

THE SCHOOLS ATTUNED® PROGRAM EDUCATOR IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

TRI-STATE AREA JEWISH DAY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

Generated by All Kinds of Minds®
Research, Program Evaluation and Information Department
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In order to help all children succeed, teachers must be skilled in modifying their instruction and implementing specific strategies based on their students' learning needs. The Schools Attuned® Program provides a framework for understanding how children learn and how to adapt instruction for learning differences. This program provides teachers with the knowledge base necessary to make the many instructional decisions required each day.

The goals of the Schools Attuned Program are to strengthen educators' understanding and management of differences in learning, help educators to help students become aware of their learning profiles and improve their academic and social achievement, and create schools that respect differences in learning and nurture strengths in students. To achieve these goals, the program is designed using principles that reflect standards of professional development from the National Staff Development Council and current research on adult learning (Borasi & Fonzi (National Science Foundation), 2002; Laine & Otto (NCREL), 2000; Little, 1993; Rogers, 2002; Bransford, et al. (National Research Council), 2000).

PREFACE

The Schools Attuned Program provides 35 intensive instructional hours (Core Course) followed by a minimum of 10 supplemental contact hours (Practicum). The program addresses eight neurodevelopmental constructs and provides practice with the Schools Attuned processes. The Program contains the following elements: (1) *Developing Minds Video Library*, (2) readings from books and articles by Dr. Levine and others, (3) small group work to provide for active assimilation of content and practice of skills, (4) case studies/vignettes to help participants understand the constructs, (5) demonstration and practice sessions to provide opportunities to use complex information and processes simultaneously and fluidly, (6) application of these processes to participants' own case student or to a complex case student provided to them, (7) preparation for implementation of Schools Attuned concepts and strategies in the school setting, and (8) practicum experiences offered during the school year to help support ongoing implementation. Online follow-up experiences are available to participants who receive training outside their geographic region as a supplement to enrich the Schools Attuned professional development experience.

**EVALUATION
OF THE
SCHOOLS
ATTUNED®
PROGRAM**

During the Schools Attuned Program, All Kinds of Minds uses written reflections, portfolio documentation, and evaluation surveys to gather evidence of participant reaction to the course and its facilitators, to assess the knowledge and skills that participants gained as a result of the program, and to gather educator reports on the impact of the Schools Attuned Program at the individual student, whole classroom, and school wide levels. The results of these analyses inform the content, format, and organization of the Schools Attuned Program.

In addition to the internal collection of ongoing evaluation, All Kinds of Minds recognizes the importance of advancing evidence-based scholarship on the impact of our programs. Several research studies have been independently conducted related to the Schools Attuned Program. To further promote rigorous, high quality research, additional studies are underway that examine the impact of the Schools Attuned Program on student outcomes, teacher practice and the special education system. To read more about these studies, visit the Research and Evaluation section of the All Kinds of Minds web site at WWW.ALLKINDSOFMINDS.ORG.

The purpose of this report is to present evaluation results related to Jewish Day School educators who participated in the Schools Attuned Program in the Tri-State area from 2002 through 2004 with support from the Nash Foundation. Results are presented with respect to what educators report regarding:

- the quality of the Schools Attuned Program;
- educators' ongoing use of the Schools Attuned Program several years after their initial training; and
- the impact that the Schools Attuned Program has had on their teaching and their students.

Section I. summarizes program evaluation related to the Schools Attuned Core Course, including Jewish Day School participant perceptions of the new knowledge and skills that they gained as a result of their participation.

Section II. presents results from an evaluation survey study conducted to examine how select Jewish Day School educators are currently implementing strategies and concepts of the Schools Attuned Program, and the outcomes of that implementation on their students.

SECTION I. PROGRAM VALUE AND QUALITY

The analyses included in this section are based on information from the *Schools Attuned Participant Core Course Survey*. Results are presented for Core Courses conducted with **Jewish Day School educators** through the Schools Attuned Tri-State Initiative with support from the Nash Family Foundation.

