamics such as parents/guardians not always changing residence when the child does, the current research measured residential stability with a single question on the demographic survey asking how many times the child had moved in the past two years. Results showed that 14% (n = 24) of the students enrolled at ESO had moved in the past two years.

Readers are advised to review the demographic data when considering contexts for the remainder of this document. Many of these data will contribute to building a framework for understanding the reports that follow.

Chapter 3

Parent/Guardian perceptions of *El Sistema Oklahoma*

The faculty, staff, and administration of El Sistema Oklahoma (ESO) work closely with the families of ESO students. Since family members are required to physically enter the ESO site to sign-out their child at the end of every program day, regular contact between families and all ESO personnel is possible. In addition, the site coordinator makes regular contact via phone with families of students who are absent over repeated days. The site coordinator also communicates with families concerning student behavior issues or special concerns expressed by a student. General parent/guardian communication is accomplished through regular newsletters, announcements on the program website, *Facebook* messages, and a *Twitter* account. Those parents/guardians who subscribe, also receive communication via text message alert system. Given the amount and differing types of regular contact, one may assume that parents and guardians are well informed about ESO.

Data Collection

This study sought to evaluate parent/guardian perceptions of the entire program via feedback in the domains of (a) program operation, (b) parent/guardian satisfaction, (c) parent/guardian perception of their child's experience, (d) parent/guardian interaction with ESO personnel, (e) direct school impact, (f) impact on school improvement, and (g) impact on issues not directly related to school. Data were collected via a pencil and paper survey distributed to parents and guardians at the year-end concert. Parents and guardians were asked to complete

these surveys and return them to one of two collection boxes at each exit of the concert hall. ESO executive director, Robyn Hilger, also made three announcements during the program, one prior to the start, one at intermission, and one in closing remarks reminding parents to complete the survey and return it that evening.

126 useable surveys were returned. Assuming that directions were followed and each family (N = 135) returned one survey, this constitutes a return rate of 93%. Questions on the survey asked participants to indicate if their child(ren) was a first year (n = 61) or second year (n = 60) student at ESO. Five surveys were returned without this indication marked. The data from these surveys were calculated in the total sample (N = 126), but were excluded from the calculations concerning first year and second year students. No other demographic data were collected on the survey. The remainder of the survey consisted of four open-ended questions and 29 statements to which respondents were to indicate their agreement on a 4-point scale. Indicators on the 4-point scale were adjusted to fit the context of the statement. Each statement also included a 'Don't Know' option.

Data Analysis

Statement data were coded with numeric scores where 1 indicated the lowest level of agreement and 4 indicated the highest level of agreement. Answers of "Don't know' eliminated that respondent's data from the analysis for that statement. Means and standard deviations for the total population, first year students, and second year students were calculated for each statement. T-tests were used to determine if statistically significant differences ($p \geq .05$) existed between first year student data and second year student data.

Data from the open-ended questions were transcribed. These data were analyzed for emergent themes via a constant comparative qualitative method. As themes emerged, responses were coded according to these themes. Once all emergent themes were coded, the data were additionally analyzed for interactions between themes and possible consolidation of themes.

Results

Data related to program operation indicates that parents and guardians are pleased with the overall program (M = 3.91, SD = 0.29), student safety (M = 3.85, SD = 0.42), the physical plant (M = 3.69, SD = 0.51), snacks that are served to their children each program day (M = 3.62, SD = 0.52), hours of operation (M = 3.76, SD = 0.52), and transportation provided to their children from school to the ESO site (M = 3.73, SD = 0.61). T-test results indicated there were no significant differences between the means of first year and second year student data (see Table 9).

Table 9. Program Operation

	All (N=126)		Year 1 (n=61)		Year 2 (n=60)		T-test
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
Overall program	3.91	0.29	3.87	0.34	3.95	0.22	.12
Student safety	3.85	0.42	3.79	0.52	3.92	0.28	.09
Physical plant	3.69	0.51	3.66	0.55	3.76	0.43	.26
Snacks	3.62	0.60	3.55	0.60	3.70	0.60	.18
Hours of operation	3.76	0.52	3.75	0.51	3.76	0.54	.93
Transportation	3.73	0.61	3.75	0.51	3.71	0.71	.77

Data from a four-point scale: poor=1, fair=2, good=3, excellent=4

Data indicated that parents and guardians were satisfied with the music instruction provided to their child(ren) (*M* = 3.86, *SD* = 0.42), the activities offered at ESO (*M* = 3.82, *SD* = 0.46), the number of staff (*M* = 3.79, *SD* = 0.48), and the overall performance of the program (*M* = 3.85, *SD* = 0.44). T-test results indicated there were no significant differences between the means of first year and second year student data (see Table 10).

Table 10. Parent/Guardian Satisfaction

I am satisfied with:	All (*N*=126)		Year 1 (*n*=61)		Year 2 (*n*=60)		T-test
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
musical instruction	3.86	0.42	3.82	0.50	3.93	0.25	.12
activities offered	3.82	0.46	3.80	0.51	3.88	0.38	.34
number of staff	3.79	0.48	3.84	0.50	3.79	0.46	.58
overall performance of the program	3.85	0.44	3.84	0.50	3.88	0.38	.63

Data from a four-point scale: strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, agree=3, strongly agree=4

Data indicates that parents and guardians believe their child(ren) enjoy attending ESO (*M* = 3.80, *SD* = 0.44), that their child(ren) feels comfortable with faculty and staff at ESO (*M* = 3.85, *SD* = 0.36), and that their child(ren) has friends at ESO (*M* = 3.82, *SD* = 0.41). T-test results indicated there were no significant differences between the means of first year and second year student data (see Table 11).

Table 11. Child's Experience

My child:	All (*N*=126)		Year 1 (*n*=61)		Year 2 (*n*=60)		T-test
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
enjoys attending ESO	3.80	0.44	3.75	0.47	3.86	0.39	.17
feels comfortable with faculty and staff	3.85	0.36	3.80	0.40	3.91	0.28	.09
has friends at ESO	3.82	0.41	3.80	0.40	3.84	0.41	.58

Data from a four-point scale: strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, agree=3, strongly agree=4

Concerning interaction between parents/guardians and ESO personnel, data indicate that parent/guardians are comfortable talking with the staff (*M* = 3.75, *SD* = 0.54). They believe the staff welcomes suggestions from parents/guardians (*M* = 3.71, *SD* = 0.62). To a somewhat lesser degree, they believe that the staff keeps them informed about their child's day (*M* = 3.58, *SD* = 0.74). Parents/guardians feel welcome to observe (*M* = 3.75, *SD* = 0.51) and comfortable with how the staff manages student discipline (*M* = 3.68, *SD* = 0.65). Data indicates that parent/guardians believe that the staff encourages positive student interaction (*M* = 3.76, *SD* = 0.57) and that the staff interacts well with students (*M* = 3.77, *SD* = 0.53). T-test results indicated there were no significant differences between the means of first year and second year student data (see Table 12).

Table 12. Interaction

	All (*N*=126)		Year 1 (*n*=61)		Year 2 (*n*=60)		T-test
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
I am comfortable talking with the staff	3.75	0.54	3.71	0.59	3.81	0.48	.34
Staff welcomes suggestions from parents	3.71	0.62	3.69	0.68	3.77	0.54	.49
Staff informs parents about child's day	3.58	0.74	3.56	0.81	3.63	0.65	.66
Staff welcomes parents who wish to observe	3.75	0.51	3.80	0.53	3.75	0.43	.61
I am comfortable with how the staff manages student discipline	3.68	0.65	3.59	0.78	3.78	0.50	.13
Staff encourages positive student interaction	3.76	0.57	3.71	0.69	3.80	0.44	.39
Staff interact well with students	3.77	0.53	3.76	0.61	3.83	0.38	.48

Data from a four-point scale: strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, agree=3, strongly agree=4

While it is still relatively strong, parents/guardians indicate their lowest level of agreement concerning adequate time for their children to complete homework while at ESO (*M* = 3.45, *SD* = 0.76). To a greater degree, they believe that ESO has helped their child(ren) be successful at school (*M* = 3.61, *SD* = 0.65). T-test results indicated there were no significant differences between the means of first year and second year student data (see Table 13).

Table 13. Direct School Impact

	All (*N*=126)		Year 1 (*n*=61)		Year 2 (*n*=60)		T-test
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
There is adequate time for students to complete homework	3.45	0.76	3.40	0.75	3.54	0.73	.32
ESO has helped my child be successful at school	3.61	0.65	3.52	0.75	3.71	0.53	.11

Data from a four-point scale: strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, agree=3, strongly agree=4

To assess parent/guardian perceptions concerning the impact of their child's participation at ESO on improvement at school, a two-part question was asked. Respondents had the option of rating their agreement with the following statement, "My child has made needed improvement in schoolwork since attending El Sistema Oklahoma" or they could check a box next to a statement that read, "My child was already academically successful prior to starting at El Sistema Oklahoma." Just over half (n = 64) of the respondents marked that their child(ren) was academically successful prior to attending ESO. Of those who did indicate their agreement level with the statement (n= 62), 24 were parents/guardians of first year students and 34 were parents/guardians of second year students. Four surveys did not indicate either first or second year participation. Parents/guardians that did indicate their agreement level felt that ESO was having a positive impact (M = 3.42, SD = 0.78) on their child's success at school. T-test results indicated there were no significant differences between the means of first year and second year student data (see Table 14).

Table 14. Impact on Improvement at school

My child has made needed improvement in schoolwork since attending El Sistema Oklahoma	All (*N*=62)		Year 1 *n*=24		Year 2 *n*=34		T-test
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*P*
	3.42	0.78	3.50	0.59	3.38	0.89	.57

Data from a four-point scale: strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, agree=3, strongly agree=4
Note: sample includes only those participants who did not indicate their child was already academically successful prior to attending the program.

Data indicates that parents/guardians believe that attendance at ESO has impacted their child(ren) in areas other than academics. Parents/guardians feel that ESO has helped their child(ren) be successful in aspects of life outside of school (*M* = 3.70, *SD* = 0.54). In general, they believe that ESO has made a positive impact on their child(ren) (*M* = 3.79, *SD* = 0.50) and on their family as a whole (*M* = 3.79, *SD* = 0.52). Parents /guardians agree that ESO has helped their child(ren) grow abilities to complete difficult tasks (*M* = 3.56, *SD* = 0.58) and has helped them gain confidence in their abilities to be successful (*M* = 3.68, *SD* = 0.52). T-test results indicated there were no significant differences between the means of first year and second year student data (see Table 15).

