

STUDENT SURVEY REPORT

June 2023



Conducted by Evan Linett, Program Evaluation Associate

Table of Contents

- Executive Summary.....2**
 - Background and objectives.....2
 - Overview of the method..... 2
 - Key findings.....3
- Detailed Findings..... 5**
 - 1. Longitudinal study findings.....5
 - 2. Statistical inference report..... 12
 - 3. Themes from open-ended responses..... 13
- Conclusion..... 14**
 - Summary..... 14
- Appendix.....15**
 - Research methodology..... 15
 - Data processing and dates..... 16
 - Response rate..... 16
 - Sample description..... 17
 - Complete survey questionnaire..... 18

Executive Summary

Background and Objectives

This report shares findings from the June 2023 student survey, conducted by Evan Linett, ArtSmart’s program evaluation associate. The report also includes the student outcomes from a longitudinal study captured between October 2021 and June 2023.

The purpose of the two-year longitudinal study, approved by WCG Institutional Review Board, is to provide insight into the learning outcomes of students, compare those findings against those from a group of non-participating students, and improve the program based on feedback from the current students. The study tracks a series of social-emotional and academic learning responses from a constant group of 80 students, with 56 ArtSmart participants and 24 comparison group participants. A parent/guardian of each participant gave informed consent, and each participant gave informed assent before participating in the four survey waves.

The surveys measure students’ perceptions of:

1. Physical and Psychological Safety;
2. Social and Emotional Development;
3. Academic Development; and
4. Lesson activities, mentor relationships, and performance opportunities.

Overview of the Method

The researcher developed a list of potential survey participants with valid contact information for the survey. The researcher invited each student to participate in the online survey in Airtable, between May 23 and June 20, 2023. In all, 136 students completed the survey for a 40.2% response rate.

The study compares the pre-post change in outcomes for students who participated in ArtSmart lessons to the pre-post change in outcomes for students who did not participate in ArtSmart lessons, over the period of October 2021, June 2022, October 2022, and June 2023.

Key Findings

1. From the two-year longitudinal study, the following post-test results are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level or above, between the constant group of 56 ArtSmart participants and a comparison group of 24 non-participants:
 - **Plans to Attend College.** ArtSmart students show a statistically significant increase in plans to attend college (+11 percentage points; from 82% to 93%) against the comparison group (-4 percentage points; from 75% to 71%). In June 2023, 93% of students plan to attend college, trending above the comparison group at 71% and national average of 74%.¹
 - **Meaningful Connection with Adults at School.** ArtSmart students show a statistically significant increase in developing a meaningful connection with an adult at school (+29 percentage points; from 25% to 54%) against the comparison group (+4 percentage points; from 21% to 25%).
 - **Adult They Can Trust** – ArtSmart students show a statistically significant increase in strongly agreeing there is an adult they can talk to when feeling stressed or having problems (+18 percentage points; 28.6% to 46.4%) against the comparison group (± 0 ppts; 21.0% to 21.0%).
 - In the post-test, no significant differences were found in goal setting, self-belief, mental health, or grade point average. In the pre-test, no significant differences were found between the characteristics of the study and comparison groups.
2. **ArtSmart lessons are a driving factor in excitement to attend school.** In June 2023, 16% of all current students were excited to go to school. However, 58% of all current students were excited to go to school on their lesson days.
3. **ArtSmart lessons provide a crucial outlet for creative expression.** In June 2023, 71% of all current students agreed they had a productive outlet to deal with negative or stressful emotions, while 38% of comparison students agreed they had an outlet.
4. **Consistent mentoring makes a difference.** Students who learn from the same mentor for two or more years have meaningfully higher scores for “having a productive outlet to deal with emotions,” “having an adult to talk to when stressed,” and “having a good relationship with mentor.”

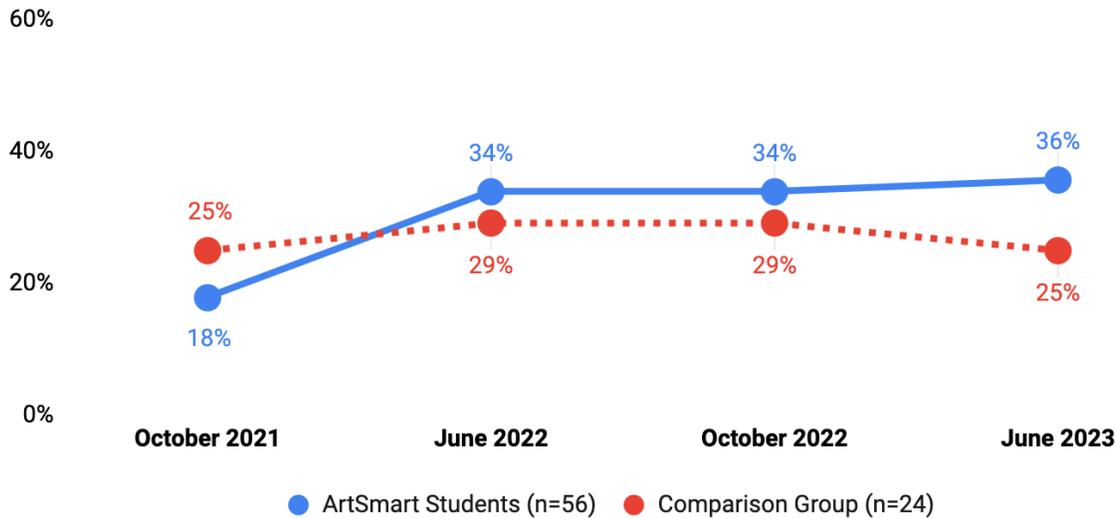
¹ YouthTruth, 2023. “The Class of 2023: Who Plans to Go to College?” *The Center for Effective Philanthropy, Inc.*
<https://youthtruthsurvey.org/college23/>

