

Evaluating the Efficacy of The Hope Project at Browning Elementary:

A Study of Student Behaviors and Attitudes

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Hope Stone, Inc.

Summary of the Study



- Purpose of the Study – To evaluate Hope Stone, Inc.'s arts education program, The Hope Project
- Goal of The Hope Project – To improve student behavior at school and at home, self-esteem, and academic performance through weekly arts education (dance, theater and music classes for K-5 students)

- Conducted at Browning Elementary (607 Northwood St, Houston, TX 77009) during 2016-2017 academic year
- 209 participants (132 in The Hope Project; 77 in Control Group)
- 3 surveys (for parents, teachers and students) administered 5 times during school year
- Behavior examples: good judgment, achieving goals, trying to do his/her best, focus, resolving disagreement

The Hope Project

Created in 2002, The Hope Project serves children and adults in their schools and facilities where they are provided music, dance and theater classes. The program aims to develop wholly-educated children to ultimately facilitate whole-school change.



What began with 40 students now reaches over 1,100 students in 9 schools/organizations across the Houston area, 90% of which are economically disadvantaged. The Hope Project is distinctive in the arts education field:

- Professional artists teach all classes.
- Classes are held during the school day, at least one day a week for the entire school year, and are part of the curriculum.
- Mindfulness is the focus, as well as engaging older students to take part in their own creative youth development.



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Browning Elementary School

A Title I School in the Houston Independent School District located on the northern edge of downtown Houston, Browning is comprised of a 96% Hispanic student population with over 95% of the student body being economically disadvantaged.

The school is a four-year community partner in The Hope Project:

- 2015-16 & 2016-17: 300 students (half of student body received 12 classes in dance, music-drumming, percussion, and theater)
- 2017-18: 550 students (entire student body received 23 classes, adding violin and spoken word)
- 2018-19: 565 students (entire student body will receive 26 classes, adding electives in ballet, ukulele/guitar, Indian dance and expanded music classes)



In 2016-17, the Rice University study began with full support from the Houston ISD, school administration, teachers, and parents and students who agreed to participate.



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Browning Elementary School

“My students seem to approach problems in a different manner.

They’re taking more risks and able to solve or see the problem differently.”

–Browning Elementary teacher



*“Playing violin helps me with my shyness.
It helps me really express myself.”*

–Browning Elementary student



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Browning Elementary School



“School data reveals that attendance, discipline, and active student participation in the classroom has improved across all grade levels.

