



The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum Evaluation Studies

Yale University's School of the 21st Century has conducted several studies on the implementation and outcome of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum.

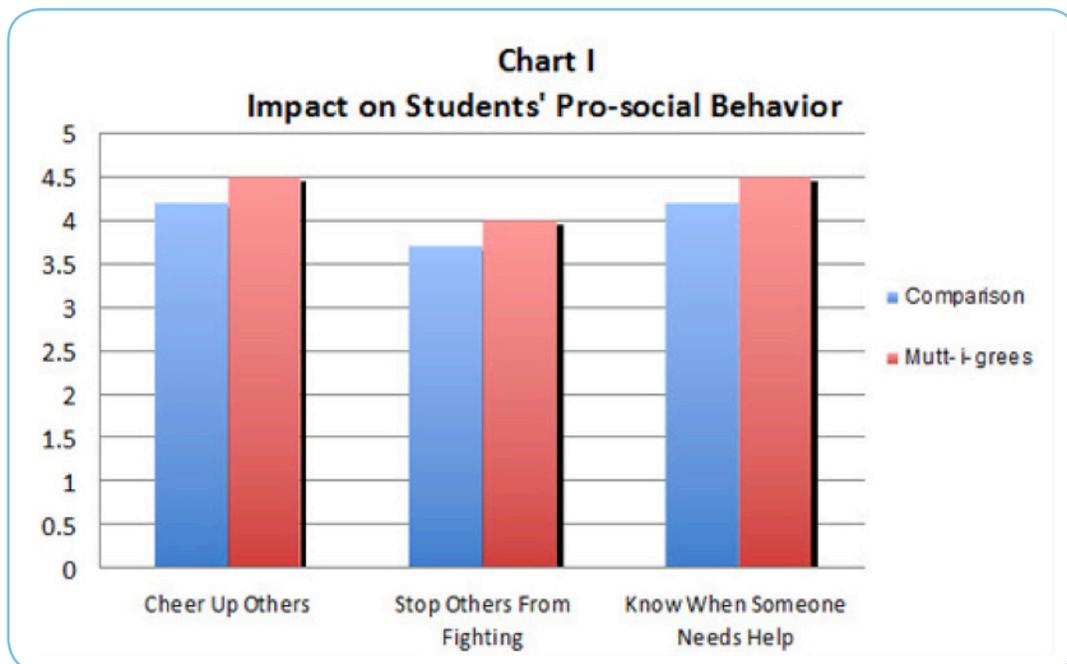
I. Outcome Evaluation Studies

The findings show that:

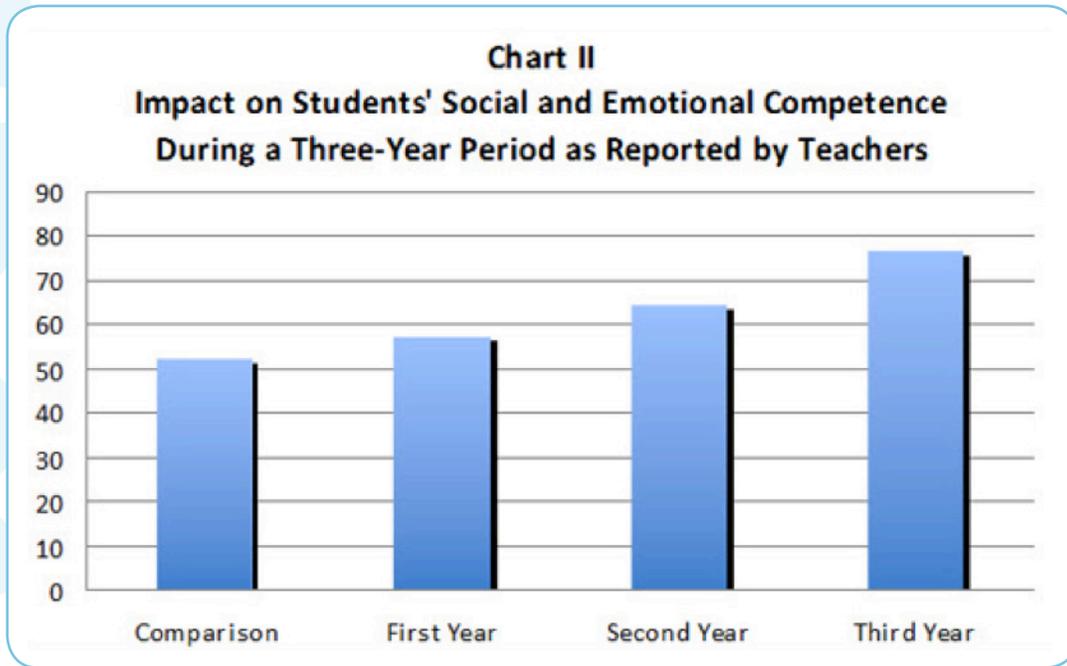
1. Participation in the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum has a positive impact on student behavior.

