Ophelia's Place:
Rural School Program Evaluation

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INTRODUCTION

Youth today encounter a variety of stressors in their lives, and are especially vulnerable during school transitions, such as from elementary school to middle school. Self-esteem, peer bullying and victimization, and perceived support systems are some areas in which students may experience difficulties as they leave childhood and enter adolescence. For girls and students in rural schools, these difficulties may be especially pronounced. Adolescent girls are more prone to peer stressors, are more influenced by peer problems, and are twice as likely as boys to become depressed. Teens in rural areas have fewer available activities and less adult support and supervision, and are more likely to be involved with substance use compared to those in metropolitan areas. Early adolescent girls residing in rural Lane County struggle with a higher level of anxiety, depression, and trauma than their urban counterparts (McCormick, MSW, 2013).

Ophelia's Place is a prevention-based non-profit organization dedicated to helping girls make healthy life choices through empowerment, education, and support. To address some of the recurring problems seen in youth, especially in rural communities, Ophelia's Place developed a holistic school-based program that includes school presentations, school staff trainings, and groups specifically designed to support and empower girls. With multi-year support from the Ford Family Foundation, Ophelia's Place selected six rural middle schools in Lane County and randomly assigned them as either control or intervention schools, to conduct a systematic program evaluation which included student surveys conducted pre- and post-intervention (or done at the same point in time in control schools). The program took place in the rural communities of Cottage Grove, Junction City, and Creswell between September 2014 and June 2017. Ophelia's Place developed a Rural Schools Partnership to provide schools with the tools and resources to affect a positive change in girls' lives and the overall school culture. While the Ophelia's Place mission is to empower girls, to achieve this goal, it is critical to educate both boys and girls and the adults in their lives and provide them with the tools and information they need. Thus, boys were included in the school-based prevention programs and participated in the student surveys. Oregon Research Institute – Community Evaluation Services (ORI-CES) consulted on the development of the student surveys and in the analyses of the results, presented here. This program evaluation may be used to improve the program, expand the program, advocate for the program, and assess the overall effectiveness of the program in achieving positive outcomes for students.

BACKGROUND

Ophelia's Place has worked with schools for over 13 years. This work has illuminated the need to develop a holistic approach to providing student support. In Ophelia's Place's work over the years with rural school students and staff, a multi-pronged approach emerged as the most effective way to enhance girls' lives and school cultures. As problem behaviors in schools have been increasing, more schools and parents are looking for programs to ameliorate these issues and influence school cultures in positive ways. This program was developed as a way to bring resources directly into vulnerable rural communities, providing Ophelia's Place with the unique opportunity to positively impact both students and staff.

Ophelia's Place staff and volunteers are experts in female-responsive programs and are trained to deliver strengths based trauma informed services. Ophelia's Place has provided resources for girls for well over a decade, empowering them to develop the skills to build self-esteem, increase resource awareness, and cultivating beneficial peer and adult relationships. This expertise working with girls can also impact boys in positive ways and can improve the school climate overall. Rural communities often have more limited resources to provide their young people with needed intervention, support, and education resources. Ophelia's Place contributes to a vital, rural community with their school partnership program that builds a healthy and nurturing school environment through empowering youth, fostering healthy relationships, and strengthening peer and adult support networks. Their work strengthens rural communities by empowering and valuing all young girls and their peers to embrace their unique talents, build self-esteem, and create healthy and productive futures.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This Ophelia's Place Rural Schools program was designed to encourage the development of the skills necessary for adolescents to build self-esteem, increase supportive networks, and become successful citizens. The Rural Schools Partnership builds awareness of resources and provides tools for girls, their peers, and school staff members to create a positive self-image, engage in healthy relationships, and learn effective communication skills. With the skills gained from participating in this program, rural youth will increase their self-esteem and confidence levels, build supportive networks (including peers and adults), develop an understanding of healthy versus unhealthy relationships, and increase their awareness of available resources. Students will build skills of leadership and personal responsibility by learning constructive communication skills, learning how to be a peer ally in difficult situations, and recognizing the importance of confidentiality when contributing to Girls Empowerment Group conversations. As students transition from elementary to middle school, this is an especially vulnerable time as adolescents typically decrease in self-esteem, report increases in peer bullying and victimization, and often initiate substance use. The Ophelia's Place program was designed to address this vulnerable population, to instill self-confidence in students' unique talents and abilities to make positive contributions to their community.

In collaboration with school administrators and staff, Ophelia's Place created and piloted the Rural Schools Partnership in the 2013/14 school year with two rural school districts. With Ford Family Foundation grant support, Ophelia's Place piloted the school-based prevention programs. As a pilot project, we collected feedback and did a preliminary evaluation. Students and staff reported that it was productive and valuable for both students and school staff. An evaluation of participant surveys revealed that Ophelia's Place helped create a safer environment for students to discuss issues and problems, and most importantly, they were able to identify and speak in confidence with a trusted adult at their school. Overall, students showed an increase in their awareness of healthy relationships and in their self-confidence.

Self-esteem. Elementary school students typically have high levels of self-esteem which decrease as they transition into middle school or junior high (Wigfield & Eccles, 1994). Males also tend to have higher self-esteem compared to females (Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999). Self-esteem is correlated with better school performance, but this is not because high self-esteem leads to better academic performance, rather, higher self-esteem is partly the result of good school performance (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). Self-esteem is strongly associated with happiness; high self-esteem does seem to be related to greater happiness, while low self-esteem can be predictive of depression. It is recommended to use praise to boost self-esteem as a reward for socially desirable behavior and consequences, rather than using indiscriminate praise or unlinking school performance with positive feedback (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). Since self-esteem has been shown to decline in youth around 6th grade, and this is especially true for girls, an intervention that slows this decline would be effective (versus one that actually raises self-esteem, which is already high in elementary school students). Therefore, to evaluate the Ophelia's Place school program, we examined levels of self-esteem and predicted that those in the intervention condition would see less of a decrease in self-esteem across the 6th grade pre-test and post-test surveys.

Peer Victimization. Physical, verbal, and relational aggression (various forms of bullying) from peers occurs frequently during early adolescence. In a recent report conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics and the Bureau of Justice Statistics, almost 600,000 adolescents reported being victims of physical aggression or violence while at school, and these numbers had increased over the past year (Robers, Kemp, Truman, & Snyder, 2013). Moreover, the rates of bullying were greater for middle school youth compared to high school, impacting about a third of middle school youth; 37% of sixth graders, 30% of seventh graders, and 31% of eighth graders reported having been victims of overt physical or verbal aggression, relational aggression such as social exclusion, and/or threatened harm. The high prevalence of different forms of peer victimization is a concern given that frequent peer victimization is a risk factor for a range of social adjustment and mental health problems for adolescents.

Adolescents who experience recurring overt aggression are more likely to affiliate with deviant peers, and to increasingly engage in alcohol use and antisocial behaviors (Rusby, Forrester, Biglan, & Metzler, 2005; Wormington, Anderson, Tomlinson, & Brown, 2012). Girls appear to be especially vulnerable; in one study, time spent with peers who use verbal aggression (teasing or saying mean things) is associated with greater sad mood and, compared to boys, girls experienced more extreme negative moods (Rusby, Westling, Crowley, & Light, 2013). Repeated overt peer harassment during adolescence predicts depression (Evans, Smokowski, & Cotter, 2014). Relational aggression, which involves active manipulation of peer acceptance by excluding, telling lies, or gossiping, is also especially problematic for girls. Girls appear to experience more negative effects from exposure to relational aggression than boys (Merrell, Buchanan, & Tran, 2006), perhaps because it may cause them more distress. Relational aggression victimization during adolescence is associated with depression, alcohol use, and increased antisocial behavior a year later (Light, Rusby, Nies, & Snijders, 2013). Studies that include both relational and physical/overt aggression identify many more girls who are being victimized by their peers compared to studies that solely investigate overt aggression.

Supportive networks. Social support can be defined in many ways; for the purposes of this evaluation, it is defined as having supportive networks of parents, classmates, teachers, and close friends that participating student's feel they can access relatively easily to obtain help, support, positive regard, and empathy. This kind of social support also predicts one's sense of global self-worth as a person. The regard with which others manifest toward the self predicts global self-worth. Social support can also buffer stressful experiences for youth, protecting them from psychological distress (Camera, Bacigalupe, & Padilla, 2017). There is some evidence that resources for social support can change from childhood, where support from parents can buffer the impact of stressful events, into adolescence, where parent support does not appear to act as an impactful barrier (Hostinar, Sullivan, & Gunnar, 2014). Thus, for children transitioning into adolescence, peer support may be more important than parental support. There is also an element of perceived support in self-report surveys; students may have social support they do not feel comfortable accessing.

EVALUATION

Sixth grade students in five schools participated in either a randomized control or intervention condition, some in multiple years with unique student participants each year. The intervention and control schools were matched because they were similar demographically. All students completed a survey, those in intervention schools then participated in the Ophelia's Place Rural Schools program, and then all students were surveyed again. Students in the control schools are then compared to those who received the intervention on three main outcomes: (1) Self-esteem; (2) Developing positive peer and adult support networks; and (3) An ability to identify and feel more comfortable accessing their available resources, including supportive adults and school and community resources. Bullying by school peers and experiences of relational aggression were also evaluated. For the first year, all schools were intervention schools to pilot and refine the program, so those schools do not have matched control conditions.

Student surveys included measures of self-esteem, bullying and relational aggression, and social support (see Appendix A for the complete survey). Ophelia's Place staff administered the paper-and-pencil surveys at schools, and then entered them into Survey Monkey to obtain an electronic dataset to deliver to ORI-CES. ORI-CES cleaned all of the data files, converted all of the survey response options to numerical values that could be transformed into scale scores (e.g., converting "Strongly Agree" to a numerical value of "4"), and consolidated the datasets to include only students who completed both pre- and post-intervention (or control) surveys. Surveys with incorrect identification numbers were deleted. We then calculated all of the pre- and post-test scale scores and looked at mean differences between intervention and control schools, as well as by gender and school. Significance tests comparing the means from intervention and control conditions were conducted, calculating the difference between the means in the independent samples (t-tests). The standard cut-off for significance is probability (p) less than .05 that the finding occurred by chance; this standard was used for these significance tests. Results from this program evaluation will be presented to the Ford Family Foundation and will be leveraged into future Ophelia's Place programming, both via refinement of the school program and expanding it into more schools.

Data were collected via student self-reports on paper-and-pencil surveys, under the supervision of Ophelia's Place staff members. These paper surveys were then entered into Survey Monkey. Data collection dates were coordinated with each school's schedule and availability. See Table 1 on the next page for details regarding participating schools and dates data was collected. See Appendix A for the complete student survey.