The analyses included in this report are based on completed *Schools Attuned Participant Core Course Surveys* from a total of **252** participants from **2002 – 2004**. Participants rated the Core Course along the following dimensions:

- (1) Overall usefulness and value of the course;
- (2) Skill of facilitators;
- (3) Quality of the course and its materials for enhancing their learning; and
- (4) Impact of the course on their teaching.

The *Schools Attuned Participant Core Course Survey* was modified in 2003. In the following tables, results for common survey elements across all three program years (2002- 2004) are presented where possible. Where it is not possible to present results across the three program years, results are reported individually by year.

**PARTICIPANT
CORE COURSE
SURVEY
RESULTS**

In 2002, Jewish Day School educators rated the
Overall usefulness of the Core Course (n=47)

All was useful	78.7 %
Most was useful	19.1 %
Some was useful	2.1 %
None was useful	----

Similarly, in 2003-04, Jewish Day School educators rated the
Overall value of their experience in the Core Course (n=209)

Very valuable	77.8 %
Moderately valuable	15.3 %
Somewhat valuable	5.9%
Not at all valuable	1.0 %

In 2003-04, participants also rated the
Usefulness of Core Course compared to other professional development programs they had attended (n=89)

SA is much more useful	32.6 %
SA is more useful	33.7 %
SA is equally useful	22.5 %
SA is less useful	6.7 %
SA is much less useful	----

In 2002, participants rated the
Overall skill of Core Course facilitators (n=48)

Excellent	93.6 %
Good	6.3 %
Fair	----
Poor	----

Across all three program years (2002-04), participants evaluated the **Usefulness of the following components of the Core Course (n=249)**

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>
Participant Syllabus	69.1 %	26.9 %	3.2 %	----
Management Resources	73.0 %	21.4 %	3.6 %	2.0 %
Presented materials	49.2 %	35.1 %	13.7 %	2.0 %

In 2002, participants rated the **Quality of Core Course Activities (n=48)**

Excellent	93.6 %
Good	6.3 %
Fair	----
Poor	----

**PARTICIPANT
CORE COURSE
SURVEY
RESULTS**

While in 2003-4, participants rated the **Quality of Core Course Logistics (n=201)**

Excellent	63.7 %
Good	27.9 %
Fair	6.5 %
Poor	2.0 %

Finally, across all three program years (2002-04), participants anticipated the **Degree of change expected in their work as result of attending the Core Course (n=246)**

Significant change	39.0 %
Moderate change	43.5 %
Some change	15.9 %
No change	1.6 %

SECTION II. PROGRAM USE AND IMPACT

This section presents the results of a special evaluation conducted with **Jewish Day School** educators in the Tri-State area. These educators had attended the Schools Attuned® Program through the Schools Attuned Tri-State Initiative with support from the Nash Family Foundation between 2002 and 2004.

Based on results of Core Course program evaluations presented in the previous section, the Research, Program Evaluation, and Information Department sought to collect detailed information from Jewish Day School educators regarding (a) their ongoing use of the Schools Attuned Program, (b) the outcomes of that implementation, and (c) factors that have supported or limited their ongoing implementation. The *Schools Attuned Program Jewish Day School Implementation Survey* was developed to gather data for this study.

Data were gathered through both online and paper versions of the survey. Emails were sent to 158 participants inviting them to complete an online version of the survey, while paper versions were mailed to 98 participants without email addresses inviting them to complete the paper survey. Following an additional reminder request, a total of **53 surveys** were returned (32 completed online, 21 completed via paper survey) for a total response rate of 21%.

