

Ballet  
Met

# Moving Into Literacy

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IMPACT EVALUATION OF PILOT  
PROGRAM

2024



# Executive Summary

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**BalletMet's Moving Into Literacy centers dance and movement to support learning and skill development in literacy and English Language Arts.**

## **Outcomes from Moving Into Literacy:**

- Students increase knowledge of dance
- Students increase knowledge of English Language Arts content
- Students make connections between ELA and dance
- Students foster social-emotional skills through dance classes
- Teachers see the educational value of the program

# What is *Moving Into Literacy*?

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There is a connection between movement and language. Dance is the language of the body and using the body's rhythm provides a link to the rhythm of language. Moving into Literacy combines dance, creative storytelling, sequencing and language arts as students read literary works and create their own unique stories using movement and words.

## Program goals

- Creative problem-solving
- Literacy skills
- Storytelling

## Structure

- 8 weeks plus a final performance
- 45-minute classes once per week
- Co-taught by two BalletMet teaching artists with live accompanist
- Focuses on specific story or type of story in collaboration with classroom teacher
- All curricula are aligned with Ohio Dance Standards and Ohio ELA Standards





## *Moving Into Literacy Curriculum*

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- Classroom teachers select a story to focus on during the residency
- Students learn about the elements of dance
  - Space
  - Time
  - Energy
- Students learn about parts of speech (nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs) and construct movement sentences
- Students learn about elements of stories such as characters, setting, plot
  - Students also learn elements of the genre of their specific story of choice, such as elements of fables, folk tales, or fairy tales
- Students create a dance based on a story using the above tools
- Students perform their choreography for an audience



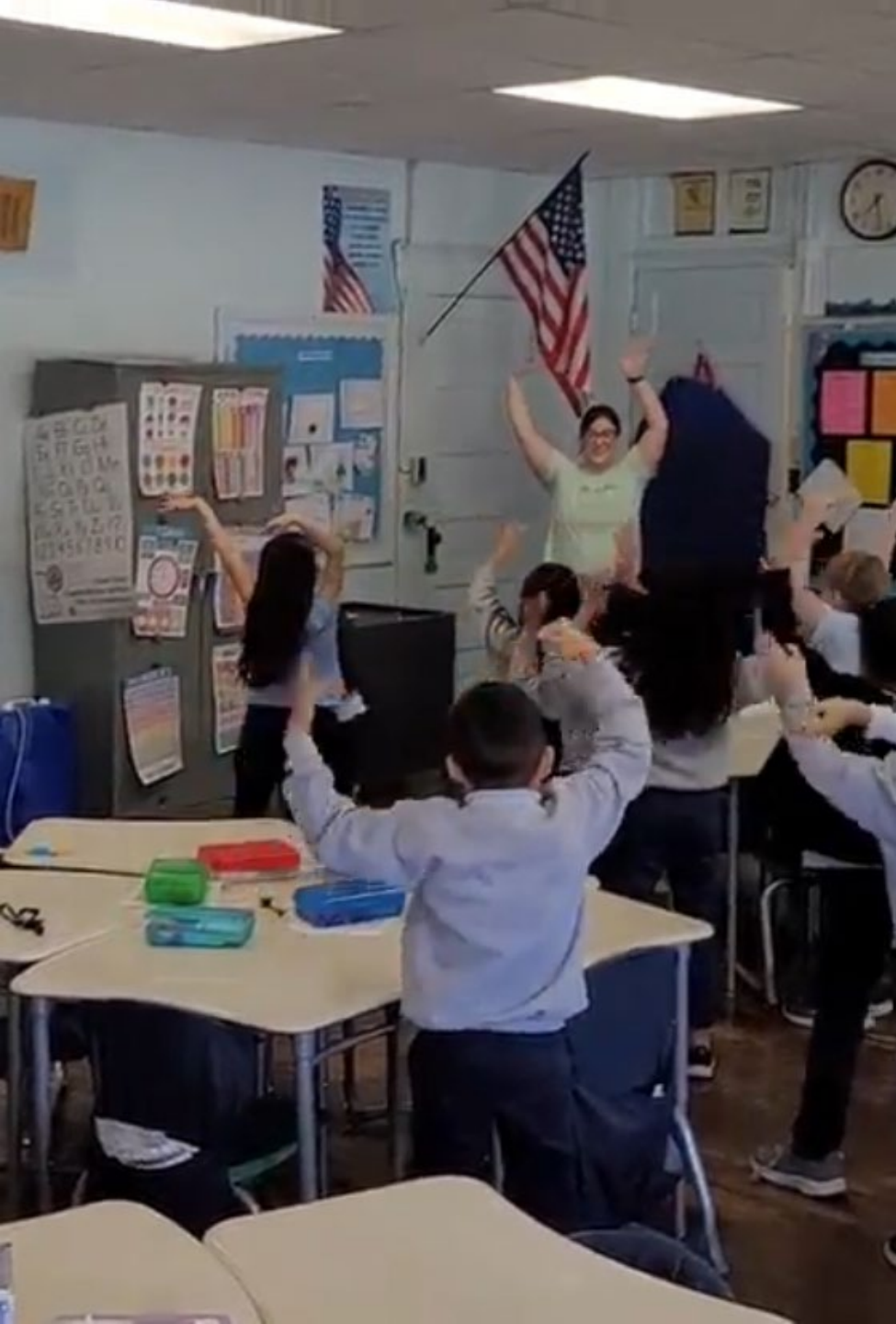
# *Moving Into Literacy* Participation – 2023-2024

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During the 2023-2024 School year:

- *Moving Into Literacy* was delivered at one school during spring 2024
- Three classrooms – one Kindergarten, one first grade, and one second grade class – participated in *Moving Into Literacy*
- In total, 45 students participated in the *Moving Into Literacy* program
- These numbers are smaller than in previous years; with continued evaluation and support, BalletMet hopes to increase the amount of *Moving Into Literacy* programming in future years





# 2023-2024 *Moving Into Literacy* Demographic Information

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The *Moving Into Literacy* Program took place at St. Mary School, a small parochial school located in Marion county. Their partner public school district, Marion City, is classified by the Ohio Department of Education as an urban district with high student poverty and average class size. The other surrounding public districts that St. Mary students could attend are also defined by high student poverty but are classified as rural districts.