- In a randomized study, 42 K-5 classrooms in the same school were randomly assigned to either implement or not implement the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum. The non-Mutt-i-grees® classrooms held off implementation so they could serve as the comparison group. 839 students and 42 teachers participated in the evaluation. The teachers' responses took into account the pilot year so teachers were involved in the evaluation for a three-year period, whereas the students were involved in the evaluation for two years. The measures used were the Bryant Empathy Scale for Students, the School Climate Survey, the Parent Involvement Scale for Teachers and Students, and questions drawn from social and emotional learning instruments measuring pro-social behaviors.

Students in classrooms implementing the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum were found to have significantly higher rates of empathy and pro-social behaviors than students in non-Mutt-i-grees® classrooms; for example, they helped other children who were sad, they stopped fights, and they knew when someone needed help (Chart I).

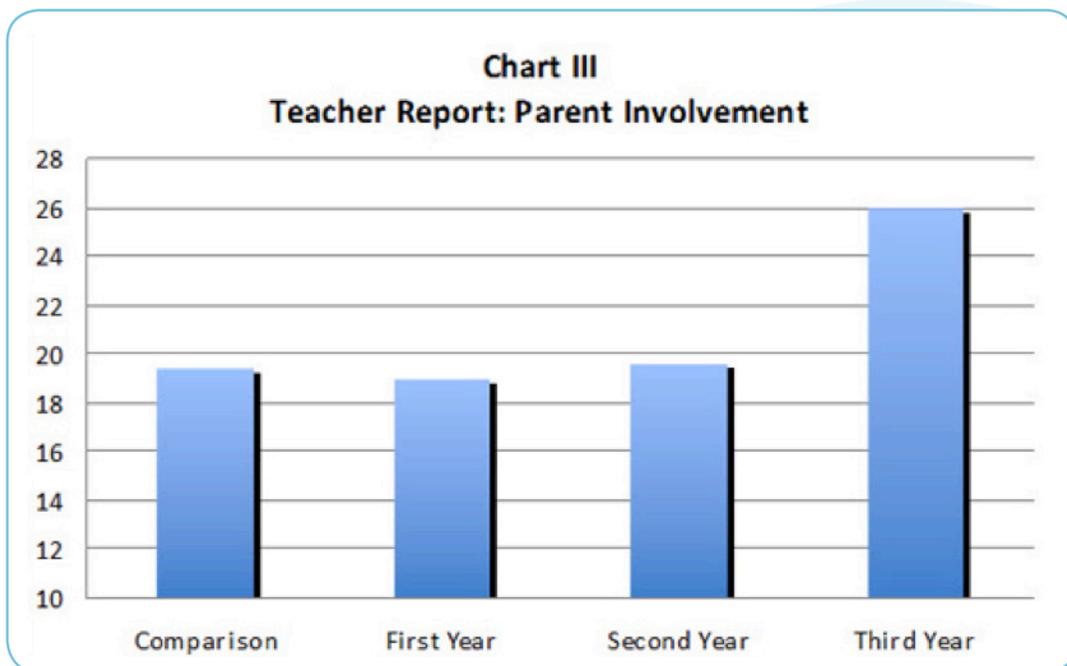


- Students' pro-social behavior was also noted in teacher reports. Significantly more teachers in Mutt-i-grees® classrooms than those in non-Mutt-i-grees® classrooms reported improvements in students' social and emotional competence during the first year when the students in Mutt-i-grees® classrooms were compared with students in non-Mutt-i-grees® classrooms, as well as during the following two years (Chart II).