Table 15. Impact other than academics

ESO has:	All (N=126)		Year 1 (n=61)		Year 2 (n=60)		T-test
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
helped my child be successful in aspects of life outside of school	3.70	0.54	3.67	0.63	3.75	0.43	.38
made a positive impact on my child	3.79	0.50	3.73	0.61	3.86	0.35	.15
made a positive impact on my family	3.79	0.52	3.71	0.64	3.88	0.33	.07
helped my child grow in his/her ability to complete difficult tasks	3.56	0.58	3.60	0.56	3.58	0.53	.89
helped grow my child's confidence in his/her abilities to be successful	3.68	0.52	3.69	0.53	3.70	0.46	.94

Data from a four-point scale: strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, agree=3, strongly agree=4

Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative analysis of the data provided via the open-ended questions revealed the emergence of nine distinct themes. They are: (a) staff, (b) music, (c) social impact, (d) program structure, (e) opportunity, (f) cost and value, (g) behavior management, (h) physical plant, and (i) community.

Comments concerning the staff were overwhelmingly positive with statements like, "the staff is awesome" (respondent 34) and "I like everything about the program. But the best part are [sic] the teachers " (respondent 51). Some responses get more specific and address the friendliness and professionalism of the staff. One parent/guardian states, "Great teachers, very friendly" (respondent 24) and another, "I love the approachable friendly atmosphere. I highly appreciate

their [the staff's] assistance in problem solving issues we have had to address in timely, professional manner" (respondent 107). Some discuss the abilities of the staff and their dedication to the children, "It is a…program with real trained and skilled teachers that really work hard for the kids and care for their needs as people not only musically" (respondent 19). Another stated that the staff,

> challenge children in more than just music – treat child as a whole person and not just someone who attends an extra curricular. I feel like you know my child and what they [sic] need (and adjust as much as they change). (respondent 56)

Comments that were not positive address a need to change "the bus drivers" (respondent 2). This is an obviously vague comment, but may warrant some clarification in the future. Another comment states, "some kids get more attention than others" (respondent 82) suggesting that one parent/guardian perceives that treatment of all students is not equitable. These were the only comments from the 40 responses addressing staff that could be considered negative in any way.

Music and musical ability were mentioned often in comments. Many address that music learning is exciting and of value to their child(ren) with statements like, "what I like best about El Sistema is how kids learn to play music easily" (respondent 57) and "my child has learned to read and play music well" (respondent 98). Comments also speak to the breadth of music understanding their child has experienced stating, "it (ESO) has introduced my son to not only different types of music but different instruments" (respondent 6). Another (respondent 116) states, "the full orchestra experience is extremely valuable. The kids play <u>real</u>

music" (emphasis in the original). Others address the advanced skill levels their children are attaining. "My son has learned a lot about music and I feel he is playing at a high school level" (respondent 37). Many address how they value their child's opportunity to make music for the sake of doing so. One states, "I love how both of my girls love playing their viola" (respondent 2) or when asked what they like best about ESO they state, "The music they learn and how to take care of their instruments and play for the love of music!" (respondent 125).

The social impact of ESO on participants and their families is also mentioned quite often in comments. From a global perspective one parent/guardian states,

> I try to explain El Sistema to people and until they come see it, they don't understand the scope of what I mean. This should be everywhere! It gives kids a great opportunity, where otherwise, they would have none at all. I only hope you guys truly realize the impact you are having on those kids for the rest of their lives. (respondent 110)

Another (respondent 49) states, " We are thrilled with how our daughter has blossomed as a person because of ESO. We can't imagine her not being part of it." Teamwork is the most often mentioned social skill in the comments. When asked what they like best about the program, one parent/guardian stated, "Teamwork. Among the children, among the staff, learning how to be part of a greater team" (respondent 81). Another (respondent 4) states, "Very pleased this has taught her a lot about teamwork." Others speak to the development of confidence, "I love it. It has helped my son with all aspects in life. He has become more open and positive.

He has more confident [sic] in him" (respondent 111). The development of persistence or 'grit' as it is addressed in some literature (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007) is mentioned in these comments as well. "The kids are continually challenged while still feeling successful" (respondent 17). "... the staff has helped my child…and encourage him to continue to do his best no matter what" (respondent 39). Others state that ESO "helps build my child's character" (respondent 108) and that "behavior has improved not only at school but at home also" (respondent 6). One parent/guardian claims that their child "has been able to develop not only musically, but maturity as well. He has also grown more responsibly and he is becoming more a leader" (respondent 26).

Program structure is addressed in the comments and is the first area where most comments are not positive. Many address the need to restructure the pick up, parking and dismissal process at the end of the day. One states, "pick up/parking gets so hectic and crowded. There has to be a better pick up system" (respondent 106). One suggests a possible solution stating, "dismissal should be more organized, dismissal times should be staggered" (respondent 108). Another (respondent 85) notes that "children should be ready to pick up at 6:00PM" suggesting that staff are not always prompt in their dismissal times.

The issue of the time commitment required of the children and their families is also mentioned in the comments in less than positive terms. One states, "everyday is a lot. It's a bit of a hardship on our family" (respondent 38). Another maintains,

> This is the 2nd year for my child and she struggles to get all of her homework done. I wish the program would allow for a day off during

the week to allow kids to finish their homework which is due on Friday. Other than that, everything else is awesome! (respondent 40)

Others suggest "more flexibility with children who have other interest [sic] such as sports" (respondent 46). Another (respondent 97) suggests a restructuring to include a "1/2 session on Monday or Friday to give some time back to families and students" as a possible solution to this issue.

Homework emerges as an issue with statements like, "homework time could be increased" (respondent 116) or that there needs to be more "time for homework and time for intermittent breaks" (respondent 50). However, at least one parent/guardian notes the staff has addressed the issue of homework time,

> Last year they didn't seem to have enough (time) for homework but this year I like the changes you made to better facilitate their academic needs. And you are flexible so they get help when they need it, but don't when they don't need the school time…my biggest problem (from) last year has been fixed. (respondent 56)

Speaking positively about program structure, some note that, "everything is…very organized" (respondent 4). Many suggest that the program structure should accommodate growth through getting "more schools involved" (respondent 6) and ask to "add more schools to give more kids the opportunity" (respondent 29). Another states, "Hoping the program will advance as our children advance in grade levels. We would like to continue until graduation" (respondent 46). In perhaps the boldest statements about program structure and growth, some state they "would

like for them (ESO) to open a school" (respondent 54) or "maybe become and academy" (respondent 55).

Many speak of the opportunities that ESO provides their children. They state, "My student would not be able to experience this level of musical instruction/experience otherwise. She loves it!" (respondent 7). Others address opportunity by stating that ESO "provide(s) quality instruction and instruments for kids who wouldn't be able to afford them" (respondent 37) or that "it provides an amazing opportunity for children who otherwise wouldn't get this type of instruction" (respondent 22). One parent/guardian confidently states, "I love that it offers 'inner city' kids with music opportunities – so important" (respondent 38). Many speak of this on a very personal level. "I am extremely impress(ed) with the program. This is something I would not have been able to afford for my daughter, as a single mom. I am so thankful my daughter had this opportunity" (respondent 44). Another states, "Overall wonderful opportunity for my daughter to learn music and how to play the clarinet that she would have never had before this (because of lack of financial resources) program allowed her the opportunity" (respondent 28).

Two issues are not mentioned often in the comments, but when they are the comments are always negative. A few parents/guardians have issues with behavior management. One states that there needs to be "a better way to address children that [sic] seem to disrupt the learning process for the students that enjoy the program and want to be there to learn" (respondent 39). Another states, "my child complained about bullying and some disruptive students that [sic] aren't given any discipline or dealt with" (respondent 98). One parent/guardian wrote "if there is a

discipline issue, share more with parents so we can correct" (respondent 4). One other parent states that, "some teachers don't listen to parents when there is a concern" (respondent 87). The physical plant is also mentioned negatively in comments claiming that "the lighting" (respondent 88) is an issue and that "cleaner restrooms" are needed.

Other themes emerge with less frequency in the data but are mentioned by more than one respondent. Some note that what they like best is that the program is of high quality and offered free of charge. One parent/guardian states, "I am impressed with the care, musical knowledge, homework time and transportation provided for my child at no cost" (respondent 83). Others note that ESO is an "outstanding opportunity for our community to grow together" (respondent 53) or that "this has been a great program and an amazing opportunity for quality music instruction for the community" (respondent 97). Yet another notes, "both my daughters have been in El Sistema since it has been offered here in OKCPS and not only is it enjoyable for extra curricular [sic] but it's very family oriented. You…have become family" (respondent 55). One response encompasses many of the emergent themes found in the data,

> Best program ever. I could not believe how much ESO has lived up to all it promises (each year) – and continues to improve. Not only do you provide the highest quality instruction and general love of music, but you do it in a way that integrates all aspects of a child's life. Your sense of community is strong! You help improve upon my child's academic pursuits, social wellbeing, emotional strength,

> independence, confidence and self-worth in truly memorable ways (not just self esteem fluff they do at school). There have been highs and lows in the last two years and my child has had mostly love, sometimes hate relationship with aspects of ESO, but in the end you always helped my child make the hurdle and my child appreciated it when the hardest parts were behind (respondent 56).

Discussion

Analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data shows that parents and guardians perceptions of ESO are positive. The quantitative analysis revealed that all but two total sample (N = 126) means are above 3.50, indicating the overall strength of parent/guardian positive perceptions of ESO. Standard deviations range from 0.78 (high) to 0.29 (low), indicating little variation in perceptions. Most all parents/guardians share the positive perceptions of ESO. The analysis of differences between the means of first year and second year perceptions did not reveal any significant differences. However, of the 27 survey statements, mean differences of 22 are more positive for those in their second year. While there is not enough information to suggest causation, this is a trend that should be investigated in future research.

While the means for all statements are positive, the two that show least agreement are related to homework time and impact on improvement at school (see Table 5 and Table 6). One could logically assume that homework completion has some impact on school success. The perceptions expressed in this survey suggest

that continued efforts to address homework completion might improve these perceptions in the future.

Qualitative analysis revealed many positive perceptions. Parents and guardians believe that the faculty and staff are among ESO's most positive assets. Parents and guardians value the musical experiences and musical learning their children enjoy as part of ESO. Many also cite specific positive social skills and understandings their children are developing as members of ESO. Parents and guardians value the opportunities afforded their children through ESO and some note that these opportunities are available largely due to its no cost feature.

The qualitative data also revealed some negative perceptions of certain ESO features. The structure of the child checkout time at the end of the day was mentioned most often. Perceptions of this process suggest that review may be warranted. Some parents and guardians also question the time commitment required of families and suggest that some adjustment is necessary. ESO leadership note that the current program structure and time commitment required of children and their families was thoughtfully developed. The current philosophy is that ESO is structured to offer opportunities to children and their families who have few other options. ESO leadership believes that many families benefit from a stable and regular schedule that offers programming every day. Much of the data addressing opportunity support this position. The perceptions concerning time commitment suggest that ESO leadership may need to either reexamine their practice or communicate the foundational ideas supporting current practice to those who question its validity. Perceptions regarding time for homework while at the ESO are

mixed. Some believe more time needs to be committed to homework completion, while others note that current adjustments to past practice has sufficiently addressed this issue. These conflicting perceptions suggest that this issue may need to be addressed with increased parent/guardian input and communication.