Self-esteem was measured using the widely utilized Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (1965), designed for use with adolescents. This scale is 10 items that measure global self-worth, with items assessing both positive and negative feelings about the self (e.g., On the whole, I am satisfied with myself; I certainly feel useless at times). All items are answered using a 4-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Total scale scores are composed of responses to all 10 items summed, so there is a range from 10 to 40. The scale is coded such that higher scores indicate higher self-esteem. This scale has high reliability and validity and has been used in numerous studies.

Peer Victimization was measured using an 8 item scale. Items were measured on a scale of 0–7, from not at all to 10 or more times per day. These include items measuring overt peer physical aggression ("how many times did a student hit, push, or physically fight you at school") and verbal aggression ("how many times did a student call you names, swear at you, or say mean things to at school") (Rusby et al., 2005) and six items measuring relational aggression (e.g., social exclusion, threatening to withdraw friendship, gossiping or spreading rumors, and telling lies about you). The relational aggression items have good reliability (α = .89) and were associated with increased antisocial behavior during early adolescence (Light, Rusby, et al., 2013).

Social Support was measured using the Social Support Scale for Children, which is designed to assess social support and positive regard from parents, teachers, classmates, and close friends. Each source of support is assessed with a subscale, so there are four total subscale scores for each child. Each item is scored on a 1-4 scale, and to calculate the subscales the values are summed then divided by 6, the number of items per subscale. This results in a final subscale score between 1 and 4, and a standard deviation around .60. This scale was designed for use in elementary or middle schools students, and it has high validity and reliability for elementary and middle school student samples (Harter, 2012). In other samples (see Harter, 2012), parent and teacher support appears to be systematically higher than the two sources of peer support (classmates and close friends). Teacher support also tends to decline as a function of grade level. Finally, girls tend to report higher levels of support from close friends than do boys.

Table 1. Intervention and control schools with dates of survey data collection

	Pre-surveys	Post-surveys		Pre-surveys	Post-surveys
2014/15					
Intervention Schools			*Control Schools*		
Lincoln MS	10/14/14	5/11/15	NA		
Creswell MS	12/1/14, 12/8/14	5/26/15	NA		
2015/16					
Lincoln MS	10/2/15	5/19/16	Coffenberry MS	9/23/15	4/21/16
Oaklea MS	10/7/15	5/18/16	Memorial MS	10/22/15	6/2/16
2016/17					
Lincoln MS	10/13/16	5/18/17	Coffenberry MS	10/13/16	5/16/17
Oaklea MS	10/20/16	6/6/17	Memorial MS	10/25/16	5/15/17

DATA CLEANING

Ophelia's Place provided data files to ORI-CES with de-identified student information (i.e., ORI-CES had no information linking student identification numbers to student names or other information). Prior to conducting data analyses, ORI-CES went through the data files and transformed the data into a useable format, with numerical values associated with each survey answer. In addition, student data that could not be matched with both pre- and post-survey data, either due to incorrect student identification numbers or missing data at one time point were deleted. Unfortunately this resulted in a loss of a significant amount of data collected, but did result in usable data files for analyses. Some entire schools were dropped from the analyses because data was only collected at one time point. The number of students with complete data for each outcome variable fluctuated slightly, so some of the final student numbers for each data outcome change slightly from the total numbers of participants. See Table 2 for a detailed summary of the data files and matching process.

Table 2. Data counts before and after matching pre/post cases with student ID numbers

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
PRE	179	452	462
PRE-incomplete	144	88	155
PRE sub-total	**323**	**540**	**617**
POST	109	554	323
POST-incomplete	114	165	108
POST sub-total	**223**	**719**	**431**
Pre-/Post-sub-totals Combined	546	1259	1048

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
PRE/POST *matched* Intervention	139	198	180
PRE/POST *matched* Control	NA	151	124
Total *matched* cases per year	**139**	**349**	**304**

RESULTS: STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2014/15, two schools participated and both received the intervention. The age range of student participants was 10 to 13 years old, with a mean age of 11.5 years old. There were 55 students who had pre- and post-tests at Creswell Middle School (MS) and 83 students who had pre- and post-tests at Lincoln MS.

In 2015/16, four schools participated, with two receiving the intervention and two as controls. The age range of student participants was 11 to 13 years old, with a mean age of 11.5 years old. There were 151 students who had pre- and post-test data at the two control schools, and 197 students who had data at the two intervention schools.

Similarly, in 2016/17, four schools participated, with two receiving the intervention and two as controls. The age range of student participants was 10 to 13 years old, with a mean age of 11 years old. There were 123 students who had pre- and post-test data at the two control schools, and 180 students who had data at the two intervention schools.

RESULTS: SELF-ESTEEM

The Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale was scored as per the scale instructions, such that items were reverse-scored as indicated and summed such that *higher scores indicate higher self-esteem*. In general, average levels of self-esteem in all student samples were high, averaging over 30 on a scale that ranged from 10 to 40, with a standard deviation of 5.9-6.0. Many more students were at the top of the scale compared to the bottom of the scale; very few students rated themselves at levels of 20 or below.

For the 2014/15 intervention, there was a slight decline in self-esteem from pre-survey to post-survey, as would be expected at this developmental age (see Table 3 and Figure 1). Boys at Lincoln MS were the exception, showing an increase in self-esteem after the intervention. All other groups declined. Thus, the intervention delivered in 2014/15 did not appear to increase student self-esteem, although without a control group comparison it is unknown if self-esteem would have declined *more* if students did not participate in the intervention.

Table 3. 2014/15 Average (Mean) Self-esteem Scale Scores for Matched Students, by Gender and School: Two Intervention Schools

	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Self-esteem (M)	# of students	Self-esteem (M)	# of students
Creswell MS: Boys	32.7	31	31.4	31
Creswell MS: Girls	30.0	24	29.3	24
Creswell MS Total	**31.6**	**55**	**30.5**	**55**
Lincoln MS: Boys	32.0	29	32.7	29
Lincoln MS: Girls	30.4	55	29.6	55
Lincoln MS Total	**31.0**	**84**	**30.7**	**84**
Both Schools Total	**31.2**	**139**	**30.6**	**139**

Figure 1. 2014/15 Self-Esteem Scores at Intervention Schools, by Gender and School
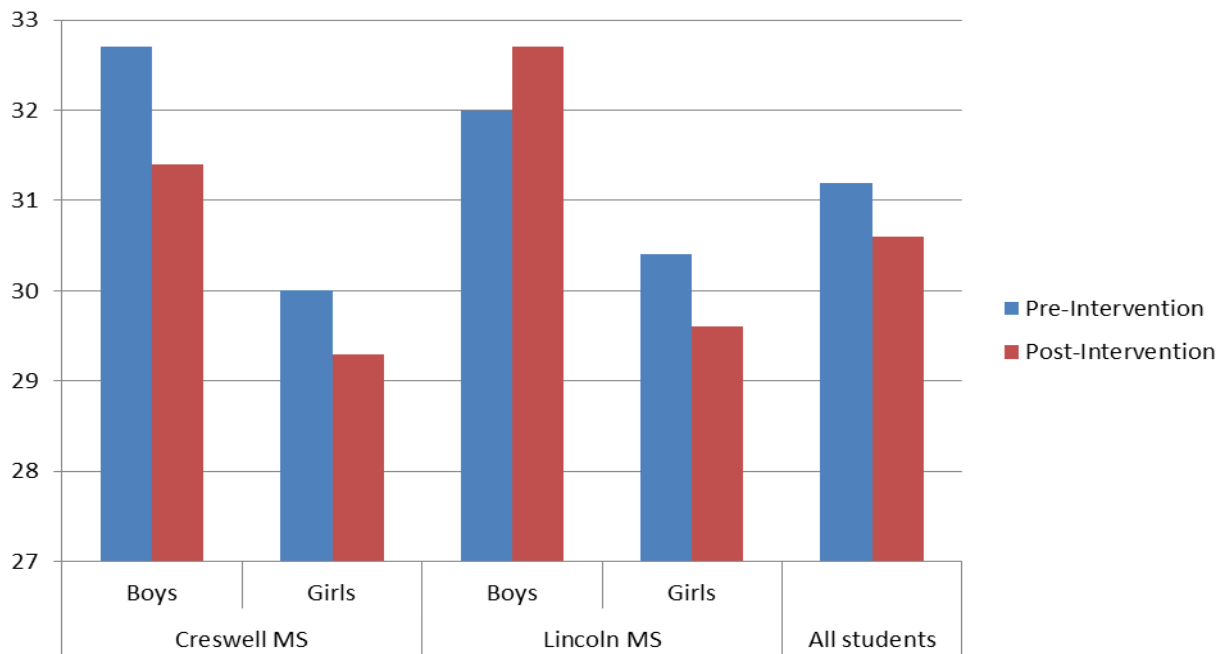

For the 2015/16 intervention and control schools, there were no significant differences between the students in the control and intervention schools in terms of self-reported levels of self-esteem (see Table 4 and Figure 2). There were no significant differences in baseline levels of self-esteem, and no significant differences over time regarding changes in self-esteem for those students who received the intervention compared to those who did not. This indicates no impact of the intervention on self-esteem for the program delivered in 2015/16.

Table 4. 2015/16 Self-esteem by Gender and School: Two Control and Two Intervention Schools

	Pre-test		Post-test	
Control Schools	Self-esteem (M)	# of students	Self-esteem (M)	# of students
Coffenberry MS: Boys	31.5	22	32.1	22
Coffenberry MS: Girls	31.3	29	29.1	29
Coffenberry MS Total	**31.4**	**51**	**30.4**	**51**
Memorial MS: Boys	33.5	34	34.7	35
Memorial MS: Girls	32.2	66	32.2	65
Memorial MS Total	**32.6**	**100**	**33.1**	**100**
Control Schools Total	**32.2**	**151**	**32.2**	**151**
Intervention Schools				
Lincoln MS: Boys	33.0	51	32.1	51
Lincoln MS: Girls	32.0	60	31.5	67
Lincoln MS Total	**32.5**	**111**	**31.7**	**118**
Oaklea MS: Boys	32.6	40	32.5	42
Oaklea MS: Girls	32.5	38	31.6	37
Oaklea MS Total	**32.5**	**78**	**32.1**	**79**
Intervention Schools Total	**32.5**	**189**	**31.9**	**197**

