

Mindful Moment Program Evaluation Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents 1) an overview of the core components of the Mindful Moment program, 2) an evaluation of the Mindful Moment program as implemented over the past year at Patterson High School and Robert W. Coleman Elementary School, and 3) a discussion of implications for future program implementation and program evaluation. The evaluation consisted of obtaining selected academic indicators at each school for the current and prior years (e.g., school attendance, suspensions) and conducting qualitative interviews with each school principal and with approximately 10 teachers and 10 students at each school to explore their experience with the Mindful Moment program. The bulk of the report describes the qualitative interview findings, identifying common themes regarding overall responses to the program and its impact, aspects of the program that were perceived as successfully implemented, and implementation challenges and suggestions for improvement.

Findings indicated substantive areas of agreement across the different stakeholders (principals, teachers, students) and schools (Patterson, Coleman) regarding the potential value of the Mindful Moment program for urban schools and regarding positive program impact on student self regulation and teacher stress management. Findings also highlighted differences between the two schools with respect to program implementation. Interviews at Patterson revealed challenges with program implementation over the past year, stemming in large part from inadequate program staffing and difficulties with consistent scheduling of program core components. By contrast, interviews conducted at Coleman suggested that program implementation was largely effective over the past year, with core components generally delivered as intended.

Structural and historical differences between the two schools are relevant for understanding these disparate levels of program implementation. First, Patterson is a much larger school (approximately 1,100 students versus less than 350 at Coleman), requiring more HLF staff and potentially somewhat modified strategies for outreach to teachers and program delivery. Second, Coleman had a longer-standing relationship with the Holistic Life Foundation and had offered HLF's Mindful Me after-school program for four years before beginning implementation of Mindful Moment, suggesting that an ongoing relationship with HLF and greater awareness of mindfulness practices across a school setting may facilitate successful implementation of Mindful Moment. Finally, Patterson serves high school students whereas Coleman serves pre-K to 5th grade students; these different student ages and developmental stages may also influence the effectiveness of current program delivery strategies.

Our qualitative findings suggest ways to bolster the effectiveness of Mindful Moment program implementation. We discuss in particular the importance of adequate HLF staffing, adequate program consistency and structure, adequate program exposure and dosage, and adequate opportunities for teacher training and communication with HLF. The findings also have implications for further developing the program conceptual model and identifying relevant measures for future program evaluation.

FULL REPORT

I. Mindful Moment Core Components

Tamar Mendelson and Ciara McAfee (Project Coordinator) met with Ali and Atman Smith to identify the core components of the Mindful Moment program and develop a preliminary logic model to guide future program evaluation and measurement. The following five core components were identified.

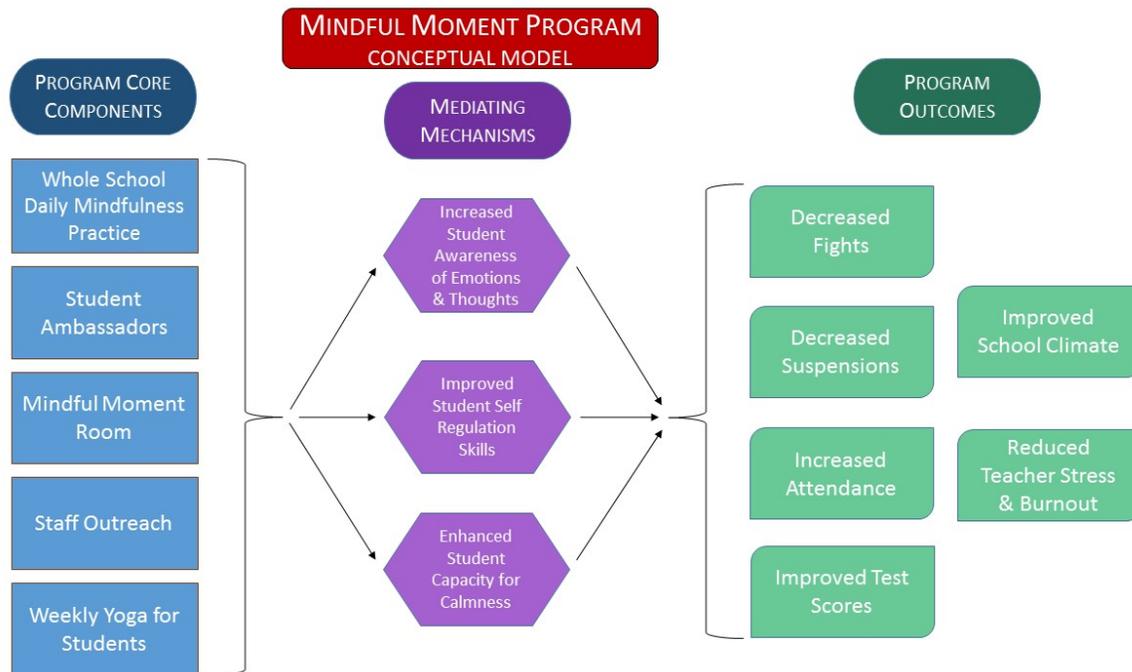
Core components:

1. Whole-School Daily Mindfulness Practices – 15 minutes each morning and afternoon, Monday through Friday. Recorded mindfulness practices played over the loudspeaker have thus far proven the most feasible delivery method for promoting consistent exposure to the practice for the largest number of students.
2. Student Ambassadors. Student volunteers who are trained in how to practice and lead mindfulness practices are an essential component of Mindful Moment. Student ambassadors are students who are recruited by HLF staff at the start of the year and receive additional training in mindfulness. They are given an incentive for their participation (e.g., day trip; party; gift cards). The ambassadors visit different classrooms during morning mindfulness to facilitate the practice.
3. Mindful Moment Room. The Mindful Moment room is a room at the school where students are sent when they are having trouble managing their behavior in the classroom. They are sent to the Mindful Moment room by their classroom teacher—or can themselves request to be sent to the room--in order to practice breath work with an HLF staff member. At lunch, students are also allowed to go in the Mindful Moment room, and schools may choose to offer mindfulness trainings or practices during this time.
4. Staff Outreach. HLF staff members provide background and education to teachers about the Mindful Moment program and about the role and utility of mindfulness in education. HLF staff members also work with teachers who are particularly stressed or are having trouble controlling their classrooms to provide strategies for self-regulation to be used for self-care or with students.
5. Weekly Yoga for Students. HLF staff members offer a weekly yoga class for all students. Weekly yoga is a desirable but not mandatory component of the Mindful Moment program.

Holistic Life explored yoga classes for teachers as a component of Mindful Moment; they found that these classes were poorly attended due to teachers' many commitments and decided this was not a feasible program component.

Figure 1 displays the hypothesized relationships between the Mindful Moment program core components and the targeted outcomes, as well as hypothesized mechanisms of action (i.e., mediators). Mindful Moment aims to improve key aspects of student performance and school climate by enhancing student capacities for emotion awareness, self-regulation, and self-calming.

Figure 1. Mindful Moment program conceptual model.



II. Mindful Moment Pilot Program Evaluation

The remainder of this report discusses data relevant to understanding the implementation of the Mindful Moment program at Patterson High School and at Robert W. Coleman Elementary School.

1. Selected school climate data were obtained for the 2015-16 and 2014-15 for each school, including school enrollment, number of suspensions, students at risk for chronic absence, and attendance. These data provide school-level indicators relevant for understanding student behavior and academic engagement, outcomes relevant to the Mindful Moment program model.

2. Qualitative interviews. Qualitative interviews were conducted with the two school principals and with a sample of teachers and students at each school. The interviews explored the perceptions and experiences of principals, teachers, and students regarding the Mindful Moment program. Project Coordinator Ciara McAfee conducted all interviews using a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix A). Topics covered during the interviews included general impressions of the program, how the program affected students, how the program affected teachers, how teachers and students felt about the program, which aspects of the program worked well and which aspects did not work well, barriers and challenges to implementing the program, suggestions for how to improve the program, whether the participant would recommend the program to others, and whether the participant would like the program to continue next year.

Participant recruitment. We aimed to interview approximately 10 teachers and 10 students at each school to capture a range of viewpoints and achieve a good understanding of common themes in stakeholders' experiences (saturation).

Ms. Cassie Smith, the Program Director of the Holistic Life Foundation, reached out to teachers at each school to identify a sample of teachers with varying levels of program exposure and program engagement who might be willing to participate in an interview. All teachers approached by Ms. Smith agreed to be contacted about the study. Ms. McAfee contacted teachers who told Ms. Smith they were interested in learning more about the study; all agreed to participate. Ms. McAfee enrolled 11 teachers at Patterson High School and 10 at Robert W. Coleman Elementary School.

Students at Patterson and Coleman were identified and approached initially by participating teachers after discussions with Ms. McAfee, with the exception of two students at Coleman who learned about the study from Ms. Smith. Students up to age 18 who provided parental permission and assent were eligible to participate at Patterson High School. Students in grades 4 and 5 who provided parental permission and assent were eligible to participate at Robert W. Coleman Elementary School; we opted to interview students in grades 4 and 5 rather than pre-K through grade 3 to maximize the chance that students would have the maturity to be able to articulate their perceptions and experiences regarding the Mindful Moment program. Ms. McAfee enrolled and interviewed 11 students at Patterson and 10 at Coleman.