Of the whole school population:

- 44% of students were identified as English Language Learners
  - 57% of students in the *Moving Into Literacy* program were identified as English Language Learners
- 74.4% were identified as economically disadvantaged
- 4.6% were identified as having a disability
- 57% of St Mary students identify as Latino/Hispanic
- 7% identify as Black
- 5.5% identify as multiple races

# Analytic Approach – Pilot Study

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In 2024, BalletMet revamped and standardized the Moving Into Literacy program in order to emphasize the connection between literacy components and dance. As such, BalletMet piloted new evaluation tools to accompany the new iteration of the program. These included:

- Student writing samples
  - Three short answer questions about the main character, setting, and plot of a chosen story
  - Answers were dictated or written
- Student surveys
  - Questions to address student learning in dance, ELA, and social emotional skills
  - Student self-report
- Teacher surveys
  - Questions to address the value of Moving Into Literacy, alignment with classroom goals, and impact on student learning

# Writing Samples

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Students completed pre- and post- writing samples to address their comprehension of a story's:

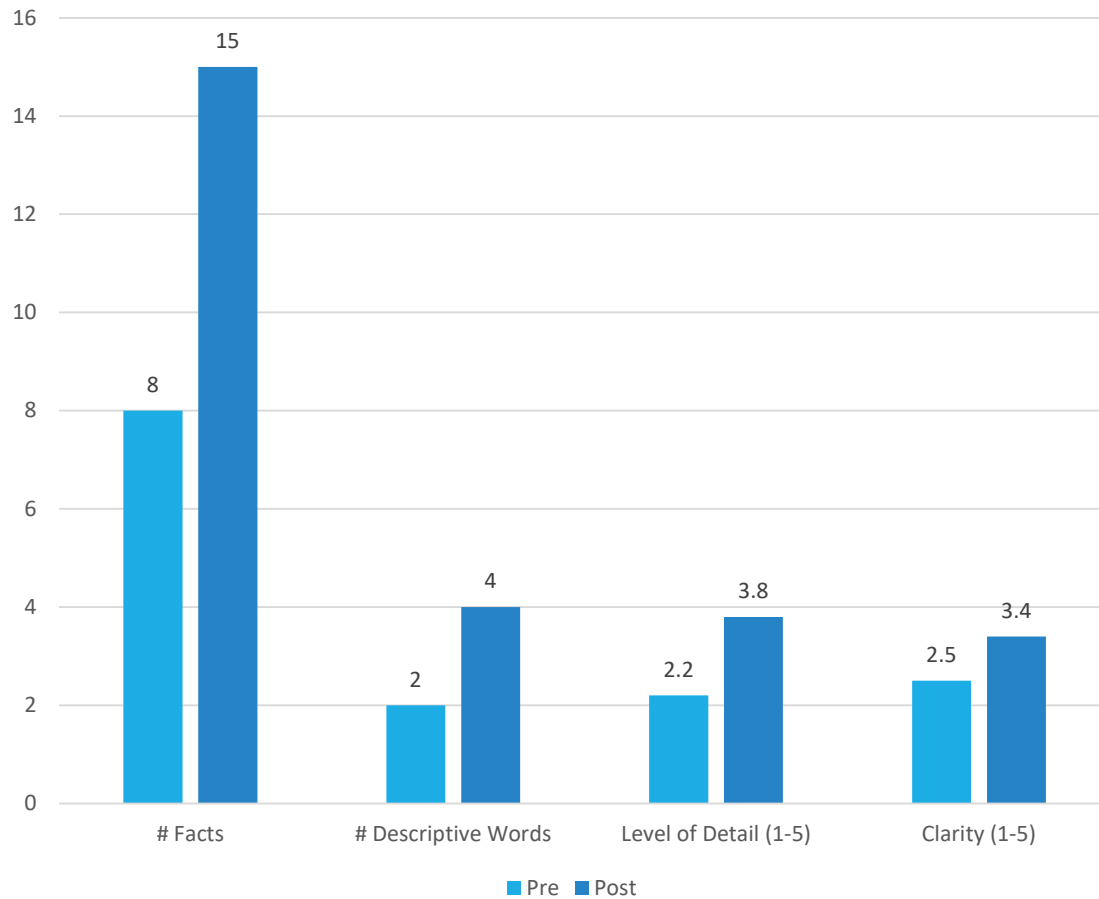
- Main character
- Setting
- Plot

Writing samples were analyzed to measure:

- Amount of accurate information conveyed about the story (number of facts)
- Number of accurate descriptive words used in answers
- Level of detail in answers (rated on a scale from 1-5)
- Clarity of answers (rated on a scale from 1-5)



Pre-Post Improvement: Writing Samples



# Writing Samples

Overall, students showed increases in:

- The number of accurate facts they relayed about the story
  - Means increased from 8 to 15 facts across all three questions
- The number of accurate adjectives/adverbs they used in their writing
  - Means increased from 2 to 4 adjectives across all three questions
- The amount of detail provided in their answers
  - On a scale of 1-5, level of detail increased on average from 2.2 to 3.8 across all three questions
- The clarity of their answers
  - On a scale of 1-5, level of detail increased on average from 2.5 to 3.4 across all three questions

These results were all statistically significant

These results suggest that the Moving Into Literacy program helped increase student comprehension of a story's main character, setting and plot

# Writing Samples Limitations

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Though writing samples suggest growth in comprehension, there were various issues in the delivery of the writing assessment that may impede the validity of the results.

- In Kindergarten, students wrote (and teachers interpreted) answers to each question on the pre-test, but students dictated answers on the post-test. Thus, the increased information and description in the post test could be due to the students' opportunity to speak rather than write.
  - Future evaluations will ensure that data is collected in the same way – either with written answers OR dictation depending on the age group – for BOTH the pre- and the post-test
- In first grade, many students wrote word for word the same answers in both the pre- and post- tests (including a misspelling of a word – “shoefeild” in 15 out of 16 students), which suggests that perhaps they were heavily guided by a teacher or did not complete the assessments entirely independently.
  - Future residencies will provide more in-depth training for teachers on how to deliver the assessments with particular attention to how much support is appropriate
- In second grade, students wrote their pre-assessment on a fairy tale but wrote their post-assessment on a “fractured” version of that fairy tale. Many students left answers blank on both pre- and post-tests as well.
  - Future residencies will stress the importance of using the SAME story – which should be the story that the students use to create their dance – for BOTH the pre- and post-assessment.

# Student Surveys

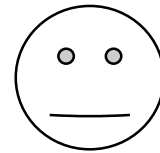
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At the beginning of the residency and again at the end, students filled out a brief survey that measured how they felt about statements related to their own knowledge of dance, their own knowledge of literacy components and dance, and their own social emotional skills.

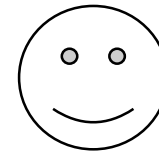
- For each statement, students indicated:



No



Sometimes



Yes

It is important to note that of the 44 students, 19 had participated in *Moving Into Literacy* in previous years, so for some survey items, students already rated themselves highly in the pre-survey.

It is also important to note that for first graders, every single student rated themselves a 3 on every single statement in the post-survey – while the first graders had the program while they were in Kindergarten and could simply remember what was discussed in the program, like the writing samples, this could indicate a higher level of teacher involvement than anticipated.

# Student Surveys – Dance Knowledge

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## Measuring Student Knowledge of Dance

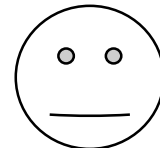
- At the beginning of the dance residency, students learn about the Elements of Dance, or the tools that help to create a dance. Students then use those tools to create their own choreography.