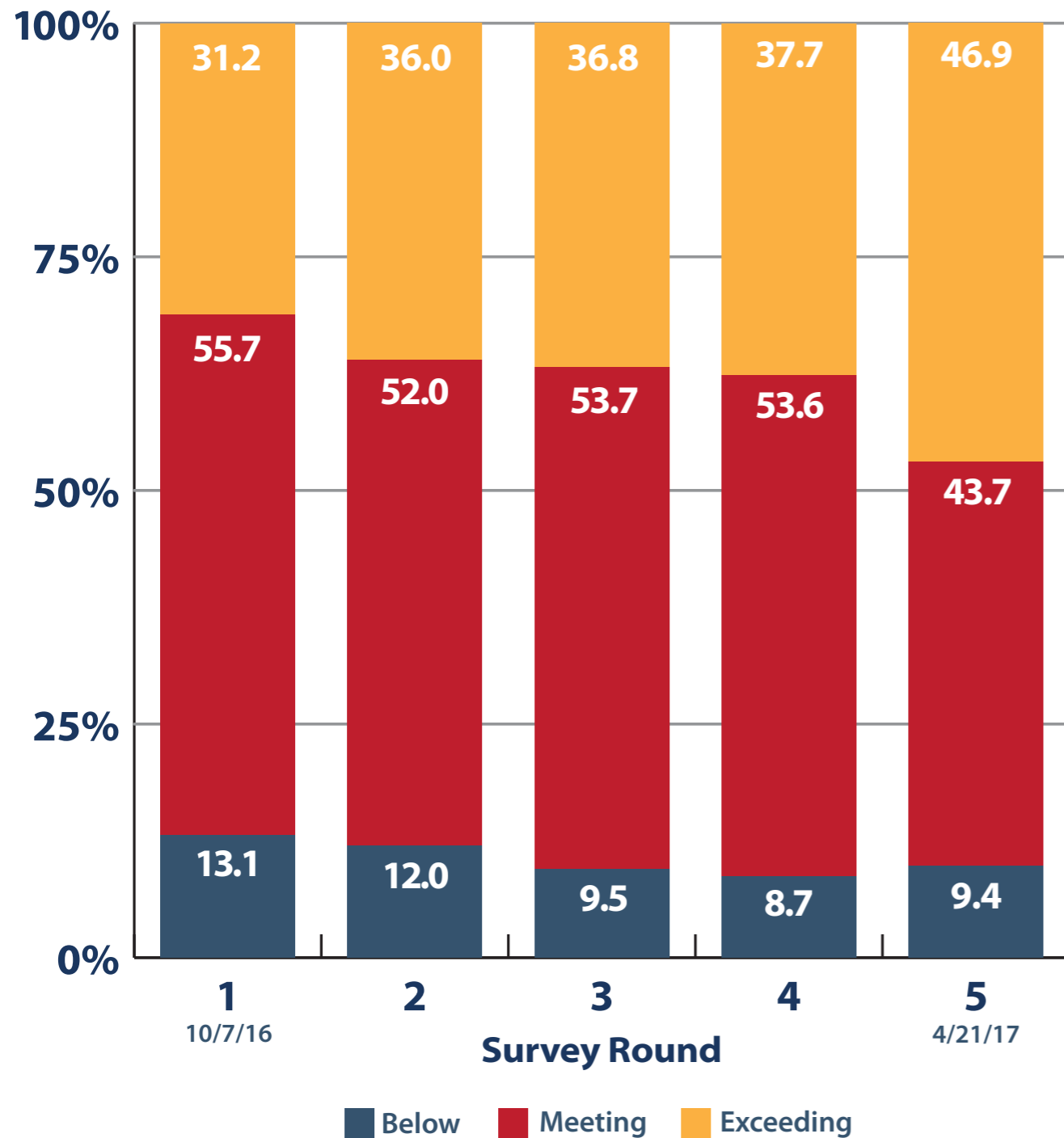
The joy on their faces is a true indication of why this work is so important in bringing the arts into schools.”

–Browning Elementary Principal



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Teacher Surveys and Findings



- By the end of the school year, student behavior at school in the Below standards category dropped by **3.7%** and student behavior Exceeding standards increased by **15.7%**.