Some mention behavior management of disruptive students negatively in the qualitative data. ESO policies are to address student behavior in ways that empower students to learn how to be positive, contributing members of the ESO community. ESO leadership notes this approach may require more time and investment of faculty efforts than other more punitive approaches. It is possible that some parents and guardians view such an approach as ineffective. This suggests that behavior management policies must be continually communicated to all stakeholders. Mentions of possible bullying by a few in the qualitative data suggest that faculty and staff could redouble their efforts in monitoring student behavior outside the classroom and that ESO's anti-bullying message needs to be continually communicated to students, parents, and guardians.

The overall analysis of parent/guardian perceptions of ESO reveals that they are overwhelmingly positive. While parent/guardian perceptions of certain program features are mixed, these do not appear to affect their overall perceptions of the program. This suggests ESO parents and guardians value program offerings and outcomes. Such value appears to have been nurtured through effective family relationship building and effective program management to date.

Chapter 4

Participant perceptions of *El Sistema Oklahoma*

El Sistema Oklahoma (ESO) served 135 families and 176 students during the 2014-15 program year. ESO student population for this report was comprised of third-grade through seventh-grade students who attended one of seven elementary schools, were homeschooled, or attended one of ten middle schools located in central northwest Oklahoma City. All students took part in the appropriate activities for their instrument choice and years of experience at ESO. These activities included transportation from their school to ESO, check-in, snack/gym time, guided practice/homework time, instrumental techniques classes, music fundamentals classes, sectional rehearsals, chamber music rehearsals, full orchestra rehearsals, and concerts. Therefore, all students have adequate experience within their schools and ESO programing to develop informed perceptions concerning their participation.

Data Collection

In an effort to capture these perceptions, students were asked to complete a student perception survey near the end of the 2014-15 program year. Students completed this pencil and paper survey when they entered the site, prior to snack time. Students were asked to indicate their grade level and their experience with ESO (1 year or 2 years). No other demographic data were collected. All surveys were completed anonymously. The remainder of the survey consisted of 18 questions that required students to respond using a four-point scale appropriate to the question. In addition, students were asked to select from a menu of options to

indicate reasons why they participate in ESO. Finally, four short answer questions asked students to indicate (a) what they would be doing after school had they not had the opportunity to attend ESO, (b) their favorite part of ESO, (c) what they like least about ESO, and (d) any suggestions they have to make ESO better.

Students completed and returned 155 useable surveys constituting an 88% return rate. Students in their first program year completed 79 (51%) surveys and students in their second program year completed 74 (48%) surveys. Two surveys (1%) did not include program year indications. Data from these two surveys were included in the total sample (N =155) calculations, but were not included in the year 1 (n =79) or year 2 (n = 74) calculations.

Data Analysis

Means and standard deviations were calculated for all data collected via responses on four-point scales. Data were also disaggregated by program year. Means and standard deviations for year 1 students and year 2 students were calculated separately. T-test calculations were used to determine if any statistically significant ($p \leq .05$) difference existed between these year 1 and year 2 data. Frequencies were calculated for data concerning why students choose to participate at ESO. Short answer data were coded via constant comparative analysis for emergent themes. Once emergent themes were determined and data were coded according to these themes, frequency counts of each code were calculated.

Results

Students were first asked to provide perceptions about their schools. They indicated that more often than not, they enjoyed attending their schools (M = 2.90,

SD = 0.95). As a group, they tend to study hard for tests (*M* = 3.14, *SD* = 0.97) and consider their school classes interesting at times (*M* = 2.63, *SD* = 0.91). Students indicate they are not often in trouble at school (*M* = 1.60, *SD* = 0.70) and are somewhat comfortable talking with teachers and other adults at their schools (*M* = 2.69, *SD* = 0.92). Standard deviations indicate there is variance among these data that is worthy of consideration. T-test analysis did not reveal any statistically significant differences between year 1 and year 2 means (see Table 16).

Table 16. Participant feelings about school

	All (*N*=155)		Year 1 (*n*=79)		Year 2 (*n*=74)		T-test
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
Do you like going to your School?	2.90	0.95	2.80	0.98	3.00	0.91	.10
Do you study hard for tests?	3.14	0.97	3.18	0.93	3.08	1.03	.37
Are your school classes interesting?	2.63	0.91	2.60	0.95	2.68	0.88	.45
Do you get in trouble at school?**	1.60	0.70	1.67	0.68	1.54	0.73	.20
Do you feel comfortable talking with teachers or other adults at school?	2.69	0.92	2.64	0.85	2.73	0.98	.90

Data from a four point scale with the following indicators: 1=No, hardly ever, 2=Sometimes, 3=Most times, 4=Yes, almost always.

** *lower means indicate a more positive response*

Considering school accomplishments, students report high levels of efficacy concerning their abilities to do things well at school (*M* = 3.32, *SD* = 0.69) and that their grades are good (*M* = 3.35, *SD* = 0.73). T-test analysis did not reveal any statistically significant differences between year 1 and year 2 means (see Table 17).

Table 17. Participant self-report of school accomplishments

	All (*N*=155)		Year 1 (*n*=79)		Year 2 (*n*=74)		T-test
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
How do you feel about your ability to do things well at school?	3.32	0.69	3.33	0.68	3.30	0.72	.69
How are your grades?	3.35	0.73	3.41	0.71	3.31	0.70	.35

Data from a four point scale with the following indicators: 1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Excellent

When asked to consider their feelings about ESO, students indicate that they enjoy ESO (*M* = 3.42, *SD* = 0.81) and feel safe while they are on site (*M* = 3.52, *SD* = 0.80). More often than not, they feel comfortable talking with teachers and other staff at ESO (*M* = 2.99, *SD* = 0.94) and believe that teachers and staff most often take time to help when it is needed (*M* = 3.20, *SD* = .88). T-test analysis did reveal statistically significant ($p \leq .02$) differences between the year 1 means (*M* = 2.80, *SD* = .95) and year 2 means (*M* = 3.20, *SD* = 0.88) concerning comfort in talking with ESO faculty and staff. No other statistically significant differences between year 1 and year 2 means were found to exist (see Table 18).

Table 18. Participant feelings about El Sistema Oklahoma

	All (*N*=155)		Year 1 (*n*=79)		Year 2 (*n*=74)		T-test
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
Do you enjoy El Sistema?	3.42	0.81	3.44	0.86	3.39	0.77	.68
Do you feel safe at El Sistema?	3.52	0.80	3.43	0.90	3.62	0.66	.13
Do you feel comfortable talking with teachers and staff at El Sistema?	2.99	0.94	2.80	0.95	3.20	0.88	.02*
Do you feel that El Sistema teachers and staff take time to help you when you need it?	3.20	0.88	3.18	0.89	3.23	0.86	.65

Data from a four point scale with the following indicators: 1=No, hardly ever, 2=Sometimes, 3=Most times, 4=Yes, almost always.
** statistically significant ($p \leq .05$)*

Survey data suggest that students believe they most often get their homework done on time (*M* = 3.24, *SD* = 0.92). Data also indicate that students believe their parents sometimes talk with them about school and their homework (*M* = 2.74, *SD* = 1.04) however, there is wide variance among these data. Data also suggest that students believe they sometimes receive help from ESO teachers with their homework (*M* = 2.50, *SD* = 1.22). Wide variance also exists among these data. Analysis indicates that students only sometimes feel they have enough quiet time to complete their homework while at ESO (*M* = 2.60, *SD* = 1.17). Again, there is wide variance among these data as well. T-test analysis did not reveal any statistically significant differences between year 1 and year 2 means (see Table 19).

Table 19. Homework

	All (*N*=155)		Year 1 (*n*=79)		Year 2 (*n*=74)		T-test
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
Do you get your homework done on time?	3.24	0.92	3.19	0.99	3.30	0.84	.42
Do your parents talk with you about school and homework?	2.74	1.04	2.76	1.05	2.70	1.04	.68
Do El Sistema teachers help you with your homework?	2.50	1.22	2.59	1.19	2.38	1.26	.28
Do you have enough quiet time to complete your homework at El Sistema?	2.60	1.17	2.58	1.19	2.62	1.15	.68

Data from a four point Likert-type scale with the following indicators: 1=No, hardly ever, 2=Sometimes, 3=Most times, 4=Yes, almost always.

Students report they feel happier and less stressed since they started attending ESO (*M* = 3.10, *SD* =0.88) and that they have friends or someone they like at ESO (*M* = 3.75, *SD* = 0.57). Students reported they were confident in their performance abilities on their instrument (*M* = 3.31, *SD* = 0.69). T-test analysis did not reveal any statistically significant differences between year 1 and year 2 means (see Table 20).

Table 20. Personal impact

	All (*N*=155)		Year 1 (*n*=79)		Year 2 (*n*=74)		T-test
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
Do you feel happier or less stressed since you have started coming to El Sistema?	3.10	0.88	3.15	0.88	3.05	0.87	.63
Do you have friends or someone you like at El Sistema?	3.75	0.57	3.67	0.63	3.82	0.48	.07
Do you feel confident playing your instrument?	3.31	0.69	3.37	0.66	3.23	0.71	0.19

Data from a four point scale with the following indicators: 1=No, not at all, 2=Probably Not, 3=Probably, 4=Yes, definitely.

When asked if they are doing better in school since they started attending ESO, students were given a fifth option and could answer 'I don't know.' If students checked this answer, their data were removed prior to analysis. Several students (*n* = 44) chose this answer. The remaining data (*N* = 111) were retained in the analysis. Distribution of year 1 student data (*n* = 58) and year 2 student data (*n* = 51) was considered representative of the total population. Two surveys did not include indications concerning if they were completed by either a year-one or year-two student. Analysis of these remaining data suggests that students generally feel they are doing better in school since starting at ESO (*M* = 3.18, *SD* = 0.80). T-test analysis did not reveal any statistically significant differences between year 1 and year 2 means (see Table 21).