## Student Surveys

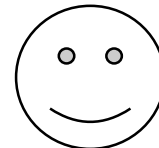
- At the beginning of the residency and again at the end, students rated how they felt about their dance knowledge by responding to the following statements. For each statement, students indicated:



No



Sometimes



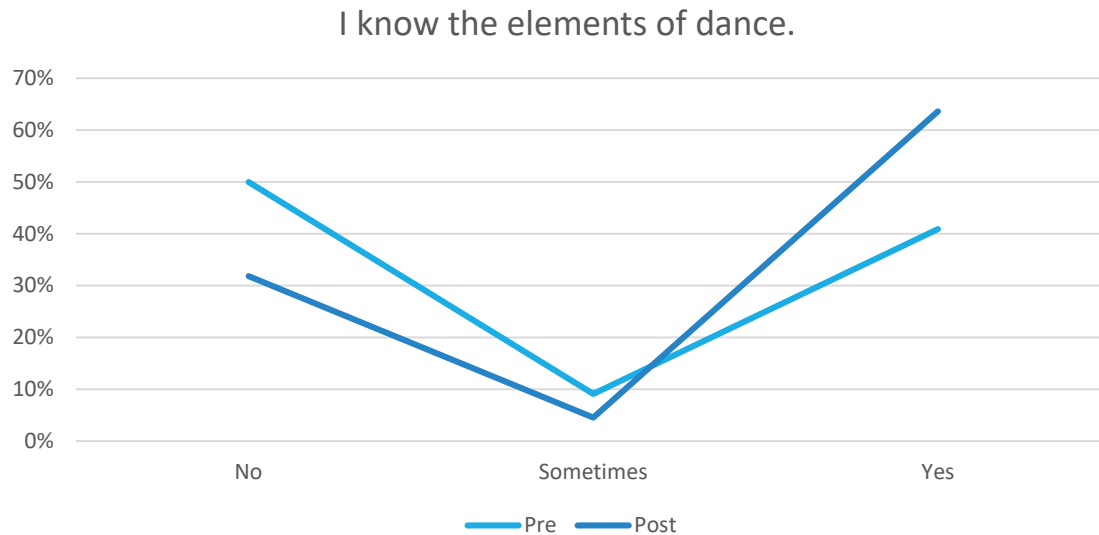
Yes

Dance Knowledge was measured by the following statements:

- I know the elements of dance.
- I can make a dance.
- Dance can tell a story.



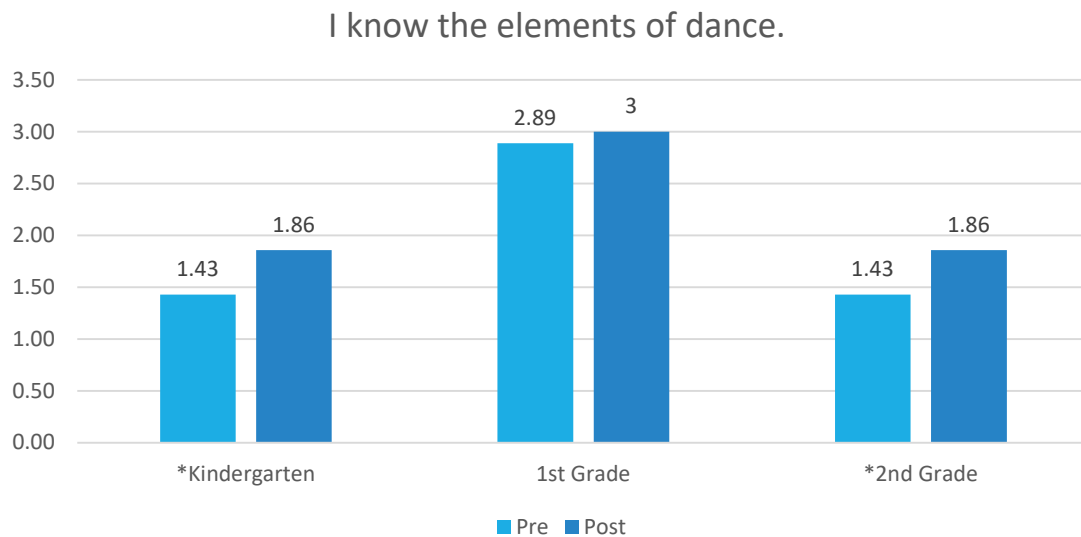
# Moving Into Literacy's Impact on Dance Knowledge



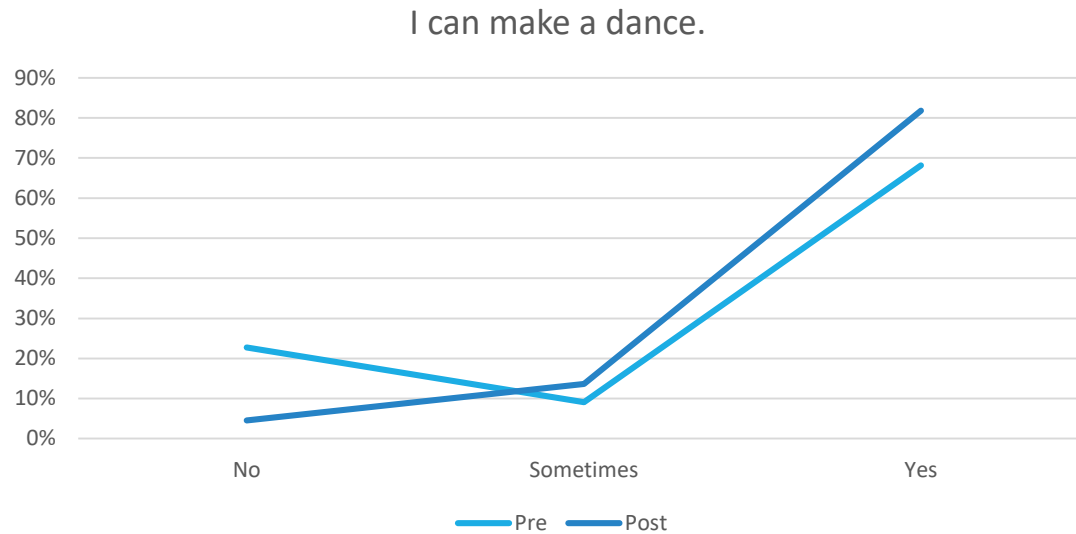
## I know the elements of dance.

Overall, students taking part in *Moving Into Literacy* showed significant improvement in knowing the elements of dance. This makes sense, as students are taught about space, time, and energy at the beginning of the residency and use that vocabulary to create their own choreography.

- On a scale of 1-3, means for the whole group increased from 1.91 to 2.32 over the course of eight weeks. This increase was statistically significant.
- When analyzing growth by grade level, increases for Kindergarten and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade were also statistically significant.