Figure 2. 2015/16 Self-Esteem at Control and Intervention Schools, by Gender and School
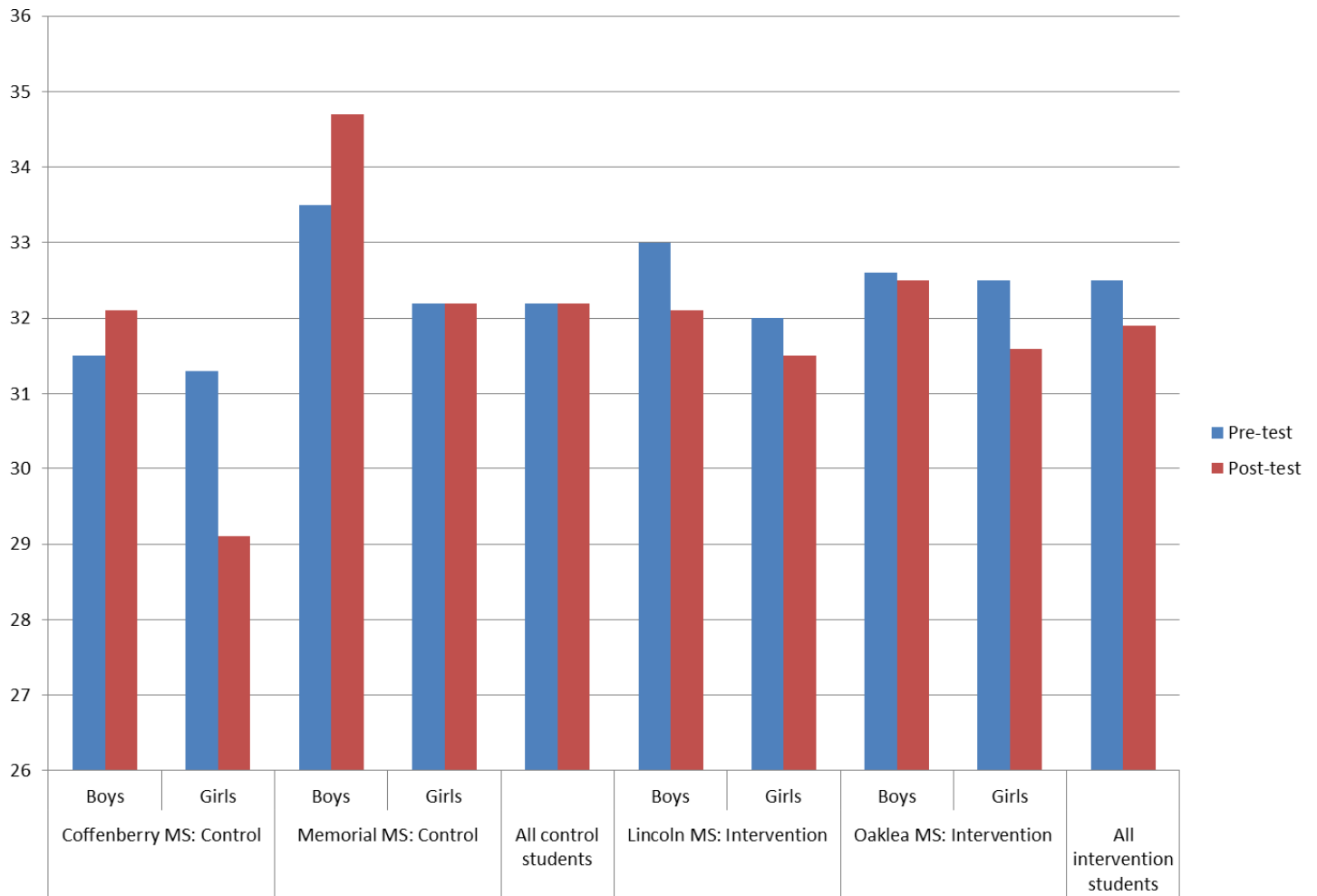
In the 2016/17 school year, there was a significant difference between the control and intervention schools in average self-esteem. Post-test, intervention students had significantly higher self-esteem compared to the control students (M = 32.6 for intervention schools; M = 29.9 for control schools; t = -3.8, p = 0.0001). However, there were also pre-test differences in self-esteem scale scores between the control and intervention schools, with the control schools, and girls at Memorial MS in particular, These were not statistically significant differences however (M = 31.7 for intervention schools; M = 30.5 for control schools; t = 1.7, p = .09). Unlike the control schools, however, self-esteem increased for students in the intervention conditions, with the exception of girls at Lincoln MS who reported a very small decrease. This is contrary to most expected patterns of self-esteem which tends to decrease in 6th grade. *This indicates a positive impact of the intervention on the reported self-esteem for these students.*

Table 5. 2016/17 Self-esteem by Gender and School: Two Control and Two Intervention Schools

	Pre-test		Post-test	
Control Schools	Self-esteem (M)	# of students	Self-esteem (M)	# of students
Coffenberry MS: Boys	30.7	20	31.8	20
Coffenberry MS: Girls	30.5	27	30.4	27
Coffenberry MS Total	**30.6**	**47**	**31.0**	**47**
Memorial MS: Boys	32.0	27	30.1	27
Memorial MS: Girls	29.6	49	28.8	49
Memorial MS Total	**30.4**	**76**	**29.9**	**76**
Control Schools Total	**30.5**	**123**	**29.9**	**123**
Intervention Schools				
Lincoln MS: Boys	31.7	60	33.0	60
Lincoln MS: Girls	31.7	49	31.3	49
Lincoln MS Total	**31.7**	**109**	**32.2**	**109**
Oaklea MS: Boys	32.1	41	33.4	41
Oaklea MS: Girls	31.3	30	33.0	30
Oaklea MS Total	**31.7**	**71**	**33.2**	**71**
Intervention Schools Total	**31.7**	**180**	**32.6**	**180**

Figure 3. 2016/17 Self-Esteem at Control and Intervention Schools, by Gender and School
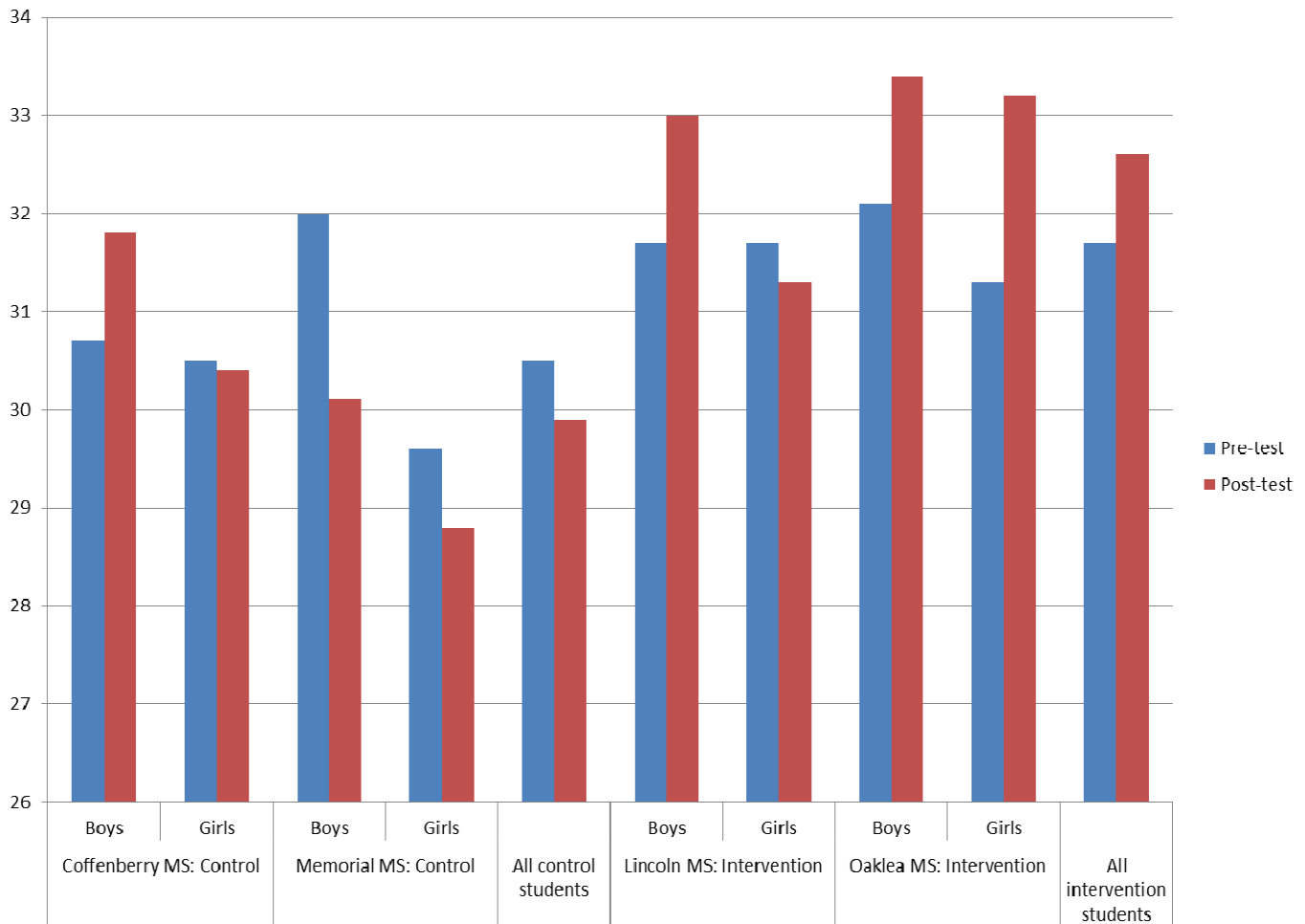
Experiences of bullying by peers and relational aggression were assessed using 8 items; these items asked about a variety of bullying or relational aggression experiences and the frequency with which the participating student experienced such bullying by other students. Items were summed, with *higher scores indicating more frequent experiences of bullying and relational aggression*. The scale ranged from 0 to 56 with an average score of 7.2, indicating that each type of bullying experience occurred about 1-2 times in the past month, across the whole sample. The median, or "middle" value, was 5. Since more items in this scale assess relational aggression, it is possible that girls will have higher scores as they are more frequently victims of relational aggression compared to boys. Overall, about 19% of participants reported no experiences of bullying, another 50% had low rates of bullying with average scores between 1 and 7, indicating bullying occurring less than 1-2 times a month, and not every type of peer victimization asked about on the survey occurred. The remaining 30% of students reported higher rates of bullying, from 3-4 times in the last month up to 10 times a day (very few students reported levels this high).

For the 2014/15 intervention, there was an increase in experiences of peer victimization from pre-survey to post-survey (see Table 6 and Figure 4). This is consistent with other research into peer victimization, which tends to be high in sixth grade students. Thus, the intervention delivered in 2014/15 did not appear to decrease peer victimization, although without a control group comparison it is unknown if experiences of peer victimization might have increased *more* if students did not participate in the intervention.