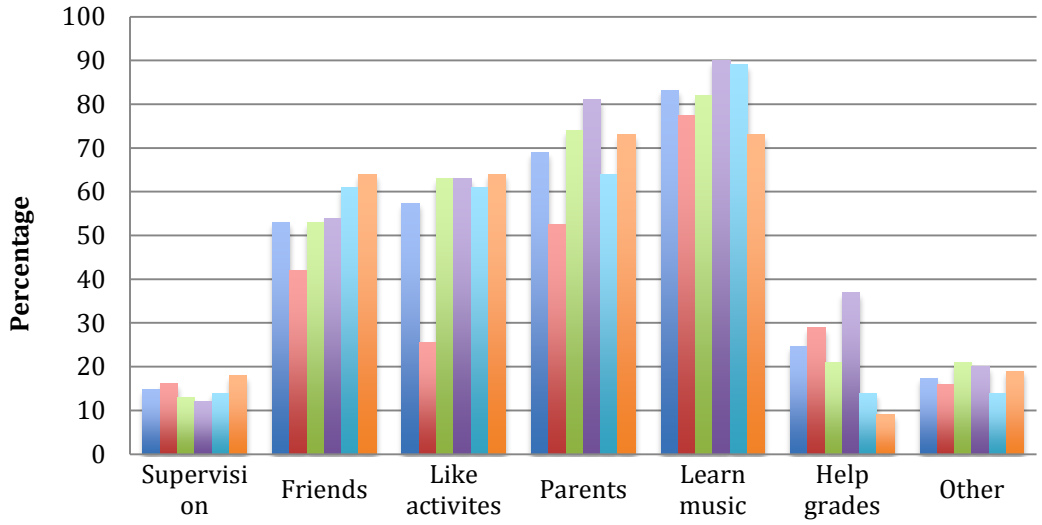
Table 21. Perceived school impact

	All (*N*=111)		Year 1 (*n*=58)		Year 2 (*n*=50)		T-test
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
Are you doing better in school since you started coming to El Sistema?	3.18	0.80	3.26	0.97	3.10	0.88	.30

Note: only data from those responses that indicated some type of impact was included. If 'I don't know' was selected the response was not calculated in this table
Data from a five point scale with the following indicators: 1=No, not at all, 2=Probably Not, 3=Probably, 4=Yes, definitely, 0=I don't know.

Students were given several options to indicate why they choose to participate at ESO. These include (a) I need after-school supervision, (b) my friends come, (c) I like the activities, (d) my parent(s) thought it would be good for me, (e) I wanted to learn to play music, (f) I thought it would help my grades, or (g) other, please explain. Students could choose any and all that apply to them. The majority of students (83%) indicated their primary reason for attending was because they wanted to learn to play music. This choice received the highest percentage of selection across all grade levels. Sixty-nine percent of students indicated they attend because their parents thought it would be good for them. This choice was the second highest across all grade levels. Some students (57%) indicated they attend because they like the activities and 53% attend because a friend is attending. Only 25% of students indicate they attend due to a belief that it will help their grades and 15% state they attend because they need after-school supervision. Analysis of the data supplied when students indicated 'other' reasons for attending ESO did not reveal any trends or emergent themes suggesting these reasons were contextual only to the students who selected them (see Chart 1).

Chart 1. Reasons for participating in El Sistema Oklahoma

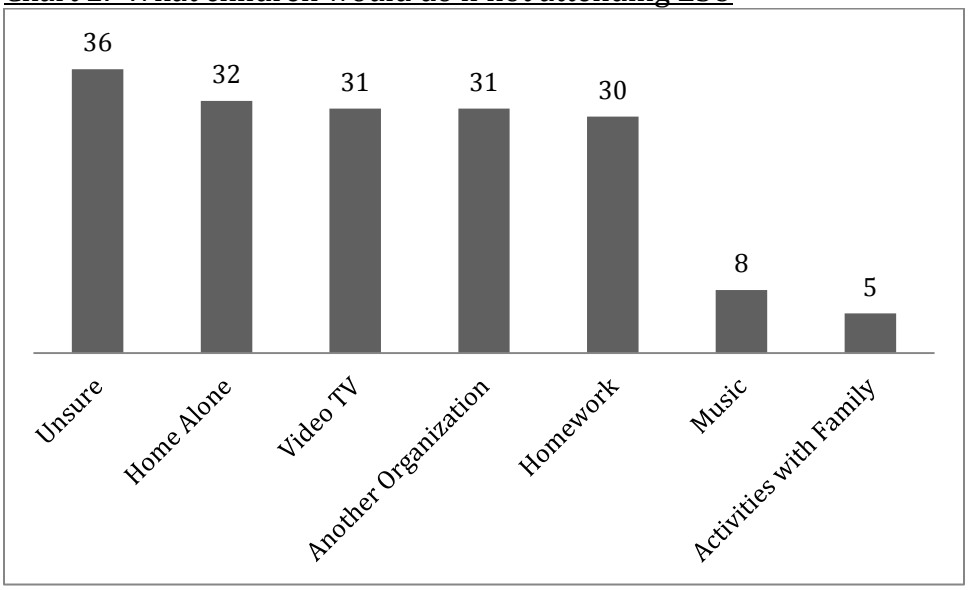


	Supervision	Friends	Like activites	Parents	Learn music	Help grades	Other
All (N=155)	15	53	57	69	83	25	17
3rd (n=31)	16	42	25	53	77	29	16
4th (n=38)	13	53	63	74	82	21	21
5th (n=41)	12	54	63	81	90	37	20
6th (n=28)	14	61	61	64	89	14	14
7th (n=11)	18	64	64	73	73	9	19

Percentage totals can be greater than 100 because participants were instructed to check all that apply.

Analysis of the short answer data concerning what ESO students would be doing if they were not able to attend ESO revealed seven emergent themes that were used to code the data. In order of those receiving the greatest frequency to the least frequency, these codes include (a) they are unsure, (b) they would be home alone, (c) they would be playing video games and/or watching television, (d) they would attend other organizations or after-school programs, (e) they would be doing homework, (f) they would be playing music, or (g) they would be engaged in activities with family (see Chart 2).

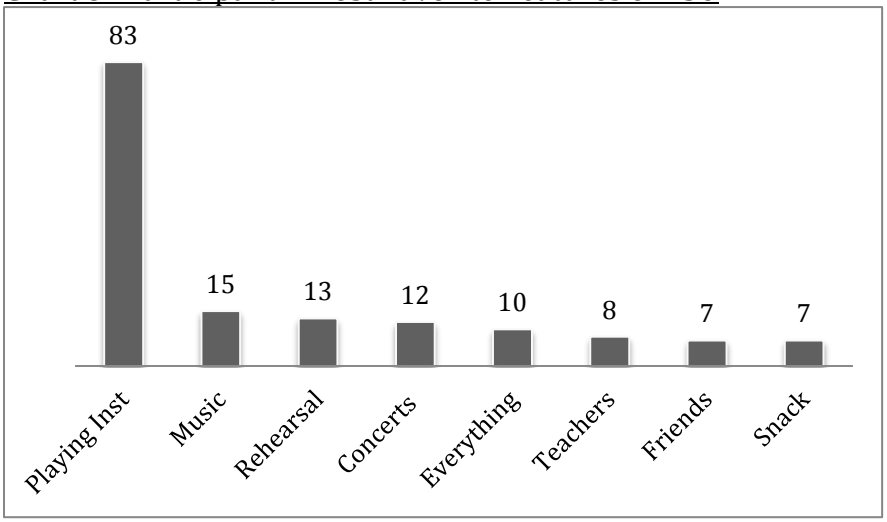
Chart 2. What children would do if not attending ESO



Numbers above each column indicate the frequency count for each code.

Analysis of data indicating students' favorite part of ESO revealed eight emergent themes that were used to code the data. Overwhelmingly, students stated that playing their instruments is their favorite part of ESO. The remaining codes in order from those receiving the greatest frequency to the least frequency include, (a) the music, (b) full ensemble rehearsal, (c) concerts, (d) everything (e) the teachers in general or a specific teacher, (f) their friends, or (g) the snacks (see Chart 3).

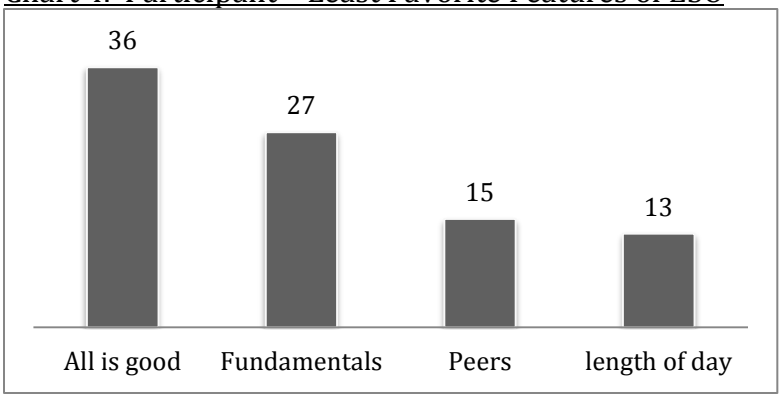
Chart 3. Participant – Most Favorite Features of ESO



Numbers above each column indicate the frequency count for each code.

Four themes emerged from the analysis of data indicating students' least favorite part of ESO. Most often, students indicated that they liked everything or that everything was good. Data concerning fundamentals classes (music literacy or creative music) received the second highest frequency count. Data noting issues with peers received the third highest frequency count. Several of the data referred to the length of the day as an issue. These data received the fourth highest frequency count (see Chart 4).

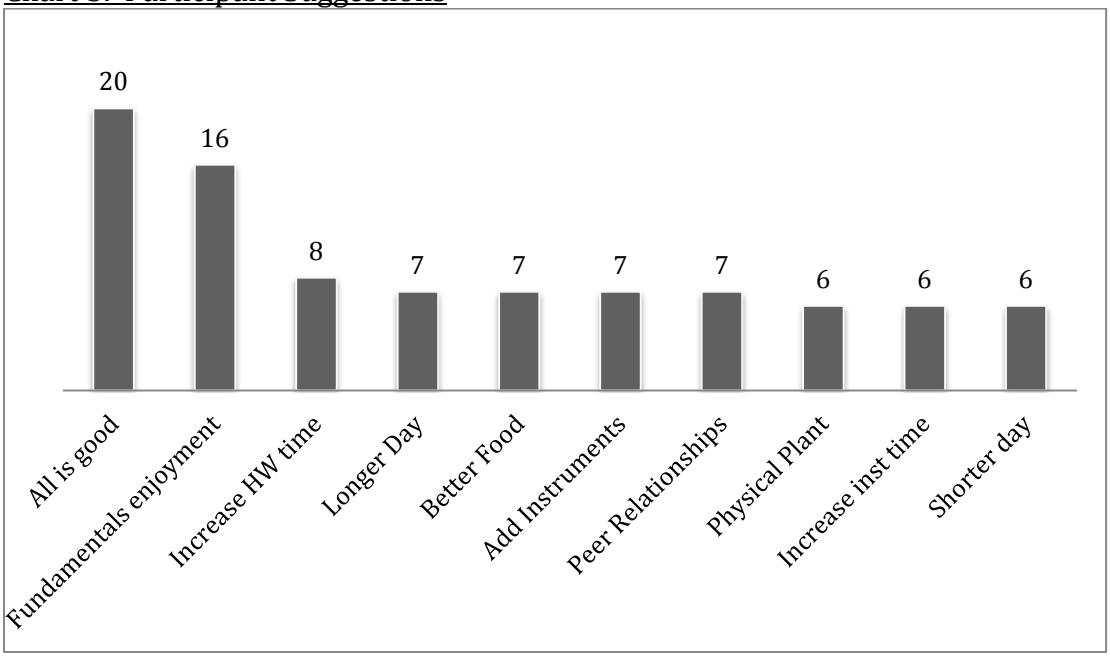
Chart 4. Participant – Least Favorite Features of ESO



Numbers above each column indicate the frequency count for each code.

