

School Transitional Environmental Program (STEP) Pre-K to 12 Education

Literature review updated September 2020.

As part of WSIPP's research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies, WSIPP determines "what works" (and what does not work) to improve outcomes using an approach called meta-analysis. For detail on our methods, see our [Technical Documentation](#). At this time, WSIPP has not yet calculated benefits and costs for this topic.

Program Description: The School Transitional Environmental Program (STEP) is a program designed to reduce poor educational outcomes that result from the middle school to high school transition. STEP targets students transitioning from elementary and middle schools to large urban junior high and high schools in lower-income neighborhoods. STEP is a two year program that seeks to decrease student anonymity and problem behavior, increase accountability, and enhance students' ability to learn rules and expectations. STEP creates smaller learning environments within larger schools thereby providing a stable set of classmates for transitioning students to work alongside. By securing the students into these small groups, the expectation is that students will show improved academic behavior and self-esteem and reduced anxiety. The homeroom teachers for these small groups provide schedule assistance, academic counseling, and counseling for personal problems.

Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

Outcomes measured	No. of effect sizes	Treatment N	Adjusted effect size and standard error			Unadjusted effect size (random effects model)	
			ES	SE	Age	ES	p-value
Grade point average	1	1204	0.127	0.062	15	0.127	0.039
Anxiety disorder	1	1204	0.020	0.062	15	0.020	0.744
Major depressive disorder	1	1204	0.027	0.062	15	0.027	0.660
Delinquent behavior	1	1204	0.047	0.062	15	0.047	0.450

Meta-analysis is a statistical method to combine the results from separate studies on a program, policy, or topic in order to estimate its effect on an outcome. WSIPP systematically evaluates all credible evaluations we can locate on each topic. The outcomes measured are the types of program impacts that were measured in the research literature (for example, crime or educational attainment). Treatment N represents the total number of individuals or units in the treatment group across the included studies.

An effect size (ES) is a standard metric that summarizes the degree to which a program or policy affects a measured outcome. If the effect size is positive, the outcome increases. If the effect size is negative, the outcome decreases.

Adjusted effect sizes are used to calculate the benefits from our benefit cost model. WSIPP may adjust effect sizes based on methodological characteristics of the study. For example, we may adjust effect sizes when a study has a weak research design or when the program developer is involved in the research. The magnitude of these adjustments varies depending on the topic area.

WSIPP may also adjust the second ES measurement. Research shows the magnitude of some effect sizes decrease over time. For those effect sizes, we estimate outcome-based adjustments which we apply between the first time ES is estimated and the second time ES is estimated. We also report the unadjusted effect size to show the effect sizes before any adjustments have been made. More details about these adjustments can be found in our [Technical Documentation](#).

Citations Used in the Meta-Analysis

Felner, R.D., Brand, S., Adan, A.M., Mulhall, P.F., Flowers, N., Sartain, B., & Dubois, D.L. (1994). Restructuring the ecology of the school as an approach to prevention during school transitions: Longitudinal follow-ups and extensions of the School Transitional Environment Project (STEP). *Prevention in Human Services*, 10(2), 103-136.

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