Table 6. 2014/15 Frequencies of Experiencing Peer Victimization, by Gender and School: Two Intervention Schools

	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Peer Victimization	# of students	Peer Victimization	# of students
Creswell MS: Boys	3.2	31	6.4	31
Creswell MS: Girls	7.6	24	10.3	24
Creswell MS Total	**5.1**	**55**	**8.1**	**55**
Lincoln MS: Boys	5.6	29	7.1	28
Lincoln MS: Girls	6.6	54	9.9	55
Lincoln MS Total	**6.2**	**83**	**9.0**	**83**
Both Schools Total	**5.8**	**138**	**8.6**	**138**

Figure 4. 2014/15 Frequencies of Experiencing Peer Victimization, by Gender and School
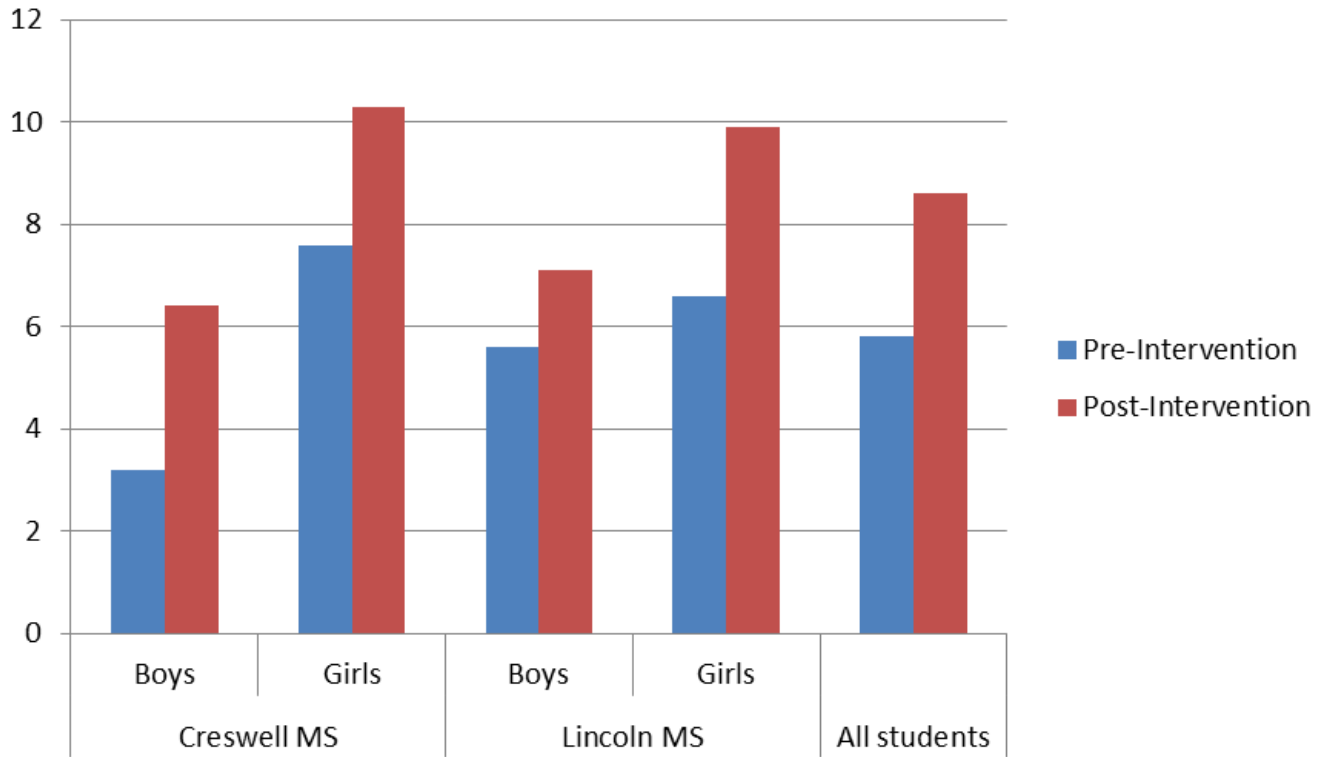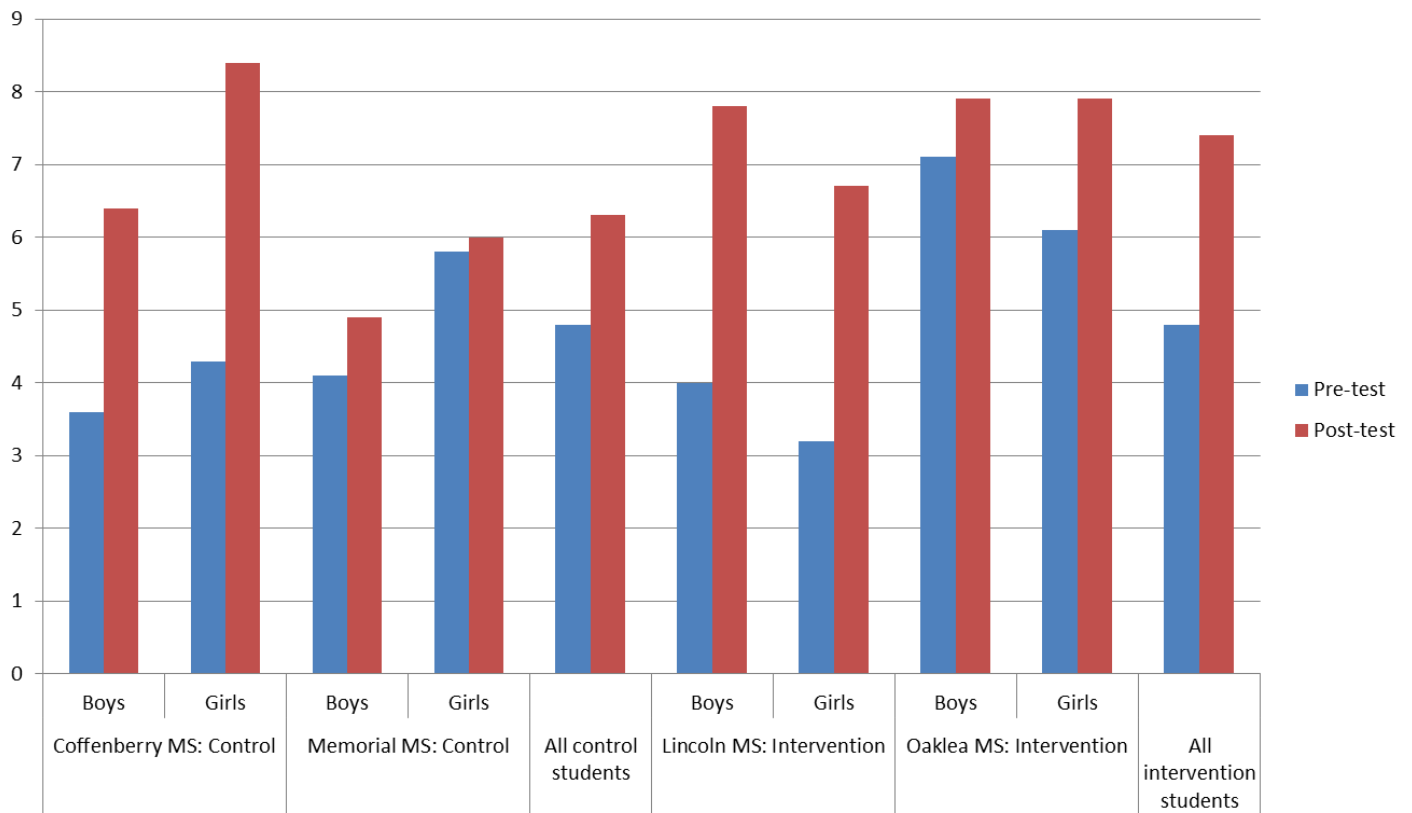

For the 2015/16 intervention and control schools, there were no significant differences between the students in the control and intervention schools in terms of self-reported experiences of peer victimization (see Table 7 and Figure 5). There were no significant differences in baseline levels of peer victimization, and no significant differences over time regarding changes in frequencies of peer victimization for those students who received the intervention compared to those who did not. The patterns of peer victimization indicate that this varies greatly by school; experiences of peer victimization increased in all schools, with substantial increases in on control school and one intervention school, with smaller increases seen in the other control and intervention schools. This indicates no noticeable impact of the intervention on experiences of peer victimization for the program delivered in 2015/16, possibly indicating that school climate needs to be addressed in a more comprehensive fashion. Levels of peer victimization appeared to be more influenced by the school level versus the individual level (i.e., frequency of experiences of peer victimization varied more by school then by control vs. intervention condition). Other school level variables, such implementation of school-wide positive behavior intervention systems, may account for some of these differences across schools.

Table 7. 2015/16 Frequencies of Experiencing Peer Victimization, by Gender and School: Two Control and Two Intervention Schools

	Pre-test		Post-test	
Control Schools	Peer Victimization	# of students	Peer Victimization	# of students
Coffenberry MS: Boys	3.6	22	6.4	22
Coffenberry MS: Girls	4.3	29	8.4	29
Coffenberry MS Total	**4.0**	**51**	**7.5**	**51**
Memorial MS: Boys	4.1	34	4.9	35
Memorial MS: Girls	5.8	66	6.0	65
Memorial MS Total	**5.3**	**100**	**5.6**	**100**
Control Schools Total	**4.8**	**151**	**6.3**	**151**
Intervention Schools				
Lincoln MS: Boys	4.0	51	7.8	51
Lincoln MS: Girls	3.2	61	6.7	67
Lincoln MS Total	**3.6**	**112**	**7.1**	**118**
Oaklea MS: Boys	7.1	40	7.9	42
Oaklea MS: Girls	6.1	38	7.9	37
Oaklea MS Total	**6.6**	**78**	**7.9**	**79**
Intervention Schools Total	**4.8**	**190**	**7.4**	**197**

Figure 5. 2015/16 Experiences of Peer Victimization at Control and Intervention Schools, by Gender and School

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For the 2016/17 intervention and control schools, there was a significant difference in baseline (pre-test) levels of frequency of peer victimization, with students at the two control schools reporting higher levels of peer victimization compared to students at the two intervention schools (M = 4.4 for intervention schools; M = 6.4 for control schools; t = -2.2, p = 0.03; see Table 8 and Figure 6). However, even accounting for this baseline difference, there is a significant difference between the control and intervention schools at post-test (M = 4.8 for intervention schools; M = 8.5 for control schools; t = -4.1, p = 0.0001). Although students in the intervention condition reported increased peer victimization at post-test, peer victimization increased much more for students in the control conditions. Although other school-level variables are likely also playing a role, *this pattern of results suggests a positive impact of the intervention* in the 2016/17 school year, indicating that students who received the intervention had lower levels of peer victimization across time. While students in the control condition experienced sharp increases in peer victimization across time, with the exception of boys at Coffenberry MS, students in the intervention condition had less of an increase in peer victimization over time.