Analysis of short answer data related to student suggestions for how to improve ESO revealed 10 emergent themes used for coding. In order of those occurring with greatest frequency to least frequency, these codes include (a) all is good, (b) make fundamentals classes more fun, (c) increase homework time, (d) extend the day or meet on weekends, (e) better food, (f) add more instruments (i.e., guitar, saxophone), (g) improve peer relationships, (h) improve the physical plant, (i) increase instrument class time, and (j) shorten the day (see Chart 5).

Chart 5. Participant Suggestions



Numbers above each column indicate the frequency count for each code.

Discussion

ESO students generally report they are happier and less stressed than before they began attending the program. Many also report they are doing better in school. ESO has not collected data related to school achievement and cannot, therefore, support student claims of school improvement quantitatively. However, research supports that perception of school achievement can have powerful effects. Akey (2006) reports, "perceived academic competence had a significant positive influence on subsequent levels of … achievement, but the influence of perceived academic competence was three times larger than that of engagement" (p 16). ESO students' perceived competence on their instrument may be a contributor to their perceptions about academic achievement. Most students reported they felt confident playing their instruments. That their favorite part of ESO is to play their instruments also suggests students feel successful on their instrument since one

rarely enjoys activities in which he or she feels incompetent. As students find they can achieve at difficult tasks like playing a musical instrument, they may be more likely to develop positive perceptions about their abilities to accomplish difficult tasks in the classroom. Further research needs to focus this connection.

Students' reasons for attending ESO speak to the potential power of musical activities to influence urban children. Across all grade levels, students' first choice for why they chose to attend ESO was to learn to play music. That this choice was marked with greater frequency than parental influence or attraction of friends suggests that music learning is very attractive to these students. Research on attraction of urban youth to after-school programs found, "Youth valued activities that gave them the opportunity to develop skills that were personally meaningful and relevant to their futures. For some students, these included academic skills … but for most, they ranged from art-oriented activities… to leadership activities" (Strobel, Kirshner, O'Donoghue, & McLaughlin, 2008, p. 1697-98.) This is of critical importance because learning to understand and perform music well is difficult and time consuming. The intrinsic motivation of music learning may sustain students through times of difficulty where other more extrinsic motivators may not be as influential. ESO teachers may wish to expand their efforts to take advantage of music learning as a motivator by planning activities that develop deep and meaningful understandings and that empower students' musical engagements on personal levels.

The attraction of music learning as a primary motivator for attendance may also speak to the need for high quality music performance. Students are normally

attracted to endeavors that exhibit excellence. While they may not be able to articulate their reasons, students will often make a judgment based upon their own implicit criteria. Simply defining something as 'good' may be a strong attractor for participation. ESO students receive consistent reinforcement of their performance excellence via faculty, staff, parents, school personnel, and the public at large. Concert attendance averages 1,100 enthusiastic audience members who are very appreciative of the students' musical performances. The power of these interactions affirming students' abilities and achievements should not be overlooked.

That the majority of students reported they are either unsure or would be at home, often alone, had they not been able to attend ESO suggests that the program is providing much needed service to families simply by providing a place for students to be after school that is safe and supervised. Students' reported choice of activities without ESO includes playing video games and watching TV, although some did report that they would be doing homework. Some noted they would likely attend another after-school program and a few even suggested that they would be involved in a music program of some type. It was interesting that only five reported they would be spending time with family were they not at ESO. This may be an important consideration in light of some comments about the time commitment to ESO being too demanding for some families. It appears a schedule that does not include an every day option would fail to serve the majority of students and their families who do not have options for family time during ESO program hours. The concern about time commitment also appears to be linked to homework demands, because students mention homework as a necessary after-school activity. This may

reinforce the need to address homework concerns and academic support for ESO students.

ESO students report they most often enjoy attending their schools, but the variance in the data suggests that opinions are mixed. These students report good study habits related to preparing for tests, but there is wide variance among those data as well. While students report their grades are generally good, analysis of data related to homework shows there is wide variance in feelings about parental interest, the homework help they are or not receiving from teachers and staff at ESO, and sufficient time to complete their homework while on site. Research supports that effective homework practices can have positive effects on academic achievement, student self-efficacy, and attitudes toward school (Cooper, Robinson, Patall, 2006; Xu, 2013).

Policies and practices concerning academic support for ESO students have been ambiguous from the inception of the program. Initial documents about program structure address the inclusion of 3-5 hours of academic tutoring and the presence of an academic coordinator on the ESO staff. Although proposed by ESO's first Executive Director, who is no longer with the program, neither the process of academic tutoring nor the academic coordinator position were explored. After his departure in January 2014, program structure has evolved to include both voluntary and mandatory (by parental request) homework time added to the daily program schedule. The ESO site has dedicated quiet space with tables and seating for students to work on homework with or without teacher help. ESO also has staff assigned to supervise the homework time and provide guidance/assistance to

students. These practices have evolved in response to issues brought to the leadership team's attention by students, parents, and school personnel. While this restructuring has helped to address some issues, it would appear that homework continues to be of concern for participants and that a more formalized or systematic approach to academic support would be beneficial to participants.

Students report they enjoy ESO and feel safe while they are on site, however first year students report significantly less comfort speaking with ESO faculty and staff than do second year students. There is a natural tendency for effective student/teacher relationships to grow over time and those students who have attended for greater lengths of time have had more opportunity to develop these relationships with faculty and staff. That fewer students attended during the first year of the program may have also contributed to the effective development of faculty/student relationships with those students who are now in their second year. However, at the time student perceptions were measured for this report, first year students had attended ESO for seven months. Even with only two hours of attendance each week day, there appears to be sufficient time to develop effective student/teacher relationships with these first year students. This is of concern because as the program grows in the number of student participants, development of effective relationships will be an increasing challenge. ESO may consider more directed efforts at developing effective student/teacher relationships with newer students. Although some efforts in peer mentoring have already been made, given the data supporting development of friendly peer relationships and the attraction of friends in students' reasons for attending, ESO may wish to consider a more

systematic approach to developing older student mentors who could help develop effective student/teacher relationships for all students.

When asked about their least favorite parts of ESO, many students could not identify any parts as their least favorite. In fact some simply wrote, "I like it all" (student 103). The wording of the question was purposeful in asking about their 'least favorite part' instead of a part or parts they 'did not like'. After analyzing the data, it appears that students had a difficult time understanding the difference between 'least favorite' and parts they dislike. This confusion should be taken into account when attempting to interpret these data. Many students reported that their least favorite part of ESO was fundamentals (music literacy or creative music) classes. Several issues may be contributing to this perception. The first is class size. Most of the fundamentals classes are populated with over 25 students. Even with a teacher and teaching assistant, classroom management is more an issue in these classrooms than in the instrument classrooms that range from 4 to 15 students. Another contributing factor is a class structure that often appears to be more like formal school learning than the students' instrumental classes. As noted earlier, students identify their time playing an instrument as their favorite part of ESO. That the suggestion to "make fundamentals more fun" (student 57) was mentioned often in the data could suggest that students desire for their fundamentals classes to be similar to their instrument performance classes. Additionally, students may not consider their time in fundamentals classes to be valuable experiences that, in addition to other things, enable and empower them to be effective performers. To bridge this gap, all faculty members may need to explore ways to help students

understand the relationship between instrumental performance and the learning they experience in their fundamentals classes. Additionally, faculty may explore ways of sharing course content between the fundamentals classes and the instrumental classes to a greater extent than is currently practiced so that learning in all classes can be reinforced and connected with others. Finally, a more performance-based structure within the fundamentals classes may help students make the positive connection between instrumental performance and the musical understandings addressed in the fundamentals classes.

Student responses that address issues with peers are of concern. These responses often address inappropriate language (i.e., curse words) used by students or that they feel bullied by another ESO student. Even if only a few students share these perceptions, there is reason to prioritize this issue. Student behavior that warrants such a report is in direct opposition to the ideals expressed by ESO. The leadership team does investigate and act swiftly on any reported incidents of inappropriate student behavior, but data suggest there are occurrences that go unreported. Addressing this issue suggests that ESO faculty and administration may need to focus efforts on times when these behaviors are most likely to occur. Dickman (2008) discusses the development of "corridor cultures" in which urban students behave in ways necessary to establish their dominance. She contends that such behavior is often seen by these students as necessary for their safety in the less supervised parts of the school culture (e.g., restrooms). ESO leadership may need to help faculty be more aware of the corridor culture phenomenon and work with all ESO personnel to help all students feel safe so they understand that such behavior is

not necessary for them to enjoy a prominent place within the ESO culture. ESO leadership also expresses the desire to empower all ESO students to advocate against bullying. In fact, some attempt at developing a student leadership team to help address this issue was made in early 2015. It may be necessary to redouble efforts empowering student leaders to help disseminate a no tolerance, anti-bullying cultural norm in those spaces where it is difficult for faculty and staff to reside.

That many students claim to have no suggestions to improve ESO and "everything is good" supports that the environment, activities, and general experiences for many students at ESO are fulfilling. The mention of increased homework time is important to note because it is one of the few recommendations that does not have another in direct opposition, suggesting that the need for more homework support may be an important issue to address. Many of the other suggestions have equally strong counter suggestions, such as calls for a longer day and meeting on weekends along with suggestions calling for shorter days. Some suggest better food while others claim that the current food offerings are their favorite part of ESO. Many note that a reason for their attendance is to be with friends, others note that relations with peers need to be improved. It is likely that both perspectives have merit, suggesting that these issues may be best managed on a more individual basis rather than through some systematic change to the program.

Overall participant perspectives are positive and students appear to value and enjoy their experiences at ESO. While there are some issues to address, it appears that in the students' eyes, ESO is largely successful.

Chapter 5

School personnel perceptions of *El Sistema Oklahoma*

Since the initial proposal outlining program formation was submitted to the Oklahoma City Public Schools (OKCPS) Board in April 2013, El Sistema Oklahoma (ESO) has valued its relationship with the teachers, administrators, and support staff working in their partner schools. This is evidenced in several ways. During the initial program development stages, ESO sought a liaison who could make necessary connections with school personnel on all levels from district administration to individual school buildings. To that end, a Director of Operations, was appointed on the leadership team. This position was not paid by ESO, as this person remained an employee of the Foundation for Oklahoma City Public Schools. The foundation agreed to redefine this employee's job description such that she would dedicate 50% of her efforts directly to helping ESO develop effective relationships with OKCPS personnel. This relationship was maintained until the departure of the ESO Executive Director in January 2014. At that time all roles were redefined among the entire leadership team until a new Executive Director was hired in June 2014, however maintenance of the relationships that had been establish with OKCPS personnel remained a priority item.

