

**BEYOND 3:30
EVALUATION**

Phase 1

TITLE: *Beyond 3:30 Evaluation: Phase I*

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Executive Summary

Beyond 3:30 (B3:30) is an after-school program with the aim of eliminating inequalities in access to after-school programs by providing multifaceted programming on school premises every school day to Grades 6-8 students, and more recently, also to Grades 3-5 students. In response to the global pandemic, B3:30 was faced with pivoting from an in-person to online delivery model while navigating changes across program operations, preparation and planning, areas and activities, and vision and foci. This responsiveness ensured that students had the opportunity to socialize with friends and program staff, participate in diverse recreational and physical activities, receive differentiated academic support, and have their emotional concerns attended to, amidst COVID-19.

Preliminary outcomes stemming from the mixed methods research approach include benefits extended to students as well as their families. With respect to positive impacts on students, stakeholders noted academic benefits such as pandemic-related learning loss being addressed and modest gains in reading and some learning skills; emotional well-being benefits such as the development of self-expression and coping mechanisms; and socialization opportunities which nurtured interpersonal skills and relationships, among other outcomes. With respect to families, their emotional and physical well-being were also impacted indirectly from their child(ren)'s participation in B3:30. The data suggest that engaging and responsive programming, an intentional focus on mental health with daily check-ins, opportunities for unstructured socialization, genuine connections between program staff and students, and greater reach through family engagement were key conditions behind the gains B3:30 made during the pandemic.

In adapting to COVID-19 realities, the B3:30 program also faced challenges associated with transitioning between delivery models, technology, implementation constraints, staff recruitment and workload, and interactions among stakeholders. While there was resounding interest among all students and families to continue participating in B3:30 after 2020-21, there were some recommendations to be considered for future offerings of the program. Some of these suggestions include additional classroom management and engagement strategies for the online delivery model, provision of academic support across more subject areas, additional planning time for staff, and continued communication with parents/guardians.

Introduction

Beyond 3:30 (B3:30) is an after-school program strategically located in several middle schools under the Toronto District School Board’s (TDSB) Model Schools for Inner Cities (MSIC) program. It was initially piloted at seven MSIC schools in 2009-10 and has since expanded its reach and offerings to Grades 6-8 students. By 2020-21, it expanded to 18 sites (see Figure 1). The intent of the program is to eliminate inequalities in access to after-school programs, by providing multifaceted programming on school premises every school day. In 2019, B3:30 expanded to the primary and junior divisions (i.e., Grades 3-5) in five schools.

Figure 1: B3:30 Sites in 2020-21



Since its creation, B3:30 has received funding support from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, facilitation support by the Toronto Foundation for Student Success (TFSS) and has been comprehensively evaluated (Yau & Presley, 2012; Yau et al., 2013, 2014, 2015) with grants from the Ministry of Education.

Focus of the Study

The current study seeks to extend the learnings from previous B3:30 evaluations (Yau & Presley, 2012; Yau et al., 2013, 2014, 2015) within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery thereafter and with a particular focus on the program expansion to Grades 3-5. As such, Phase I (2020-2021) will explore the delivery, participation, challenges, and preliminary outcomes of B3:30 within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology

To address the aforementioned foci of the Phase I evaluation, a mixed research methods approach was used, primarily relying on qualitative data collection which was supplemented by and triangulated with quantitative data sources. The following data were collected during the month of June 2021.

Qualitative Data Sources

- **Virtual site observations:** Researchers used a standardized, purpose-built observation guide (see Appendix A) to conduct virtual observations of the Google Classrooms and synchronous programming sessions with students and program staff. Four sites were selected based on offering both B3:30 Junior (Grades 3-5) and standard B3:30 (Grades 6-8), as well as geographic representation.
- **Focus groups:** Researchers used an interview protocol to conduct semi-structured, virtual focus groups (see Appendices B-E). TFSS staff and B3:30 staff helped with recruitment efforts, particularly for students and parents/guardians. Two sets of focus groups were organized with each of the stakeholder groups identified below (except for TFSS staff) to ensure voices from sites located in the east and west were documented. Each focus group was co-facilitated by two researchers and recorded for transcription and analytical purposes.
 - Grades 3-5 students (N = 6)
 - Grades 6-8 students (N = 17)
 - Parents/guardians (N = 7)
 - Program staff (N = 14)
 - TFSS staff (N = 3)

Quantitative Data Sources

- **Student attendance data:** Participant attendance data were recorded in a central database maintained by the TFSS Program Office and obtained to understand attendance patterns.

- **Elementary Report Card data:** Report card data for Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Learning Skills were obtained from the 2020-21 school year to understand preliminary relationships between B3:30 participation and academics.
- **Year-end student survey:** At the end of the program, participants in Grades 4-8 were invited to complete an anonymous online survey which consisted of closed and open-ended questions (see Appendix F). The survey included demographic questions as well as items about their participation, virtual experience, satisfaction with program components, and perceived changes from participating in B3:30. In total, 93 surveys were completed online, representing a response rate of 56% (given that the average daily attendance of the program was 166 students). The low response rate may reflect that fewer students were regularly attending the synchronous components of B3:30 and/or checking the asynchronous program site at the beginning of June 2021, and so were unaware of the opportunity to share feedback about the program.

Background

About the 2020-21 Program

As a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020-21 school year was a year marked by fluctuation and change for the B3:30 program. At the beginning of the school year, schools were open for in-person learning and the B3:30 program was also in-person. The outbreak of the pandemic led to provincially mandated school closures in January 2021. With these school closures, B3:30 had to quickly pivot from in-person programming to an online delivery model. The program did not shut down; it transitioned to virtual programming as a precautionary measure. Even if one school closed due to a positive test of COVID-19, it impacted the entire school and B3:30 pivoted to online programming. When schools re-opened, B3:30 resumed its in-person program while continuing to offer its virtual program. TFSS staff made the decision to offer a fully virtual B3:30 program that was always running in order to accommodate students who were in TDSB's Virtual School. Staff tried to be there for both groups of students and keep students connected to the B3:30 program so that when they returned to in-person delivery, it was a smooth transition.

In addition to these shifts and pivots, there were several program changes, both in-person and virtually, in response to the pandemic. These changes happened across program vision and foci, preparation and planning, operations, and areas and activities, as surfaced from focus groups and observations.

Program Vision and Foci

Owing to the changing reality and rules brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, there were some shifts in the larger vision and foci for the B3:30 program. TFSS staff decided to prioritize student emotional well-being and enjoyment in the program, directing B3:30 staff to focus on these priorities. There was an increased focus on holistically supporting students and helping them adapt to the challenges of the pandemic. With this change in focus, B3:30 staff created opportunities to have conversations with students about self-care and provided a safe space where students could discuss the impact of COVID-19 and how they were feeling. For example, stakeholders reported that during the online, one-on-one tutoring support, staff used the opportunity to check-in with students about their well-being. It should also be noted that as part of the program, B3:30 staff were expected to be logged in from 2:30pm each day to make themselves available to students. This was set up intentionally across all program sites so that students could socialize and connect with others before activities began. Staff also provided time for a "wellness check-in" with students. This was supplemented asynchronously with a section on "Mental Health and Wellness" on the Google Classroom page for the

program sites. This segment included mindfulness activities, guided meditation, and mental health tips to handle the stress of online learning and the pandemic. As part of the vision to support students' well-being during the pandemic, staff also focused on making the program a fun and enjoyable experience. While the staff still delivered the academic and nutritional components of the program, there was less pressure to implement them during the pandemic.

Preparation and Planning

There were several additional steps that staff undertook to plan and prepare for implementing B3:30 during such unprecedented times. First, TFSS staff provided professional learning to program staff. This included training on topics such as youth engagement, online engagement, and technical training on tools such as Google Classrooms and Microsoft Teams. Staff participated in an online training session offered by the Blue Jays Foundation to learn about strategies to implement the online B3:30 program. In addition to the training, B3:30 site coordinators collaborated and shared their ideas, which was likened to a community of practice. Second, program staff reviewed their customary program areas and activities and developed a list of program activities that they could continue and others that required modification so they could be delivered in an engaging, safe, and fun way in-person. To further draw students' interest and participation, they created a weekly schedule of activities for the online program and pre-recorded videos which multiple sites could use. Finally, with a tumultuous start to the school year, B3:30 staff reached out to school principals and community organizations to recruit students who were in virtual school (not attending school in-person) and possibly were unaware that B3:30 was being offered. Email blasts were also sent out to notify parents/guardians about the online B3:30 program.

Program Operations

The changes in program vision and foci and preparations were also accompanied by changes to operations to keep students safe, while offering them enriching programming. First, safety protocols were put in place for the in-person program to minimize COVID-19 risks. These guidelines included wearing masks, keeping six feet apart, separating students within their classes and between grade levels, limiting classroom size and seating arrangements, not permitting games where students must touch the same object, and adding new games that did not involve contact and were physically distanced.

Additionally, as previously noted, B3:30 staff met students where they were, whether that was in-person or virtually. If students were in school, B3:30 was offered in-person and when schools were closed to in-person learning, B3:30 was offered virtually. At

some sites, staff delivered the program simultaneously with students attending both in-person and virtually by using projectors and headphones. This strategy was intended to accommodate students who were engaged virtually so they could participate in the program while the in-person program was underway. This accommodation strategy was implemented at some sites in the Homework Club, Visions of Science, and Lay-up Basketball.

There were additional operational changes when B3:30 transitioned to being fully online. B3:30 was still a three-hour program, but during the 2020-21 school year, it offered 90 minutes of synchronous/live activities and 90 minutes of asynchronous activities. Considering the significant amount of time that students spent engaged online in synchronous learning for regular school, TFSS staff wanted to minimize students' daily screen time. In order to ensure children's safety in the online tutoring program, some operational changes were introduced. Staff were re-allocated so that enough staff were available to monitor the one-on-one, online tutoring session. In addition, there were changes in the following program areas.

Program Areas and Activities

While some activities in the B3:30 program were cancelled owing to public health measures (i.e., Community Dinners, field trips, and having volunteers help out with B3:30), other cornerstone program areas carried on both in-person and virtually. These included Sports and Recreation, Nutrition and Junior Chef's Club, Daily Physical Activity, Homework Help, and JUMP Math and tutoring. These program areas had to be modified in accordance with municipal and provincial guidelines which arose from the pandemic. Some new activities were also introduced during the pandemic. Below are some of the main changes that took place in terms of program offerings and activities:

- **Sports and Recreation:** Led by the Recreation staff, the recreational component of B3:30 was allocated for one hour. When the B3:30 program was in-person, students generally went outside and played sports, such as dodgeball, soccer, basketball, or had structured play. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, students were not allowed to play contact sports, or take part in dance, baseball, floor hockey, or yoga. Games were developed or modified to adhere to COVID-19 guidelines, such as physical distancing. For example, the partnership with Lay-Up basketball allowed students to participate in contactless basketball both in-person and online. Staff incorporated movement and exercises into the online program to replace the recreational activities that were previously done in-person.
- **Nutrition and Junior Chef's Club:** Due to the pandemic and indoor dining restrictions, staff had to cancel Community Dinners. There was also a

modification to the Junior Chef's Club. Students were not able to take part in food preparation due to COVID-19 so they watched the B3:30 staff cook instead, where possible. When B3:30 went online, staff made cooking demonstration videos and did food presentations and workshops that students could watch virtually at home. The virtual Nutrition and Junior Chef's Club also included food and nutrition information, games, and fun facts, as noted during an observation of the Google Classroom page. Although kitchen access was inconsistent across sites, B3:30 provided food to students every day across all sites. Initially, this came in the form of pre-packaged meals or meals prepared off-site due to the restrictions regarding on-site food preparation. Eventually, the program sites were allowed to bring in food and provided hot meals for students. Parents were able to sign up for the 'Hot Meals' program that B3:30 facilitated with a third party to deliver food to families. When B3:30 moved online due to school closures, all children registered in B3:30 received grocery gift cards¹.

- **Daily Physical Activity:** Daily Physical Activity (DPA) took place both in-person and virtually. It was the first activity in the live/synchronous B3:30 program and involved 15-20 minutes of either a physical or mindfulness activity. Program staff started the program with DPA to help students de-stress. Due to the pandemic and strict public health guidelines followed in the gyms, students would do this activity outside. There were also times when students would play board and card games during the DPA component, which required students to sanitize their hands frequently. DPA was separate from recreation. As noted earlier, students had a full, separate hour for the recreation component. During the virtual B3:30, Daily Physical Activities also included aerobic exercise sessions, word searches, and quizzes to test students' knowledge.
- **Community Partnerships:** B3:30 was delivered in partnership with local community organizations, including VIBE Arts, Visions of Science, JUMP Math², and Lay-Up Basketball. These partnerships offered opportunities to students that encompassed dance, science, mathematics, and contactless basketball. These partnerships allowed B3:30 to pivot in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. TFSS staff usually have more partners involved in the program, but they had to limit the number of partners due to the pandemic.
- **JUMP Math:** The JUMP Math program is an academic support program offered to Beyond 3:30 students in the Junior (Grades 3-5) and Senior (Grades 6-8)

¹ TFSS staff had another source of funding that they could allocate to support families in case of need (e.g., purchasing technology so that students could participate in B3:30, donations of winter coats, etc.).

² Beyond 3:30 has made a 3-year commitment to the JUMP Math program.

program. It is a workshop consisting of a series of modules that were offered twice a week. With the support of JUMP Math staff, B3:30 staff were trained to teach math concepts (e.g., fractions, addition, and subtraction) and provide math support to a small group of students. The activities offered in JUMP Math were group-based as opposed to individual support.

- **One-on-One Tutoring:** Another academic support program offered in B3:30 was one-on-one tutoring. Beyond 3:30 provided 10,000 hours of one-on-one tutoring between March and July 2021. Tutoring focused on math and literacy, but students could get assistance from a tutor with any subject. Like the JUMP Math workshops, students in B3:30 had access to tutors twice a week. Students who started in-person had their scheduled one-on-one tutoring during B3:30 hours from 3:00-4:00pm and then would come online from 4:00pm-5:30pm. Students who were completely virtual had their one-on-one tutoring scheduled outside of B3:30 hours, such as on a Saturday, Sunday, or after hours.
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Program Participants

The following section draws on information students shared about themselves in the year-end survey. Considering that B3:30 was still establishing its roots among the junior grades, it is not surprising that most respondents are in Grades 6-8 (combined 84%; see Figure 2). There were also more participants who identified as girl/woman (59%) compared to other gender identities (see Figure 3) at the time the survey was administered.