Interview procedures. All interviews were conducted one-on-one on school premises in private rooms at times that were convenient for participants. All interviews were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed.

Institutional approvals. We received approval from the Baltimore City Public School IRB to conduct this research. The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg IRB determined the research to be exempt.

Analytic approach. Dr. Mendelson reviewed all interview transcripts and identified themes for each school separately. (Please note that further qualitative coding with more than one coder will be undertaken for preparation of a manuscript for publication from these data.)

Qualitative data collection aims. The key aims of this evaluation were to document which aspects of the program had been implemented at each school and to explore the responses of key stakeholders to the program, including program components seen as beneficial for students and/or teachers and components seen as less useful or requiring modification. Evaluation findings are intended to inform next steps in the following ways:

- Identify program benefits to inform what outcomes are measured in a future evaluation study
- Identify program aspects that might benefit from modification in order to improve program engagement and impact
- Use the findings to inform further refinement of the program conceptual model and development of methods for rating fidelity of program implementation

III. Patterson High School

Patterson is a public high school with over 1,000 students in grades 9-12. The school is located in Eastern Baltimore City in the Hopkins-Bayview neighborhood. The Mindful Moment program has been offered at Patterson over the past three years. Over the past year, program components

were somewhat reduced. For instance, mindfulness practices were delivered only in the morning, not in the afternoon, and were no longer delivered over the PA system; as a result, not all classrooms participated in the mindful practices.

1. School Climate Data.

Table 1. Selected school climate data for Patterson High School.

	2014-15 Academic Year Data as of 12/23/14	2015-16 Academic Year Data as of 12/23/15
Total enrollment	1,004	1,100
Number of suspension incidents	92	107
Number of suspended students	77	87
Students with multiple suspensions	13	14
At risk for chronic absence rate*	50.8%	54%
Cumulative attendance rate	79.2%	73.8%

*An unofficial metric indicating children who have attended less than 88.8% of day enrolled, with a minimum of 10 days enrolled.

Patterson school enrollment increased by close to 100 students this past academic year. The metrics above indicate some increase in suspensions and decrease in attendance over the past year as compared with the prior year. It cannot be determined from these data whether these changes were related to the Mindful Moment program. The interviews described below suggest an increase in program implementation problems over the past year; it is possible that the pattern of academic indicators in Table 1 is related to this increase in program issues.

Of note, City-wide data for all grades report an attendance rate of 89.5% for 2014-15 and a chronic absence rate of 24.7%

(<http://www.baltimorecityschools.org/cms/lib/MD01001351/Centricity/Domain/8048/DistrictDataProfile.pdf>). Patterson’s rates of 79.2% attendance and 50.8% chronic absence for 2014-15 indicate a more problematic attendance pattern as compared with the City averages; however, we do not have access to City-wide averages for high schools only, which would be expected to show higher rates of attendance problems.

2. Interview Data. Below we present interview data from the principal and from 11 teachers and 11 students at Patterson, which we have organized thematically.

a. Principal. The principal expressed a firm commitment to the Mindful Moment program that grew initially from his desire to provide strategies and skills to address his students’ adverse life circumstances:

“What made me interested is when we did a impromptu survey on how our children experience death, and the number of deaths that they experienced were alarming. I likened it to having post-traumatic stress disorder as soldiers do. However, our children is not post, because they are not removed from the situation... So, it came out of that.”

He reported that the program currently had several areas of strength but also that there were problems with program implementation. The principal identified increased awareness about mindfulness practices and how to use them to handle stress as the biggest change he has seen:

“Just awareness. Just awareness. I had a situation just about 20 minutes ago. A student was on 1000, and because I reminded him of who’s talking to him, and that maybe now is

the time that you can take a deep breath. When I say things like that, they know what I'm talking about. Whether they actually engage in the practice or not, they know what it means when I say "This is probably a Mindful Moment time." If I mention that, then they're going to know we're talking about breathing, we're talking about relaxing, we're talking about settling yourself. I would say that just awareness has been the biggest change."

He also identified as program strengths the Mindful Moment room (*"What's working well is the fact that there is a room that has been designed and designated for these purposes"*), the fact that certain students are utilizing the room and the practices (*"those who choose to engage in the practice, learn the practice, have benefitted, in terms of the awareness, in terms of what it brings to their life. We have children that will leave lunch to go to the Mindful Moment room, so they can do their meditation during that time"*), and the Student Ambassador program (*"the advent of student ambassadors and the training of those children who could possibly disseminate the practices throughout the building, I think was a plus as well because the more children you can get to be on board with it, their influences will be much greater than any of ours."*).

He also reported weaknesses or limitations in the way the program is currently being implemented, including a lack of consistency (*"We're not consistent in providing the practice daily to multitudes of classes. We fell short of that."*) and too few HLF staff (*"I think ultimately we fell short of having enough Holistic Life Foundation staff members to effectively and efficiently provide the practice to as many classes and students as possible on a daily basis."*) He described obtaining adequate teacher and student buy-in as challenges for program implementation (*"So it's just difficult for people to believe in something that they don't understand, don't know, and don't practice, don't know no one else who does. I think that's the biggest hurdle."*)

The principal reported that his "experiences have varied" with program implementation and that his decision to discontinue use of the intercom for delivering mindfulness practices possibly contributed to reduced program structure and engagement:

"So, it was a battle at first and then we had some good momentum, in terms of it remaining, coming back for a second year, and it being played over the loud speaker or the PA system. This current year, I would have liked for it to have a little bit more momentum, and maybe that's partly my fault in not insisting that it remain coming out of the PA system each morning."

The principal's recommendations for program improvement included a focus on increasing program consistency and structure:

"Consistency. Having consistency, in terms of when you offer, how you offer, who's offering. Consistency. Every day, this would be a schedule, just like teachers know what classes they teach every day... until the HLF staff understands and implements a strategically built schedule that incorporates the practice being done across the campus on a daily basis, it will continue to falter."

The principal expressed a strong desire to continue the program at Patterson:

“I have no intentions on discontinuing this program. No intentions. The founders themselves are very bright, intelligent, caring, strong men that I’ve come to develop a very, very good relationship with. I respect what they’re doing and the knowledge that, not only they’ve obtained, but what they try to share with others through this practice. So I have no intentions on ever in my power to discontinue the program. Of course money matters, right?”

b. Teachers. Table 2 on pp. 36-37 displays a summary of teacher interview themes.

Overall impressions: Eight of the 11 teachers (72.7%) reported positive, very positive, or extremely positive impressions of the Mindful Moment program overall. One teacher (9.1%) reported an “extremely positive” impression of the Mindful Moment resource time programming but a “mixed experience” with the classroom-based mindful practices (*“Some days its good. Some days it’s not so good. I would never say it was a bad experience.”*). One teacher (9.1%) reported being “neutral” about the program (*“I don’t really have a feeling about the program one way or the other because I guess I’m not involved that much, and I don’t really see the benefits or the un-benefits of it”*). One teacher (9.1%) reported a negative impression of the program (*“This year I feel like they were not even in our school, so I don’t know what they did.”*).

Seven teachers (63.6%) would recommend the program, two (18.2%) would recommend the program in theory but not in its current form, one (9.1%) would want to know more about the program’s impact and results before recommending it, and one (9.1%) did not provide a clear answer to this question.

Nine teachers (81.8%) would like to see the program continue at Patterson, although five of them specified that they would like to see improvements in program implementation if it continues. Two teachers (18.2%) did not feel strongly about whether or not the program continues at Patterson.

Benefits for students: All eleven teachers (100%) who were interviewed reported some program benefits for students. The most frequently reported benefits included: 1) improvements in students’ ability to regulate their emotions, behaviors, and responses to stress, 2) improved student behaviors in the classroom and hallways/enhanced readiness to learn, 3) positive relationships and interactions of students with HLF staff, 4) students enjoy the program, and 5) the Mindful Moment room provided a safe space for students.

- 1) Improvements in students’ ability to regulate their emotions and responses to stress were noted by eight teachers (72.7%). Examples:

“I certainly do hear some students talk about using techniques for, particularly dealing with emotions and difficult situations and being able to kind of mature in the way that they understand and handle themselves. I also think some students get maybe more subtle and longer range kind of benefits.” (ID #1)

“I had a student who was having panic attacks, and every time she had a panic attack she would request to go to Mindful Moments. And it works actually well for her... ” (ID #3)

“Just calmer, less fighting. That's one of the biggest things where I can now tell a student ‘Take a breath,’ and they understand what it means to take a breath and just de-escalate for a minute ... We were having a big event for the seniors, and it was kind of crazy in the hallways, lots of people coming through, and it happened that the Mindful Moment room was closed because they were going down to this event too. And in the middle of all the chaos there was a student sitting in the doorway of the Mindful Moments room, and he was meditating...” (ID #4)

“For the ones that participated, they know that they have a strategy that they can use when they need it. So I have talked to some of them, and some of them can remember, okay, I need to breathe. It's time to breathe. Let me focus. So it's a strategy that they know they have that they can use when it's necessary... And the kids knowing that they're there, know that there's an out. It doesn't have to turn into violence. It doesn't have to turn into an altercation, verbal abuse and conflicts like that. They know. Okay, there's an alternative to this.” (ID #6)

- 2) Improved student behaviors in the classroom and hallways/enhanced readiness to learn were noted by six teachers (54.5%).

