



DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES CENTER

Educating Minds and Hearts™

Evaluation: *Caring School Community*®

Snapshot

San Francisco Unified School District, CA

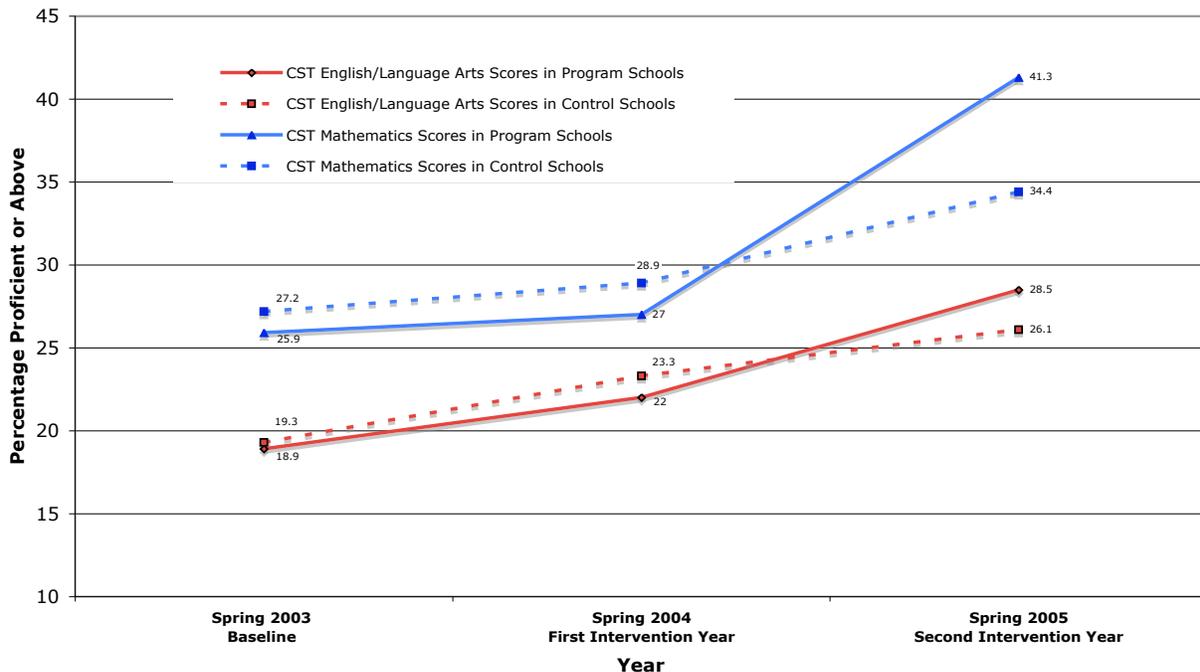
- 12 underperforming schools—6 schools implemented the *Caring School Community*® (*CSC*) program and 6 control schools did not implement the program; the English/Language Arts and Mathematics curricula used in the 12 schools were the same
- 3700 students, racially and socio-economically diverse, grades 2–6

Background

A federally funded, third-party randomized trial of the *CSC* program was conducted from 2003 to 2006 by the San Francisco Unified School District's research department. This study involved twelve underperforming elementary schools, six that were randomly selected to implement the *CSC* program while the other six served as a control group. Over the two-year intervention period, from spring 2003 to spring 2005, students in the *CSC* schools showed significantly stronger academic growth in both reading and math as measured by the California Standards Test—even though the *CSC* program does not include an instructional focus, but rather concentrates exclusively on creating a supportive learning environment and building a school-wide culture of care. The program and control schools used identical reading and mathematics curricula.

The following graph depicts the reading and math scores for the two sets of schools at baseline and after one and two years of *CSC* implementation. It shows no differential gains in achievement after one year, but then sizeable gains in reading and especially math achievement for students in *CSC* schools during the second year of implementation. These differential gains were attributed to the development of stronger “school bonding” (i.e., a stronger affective commitment to the school and its values and goals) among students in *CSC* schools.

**Achievement Effects of The Caring School Community Program
San Francisco Unified School District
Percentage of 2nd-5th Grade Students Proficient or Above on California Standards Test
English/Language Arts and Mathematics
Spring 2003–Spring 2005**



The Principal of one of the CSC schools reports:

The Caring School Community program has given us a common vocabulary and tools that work. We have class meetings on the same day each week in every classroom. We do the big, important topics on the same day, schoolwide. When every classroom simultaneously addresses arguing, teasing, or bullying, the students bring their understanding to recess, and you can see them putting it into action.

Kids feel safe. When there are issues, the kids know it is okay to bring them up. They know it helps. The practices of the CSC program carry over to academics. We use “Think, Pair, Share” [one of the cooperative structures used in CSC] in math and reading. We see students helping each other with their work. Students no longer bring anger from the playground into math class. They resolve it outside. We don’t see it. There are fewer disruptions and more achievement.

The CSC program has brought our staff closer together. We use the principles of CSC at staff meetings. Having this coherence in a school helps us. We’ve become a small, close community that works.