Detailed Findings

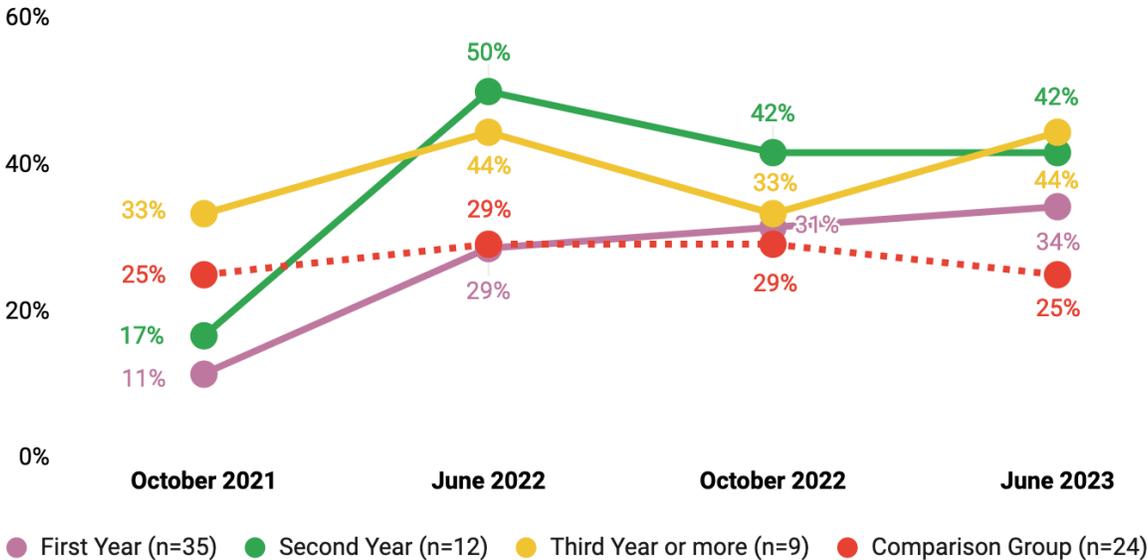
Longitudinal Study Findings

Participants used an agree-disagree scale to describe their experiences. Scale items were: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. Each graph compares the proportions of respondents who gave ‘strongly agree’ to the item over a two-year period:

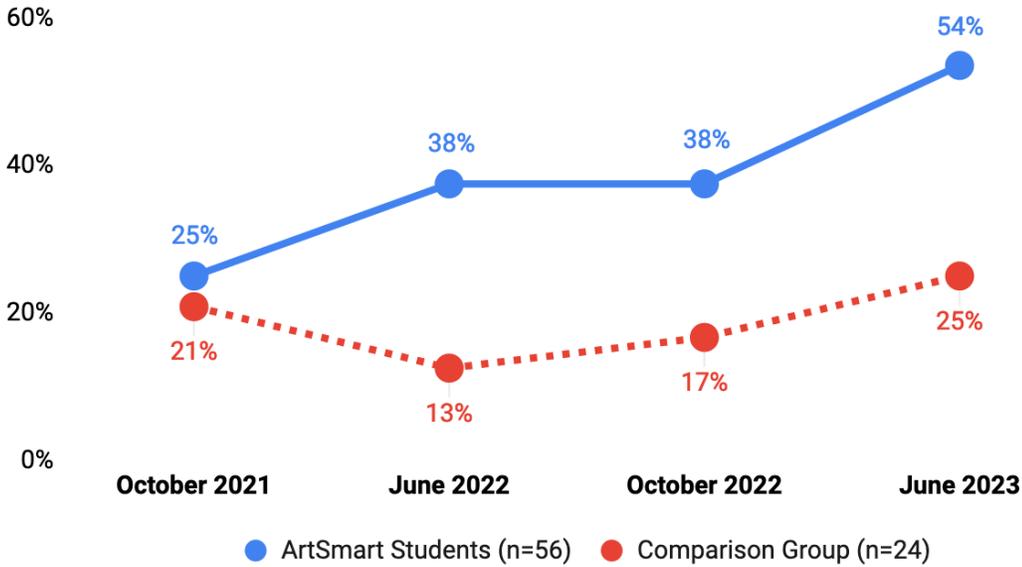
Longitudinal Comparison: "I believe I am talented." (% strongly agree)



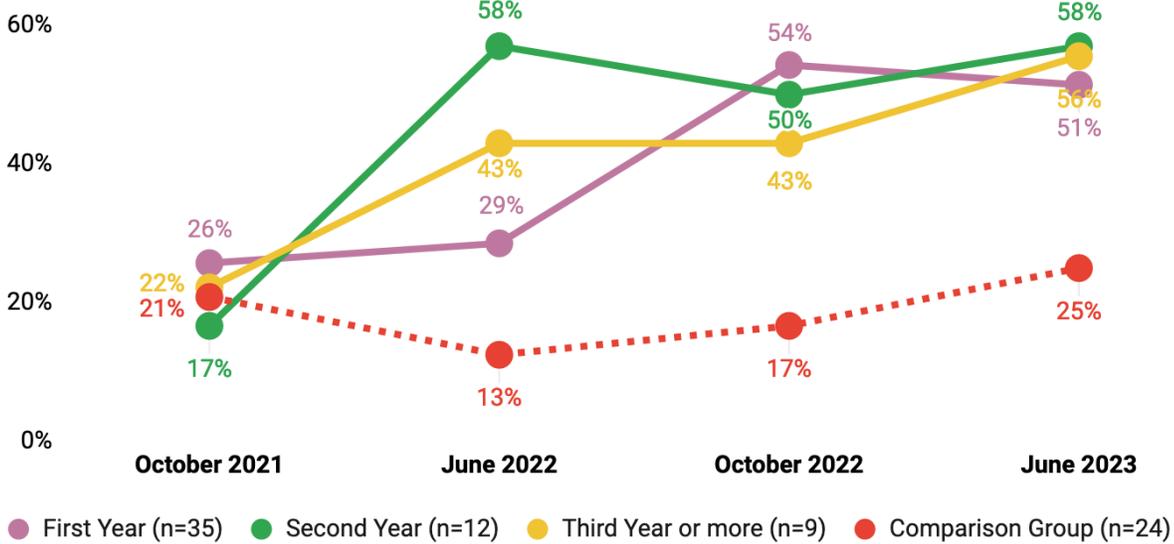
First-year students' self-belief increased steadily; comparison students' self-belief remained flat (% strongly agree)