Figure 2: Grade Distribution of B3:30 Participants (N = 93)

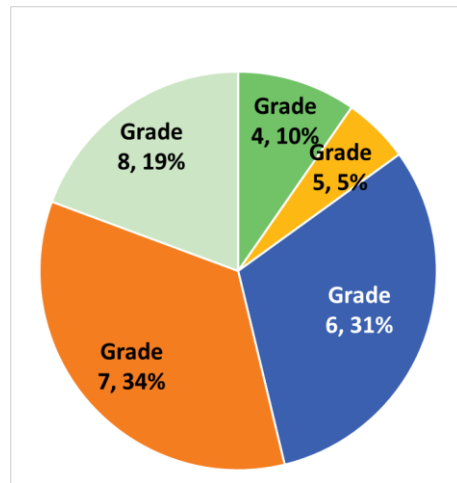
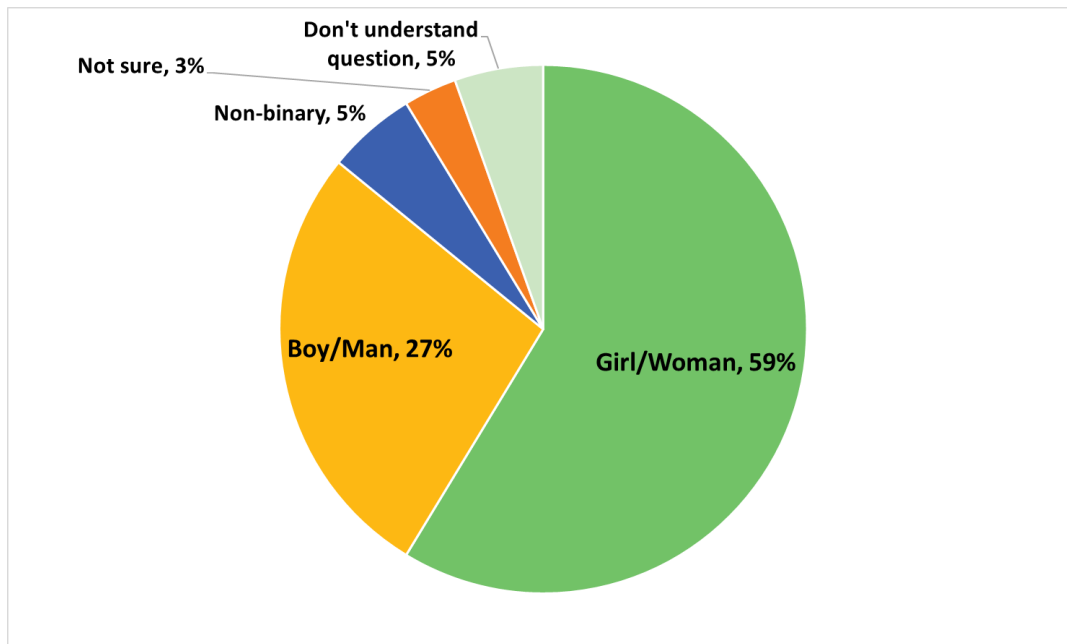
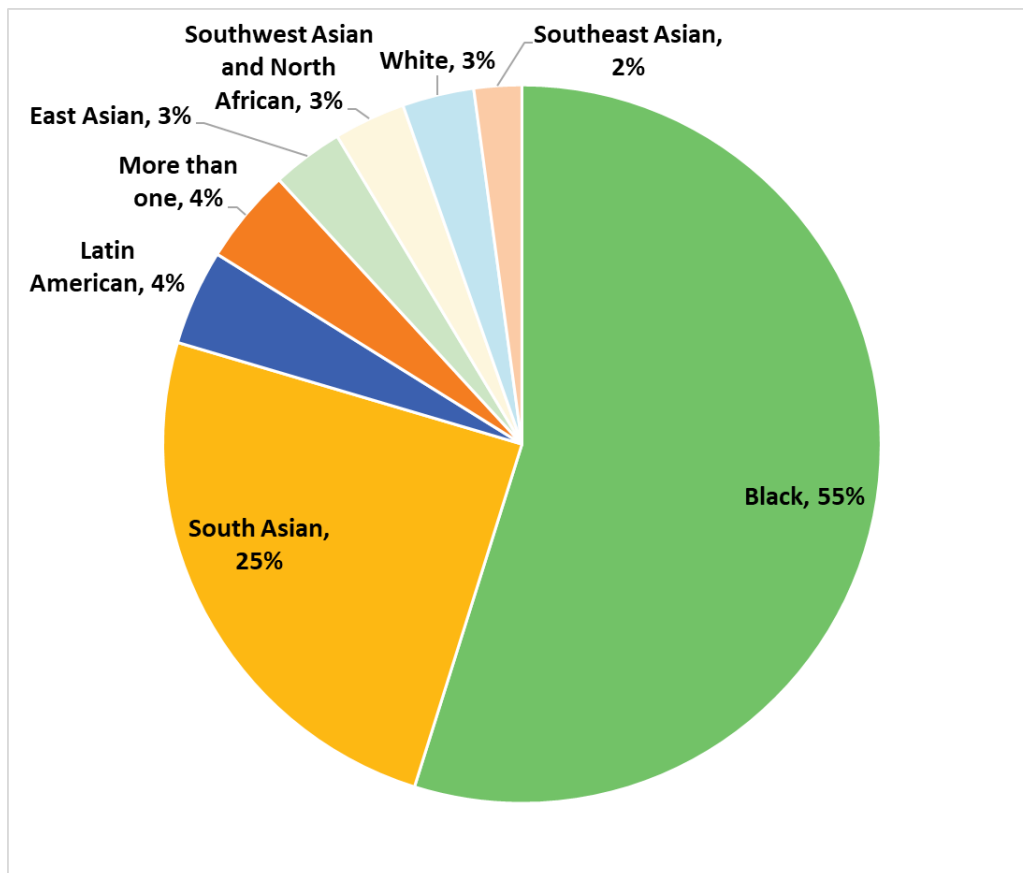


Figure 3: B3:30 Participants' Self-Identified Gender (N = 92)



According to the survey, approximately half of the participants self-identified as Black (55%) which was followed by South Asian (25%) and other ethno-racial backgrounds (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: B3:30 Participants' Self-Identified Ethno-racial Background (N = 93)



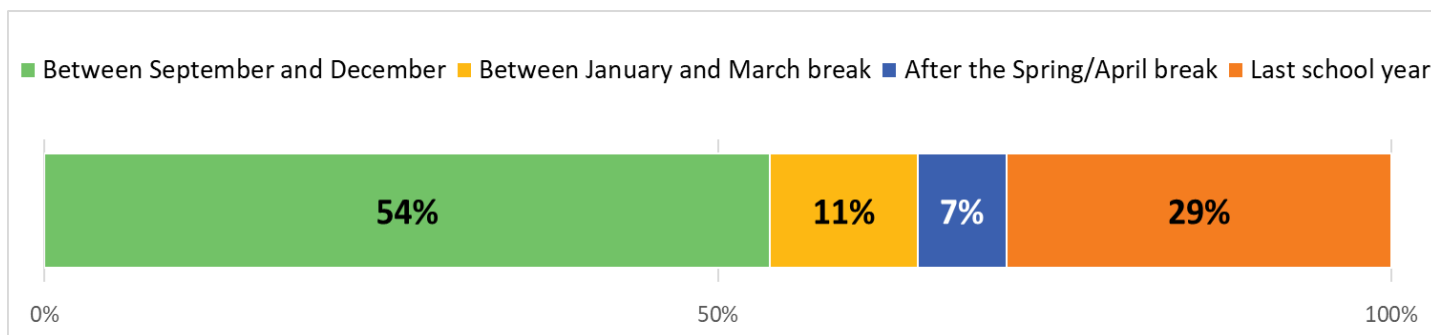
Student Attendance

Patterns in student attendance and engagement were gleaned from focus group discussions, student surveys, and the program attendance database. There were differences in attendance for both in-person and virtually by site. Various factors that impacted attendance included the types of programs offered at sites, the reasons that students attended the program (e.g., childcare versus academic support), whether students were attending school in-person or virtually, as well as student demographics.

Most students who responded to the year-end survey indicated that they first started participating in B3:30 in the previous school year (2019-20) (29%) or between

September to December 2020 (54%), while 11% and 7% started attending the program in 2021 between January and March break and after the Spring/April break, respectively (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: When did you first start attending B3:30? (N=91)

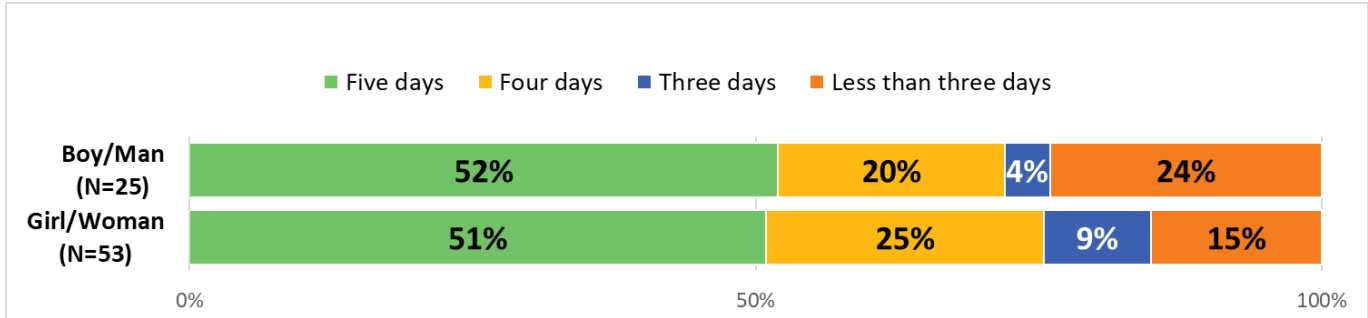


As the program moved from in-person to online, several staff members from multiple sites commented on the drop in enrollment for the program and shared possible reasons for this shift. According to TFSS staff, one of the primary reasons for the lower registration in 2020-21 compared to previous years was that sites were restricted by the amount of space allocated for the program due to physical distancing and capacity limits. They asserted that registration did not drop because students had less interest in the program, but the program had to cap registration based on capacity limits. During the Google classroom observations, there was a noticeable difference between the total number of students enrolled and the number of students attending the session, which was much less. The demographics of attending students also changed. While in-person classes had a greater proportion of boy/man identifying students, the online program had a greater proportion of girl/woman identifying students. This pattern was also confirmed by students and program staff in the focus groups and classroom observations.

“We initially started with 20 students, so we had a lot of kids in September and then, once the first lockdown took place, we saw the numbers drop. We had all boys online on the virtual and then the second lockdown it was only girls.”
– B3:30/TFSS Staff

This was further corroborated by results from the year-end student survey (see Figure 6). A higher proportion of girls than boys reported attending the program three days a week or more (85% for girls versus 76% for boys). Fewer girls said they attended the program less than three days per week when compared to boys; this gap was noticeably larger (15% for girls versus 24% for boys).

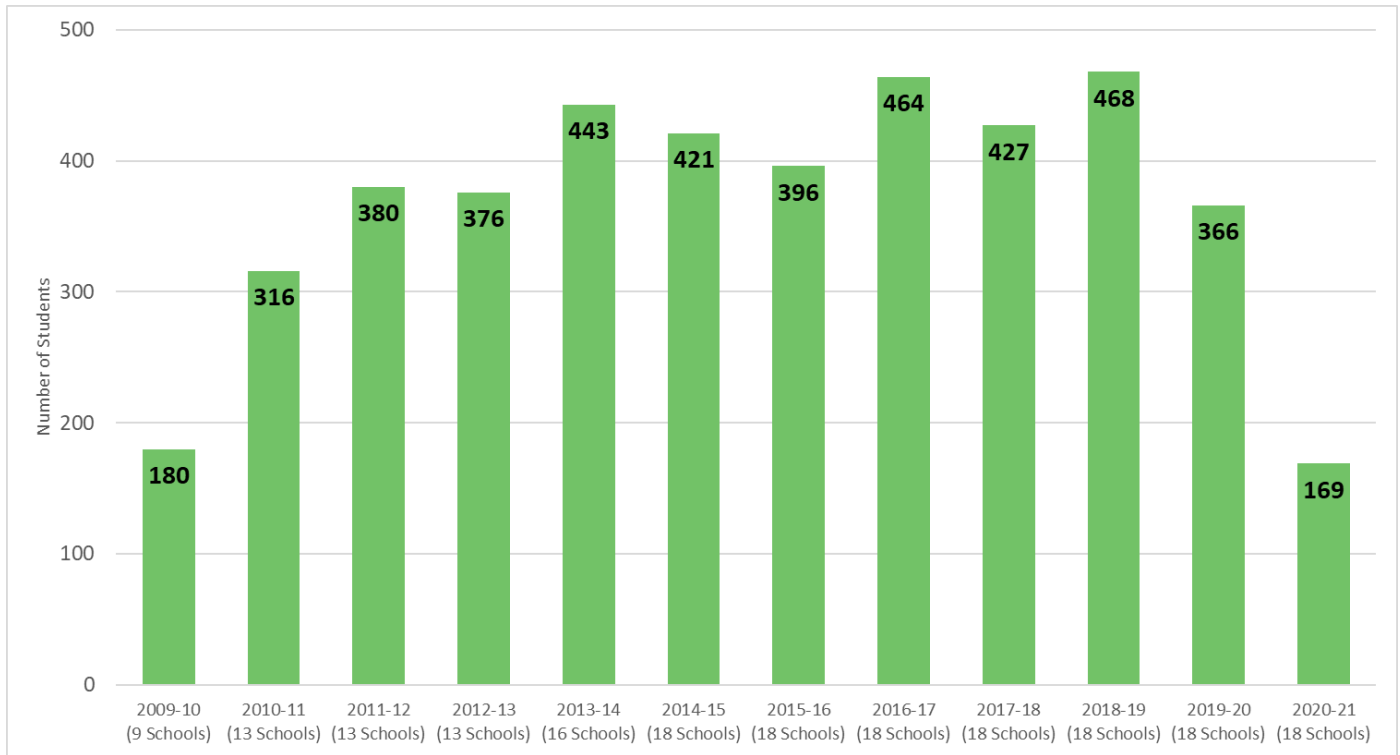
Figure 6: On average, I attend B3:30 for the following number of days each week



One of the key reasons behind this pattern, as explained by program staff and parents/guardians, was the fewer opportunities for physical activities and sports, like basketball and track and field activities, in the online program compared to in-person. Due to the change in activities offered online, fewer male students were interested in attending the online program. Another disclosed shift in attendance was that students in lower grades (Grades 3 to 5) more consistently attended the online program compared to those in higher grades (Grades 6 to 8).

Apart from these data, it is significant to note the changes in the average daily attendance in B3:30 over the past 11 years. Figure 7 shows the unique number of students that attended B3:30 on average each day from 2009-10 to 2020-21. Overall, the chart clearly shows that as the number of program sites increased, so to did attendance. This was followed by a drop in attendance in 2019-20 and 2020-21 that coincided with the onset and persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ontario and the cap on registration based on capacity limits. For additional context, it should be acknowledged that average daily attendance figures were lower than the actual number of participants as some students were absent for various reasons or a whole cohort or grade would not attend due to COVID-19 related reasons, even though B3:30 was operating. In 2020-21, there were 545 students registered in B3:30, with approximately 221 of these students registered for the virtual program.