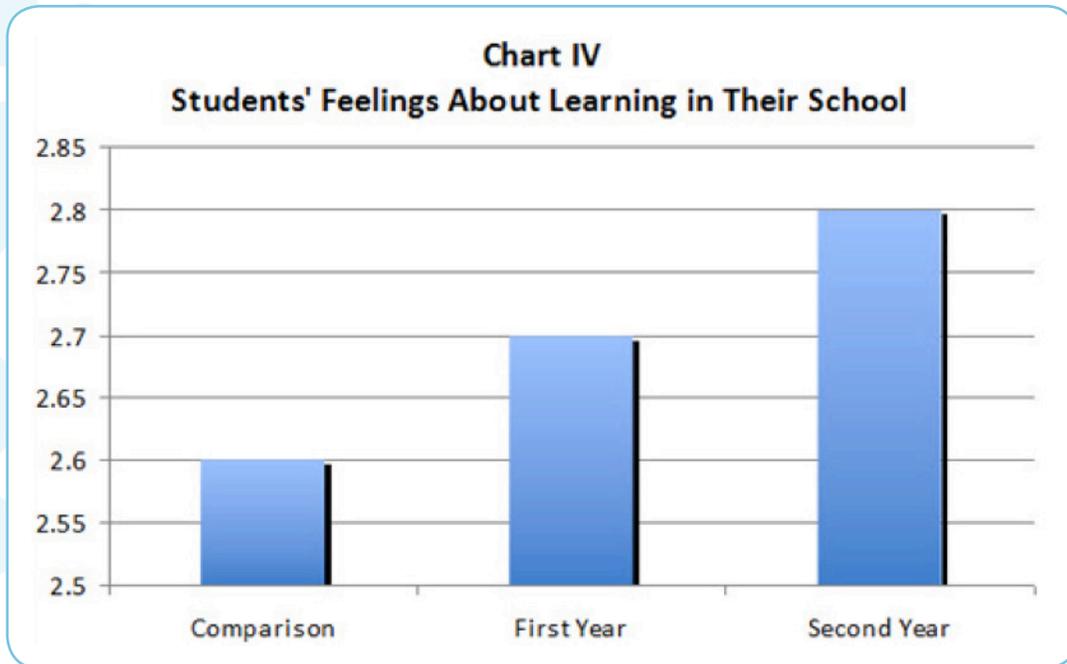
2. The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum has a positive impact on parent involvement.

- During the first year, teachers in the comparison group reported slightly higher rates of parent involvement, but later, especially in year 3, teachers in Mutt-i-grees® classrooms reported significantly higher levels of parent involvement. (Chart III).