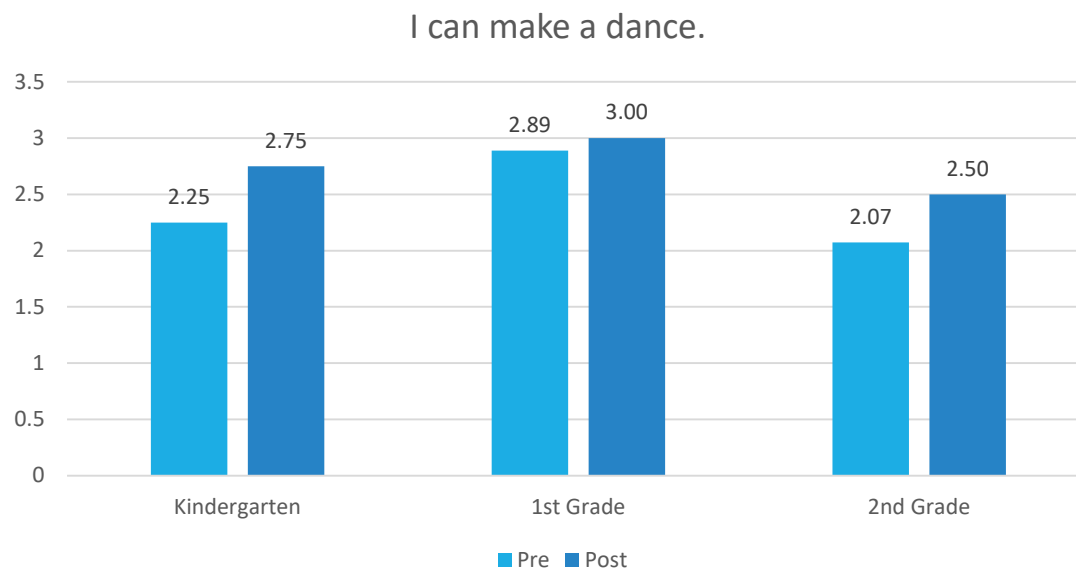
# Moving Into Literacy's Impact on Dance Knowledge



## I can make a dance.

Overall, students taking part in *Moving Into Literacy* showed significant improvement in their ability to make a dance. This makes sense, as students spend much of the residency creating their own dance as a group.

- On a scale of 1-3, means for the whole group increased from 2.45 to 2.78 over the course of eight weeks. This increase was statistically significant.

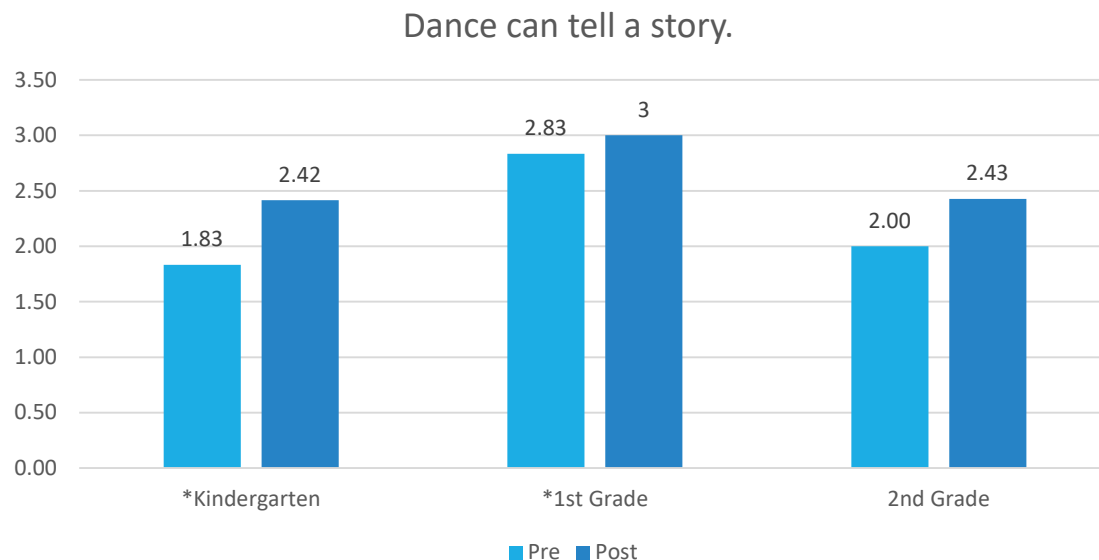
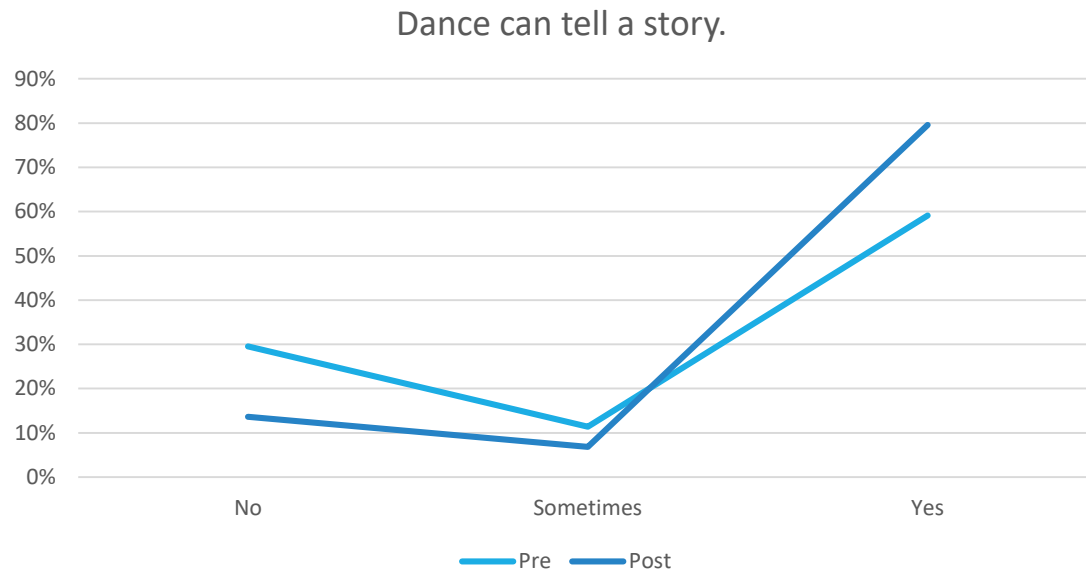


# Moving Into Literacy's Impact on Dance Knowledge

## Dance can tell a story.

Overall, students taking part in *Moving Into Literacy* showed significant improvement in their ability to make a dance. This makes sense, as students spend much of the residency creating their own dance as a group.

- On a scale of 1-3, means for the whole group increased from 2.30 to 2.66 over the course of eight weeks. This increase was statistically significant.
- When analyzing growth by grade level, the increases in Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade were also statistically significant.



# Student Surveys – Literacy Content

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## Measuring Student Literacy Skills

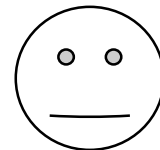
- Throughout the dance residency, students learn how dance can tell stories and work together to create a story through dance.