Select demographic characteristics were collected with the survey. Of the 53 respondents:

- 61.4% indicated they were classroom teachers, while 29.5% identified themselves as administrators. Remaining respondents identified themselves as school counselors, psychologists, and/or paraprofessionals.
- 73.1 % had more than 10 years experience in education, 17.3 % had between 6-10 years experience, and 9.6 % had between 3-5 years experience.
- Respondents worked with students in grades K-12. Almost 55% worked with students between grades K-6, while approximately 25% worked with students in grades 7-8, and 20% worked with students in grades 9-12.
- 17.6% of respondents had attended the Core Course in 2002, 43.1% in 2003, and 39.2% attended in 2004.
- 45.1 % of respondents had completed the full 10 hours of follow-up Practicum, 23.5 % completed some, but not all of Practicum, and 31.4 % did not participate in Practicum.

Presented below is a summary of Jewish Day School educators' responses to the *Schools Attuned Program Jewish Day School Implementation Survey*. Results are presented as follows:

- Student Outcomes
- Educator Outcomes
- Educators' Use of Schools Attuned Program
- Barriers and Supporting Factors

DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

RESULTS

The ultimate goal of the Schools Attuned Program is to help all students succeed. Respondents provided information about how their use of Schools Attuned impacted **student outcomes**. Educators were first asked if the following indicators associated with student learning were an issue. Of the more than 90% of respondents who identified these indicators as relevant for their students, the following changes were reported.

Educators reported changes in student behaviors and progress:

**STUDENT
OUTCOMES**

	<u>Decrease</u> (%)	<u>No Change</u> (%)	<u>Increase</u> (%)
Engagement in the learning process	---	13.6	86.4
Self-concept	---	14.9	85.1
Awareness of own learning profile	---	17.0	83.0
Coping with own learning difficulties	---	19.1	80.9
Motivation to learn	---	20.0	80.0
On-task behavior	2.5	20.0	77.5
Class grades	---	30.2	69.8
Test scores	---	35.0	65.0

Approximately 75% of respondents identified attendance and negative classroom behavior issues for their students. These respondents reported the following changes.

	<u>Decrease</u> (%)	<u>No Change</u> (%)	<u>Increase</u> (%)
Attendance	5.7	74.3	20.0
Negative classroom behavior	52.8	44.4	2.8

In order to help students succeed, the Schools Attuned Program provides educators with skills and knowledge to meet the diverse learning needs of all students. Survey respondents provided information about the **impact on their instructional skills**.

Educators that reported the following increases in their knowledge and skills:

**EDUCATOR
OUTCOMES**

Overall understanding of how students learn	98.0 %
Ability to identify and address the special learning needs of students	96.1 %
Ability to create educational plans and select strategies to improve academic achievement	86.3 %
Ability to work with families to better understand students and support their learning	86.3 %
Belief that students with learning challenges can succeed	80.4 %
Confidence in working with students with learning challenges	80.4 %
Likelihood of working with students with learning challenges before referring students for outside services	78.4 %
Use knowledge of the ND framework to serve as a resource to other teachers	60.0 %
Pursuit of ongoing learning related to the neurodevelopmental (ND) framework	55.1 %

**EDUCATOR
OUTCOMES**

Changes in Working with Students with Learning Challenges

Forty-one respondents provided further information about the impact of the Schools Attuned Program by describing changes in their approach toward working with students with learning challenges. The majority pointed to changes in instructional methods, including:

- Focusing on a strengths-based approach;
- Pinpointing or assessing learning issues with improved ability; and
- Using modifications, adaptations and interventions to address the needs of students with learning challenges.

Examples of comments about changes in instructional approaches include:

“When a child experiences difficulty with a task, I look for other accommodations.”

“We no longer focus on only those areas of challenge. Instead we use areas of strengths to leverage challenges.”

“The first thing we do when analyzing how to help a student with learning challenges is take out our Schools Attuned books and see what her strengths and weaknesses are according to Schools Attuned.”

Respondents also noted changes in how they view students with learning challenges. Examples of such comments include:

“I am much more respectful of their unique perspectives and approaches to assignments.”

“I am more empathetic and respectful. I am eager to work with them and find it fulfilling whereas before it was a ‘necessity’ I didn’t mind doing.”

Finally, respondents described changes in how they openly discuss differences in learning with their students, which is referred to as demystification. Examples of such comments include:

“The way of speaking with students about their learning that occurs during the demystification process has helped me help students.”