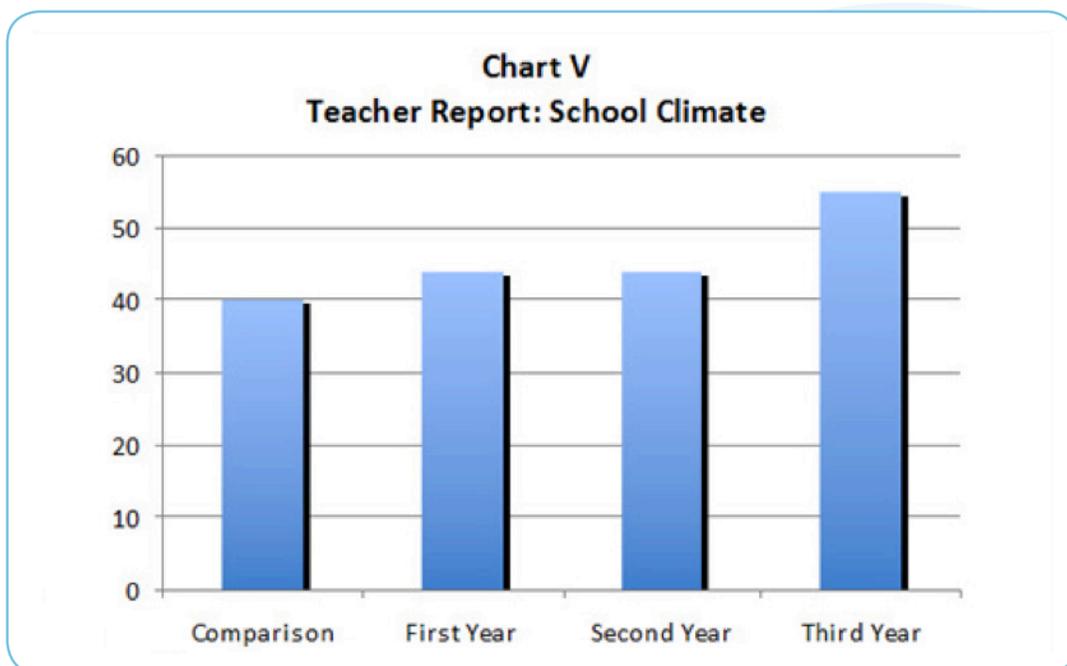


3. The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum has a positive impact on parent involvement.

- In a school climate measure, significantly more students in Mutt-i-grees® classrooms than non-Mutt-i-grees® classrooms reported that they feel good about being in school and about learning (Chart IV), two critical factors in positive school climate.

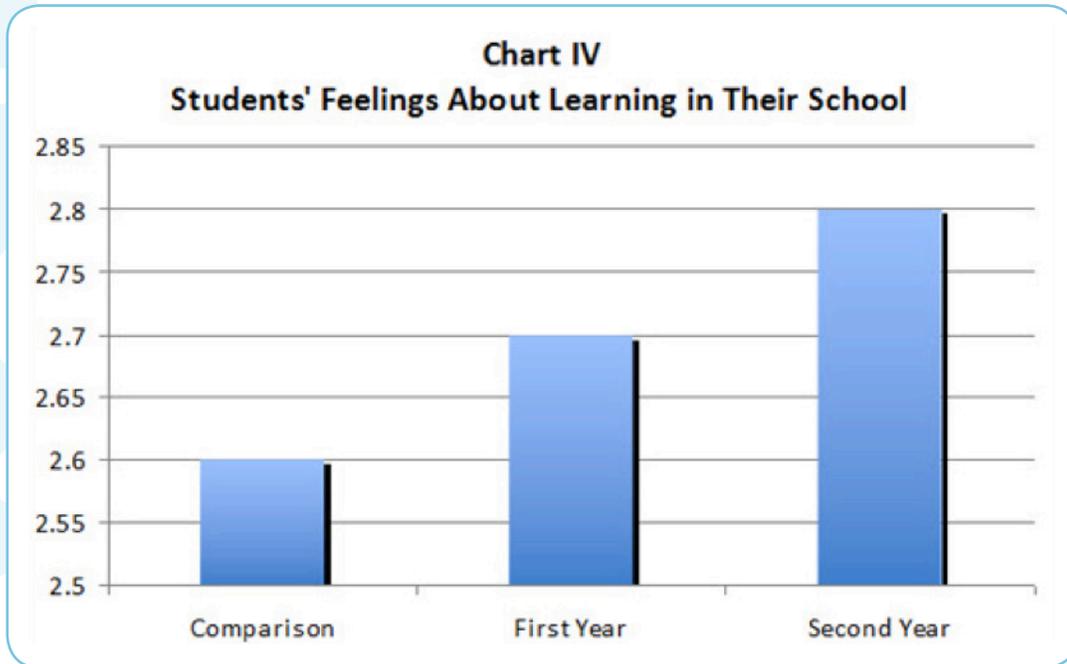


- Significantly more teachers in Mutt-i-grees® classrooms than teachers in non-Mutt-i-grees® classrooms reported a positive school climate. The difference between Mutt-i-grees® teachers and non-Mutt-i-grees® teachers on school climate was especially evident in year three (Chart V).