## Student Surveys

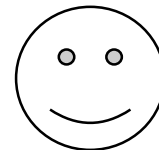
- At the beginning of the residency and again at the end, students rated how they felt about their literacy knowledge by responding to the following statements. For each statement, students indicated:



No



Sometimes



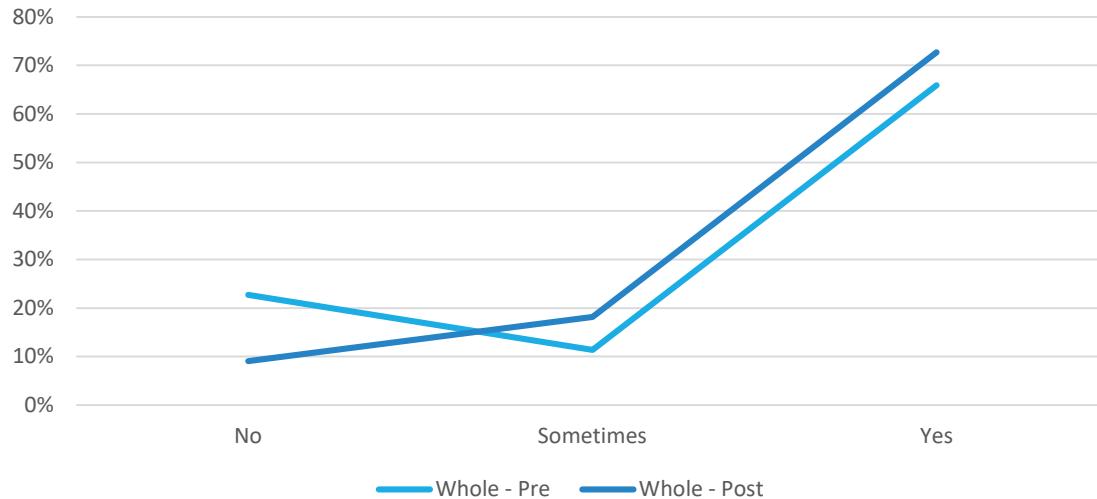
Yes

Literacy Knowledge was measured by the following statements:

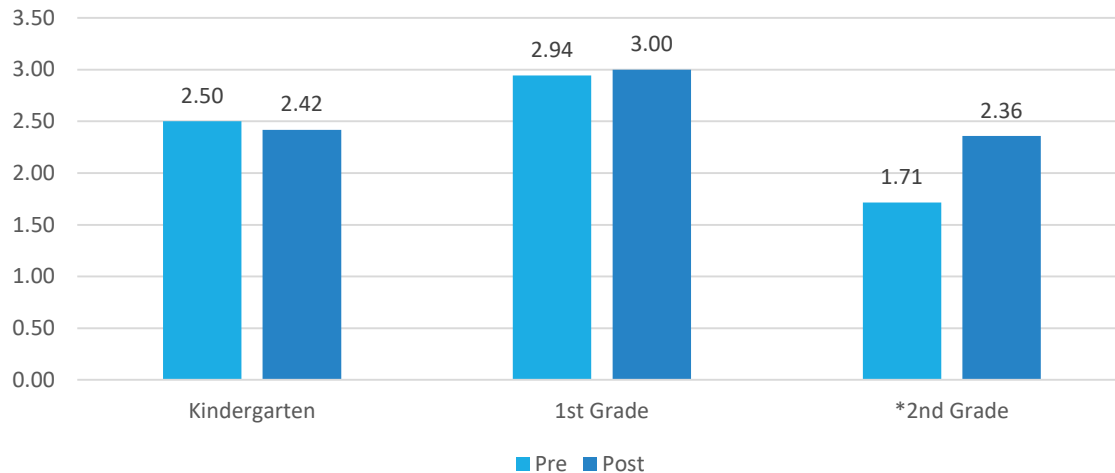
- I can use dance to show a verb or movement word.
- I can use dance to show a character in a story.
- I can use dance to show a place in a story.
- I can use dance to show the beginning, middle, and end of a story.



I can use dance to show a verb or movement word.



I can use dance to show a verb or movement word.



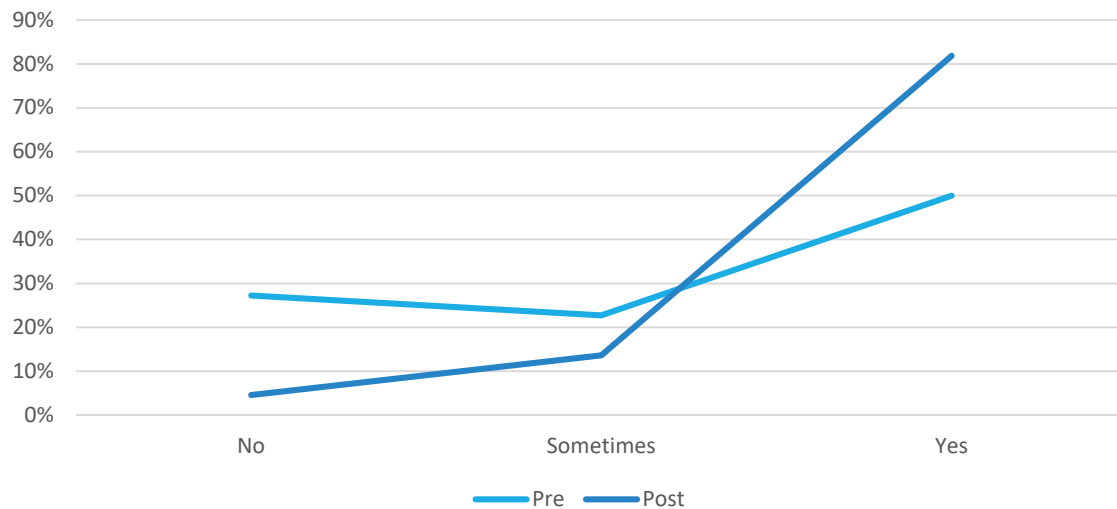
## *Moving Into Literacy's* Impact on Literacy

**I can use dance to show a verb or movement word.**

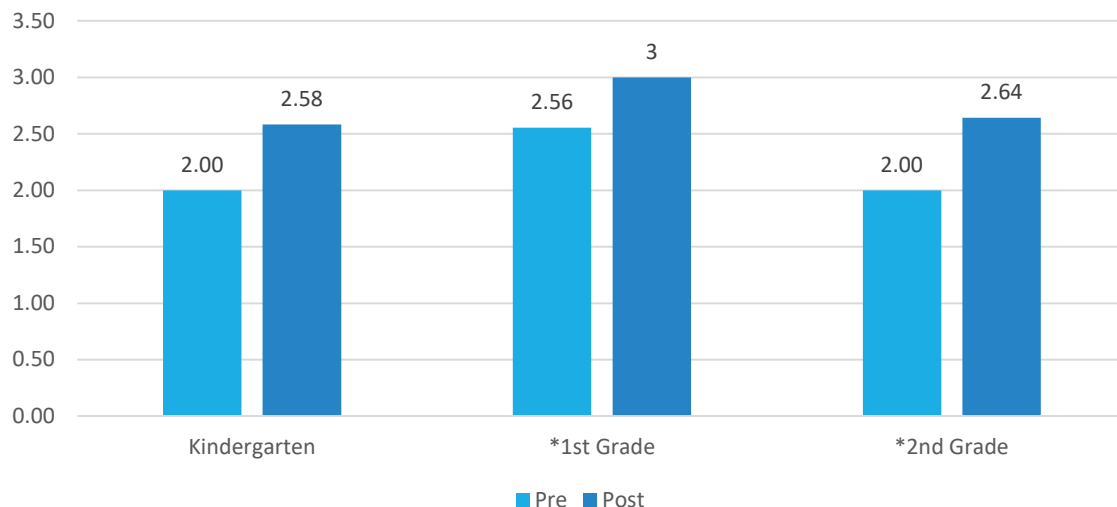
Overall, students taking part in *Moving Into Literacy* showed significant improvement in their ability to demonstrate parts of speech, like verbs, through movement. This makes sense, as students learn about verbs and create movement sentences using verbs and other parts of speech.

