



## Connecting social-emotional development and academic indicators across multiple years

Everyone Graduates Center (2022)

This [report](#) builds on a previous study, [Connecting Social-Emotional Development, Academic Achievement, and On-Track Outcomes: A Multi-District Study of Grades 3 to 10 Students Supported by City Year AmeriCorps Members](#). Released in May of 2020, the initial study was one of the largest across multiple cities and grades to explore the relationship between social-emotional development and academic and on-track outcomes for students attending systemically under-resourced schools. Using 2017-2018 data, the study focused on the connections between students' social-emotional skills and academic outcomes. The findings validated a holistic approach to student supports such as [student success coaching](#).

### SUMMARY FINDINGS OF THE 2020 STUDY:

[Review in detail here.](#)

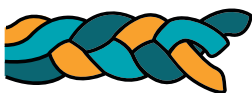
- 1 There is a statistically significant, consistent relationship between student social-emotional skills and academic outcomes and making gains in social-emotional skills is like gaining an entire school year of achievement growth in math or English.
- 2 More time spent with City Year AmeriCorps members, who serve as student success coaches, is associated with student improvements in social, emotional, academic and attendance outcomes.
- 3 Greater impact is seen when social-emotional skills are integrated with academic interventions. Time spent with an AmeriCorps member in math or ELA had direct impact on those areas and also significant indirect impacts by improving social-emotional outcomes.



## Expanding on the original findings, this new study uses additional years of student data to address the following questions:

- To what extent do the correlations identified in the original study hold over multiple years?
- What does the relationship between students' social-emotional skills and academic outcomes look like over multiple years?
- Which social-emotional skills are tied to short-term growth, and which are tied to long-term growth?
- Does time spent with an AmeriCorps member impact student outcomes over multiple years?
- How do students' social-emotional skills develop over time?

### KEY FINDINGS



#### **Social-emotional skills are significantly and strongly related to academics.**

Students' social-emotional levels in 2017-2018 were just as significantly and strongly related to changes in their academic outcomes by the end of 2019, one year later.

These findings contribute to a growing evidence base<sup>1</sup> about how children learn and develop, underscoring the intertwined nature of academic, social and emotional growth.

They validate a holistic approach to student supports, particularly in systemically under-resourced schools, and help to make the case for how such supports can expand educational equity.

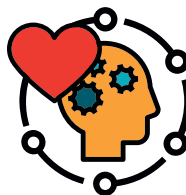


#### **Time spent<sup>2</sup> with an AmeriCorps member results in improved student outcomes for students, and the effects of that time spent are durable.**

Time spent with an AmeriCorps member serving as a student success coach is related to higher attendance and stronger social-emotional skills.

Students who worked with AmeriCorps members in 2017-2018 only still had higher English course grades and attendance rates at the end of 2019, one year later.

For students who worked with an AmeriCorps member for two years, the relationship between time spent with an AmeriCorps member and academic outcomes was statistically significant for math and English course grades, attendance rates, and social-emotional skills.



#### **Students' social-emotional skills are highly variable.**

There is as much difference between the social-emotional levels of the same student at two different time points as there is between two different students.

Students' social-emotional skills grow over time, but at a very slow rate.

Students' social-emotional skills dip when they enter middle school and high school. However, they recover shortly thereafter, suggesting that the dips are related to the transition to a new level of schooling, but that students eventually adapt to the new environment and challenges.

Students' social emotional skills grow dramatically over the course of the school year, starting at a low in September and reaching a high point in June. They then drop over the summer. This cycle repeats itself during the years of schooling.

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<sup>1</sup> From a Nation at Risk to A Nation at Hope: Recommendations from the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development. (2019). [https://www.cityyear.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/EGC\\_overview\\_FY20\\_05.20.pdf](https://www.cityyear.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/EGC_overview_FY20_05.20.pdf)

Science of Learning and Development (SoLD) Alliance. <https://www.soldalliance.org/>

<sup>2</sup> The median, or middle, amount of time spent working directly with an AmeriCorps member is 16 hours in math or English, and three hours for social-emotional support.





### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Time spent with an AmeriCorps member is related to higher attendance, improved English course grades, and strong social-emotional skills, but not related to improved math course grades in this new report that includes data from multiple years.

### FURTHER AREAS OF INQUIRY<sup>3</sup>

We want to better understand how AmeriCorps members serving as student success coaches foster positive developmental relationships with students, strengthen classroom environments, and leverage intentional skill-building activities and real-time responsive supports to improve student outcomes.

Employing qualitative research methods by conducting site visits, interviews, and focus groups will give us a more holistic picture of the work that AmeriCorps members do in schools and how it impacts student outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

### STUDY DESIGN

The new report leverages 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 student outcome data as well as 2019-2020 Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) data to:<sup>5</sup>

- Replicate exactly the findings from the initial study with a second data sample for the 2018-2019 school year.
- Combine data from original study (2017-2018) with additional data (2018-2019) to look at changes in student attendance, English and math course grades, and social-emotional skills over a two-year period using a larger sample of students from a wider range of backgrounds, which adds to the external validity of the original findings.
- Track the growth of students' social-emotional skills over time by adding in data for a third year (2019-2020).

## Conclusions

The findings affirm the effectiveness of City Year's holistic approach, which is rooted in the AmeriCorps member-student relationship and integrated academic and social-emotional supports throughout the school day.

The variability of students' social-emotional skills over time indicates that social-emotional skills are highly influenced by life experiences, environment, and relationships.

AmeriCorps members serving as student success coaches should play a critical role in any efforts to improve students' social-emotional outcomes.

As near-peer mentors in the classroom, student success coaches are positioned to respond to students' in-the-moment needs, provide individualized guidance to students, facilitate a positive relationship between the teacher and students, and support relationship building among students.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.cityyear.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ResearchAgendaCY\\_2022\\_3.25\\_F.pdf](https://www.cityyear.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ResearchAgendaCY_2022_3.25_F.pdf) ; <sup>4</sup> <https://www.cityyear.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Guidelines-for-Taking-an-Equity-based-Approach-to-Research-and-Evaluation-website-version.pdf> ; <sup>5</sup> We planned to include 2019-2020 student outcome data in the analysis but COVID-19 impacted both the availability and quality of student outcome data.