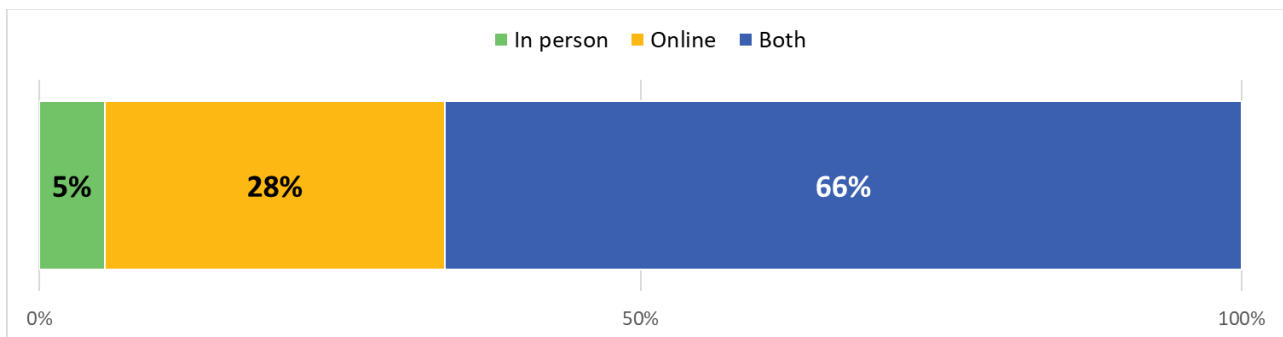
Figure 7: B3:30 Average Daily Attendance from 2009-10 to 2020-21



Student Engagement

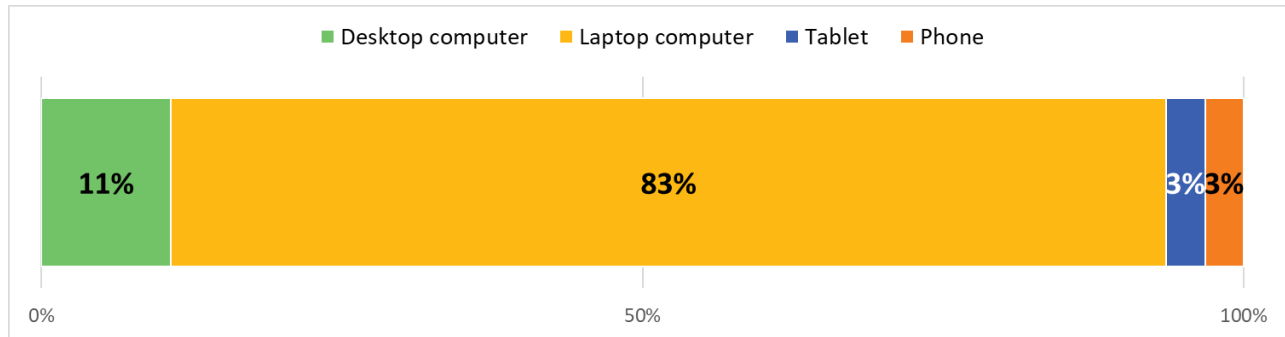
Two thirds of students participating in B3:30 both in-person at the start of the school year and online as the program pivoted to online delivery, whereas 28% of students only participated online and 5% participated in-person and did not continue with the online program (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: How did you participate in the B3:30 program this school year? (N=92)



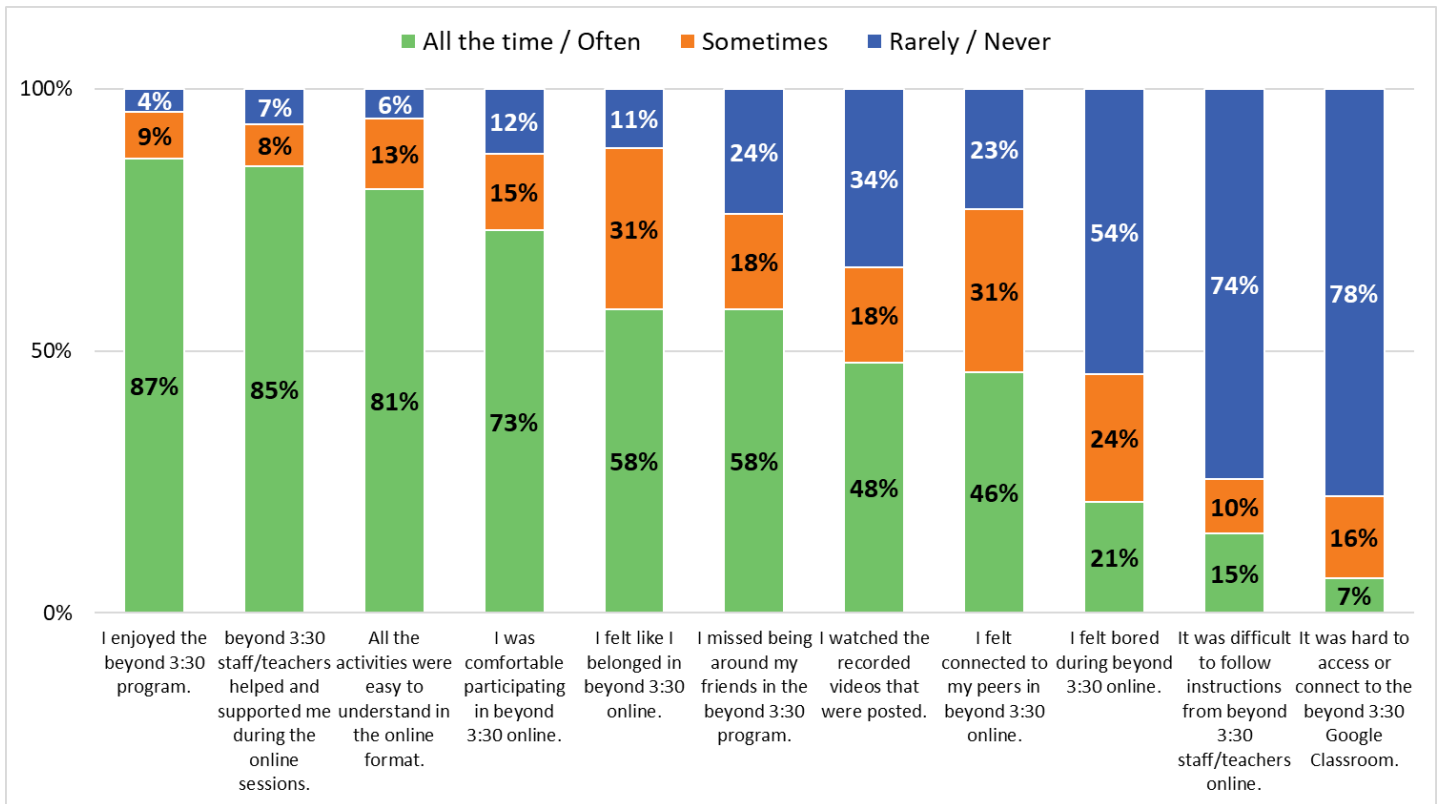
Nearly all students participated in B3:30 using a laptop computer, with under one quarter relying on a desktop computer, tablet, or phone (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: What type of device did you use most of the time to participate in B3:30 online? (N=93)



Students were asked to share their experiences with engaging in the online B3:30 program on the year-end survey. Students expressed positive perceptions about several aspects of the program. The majority of students said they enjoyed the program, felt that the staff helped and supported them during online sessions, thought that all the activities were easy to understand in the online format, and were comfortable participating in the program online “all the time” or “often”. Slightly more than half of students indicated that they felt like they belonged in the B3:30 online community but also missed being around their friends “all the time” or “often”. Feedback was more mixed on some other aspects of the program (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Tell us how often you had the following experiences or feelings about the online B3:30 program (N=86-90)



Rationale for Participating in B3:30

In 2020-21, B3:30 provided students an opportunity to socialize with their friends and staff amidst a global pandemic as well as engage in multifaceted program activities while staying at home. There were multiple reasons that encouraged parents/guardians to enroll their child(ren) in B3:30 which are shared in detail below.

Opportunity to spend time with friends

B3:30 was a space, both virtually and in-person, and primary opportunity for students to socialize and be with their friends during the pandemic. Common sentiments towards fellow students of fondness, happiness, and joy of learning together were expressed by students and parents/guardians as reasons for enrolling in the program. During the observations, it was noted that the students interacted with each other outside of the program and at times when one of the students would be late or absent, the other students would know why.

“I would say, like my friends like they can't play after school because they always like go to [the] park and they can't really talk to me, and then I was bored or something and I really [...] miss my friends that go to Beyond so let's just go to Beyond. [...] they always make us laugh, play. One of the times when we would go to [the] gym, we would play a lot of stuff. It's really fun and also [...] I don't know how to say this but it like just feels like I'm not even alone there.” – B3:30 Student

Diverse recreational activities and supports

B3:30 aimed to provide fun and enjoyable activities that would appeal to a wide range of student interests, such as sports and recreation, arts, dance, play, and cooking while developing social skills and other essential life skills. Program staff and parents/guardians commented on other aspects of the program like the hot meals, Annual Dinner as well as the provision of technology, ingredients, and STEM supplies needed for participation in the program.

“Yeah, so I'd read about the program and I thought it was great because of the homework help and the other things that they offer as well. And then my kids have brought home a form and I definitely signed it because I thought it would be great for them. They would get the homework help that they need. They do a bunch of activities basketball, and another great thing - they get fed as well, which is great. Yeah and the tutoring too. The tutoring is amazing. Amazing.” – B3:30 Parent/guardian

Differentiated academic support

A leading reason for enrolling child(ren) in B3:30 was the provision of differentiated academic support through homework help and tutoring in subjects such as English/literacy and science. The complimentary JUMP Math component was specifically highlighted as a welcomed source of help with math. These academic supports ensured that students had timely and relevant assistance immediately after school, especially if their parents/guardians were working and/or extra help from regular school teachers was paused due to the pandemic.

“My daughter joined this year. She joined to have academic support as she just changed into a French school. Having an extra support was a big relief to navigate the difficulties she had during class.” – B3:30 Parent/guardian

“Just like because I wanted to just have like a little extra time in my learning and have more fun after school and just to participate more because I was lacking in literacy and they said that we will do like activities which will help us

to get more confident with literacy, so those were like one of the reasons why I wanted to join and just to have fun after school.” – B3:30 Student

Source for coping with the pandemic

An unforeseen common theme that emerged from the focus groups was how B3:30 became a source to help students cope with the pandemic. The program staff provided students with opportunities to talk about their feelings and thoughts in relation to the pandemic. The staff were observed checking on students and asking about their daily life and well-being before the virtual synchronous/live program. For students and parents/guardians, enrolling in B3:30 was a way to keep children engaged and connected, even during a pandemic. Participation in program activities and interactions with peers and program staff helped students to recognize that they were not ‘alone’, gave them ways to ‘persevere through the pandemic’, and feel a sense of community, even virtually. The students felt that the time they spent with B3:30 staff and friends during the synchronous/live portion of the program made them forget the stress and implications of the lockdowns on their life.

“Most of the time they allow them to tell them how their day was at school. What was their challenges in school and so on. It also impact[ed] her mental health positively, being able to speak out without being shut down. It’s a safe place that she was confident to share her feelings.” – B3:30 Parent/guardian

“Um yeah, so Beyond 3:30 helped me as I have been really sick since COVID [...] mentally like I have been bored. I have been sitting in my room for so long. I haven’t been outside for so long. I like have been just like sitting on the phone like I didn’t even talked to my relatives on the phone because I was like I don’t wanna, I don’t want anybody to speak with me. I just want to stay alone because I am used to it like Beyond help me with that. I started to talk to more people, and go out.” – B3:30 Student

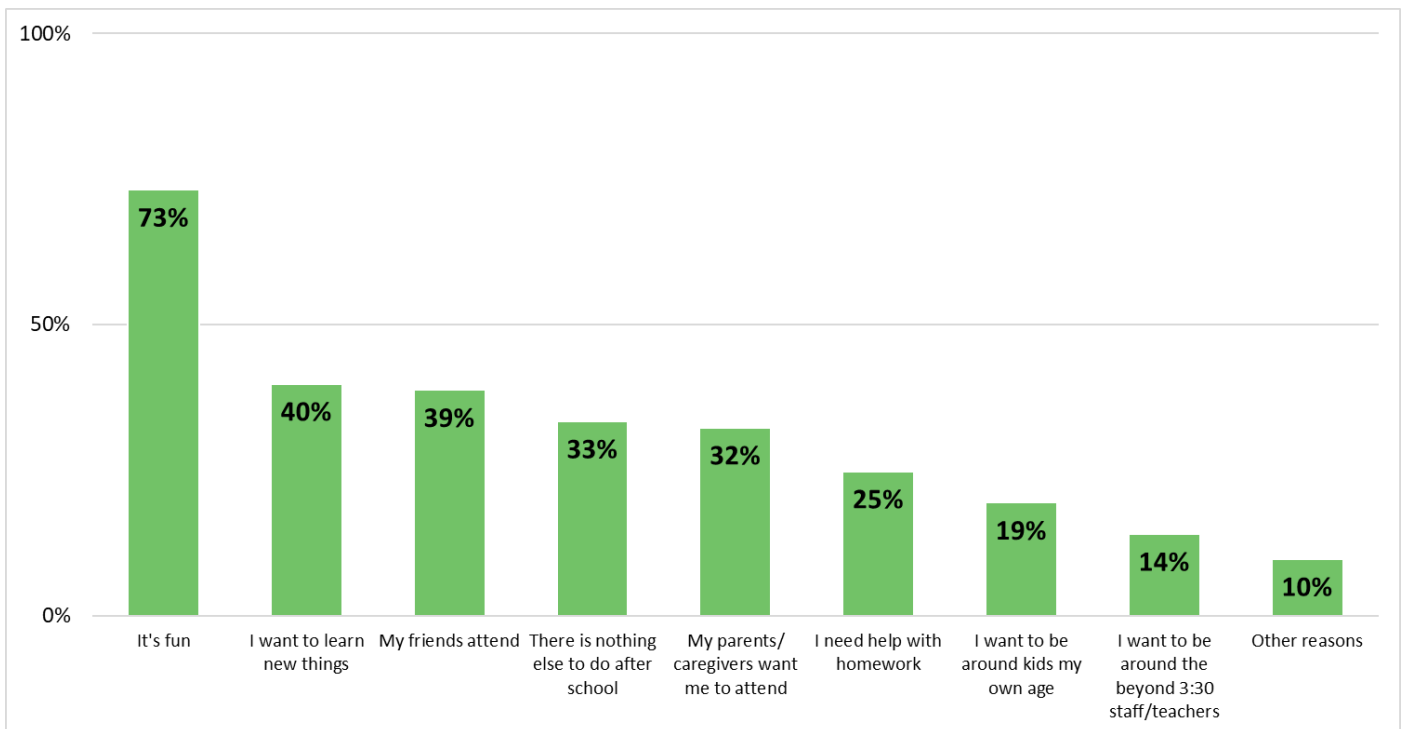
Supplemental familial support

Due to provincially mandated closures of after-school programs, extracurricular activities, and some childcare, B3:30 provided families with a suitable option in which their child(ren) could participate safely in-person or virtually. In fact, during site observations, it was observed that younger siblings who were otherwise ineligible to enroll in B3:30 due to their age, would very much be present and comment on the activities that their older siblings were participating in. The program also offered much-needed peace of mind and respite for parents/guardians who were also impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and managing multiple responsibilities.