“...a lot of students would walk the halls, but fewer than used to.” (ID #1)

“But I saw some effects not only for myself, but also from the kids that were taking advantage of doing the breathing exercises. And they just-- they were more focused, more relaxed, more-- and apt to learn.” (ID #2)

“And it's helped to calm the students down. Like I said, after lunch they have a lot of energy. Their sugars go up. So after lunch is all up and up, hyper. And Mindful Moments help them to calm down, and be attentive and learn... It has helped those two particular students to actually pass my class.” (ID #3)

“So from the time before I started doing it and now that I do it with more of my classes, better behavior, much better behavior in the class, so I'm actually able to do better projects, like now this chair project that I'm doing. I couldn't do it with my other classes because they were too wild, throwing crayons, so it's a huge help with management...” (ID #4)

- 3) Positive relationships and interactions of students with HLF staff were noted by five teachers (45.5%).

“The staff, they are embedded into the school and it takes a while for kids to show trust and that's one thing that they've done a good job at, I believe. You know, where if these kids don't trust what you're saying to them, they're not going to respond to you at all. It's just their nature. So, you know, but they've got a good job in building rapport with the kids and, you know, having them believe in what they're trying to preach to them, you know, or teach them.” (ID #2)

“I think they develop this rapport with the instructors. So even when I have a problem in one of the particular two students, and talk to the instructors, they say, “Okay, I'll talk to

her," or, "I'll talk to him." And surely, at the following day you see a change with the students." (ID #3)

- 4) Students enjoy the Mindful Moment program. At least four teachers (36.4%) mentioned student enjoyment of the program. Examples:

"Oh, they love it. They love it... If they had the chance, they would be going there, not coming to class. So, I know they love it." (ID #3)

"The ones that participate, they love to go down there and meditate." (ID #7)

- 5) The Mindful Moment room provides a safe space for students. This strength was noted by three teachers (27.3%). Examples:

"I've had one student that she was the one who went there the most. She had high anxiety and she would walk out of the class and I would know that she was there, so at least I knew she had a safe place to go to that she wasn't roaming the halls. So, in that respect it's been good for her and good for me that I know that she's in a safe place." (ID #5)

"...I know one girl who's very pregnant and another one was very depressed with her own situation and all like that, to find this safe environment [the Mindful Moment room]... Safety. Finding safety... You cannot manifest love and belonging. You cannot do the rest of this stuff until you get rid of the-- you deal with the basics. And safety is that level that a lot of our students can't get past. They go out here, they don't know if they're coming back. They're going in environments where so they have to find a place that's safe first. And that's what this represents. It's a place that's safe. And when they can do that, now they begin to work on their other levels and then they begin to manifest, you know, the other levels of the hierarchy, you know, going up the scale. But if you don't do the first basics, you don't get any higher." (ID #7)

Teachers also mentioned the Student Ambassador program as a positive component of the program that built student leadership and noted that they liked that students could take the initiative to request to use the Mindful Moment room and could prompt other students and teachers to use program skills, such as breathing.

Benefits for teachers: Seven teachers (63.6%) reported that they had experienced personal benefits from their contact with the Mindful Moment program, two teachers (18.2%) reported that had not experienced personal benefits from the program, and two teachers (18.2%) did not provide responses that directly addressed this question. The most common personal benefits teachers reported were: 1) stress reduction and 2) positive experiences participating in a Mindful Moment retreat or training with HLF during Personal Development time.

- 1) Stress reduction was reported by 7 teachers (63.6%).

"And sometimes we just running, running, running, running, and we just don't take time to stop and breathe. So that gave us a chance to just breathe, focus, get our thoughts together for the rest of the day, and I loved it. We breathed together... So it was just a relaxing moment during the day, and I really, really loved doing it." (ID #6)

“It's been extremely positive, personally Mindful Moments came at a-- I feel like it was destined for me personally because it came at a place in my life personally where I personally needed it. I had been a period of pretty much, pretty strong depression and it was just kind of like a light that came into my life at the right moment, it reminded me to focus on me and that's what I started doing. So the first year, year and a half that they were here, I had actually lost, close to 70 or 80 pounds, since then I then wound up falling in love in a relationship. Then I quit smoking, Mindfulness helped me there... And I do notice the difference between when I was being much more mindful and when I wasn't.” (ID #10)

“I definitely feel myself more relaxed, more able to deal with the chaos of the building and everything that goes with that.” (ID #15)

“Oh, wonderful. It's been good. It's good for me personally. I always did mindfulness, but I do it more now, more often, ... but I was using it [the Mindful Moment techniques] to help me sleep, and so I was taking sleeping pills every night. Now I don't take them at all. ... and it helped with my headaches, because I have migraines, and I'm actually off all my migraine medicine except for taking Advil once in a while.” (ID #4)

- 2) Positive experiences participating in a Mindful Moment retreat or training with HLF during Professional Development time was reported by 5 teachers (45.5%).

“I went on a retreat with them to Charlottesville, and that was just amazing. I liked the whole atmosphere. They were very encouraging, very kind, very thoughtful, and very informative... That was one of the highlights of the year, to go to the retreat with them... And it worked. It actually worked. So I, sometimes I stop and I think and I reflect on it, and I'll do it on my own. Those memories will come back of a beautiful place, quiet time, breathing, and it helps... the teachers and especially the ones that went on the retreat with me that joined us, we kind of all agree that it enhanced the whole experience, learning experience. It adds to it, you know. So it enriches what we're already doing.” (ID #6)

“We actually had our staff retreat at their location the year before last, and that was I think a big thing that helped to kind of connect and put it on everybody's radar.” (ID #1)

Implementation problems with the Mindful Moment program over the past year: All the teachers reported problems with program implementation in the past year, with the possible exception of one teacher who reported, *“It is working well”* but wished she had more information about the program skills. The most commonly reported implementation problems over the past year were: 1) the program didn't have enough presence at the school, 2) there was a lack of structure and consistency in implementation, 3) the program was understaffed, 4) there was inadequate communication between HLF staff and teachers, and 5) use of the same mindful practice was overly repetitious.

- 1) Lack of program presence was reported by seven teachers (63.6%).

“I don’t understand what the delivery mechanism currently is. And the staff, as good as they are at making connections with kids, have had an extraordinarily low profile from my perspective, for the last year or so. So, it almost feels like it hasn’t been around. You know, and so, it’s really felt like it’s kind of faded back a lot... currently I feel like the issue is sort of the profile of the whole program is very low.” (ID #1)

“They were doing a really good job I felt like, when they started momentum with stuff but then it all kind of stopped... There’s not enough presence, like I said, I think the guys need to go back to the beginning again and schedule and visit every single classroom and bring it back around because we have a lot of new staff who weren’t on board when we had it the first year, new students. A lot of kids don’t even know that we have Mindful Moments, the whole entire ninth grade, I don’t think they even really know.” (ID #10)

“It’s hard to say this year because it’s not on the intercom. I don’t feel like I see the Mindful Moment people that much. I feel like they’ve kind of just been absent this year and I know there were some issues with funding or whatever.” (ID #15)

“This year I feel like they were not even in our school, so I don’t know what they did. I mean, they weren’t on the announcements this year, I don’t know how many people went to their room, how many kids do they serve. I think mindfulness is really important but for some reason it’s not being implemented and executed correctly here at Patterson.” (ID #16)

- 2) Lack of structure and consistency in implementation was reported by six teachers (54.5%).

“Because we’ve tried it seems like a number of different things, and the program is not consistently in the same place everywhere, or all at the same time, from time to time, so that’s I think a key factor.” (ID #1)

“That’s one of the problems that we had was consistency too. Consistency of application. If you’re going to do this and do this and say this and do that, then you’ve got to be consistent or otherwise, people will drop out and then have to be reconditioned to drop back in. So consistency.” (ID #7)

“I think there’s a lot of really good ideas, I just think there needs to be more structure, more consistency and more presence.” (ID #10)

- 3) Understaffing was reported by four teachers (36.4%).

“The Mindful Moment staff what we have are great with them, but we need more of them. It’s a big school with a lot of kids and a lot of classes.” (ID #15)

“The ambassador program seemed very strong last year and not as strong this year, and I think because they are understaffed there was times when I wanted them to come in, and they couldn’t come in.” (ID #4)

- 4) Inadequate communication between HLF staff and teachers was reported by 3 teachers (27.3%).