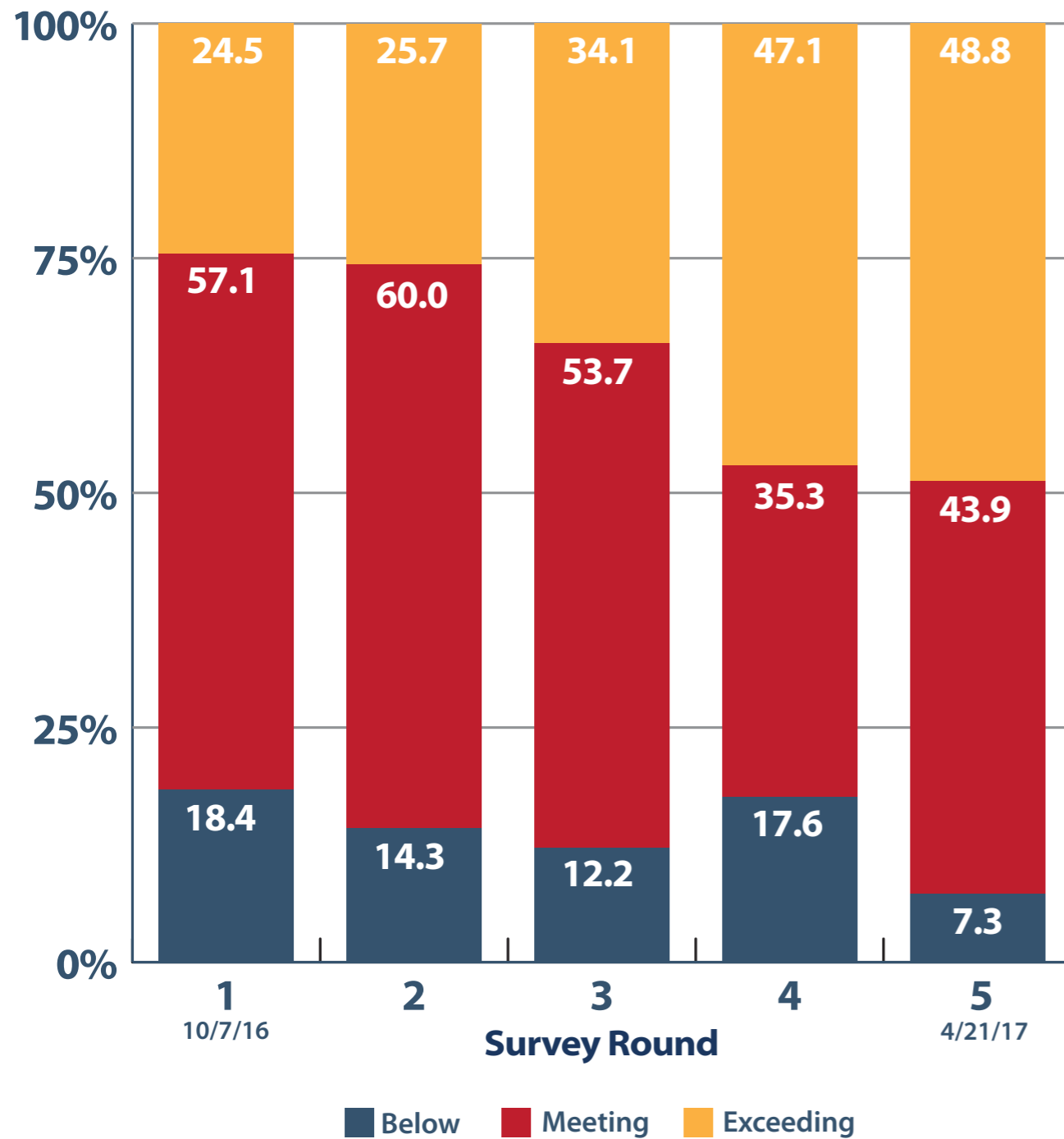
- **Measures for Teacher Surveys**

- Pre-validated proprietary measure, DESSA-mini Form 3 (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment)
- 8 items asking teachers to rate the frequency of student behaviors
- Examples include: How often does the child show good judgment? How often does the child try to do his/her best?
- 5-item response scale: (1) Never to (5) Very Frequently

- **Note:** Because too few surveys were returned in Rounds 4 and 5, the Control group could not be used as a comparison group in the analysis.



Parent Surveys and Findings



- By the end of the school year, student behavior at home in the Below standards category dropped by **11.1%** and behavior categorized as Exceeding standards increased by **24.3%**.