Table 8. 2016/17 Frequencies of Experiencing Peer Victimization, by Gender and School: Two Control and Two Intervention Schools

	Pre-test		Post-test	
Control Schools	Peer Victimization	# of students	Peer Victimization	# of students
Coffenberry MS: Boys	9.5	20	7.2	20
Coffenberry MS: Girls	4.7	27	6.6	27
Coffenberry MS Total	**6.7**	**47**	**6.8**	**47**
Memorial MS: Boys	6.6	27	8.8	27
Memorial MS: Girls	5.9	49	9.9	49
Memorial MS Total	**6.2**	**76**	**9.5**	**76**
Control Schools Total	**6.4**	**123**	**8.5**	**123**
Intervention Schools				
Lincoln MS: Boys	3.6	60	3.8	60
Lincoln MS: Girls	3.6	49	4.9	49
Lincoln MS Total	**3.6**	**109**	**4.3**	**109**
Oaklea MS: Boys	4.5	41	5.2	41
Oaklea MS: Girls	7.1	30	6.2	30
Oaklea MS Total	**5.6**	**71**	**5.6**	**71**
Intervention Schools Total	**4.4**	**180**	**4.8**	**180**

Figure 6. 2016/17 Experiences of Peer Victimization at Control and Intervention Schools, by Gender and School
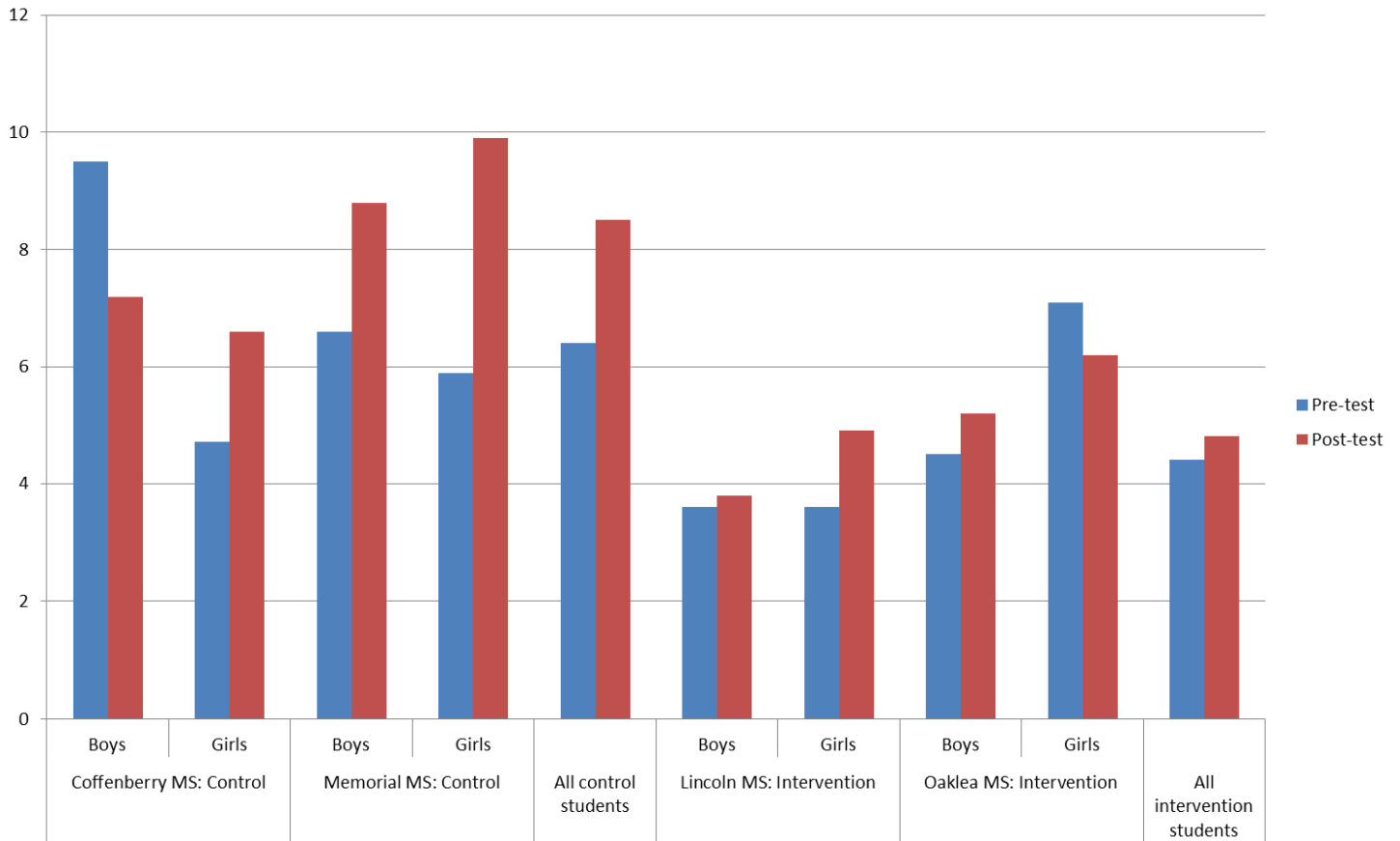
Social support and regard from parents, teachers, classmates, and close friends was assessed with 6 items per source of social support, for a total of 4 subscales. Items asked about having parents/teachers/classmates/close friends the student could talk to, who would pay attention to what they say, who want to hear about their problems, who help them when they are upset, who care if they feel bad, who play with them, etc. Items were averaged per each substance, with *higher scores indicating more social support and regard in that domain.* The scale ranged from 1 to 4 with an average score of 3.2, which is about the average found in 6th grade students in other samples (Harter, 2012). There was not a great deal of variance in this measure to predict change over time.
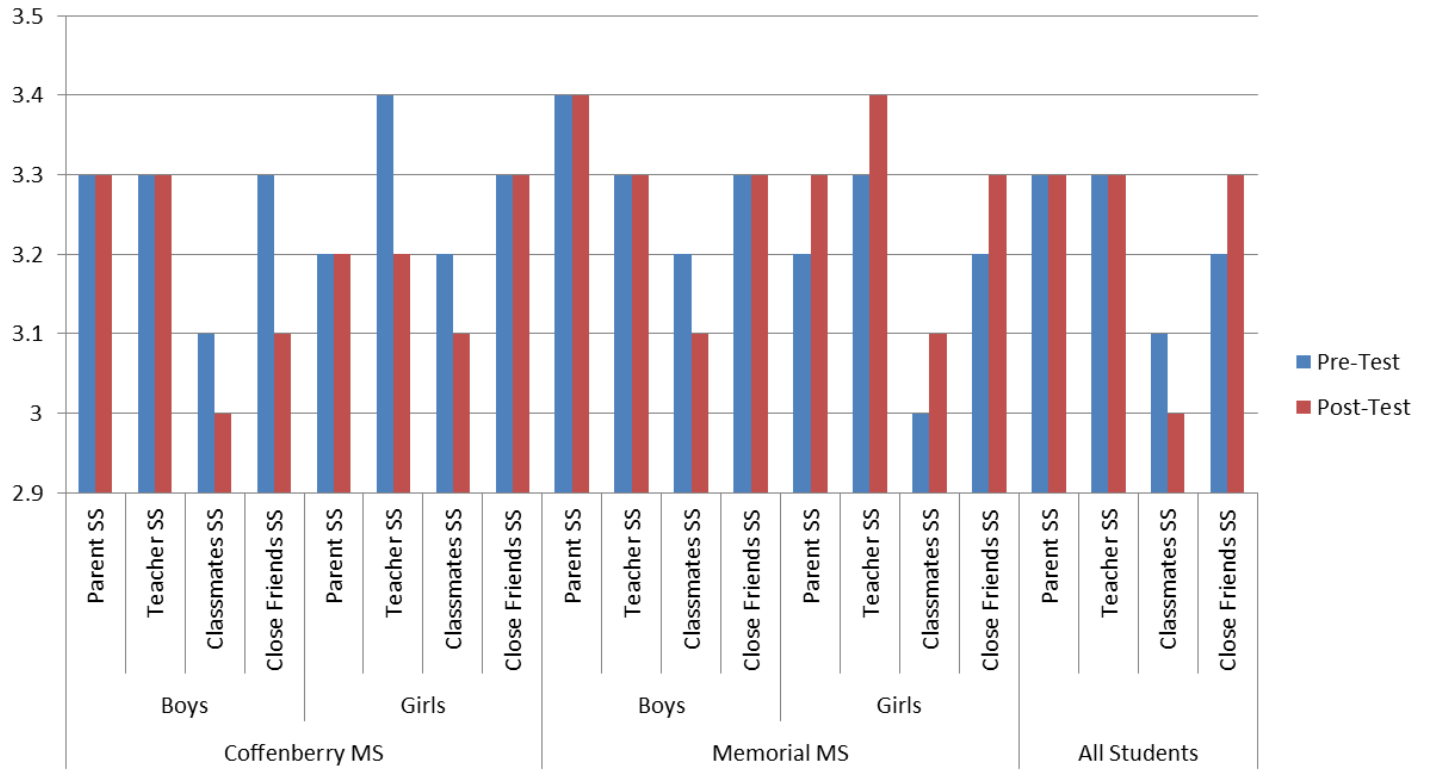
For the 2014/15 intervention, there were no significant differences in any of the social support subscales from pre-survey to post-survey (see Table 9 and Figure 7), however, the changes did approach significance for Teacher Social Support (SS), Classmates SS, and Close Friends SS (p = 0.10). Social support either stayed the same (Parent SS) on increased by 0.1 post-intervention (Teacher SS, Classmates SS, Close Friends SS). Thus, the intervention delivered in 2014/15 did not *significantly* impact student experiences of social support and regard according to the p < .05 criterion, but *social support moved in a positive direction in general and approached significance in three of the four subscales.* Without a control

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group comparison, it is unknown if social support would have changed in other ways if students did not participate in the intervention.