Under current leadership, there is growing evidence of relationship building efforts between ESO and OKCPS. To date, two 'administrator luncheons' have taken place, one in the summer of 2014 and another in the summer of 2015. Administration and staff from the seven partner elementary schools along with district level administration have been invited to this luncheon. ESO leadership

instituted these gatherings to (a) thank those in attendance for their contributions to the partnership, (b) share ESO information and accomplishments that may be of interest, and (c) collect information from schools concerning their partnership with ESO. In addition, the ESO Executive Director and Site Coordinator make regular visits to school sites to attend events or meet with personnel about concerns or issues. These meetings have been initiated either by ESO leadership or at the request of school personnel. In addition, the ESO Site Coordinator who has a degree in behavioral science and experience in behavioral counseling with children, makes occasional contact with school personnel concerning student issues. With parent/guardian permission, the site coordinator has partnered with teachers and administration to develop interventions for some students. Reports from the ESO leadership and from school personnel suggest these have been effective partnerships that have shown positive results both at school and at the ESO site for the children involved.

Data Collection

To investigate the relationship between school personnel and ESO, an on-line survey was developed using *Qualtrics* and disseminated to all school personnel at seven partner elementary schools. Six of these schools were selected because they had enjoyed a standing relationship with ESO since the spring of 2013. The seventh school had not been added as a partner until spring 2014, but ESO leadership and the school administration had worked very closely together over the year and it was determined that an effective relationship had been established such that informed data could be collected from personnel at this site. The researcher elected not to

collect data from any of the middle schools attended by ESO students. It was determined that the number of students attending any of these schools was not sufficient to establish relationships with school personnel such that they could supply this investigation with informed data.

The ESO Executive Director sent email communication with the survey URL to the building administration in late May soliciting them to invite their building personnel to participate. Two email reminders were also sent in the following two weeks.

The survey website opens to a consent cover letter informing participants of their rights and noting that by continuing with the survey they are giving their informed consent for the researcher and ESO to use the data they supply for this investigation. This page was visited by 49 unique IP addresses. Four did not navigate past the consent letter suggesting the user elected not to participate. The remainder (N = 45) did complete at least portions of the survey. This constitutes a 24% return rate for the school personnel population at the seven selected sites. Thus, the confidence interval of these data is $\pm$ 12.8% at a 95% probability level ($p \leq$ .05)

After the consent page, the survey begins with an opportunity for the participant to indicate their role (i.e., administrator, certified teacher, teachers aide, or support staff) and a measure of the participant's familiarity with students who attend ESO. Five statements used to measure participants' perceptions ESO follow. Participants indicated their level of agreement with these statements on the following five-point scale consisting of (a) strongly disagree, (b) disagree, (c)

neither agree nor disagree, (d) agree, (e) strongly agree. A sixth option of 'I don't know' was also available. After the perception questions, participants were provided a text box and asked to elaborate on their reasons supporting either their negative or positive perceptions. This is followed by four questions used to measure the level of interaction the participant has had with ESO. Participants responded to these questions via a four-point scale consisting of (a) never, (b) rarely, (c) sometimes, and (d) often. A text box for open comments was available at the end of the survey.

Data Analysis

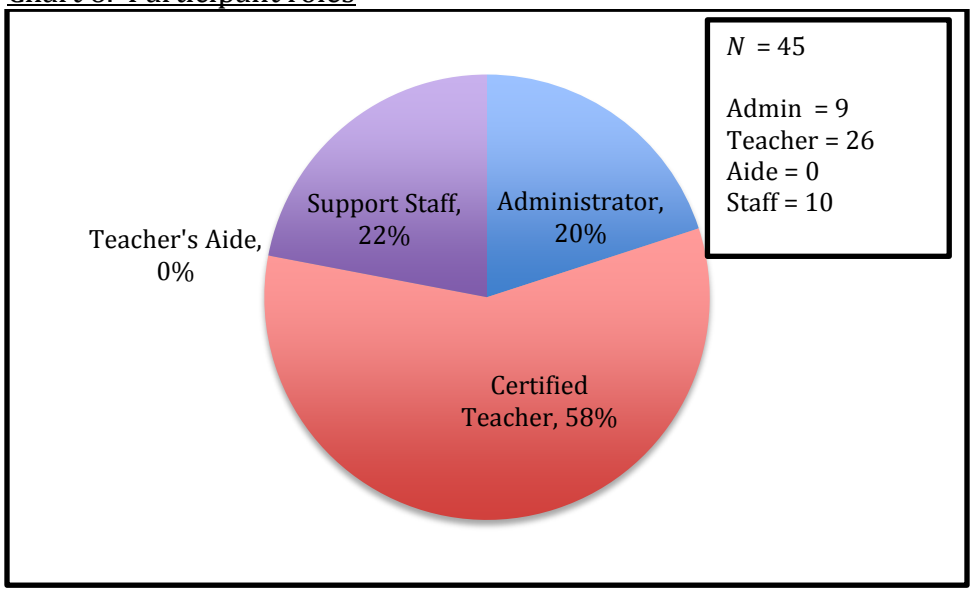
Initial review of the data revealed that two participants consistently marked 'strongly disagree' on all five of the perception statements. However, their created responses supporting their reasons for why they either agreed or disagreed with the statement about student impact were both very positive and discussed why they felt that ESO was making such a positive impact. Because of this conflicting information, the perception data from both these surveys was eliminated from the analysis (N = 43). This changed the confidence interval to $\pm$ 13.2% at the 95% probability level. Because the role indication on both eliminated surveys indicated administrators completed them, the distribution of roles among data was skewed in favor of teachers (administrators = 9, teachers = 26, teacher's aide = 0 and staff = 10). It was therefore determined that all data would be reported in aggregate and that the data skew will be considered in the discussion of results. Means and standard deviations were calculated for perception data. Should a participant select the 'I don't know' option on any of the five perception statements, their data were not included in

these calculations. Percentages were calculated for interaction data and the reported sources personnel use to get information about ESO. Created responses were analyzed for emergent themes and then coded accordingly.

Results

Of the total sample (N = 45) 20% identified as administrators (n = 9), 22% identified at support staff (n =10), and 58% identified as certified teachers (n = 26). None of the participants identified as a teacher's aide (see Chart 6).

Chart 6. Participant roles



Of those who considered themselves informed enough to address the question, participants agree that ESO offers assistance to students that relates to what is being taught during the school day (n = 36, M = 4.19, SD = 0.64). They also agree that ESO offers a variety of activities for students (n = 38, M = 4.53, SD = 0.56). Strongest participant agreement came to the statement that ESO has made a positive difference for students in their classrooms or schools (n = 37, M = 4.59, SD =

0.90) although there was more variance among these data than those on the previous two questions. Participants indicated that they would like for more students from their classrooms or schools to participate in ESO (n = 39, M = 4.56, SD = 0.72). Participants indicated they were moderately well informed about ESO and what happens there (n = 43, M = 3.83, SD = 1.00). There was, however, wide variance among these data (see Table 22).

Table 22. School Personnel Perceptions of El Sistema Oklahoma

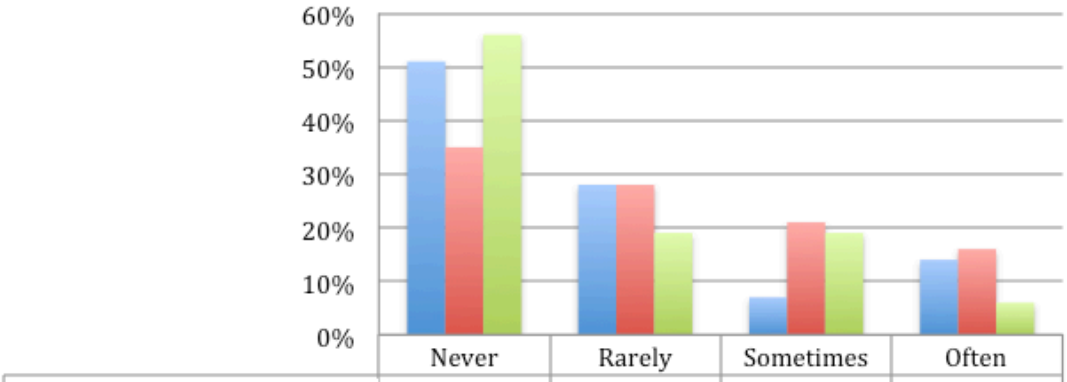
Question	*n*	*M*	*SD*
El Sistema Oklahoma offers assistance to students that relates to what is being taught during the school day.	36	4.19	0.64
El Sistema offers a variety of enrichment activities for students.	38	4.53	0.56
In general, El Sistema Oklahoma has made a positive difference for students in my classroom/at my school.	37	4.59	0.90
I would like more students from my classroom/school to participate in El Sistema Oklahoma.	39	4.56	0.72
I am well informed about El Sistema Oklahoma and what happens there.	43	3.83	1.00

Data from a five point scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. Data were eliminated for any response selecting 6 = Do not know

Generally, participants indicated low levels of interaction with ESO. 79% of participants indicated they have rarely or never visited the ESO site while 21% indicate they have visited sometimes or often. Considering their direct interaction with ESO staff, 63% indicate they have either rarely or never done so while 21% indicate they have sometimes interacted and 16% report they have often interacted. Lowest reported interactions occur when considering exchanges between ESO and school personnel related to student issues or curriculum. 56% of respondents

report that they have never interacted with ESO in this manner. 38% indicate they have done so only rarely or sometimes while 6% report they have interacted this way often (see Chart 7).