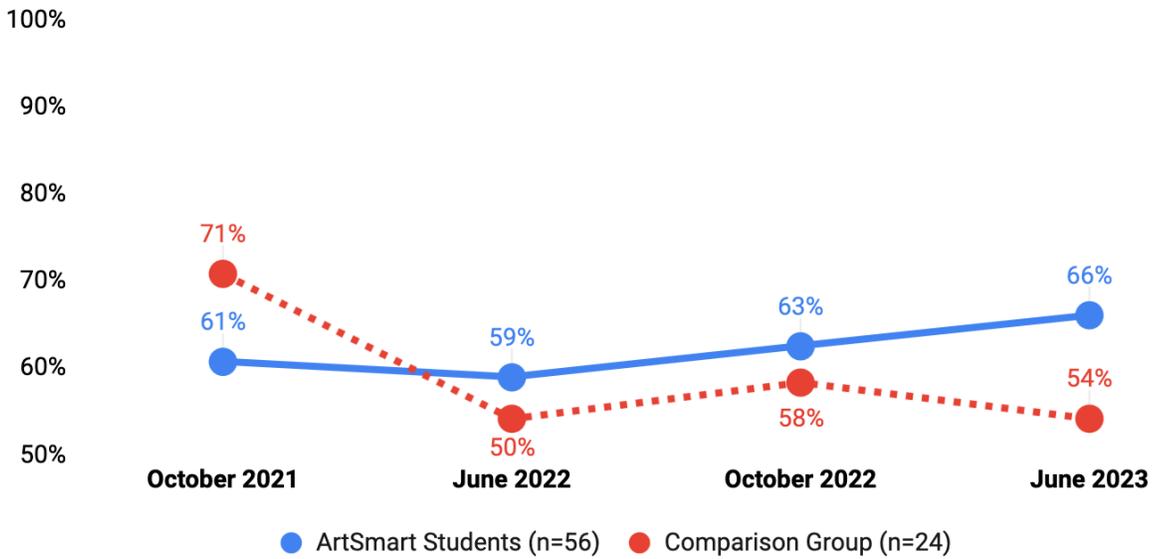
Longitudinal Comparison: "I have a meaningful connection with one or more adults at my school."
 (%strongly agree)



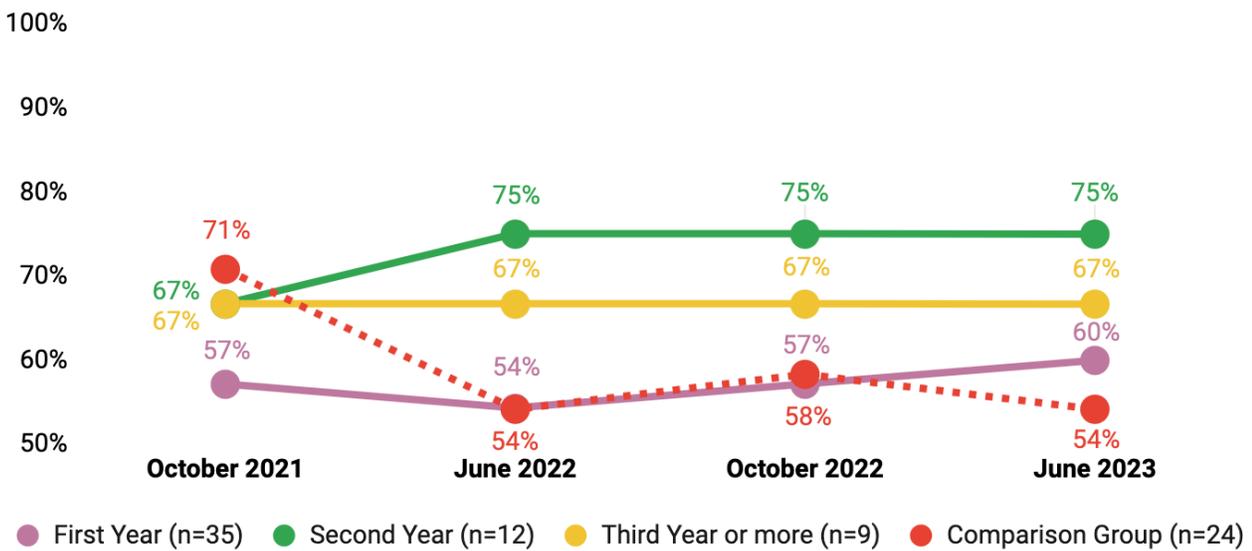
Over time, ArtSmart students had increasingly meaningful connections with an adult at school; comparison students remained constant.
 (% strongly agree)



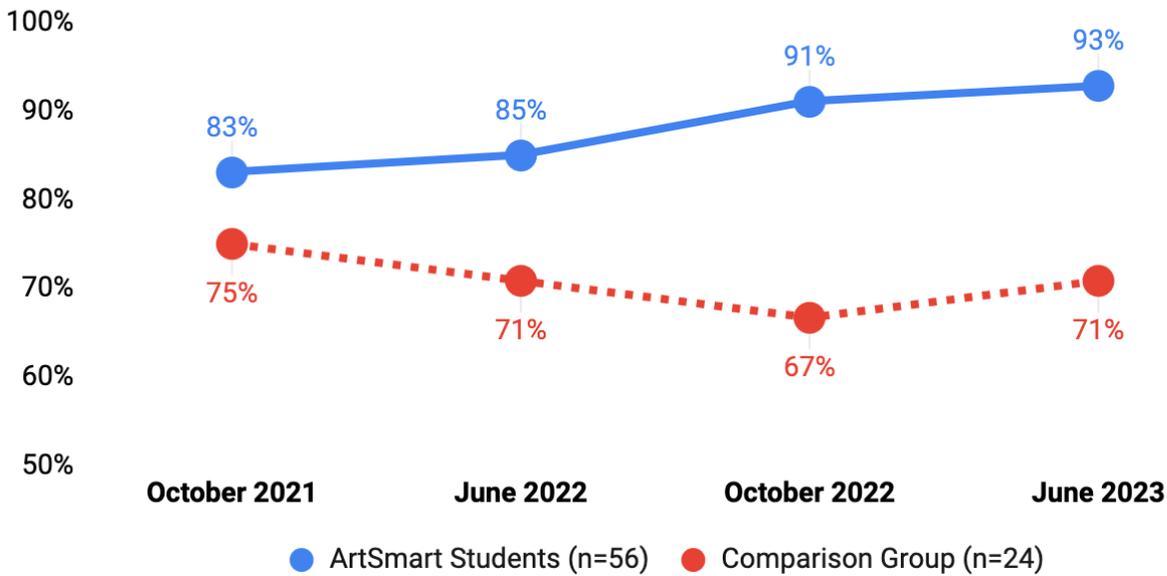
Longitudinal Comparison: "Besides the adults I live with, there is an adult who believes I can succeed in school, graduate, and be successful in life."
 (% strongly agree)