- **Measures for Parent Surveys**

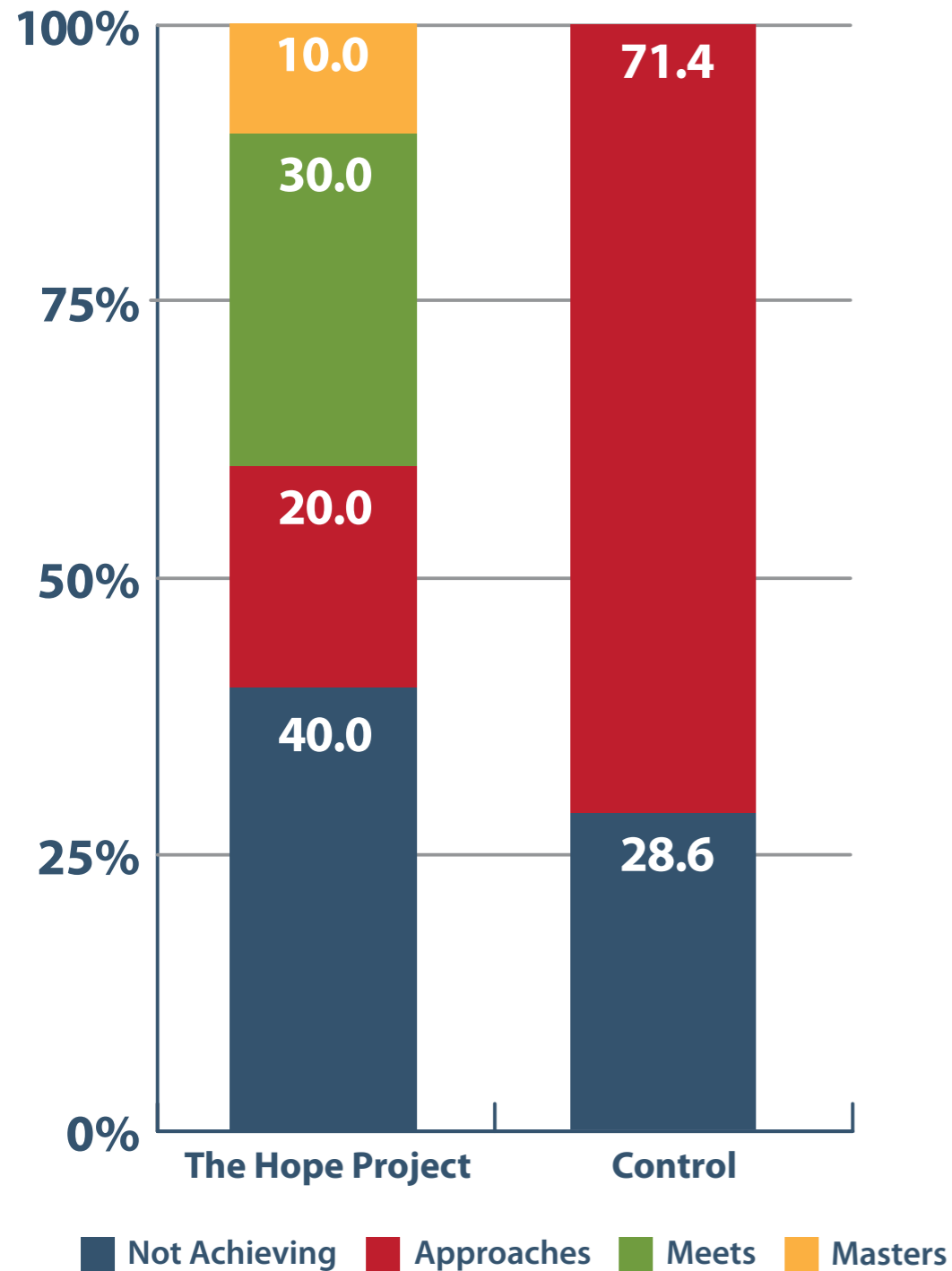
- 72 items asking parents to rate the frequency of student behaviors
- Examples include: How often did the child resolve a disagreement? How often did the child adjust well to change in plans?
- 5-item response scale: (1) Never to (5) Very Frequently

- **Note:** Because too few surveys were returned in Rounds 3, 4 and 5, the Control group could not be used as a comparison group in the analysis.



STAAR Test Scores

WRITING, GRADE 4



- More students participating in The Hope Project Met or Mastered grade level standards for Writing than students in the Control Group
- Specifically, no Control Group students scored at Meets or Masters levels, while **40%** of The Hope Project participants reached or exceeded grade level expectations

- **Note:**

- STAAR test scores were collected for participants who took the exam during 2016-2017 academic year (grades 3-5)
- Individual subject scores were also collected: Reading (all grades), Math (all grades), Science (grade 5), and Writing (grade 4)
- Scores were categorized into four groups by the state of Texas – Not Achieving, Approaches, Meets, or Masters grade level standards



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Conclusions

- The Hope Project was found to have positive effects on and significantly greater ratings of student behavior at school and at home by teachers and parents at the end of the 2016-2017 school year.
- While students' own attitudes about school and self were not shown to increase or decrease over time, participation in The Hope Project classes resulted in better student behavior over time.
- Students participating in The Hope Project were more likely to "Meet" or "Master" grade level expectations for Writing STAAR test scores than the Control Group.



Research & Evaluation

Margaret E. Beier, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Industrial and Organizational Psychology at Rice University. She received her B.A. from Colby College, and her M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the Georgia Institute of Technology. Margaret's research examines the influence of individual differences in age, gender, abilities, and motivation as related to success in educational and organizational environments. Her work has been funded by the National Science Foundation and published in outlets such as *Educational Psychology*, *Psychology and Aging*, *Psychological Bulletin*, *the Journal of Applied Psychology*, and *the Journal of Business and Psychology*. She is a fellow of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) and the Association for Psychological Science (APS).

Jacqueline M. Gilberto is a 5th year Industrial/Organizational doctoral student at Rice University working under Dr. Margaret Beier. Her research focuses on topics related to aging in the workplace, such as late-stage career development, retirement, and work-related ageism. She is also interested in creating evidence-based interventions for disadvantaged groups in work and education contexts.



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