- On a scale of 1-3, means for the whole group increased from 2.43 to 2.64 over the course of eight weeks. This increase was statistically significant.
- When analyzing growth by grade level, the increases in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade were also statistically significant.

I can use dance to show a character in a story.



I can use dance to show a character in a story.



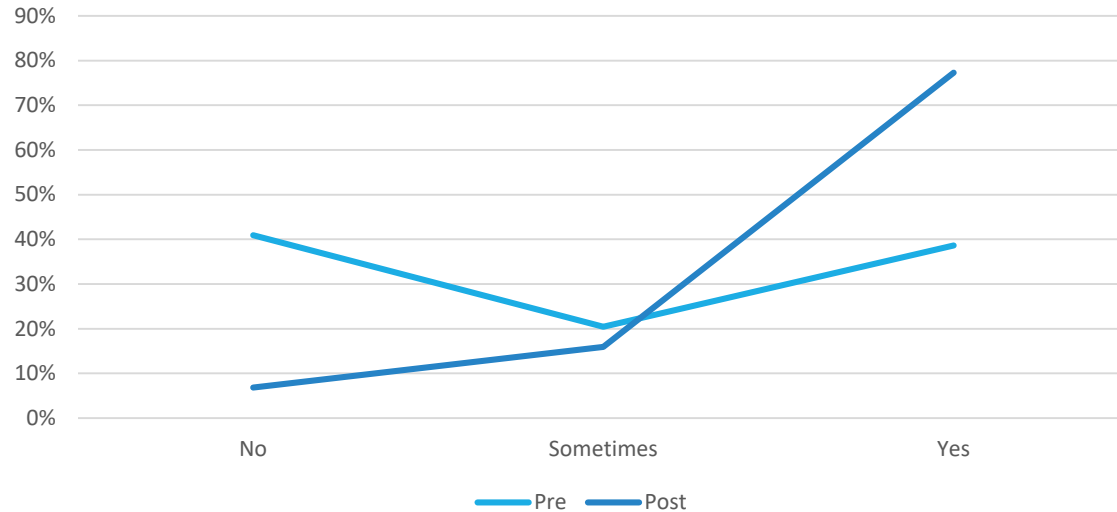
## *Moving Into Literacy's* Impact on Literacy

**I can use dance to show a character in a story.**

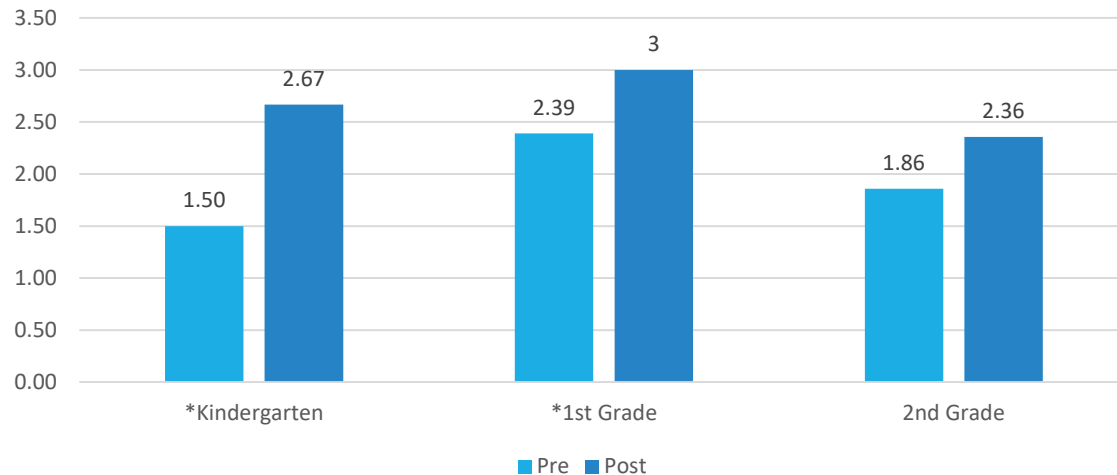
Overall, students taking part in *Moving Into Literacy* showed significant improvement in their ability to use movement to express various characters in stories, which demonstrates deep understanding of the elements of these characters. This makes sense, as students create dances featuring characters in a chosen story.

- On a scale of 1-3, means for the whole group increased from 2.23 to 2.77 over the course of eight weeks. This increase was statistically significant.
- When analyzing growth by grade level, the increases in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades were also statistically significant.

I can use dance to show a place in a story.



I can use dance to show a place in a story.



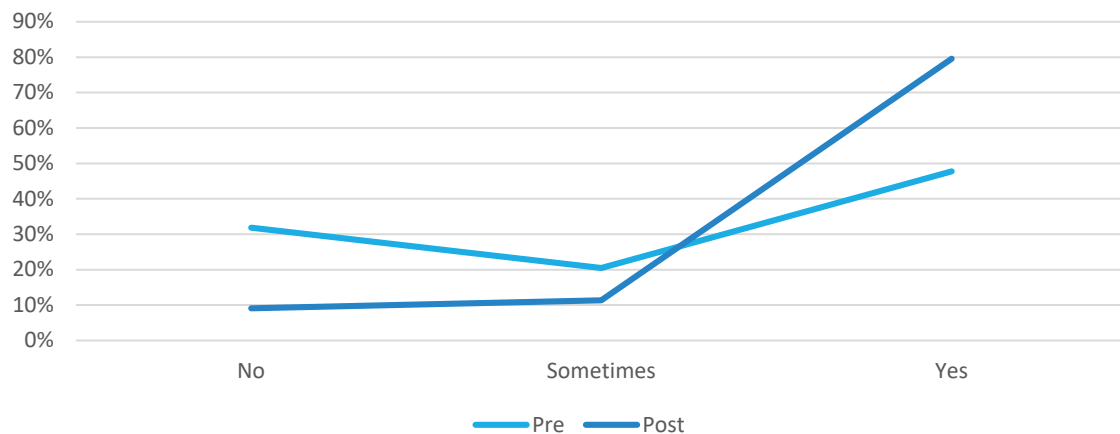
## *Moving Into Literacy's* Impact on Literacy