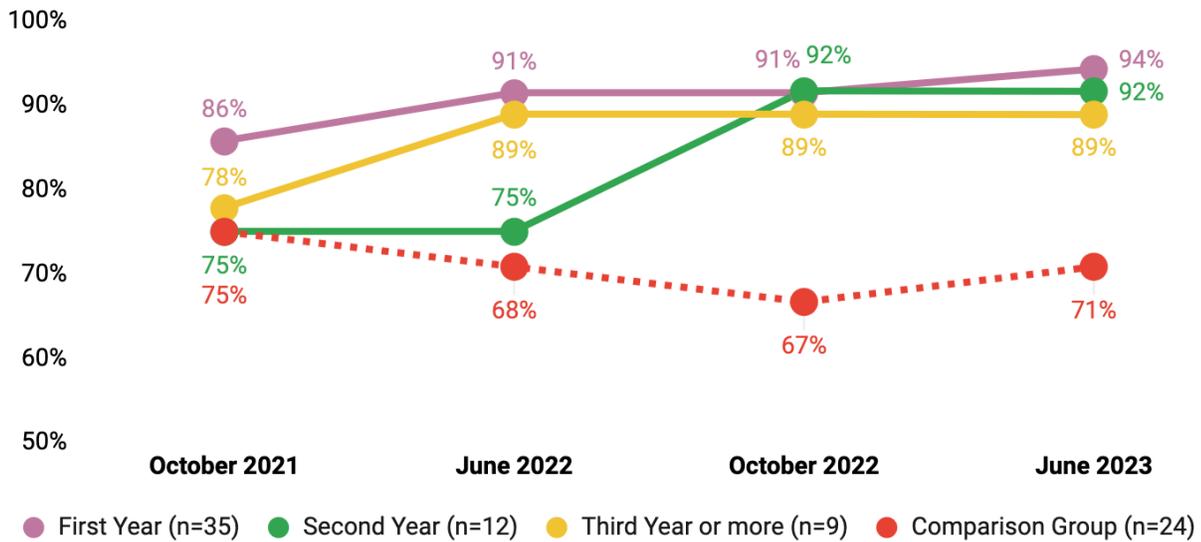
ArtSmart students increasingly feel that an adult believes in them
 (% strongly agree)



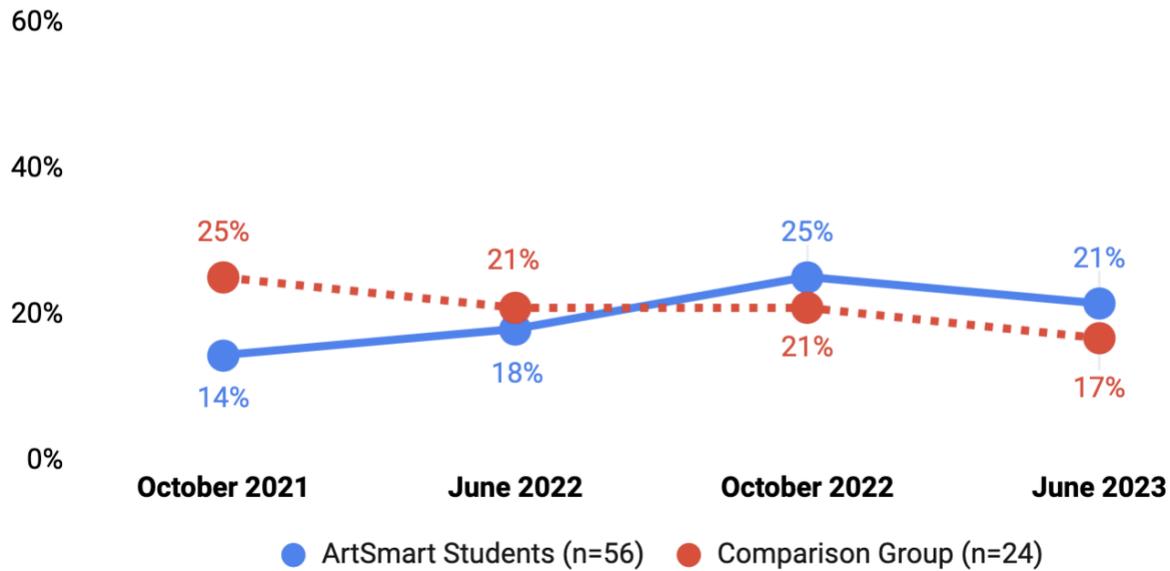
Longitudinal Comparison: "I plan on attending college." (% Yes)



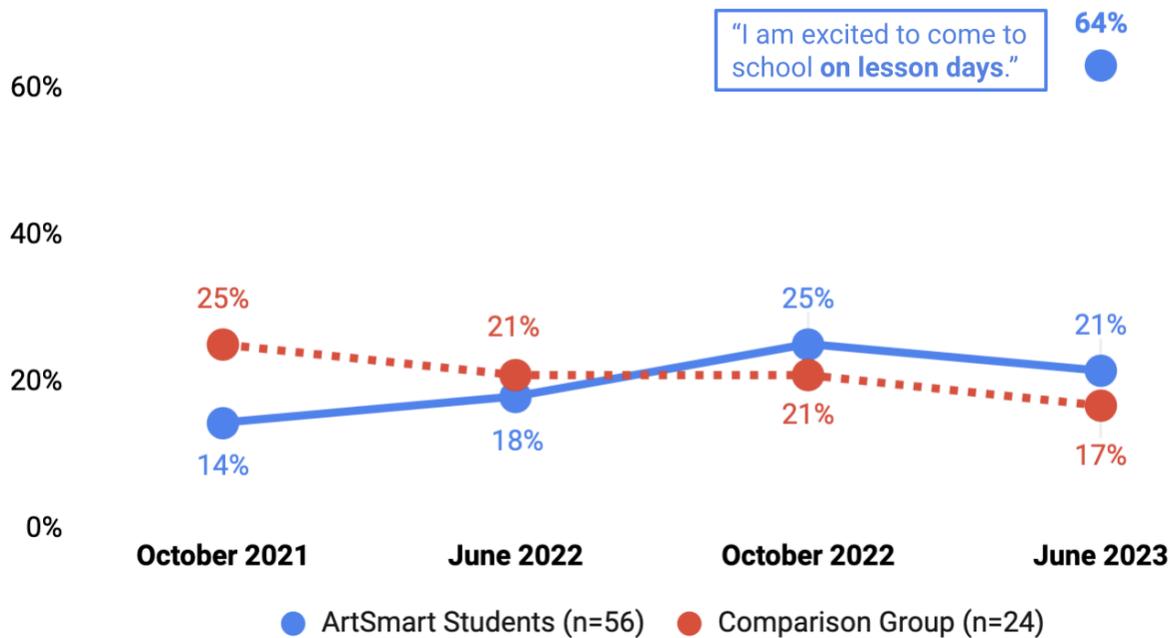
93% of ArtSmart students plan to attend college, trending above the comparison students at 71% and the national average of 74%. (% Yes)