“The reason why I joined Beyond 3:30 was because my mom had to work until like a late shift a little bit so that’s why I joined Beyond because then that way, when she’s at work, I’m still in school. So, it’s more easier for somebody else to pick me up.” – B3:30 Student

The aforementioned reasons for participating in B3:30 gathered through focus groups and observations aligned with data from the student survey (see Figure 11). Nearly three quarters of students indicated that they attended B3:30 because it was fun. Other common motives for participating were that they wanted to learn new things, their friends attended, there were limited after-school opportunities, and their parents/guardians wanted them to attend.

Figure 11: I attend B3:30 because: (N=93)



If not for in-person or online B3:30, students shared that they would have most likely spent their time at home doing chores, working on their homework, playing with friends, or watching television. However, others felt that their commitment to B3:30 took them away from being outside with their friends.

Preliminary Program Outcomes

Feedback gathered from stakeholders revealed several preliminary outcomes attributed to the B3:30 program. These outcomes are organized under two main categories: outcomes for students and ripple effects on families. These early outcomes suggest that the program had a beneficial impact on both students and families in several domains.

Student Outcomes

Academic Benefits

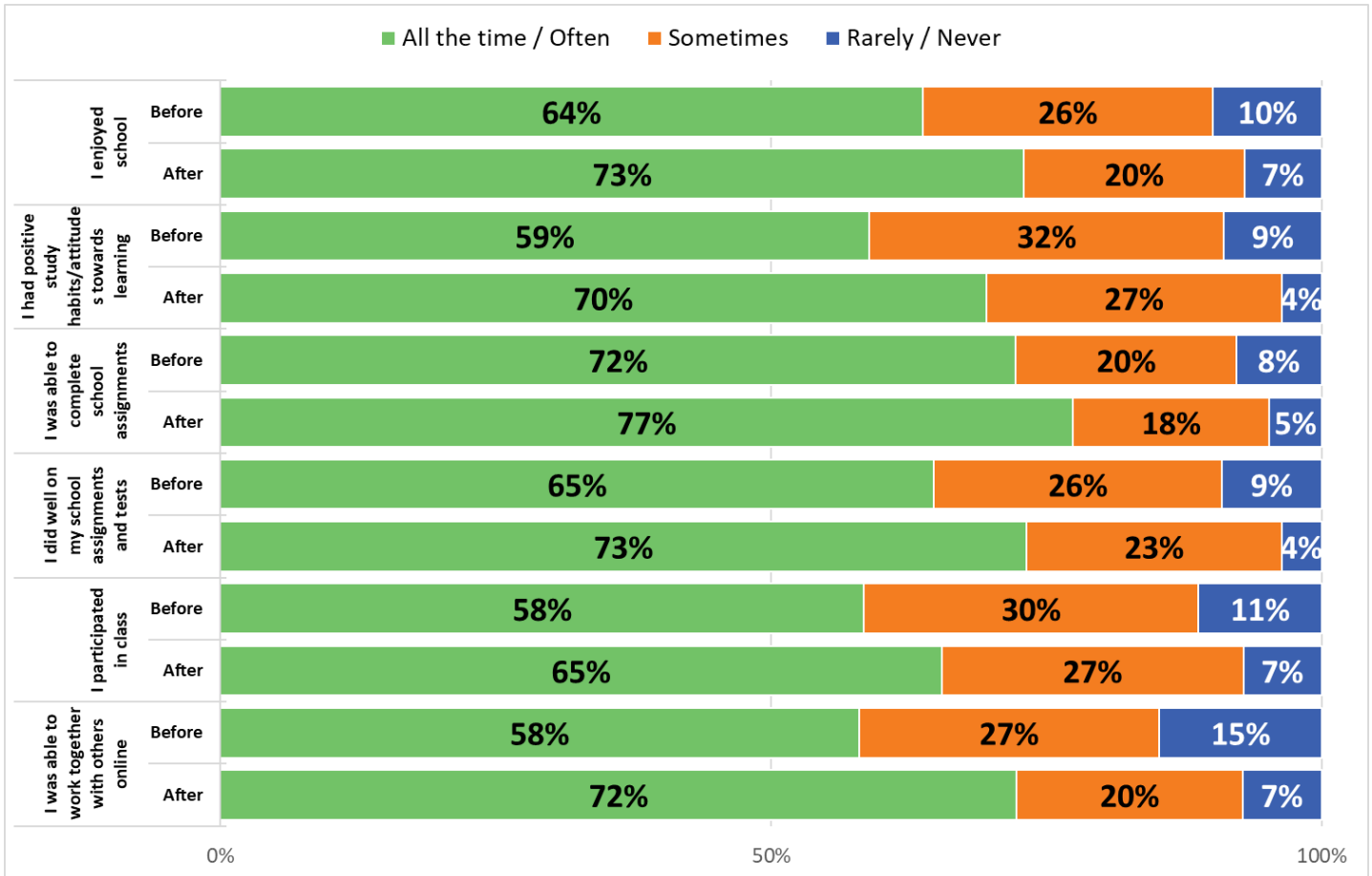
Based on the feedback received from all groups of stakeholders, B3:30 helped students improve their academic skills, especially in math through the JUMP Math program. Program staff also communicated with the students' regular classroom teacher to find out what topics were covered in the math curriculum and then developed their own complementary tutoring curriculum, accordingly.

In addition to learning math, students said they noticed improvements in their literacy skills. One of the stakeholders noted that the program helped students to understand classroom lessons which they had difficulty with since they were being taught online. In the focus group, staff commented that many students in B3:30 had fallen behind due to COVID-19; however, the program kept students engaged in their learning and addressed pandemic-related learning loss.

“The academic piece, clearly, we were helping in terms of engaging and keeping kids engaged and keeping them learning and helping them just you know fill in the gaps.” – B3:30/TFSS Staff

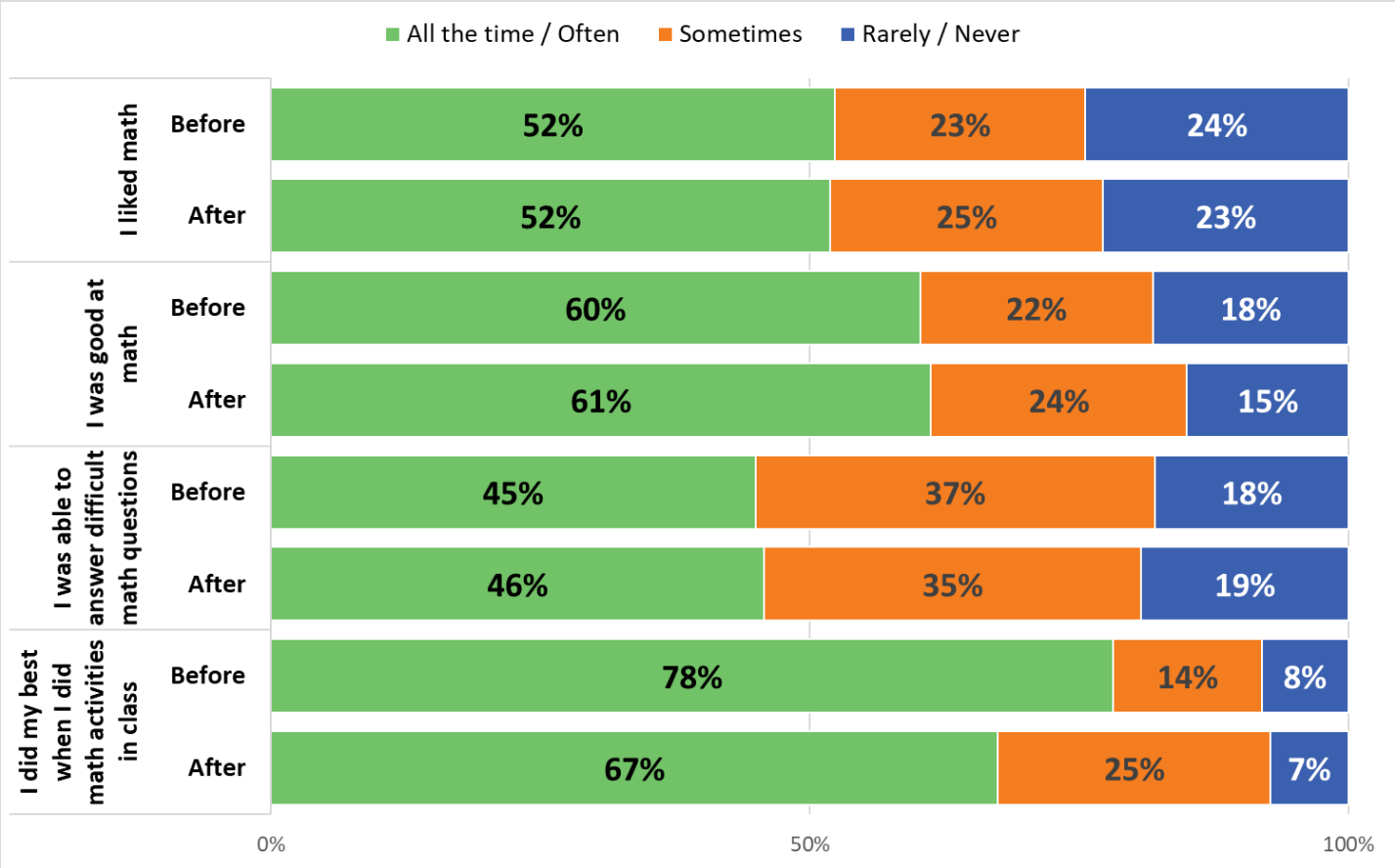
On the year-end survey, students were asked questions regarding their attitudes towards academics before and after joining B3:30. Generally, modest increases were reported in several areas, such as students' enjoyment of school, positive study habits/attitudes towards learning, the ability to complete school assignments, performance on school assignments and tests, and class participation. Further, there was a noticeable increase in students' reported ability to work together with others online (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Student Attitudes towards Academics Before and After Joining B3:30 (N=82-91)



In regard to math skills, student feedback was more neutral. This may be because math was a recurring element of the B3:30 program (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Student Attitudes towards Mathematics Before and After Joining B3:30 (N=79-89)



Data from the 2020-21 report cards were analyzed in an attempt to understand the preliminary associations between the B3:30 program and student achievement, specifically in the Reading, Writing, and Mathematics strands as well as Learning Skills. Data were analyzed for all participating B3:30 students combined, irrespective of grade level.

B3:30 participants were divided into two groups: students who attended the program for 0-60 days (the “lower participation group”) and students who attended the program for 61 or more days (the “higher participation group”). For comparison purposes, there was a control group of students who attended the same school and grade as the B3:30 students (“B3:30 School/Grade”) but did not participate in B3:30.

There was some preliminary information that students in the higher participation group met provincial standards in reading achievement in greater proportions than their counterparts, however, these differences were small. In terms of writing skills, the results were reversed, with students in the lower participation group were more likely to

meet provincial standards than their counterparts. No differences were found between groups in regard to math achievement (Figure 14). These results were difficult to interpret without knowing if or how B3:30 participants were differentially impacted as a result of pandemic related disruptions and differential areas of need or concern among students and their parents/guardians, when compared to the control group. It could also be that gains made as a result of the B3:30 program were difficult to measure on the report cards.

Figure 14: Proportion of Students Meeting Provincial Standards (Levels 3 or 4) in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics

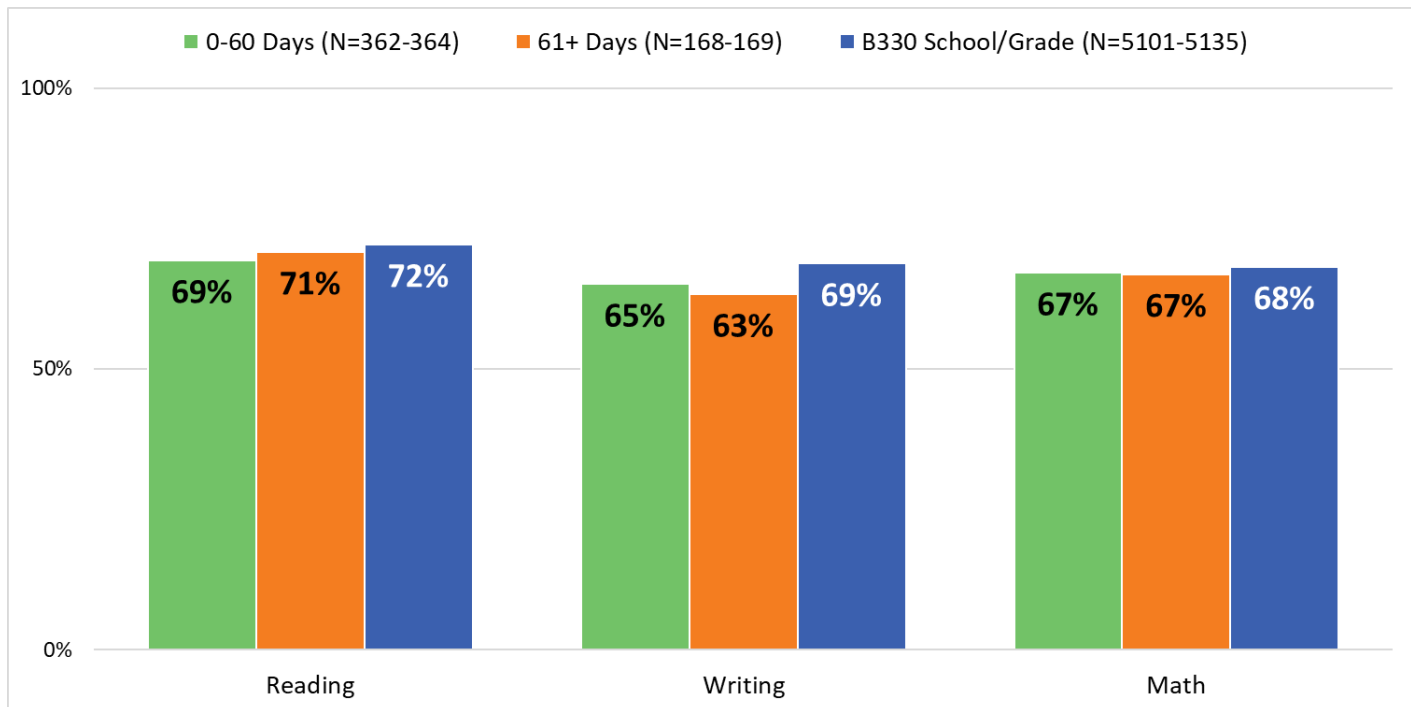
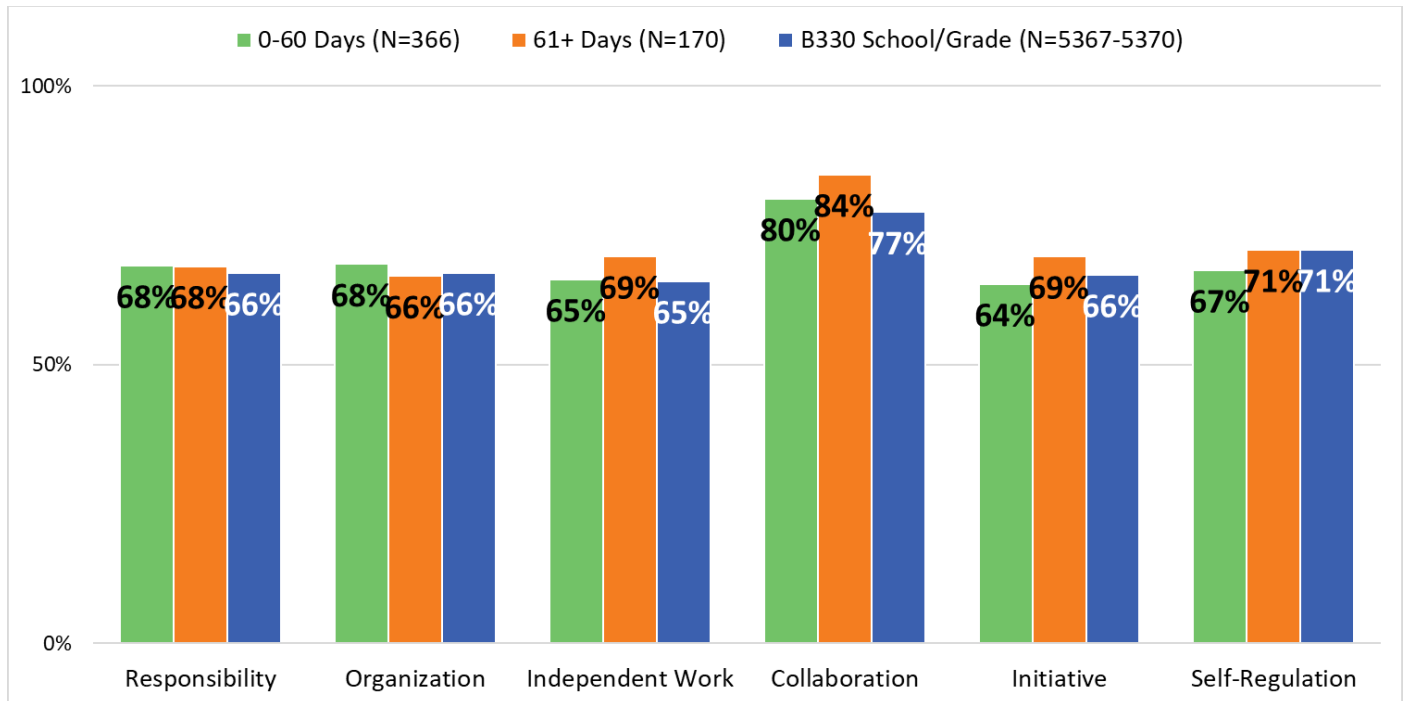