“Using demystification was new for me, and I really see benefits.”

This study also examined in more detail the use of the Schools Attuned Program with **individual students**. Educators reported the strategies they were currently using with individual students.

Educators reported currently using individual student Schools Attuned strategies in the following ways:

Use the neurodevelopmental (ND) framework to think about individual student behaviors	94.2 %
Use strategies that address individual students' ND strengths and weaknesses	84.6 %
Develop hypothesis about individual students based on ND data	80.8 %
Use informal, mini-demystification sessions with individual students	73.1%
Use the Attuning a Student process with individual students	51.0 %
Use full Demystification sessions to help individual students understand their own learning	23.5 %

USE OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENT STRATEGIES

Respondents were asked to elaborate on reasons for not using any particular individual student strategy. Less than half the respondents reported currently using either the Attuning a Student process or full Demystification sessions. The Attuning a Student process is a series of steps to help educators, parents, and students understand how a student's neurodevelopmental profile affects school performance. Demystification, one aspect of Attuning a Student, is used to communicate with students and parents about the student's neurodevelopmental profile. Several respondents commented that they do not use the Attuning a Student and Demystification processes because they are not classroom teachers, and the processes were not applicable to their positions as administrators, resource educators, etc.

For those respondents who were classroom teachers, some commented that these processes in their full forms are too time-consuming or that curricular pressures were a barrier. Some respondents qualified their comments by stating they used elements of the Schools Attuned processes, finding it more natural to incorporate the ideas less formally.

This study also examined in more detail the use of the Schools Attuned Program with **whole classrooms**. Educators reported the strategies they were currently using with their whole classrooms.

Educators reported currently using Schools Attuned whole classroom strategies in the following ways:

USE OF WHOLE CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

Promote students' acceptance of others' strengths and weaknesses to create a safe classroom environment	86.7 %
Create a respect for neurodevelopmental (ND) diversity among students	79.2 %
Present instructional material in a variety of ways based on the ND demands of curriculum and students' strengths and weaknesses	78.7 %
Use the ND framework to discuss student learning with colleagues	75.5%
Promote students' use of learning strategies based on their ND profiles	73.9 %
Use the ND framework to implement strategies that have the potential to benefit all students	69.6 %
Offer students options for completing assignments based on the ND demands of curriculum and students' strengths and weaknesses	68.1%
Use the ND framework as a guide to communicate with parents	67.3 %
Adapt classroom assessments based on the ND demands of curriculum and students' strengths and weaknesses	63.8%
Embed lessons on learning about learning within academic tasks	60.9 %
Provide parents with resources or home-based strategies based on the ND framework	58.0 %
Observe the learning of the whole class using the ND framework	57.1 %
Teach freestanding lessons on learning about learning	38.6 %
Use a student's ND profile and related materials to supplement student achievement data	39.1 %

USE OF WHOLE CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

Respondents were asked to elaborate on reasons for not using any particular whole classroom strategy. Similar to comments about individual student strategies, some respondents mentioned that their roles as administrators or resource educators did not provide opportunity for using whole classroom strategies.

A few respondents commented that the use of strategies depended on the student, the curriculum, or class size. Others elaborated on why specific strategies were not used, including a feeling of not being adequately prepared; difficulties in explaining the process to parents; and too much preparation time needed to modify classroom materials. Lack of interest from colleagues was offered as an explanation for not using the Schools Attuned Program to collaborate with colleagues.

This study also involved a preliminary examination of factors that limit and support the ongoing use of the Schools Attuned Program. Responses to open-ended questions about supporting and limiting factors provided further information on how Schools Attuned strategies are used or not used by Jewish Day School educators.

Regarding barriers, twelve respondents provided comments about a lack of time, such as:

"Time has been an issue."

"There are time constraints that are inherent in a dual curriculum school. I see my students for only three hours each day."