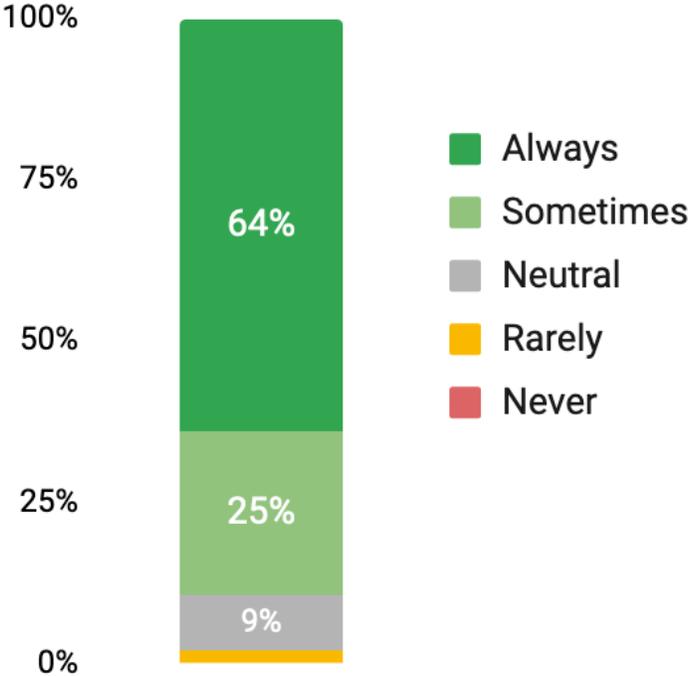
Longitudinal Comparison: "I am excited to come to school."
 (% *always*)



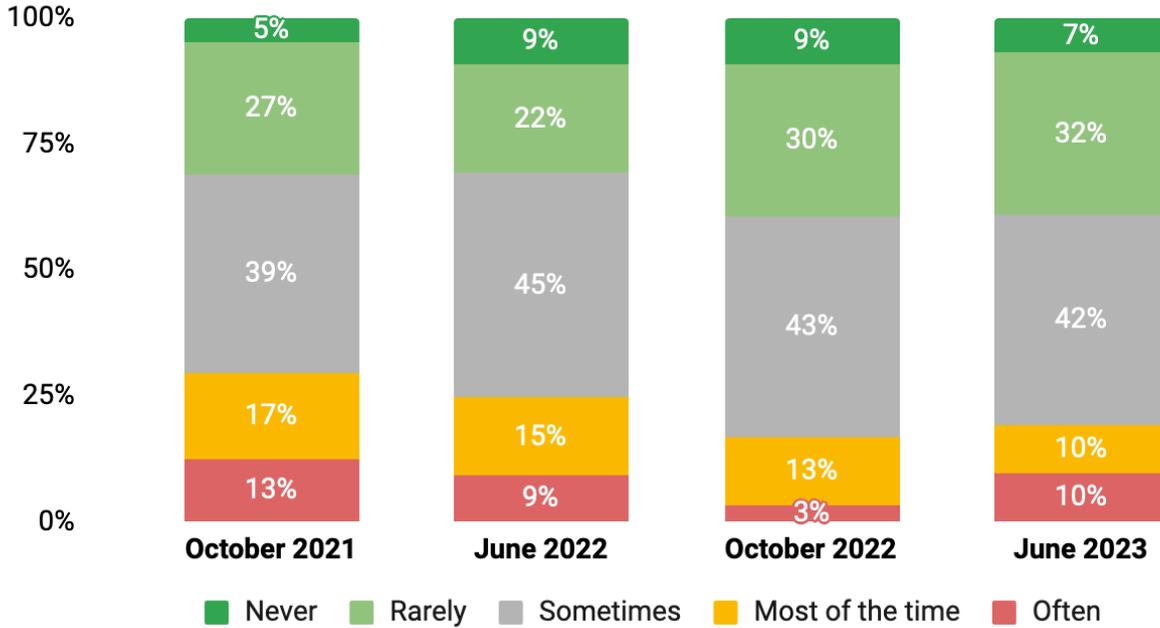
Longitudinal Comparison: "I am excited to come to school."
 (% *always*)



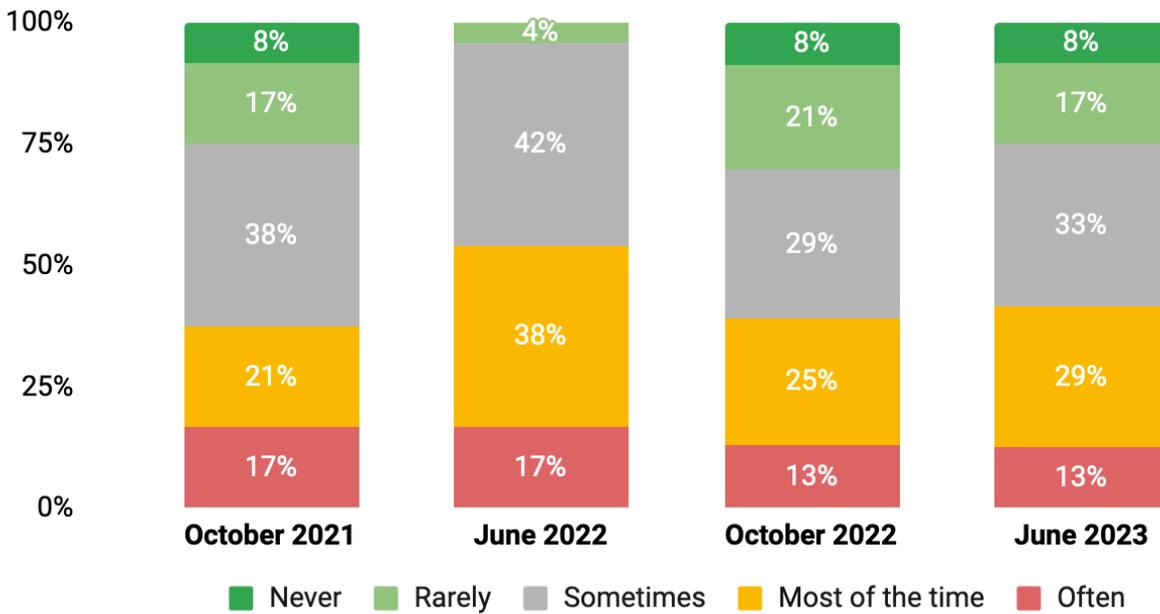
Longitudinal Students: "I am excited to come to school on lesson days."