Figure 15 shows the percentage of students in each of the aforementioned groups in relation to their Learning Skills. B3:30 students in the higher participation group were more likely to attain “Good” or “Excellent” in the areas of collaboration, initiative, and independent work, than the other groups. In terms of collaboration, students who attended the program for 61 days or more days may have had higher ratings in collaboration because they were in the program longer and developed their interpersonal skills through their engagement and close ties with other students in the program. When compared to students in the lower participation group, students in the higher participation group also demonstrated “Good” or “Excellent” in self-regulation at a higher proportion. This may have been a result of their longer time in the program and the increased focus in the program on mental health and daily check-ins (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Proportion of Students Meeting Provincial Standards (Good or Excellent) across Learning Skills



Emotional Well-being

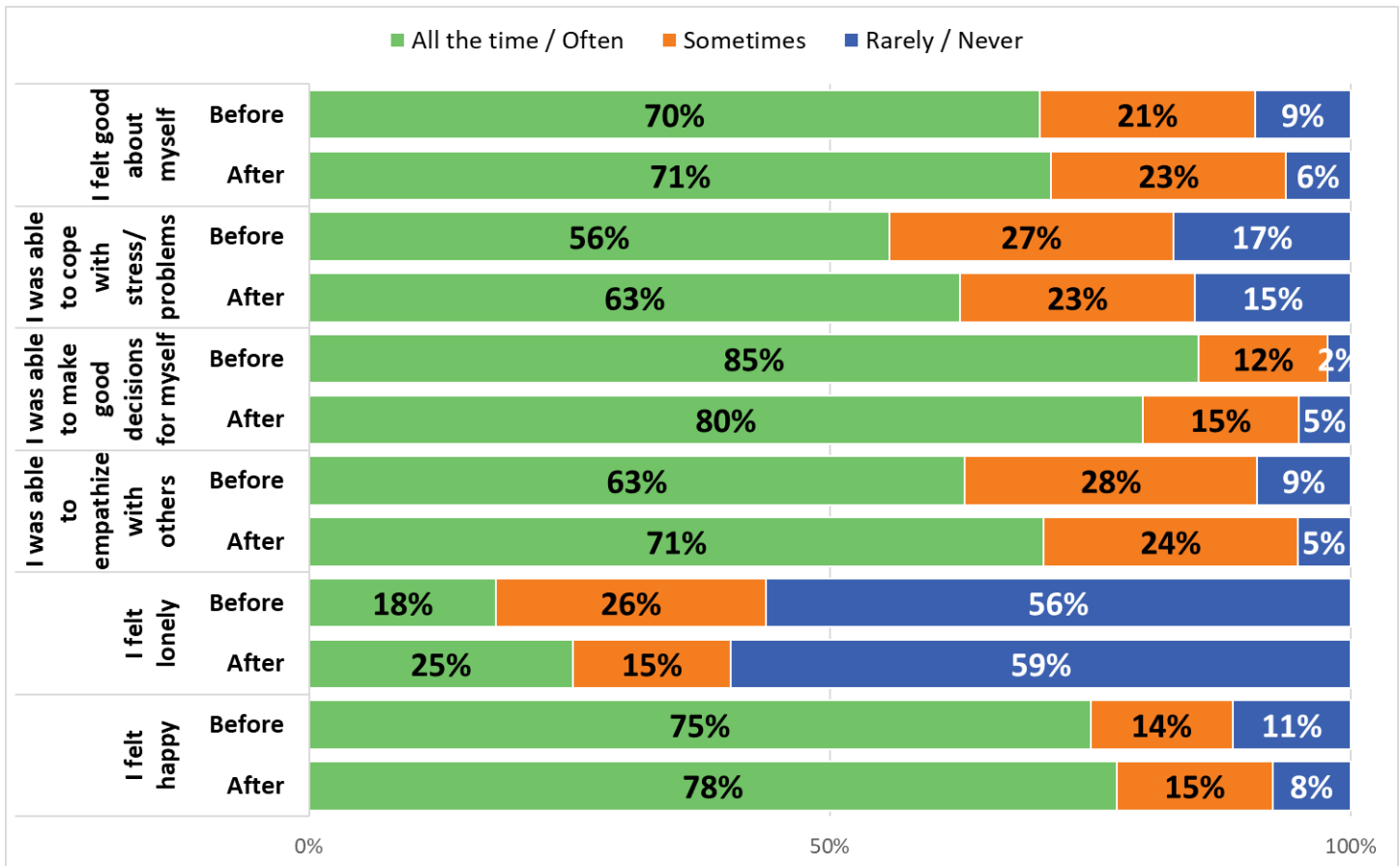
One of the key ways in which the program helped students was by providing an environment that supported their emotional well-being. Students learned skills to adapt to and cope with COVID-19. They were encouraged to talk about their feelings, thoughts, and experiences about the pandemic by being open and honest in expressing themselves to their peers and staff. As a result, students felt that their engagement with the staff and other students at B3:30 helped to lessen the emotional impact of the pandemic.

“Beyond 3:30 helped me with my mood because [...] sometimes I was sad and every time I went to Beyond, I was laughing my head off because it was so funny so they really helped me to cope with my mood and like help me be happy all the time and not sad when we are at the program.” – B3:30 Student

Some of these findings were corroborated by results from the year-end student survey. For example, the data revealed some modest increases in students’ reported ability to

cope with stress/problems and also the ability to empathize with others. There was a smaller increase in students' reports of feeling happy. The results were more mixed regarding students' reports of feeling lonely (Figure 16).

Figure 13: Student Emotional Well-being Before and After Joining B3:30 (N=79-89)



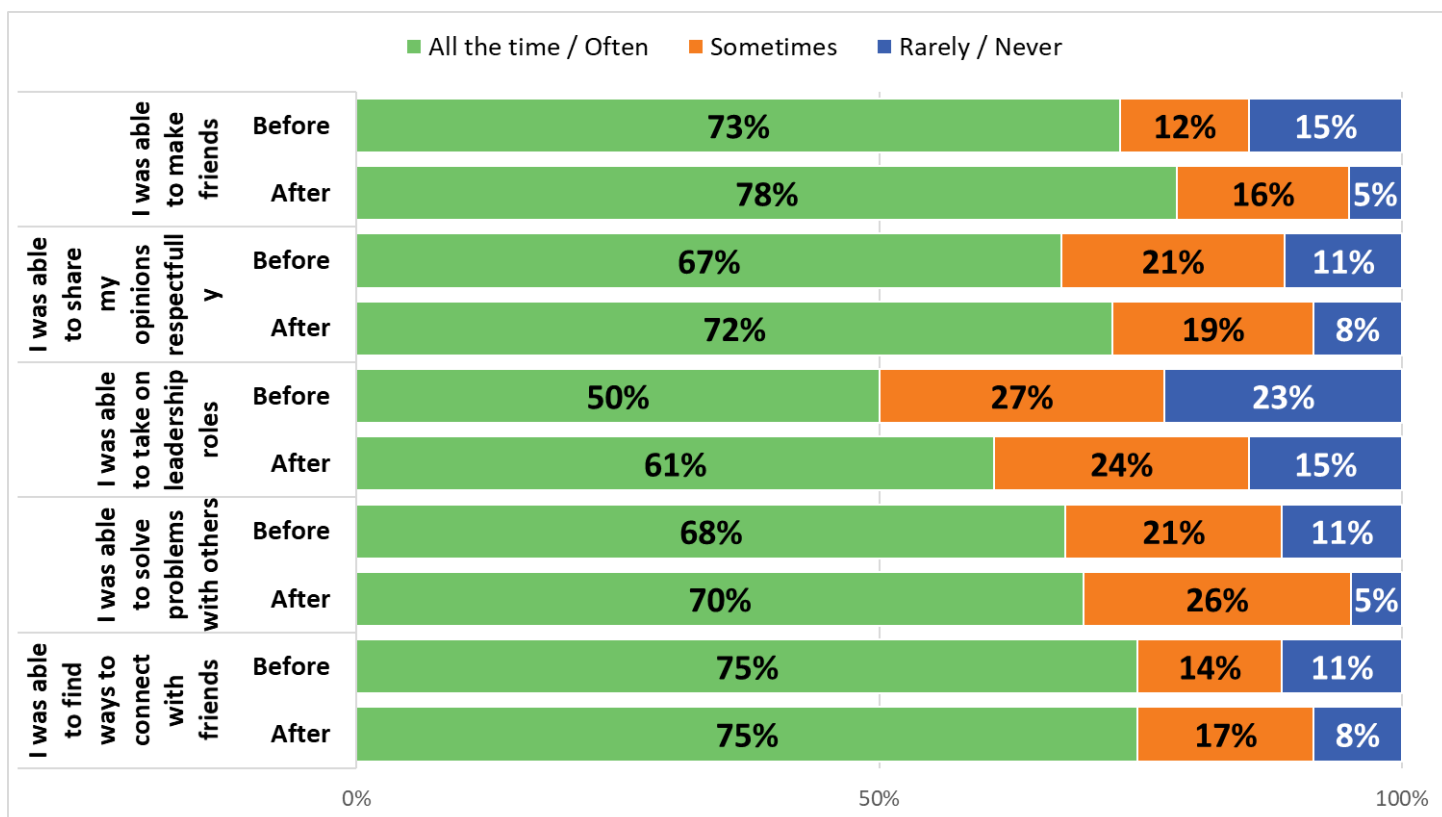
Socialization

The opportunity for students in the program to socialize and be with their friends was a repeated theme across focus groups with parents/guardians and students. Participants reported that students enjoyed and were pleased with the friendships they developed in the program. It was suggested that these ties were important for students' social and emotional well-being.

It was also noted in a focus group that new members of the community were given an opportunity to engage with other parents/guardians in the program and to make their children feel more involved by participating in after-school activities through B3:30.

On the year-end survey, students were asked to report on changes in their social skills before and after the program. There were modest increases reported in several areas including students' ability to make friends and share their opinions respectfully. The largest reported increase was in students' ability to take on leadership roles (Figure 17).

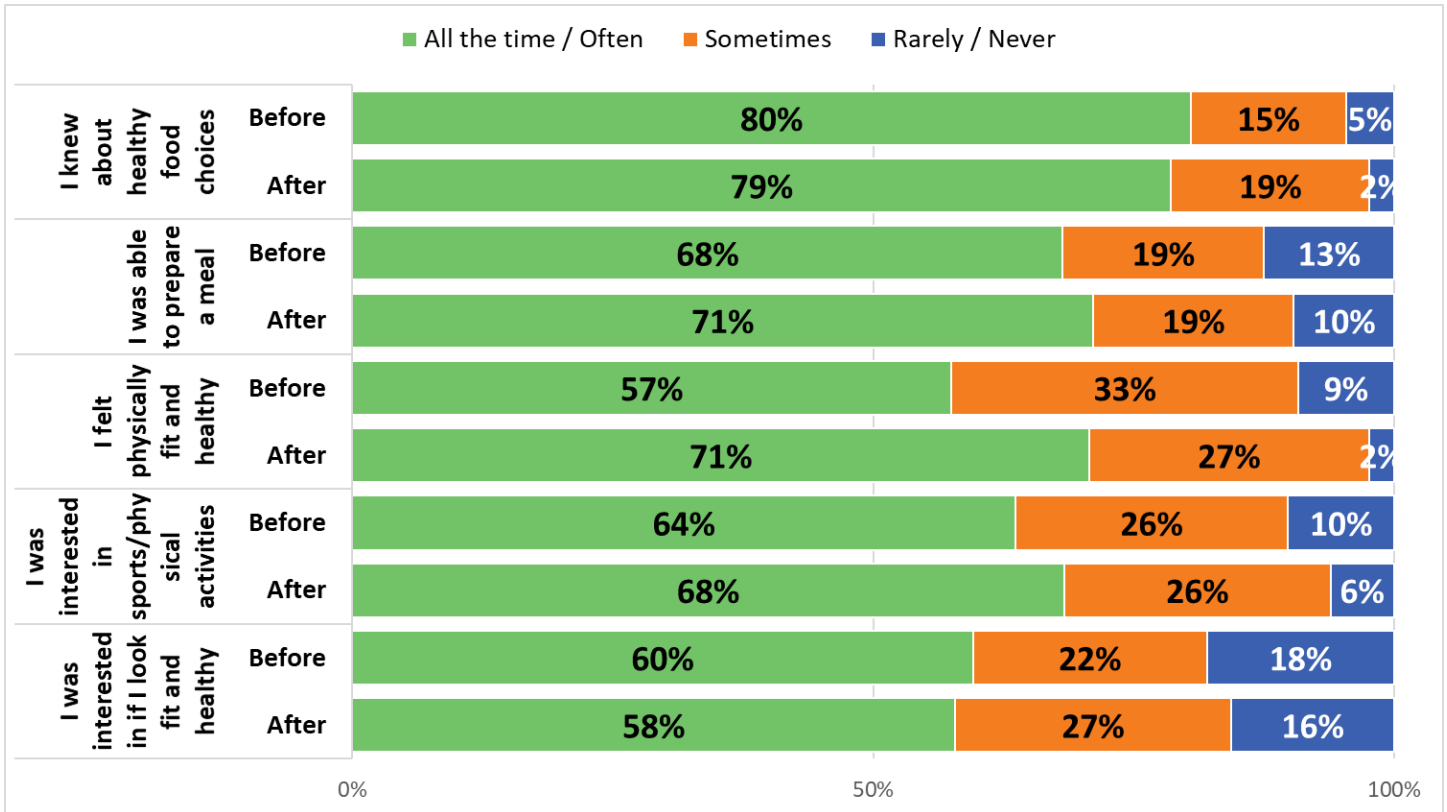
Figure 14: Student Social Skills Before and After Joining B3:30 (N=79-89)



Healthy Living

While there were no specific outcomes reported in the focus groups and interviews in regard to healthy living, there were some positive outcomes reported on the year-end student survey. When comparing students' perceptions before and after the program, there were a few modest increases in regard to their ability to prepare a meal and their interest in sports/physical activities. There was also a large increase in students' perception of being physically fit and healthy before and after the program (Figure 18).