"...the mindfulness staff to Patterson staff connection I feel like has also been somewhat weak..." (ID #1)

"I feel that my experience with them hasn't been as much as I would like it to be. I haven't seen them as much as I would like to see them just in my classroom specifically... it was my assumption-- not even assumption, because it's what they said-- that they would have a schedule, so everybody would see them consistently because they were following a schedule, but, like I said, this year I literally think I saw them one time in my classroom." (ID #9)

"I do not know when they are here, I have no idea when they're here. Like I said, sometimes the rooms close, they're not here. So I couldn't even tell you if they were here today... their lack of communication of when they're available, I think their lack of communication is pretty weak... I mean, literally, someone, like for example today would start walking into my room and he would be, "Can we schedule a Mindful Moment?" I mean he has no piece of paper and I'm like, "Sure, can we do May-- " it wasn't even May, "Let's do February 12th." I put it in my calendar, I write it down, I don't plan for anything because I feel like Mindful Moments is coming and then on February 12th, no one shows up, it's infuriating." (ID #16)

- 5) Problematic repetition of mindful practice was reported by three teachers (27.3%).

"...it just became redundant, and you just kind of tuned it out after a while because it was every day, and it was the same thing." (ID #9)

"Yeah, it's just-- just because it's like every day. It's monotonous. Like I could verbatim give you the whole spiel..." (ID # 15)

Additional problems with implementation mentioned by at least two teachers included the fact that some students were perceived as abusing the Mindful Moment room as a way to get out of class, mindfulness practices were no longer done over the intercom and were not being consistently implemented as a result, and insufficient time was allocated for training teachers in the Mindful Moment this past year.

Barriers to program implementation: Perceived barriers to program implementation included the difficulty of obtaining adequate buy in from teachers (endorsed by three teachers) and from students (endorsed by two teachers) and the fact that teachers' time for training is limited (endorsed by one teacher). Ten of the teachers (90.9%) reported that teacher responses to the program were mixed; one teacher (9.1%) reported, *"I've never heard anybody talk negative about the program."* Seven teachers (63.6%) reported that student perceptions of the program were mixed.

Factors that facilitate program implementation: Four teachers (36.4%) highlighted the importance of taking a long view, being patient, and making appropriate investments in time and resources to build the program over time.

“For one thing, we're not used to it. It's new. And whenever you introduce something new into an environment and people aren't used to it, you're going to get that pushback, that resistance, because, "Why do we need it? We don't need that. We haven't done it before." And people want to see immediate results. Like, "Okay, put it in this year and we want to see everybody nice and calm and quiet." It doesn't work like that. We need time. So I think one of the barriers and challenges is the longevity. So if they aren't given enough time to actually produce results and change the mindset of the people in the environment, it's just not going to work. They need time.” (ID #6)

“Patience. People giving it time. Giving it time to become what it can be. Investing time when you feel you have none to invest... patience is the greatest barrier to this program's success, to give up when the next step could win the summit... As far as how we energize this program and make it stronger, just leave it there. Leave it grow. Let it grow. Let it be natural in its growth, you know. You can't coerce people into it, because if we coerce people, we're leading them right back into the hole they were in that we were trying to bring them out of. You know, you've got to allow it to breathe. The program itself has to breathe.” (ID #7)

“I think if we're going to buy into this whole idea of mindfulness, then we need to buy into it. In my opinion, it's sort of an all or nothing deal. Like this is what we do, this is what this school does and in order to do that, you're going to have to have more money because you're going to have to have more staff and you're going to have more activities or methods of delivery of the mindful exercises. I feel like now we're kind of we say we're mindful, but we're not really all in... I think you also have to give it some time for it to work. Execution is very like, we have this great idea and we're going to try it and you're going to do it now and then three months later we're like, oh, this idea is terrible. It doesn't work. We don't ever give anything enough time to work. So, I think that my solution would be we just have to go all in and find some funding and expand it so that we can reach every kid in this school and every staff member if they want to.” (ID #15)

Suggestions for program improvement. Teachers offered many suggestions for program improvement. Areas for improvement mentioned most frequently were: 1) improve the program's reach to more students/integrate program better within school activities, 2) improve consistency, organization, and scheduling, 3) schedule additional retreats/trainings with teachers (and potentially students) to improve buy-in and understanding of program skills, 4) re-instate use of the intercom for mindful practices, 5) increase the number of HLF staff visits to classrooms and interactions with students, 6) increase the identifiability and presence of HLF staff in the school, and 7) increase the number of HLF staff.

- 1) Improve the program's reach to more students/integrate program better within school activities. Seven teachers made suggestions of this nature (65.6%). Examples:
“...I think that if we write that into the lesson plan for your day, it might be better. And that might be a solution for us in the long run... to be able to use it every more than, you know, the once or twice a week that I use it as a class.” (ID #2)

“...offer it in gym or health like a unit, which-- me and the health teacher were trying to do it a little bit. Might have to try a little harder, but when we combine our classroom then it's awfully big. But I think, yeah, just somehow have every student trained maybe when they come in in ninth grade. Then the ninth graders know if we concentrated on that group, so then the next ninth graders-- they keep moving up.” (ID #4)

“I think one way you probably could get them to definitely participate is through sports programs here. If you can infuse it through our sports programs... Because that's their angle. That's their life, they love sports. And to have that cool down time and that focus time with the Mindful Moments would just be perfect for the athletes, especially. And then the ones who aspire to be athletes, it could be integrated in some other type of physical program, you know what I mean. Because they're already grouped together...” (ID #6)

“...the whole entire ninth grade, I don't think they even really know [about the Mindful Moments program]. So maybe the best way to do it is if I were going to run it next year, focus completely on the ninth grade next year, then the following year, focus on ninth and tenth grade then the following year, ninth, tenth, eleventh, et cetera, so you can see-- and focusing on the different gigs is a little bit difficult because you don't know what classes kids are in but the ninth grade they're all here, so that's the easiest grade to focus on.” (ID #10)

- 2) Improve consistency, organization, and scheduling. Six teachers (54.5%) suggested improvements in this area. Examples:

“I still would like to see a daily activity that's being led by someone who is qualified. You know, I would like to see that in whatever form. I would also like for them to continue to come into the classrooms, even if it's just five minutes, more regularly. They did come in this year. We did do some breathing exercises. But I would like to see it more regularly, at least once a week... Teachers like organization. Teachers want to see programs that are organized and that are how can I say it? Consistent.” (ID #6)

“[The Mindful Moment room] needs to have more parameters and more structure to it where kids can go for a certain amount of time. They should provide the passes so that I know they're going to where they say they're going and that they should be sent back before the class is over with a signature so that the teacher knows that they actually went there.” (ID #5)

“I think it will [be effective] if it's consistently done in everybody's classroom on a specific day, specific time... More visits would probably make it better... at least once a week, that they're hitting every student at least once a week. The more, the better, but at least once a week.” (ID #9)

- 3) Schedule additional retreats/trainings with teachers (and potentially students) to improve buy-in and understanding of program skills. Endorsed by six teachers (54.5%). Examples:
- “If you have buy-in from the teachers, it would move smoother. Now, there were some things that they did then in the past where they-- we had a-- might have been two years ago, I believe, that the folks that run the Mindful Moment room put on a seminar for us at*

their location and took breathing exercises and stuff like that. And it was nice to see all the teachers there and it looked like there was a buy-in.” (ID #2)

“That [professional development day at the HLF facility] was a way to welcome people and invite people and advertise and publicize and show them what you're doing and participate with them doing it. That was-- we need those. Like not, you don't have to have it two, three times a year, but at least once a year or twice. So something like that would help change perceptions. People see what you're doing and what you offer.” (ID #6)

- 4) Re-instate use of the intercom for mindfulness practices. Teachers had mixed feelings about use of the intercom for mindfulness practices, but in spite of its drawbacks, six teachers (54.5%) mentioned that use of the intercom improved program participation. Examples:

“[Using the intercom] was better. Having that set time, that we as a school are doing mindfulness at this time, and it was like 10:15 to 10:30, and they came on, and they rang the bells. Some people didn't like that, but it was still that set time. Yeah, we are all doing the meditation.” (ID #4)

“Only that I did think that having it on the announcements even though it was too long, I bet a lot of people did talk over it and through it especially first period, that's when it was during first period. I think it was better than not having it because it was at least every day, a consistent effort was being made to try to run the program.” (ID #16)

- 5) Increase the number of HLF staff visits to classrooms and interactions with students. Endorsed by five teachers (45.5%). Examples:

“I do think if every one of them got to every classroom or got to, you know, the entire school through two to three visits, that would make a big difference. ...mindfulness folks need to get out and have more contact with more students, maybe even be in the halls or something more?...” (ID #1)

“I would also like for them to continue to come into the classrooms, even if it's just five minutes, more regularly. They did come in this year. We did do some breathing exercises. But I would like to see it more regularly, at least once a week.” (ID #6)

- 6) Increase the identifiability and presence of HLF staff in the school. Four teachers made suggestions of this nature (36.4%). Examples:

“There's not enough presence, like I said, I think the guys need to go back to the beginning again and schedule and visit every single classroom and bring it back around because we have a lot of new staff who weren't on board when we had it the first year, new students. A lot of kids don't even know that we have Mindful Moments...” (ID #10)

“...they're not consistently the same people throughout the school year and they look like they came in from the streets, how would I know that they're Mindful Moment workers? Maybe they'd have a uniform, a t-shirt that they wear. I mean, it's hard to identify them... I think they should be more identifiable as Mindful Moments, they should make more of a scene of who's involved in Mindful Moments. Yeah, maybe they have a uniform and say,

"Mindful Moments," wear a t-shirt every single day, we know who they are. Have an email, have a phone number to call." (ID #16)

7) Increase the number of HLF staff. Four teachers (36.4%) made this suggestion.