**I can use dance to show a place in a story.**

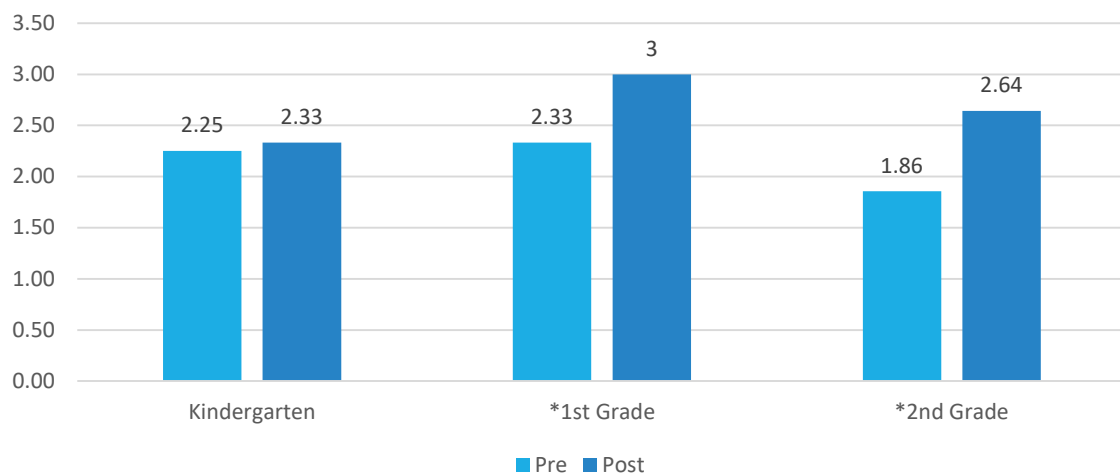
Overall, students taking part in *Moving Into Literacy* showed significant improvement in their ability to use movement to demonstrate a story's setting, which indicates deep understanding of elements of setting. This makes sense, as students create dances to represent settings in a chosen story.

- On a scale of 1-3, means for the whole group increased from 1.98 to 2.70 over the course of eight weeks. This increase was statistically significant.
- When analyzing growth by grade level, the increases in Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grades were also statistically significant.

I can use dance to show the beginning, middle, and end of a story.



I can use dance to show the beginning, middle, and end of a story.



## *Moving Into Literacy's* Impact on Literacy

**I can use dance to show the beginning, middle, and end of a story.**

Overall, students taking part in *Moving Into Literacy* showed significant improvement in their ability to use movement to demonstrate a story's plot, which indicates deep understanding of elements of plot such as sequencing of events. This makes sense, as students create dances to represent the plot of a chosen story.

- On a scale of 1-3, means for the whole group increased from 2.16 to 2.70 over the course of eight weeks. This increase was statistically significant.
- When analyzing growth by grade level, the increases in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades were also statistically significant.



# Student Surveys – Social Emotional Learning

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## Measuring Student Social Emotional Learning

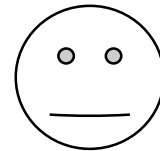
- Throughout the dance residency, students foster social emotional skills like emotional expression and self-regulation.

## Student Surveys

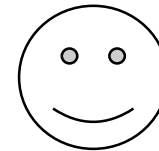
- At the beginning of the residency and again at the end, students rated how they felt about their social emotional skills by responding to the following statements. For each statement, students indicated:



No



Sometimes



Yes

Social Emotional Learning was measured by the following statements:

- I can express my feelings when I dance.
- I know how to control my body in self space and general space.

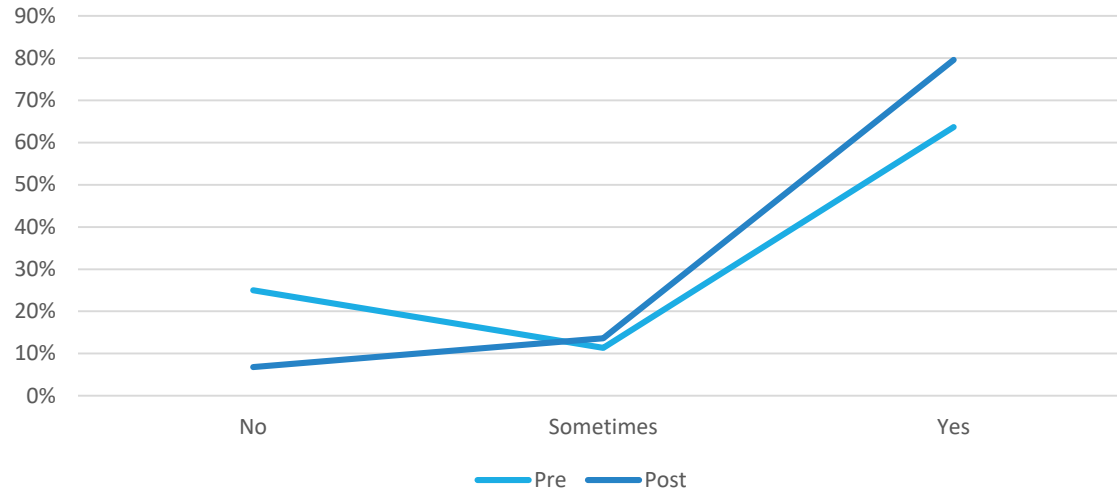
# Moving Into Literacy's Impact on Social Emotional Skills

## I can express my feelings when I dance.

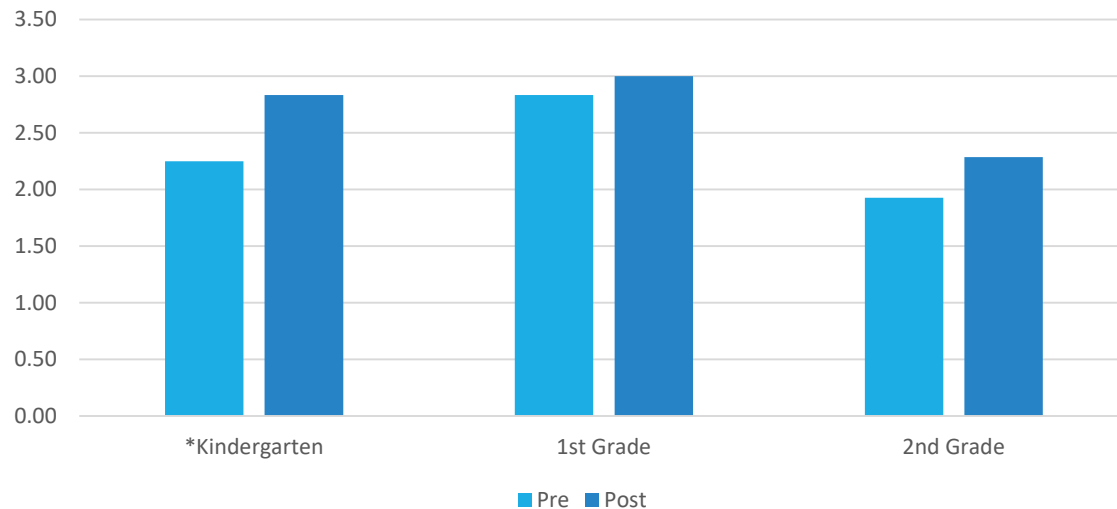
Overall, students taking part in *Moving Into Literacy* showed significant improvement in their emotional expression. This makes sense, as students tap into emotions to present characters in their stories and learn how to express emotions without using words.

- On a scale of 1-3, means for the whole group increased from 2.39 to 2.72 over the course of eight weeks. This increase was statistically significant.
- When analyzing growth by grade level, the increases in Kindergarten were also statistically significant.