Table 9. 2014/15 Social Support from Parents, Teachers, Classmates, and Close Friends, by Gender and School: Two Intervention Schools

| | *Pre-test* | | | | |
	Parent SS	Teacher SS	Classmates SS	Close Friends SS	# of students
Creswell MS: Boys	3.3	3.1	3.0	3.1	29
Creswell MS: Girls	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.1	22
Creswell MS Total	**3.3**	**3.0**	**3.0**	**3.1**	**51**
Lincoln MS: Boys	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.2	29
Lincoln MS: Girls	3.4	3.3	3.0	3.3	54
Lincoln MS Total	**3.3**	**3.3**	**3.0**	**3.2**	**83**
Both Schools Total	**3.3**	**3.2**	**3.0**	**3.2**	**134**
	Post-test				
	Parent SS	Teacher SS	Classmates SS	Close Friends SS	# of students
Creswell MS: Boys	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.2	31
Creswell MS: Girls	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.4	22
Creswell MS Total	**3.3**	**3.2**	**3.1**	**3.3**	**53**
Lincoln MS: Boys	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.1	28
Lincoln MS: Girls	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.3	55
Lincoln MS Total	**3.3**	**3.4**	**3.1**	**3.2**	**83**
Both Schools Total	**3.3**	**3.3**	**3.1**	**3.3**	**136**

Figure 7. 2014/15 Social Support from Parents, Teachers, Classmates, and Close Friends, by Gender and School

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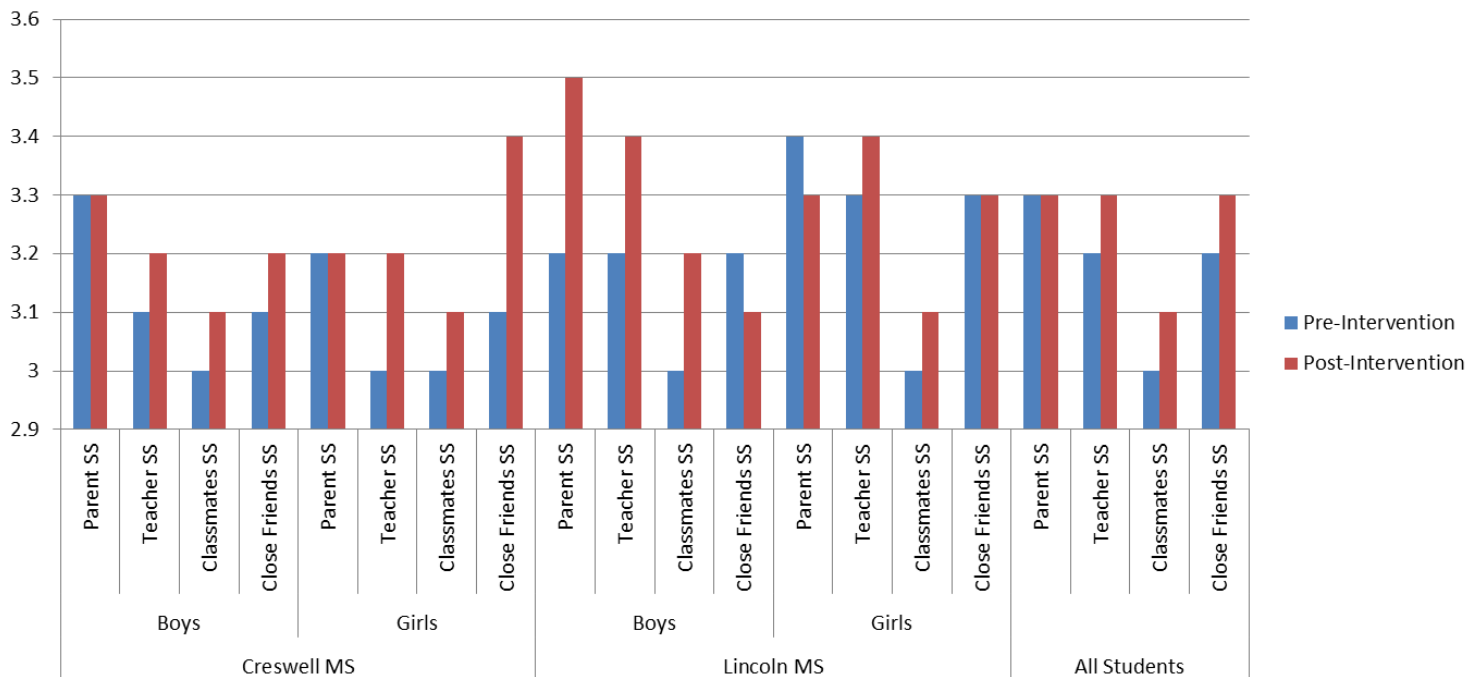
For the 2015/16 intervention, there were no significant differences in any of the social support subscales from pre-survey to post-survey (see Table 10 and Figures 8 and 9). Social support did not appear to change much over time. Thus, the intervention delivered in 2015/16 did not significantly impact student experiences of social support and regard. Perceptions of available social support resources in various domains for these 6th grade students may be challenging to change via a school-based program.

Table 10. 2015/16 Social Support from Parents, Teachers, Classmates, and Close Friends, by Gender and School: Two Control and Two Intervention Schools

	Pre-test				
Control Schools	Parent SS	Teacher SS	Classmates SS	Close Friends SS	# of students
Coffenberry MS: Boys	3.3	3.3	3.1	3.3	21
Coffenberry MS: Girls	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.3	29
Coffenberry MS Total	**3.3**	**3.4**	**3.1**	**3.3**	**50**
Memorial MS: Boys	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.3	34
Memorial MS: Girls	3.2	3.3	3.0	3.2	66
Memorial MS Total	**3.3**	**3.3**	**3.1**	**3.2**	**100**
Both Schools Total	**3.3**	**3.3**	**3.1**	**3.2**	**150**
	Post-test				
	Parent SS	Teacher SS	Classmates SS	Close Friends SS	# of students
Coffenberry MS: Boys	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.1	22
Coffenberry MS: Girls	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.3	29
Coffenberry MS Total	**3.3**	**3.2**	**3.1**	**3.2**	**51**
Memorial MS: Boys	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.3	35
Memorial MS: Girls	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.3	65
Memorial MS Total	**3.3**	**3.3**	**3.0**	**3.3**	**100**
Both Schools Total	**3.3**	**3.3**	**3.0**	**3.3**	**151**
	Pre-test				
Intervention Schools	Parent SS	Teacher SS	Classmates SS	Close Friends SS	# of students
Lincoln MS: Boys	3.5	3.3	3.1	3.2	51
Lincoln MS: Girls	3.3	3.3	3.1	3.2	61
Lincoln MS Total	**3.4**	**3.3**	**3.1**	**3.2**	**112**
Oaklea MS: Boys	3.3	3.2	3.0	3.2	39
Oaklea MS: Girls	3.4	3.3	3.0	3.4	36
Oaklea MS Total	**3.3**	**3.3**	**3.0**	**3.3**	**75**
Both Schools Total	**3.3**	**3.3**	**3.1**	**3.2**	**90**
	Post-test				
	Parent SS	Teacher SS	Classmates SS	Close Friends SS	# of students
Lincoln MS: Boys	3.3	3.2	2.9	3.1	51
Lincoln MS: Girls	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.3	67
Lincoln MS Total	**3.2**	**3.2**	**2.9**	**3.2**	**118**
Oaklea MS: Boys	3.3	3.2	2.9	3.2	42
Oaklea MS: Girls	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.4	37
Oaklea MS Total	**3.3**	**3.2**	**3.0**	**3.3**	**79**
Both Schools Total	**3.3**	**3.2**	**3.0**	**3.2**	**93**

Figure 8. 2015/16 Social Support from Parents, Teachers, Classmates, and Close Friends, by Gender and School: Control Schools

Figure 9. 2015/16 Social Support from Parents, Teachers, Classmates, and Close Friends, by Gender and School: Intervention Schools
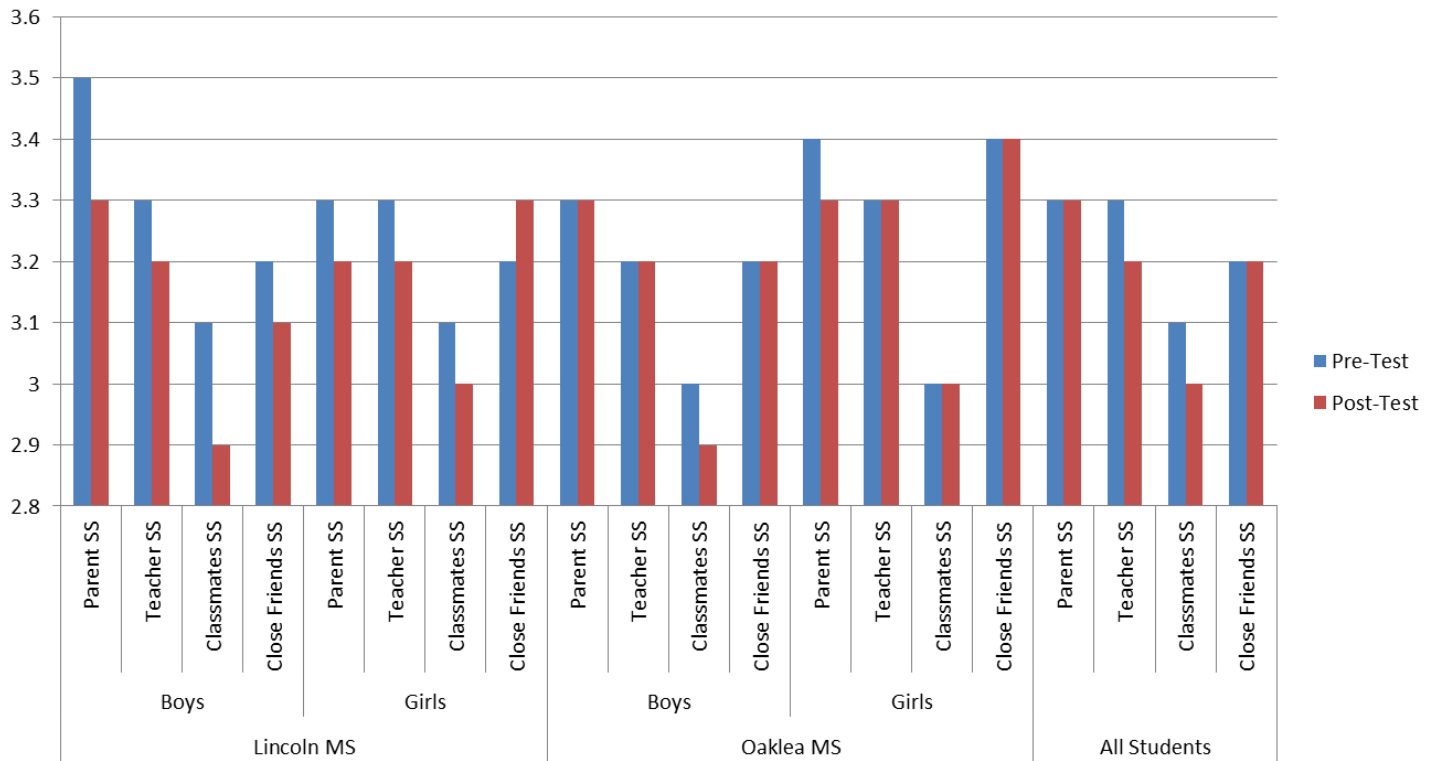
For the 2016/17 intervention, there were no significant differences in any of the social support subscales from pre-survey to post-survey (see Table 11 and Figures 10 and 11). Students in the intervention schools did have higher levels of perceived social support compared to students in the control schools at pre-test. Social support did not change significantly from pre-test to post-test. Thus, *the intervention delivered in 2016/17 did not significantly impact student experiences of social support and regard, but in general there was little change over time to predict.* Perceptions of available social support resources in various domains for these 6th grade students may be challenging to change via a school-based program, as other factors likely contribute to these existing social support resources.