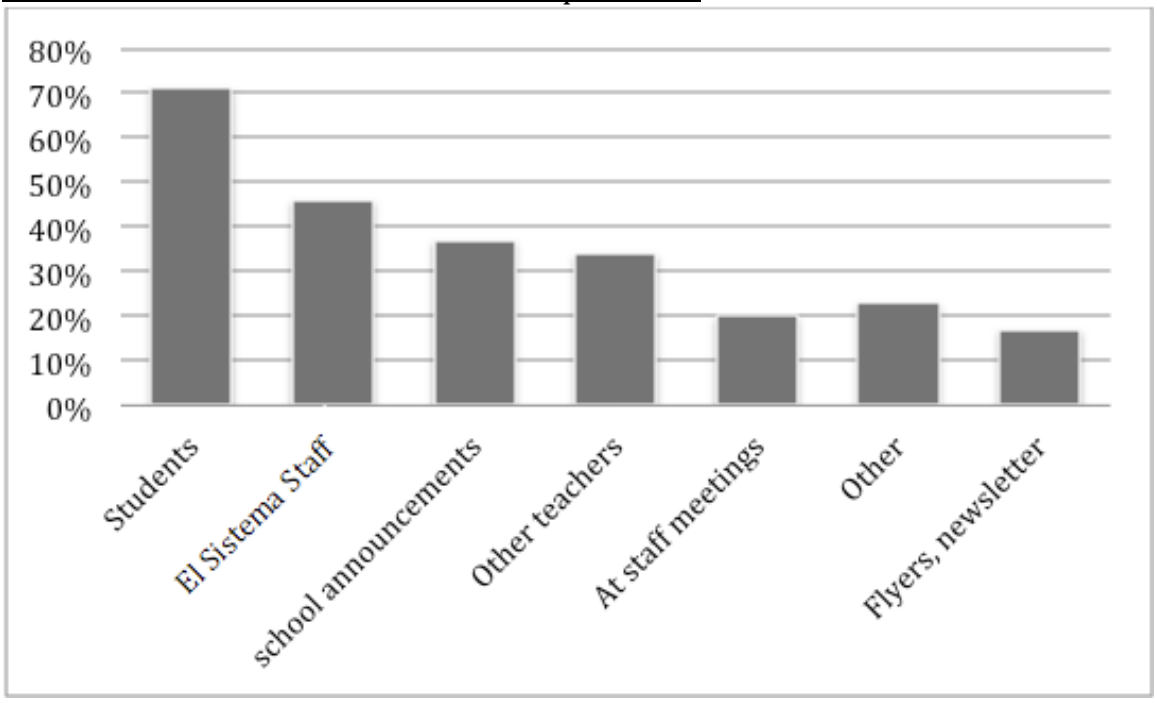
Chart 7. School personnel interaction with El Sistema Oklahoma



	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
How often have you visited the El Sistema Oklahoma sight?	51%	28%	7%	14%
How often do you interact with the El Sistema Oklahoma staff?	35%	28%	21%	16%
How often do you communicate with El Sistema Oklahoma staff about particular students or curriculum?	56%	19%	19%	6%

Participants report that their most common source of information concerning ESO was the students (71%). The remaining sources in descending order of use were El Sistema staff (46%), school announcements (37%), other teachers (34%), staff meetings (20%), other (23%) and flyers or newsletter (17%). The most often indicated source in the created responses to 'other' was related to on-line social media (see Chart 8).

Charts 8. Information sources for school personnel



Analysis of created responses related to the nature of the impact school personnel are witnessing among their students who attend ESO revealed four emergent themes. These include (a) social skills, (b) motivation, (c) behavior and (d) musical knowledge/skills. Addressing the development of social skills, participant 1 states, "Students are learning responsibility and functioning within a system that promotes, encourages and insists on collaborative work with the students." Another states, "Students who attend El Sistema are more self-confident" (participant 34). One other asserts that, "I have seen withdrawn students blossom into active participants in class. All of my El Sistema kids build more confidence through your program which helps them in the academic setting" (participant 19). Discussing motivation one states, "The students that [sic] attend (ESO) are more eager to learn and are very excited to come to school" (participant 2). Another

affirms that, “The kids who attend El Sistema really enjoy it and look forward to it every day. This positivity radiates in the classroom as well” (participant 11). Another participant has observed that, “students with negative attitudes toward school before El Sistema now show a positive one” (participant 29). Statements like “The students that are in El Sistema are more likely to participate and the ones that have trouble controlling their actions seem to be more in control” (participant 8) and “responsibility in the classroom was evident and overall behavior improved!” (participant 17) are typical of those addressing improvements in student behavior. A couple of participants noted the increase in musical knowledge and skills ESO student are exhibiting at school. They state “the level of musicality has been exemplary through the students’ performance and sets the tone for higher quality musicianship for their peers” (participant 15) and “it is an opportunity for students who cannot afford benefits of being exposed to many different kinds of musical instruments and stay tuned to their creative nature” (participant 28).

One participant commented on why he/she did not agree that ESO was making a positive impact on a student in his/her classroom noting that he/she “still had attitude and smart remarks continually by student” (participant 35). This was the only negative comment made by any participant.

Discussion

Although the response rate was not as high as the other survey instruments used in this report the data collected from this survey can be considered generally representative ($\pm$ 13.2%) of the overall population. Issues that contributed to the lower return rate could be the time of year the survey was conducted or the nature

of return rates on on-line surveys in general (Fan & Yan, 2010). Among those who responded to the survey, it appears that school personnel believe ESO was impacting students in ways that either had or will affect their interactions and achievements at school in positive ways. Both the high means and relatively low standard deviations among data analysis suggest this perception is largely held by most of the population. This is also supported by the overwhelmingly positive comments supporting positive impact in the classroom or school.

This investigation revealed three areas of concern, two of which are related to one another. First is the low response rate. This may have been a product of the time of year the survey was released to school personnel. Coming at the end of the school year, the request for participation may have been set aside in deference to other pertinent issues that were in need of immediate attention. No incentive for participation was offered. Perhaps some incentive (i.e., entries into a drawing for a gift card) would increase future response rates.

Another concern was the lower agreement with statement concerning being informed about ESO and the very low percentage of participants reporting any sustained interactions with ESO faculty, administration, and/or staff. Among the data concerning being informed, not only was the means lower, but the variance indicated by the standard deviation suggests that school personnel either feel well informed or not informed at all. This has the potential of creating sects within school site personnel that are 'in the know.' This may concern ESO leadership and school administration as to the potential to create divisiveness among school personnel. While this does not appear to be of any concern at school sites currently,

it may something to consider in the future. This lack of knowledge about ESO may have also contributed to the low response rate.

The lack of interaction between ESO personnel and school personnel is also of concern. The skew of the data toward the classroom teacher perspective likely contributed to this result. ESO leadership reports regular communication with school administrators who confirmed such communication at both 'administrator luncheons'. However, a mechanism for regular communication between ESO personnel and classroom teachers does not currently exist. Comments made by some participants suggest they would value such interaction. "Was not aware that we could communicate with staff about students or see what the program was about" (participant 21). "Is it an option to communicate with staff?" (participant 13). As ESO seeks to enrich and grow their partnerships with schools, they may wish to explore means for enhancing these interactions on a more regular basis.

Other comments made at the end of the survey reinforce the positive perceptions of the participants toward ESO. These include the following:

> This is a fabulous program that I feel benefits the district and I would like to see it grow. (participant 4)

> Keep it up!! I love the impact you have on our children! :) (participant 11)

> The students I visit with while waiting for the bus seem proud of themselves. They communicate that they are looking forward to next year. (participant 15)
>
> I love El Sistema and I think it is an amazing program for our kiddos who need the mentors and role models that El Sistema provides. (participant 31)

One comment not only addresses the participants feelings about impact students, families and the community have enjoyed, but supplies evidence for this perception.

> El Sistema has made possible intense instrumental music instruction that is not available at school to this degree, or through traditional private instrument study. Family dynamics sometimes mean that hard choices are made with income, and El Sistema gives these students the opportunity to grow through being involved in these studies. Students and parents and family members are immensely proud of the student accomplishments. The instrumental instructor at [partner middle school] reportedly was able to have orchestra this year because of the students feeding to him that had El Sistema backgrounds, and that was a first for his program (participant 2).

Chapter 6

Development of self-concept and self-regulatory behavior

Self-concept as possible selves

Self-concept development among minority and urban youth has been studied in terms of many different outcomes. Of particular concern for the current study is the impact of self-concept development on youth depression (Ulrich, Robins, Widaman & Couger, 2014), projected occupational prestige (Perry & Vance, 2010), and academic achievement (Huang, 2011). These outcomes have direct relationship to the development of responsible citizenry cited in El Sistema Oklahoma's (ESO) mission statement. The potential impact of participation in ESO on a child's self-concept may have long-term effects for his or her life beyond program years.

Self-concept can be defined as, "one's theory about oneself, the person one was in the past, is now, and can become in the future, including social roles and group memberships" (Lee & Oyserman, 2012, p. 1). Self-concept is often equated with other constructs like self-esteem (the overall evaluation of self) and self-efficacy (the perceived ability of one to successfully complete a given task). While the impact of self-esteem and self-efficacy on depression, occupation, and academic achievement has been studied, most consider self-esteem and self-efficacy to be products of one's self-concept (Marsh & Craven, 2006). For this reason, the current study will examine the more global construct of self-concept.

Self-concept has been measured in a number of ways, but of particular importance to this study is measurement related to future-oriented components of self-concept. As ESO aspires to develop students' abilities to construct healthy self-

concepts that will impact their future lives, measurement of self-concept related to future orientation is most appropriate. Markus and Nurius (1986) developed the concept of *Possible Selves* as such a measurement. *Possible Selves* theory suggests people project 'selves' they believe they can become in the near and more distant future. These future selves impact goal setting and motivation (Lee & Oyserman, 2012). Further, the theory suggests these projected selves have positive images of what one desires to become and negative images of what one wishes to avoid becoming. Through focusing on both desired selves and selves one wishes to avoid, "possible selves allow for self-improvement, malleability, and personal growth" (Lee & Oyserman, 2012, p.1).

With a future focus and belief that change is possible, students with well-developed possible selves may become more self-regulatory. Oyserman, Bybee, Terry, and Hart-Johnson (2004) state, "To regulate behavior, the self-concept must contain not only goals or desired end states, but also strategies about how to behave in order to reach the desired end state" (p. 131). Thus, the future becomes a target and current behavior could be regulated according to the strategies developed to reach the target. For example, the choice a student makes to complete or not complete homework on a single evening will not make much overall academic difference. If the student's future projection is only for the impact of that single event, the choice to not complete the assignment may be easy for him or her. However, when the impact of this decision is viewed according to its consequences on one's future, a student may come to a different conclusion. Development of self-

regulatory behavior is essential to prolongation of any effects that ESO may have on it students.

Several individual and contextual factors influence the development of possible selves. Past experience influences one's future projection. For example,

> Youth with a history of…school failure are less likely to articulate education and job focused possible selves, students from low income families are less likely to generate multiple strategies for how to attain school-focused possible selves like doing well and getting good grades. (Lee & Oyserman, 2012, p.2)

Possible selves are also developmentally contextual and are, therefore, related to one's life experience. Social context also influences possible selves development.

> Minority, low-income, and rural youth may be less able to imagine school-focused possible selves or to sustain these possible selves if the context include few models of overcoming barriers to success or are rife with stereotypes that are not congruent with school-focused possible selves. (Lee & Oyserman, 2012, p. 3)

In fact, some studies have shown that if college is not a projected option by the time a student is in middle school, academic effort may be withdrawn (Oyserman, & Fryberg, 2006; Oyserman, Gant & Ager, 1995).

Implications of possible selves for *El Sistema Oklahoma* students and teachers

All ESO students, teachers, parents, and administrators maintain possible selves. These projected future goals and the strategies to attain or avoid them impacts behavior and interactions of all these educational stakeholders. Of greatest

importance to ESO and the current study is the fact that possible selves are malleable. They can be influenced through intervention. These changes can "lead to positive changes in academic behavior, in better academic performance, and lower risk of depression" (Lee & Oyserman, 2012, p. 5). The impact of improved academic behavior and performance on the development of responsible citizenry is directly related to ESO's mission. The occurrences and effects of youth depression, especially among minority populations are well documented (Huynh, 2012). That appropriate interventions can affect youth depression is directly related to joyful music making and is therefore, related to an investigation of ESO's ability to achieve its stated mission. The potential impact of interventions made possible through programing at ESO on the students' self-concept as measured through possible selves is therefore appropriate and directly related to the mission of El Sistema Oklahoma.