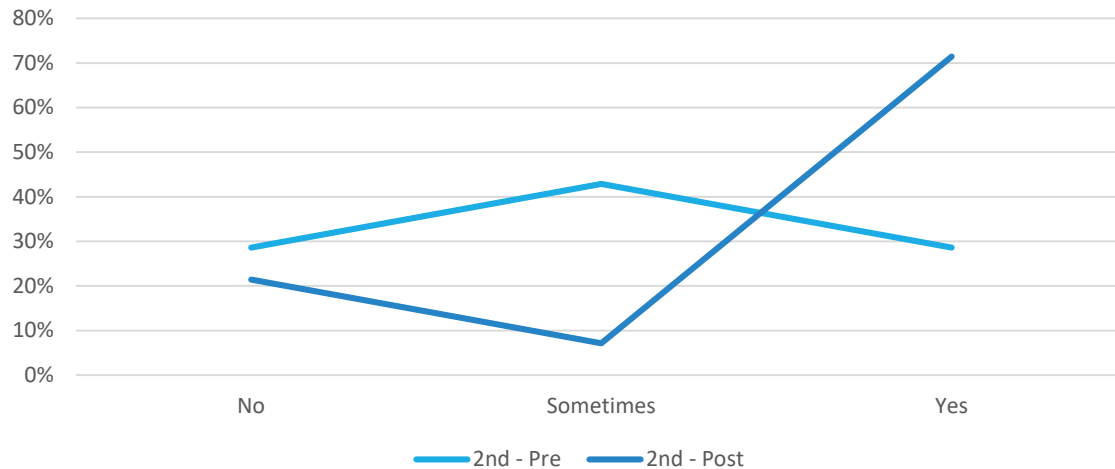
I can express my feelings when I dance.



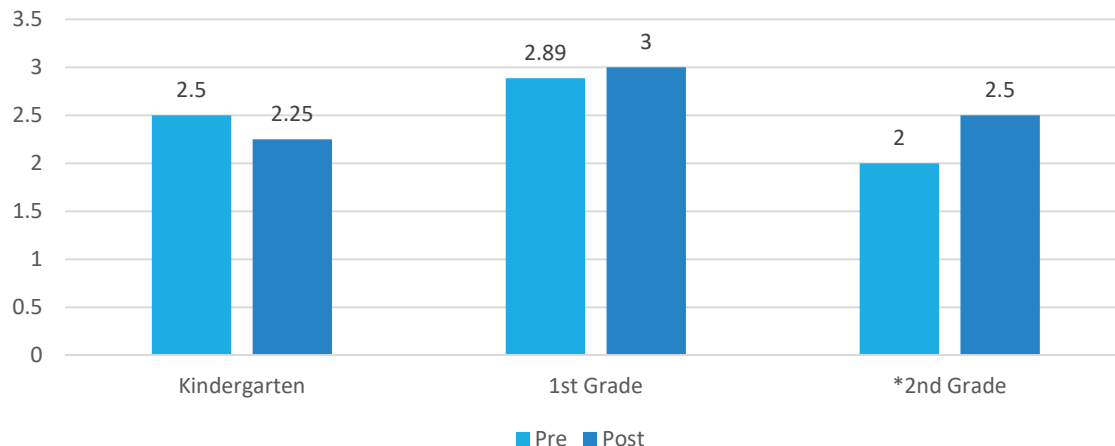
I can express my feelings when I dance.



I know how to control my body in self space and general space.



I know how to control my body in self space and general space.



## Moving Into Literacy's Impact on Social Emotional Skills

**I know how to control my body in self space and general space.**

Overall, students taking part in *Moving Into Literacy* showed significant improvement in their self-control, which indicates an improvement in self-regulation skills. This makes sense, as students discuss the importance of safety and self-control when moving in a group.

- On a scale of 1-3, means for the whole group increased from 2.50 to 2.64 over the course of eight weeks.
- Despite the already high reporting of self control on the pre-test, the second graders showed significant improvement in their ability to self-regulate throughout the residency.
- Though kindergarteners showed a slight decrease, this change was not statistically significant.



# Student Surveys: Key Takeaways

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Students demonstrated increased knowledge of dance

Students demonstrated increased knowledge of elements of literacy, such as parts of speech, character, setting, and plot

Students demonstrated increases in social emotional skills

# Teacher Feedback on *Moving Into Literacy*

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All three participating teachers provided overwhelmingly positive feedback on the program. Teachers responded to statements about the program on a five point scale: “Not at all | Slightly | Moderately | Very much | Extremely”

## **Program Content:**

- 100% of teachers stated that the program was “extremely” aligned with their classroom curriculum
- 100% of teachers stated that the program had an “extremely” positive impacts on students’ ability to understand:
  - Characters in a story
  - The setting of a story
  - The plot of a story
- 100% of teachers stated that the program “very much” (67%) or “extremely” (33%) had a positive impact on students’ ability to recognize parts of speech
- 100% of teachers stated that the program “very much” (33%) or “extremely (67%) helped students with emotional expressivity

# Teacher Feedback on *Moving Into Literacy* (cont.)

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Teachers responded to statements about the program on a five point scale: “Not at all | Slightly | Moderately | Very much | Extremely”

## **Program Elements:**

- 100% of teachers found the planning meeting to be “extremely” helpful
- 100% of teachers stated that the final performance was “extremely” valuable
- 100% of teachers stated dance is an “extremely” valuable teaching tool
  - This is an increase from the pre-test, when one teacher stated dance was only “moderately” valuable
- 100% of teachers stated they are “very much” (67%) or “extremely” (33%) confident in their own ability to use dance in the classroom
  - This is an increase from the pre-test, when teachers were only “slightly” (33%), “moderately” (33%) or “very” (33%) confident

# Teacher Feedback on *Moving Into Literacy* (cont.)

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Teachers also provided open-ended responses about the program:

## **Program Strengths**

- “I liked the use of the different words and building the sentence. I loved how they then acted out the sentence that they made. I think the program was all very good!”
- “BalletMet did a wonderful job incorporating all styles of learning to fit the needs of every student. I found that segmenting parts of a story was beneficial for students comprehension.”
- “The students really enjoy it. It allows all students to participate even our ESL learners.”

66% of teachers also said they would make no changes to the program; they were happy with the experience.

- One teacher mentioned more emphasis on teaching the elements of dance.
- That same teacher also stated: “Great job! Students really enjoy the program. This is great to bring this type of experience to our students, they probably otherwise wouldn't have. :)”



# Ballet Met

EDUCATION

## Key Takeaways

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This robust evaluation of the *Moving Into Literacy* program (2023-2024) finds considerable evidence to suggest this program has a significantly positive impact on elementary students' knowledge of dance and literacy skills.

Teachers find great value in this program, both in its educational content and in its structure.

For future residencies, the delivery of writing prompts will be refined to ensure valid and reliable data collection.

We also hope to increase the number of students and schools participating in *Moving Into Literacy* in order to gain more data and thus a deeper understanding of how the program supports student literacy.