Examples:

"This year, I was made aware that they reduced the staff, and they didn't have enough people to actually go around and interact. So they need more staff to do the job. So I think a larger staff would help eliminate some of the problem of them not being known and all of the staff being aware that they're actually here." (ID #6)

"The Mindful Moment staff what we have are great with them, but we need more of them. It's a big school with a lot of kids and a lot of classes. And so, if you could get more staff to be here and figure out a way to say like your class is going to go this day, your class is going to-- everybody's going to go once every two weeks or whatever, I think then you're going to see a lot more results." (ID #15)

Additional program improvement suggestions each offered by one or two teachers included diversifying the mindful practices so that they do not become too repetitive, instituting an incentive program for student participation in Mindful Moment, requiring teacher participation (similar to the first year the program was offered), getting a larger or better space for the Mindful Moment room and ensuring it is not used as a "hang out" room, getting more buy-in from the administration, publicizing the program more, and collecting and sharing program results with teachers to promote buy-in.

A few additional themes with relevance for program implementation and impact emerged from the teacher interviews. One broad theme was the *importance of the HLF staff themselves in program delivery.*

One aspect of this theme was the positive relationships that students developed with HLF staff members (covered above under *Benefits for Students #2*).

Another aspect of this theme was the value of HLF's training, skills, and personalities (endorsed by five teachers; 45.5%). Examples:

"Like I say, interacting is the best thing. And they have, I love their personalities and their attitudes. When they're around, you feel it. You feel their calmness when they're calm. So they've got to spread more of that. Yeah... they are just phenomenal people. They really are. That like I said, when they come, they bring a certain aura with them. They carry it with them. What they do, it kind of emanates from their personalities, their speech, their demeanor. You see it. And I admire that, and I've really enjoyed working with them. I think they were very professional. They were very, very, very respectful of everyone. And I've really enjoyed working with them. They're just the kind of people you want in your environment. You know what I mean? They add to it." (ID #6)

"I would say I do like the employees. They're very nice. They're very approachable and very courteous. I had a great relationship with [HLF Staff member]... And I love [Head of HLF Staff Name], I love all the people who work in the room..." [ID #9]

A third aspect of the theme was that teachers did not feel personally qualified to teach mindfulness to their students and valued the support and leadership of HLF staff (endorsed by four teachers; 36.4%). Examples:

“So I think that take advantage of the strength which are the staff and their ability to convince people of its value, and I think that can only really be done in a personal context. I don't think it can be done-- I don't think it can be done with teachers as proxies, not just because of the teachers, some teachers aren't bought in, but just because I think that you lose something there.” (ID #1)

“I don't feel like I'm one of the Mindful Moments experts and that I'm going to deliver something that is-- that's been accepted by their organization as, you know, this is a-- she's mastered this, and this is an instructor who can lead these groups daily without any problem. I don't have that confidence.” (ID# 6)

“I do think it works well when you have a live body in front of you. I guess that's my point. Because when we go down there, like [HLF instructor] can explain to the kids, “This is why you're doing this. I'm asking you to stretch your body into a table because this is why,” and I can't do all the explanations. I can't remember, but he explains the muscles that are involved and the benefits versus the next pose where you get this benefit out of that. I think, at least my kids, they really do pay attention to that.” (ID #15)

Another emergent theme, which echoed statements made by the principal, was the *critical importance of the Mindful Moment program for addressing the specific needs of trauma-affected urban youth*. Five teachers (45.5%) made comments related to this theme. Examples:

“...with the things that the children are faced with nowadays and the problems they're faced with and the things they're going through, they need alternatives. And what better alternative than a peaceful environment and learning how to breathe and learning how to focus. Learning how to control yourself. So I think it's a beautiful program.” (ID #6)

“You know, whether they are out on the street or under protective care, they become statistics constantly because nobody takes the time to teach them to go inside themselves. And that's the strength and the benefit of this program... It is about once again being able to tune yourself to your own possibilities, to your own aspirations, to the secret that's in you, the power that's in you to accomplish whatever you want to. You know? This is the door that opens-- the door to revolution... so allowing people to know they have that strength, I think it's an answer to helping our communities, in general. So I'm very, very up on this program. I would recommend this to all schools. I would, definitely... this is a template that's needed in urban schools around the country...” (ID #7)

“For kids that live in a pretty tough city under some tough circumstances that deal with a lot of things that probably they never should at their age, figuring out how to keep yourself sane is pretty important.” (ID #15)

c. Students. Table 2 on pp. 36-37 displays a summary of student interview themes. Student interviews tended to be shorter and less detailed than those with teachers. Students echoed some

of the same themes that teachers described but appeared overall more positive about program implementation.

Overall impressions: Students were predominantly positive in their perceptions of the Mindful Moment program. Nine out of 11 students (81.8%) said they would recommend the program, one student (9.1%) did not recommend the program in its current form due a perceived lack of activities and presence, and one student (9.1%) who had transferred into the school in the middle of the year was not aware of the program.

Perceived program benefits for the school: Eight students (72.7%) mentioned program benefits for the school. The most commonly mentioned benefit was reducing fighting and improving student emotional wellbeing (endorsed by 7 students; 63.6%):

“Made positive changes. We see a lot less fighting... Kids are more calm and happy.” (ID #8)

“It was helpful for the people who were, like, into it... There's some kids that are in this program that were... fighters or, like, really, really loud or, like, uncontrollable, and then they got in the program and now, there's kind of, like, mellow and less of a, like, aggressive person. Just because we know how to control our emotions a little bit better.” (ID #12)

“Some students have a hard time focusing because of what's happening outside of school. So the Mindful Moment is just a way to help them. ... I know with my friend-- I'm not gonna say who but she-- before she was-- she used to be a really talkative person but then her grades started dropping and she was upset most of the time. So she decided to join Mindful Moments and then so, when she sees certain teachers, they know that she's going through a hard time and stuff. So they help her... Yeah, she seems happier... I think my friends have made changes... I think it's 'cause of the program 'cause I've seen a lot of them change drastically, going downfall. And then, because of the Mindful Moment Program they've gotten better.” (ID #22)

“It's made some changes... the people that had a lot of things going on and ever since they joined the Mindful Moment Program I can see that they have mellowed out and relaxed and changed...” (ID #23)

One student also mentioned that the practices were helpful for a teacher, who uses the practices to *“help her better with interacting with her class and stuff.”*

Perceived personal benefits from the program: Seven students (63.6%) mentioned benefitting personally from the program, one student (9.1%) reported not perceiving personal benefits, and one student (9.1%) was not familiar with the program. Perceived program benefits included 1) enhanced capacity for emotion and behavior regulation, 2) being able to express emotions and receive support, and 3) feeling part of a community/building relationships.

1) Enhanced capacity for emotion and behavior regulation was endorsed by 6 students.

Examples:

“Like, personally, I know I've changed a lot. ... Mine is I'm, like-- I'm less of a high aggressive-- I used to run around the halls and, like, play fight with everybody all the time because that's what I like to do. Because why would I go to class? Now, I don't run

around the halls and play fight with people as much. Because I know that I need to be a little more calm and keep my emotions a little more intact. It's nothing big, but it's enough for me.” (ID #12)

“...me personally, I would go there to calm my nerves because I do have anger issues and I do have mental problems. I'm just upset sometimes and I have mood swings. So when I go in there, or when I choose to go in there, I would personally just sit and relax and calm down...” (ID #14)

“Because with me, I had like.. I wouldn't say anger issues, but I'm kind of impatient and stuff like that. So before the Mindful Moment thing, I'd just basically walk out of class and not come back for a few days... It's made big changes on me... Yeah. Like some days I come in school angry and tired, stressed out or something, and I go down there for like five minutes, and I come back with the biggest smile on my face, I'll be so happy. It just kind of happens.... It calms you. I mean at first when I first-- when was this? Like a year ago. When I first went down to Mindful Moment I thought that it was just something phony, like it wouldn't help me with anything I do. But now it helps, I do it before I go to sleep, I do it whenever I'm stressed out. It helps.” (ID #20)

- 2) Being able to express emotions safely and receive support was endorsed by 4 students (36.4%):

“When I'm here [Mindful Moment room] I feel safe, and I can feel like I can express myself and talk to people, and even though I've been here such a short time, I can already see myself expressing... From school it's a program where you go, you can talk about your feelings. Technically like a therapy group, I guess, and you go and you can express yourself, and meditate and calm yourself, especially if you're having a bad day, you can just go in and you can talk to people.” (ID #14)

“Personally, I would go there if I was having a stressful day and just help me calm down and stuff... if I'm depressed or something and I go in there, my day always gets better because I have people I can talk to... just having people to talk to and they help us and it's not like they're just going to be, oh, just do whatever if you're having a bad day. They'll actually turn and help.” (ID #17)