Table 11. 2016/17 Social Support from Parents, Teachers, Classmates, and Close Friends, by Gender and School: Two Intervention and Two Control Schools

	Pre-test				
Control Schools	Parent SS	Teacher SS	Classmates SS	Close Friends SS	# of students
Coffenberry MS: Boys	3.5	3.0	3.1	3.3	20
Coffenberry MS: Girls	3.2	3.3	2.9	3.4	27
Coffenberry MS Total	**3.3**	**3.2**	**3.0**	**3.3**	**47**
Memorial MS: Boys	3.5	3.1	3.1	3.1	27
Memorial MS: Girls	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.2	49
Memorial MS Total	**3.3**	**3.2**	**3.1**	**3.2**	**76**
Both Schools Total	**3.3**	**3.2**	**3.0**	**3.2**	**123**
	Post-test				
	Parent SS	Teacher SS	Classmates SS	Close Friends SS	# of students
Coffenberry MS: Boys	3.3	2.9	3.2	3.2	20
Coffenberry MS: Girls	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.3	27
Coffenberry MS Total	**3.3**	**3.1**	**3.1**	**3.3**	**47**
Memorial MS: Boys	3.5	3.1	2.9	3.2	27
Memorial MS: Girls	2.9	3.2	3.0	3.3	49
Memorial MS Total	**3.1**	**3.2**	**2.9**	**3.3**	**76**
Both Schools Total	**3.1**	**3.2**	**3.0**	**3.3**	**123**
	Pre-test				
Intervention Schools	Parent SS	Teacher SS	Classmates SS	Close Friends SS	# of students
Lincoln MS: Boys	3.4	3.3	3.0	3.2	59
Lincoln MS: Girls	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.3	49
Lincoln MS Total	**3.4**	**3.3**	**3.0**	**3.2**	**108**
Oaklea MS: Boys	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.2	41
Oaklea MS: Girls	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.1	30
Oaklea MS Total	**3.4**	**3.3**	**3.1**	**3.2**	**71**
Both Schools Total	**3.4**	**3.3**	**3.1**	**3.2**	**179**
	Post-test				
	Parent SS	Teacher SS	Classmates SS	Close Friends SS	# of students
Lincoln MS: Boys	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.2	60
Lincoln MS: Girls	3.3	3.3	3.1	3.3	49
Lincoln MS Total	**3.4**	**3.3**	**3.1**	**3.2**	**109**
Oaklea MS: Boys	3.4	3.4	3.2	3.3	41
Oaklea MS: Girls	3.3	3.4	3.2	3.3	30
Oaklea MS Total	**3.4**	**3.4**	**3.2**	**3.3**	**71**
Both Schools Total	**3.4**	**3.3**	**3.2**	**3.3**	**180**

Figure 10. 2016/17 Social Support from Parents, Teachers, Classmates, and Close Friends, by Gender and School: Control Schools
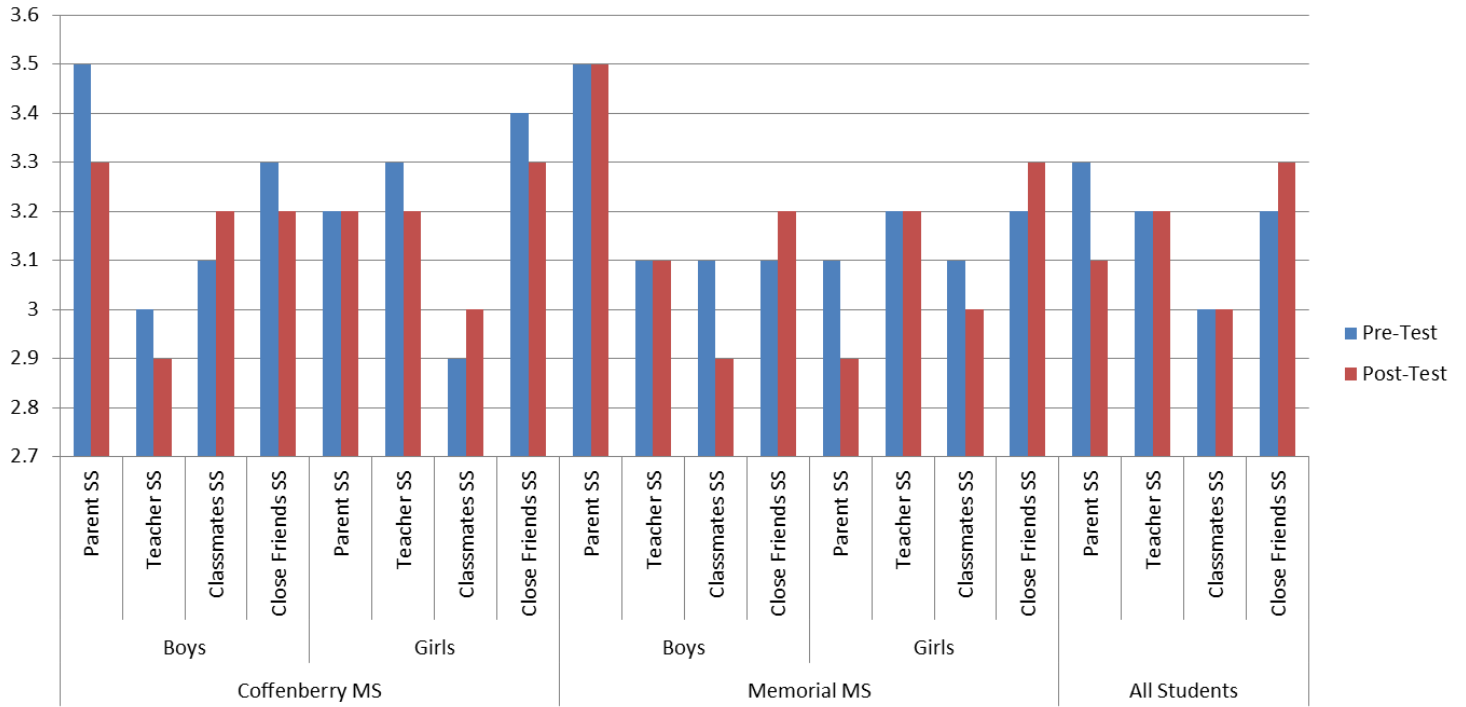
Figure 11. 2016/17 Social Support from Parents, Teachers, Classmates, and Close Friends, by Gender and School: Intervention Schools
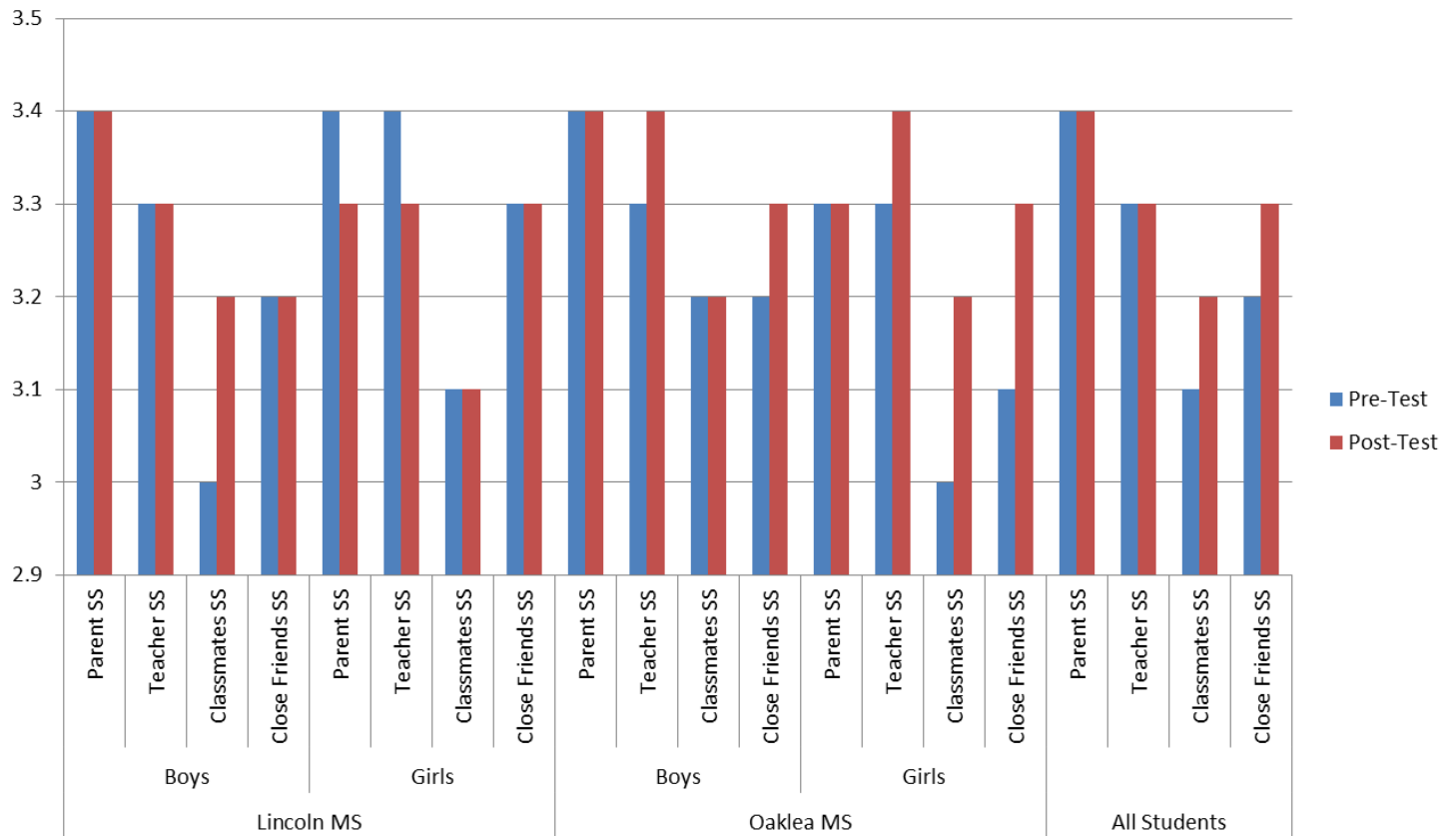
EVALUATION CONSTRAINTS

This was a small evaluation, so there are some constraints inherent to this design. First, all data was collected via student self-report, and there were some errors made on student identification numbers that resulted in unusable surveys that could not be matched up at both time points. Second, there was some student confusion regarding the instructions for the social support scale, in which students select one column and enter one answer per item. Via data cleaning, as much of this information was extracted and utilized as possible, however, some data from this survey was not able to be used in this evaluation. Third, additional schools participated in this evaluation but did not collect pre-test data, post-test data, or any data, thus were not included. Fourth, as an extension of the third constraint, more schools are needed in both the intervention and control conditions to increase the power to detect differences, especially as there are many variables that may change by school. Finally, as is the case with all research, it is possible that other variables that were not measured influenced the outcomes examined more than the intervention. For example, school-level variables may be especially important in the case of experiences of peer victimization and perceived social support from teachers and classmates, and family or parent-level data may be especially important when examining perceived social support from parents.