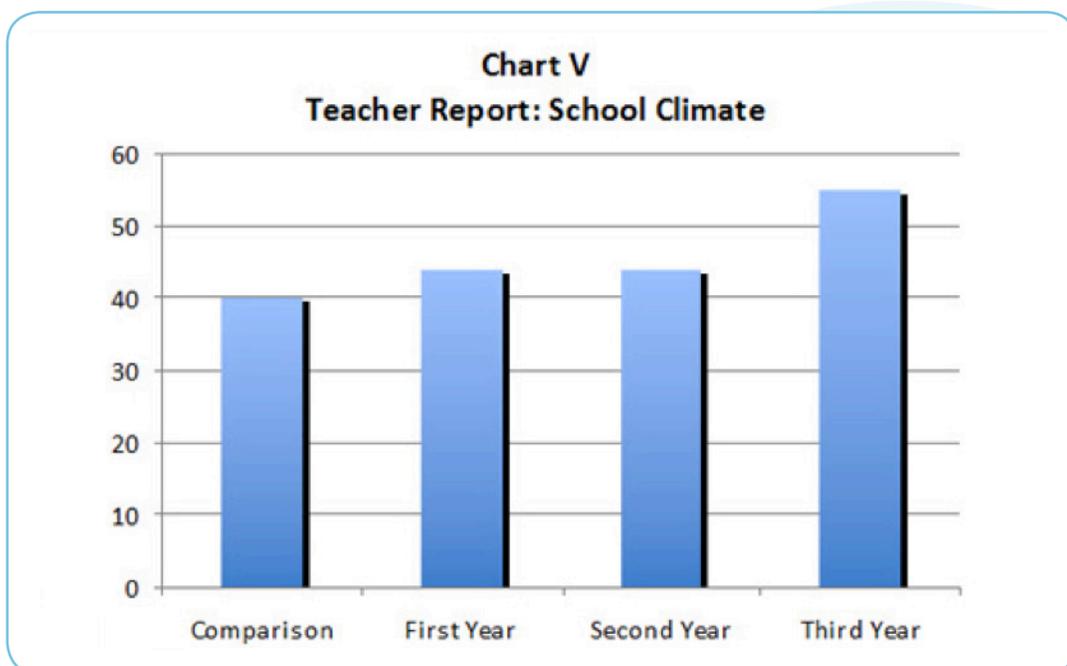


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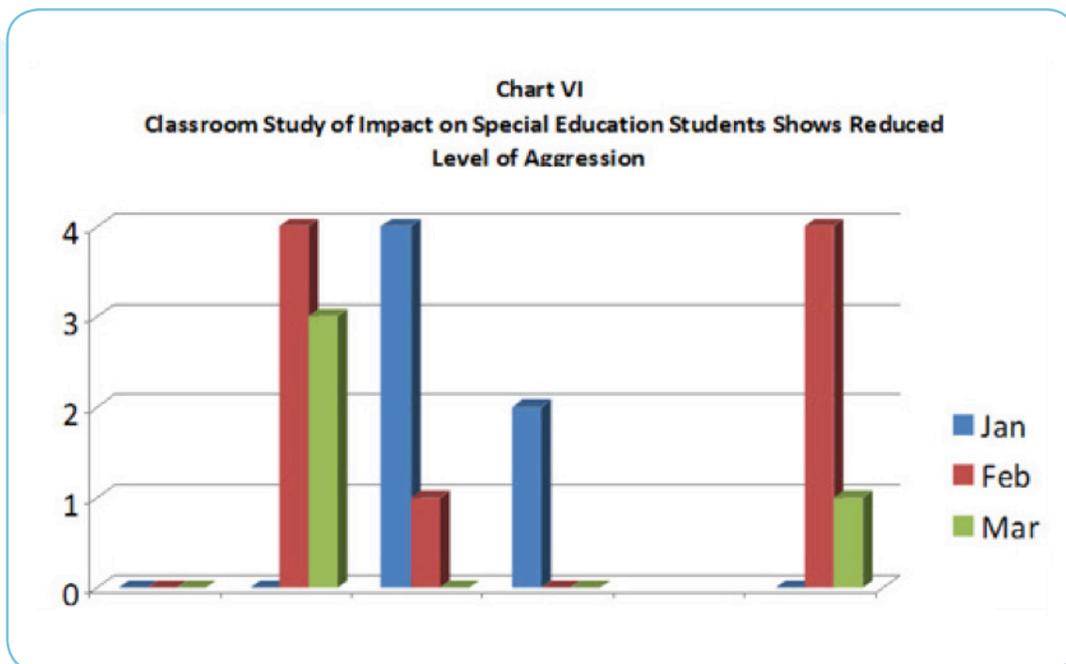
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- Principals reported in interviews that improvements in school climate are noted not only in terms of enhanced social and emotional skills among students, but also in terms of improved relationships and greater job satisfaction among teachers, which they attributed to the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum.