“It's definitely the place to go instead of, you know, being alone, you can be with somebody... That they're not judgmental, they're very welcoming, arms open, you can come talk to them about anything... You can go like I said, go and talk to-- anything about anybody and they don't ask questions, you can just go to them and talk to them if you're feeling like glum or down or something, it's pretty nice. They're some nice people.” (ID #23)

- 3) Feeling part of a community/building relationships was noted by at least 3 students (27.3%):

“I like the feeling of having a family. So being in Mindful Moments is like one big gigantic happy family. Like, we're all completely different, but we have this one common

ground that keeps us together. So now I know that if there was ever a problem with me, I have people to back me up. That is the overall best part.” (ID #12)

“I think it’s a small second home... Those [HLF] teachers or those instructors, they treat students with respect, and I think if you treat people with respect you’ll get respect. So, they are so respectful and they’re so nice and kind, so that’s why they receive kindness and they’re actually liked by everybody so that’s why everybody go there because they’re like friends and family, and what not.” (ID #14)

“I like the friendships you build with it. I think that’s the most I like.” (ID #20)

In addition, two students reported enjoyment of the different mindfulness practices. One of those students also reported that the practices enhanced his ability to learn and remember new material:

“You can concentrate on a lot of work that you’re doing. Even though, if you have a lot of stuff going on outside and let’s say outside of school, and then you have to do this [mindfulness practice] right now, you just felt like you so good that-- I just love it.... that helped me a lot with algebra because, in my country, algebra-- there’s basically no algebra. ... when I go to the classroom where they at and we stay there and, for 15 or 20 minutes, do all exercise. And, after that, I’m just so-- it feels just so good... it really helped me a lot with learning the language... you have to work hard at the same time but it’s a really good exercise to do when you’re learning new things. It’s more easier to memorize it.” (ID #11)

Limitations of the program: Four students (36.4%) mentioned program weaknesses, which primarily involved lack of buy-in for the Mindful Moment program from some of the student body.

“My friends, they’ll just use that as an excuse for them to cut class.... I wish people would stop going there for excuses.” (ID #14)

“They can say if they’re not feeling being in the classroom at that certain time they say “Oh, can I get my work and go to the Mindful Moment room” or go to any other room. That’s basically kind of their escape if they’re not going to be in class...” (ID #19)

“Not everybody wants to do the program... Maybe because they just think it is boring and they don’t want to sit there in silence and just breathe ...” (ID #23)

One student also mentioned declining participation in the program: *“Like when it first started everybody was starting to participate in it and as it kept going along and people started to-- like the participation started to decrease a little bit and then before you know it most of the people wasn’t doing it anymore...” (ID #19)*

One student mentioned as a drawback having to wait months in order to get promised incentives for program involvement, such as field trips or food. This student was also disappointed that students were prohibited from using the Mindful Moment room for religious practices.

Suggestions for program improvement: Eight students (72.7%) offered some suggestions for program improvement, although four of those students also stated that they were happy with the program the way it is now. Suggestions for improvement included reducing the number of students who use the Mindful Moment room to get out of class and do not take it seriously (3 students), holding a therapy group in the Mindful Moment room (1 student), including additional activities in the Mindful Moment program, such as a greenhouse, garden, or volunteer work (1 student), increasing the amount of program activities and involvement with students (1 student), increasing the number of HLF staff (1 student), reducing the mindfulness practice from 20 to 10 minutes (1 student), and increasing the variety of practices for the daily mindfulness practice (1 student).

3. Patterson Evaluation Summary. Interviews with the principal, teachers, and students showed a great deal of consistency. The interviews indicated a substantial level of interest in the Mindful Moment program and beliefs that the program has potential to make a crucial difference in the lives of urban youth and their teachers. Respondents also, however, reported significant problems with program implementation over the past year, including a lack of program consistency and structure, difficulty engaging a large enough number of teachers and students, inadequate numbers of HLF staff, and not enough of a visible presence of the HLF staff and Mindful Moment program overall.

IV. Robert W. Coleman Elementary School. Robert W. Coleman Elementary is a Title I public Pre K-5 school in Western Baltimore City with a total enrollment of just under 350 students. HLF has offered an after-school yoga and mindfulness program (Mindful Me) at Robert W. Coleman for six years.

The Mindful Moment program has been offered for the past two years at Robert Coleman. Mindful Moment program implementation at Coleman over the past year included 15 minutes of mindful practice over the PA system every morning and 15 minutes every afternoon, a time during which HLF facilitators visited different classrooms to check on students with behavior problems. Students could request that their teachers give them a pass to use the Mindful Moment room, or teachers could choose to send a student to the Mindful Moment room if the student was having difficulty behaving in class. A 45-minute yoga class taught by HLF staff was offered during one resource period per week for students in each grade throughout most of the year.

1. School Climate Data.

School-level academic indicators for Coleman for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years are shown below in Table 3.

Table 3. Selected school climate data for Robert W. Coleman Elementary School.

	2014-15	2015-16
Enrollment	352	343
Number of suspensions	0	0
Number of office referrals	25	30
Students at risk for chronic absence*	20%	15.7%
Cumulative attendance rate	95.6%	93.8%

*An unofficial metric indicating children who have attended less than 88.8% of day enrolled, with a minimum of 10 days enrolled.

Table 3 shows a slight decrease in the number of students at Patterson in 2015-16, with an increase from 25 to 30 in the number of office referrals but an improvement in overall attendance and students at risk for chronic absence. The attendance rate for both years is higher than the 2015-16 attendance rate of 92.2% for K-5 schools in the district. No suspensions were reported in either year.

These numbers contrast with Patterson's, where over 100 suspensions were reported during the first half of the 2015-16 year, over half the students were at risk for chronic absence and the cumulative attendance rate was under 75%. Of note, risk for suspensions and absenteeism is much higher in high school than elementary school.

2. Interview Data. Below we present data from interviews with the Coleman principal and with 10 Coleman teachers and 10 Coleman 4th and 5th grade students, which we have organized thematically.

a. Principal.

The principal at Robert W. Coleman first began working with HLF in 2011 when she agreed to have the Mindful Me after school program at the school. She was extremely pleased with that program and was enthusiastic about implementing the Mindful Moment program during the school day. The principal expressed satisfaction with the effects of the Mindful Moment program.

She highlighted in particular a reduction in office referrals due to the Mindful Moment program: *"Office referrals have been less because instead of just teachers sending students to the office, they would go to the Mindful Me room. So basically, they would go in, they would talk to whomever who was in the room, and they would do some breathing, and they would take them back to class and, kind of, hang around to get them reunited with instruction... Less office referrals. I've even seen children, 'You know what, I'm just going to stop and breathe. Get myself together.'"*

She was also pleased with the relationships HLF staff built with the Coleman students: *"The thing that I really liked is they built relationships with the students. Once students feel that you have their best interest at heart, then they are warm welcoming. So they've built these relationships and it's kind of funny because this week, we don't have-- we're not having any [Mindful Moment] resources. So one of the children said, 'I went and knocked at the door and nobody was in there.' And she was really sad."*

She also gave an example of another student:

"I have a one particular incident that I can think about. I have a child this year that's in kindergarten, and every day when he comes, the first person he wants to see is either [two HLF instructors]. If he sees one of them, then he's good. If he doesn't see them, he's going to leave his classroom to go see them, and then go back to class. So they have really impacted him... He knows if he's with one of them, that he's going to do the right thing. But he also

knows, when they see him, they're going to hug him, talk to him, and this child really needs that kind of attention."

She also perceived that teachers appreciated the help and support they received from HLF staff:

"The teachers love it because they are another adult that they can bounce ideas and strategies off of. So, it really has made a big difference... I think teachers really appreciate the fact that they have someone who could be a mediator between them and sending students to the office, a support. Because even teachers ask for strategies of how to relieve stress, or they ask strategies on, "Well, what can I do differently that will impact this child's behavior." So it's kind of a win-win situation, because they're the teacher's best friend because I can send the children to mindful moments, and I'm not occurring a paper trail because of somebody's behavior. So the teachers really appreciate it."

The principal was pleased with the performance of the HLF staff leading the Mindful Moment program (*"the ones who run it during the day school, they do a beautiful job. They're here at 7:00, 7:15am. They're here until dismissal. They do an outstanding job."*) She did not perceive any significant weaknesses or problems with the program: *"As far as the day program, I don't think there's much improvement needed. I think that they did an awesome job this school year."* She acknowledged that it might be useful to alter the mindfulness practices periodically to maintain student engagement: *"...even if we switched it monthly. Because I think it takes, maybe the first week for them to really get the techniques down in their heads. But I think, and then after the next three weeks... put it into practice. But I think, by the time the end of the month comes, if there was something new, then it would stimulate them a little more."*

The only barrier she identified regarding program implementation was funding:

"Money. Financing, because my school budget has to be developed January or February. And it seems like the budget is getting smaller and smaller. But the requirement is for us to do so much more. So, you get less money but you want-- but they want to see more productivity... So at this point, we don't have the finances to make a contribution. I wish I did... This is something that I know is beneficial to the students, but right now, I can't finance it. So, and to be 100 percent honest with you, the day program is what's making the difference. Just knowing that there are individuals in the building who are trained and skilled enough to take my child who's in distress, refigure that energy. They go in one way, but they come out calm, ready to go back to class, that's huge."