CONCLUSIONS

The intervention done in the 2014/15 school year did not have a comparison group, but self-esteem slightly declined pre-intervention to post-intervention, and experiences of peer victimization increased from pre-intervention to post-intervention. Without a comparison group, however, it is impossible to know if these outcomes would have been even worse without the intervention. Regarding social support, however, although there were no significant differences, in school year 2014/15, social support did move in a positive direction in three out of the four subscales, and these difference from pre-test to post-test approached significance ($p = .10$).

There were no significant differences seen between the control and intervention schools in self-esteem, experiences of peer victimization, or social support in the 2015/16 school year.

The intervention conducted in school year 2016/17 appears to have had a positive impact on student reports of self-esteem, which were significantly higher post-test in the two intervention schools compared to the two control schools. Similarly, the intervention conducted this year appears to have had a positive impact on experiences of peer victimization, with students at the two intervention schools reporting a smaller increase in experiences of victimization from pre-test to post-test, compared to students at the two control schools. The 2016/17 intervention was the second year the intervention had been done at both of these intervention schools; it is possible that doing the intervention across multiple years has a cumulative impact on school culture, student experiences, and in building skills among the teachers and school staff.

These outcomes can inform the Ophelia's Place Rural Schools Program in future years, leading to possible refinements in the program, an internal examination of what may have worked well in the

2016/17 school year program compared to the other years, and will inform selection of evaluation outcome measures.

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APPENDIX A

Pre- and Post-Test Student Surveys

ID: ___ ___ - ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___   **Age:** _____   ☐ **Girl** ☐ **Boy**   **Date:** _____
1   0

first & last initial, DOB xx/xx/xx
Ex: JD - 010101

Part 1: SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

The next questions ask about your current feelings about yourself. For each of the following, please circle the number that corresponds with the answer that best describes how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement about yourself <u>now</u>.

		Strongly Agree 1	Somewhat Agree 2	Somewhat Disagree 3	Strongly Disagree 4
SES01	1. I feel that I am a person of worth, or at least on an equal level with others.	1	2	3	4
SES02	2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	1	2	3	4
SES03	3. All in all, I usually feel that I am a failure.	1	2	3	4
SES04	4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	1	2	3	4
SES05	5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	1	2	3	4
SES06	6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	1	2	3	4
SES07	7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	1	2	3	4
SES08	8. I certainly feel useless at times.	1	2	3	4
SES09	9. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	1	2	3	4
SES10	10. At times, I think I am no good at all.	1	2	3	4

Part 2: BULLYING AND RELATIONAL AGGRESSION

Please mark how many times you have experiences each of the following in the LAST MONTH:

BRA01 1. Had another student call you names, swear at you, threaten you, or say mean things abo

0 ☐	Never	4 ☐	Once a day
1 ☐	1-2 times in past month	5 ☐	2-5 times a day
2 ☐	3-4 times in past month	6 ☐	6-9 times a day
3 ☐	2-4 times a week	7 ☐	10 times a day

BRA02 2. Had another student hit, push, or physically fight or attack you at school.

0 ☐	Never	4 ☐	Once a day
1 ☐	1-2 times in past month	5 ☐	2-5 times a day
2 ☐	3-4 times in past month	6 ☐	6-9 times a day
3 ☐	2-4 times a week	7 ☐	10 times a day

BRA03 3. Had another student threaten to not do things with you or not be your friend at school.

0 ☐	Never		4 ☐	Once a day
1 ☐	1-2 times in past month		5 ☐	2-5 times a day
2 ☐	3-4 times in past month		6 ☐	6-9 times a day
3 ☐	2-4 times a week		7 ☐	10 times a day

BRA04 4. Had another student refuse to talk to you at school.

0 ☐	Never		4 ☐	Once a day
1 ☐	1-2 times in past month		5 ☐	2-5 times a day
2 ☐	3-4 times in past month		6 ☐	6-9 times a day
3 ☐	2-4 times a week		7 ☐	10 times a day

BRA05 5. Got excluded from activities with a group of students at school.

0 ☐	Never		4 ☐	Once a day
1 ☐	1-2 times in past month		5 ☐	2-5 times a day
2 ☐	3-4 times in past month		6 ☐	6-9 times a day
3 ☐	2-4 times a week		7 ☐	10 times a day

BRA06 6. Had another student or students gossip or spread rumors about you at school.

0 ☐	Never		4 ☐	Once a day
1 ☐	1-2 times in past month		5 ☐	2-5 times a day
2 ☐	3-4 times in past month		6 ☐	6-9 times a day
3 ☐	2-4 times a week		7 ☐	10 times a day

BRA07 7. Had another student tell lies about you at school.

0 ☐	Never		4 ☐	Once a day
1 ☐	1-2 times in past month		5 ☐	2-5 times a day
2 ☐	3-4 times in past month		6 ☐	6-9 times a day
3 ☐	2-4 times a week		7 ☐	10 times a day

BRA08 8. Had a student encourage others to not to talk to you at school.

0 ☐	Never		4 ☐	Once a day
1 ☐	1-2 times in past month		5 ☐	2-5 times a day
2 ☐	3-4 times in past month		6 ☐	6-9 times a day
3 ☐	2-4 times a week		7 ☐	10 times a day

BRA09 9. How often did you refuse to talk to another student?

0	☐	Never	4	☐	Once a day
1	☐	1-2 times in past month	5	☐	2-5 times a day
2	☐	3-4 times in past month	6	☐	6-9 times a day
3	☐	2-4 times a week	7	☐	10 times a day

BRA10 10. How often did you try to exclude a student from group activities?

0	☐	Never	4	☐	Once a day
1	☐	1-2 times in past month	5	☐	2-5 times a day
2	☐	3-4 times in past month	6	☐	6-9 times a day
3	☐	2-4 times a week	7	☐	10 times a day

BRA11 11. How often did you gossip or spread rumors about another student?

0	☐	Never	4	☐	Once a day
1	☐	1-2 times in past month	5	☐	2-5 times a day
2	☐	3-4 times in past month	6	☐	6-9 times a day
3	☐	2-4 times a week	7	☐	10 times a day

BRA12 12. How often did you tell lies about another student?

0	☐	Never	4	☐	Once a day
1	☐	1-2 times in past month	5	☐	2-5 times a day
2	☐	3-4 times in past month	6	☐	6-9 times a day
3	☐	2-4 times a week	7	☐	10 times a day

BRA13 13. How often did you encourage others not to talk to another student?

0	☐	Never	4	☐	Once a day
1	☐	1-2 times in past month	5	☐	2-5 times a day
2	☐	3-4 times in past month	6	☐	6-9 times a day
3	☐	2-4 times a week	7	☐	10 times a day

Part 3: PEOPLE IN MY LIFE
On the next few pages, read each statement and first decide which kind of kid is most like you, the one described in the first part of the statement or the one described in the second part of the statement. Then to go to the side of the statement which is most true for you and then decide whether this statement is only sort of true for you or really true.

People In My Life

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
			Sample Sentence				
a.	☐	☐	Some kids like to do fun things with a lot of other people	BUT	Other kids like to do fun things with just a few people	☐	☐
1.	1	2	Some kids have parents who **don't** really **understand** them	BUT	Other kids have parents who really **do** understand them	3	4
2.	4	3	Some kids have classmates who like them the way they are	BUT	Other kids have classmates who wish they were **different**	2	1
3.	4	3	Some kids have a teacher who **helps** them if they are upset or have a problem	BUT	Other kids **don't** have a teacher who helps them if they are upset or have a problem	2	1
4.	4	3	Some kids have a close friend who they can tell **problems** to	BUT	Other kids **don't** have a close friend who they can tell problems to	2	1
5.	1	2	Some kids have parents who **don't** seem to want to hear about their children's problems	BUT	Other kids have parents who **do** want to listen to their children's problems	3	4
6.	4	3	Some kids have classmates they can become friendly with	BUT	Other kids **don't** have classmates that they can become friendly with	2	1
7.	1	2	Some kids **don't** have a teacher who helps them to do their very best	BUT	Other kids **do** have a teacher who helps them to do their very best	3	4
8.	4	3	Some kids have a close friend who really understands them	BUT	Other kids **don't** have a close friend who really understands them	2	1
9.	4	3	Some kids have parents who **care** about their feelings	BUT	Other kids have parents who **don't** seem to care very much about their feelings	2	1
10.	1	2	Some kids have classmates who sometimes make fun of them	BUT	Other kids don't have classmates who make fun of them	3	4

Classmate items: 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22

Friend items: 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24

Parent items: 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21

Teacher items: 3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
11.	4	3	Some kids **do** have a teacher who cares about them	**BUT**	Other kids **don't** have a teacher who cares about them	2	1
12.	4	3	Some kids have a close friend who they can talk to about things that bother them	**BUT**	Other kids **don't** have a close friend who they can talk to about things that bother them	2	1
13.	4	3	Some kids have parents who treat their child like a **person** who really matters	**BUT**	Other kids have parents who **don't** usually treat their child like a person who matters	2	1
14.	4	3	Some kids have classmates who pay attention to what they say	**BUT**	Other kids have classmates who usually **don't** pay attention to what they say	2	1
15.	1	2	Some kids **don't** have a teacher who is **fair** to them	**BUT**	Other kids **do** have a teacher who is fair to them	3	4
16.	1	2	Some kids don't have a close friend who they like to spend time with	**BUT**	Other kids do have a close friend who they like to spend time with	3	4
17.	4	3	Some kids have parents who like them the **way** they **are**	**BUT**	Other kids have parents who wish their children were different	2	1
18.	1	2	Some kids **don't** get asked to play in games with classmates very often	**BUT**	Other kids **often** get asked to play in games by their classmates	3	4
19.	1	2	Some kids **don't** have a teacher who cares if they feel bad	**BUT**	Other kids **do** have a teacher who cares if they feel bad	3	4
20.	1	2	Some kids **don't** have a close friend who really listens to what they say	**BUT**	Other kids **do** have a close friend who really listens to what they say	3	4
21.	1	2	Some kids have parents who **don't** act like what their children do is **important**	**BUT**	Other kids have parents who **do** act like what their children do is important	3	4
22.	1	2	Some kids often spend their recess being **alone**	**BUT**	Other kids spend recess playing with their classmates	3	4
23.	4	3	Some kids have a teacher who treats them like a person	**BUT**	Other kids **don't** have a teacher who treats them like a person	2	1
24.	1	2	Some kids **don't** have a close friend who cares about their feelings	**BUT**	Other kids **do** have a close friend who cares about their feelings	3	4

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