Measuring possible selves

Possible selves have been measured through close-ended measures and open-ended measures. Close-ended measures allow for easy coding, but require preparation of the measurement tool be well-founded in the appropriate context for each student completing the measure. As the students at ESO represent a very diverse population with widely varied contextual backgrounds, it was determined that an open-ended measurement was more appropriate for this study. The open-ended measure allows for students to describe their possible selves without constraint, as they describe their possible selves within their own contexts.

Data for this study were collected using the *Possible Selves Questionnaire* (PSQ)(Osyerman, 2004). The questionnaire has two parts. The first part asks students who they will be next year and to list up to four possible selves indicating what they will be like and what they will be doing at that time. Across from each of these future possible selves, students are asked to write what they are doing this year to attain this future goal. In the second part of the survey, students are asked to list up to four possible selves they would not like to be in the next year. These represent things they are concerned about or wish to avoid in the coming year. Across from each of these avoided possible selves, students are asked to list what they are currently doing so that these things will not happen.

Data Collection

All students attending ESO in the fall of 2014 (N = 176) were asked to complete a PSQ during a session in their music literacy classroom. Students were given the questionnaire and asked to read and complete it to the best of their ability. Teachers helped to clarify directions and informed students they could opt out of this process if they desired. They offered no other input concerning the completion of the PSQ. The questionnaire does not ask for students' names, so most data was anonymous, however some students did write their name on the PSQ. All completed questionnaires were given to the primary researcher for storage and analysis.

Data Analysis

A total of 156 questionnaires were returned constituting an 88% return rate. Of those, 128 were completed correctly lowering the usable return rate to 73%. The

other 28 questionnaires did not contain enough data for analysis and were discarded. The total data set revealed that first year (n = 83) students completed many more PSQ's than second year (n = 45) students. Due to the disproportionate representation of first year students in the remaining questionnaires, it was determined that a random sampling from first year and second year data would be necessary. Using a random number generator, 38 first year and 36 second year PSQs were selected for analysis. The necessary number of PSQ's required from each year was determined by the ratio of first year to second year students in the total program enrollment. If the questionnaire had a name written on it, the name was obscured so that it could no longer be seen.

Normal analysis of the PSQ requires that expected and feared possible selves be coded into one of six domains: school achievement, interpersonal relationships, personality traits, physical/health, material/lifestyle or negative (for expected selves) or non-normative/delinquent (for feared selves). However, Oyserman et al. (2004) devised a different analytic stage to analyze plausibility of self-regulation on a 6-point scale. Using this method, higher scores indicated a higher likelihood that self-regulation would occur because of the combination of more possible selves with strategies to attain or avoid the outcome. This analytical process appeared to produce results more related to the focus of this study than the former process and was therefore adopted. In the original implementation of a 6-point scale, no PSQ received a score of 6. Therefore, the 6-point scale was reduced to a 5-point scale for the current study. Additionally, the original research (Oyserman et al, 2004) was intended only to address Academic Possible Selves (APS). As APS was not the sole

focus of the current research, the original scoring rubric was broadened to address all expected and feared possible selves. The current data were analyzed according to this revised rubric (See Table 23). The data were analyzed by the researcher and verified by an independent coder using the same procedure. A 92% agreement rate between these two independent analyses was obtained.

Table 23. Self-regulation coding chart

Self-regulation score	Coding operationalization
0	No expected or feared possible selves were expressed. Strategies are not analyzed without the existence of a possible self.
1	At least one possible self was expressed. There were either no strategies or strategies were ambiguous or not connected to the possible self.
2	More than one possible self was expressed. If there were two possible selves, only one strategy aligned with the expressed possible self. If there were more than two possible selves, most strategies did not align with the expected or feared possible selves.
3	More than two possible selves were expressed. At least half the strategies aligned with the expected or feared possible selves.
4	More than two possible selves were expressed. Most of the strategies aligned with the expected or feared possible selves.
5	More than three possible selves were expressed and all strategies aligned with the expected or feared possible selves.

Results

Analysis of the total random sample (N = 74) revealed moderate levels of self-regulation (M = 3.23, SD = 1.52, range 1-5). When data were disaggregated to years of participation in ESO, students in their first year (n = 38) had lower self-

regulation scores (M = 2.71, SD = 1.56, range 1-5) than the total sample. Students in their second year of participation in ESO (n = 36) had higher self-regulation scores (M = 3.78, SD = 1.29, Range 1-5) than the total sample. T-test analysis was performed to determine if a statistically significant ($p \leq .05$) difference existed between first year and second year students' self-regulation scores. This analysis indicated that such a difference did exist ($p \leq .00$) suggesting that the second year students had significantly higher self-regulation scores than those of the first year students (see Table 24).

Table 24. Possible Selves, Self-regulatory coding results

All (N=74)		Year 1 (n=38)		Year 2 (n=36)		T-test
M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
3.23	1.52	2.71	1.56	3.78	1.29	.00*

**Indicates a statistically significant difference $p \leq .05$*

Discussion

Analysis of students' self-regulatory abilities via measures of self-concept such as the *Possible Selves Questionnaire* has been established in the literature (Oyserman, Bybee & Terry, 2006; Oyserman, Bybee, Terry & Hart-Johnson, 2004). The current analysis of data from first and second year students at El Sistema Oklahoma revealed a statistically significant difference between these two groups with the second year students' scores indicating they exhibit greater self-regulatory abilities.

Some caution in interpreting these results is recommend as there were no baseline data for either group and that comparison of one group to the other may

not take individual differences into account. These results would be better supported by repeated measures of the same population. They would also benefit from an analysis of the total population, rather than a random sample. However, the population of both groups (i.e., first year students and second year students) analyzed in this study is comprised of students from the same communities and schools. The method of recruitment for admission to ESO was the same for both the first year and second year groups. There is no significant difference in the demographic indicators that impact academic success of the first and second year student cohorts within ESO (see Demographic data in section 1 of this report). Because of these similarities, a cautious comparison of these two groups is supported.

That the self-regulation mean scores of second year ESO students are significantly higher than those of first year ESO students might indicate that time attending ESO is impacting the students' ability to self-regulate. Research indicates that interventions focused on increasing students' possible selves and strategies to attain them, positively impacted student academic outcomes including grades and in-class behaviors (Oyserman, Brickman, Rhodes, 2007). The critical importance of self-regulatory ability and attainment of desired academic outcomes is further supported as a significant indicator of academic improvement for at-risk youth (Oyserman, Bybee, Terry & Hart-Johnson, 2004). The impact of self-regulation on at-risk student outcomes is directly related to the ESO's mission. The results of the current study imply some relationship between student attendance at ESO and self-regulatory abilities exists. Should the positive impact of ESO attendance on

students' abilities to self-regulate be substantiated, ESO could support claims of long-term benefits for students who attend ESO. Further research is necessary to support such claims, but initial data analysis suggests a very positive potential finding.

Bibliography

Akey, T. (2006). *Social context, student attitudes and behavior, and academic achievement.* New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

Cooper, H., Robinson, J. C., & Patall, E. (2006). Does homework improve academic achievement? A synthesis of research 1987-2003. *Review of Educational Research, 76*(1), 1-62.

Dickman, M. (2008). *Corridor Culture.* New York: New York University Press.

Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92*(6), 1087-1101.

Fan, W., & Yan, Z. (2010). Factors affecting response rates of the web survey: A systematic review. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *26*(2), 132-139.

Huang, C. (2011). Self-concept and academic achievement: A meta-analysis of longitudinal relations. *Journal of School Psychology, 49,* 505-528.

Huynh, W. H. (2012). Ethnic microagressions and the depressive and somatic symptoms of Latino and Asian American adolescents. *Journal of Youth Adolescence, 41*(7), 831-847.

Iddings, A. C., Combs, M. C., & Moll, L. (2013). In the Arid Zone. *Urban Education, 47*(2), 495-514.

Lee, S., & Oyserman, D. (2012). Possible Selves Theory. Retrieved August 8, 2014 from http://www.education.com/print/possible-selves-theory

Markus, H. R., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible Selves. *American Psychologist, 41,* 954-969.

Marsh, H. W., & Craven, R. G., (2006). Reciprocal effects o self-concept and performance from a multidimensional perspective: Beyond seductive pleasure and unidimensional perspectives. *Perspectives in Psychological Science,* 1, 133-163.

Mc Adams, R. P. (2010). *Exploring the myths and the realities of today's schools: A candid review of the challenges educators face.* Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield.

Oklahoma City Public Schools. (2014). *Oklahoma City Public Schools: Statistical profile 2013-2014.* Retrieved on September 2, 2015 from http://www.okcps.org/Portals/OKCPS/District/docs/About%20OKCPS/PRE%20Stat%20Profile%2012-9-14%20GoogleWeb.pdf

Oyserman, D. (2004). Possible selves citations, measure, and coding instructions. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

Oyserman, D., Brickman, D., & Rhodes, M., (2007). School success, possible selves and parent school involvement. *Family Relations, 56*, 479-489.

Oyserman, D., Bybee, D., & Terry, K. (2006). Possible selves and academic outcomes: How and when possible selves impel action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91,* 188-204.

Oyserman, D., Bybee, D., & Terry, K., & Hart-Johnson, T. (2004). Possible selves as roadmaps. *Journal of Research in Personality, 38,* 130-149.

Oyserman, D., & Fryberg, S. (2006). The possible selves of diverse adolescents: Content and function across gender, race and national origin. In C. Dunkel & J. Kerpelan (Eds.), *Possible selves: Theory, research, and application,* Huntington, NY: Nova.

Oyserman, D., Gant, L., & Ager, L. (1995). A socially contextualized model of African-American identity: Possible selves and school persistence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69,* 1216-1232.

Perry, J. C., & Vance, K. S. (2010). Possible selves and urban youths of color: An exploration of peer beliefs and gender differences. *The Career Development Quarterly, 59*(3), 257-69.

Strobel, K., Kirshner, B., O'Donoghue, J., & McLaughlin, M. (2008). Qualities that attract urban youth to after-school settings and promote continuous participation. *Teachers College Record, 110*(8), 1677-1705.

Ulrich, O., Robins, R. W., Widaman, K. F., Conger, R. D. (2014). Is low self-esteem a risk factor for depression? Findings from a longitudinal study of Mexican origin youth. *Developmental Psychology, 50*(2), 622-33.

Voight, A., Shinn, M., & Nation, M. (2012). The longitudinal effects of residential mobility on the academic achievement of urban elementary and middle school students. *Educational Researcher, 41*(9), 385-392.

Xu, J. (2013). Homework and academic achievement. In E. D,. Hattie & E. M. Anderson (Eds.), *International Guide to Student Achievement.* (pp. 199-201). New York: Routledge.