The principal expressed gratitude for her involvement with HLF:

"When I reflect back six years ago, that I was open minded enough to let them come in and show me, teach me, what Holistic Life was all about. And because I have been introduced to holistic life, my life has changed. I look at [the three HLF founders] and I see them as my extended family. They come in with such calmness and such passion for the children, not only for the children, but for me, for the teachers, the parents, and I'm just so grateful that I gave them an opportunity."

b. Teachers. Table 4 on pp. 38-39 displays a summary of teacher interview themes.

Overall impressions: All ten teachers (100%) reported extremely positive impressions of the Mindful Moment program. All said they would recommend the program and that they hope the program continues at Coleman next year.

Benefits for students: All ten teachers (100%) reported positive program effects for students. The most commonly reported benefits were: 1) improvements in students' ability to regulation their emotions and responses to stress, 2) improved focus and readiness to learn, 3) positive student relationships with HLF staff, and 4) skills acquisition with positive long-term implications.

- 1) Improvements in students' ability to regulate their emotions and responses to stress were noted by all the teachers (100%). Examples:

"... individually with some students who are emotionally disturbed, it helps them to be less active, less.. aggressive than they normally would be." (ID # 24)

"So the structure of it and the consistency I think has helped them with being able to have a quiet moment and understand, and kind of regroup themselves." (ID #27)

"I would say that some of the behavior still persists, but they know they have another way of dealing with it... for my kids, because they do have some background history, it didn't totally erase it, but it just gave them a outlet for them to know how to kind of process their emotions and their frustrations." (ID #33)

"It's worked wonders because you can see kids, even if they can't go to the Mindful Me room. You'll see them just sit there, and they'll sit in their chair, and you can just see them breathing, and doing some of the things that the guys have taught them... My students? It has definitely affected them in a-- in a good way... I can think of one in particular who, he would walk out of the room, he would yell, he would throw things, and now... he's a different boy. I mean, you-- I started seeing differences in him like right after Christmas break. By then, they had been working with him for what-- four or five months. And I mean, you could already see the difference. He's not walking out of the room. He-- he'll get upset, but he doesn't do the things that he used to do. And the same thing with some of the others, they'll get upset, but now instead of yelling, or getting angry to the point where they want to walk out, 'They'll ask, can I just go to the mindful room? Can I go with [HLF staff member], or can I go with [HLF staff member]?' (ID #29)

Improved focus and readiness to learn were reported by nine of the teachers (90%).

Examples:

"In general, it has calmed the whole class before we begin the morning work." (ID #24)

"It's just about us learning how to breathe and channeling our energy and getting back to focus. It helps us to focus. It helps me to focus and I know it helps my kids to focus... I know kids who used to freak out when it comes to testing and it's no big deal to them now because they know how to channel, how to get themselves calm to do the test. So, it has been helping us." (ID #25)

“The frustrated children that I’ve sent to the room usually come back ready for learning. I like the fact that this past year they [HLF staff] had the opportunity to... just kind of like walk around. And if they saw a student off task and they would just come in and say get back on task and things like that before they had to get angry and get sent to the room. So that worked out.” (ID #28)

Positive student relationships with HLF staff were mentioned by six teachers (60%).

Examples:

“...our kids really look up to the Holistic staff. I mean, they-- I don’t think they look at them as people who are judging them... they just really-- for some reason they really open to those guys.” (ID #29)

“...they have these guys [HLF staff] there that are willing to help them to work on whatever problem they’re dealing with and that’s good. They don’t only teach them about the meditating and stuff. I know they talk about all other stuff that’s going on and how to channel their behavior and stuff.” (ID #25)

Skills acquisition with positive long-term implications were noted by two teachers (20%):

“The fact that they’ll use those techniques as they move on in life, that they’ll stick with them... it’s like a life learning experience that.. they won’t forget it. Because with it being kinesthetic, you know, audio, they’ll remember those movements, they’ll remember how to breathe. Because breathing, and once you learn how to breathe correctly it’s almost like riding a bike, like you just kind of-- it comes naturally after a certain point. And if you forget, if you kind of just come back to it, it comes back to you. And especially the ones, like I said, that have been doing it for so long. They are really, really good with the techniques and the strategies.” (ID #26)

“...it also helps them learn coping mechanisms and techniques, because when they get older and they’re at a job, and they get angry, nobody’s going to send them to their boss’s office, or professor’s office and say, “Hey, you’re in trouble.” It’s like you’re either going to get fired, or you’re going to figure out how to deal with what you’re doing... When somebody’s messing with them, learning how to breathe, learning how to kind of get to that calm state. So I just-- I think it really prepares them for the future.” (ID #38)

Benefits for teachers: All ten teachers (100%) reported having benefitted from the Mindful Moment program. The primary benefits mentioned were 1) improved stress management/increased calm and 2) support from HLF staff in managing student behavior.

1) Improved stress management/increased calm was reported by six teachers (60%).

Examples:

“Oh, absolutely [program has benefitted me]. I do it with them. I actually participate with them... I want them to see that it’s important, so it’s important to me and it should be important to them. The other part is that it helps me. The same impact. Helps me to relax, helps me to focus, and helps me to take away anything that’s in the way of my thinking processes. So it works.” (ID #24)

“I’ll tell one of them, the little boy that sits here, I’ll just tell him, bring his little chair over here. And I’m like, “Show me the breathing exercises you guys do.” I’ll act like I don’t know it. And it’s mostly to get him to breathe and calm down, but it helps me as well too. So I’m not getting worked up and yelling or anything like that. So, it definitely helps-- it helps all of us.” (ID #29)

“Oh, it’s helped me. Probably lowered my blood pressure, really. Because there would be times where I would get really frustrated, and I would just stop and I would just breathe. And doing that has helped me kind of calm down. It’s helped me to just deal with the kids a little differently. And it definitely helped as far as my health is concerned, because I would have a lot of headaches before. I would have headaches and I’d be all stressed out. All crazy. ... And even dealing with the kids, because sometimes I can get very angry. And but then I’ll just lead the whole kids into like just a breathing section. And we kind of recollect our thoughts.” (ID #38)

- 2) Support from HLF staff in managing student behavior was reported by six teachers (60%). Examples:

“I-- I can’t imagine what it would be like if they weren’t here. ... But, I mean, it just-- the things that our kids are dealing with and the things that they come to school with, there’s no way that teachers alone could help our kids the way that these guys help them... they’re able to relate to our kids in ways that we, as teachers, are not. And it’s really, really helpful and beneficial. And I just can’t imagine what would happen if we didn’t have them here with us. ... I love the Holistic program... And they’re-- they’re just really awesome.” (ID #29)

“I think that it has been overall really helpful... having them [HLF staff] as a resource when-- especially working with all girls at this age, it was really good to have them as someone else that could talk to them, and mediate, and deal with their issues, so that I could keep my instruction rolling, and not have to take so much time out of my day to deal with these issues that pop up.” (ID #31)

“I think the support, too. I think that was the other big thing. Just as a teacher, knowing that there are other adults who want to support me and help me stay calm, or support me in just dealing with students. And they’re very-- like they’ll teach you. So it’s not like this is just for the kids. I think that they’re very much interested in the teachers well-being as well.” (ID #38)

Program buy-in. While Coleman teachers noted some variability in student buy-in and engagement with the Mindful Moment program, the overall impression was of a higher level of program engagement and enthusiasm among the Coleman students as compared with Patterson students. For example:

“I have twenty-three students, I would say maybe three are negative towards it.” (ID #24)

“The kids love it too. Not just leading out [leading the class in mindfulness], but they-- even the ones that don’t get to lead out, you’ll see them standing at their desk or sitting at their desk. You can actually see them, their eyes are closed, some kids you can tell that

they're blanking-- that they're not really doing it. But majority of them are really into it... So, they-- they're really into it... I can only remember once that we didn't have yoga. And, my kids were like, "No, I want to go to Holistic. I want to go to yoga." (ID #29)

"I just felt like some of them were kind of over it, but that's not the majority. That's just a few that I can pinpoint, maybe 4 or 5 out of my 22 that just were not as active..." (ID #30)

Two teachers (20%) noted that there is variability in teacher buy-in for the Mindful Moment program, but the other eight (80%) emphasized high levels of positive program engagement across teachers. For example:

"Well, all the teachers that I've spoken the past couple of years, they love the program ... starting your lesson in the morning is not a struggle anymore because the children, they're calm. Like before, we used to struggle with them." (ID #25)

"As far as I know, I think everyone-- I get the vibe that everyone likes it, they enjoy it... I remember us talking about it [in staff meetings]. And there was nothing but good things said about the program, that they thought it was helpful and beneficial." (ID #29)

"Well, everybody really buys into it. So it's like a really big buy in. So I guess that they like it.... I mean you hear grumbling when it [Mindful Moment programming] doesn't happen." (ID #33)

Implementation problems: Three teachers (30%) did not report any issues with program implementation. In contrast to Patterson, where teachers agreed on several areas of difficulty in program implementation, the seven teachers at Coleman (70%) who mentioned difficulties tended to each raise separate points and generally did not seem to highlight implementation issues to the same extent as at Patterson. Three Coleman teachers mentioned some issues with program buy-in, particularly among the older students. One of these teachers noted: *"...I think for the younger students like kindergarten through second they see it as a positive. But I think like third, fourth and fifth in the beginning it may have been positive but then it was just a way to get out of class... I think they request when they don't need to. Mm-Hm. It's like a handful. It's not a lot. It's just handful of kids and we know those ones. They just kind of take advantage of it." (ID #28)*

The Coleman teachers primarily each raised separate points (i.e., each issue was endorsed by one teacher rather than being mentioned by two or more), as follows: the mindfulness practices became *"repetitive and redundant a bit"* towards the end of the school year, mindfulness practices may be too long, *"small technicalities that happen every now and again"* can interfere with students' ability to participate in mindfulness, challenges in getting afternoon mindfulness practices to run smoothly, abrupt transitions back to class following mindfulness practices, and wanting more administrative support.