4. The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum is implemented in several different settings.

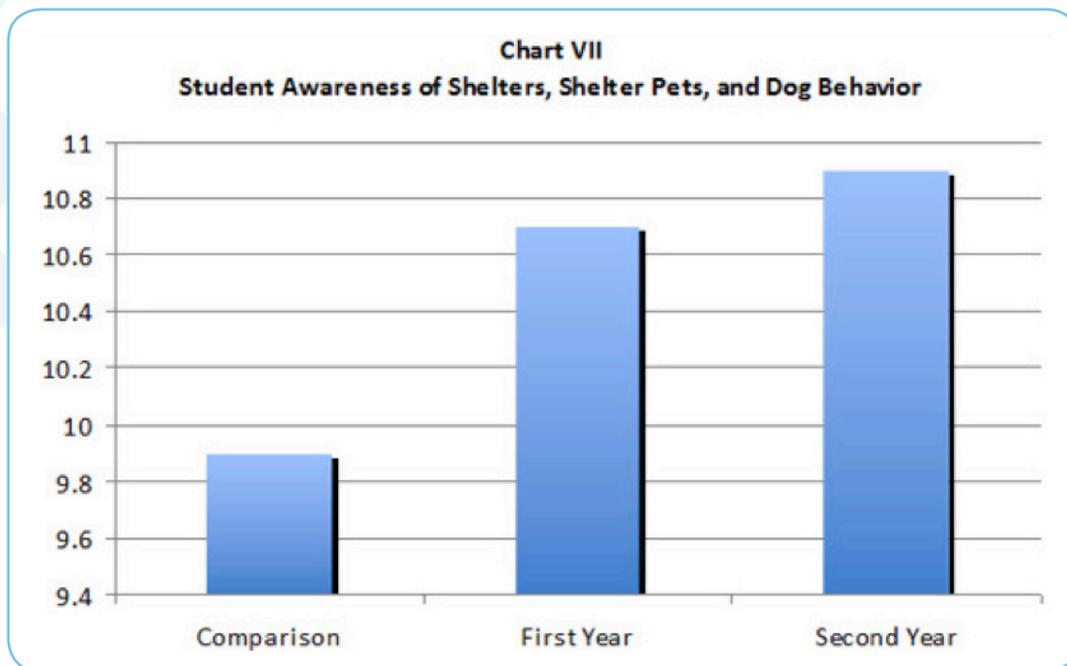
- Process studies indicate that the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum is being implemented in mainstream classrooms, special education classrooms, afterschool programs, and as part of bullying prevention efforts.
- Principals indicated in interviews that they have seen fewer disciplinary referrals and a lower incidence of bullying since the implementation of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum in their schools.
- In a case study reporting on the use of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum with students with severe behavioral problems, teachers in a Missouri school used a standard measure that monitors students' behavior. The measure, used before as well as after implementation of the Mutt-i-grees Curriculum, indicated improvements in student behavior and reduced levels of aggression after a three-month period of implementation (Chart VI).