Seven respondents mentioned the need to have more teachers trained in order to fully implement the program. Examples of these comments include:

"Teachers with whom I work are not yet fully comfortable using the framework."

"The rest of the staff must be trained so it is not a limited but rather a broad based approach."

Four respondents commented on lack of cooperation from partners, such as parents or the school administrators, as a barrier. Examples of these comments include:

"Parents and teachers do not complete the forms in a timely manner, if at all."

"The school administration is not open to it."

Other comments about limiting factors from two or fewer respondents included the educator's lack of confidence in their knowledge of Schools Attuned strategies; large class size; and the processes are cumbersome, not user-friendly; and not practical for older students.

BARRIERS TO PROGRAM USE

**SUPPORTING
FACTORS FOR
USE**

Just as lack of collegial support was cited as barrier to implementation, the majority of comments about supporting factors centered on support from colleagues. Seventeen respondents identified collegial support as an enhancing factor, and of these, nine specifically mentioned support from principals and administrators. Examples of these comments include:

"The administration strongly supports it."

"My principal made it possible for this program to be available to me and has asked me speak about the program to encourage other colleagues to attend."

"It has been very helpful to discuss Schools Attuned with my colleagues. This has contributed to creating a culture of openness within our school."

"Having other teachers who were exposed to the program enhanced our ability to use Schools Attuned."

Six respondents pointed to results with students as a supportive reason for actively using Schools Attuned. Examples of these comments include:

"The positive feedback I get from students and parents makes me want to pursue the program even further."

"I find it yields powerful results which serves to reinforce my doing it."

"My principal has also seen the positive results that have been achieved with students and parents alike."

Four respondents mentioned Schools Attuned materials as a supportive factor. Easy-to-use materials and the availability of additional Schools Attuned resources were particularly noted.

Four respondents pointed to their professional backgrounds as an enhancing their use of Schools Attuned. Special education and social work degrees particularly were noted.

Finally, three respondents mentioned other supports and services; two commented about having access to a mentor and one commented about attending a "follow-up module meeting."

A summary of responses to the *Schools Attuned Program Jewish Day School Implementation Survey* is provided below. While it is not possible to know the extent to which these results reflect all Jewish Day School educators' experiences with the Schools Attuned Program, those who did respond to the survey indicated they have continued to use many elements of the Schools Attuned Program, and that these elements have resulted in a variety of positive outcomes for themselves and their students. Highlights of the results include:

Student Outcomes

- The greatest increases for these respondents' students have been in behaviors and attitudes towards learning, such as increased engagement in learning, enhanced self-concept, and increased self-awareness.
- Although a majority of respondents did report increases in test scores and class grades, these measures of academic progress were less frequently reported among the outcomes.

Educator Outcomes

- Almost all respondents reported increased understanding about how students learn.
- Respondents reported putting this knowledge into action by creating educational plans and selecting strategies to improve students' achievement, and working with families to better understand students and support their learning.

Ongoing Use with Individual Students and Whole Classrooms

- Schools Attuned impacted how respondents view and work with individual students, such as using Schools Attuned to develop strategies to address individual students' neurodevelopmental strengths and weaknesses.
- Respondents were less likely to report currently using the Schools Attuned processes of Attuning a Student and Demystification with individual students in formal ways.
- Schools Attuned has impacted how respondents continue to work with their whole classrooms. Three-fourths or more of the respondents reported currently using Schools Attuned to create a safe classroom environment, differentiate instruction, promote students' use of learning strategies, and to discuss student learning with colleagues.
- Respondents were least likely to report teaching freestanding lessons on learning about learning or using Schools Attuned data to supplement student achievement data.

Supportive and Limiting Factors

- Collegial support was identified as a supportive factor for respondents' ongoing use of Schools Attuned when present, and as a barrier when absent.
- Other factors which have supported respondents' implementation included seeing the program's impact on students, the quality of Schools Attuned materials and resources, and the synergy between the program and the respondent's professional background.
- Finding time to integrate Schools Attuned into teaching practices was mentioned as a barrier to ongoing implementation.

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