Figure 15: Student Healthy Living Perceptions Before and After Joining B3:30 (N=82-89)



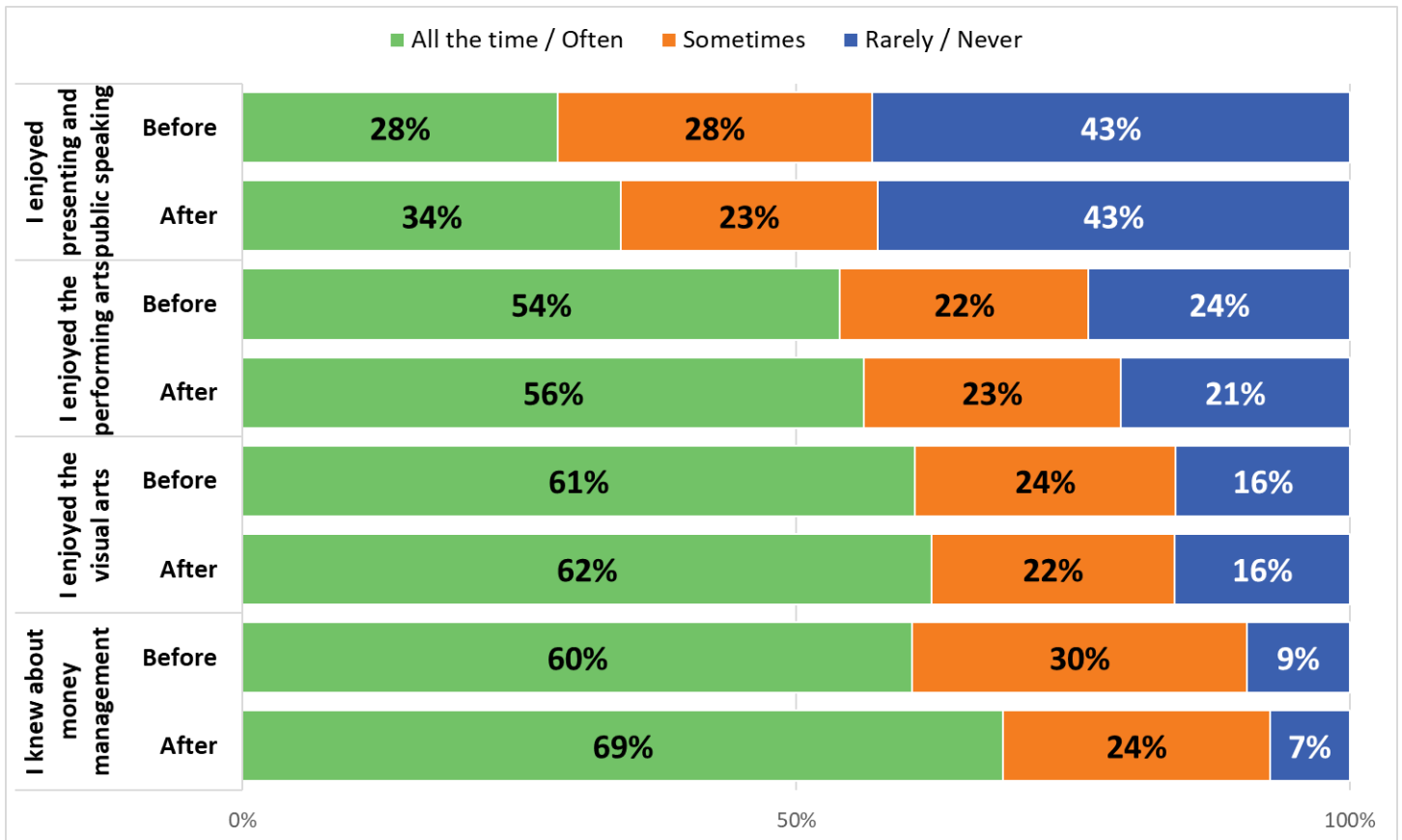
Other Outcomes and Skills

Aside from the preliminary outcomes already mentioned, there were some additional outcomes and skills which students developed because of the B3:30 program. One such skill was problem-solving. In the student focus groups, it was noted that staff helped students to solve problems with their peers, for example, with a fight or bullying incident at school. Another area of development was confidence building. Improvement through tutoring and homework help gave students a sense of self-worth and confidence. Another student claimed that their confidence was boosted when staff helped them to open up and share their ideas.

Results from the year-end student survey pointed to some additional outcomes of the program. There was a modest increase from before and after the program in students' reported enjoyment when presenting and public speaking. An even larger increase was found in their knowledge about money management. No increases were found regarding students' enjoyment of the performing or visual arts. It is possible that these

were areas that students already experienced in the in-person program or were not highly emphasized in the virtual program (Figure 19).

Figure 16: Student Perceptions of Other Skills Before and After Joining B3:30 (N=82-89)



Ripple Effects on Families

Preliminary impacts owed to B3:30 also extended to families in three key areas. First, families felt less pressure and stress knowing that their child(ren) were taken care of holistically through the program. When parents/guardians saw that the program made their child happy, they were happy as well. Second, B3:30 staff recognized needs among students and connected families with appropriate resources. For example, a staff member helped a family promptly get resources and professional help for their child who was experiencing mental health issues. Lastly, the pandemic had differential impacts on families across Toronto and in the absence of the traditional B3:30 nutrition program, families were grateful that TFSS staff arranged for the delivery of hot meals

and grocery cards, especially given the increase in the cost of food and the financial difficulties faced by some families during the pandemic.

“...you're not as stressed out because they're at an activity, you know... They're in a program so of course it takes less, it's less stress on you, of course, as a parent. You know, oh, they have dinner that's great. They're home. When they come home, they're tired and they're you know they're done for the day and it just takes so much pressure off of you.” – B3:30 Parent/guardian

In summary, the preliminary findings from this evaluation found that the whole family benefitted from B3:30 in various ways. Students improved their academic skills and attitudes towards academics. Further, the program had a positive impact on students' emotional well-being and socialization skills. Positive student outcomes were also found in the areas of healthy living, knowledge about money management, problem-solving, and confidence. In regard to positive outcomes for families, the results of the evaluation found that the extension of the nutrition program provided various forms of relief to families during the pandemic.

Conditions for Program Success

Finally, there were a number of conditions that were identified across focus groups that were instrumental to the B3:30 program's success during an unprecedented year. These should not be considered as program recommendations, but rather as important factors that were in place for the program's success given the realities faced in 2020-21. These conditions included engaging and responsive programming, intentional focus on mental health with daily check-ins, opportunities for unstructured socialization, genuine connections between program staff and students, and greater reach through family engagement.

Engaging and Responsive Programming

As previously described, B3:30 offered a comprehensive selection of programs and activities in order to engage students and be responsive to their interests and needs. For example, all stakeholders touted the academic support components of the program by way of homework help, JUMP Math, and tutoring that provided students structured time to focus and complete their homework. Students were also sent home with necessary materials and technology, such as whiteboards to foster their engagement during tutoring sessions. Similarly, in response to general concerns about amount of screen time and sedentary behaviour among students due to synchronous online learning, program staff provided ample recreational and arts-based opportunities in areas that "piqued a lot of the kids' interests" and "was a lot of fun", including Lay-up basketball and VIBE Arts.

"I've had parents also reached out about, "Thank you for helping my son with math" because this year was really challenging with the delivery method of normal schooling where kids were struggling a lot more academically so [parents told me] "Thank you for developing and working in with their curriculum to help them to reach their goal this year"." – B3:30/TFSS Staff

Program staff also found that the following practices effectively engaged students virtually: being welcoming and inviting, posting engaging online content, reaching out to students, posting reminders virtually, and encouraging students to interact by turning their cameras on.

Intentional Focus on Mental Health with Daily Check-ins

As previously mentioned, one of the key changes made to the B3:30 program was the focus on supporting students' emotional well-being during the pandemic. This was

made possible through an intentional daily check-in with each student in the program. Irrespective of what time and point in the program that a student joined, the program staff would always check in with the student to ask how they were feeling. Parents/guardians and students alike were appreciative of these mental health connections because it allowed program staff to get a real understanding of how each student was doing and what was happening in their life outside of B3:30. In a few cases, program staff reached out to parents/guardians due to their concerns for particular students and connected them to appropriate mental health supports.

Opportunities for Unstructured Socialization

Socialization was an important part of the B3:30 program, especially during the pandemic. The online program helped students maintain connections they had developed with students in the in-person program at the beginning of the school year. According to staff, several sites activated and opened the online session before the official start time to give students an additional window to have unstructured conversations and catch up with each other. Students fully utilized these extra moments to chat with their friends and staff about their other online learning activities, their hobbies, and lives, among other topics.

Genuine Connections between Program Staff and Students

A common sentiment of students participating in the focus groups was that they had very positive experiences and relationships with program staff and this contributed to their enjoyment of B3:30. They liked the way the staff interacted with them, engaged with them in different activities, and took time out to check in on them during the sessions. Students also shared that the staff appeared close in age to them, which made it easier for them to share their personal problems and connect with the staff. Some students even referred to the staff as their friend. During the classroom observations, students were observed sharing their everyday school experiences, day-to-day activities, summer plans, and freely engaging with the staff. The staff were usually prompt in responding to the students and shared a joyous and friendly comradery.

Greater Reach through Family Engagement

Based on the focus group discussions with staff and parents/guardians, family engagement was another factor for increasing the reach and impact of the program. One best practice in reaching families was to send out email blasts to those who were connected to their child's Google Classroom. Another effective practice was to phone

parents/guardians directly, given that not all parents/guardians were connected to their child's Google Classroom and it was not certain how often parents/guardians checked their emails. Parents/guardians also sat in on the online sessions and engaged in activities such as Jeopardy fractions, recreational exercise classes, and the VIBE Arts program. One parent/guardian said that seeing the activities their child was doing online meant a lot to them. Some parents/guardians even shared photos of their children's work on the program's Google Classroom. It was also observed in the virtual Google Classroom that some students participating in the VIBE Arts dance sessions were joined by their siblings. Such opportunities for family engagement increased the reach of the program and had ripple effects on other family members as indirect beneficiaries of B3:30.

"The big thing that I'm sure everybody will agree, is keeping that communication line open with parents is very necessary for Beyond 3:30, because without getting parents feedback, tailoring the program for the participants, you know it's something that we need." – B3:30/TFSS Staff

Characteristics of Program Staff

In addition to fostering genuine connections and a safe online environment for students, the disposition and dedication of B3:30 staff were also instrumental in the program success. According to focus group discussions, staff demonstrated dedication, flexibility, and the ability to pivot and learn during the pandemic. They were also described as being accommodating, creative, and possessing numerous skills, such as teaching and technical skills and the ability to create content for the virtual program and develop recreational challenges. Staff took on additional responsibilities to ensure that B3:30 operated safely in-person and successfully transitioned online so it would not be impacted by the school shutdown during the pandemic. Program staff demonstrated an unwavering commitment to planning and implementing a safe, robust, and responsive program.

Challenges with Program Implementation During a Pandemic

There were some challenges affecting the implementation of the B3:30 program. These challenges extended beyond the program and were part of the reality of implementing a social service during a pandemic. Similar challenges have been reported in remote learning for regular schooling as well. As B3:30 adapted to in-person and online programming to keep students engaged over the 2020-21 year, there were several challenges that the students, program staff, and parents/guardians faced. These challenges included changing delivery models, technology, implementation constraints, staff recruitment and workload, and interactions among stakeholders.

Transitioning between Delivery Models

A common sentiment expressed by participants in all stakeholder focus groups was the difficult transition between delivery models, as determined by the province or public health guidelines to close schools and switch to virtual methods. This was particularly difficult for students who preferred the in-person program. With online delivery, students found it difficult to focus. It was observed that at times, students would switch topics or become distracted during discussions and activities at hand, leaving only a handful of students actively engaged with staff during the online session. This left the staff wondering how much of their online instruction was understood and retained by students. This mode of delivery also limited the ways in which staff could support students and parents/guardians. For example, it was difficult for staff to get feedback from parents/guardians, spontaneously help students with homework, or have a private conversation with them.

Some sites offered an accommodation strategy where in-person and online programming were offered simultaneously, but not without a few challenges. First, activities that were prepared for the in-person program could not be replicated identically online, and so students participating in-person and online would sometimes do different activities. The overlapping noise from these activities made it difficult for students to engage and learn. Second, there were technical challenges due to unstable Wi-Fi connections and inability to start up Google Meet at the same time as the in-person session. The accommodation strategy was further complicated by challenges with sourcing proper space and equipment (e.g., projectors) and students being unable to login on time. Also, the staff had difficulty maintaining the attention of students who were attending the session in-person as they were distracted by their peers who were on laptops in front of them.

“I cannot recommend [...the accommodation strategy] at all. It just does not work. The kids find it very boring, or we just don't have even the leisure to set up a laptop and get the program running virtually at the same time with our in-person students.” – B3:30/TFSS Staff

Technology-based challenges

As the primary mode of delivery in the program shifted from in-person to online, there was a heavy reliance on technology which gave rise to the following issues:

- **Internet issues:** Multiple students and staff struggled with disrupted internet connections, loss of bandwidth, and difficulties with navigating online/interactive Google slides, videos, and activities as well. During the focus group, some of the students shared that they would depend on their parents/guardians to help them reconnect to the internet.