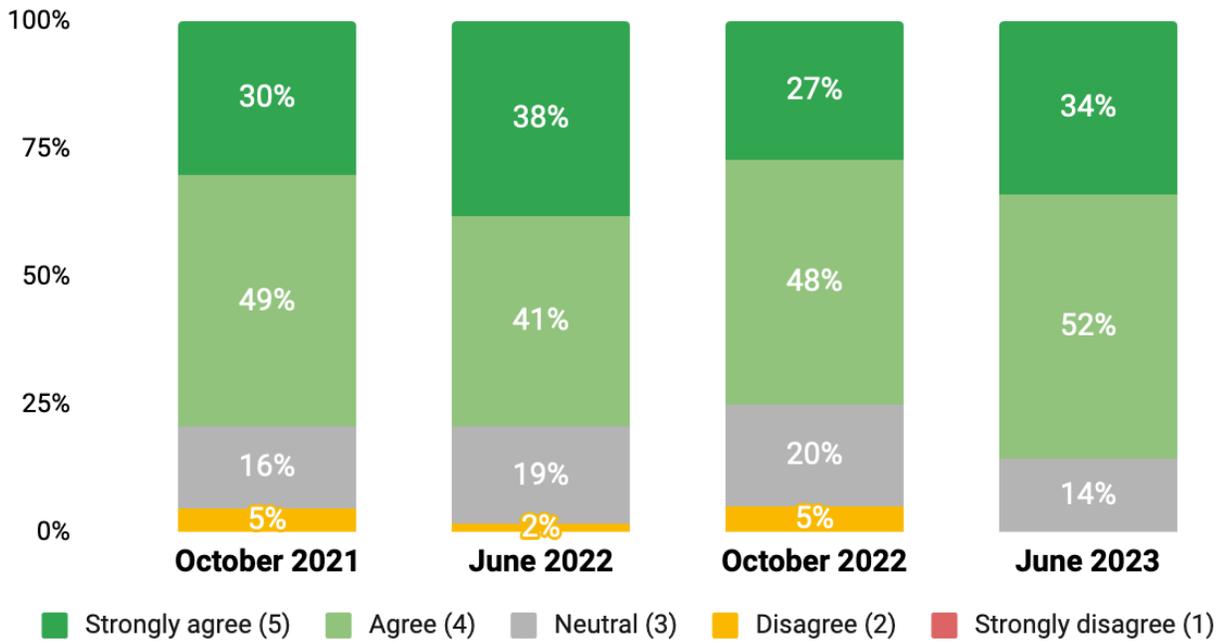
ArtSmart Students: "In the past 30 days, my mental health was not good..."



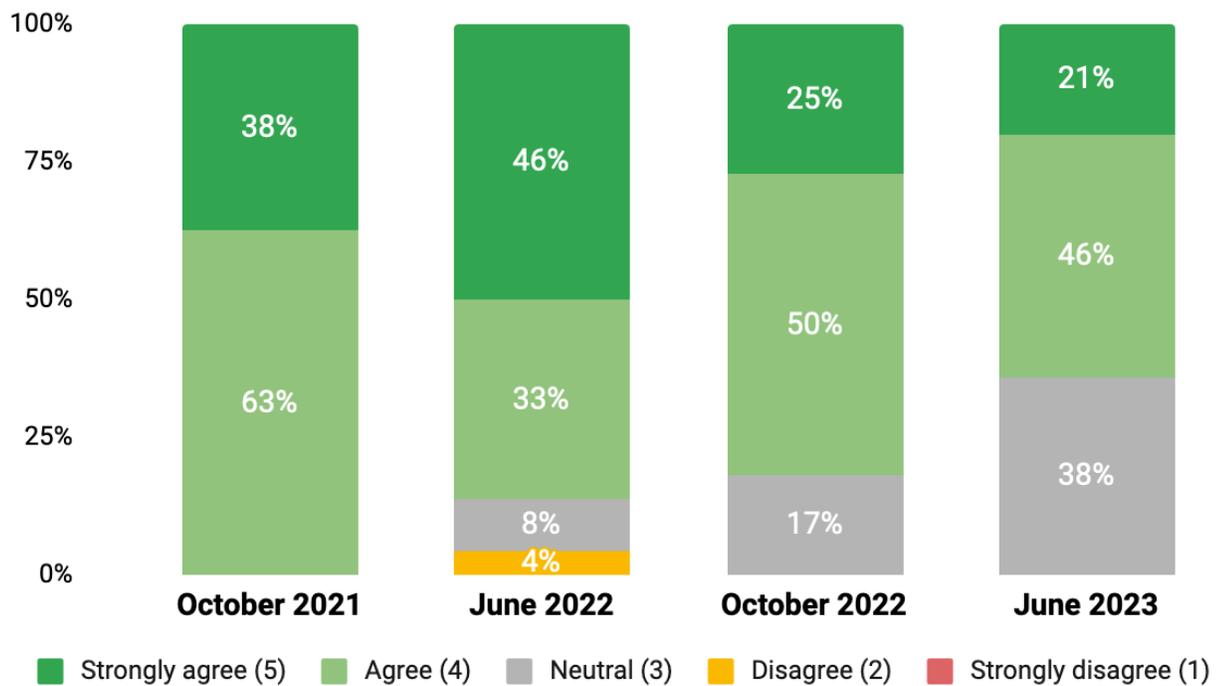
Comparison Students: "In the past 30 days, my mental health was not good..."



ArtSmart Students: "I am confident in my ability to set and achieve a goal."



Comparison Students: "I am confident in my ability to set and achieve a goal."