5. The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum has a positive impact on student empathy for and advocacy on behalf of shelter pets.

- Evaluation findings point to the value of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum as a humane education tool as indicated by students' engagement in volunteer and service learning activities that promote improvements in the lives of shelter pets.
- Students at Mutt-i-grees® schools have participated in various service learning activities, including collecting items to donate to animal shelters and rescue organizations, volunteering at spay/neuter clinics and adoption events, and donating time to animal shelters to clean crates and litter boxes, socialize animals, and walk dogs.

- Several Mutt-i-grees® schools built kennels on school grounds to provide temporary shelter to stray dogs and worked with local animal control to rehome dogs or find their owners. In one community students built a shelter on school grounds to showcase dogs that are up for adoption.
- As a result of their participation in the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, students have initiated efforts to increase adoption rates, advocated for improved conditions in their local animal shelters, and presented proposals to local government officials to reduce euthanasia rates in local shelters.
- Comparing classrooms using the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum with non-Mutt-i-grees® classrooms, we found significantly higher understanding of shelters, shelter pets, and dog behavior among teachers and students in classrooms using the Curriculum (Chart VII).



II. Process Evaluation Studies

Process evaluations examined the use of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, specifically whether the delivery of the Curriculum was consistent with its design and intended implementation and whether teachers, administrators, students, and families were engaged and satisfied with the Curriculum format and content. Schools implementing the Pre-K-Grade 3 Curriculum during the pilot year participated in this study. The schools ranged in size from 300 to 1,400 students. The teachers completed surveys to gather data on the use, scope, and application of lessons, as well as perceived impact and outcomes on students, families, and classroom/school climate. Interviews and classroom observations were also conducted with a subsample of teachers.

Findings indicated that:

1. Teachers implemented lessons weekly and tailored lesson scripts, materials, and activities to meet the needs and characteristics of their students and families.

- 56% of teachers implemented lessons from the Curriculum once per week
- 28% of teachers implemented lessons from the Curriculum twice per week

- 78% of teachers implemented lessons in the afternoon during instructional time
- 74% of teachers tailored lessons by adding materials, activities, or books, or modifying the lesson script

2. Teachers used a range of instructional and classroom management strategies in order to reinforce lesson concepts and promote social and emotional skills.

- 68% of teachers surveyed discussed topics from the Curriculum while teaching other subjects
- 48% of teachers created classroom guidelines regarding feelings, communication, and cooperation
- 32% of teachers displayed Mutt-i-grees® posters and materials throughout the classroom
- 32% of teachers used strategies from the Curriculum when classroom conflicts arose

3. Teachers reported that use of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum influenced their own teaching style and instructional practices. After implementing the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum...

- 79% of teachers reported being more likely to model how to identify and express emotion
- 77% of teachers reported being more likely to encourage students to identify and label feelings
- 74% of teachers reported being more likely to help students consider how a classmate or dogs might be feeling by paying attention to physical and situational cues
- 65% reported being more likely to discuss and model appropriate and inappropriate ways to express emotion
- 65% of teachers reported being more likely to consider how their own feelings affected students
- 62% of teachers reported being more likely to consider the feelings of their students

4. Teachers reported that the use of the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum impacted children's social-emotional competence, particularly empathy and problem-solving skills. After implementing the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum...

- 74% of teachers reported that children were more likely to try to understand how and why other children feel and think
- 65% of teachers reported that children were more likely to recognize and accurately label their emotions
- 62% of teachers reported that children had exhibited an increased vocabulary of feeling words
- 62% of teachers reported that children were more likely to try and work out problems by talking

Interestingly, more than 90% of teachers surveyed had used other curricula that targeted social and emotional skills. When asked about the differences between these programs and the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, teachers commented that children were particularly engaged in the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum because of the spotlight on dogs and inclusion of hands-on activities.