“And for online, it's not really the same because there's always somebody who's lagging or somebody who's always gonna talk but then they can't because nobody can hear them.” – B3:30 Student

- **Excessive screen time:** The fatigue of being online for regular schooling, along with the B3:30 virtual one-on-one tutoring, prompted TFSS staff to offer daily synchronous/live programming after the 90 minutes of asynchronous content/activities. The online screen time for regular schooling was realized by many students and was observed by staff in the form of reduced engagement and interactions. Being online was also seen by students and parents/guardians as a commitment that took them away from outdoor leisure opportunities. Online schooling and B3:30 increased the daily hours spent in front of a computer screen and indoors, and therefore, some parents/guardians did not transition their child(ren) from the in-person to the online program when school closures promoted this change.

“I mean, like I do class all days [...] and then I have to do Beyond, so it may seem like a little bit hard. I feel like after we're done school, we spend so much time on the screen. It is like we're spending more time on the screen.” – B3:30 Student

- **Hardware issues and preferences:** The online mode of delivery affected the ways in which students and staff could interact with each other. This was compounded by most students' preference to keep their cameras and/or mics

turned off due to discomfort, loud background noise or activity, and/or sharing space with their family. As a result, it was hard for the program staff to gauge the level of engagement and understanding from students online. During classroom observations, it was noted that students who had their mics and cameras on were more proactive in the session and received more attention from the program staff as compared to the students who had their cameras turned off. The online video engagement as well as monitoring the chat simultaneously proved challenging for the staff while navigating the interactive google slides.

“And then, sometimes because they don't have their mic on, you might be presenting something to them but you have no way of knowing if they're actually watching this presentation that you're presenting until you ask them a few questions and you realize, whoa this person might have gone off to go you know, do something totally different. They were not watching.” – B3:30/TFSS Staff

Implementation constraints

In order to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic, B3:30 staff and students were required to follow strict public health measures. The program pivoted in more ways than one, which was associated with some challenges discussed below:

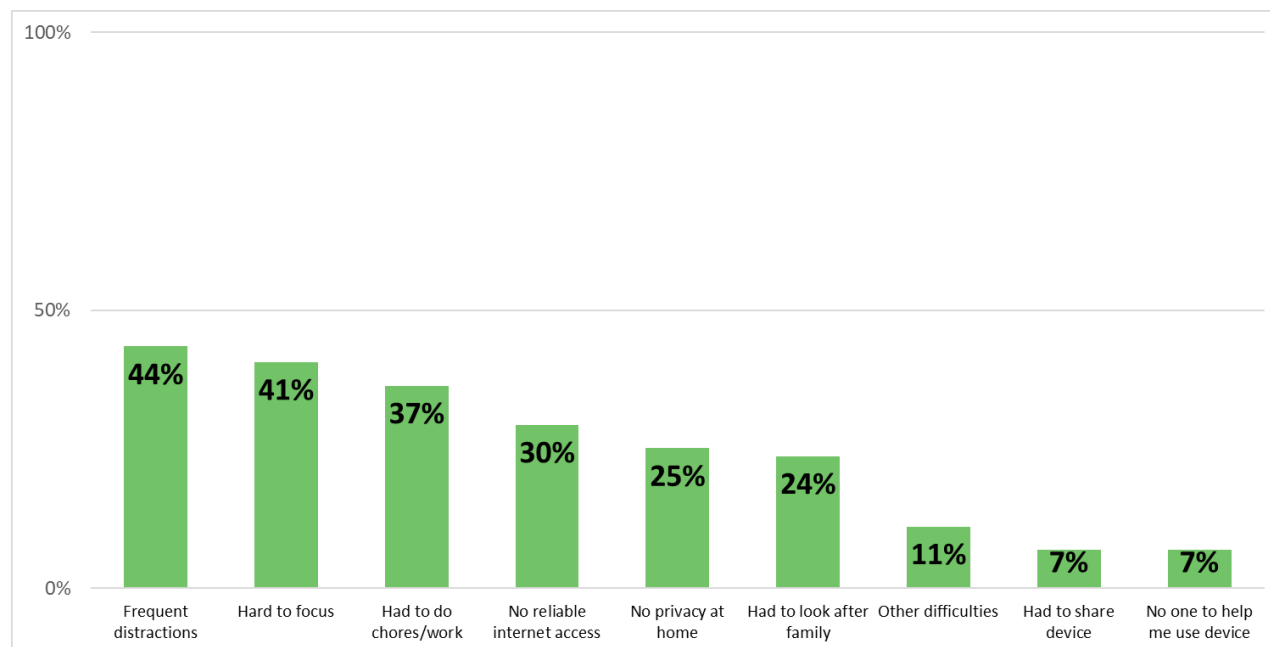
- **Programs and activities:** Since students were not allowed to share equipment due to public health guidelines, B3:30 changed how programs and activities were run; however, core program activity offerings remained the same. For example, the program still offered nutrition and DPA but only changed how it was implemented. Space was also a constraint in the types of activities that were allowed due to physical distancing requirements. Contact sports, dance, and nutrition activities were affected, among others. For example, students and staff missed the opportunity to participate in hands-on cooking demonstrations and share hot meals in a manner like before the pandemic. Instead, students watched videos or cooking demonstrations, received pre-packaged meals or meals prepared off-site, as previously noted.

“So, for me, the in-person experience was more like active, engaging, more fun and when we're doing Beyond 3:30 in virtual, then it becomes a bit more hard, because for some games that we used to do in-person, we aren't able to do that in virtual so it makes it a bit more hard and less fun in my case.” – B3:30 Student

- **COVID-19 Guidelines:** The provincial COVID-19 guidelines for school boards had ripple effects on the B3:30 program. COVID-19 restrictions limited the number of people who could be in a space at a given time, which meant that B3:30 was not able to accommodate all of the children who wanted to attend the program. Some school administrators would not allow the mixing of cohorts, so different days of the program were assigned to different grade levels. Other sites did not want to have more than 15 students on a given day. Since some B3:30 sites had 30 kids registered, they set it up so that 15 students attended the program on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and the other 15 students attended the program on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The students switched the days they attended the program every week, so that everyone could still participate in B3:30. This happened at sites where there was very high enrolment and capacity limits were imposed by the school principal.
- At times, space constraints also extended to students participating in the online B3:30 program. Students were sometimes unable to find a quiet space to participate or a place to do physical movements and activities as they were sharing living space with other family members. During online observations, it was noticed that some family members were uncomfortable and hesitant with their child moving through the home with their device in order to complete the activities. An additional difficulty related to COVID-19 guidelines was implementing the mask policy and reminding students to wear their masks properly during the in-person program as students pulled their masks down because they craved social interaction with their friends.

The aforementioned technology and space-related challenges were corroborated by student perceptions from the year-end survey (Figure 20). The most encountered challenges for the student were frequent distractions at home and completion of chores and other responsibilities at home. One third and one quarter of students indicated that internet access and lack of privacy, respectively, were challenges to participating in B3:30.

Figure 17: Did any of the following things make it difficult for you to participate in the B3:30 program this school year? (N=71)



Staff recruitment and workload

In terms of staffing challenges, TFSS administrators noted the difficulty in recruiting academic tutors for the online B3:30 one-on-one tutoring program which was implemented after B3:30 began its virtual program in January 2021. It was difficult to find qualified people to fill these roles as TFSS staff were contending with school boards to find qualified teachers for supply coverage. Recruitment was also made difficult by the hesitation among candidates to work in schools during the pandemic due to the fear of contracting COVID.

An additional challenge was the immense workload of staff. Program staff took on many new roles and responsibilities and engaged in additional professional learning related to navigating and troubleshooting teaching and learning online in a short period of time. These circumstances took a toll on program staff. Staff found it rather discouraging to not be able to spend more one-on-one time with students and help them.

Interactions among staff, students, and parents/guardians

The interactions between staff, students, and parents/guardians changed a lot over this last year. A key challenge that surfaced was the lack of in-person social interaction, which was an inherent part of B3:30. However, with COVID-19 safety protocols in place,

staff, students, and parents/guardians were not able to have the same level or type of social interaction, which is explored further below.

- **Student-student interactions:** During the in-person B3:30 program, it was noted that the connection that students built with each other was affected by wearing masks and this inhibited play between children. During the online delivery of the program, it was difficult for students to interact one-on-one with Google Classrooms at the same level as the in-person program. Students missed the opportunity to talk, laugh, and play with their friends, sit down with them for a meal, and have impromptu conversations with their friends and staff. Students were also not able to message privately in Google classroom which they wished was an option for more direct conversations. Some parents/guardians and program staff described B3:30 socialization as the “touch piece” wherein students were able to be in-person with friends.

“The students want interaction, right, and physical kinship like in a you know platonic way is really important for these students to feel connected, and so you know they'd hold hands, they'd like bumped into each other, you know, all the stuff that's normal for kids to do.” – B3:30/TFSS Staff

- **Staff-student interactions:** Students dearly missed seeing and greeting the staff as well as interacting with them in-person. Some students mentioned missing their one-on-one, spontaneous “girl’s talk” with program staff. In transitioning to the online program, students could not see program staff as frequently and easily and interactions were limited to emails, Google classroom, or the chat option. Another issue that impinged on the ability to connect with the staff were brought in by rules around COVID-19 which stipulated that staff wear masks and face shields. As a result, students were not able to see staff members’ expressions and what they looked like. This also made it difficult for newer staff to develop rapport with students.

“I think Beyond 3:30 online is a little bit harder because you don't have like a teacher to like comfort you when you don't know what to do or anything.” – B3:30 Student

- **Staff-parent/guardian interactions:** Several staff members commented on the lost opportunity to engage and interact with parents/guardians with the online program shift. Traditionally, parents/guardians and staff had more informal interactions and connections wherein the parents/guardians would check in with the staff while picking up their children or during community or the Annual

dinners. However, with the online delivery of the program, it was hard to directly reach out to the parents/guardians. Staff members also remarked that some of the students came from communities wherein the parents/guardians did not have the means to access information online or faced language barriers. On Google Classroom, it was observed that even though the staff regularly posted and shared information with the parents/guardians about the students' ongoing activities, there was limited engagement from parents/guardians. Some parents/guardians also commented on the delay in receiving timely information from the staff. There was also a comment from parents/guardians and staff about the limited opportunity they had to connect and communicate when parents/guardians picked up their children from school due to changes in protocols at schools; this further hampered parents'/guardians' engagement and involvement in the program.

In summary, the dependence on knowledge and access to technology for virtual delivery of and attendance in B3:30 created a learning curve and similar challenges for different stakeholders. Parents/guardians, students, and staff alike missed the ease of access and opportunity to interact that defined B3:30 program design. This experience led the stakeholders to reflect on the program and its different facets over the past year and afford suggestions to pivot as well as re-define the program in the upcoming years.

Considerations to Explore in a Pandemic Context

While there was resounding interest among all students in continuing their participation with B3:30 after 2020-21, there were several recommendations that can be considered in a pandemic context. These considerations are not unique to B3:30 as many of these suggestions apply to online or remote learning and program implementation in general. These suggestions are organized in relation to the online program and the combined in-person/virtual accommodation strategy, while acknowledging there are areas of overlap.

Online Program

- **Consider additional online classroom management and engagement strategies:** In speaking with students and doing the online classroom observations, it was noted that spontaneous and unplanned activities more often led to a disorderly session (e.g., cross talking, yelling, etc.), thereby impacting student engagement. Students suggested that certain online games like Jeopardy could be changed and replaced with something more organized and structured. To help with online classroom management and engagement, it was suggested that: a) students be provided with fun, engaging, and game-based activities (e.g., magic show, science experiment) in the online program; b) incentives (e.g., points, stickers, etc. when students attend a certain number of days per week) be provided for students to participate and stay focused; and c) connections are made between program sites so students can meet others and foster friendly collaboration and competition. Further, male students could benefit from relevant guest speakers, continuing to have male B3:30 staff, and having more competitive activities and prizes.
- **Provide a broader range of academic support:** Students missed the ability to share and ask staff questions pertaining to their regular schoolwork. They suggested that the array of subjects which B3:30 offers online and tutoring be expanded. It was also suggested that the students be matched up with their online tutors in a more intentional way that reflects students' interests. As mentioned previously, this suggestion could be applied to the online and the in-person design of the program delivery and offerings.

Combined In-Person/Virtual Delivery

- **Provide additional planning time:** The combined in-person/virtual accommodation strategy that occurred at some sites was particularly challenging to implement for staff. If this strategy continues, it was suggested that all staff (e.g., nutrition, recreation, and academic staff) be given additional time to create

online content, in addition to the content they need to create for the in-person program.

- **Ongoing communication with the parents/guardians:** As mentioned earlier in the report, parents/guardians and staff members struggled to maintain regular communication during the pandemic, but especially throughout the online program and combined in-person/virtual program which was dependent on emails. As a result, parents/guardians suggested that program staff find alternate ways to better engage and communicate with them, so they are informed about what is happening in the program and their child(ren)'s progress.

Overall, the suggestions made by different stakeholders addressed their concerns regarding the delivery and overall objectives of the B3:30 program. Due to COVID-19, the dependence and exposure to technology and virtual learning as a part of regular schooling as well as B3:30, has directed most students, parents/guardians, and staff alike to wish a return to the in-person delivery of the program.

References

Yau, M. & Presley, A. (2012). *Beyond 3:30: A Multi-Purpose After-School Program for Inner-City Middle Schools*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Toronto District School Board.

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Yau, M., Archer, B., Wong, J., & Walter, S. (2014). *Beyond 3:30: A Multi-purpose Afterschool Program for Inner-City Middle Schools, Phase III Evaluation* (Research Report No. 14/15-04). Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Toronto District School Board

Yau, M., Archer, B., Wong, J., Walter, S., Bonsu, V., & Sauriol, D. (2015). *Beyond 3:30: A Multi-Purpose After-School Program for Inner-City Middle Schools, Phase IV Evaluation* (Research Report No.15/16-10). Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Toronto District School Board.

Google Classroom/Session Observation Guide

The following guide was designed to observe the delivery of Beyond 3:30 Google classrooms.

<p>School: _____</p> <p>—</p> <p>Program staff’s name: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Number of participants: _____</p> <p>Number of participants on site: _____</p> <p>Grades of participants: Grade 3 _____ Grade 4 _____ _____ Grade 5 _____ Grade 6 _____ Grade 7 _____ Grade 8 _____</p>	<p>Researcher: _____</p> <p>Date of Observation: _____</p> <p>Start time: _____</p> <p>End time: _____</p> <p>Activity in Observation: _____</p>
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Describe the activities in the Google classroom in sequence (e.g., how did the staff introduce each unit of activity; what was done/said - audio/video, student grouping, breakout rooms, game/play-based vs content/lecture-style, guest speaker etc.; and how did students respond and engage).