Statistical Inference Report

The **Chi-square test** interprets the statistical significance between the outcomes of the ArtSmart students and the comparison group over the pretest period in October 2021 and the posttest period in June 2023. This “two-by-two test” is referred to as a test of homogeneity because it measures whether the outcomes of two groups are statistically similar. The chi-square (χ^2) statistic indicates how observed data compares to expected values, while the p-value determines the level of significance in the results. At the 95% confidence level, if the p-value is larger than 0.05, we cannot conclude a significant difference exists. If the p-value is smaller than 0.05, we conclude one of the groups is significantly different from the other, and observe differences between the two groups.

	Pretest % strongly agree				Posttest % strongly agree			
	Study Group (n=56)	Comparison Group (n=24)	χ^2	p-value	Study Group (n=56)	Comparison Group (n=24)	χ^2	p-value
Social and Emotional Learning								
1. I believe I am talented.	17.9	25.0	0.54	0.464	35.7	25.0	0.88	0.348
2. I feel fully responsible for my actions.	48.2	45.8	0.04	0.845	67.9	45.8	3.43	0.064*
3. I am confident in my ability to set and achieve goals.	30.4	37.5	0.39	0.532	33.9	20.8	1.37	0.241
Physical and Psychological Safety								
4. School feels like a safe environment.	12.5	12.5	0.02	0.901	10.7	20.8	0.98	0.323
5. In the past 30 days, my mental health has not been good... (% Never)	5.4	8.3	0.17	0.681	7.1	8.3	0.01	0.929
6. I have a meaningful connection with at least one adult at school.	25.0	20.8	0.16	0.689	53.6	25.0	5.54	0.019**
7. There is an adult I can talk to when I feel stressed or am having problems.	28.6	20.8	0.52	0.471	46.4	20.8	4.64	0.031**
Academic Development								
8. I plan on attending college.	82.1	75.0	0.54	0.464	92.9	70.8	6.87	0.009***
9. I am excited to come to school.	14.3	25.0	1.34	0.248	21.4	16.7	0.24	0.626
10. On average, I received the following grades in school this year... (% A or A-)	69.6	58.3	0.96	0.327	67.9	66.7	0.01	0.917
11. Last year at school, I was disciplined... (% Never)	94.6	83.3	2.69	0.101	92.9	83.3	1.69	0.193

***Significant at the 1 percent level; **Significant at the 5 percent level; *Significant at the 10 percent level.

Themes from Open-Ended Responses

Below is a summary of themes identified from current student responses in each topic area:

<i>Which high school do you plan to attend?</i>
In order by number of responses from 26 middle schoolers: RASOTA, Lincoln HS, Lowell HS, Arts HS, ENYFA, East Side HS, Harlem Village Academies, Unity Center for Urban Technologies, and Young Women’s Leadership School.
<i>What was your biggest accomplishment in lessons this year?</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <u>Artistic Ability</u> — Students participated in their first live performances, finished an original song, created part of a musical from scratch, furthered an understanding of jazz, and sustained high notes they did not know they could hit. Students explored how music connects to other disciplines, by gaining independence of different body parts to produce linear and syncopated rhythms, and learned how human biology connects to vocals and making music.2. <u>Confidence and Belief in Self</u> — Many students developed the ability to comfortably perform in front of others, and gained confidence in their musical abilities. Students shared that their mentor helped them build a stronger self-image and to make progress instead of doubting their abilities.3. <u>Social Connectivity and Wellbeing</u> — Students were particularly satisfied with being able to connect consistently with a group of singers, and share different techniques with the chorus. Many students felt the program was a chance to take better care of themselves mentally and emotionally, and that participating in lessons made their parents proud.
<i>Do you have any thoughts or stories to share about working with your mentor?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● <u>Creating safe spaces</u> — Many students felt comfortable and safe with their mentor in otherwise challenging school environments. Students shared they were able to experiment with music without feeling anxious or shy. Students also said their mentors were understanding and encouraging when they were personally struggling.● <u>Supporting students’ musical journey</u> — Students describe being supported by their mentor in a range of musical activities, including college auditions, all-state auditions, and school jazz concerts. One student described a breakthrough when their mentor realized the student has perfect pitch. Students were pushed to work hard and do their best whenever they practice and perform, while mentors also made space for fun in the lessons.
<i>Is there anything else you would like to share with the ArtSmart team?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Overwhelmingly, students were grateful for an opportunity to learn a new activity they would not have access to without free lessons. Returning students requested an expansion to the instrumental program. Some graduating students would like to continue with ArtSmart in college; younger students felt that ArtSmart helped guide and support them through middle school.

Conclusion

Findings from ArtSmart’s two-year study demonstrate the program has statistically significant positive effects on a range of students’ social, emotional, and academic outcomes. In particular, the constant sample of ArtSmart students outperformed the comparison group of non-participants in “plans to attend college,” “having a meaningful connection with an adult at school,” and “feeling there is an adult they can talk to,” over the period from October 2021 to June 2023.

A 2023 study from MENTOR National found that one in three young people do not have a mentor, or someone outside of family to turn to for support and guidance.² Specific, targeted mentoring programs like the ArtSmart program are shown to have larger effect sizes globally on outcomes than mentoring programs generally designed to support youth.³ ArtSmart promotes positive social attitudes and relationships with mentors, while targeting specific artistic skills that benefit the lives of youth.

² MENTOR National. 2023 “Mentoring Impact.” <https://www.mentoring.org/mentoring-impact/>

³ Christensen, KM et al. “Non-Specific versus Targeted Approaches to Youth Mentoring: A Follow-up Meta-analysis.” *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, Vol. 49(5). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32297173/>

Appendix

Research Methodology and Study Design

The purpose of this study is to gather student data at the beginning and end of two program years to examine the effect of the ArtSmart program on students' social-emotional and academic learning outcomes over time. The study was approved by WCG Copernicus Group, an independent Institutional Review Board that provides regulatory and ethical review services for social and behavioral science research. The study compares the pre-post change in outcomes for ArtSmart participants against the change in outcomes for students who did not participate in the program.

The June 2023 survey was completed by 135 current ArtSmart students. For the longitudinal study, a constant group of 56 ArtSmart students and a comparison group of 24 non-participants participated at the start of the lessons in October 2021, in June 2022, in October 2022, and finally in June 2023. The parent/guardian of each respondent was notified of the study purpose, and each parent/guardian gave active consent. Each respondent gave active assent to participate in the two-year research study. The surveys were distributed electronically using an Airtable Form; participants were allowed to skip any question and to leave the survey at any time. In the post-test surveys, respondents in the comparison group were offered a \$10 gift card incentive to complete the survey.

