

**Interim Findings from the
U.S. National El Sistema Evaluation Study
December 2016**

Prepared for
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra CHAMPS

A joint project of
Longy School of Music of Bard College and WolfBrown

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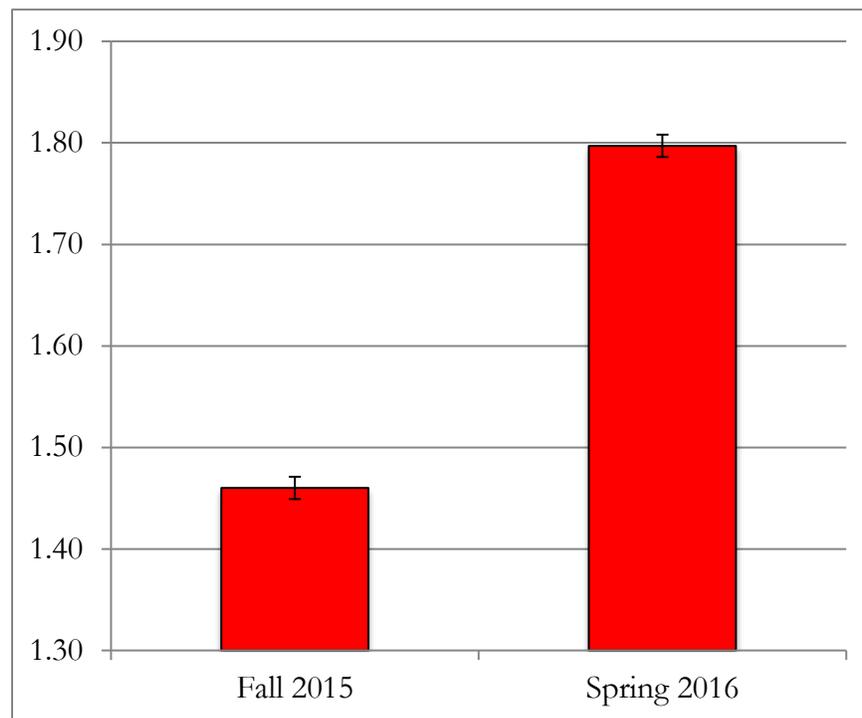
INTERIM FINDINGS

Across ten U.S. sites, the National El Sistema Evaluation Study examines the growth of children in El Sistema-inspired programs in three areas: musical performance, socio-emotional behaviors, and school success. In the last two domains, we compare them to their peers who are not engaged in orchestral programs. Using these national findings, we want to share additional information about: 1) how New Jersey Symphony Orchestra CHAMPS students made significant gains that mirror national findings and 2) how CHAMPS students showed unique gains. While the study is ongoing throughout 2016-17, these early headlines from an interim analysis can be shared with program constituents.

Significant Musical Growth:

Young musicians in CHAMPS, like students across all ten sites in the study, showed statistically significant music growth in the areas of pitch, intonation and rhythm. As shown in the chart below, NJSO students moved from a basic to a proficient level of playing in a single year.¹

Figure 1: Musical Growth from Fall 2015 to Spring 2016²



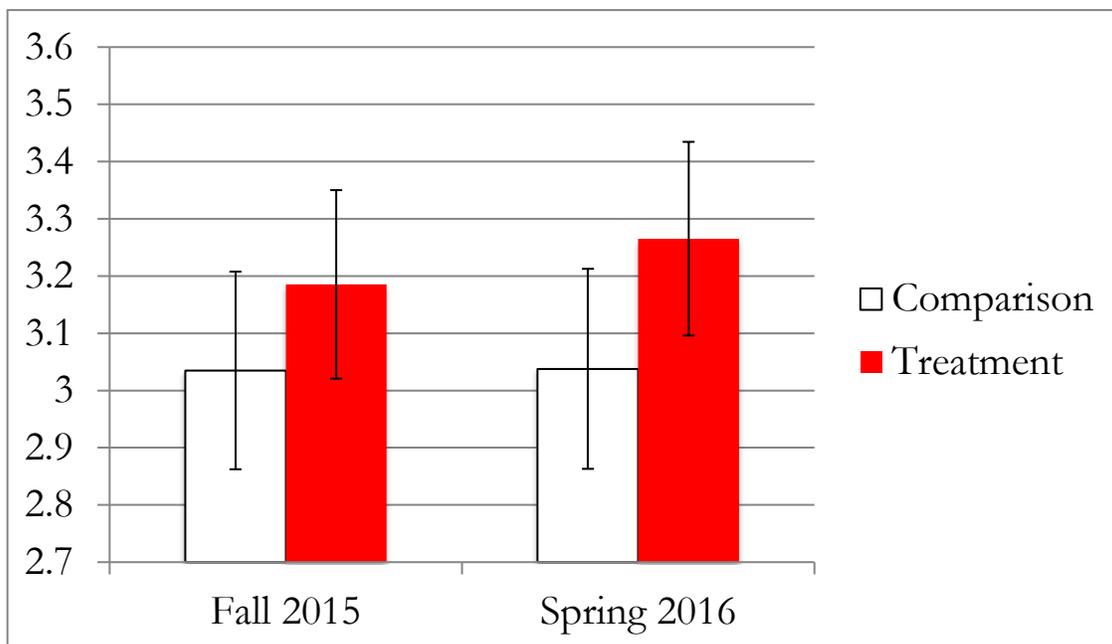
¹ This difference was large (in terms of effect size; see Cohen, 1988, *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*), and statistically significant.

² Here and throughout the error bars or “whiskers” correspond to two times the standard error of the mean.

The Ways Students View Themselves

Students' success depends not only on their ability, but also on their attitudes and beliefs about themselves and how they learn. One key belief is *academic self-concept*, or whether one views oneself as a capable student, which has been found to predict academic success. Students enrolled in NJSO CHAMPS program show an increase in *academic self concept* from Fall 2015 to Spring 2016, while their comparison group peers show very minimal change. This finding was not observed across all ten sites involved in the study.

Figure 2: Rising *Academic Self Concept* from Fall 2015 to Spring 2016



Sharing Findings

While the study continues for 2016-17, we urge you to share early findings from the interim aggregate report (October 2016) and this interim individual report (December 2016) with your staff, Board, funders, potential funders, and other constituents. If you are posting or writing about your findings, here is some recommended language:

- As part of the National EI Sistema Evaluation Study, looking at student growth across ten diverse EI Sistema-inspired programs in the US, NJSO CHAMPS students showed significant musical growth from Fall 2015 to Spring 2016 within their individual playing juries. Growth was measured using repertoire and a rubric from outside sources and is objective evidence of CHAMPS students' musical learning.

- NJSO CHAMPS students also showed a gain in *Academic Self Concept* during the same time period, as compared with minimal growth seen in their comparison group peers. *Academic Self Concept* is an important indicator since it correlates with academic success.

Our Thanks

The study has been a collaborative venture calling on effort, time, and insight from everyone involved. We hope these findings, and those to come, can help you to build support for your programs throughout your community.