Pre-session instructions

- **What are the instructions before the session begins?**

- Are there disciplinary instructions? (Y / N)

- Are there check-ins about students' well being? How the students must be feeling that day or the previous day etc.? (Y / N)

- Are there check-ins related to the last session? (Y / N)

- Are there check-ins related to Google Classrooms use and design (*technological aspect*)? (Y/ N)

- Program staff introduces the topic or activity for the session (Y / N)

Comments/Observations:

Program Delivery

- **How is the program organized and differentiated between the Jr and Sr program?**

Comments/Observations:

- **How is the program differentiated for students?**

- Program staff uses a variety of strategies to support learning (Y / N)

- **Do students have any parents/guardians at the home helping them that one can see or hear? (Y / N)**
 - Is it technical help?
 - Instructional help?
 - Or just observing the child?
 - Any interaction with the instructor?
 - Other forms of parent/guardian engagement?

Comments/Observations:

- **What kind of raw material or preparation was required on the students' part?**
 - Were the students prepared for it?
 - Did the teacher offer any alternative?
 - Who provided the tools/raw materials/aids, if needed, for the session?

Comments/Observations:

Engagement

Rate the following activities observed in the Google classroom:

Activities	All the time	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
The program staff checks for student understanding of a task, activity, assignment, or content shared.					

The program staff asks students to respond with emoticons.					
The program staff monitors the chat box for students' comments.					
The program staff asks questions to get students thinking.					
The program staff responds to students' feedback and questions.					
The program staff invites quiet participants to speak.					
The program staff communicates in clear language.					
The program staff encourages students to share their ideas.					
The program staff encourages student-to-student interaction.					
The program staff address students by their name.					

Comments/Observations:

Share an incident, if any, to support the following:

- **The program staff creates a safe environment for learning.**

- **The program staff gives students the opportunity for choice in their learning.**

- **The program staff accommodates individual students' learning styles.**

- **The program staff connects the discussion/content to previous material.**

- **What kinds of roles did the program staff play during the session? (check all observed during the period):**

- Instructional role (Y / N)
- Facilitating role (Y / N)
- Mentoring role (Y / N)
- Advising role (Y / N)
- Role modelling (Y / N)
- Listening (Y / N)
- Other (please specify):

- **Nature of interaction directed from the students**

Rate the following activities observed in the Google classroom:

Activities	All the time	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Students share personal reflections.					
Students contribute to an ongoing activity.					
Students share their progress on the activity.					
Students are able to ask questions and seek clarity while an activity is being conducted.					
Students use emoticons or other graphic aids to express and communicate.					
Students are interested in what they are doing.					

- What is the nature of questions that the students ask the instructor? (questions about content, instruction, technical glitches and help)

Comments/Observations:

- How do students get instructors' attention (raising hand, speaking directly or using chat?)

Comments/Observations:

- Do students talk to other students? *(how is that received by others, what is the nature of the interaction: Task related, personal moment/sharing)*

Comments/Observations:

Did you observe any instances in which participants had difficulties accessing or connecting to the Google classroom? (Y / N)

If yes, how were these issues handled?

Impact

- **Are there any extensions made by staff/students on how the students can use it for their school life, personal life, future tasks etc.?**

Comments/Observations:

- **Structure of the Google classroom site?**
 - Very structured
 - Somewhat structured
 - Not very structured

Comments/Observations:

- Do you have any other observations or reflections on how the session was delivered and/or experienced?

Appendix B

Focus Group Guide for Beyond 3:30 Jr and Snr Students

Date and time of Focus Group:

East/West?: _____

Program: _____ B3:30 Junior Grades 3-5 _____ B3:30 Grades 6-8

Number of participants: _____

Grades of participants _____

1. To start things off, tell us what grade you are in and something that you are looking forward to after school ends/for the summer?
2. Why did you join beyond 3:30? What would you be doing after-school if you were not in beyond 3:30? When did you join beyond 3:30?
3. What has it been like to be part of beyond 3:30? How does it make you feel?
 - A. What do you like about it?
 - B. What are some of the things that you wish were different or some of the things that you do not like so much?
 - C. Do you find it hard to attend some of the days?
4. Do you think the online/virtual beyond 3:30 program was the same as when you had beyond 3:30 in-person in your school?

- A. What were the challenges?
 - B. What made it different?
 - C. What made it still feel the same?
5. How has beyond 3:30 helped you this year?
 6. Tell us about your experiences with the beyond 3:30 staff/teachers. How have they helped you?
 7. Now we want you to think about your regular/normal school. How has the change from learning in your classroom to online learning been for you?
 8. If beyond 3:30 is offered online next year, what ideas or suggestions do you have to improve the program?
 9. Is there anything else you want to tell us about the program?

Appendix C

Focus Group Guide for beyond 3:30 Parents/Guardians

Date and time of Focus Group:

East/West?: _____

Number of participants: _____

1. Tell us a bit about yourself and how you have been doing during the pandemic/school closure?

2. Why did you enrol your child in beyond 3:30? This year, what would your child be doing after-school if they were not in beyond 3:30? When did they join beyond 3:30?
3. What does having your child enrolled in beyond 3:30 mean to you? How do you feel about the program?
 - A. What do you like about it?
 - B. What are some of the things that you wish were different or some of the things that you do not like so much?
 - C. Do you find it hard for your child to attend some of the days?
 - D. Have you ever had an interaction with the program facilitator outside of beyond 3:30? Have they helped or supported you in any way?
4. Do you think the online/virtual beyond 3:30 program was the same as when your child had beyond 3:30 in-person in your school?
 - A. What were the challenges?
 - B. What made it different?
 - C. What made it still feel the same?
5. How has beyond 3:30 helped your child this year?
6. Do you have any other child that you would like to register in the program? Are there any people in your neighbourhood you would suggest the program to?
7. Even though it is your child that is enrolled in beyond 3:30, have you noticed any changes in yourself due to that? How did your role as a parent shift? Has it had an impact on you or your family?
8. Now we want you to think about your child's experience with their regular/normal school. How has the change from learning in the classroom to online learning been for your child?
9. If beyond 3:30 is offered online next year, what ideas or suggestions do you have to improve the program?
10. Is there anything else you want to tell us about the program?

Focus Group Guide for beyond 3:30 Program Staff

Date and time of Focus Group:

East/West?: _____

Program: _____ B3:30 Junior Grades 3-5 _____ B3:30 Grades 6-8

Number of participants: _____

- 1. Tell us a bit about yourself and how long you have been with the beyond 3:30 program?**
- 2. What are your thoughts on the delivery and implementation of beyond 3:30 this school year?**
 - A. How did it go? Walk us through a typical afternoon at beyond 3:30.**
 - B. What worked well?**
 - C. What did not work well?**
 - D. What were the main goals/objectives of the program this year?**
- 3. What challenges did you face in delivering the program?**
 - A. How did you overcome these challenges? Did you have the resources/supports needed to deliver the program?**
- 4. What changes and adjustments, if any, had to be made to the program this school year because of the pandemic? What impact did this have for students?**
- 5. What were the effective practices, strategies or conditions for delivering beyond 3:30 within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?**
 - A. What types of planning and preparation need to take place?**
 - B. What are the best practices and strategies for engaging students in a virtual classroom?**
 - C. What are the best practices and strategies for engaging parents in a virtual classroom?**
- 6. Tell us about students' and parents' experiences with the beyond 3:30 program this year. Did they enjoy it? What were their attendance and engagement like? Did you see any changes as a result of the pandemic?**

7. Do you have a relation/connection with the students and parents/guardians beyond the program? Do you feel like you are their family and know the students more than just what they do during their 2 hours with you?
8. How has beyond 3:30 helped students and families this year?
9. If beyond 3:30 is offered online next year, what ideas or suggestions do you have to improve the program?
10. Is there anything more you would like to add?

Appendix E

Interview Guide for TFSS Administrators

Date and time of Interview:

Number of participants: _____

1. Tell us how long you have been with the beyond 3:30 program and your role and responsibilities in relation to beyond 3:30?
2. Tell us about the history of the B3:30 program and how beyond 3:30 Junior came to be?
3. What are your thoughts on the delivery and implementation of beyond 3:30 this school year?
 - A. How did it go?
 - B. What worked well?
 - C. What did not work well?
4. What challenges did you and your team face in delivering the program? How did you overcome these challenges? Did you have the resources/supports needed to deliver the program?
5. What changes and adjustments, if any, had to be made to the program this school year because of the pandemic? What impact did this have for students?

6. **What were the effective practices, strategies or conditions for delivering beyond 3:30 within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?**
 - A. **What types of planning and preparation took place?**
 - B. **What are the best practices and strategies for engaging students in a virtual classroom?**
 - C. **What are the best practices and strategies for engaging parents in a virtual classroom?**
7. **What do you think of students' and parents' attendance and engagement in the program this school year? Did you see any changes in students' and parents' attendance and engagement as a result of the pandemic?**
8. **How has beyond 3:30 helped students and families this year?**
9. **If beyond 3:30 is offered online next year, what ideas or suggestions do you have to improve the program?**
10. **Is there anything more you would like to add?**

Appendix F

beyond 3:30 Year-End Student Survey

You don't need to put your name in this survey. There are no right or wrong answers, so please choose the survey responses that best describe your own experiences or feelings. Your honest opinions will help us understand how beyond 3:30 can help students like you, and how it can be improved or expanded for more students.

There are 4 pages to this survey. Click on the "Next" button at the bottom of each page to move on to the next page. When you complete the survey, you will notice a "Submit" button at the bottom of the very last page. Please click "Submit" to finish the survey.

If you need any help with completing the survey or have any questions, please contact your beyond 3:30 staff/teacher.

- _____
- If not listed, type in the box: _____

Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense or feeling of being a girl or woman, a boy or man, both, neither or anywhere on the gender spectrum.

What is your gender identity? You may pick more than one.

- Girl/woman
- Boy/man
- Non-Binary
- Gender Fluid
- Two-Spirit (An Indigenous person whose gender identity, spiritual identity, or sexual orientation includes masculine, feminine, or non-binary spirits)
- Gender identity or identities not listed above. Please type in the box:
- _____
- Not sure
- I do not understand this question

1. When did you first start attending beyond 3:30?

- Last school year
- This school year between September and December
- This school year between January and March Break
- This school year after the Spring/April Break

2. On average, I attend beyond 3:30 for the following number of days each week:

- Five days
- Four days
- Three days
- Less than three days

3. How did you participate in the beyond 3:30 program this year?

- In the classroom
- Online (using a computer, tablet or phone)
- Both in the classroom and online

4. What type of device did you use most of the time to participate in beyond 3:30 online?

- Desktop computer
- Laptop computer
- Tablet
- Cell phone

5. I attend beyond 3:30 because: You may pick more than one.

- My friends attend
- My parents/caregivers want me to attend
- There is nothing else to do after school
- It's fun
- I need help with homework
- I want to learn new things
- I want to be around kids my own age
- I want to be around the beyond 3:30 staff/teachers
- If you have other reasons, please type them in the box: _____

6. Tell us how often you had the following experiences or feelings about the online beyond 3:30 program.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the time
It was hard to access or connect to the beyond 3:30 Google Classroom.					
I was comfortable participating in beyond 3:30 online.					
All the activities were easy to understand in the online format.					
It was difficult to follow instructions from beyond 3:30 staff/teachers online.					
beyond 3:30 staff/teachers helped and supported me during the online sessions.					

I watched the recorded videos that were posted.					
I missed being around my friends in the beyond 3:30 program.					
I felt connected to my peers in beyond 3:30 online.					
I felt like I belonged in beyond 3:30 online.					
I felt bored during beyond 3:30 online.					
I enjoyed the beyond 3:30 program.					

7. Tell us how often you felt this way in each of the following areas BEFORE you joined beyond 3:30 this year?

	Before beyond 3:30				
School	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the time
I enjoyed school					
I had positive study habits/attitudes towards learning					
I was able to complete school assignments					
I did well on my school assignments and tests					
I participated in class (such as answering questions in class)					
I was able to collaborate with others online					

Health and Nutrition					
I knew about healthy food choices					
I was able to prepare a meal					
I felt physically fit and healthy					
I was interested in sports/physical activities					
I was interested in if I look fit and healthy					
Social					
I was able to make friends					
I was able to share my opinions respectfully					
I was able to take on leadership roles					
I was able to solve problems with others					
I was able to find ways to connect with friends					
Emotional					
I felt good about myself					
I was able to cope with stress/problems					
I was able to make good decisions for myself (e.g., say no to drugs, etc.)					
I was able to empathize with others/put myself in others position					
I felt lonely					

I felt happy					
Mathematics:					
I liked mathematics					
I was good at mathematics					
I was able to answer difficult mathematics questions.					
I did my best when I did mathematics activities in class.					
Other Areas:					
I enjoyed presenting and public speaking					
I enjoyed the performing arts (e.g., music, dance, drama)					
I enjoyed the visual arts (e.g., painting, drawing)					
I knew about money management					

8. Tell us how often you felt this way in each of the following areas AFTER you joined beyond 3:30 this year?

	After beyond 3:30				
School	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the time
I enjoy school.					

I have positive study habits/attitudes towards learning					
I am able to complete school assignments					
I am doing well on my school assignments and tests					
I am participating in class (such as answering questions in class)					
I am able to collaborate with others online					
Health and Nutrition					
I know about healthy food choices					
I am able to prepare a meal					
I feel physically fit and healthy					
I am interested in sports/physical activities					
I am interested in if I look fit and healthy					
Social					
I am able to make friends					
I am able to share my opinions respectfully					
I am able to take on leadership roles					
I am able to solve problems with others					
I am able to find ways to connect with friends					
Emotional					

I feel good about myself					
I am able to cope with stress/ problems					
I am able to make good decisions for myself (e.g., say no to drugs, etc.)					
I am able to empathize with others/put myself in others position					
I feel lonely					
I feel happy					
Mathematics:					
I like mathematics					
I am good at mathematics					
I am able to answer difficult mathematics questions.					
I do my best when I do mathematics activities in class.					
Other Areas:					
I enjoy presenting and public speaking					
I enjoy the performing arts (e.g., music, dance, drama)					
I enjoy the visual arts (e.g., painting, drawing)					
I know about money management					

9. Is there an adult in your regular school – outside of beyond 3:30 – who you feel comfortable to go to for personal support, advice, or help?

Yes, there is one adult

- Yes, there is more than one adult
- No, I haven't met one yet

10. Is there an adult in beyond 3:30 (including program staff, teachers, volunteers) who you feel comfortable to go to for personal support, advice, or help?

- Yes, there is one adult
- Yes, there is more than one adult
- No, I haven't met one yet

11. Did any of the following things make it difficult for you to participate in the beyond 3:30 program this school year? You may pick more than one.

- There was no reliable internet access.
- Someone else was using the computer or another device.
- There was no one to help me use the computer or another device.
- There were frequent distractions (background noise, sounds of traffic, people talking).
- There was no private or quiet space at home.
- It was hard for me to stay focused on the computer.
- I had to do household chores or other work.
- I had to look after brothers, sisters and/or family members
- Other difficulties not listed, please type in the box:

12. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about your beyond 3:30 experience?