Since a portion of the participants were not accepted to participate in the program via an audition process, the study includes a treatment group (n=56), a comparison group (n=24), and is pretest-posttest in design. The study is considered quasi-experimental because the students are accepted by an audition process to participate in lessons, and as such participants are not randomly assigned to the lessons intervention. Quasi-experimental design studies have higher internal validity than non-experimental designs, but they are not as strong as experimental designs in internal validity since participants are not randomly assigned.

It is noteworthy that the relatively small sample size (n=80) and omission of select demographic variables (including family history and income level) reduces the external validity of this study. With a higher degree of internal validity, the study is able to confidently test the causal relationships with the ArtSmart lessons program; however, the findings are limited in the ability to be generalized to other arts program interventions.

Data Processing and Project Dates

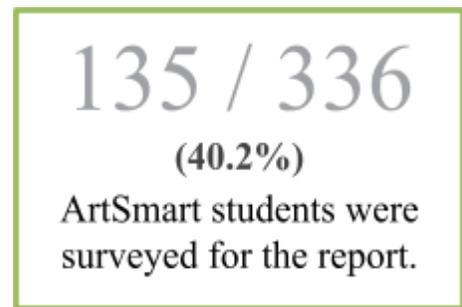
The data were edited and coded by the researcher following procedures and policies consistent with IRB Protocol # 20211480 and IRB Study # 1306193. The longitudinal study participants were each assigned a unique identifier with the code sheet stored in the WCG IRB Connexus Portal.

The final survey was conducted in May and June 2023. The longitudinal study consists of four survey waves conducted in October 2021, June 2022, October 2022, and June 2023. Findings from the first year of the study were published in the Chronicle for Evidence Based Mentoring in September 2022.⁴

Response Rate

The response rate for the survey was 40% (52% in June 2022).

135 of 336 participants completed the end-of-year survey. With 411 current students in the program, invites were delivered to 336 students with valid contact information and signed media and survey consent forms. 80 participants responded to all four waves of the two-year longitudinal study.



Sample Description

To contextualize the study findings, a series of demographic responses were collected from participants: *Region*, *Race/Ethnicity*, *Gender Identity*, *LGBTQ+ Identity*, and *Grade Level*. From a descriptive observation, the demographic variables appear to be fairly proportionate between the ArtSmart student group and the comparison group. Below is a descriptive breakdown of the participant sample populations:

ArtSmart Student Group (n=56)

89% identify as people of color; 39% identify as LGBTQ+; 68% female, 18% male, 18% nonbinary or self-identify; 21% attend middle school and 79% attend high school.

Comparison Group (n=24)

96% identify as people of color; 33% identify as LGBTQ+; 75% female and 25% male; 21% attend middle school and 79% attend high school.

⁴ Linett, Evan. (2022). Study of the Effectiveness of the ArtSmart Lessons Program on Student Learning and Behavioral Outcomes. *Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring*.

<https://www.evidencebasedmentoring.org/artsmart-investigates-the-effectiveness-of-a-school-based-arts-mentorship-intervention-on-students-learning-outcomes/>

Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants			
Demographic Measures	n size	% ArtSmart Students (n=56)	% Comparison Students (n=24)
Region			
Chicago	12	14%	17%
Newark & Jersey City	10	9%	21%
New York City	27	32%	38%
Philadelphia	19	27%	17%
San Francisco	12	18%	8%
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0%	0%
Asian or Asian American	13	18%	13%
Black or African American	13	14%	21%
Hispanic or Latinx	30	36%	42%
Multiracial	17	21%	21%
White	7	11%	4%
Gender Identity			
Female	54	64%	75%
Male	16	18%	25%
Nonbinary or Self-Identify	10	18%	0%
LGBTQ+ Identity			
Yes	29	39%	33%
No	35	41%	54%
Unsure or Prefer Not to Respond	14	20%	13%
Grade Level			
Middle School (6th – 8th Grade)	29	21%	21%
High School (9th – 12th Grade)	63	79%	79%
Total	80		

Complete Survey Questionnaire

Below is the survey questionnaire that each participant received online through an Airtable form. Apart from the inclusion of specific questions for “intended high school,” “having the same mentor,” and “having a productive outlet,” the questions in June 2023 were the same as those used in October 2021. The new questions were developed with the program operations director before survey launch.

No	Question	Theme	Trended
1	I identify my race or ethnicity as:	Demographics	Y
2	I identify my gender as:	Demographics	Y
3	I identify as LGBTQ+.	Demographics	Y
4	I speak the following languages at home:	Demographics	
5	On an average school night, I get the following hours of sleep:	Demographics	Y
6	During my time in ArtSmart, I have always had the same mentor.	Demographics	
7	On average, I received the following grades in school this year:	Academic Development	Y
8	Last year at school, I was disciplined (specifically, received detention, suspension, or expulsion):	Academic Development	Y
9	In the past 30 days, my mental health has not been good:	Physical and Psychological Safety	Y
10	School feels like a safe environment to me.	Physical and Psychological Safety	Y
11	My friends support me to be my best self outside of school.	Physical and Psychological Safety	Y
12	My classmates support me to be my best self at school.	Physical and Psychological Safety	Y
13	I have a meaningful connection with at least one adult at school.	Physical and Psychological Safety	Y
14	There is an adult I can talk to when I am feeling stressed or having problems.	Physical and Psychological Safety	Y
15	I have an important role in making my school a better place.	Social and Emotional Learning	Y

16	I have a productive outlet that helps me deal with negative or stressful emotions.	Social and Emotional Learning	
17	I believe I am talented.	Social and Emotional Learning	Y
18	I feel I am fully responsible for my actions.	Social and Emotional Learning	Y
19	I am confident in my ability to set and achieve goals.	Social and Emotional Learning	Y
20	I feel art gives my life purpose.	Social and Emotional Learning	
21	I am excited to come to school.	Academic Development	Y
22	I am excited to come to school on lesson days.	Academic Development	
23	I plan on attending college.	Academic Development	Y
24	I have a good relationship with my mentor.	Program Specific	
25	My mentor helps me set goals I can achieve.	Program Specific	
26	My intended area of study is:	Open-End	
27	What was your biggest accomplishment in lessons this year?	Open-End	
28	Do you have any thoughts or stories to share about working with your mentor?	Open-End	
29	Is there anything else you would like to share with the ArtSmart team?	Open-End	