Barriers to program implementation: Only three teachers (30%) noted barriers or challenges to program implementation. Two of these teachers mentioned money for funding the program as a challenge and two mentioned needs for additional space.

Factors that facilitate program implementation: Several teachers perceived that teacher buy-in was key for promoting student engagement in the program and that they made an effort to model the practices for their students. Examples:

“I participate, and I think that helps them out. Because they kind of see-- if they see me doing something else, it kind of takes their focus away. So when they see that I'm doing it with them, that helps them participate. And I like participating...Even if there's somebody, like you said, who's not in the mood, if I stand beside them and do it, it'll get them going.” (ID #26)

“On the days that I couldn't, I always tried to remind them that, I believe in this, I think this is important, if I could do it with you, I would be. And then on the days that I didn't really have anything to do, I always tried to do it with them, set the example, 'cause I do believe in it, and I believe that it's important...” (ID #31)

Suggestions for program improvement: Seven teachers noted that they would like increased variety in the recorded mindfulness practices played in the morning and afternoon. One suggested *“maybe about two, two or three so we can interchange... and give them a little more movement”* (ID #25) and another mentioned *“I think it would help if they maybe did one for the first part of the year, from like September to December, and the when they come back for the new year... it would be nice to kind of freshen it up”* (ID #26). One of those teachers mentioned that a slightly briefer practice might be helpful.

Five teachers (50%) made suggestions related to increasing the number of trainings and “refresher” sessions for teachers and/or students, in which HLF staff would model skills, provide information about the rationale for and benefits of the program, check in with teachers about how things are going in their classrooms, and/or monitor student skills practice. For example, one teacher suggested:

“For the teachers to discuss it among themselves, come together... possibly with the Holistic Life person to sit down and talk about it, maybe quarterly, talk about what's going on in their classroom. ... I think all of that needs to be gone over, not just in the beginning, but I think that needs to have a follow-up. I think as a whole group, rather than for the Holistic person to come in and sit down with me and say, 'How are you doing? How's it going?'" (ID #25)

Another teacher noted:

“The only thing that I would say that maybe could be improved is I know last year the leaders, the Holistic staff, came in and kind of monitored them with doing it, like a little refresher. I feel like at the end, students were kind of just not doing it correctly as they should. So, maybe with a little more monitoring it will make the kids buy into it more if they know somebody's watching them.” (ID #30)

Four teachers (40%) suggested having a female HLF staff member (apparently the female HLF staff member who had been at Coleman the year prior was no longer there). For example, one teacher noted: *“...having another female that they [female students] can talk to would definitely help. 'Cause they don't always want to talk to teachers. But it helps to have someone else that they can relate to here.”* (ID #29)

Two teachers (20%) mentioned additional training in for HLF staff in how to work with children (although one was primarily referring to staff in the after-school program), one teacher suggested more individual work with students who are not engaging in Mindful Moment, one teacher suggested increasing the number of HLF staff members, one teacher wanted to bring back an incentive system with a trophy that had been used to promote Mindful Moment participation the prior year, one teacher wanted to move back to the prior Mindful Moment room and have yoga mats already set out to save time, and one teacher mentioned that having more space would be helpful.

Additional themes: As at Patterson, teachers highlighted the importance of the Mindful Moment program specifically for youth in Baltimore City and other disadvantaged urban areas. At least five teachers (50%) referred specifically to the needs of Baltimore City youth when explaining why the Mindful Moment program is needed at their school. For instance:

“I think that a lot of kids in Baltimore City as a whole have deep rooted just like issues and they don’t know how to deal with their frustration and deal with that anger and anxiety when it comes to being in a structured school setting.” (ID #28)

“I wish this was a program that we could have in all of our ... city schools, and I mean, I really think that it would be beneficial. I talk to other teachers at my old school and at other schools that I know. And I mean, the-- pretty much the same behavior issues, a lot of anger issues with our students, a lot of emotional stress and distress that they come to school with and, I think, that the Holistic staff, they just really help our kids with that.” (ID #29)

“I think, it’s something that these children and their demographic and what they experience, I think it’s something that they desperately need. They need this in their lives, and I absolutely would recommend it.” (ID #31)

c. Students. Table 4 on pp. 38-39 displays a summary of student interview themes. Given their younger age (4th and 5th grades), student participants at Coleman provided shorter responses and fewer details about their experiences with the program than our other participants. Students sometimes had difficulty distinguishing the Mindful Moment program from the Mindful Me after school program and overall seemed to view the program activities as an integral part of school, rather than separate program components being offered at school.

Overall impressions: All ten students (100%) appeared to have generally positive impressions of the Mindful Moment program and would recommend the program.

Program benefits: All the students (100%) appeared to see benefits or potential benefits of the program for stress management and emotion regulation, e.g., helping students stay calm and helping them to handle emotions like anger. For example:

“It keeps us calm, and it like... it keeps us calm so we don't get like... Like, because we, after like lunch, we're all full of energy. So, we like just talk to ourself and do your

mindful moments to calm ourselves down... I think some kids think it's just boring, but it actually, it keeps us calm... it's fun to do.” (ID #35)

“It helped kids. Like, when they're mad, they just sit down and they do deep breathing and then calm down.” (ID #39)

Several participants also noted that not all students were engaged in the program.

“Some people don't like it and some people do like it... they don't like breathing and stuff.... [Some students] They're bad, don't participate. So, like in the morning some people be too tired and don't want to do it.” [Student estimated that 12-15 out of a class of 23 participated]. (ID #41)

“Yes, they participate. Not all of them, but some of them.” [The student estimated 14 or 15 students participated out of a class of 23] (ID #42)

Several participants reported that some students' behavior improved as a result of the program. For example:

“They get in trouble less.” (ID #34)

[Program has made changes] *“A little, but not really... Keep them staying in class, because usually they would be outside running, I mean, be outside the classroom running in the halls in stuff. But usually they stay in class and do their work... This girl [name redacted] that's in 4th grade, I think, she used to be in the halls throwing stuff down, stuff like that. Then one of the Mindful Moment teachers just took her and just told her to breathe every time she get mad. And that's when-- after, after she was finished, now she's in class doing her work right, all the time.” (ID #40)*

“...less people get into fights when they do the Mindful Moment. Because it can help us calm down like when we're outside or something... It changed the fighting... Because when they're going to fight they breathe so they just walk away.” (ID #43)

“Well, kids don't be fighting that much anymore.” (ID #44)

Personal benefits: Nine student participants (90%) perceived that the program had helped them personally; one student (10%) did not provide a clear response about personal benefits but seemed to value the program. Personal benefits centered primarily on gaining skills for stress reduction (e.g., calming down) and for managing difficult emotions like anger without acting impulsively. Examples:

“It's like if you take a test you can do any kind of breathing to the-- so you can feel calm and just pass the test. That's what I do when I take a test... It helped me feel calm to do the test.” (ID #34)

“Then the yoga, that part, just helps me. It calms me down. It calms me down. But then, most of the time, the best part about doing it is the meditation because that’s the good time. You get to clear your mind and think of nothing but-- like take all the negative energy out of your sight and mind...” (ID #37)

“For me, it's when... is when I'm mad. For me, it's when I'm mad and I can't calm down. So, I did do deep breathing, and then it'll calm me down.” (ID #39)

“...every time when somebody tries and fight me I take a deep breath and say I don't want to fight with you and walk away.” (ID #44)

Problems with the program: The primary problem students identified was that some students did not engage in the Mindful Moment program and made it difficult for other students to concentrate or benefit as fully in the program. At least five students (50%) made reference to some aspect of this issue. For instance:

“It's sometimes bad, because the kids in there, they begin their trouble and the teachers can't do nothing.” (ID #36)

“All the kids being bad and they curse in front of the teachers and the teachers don't do nothing, they just stand there.” (ID #44)

Suggestions for improvement: Three students did not have any suggestions for program improvement. Four students (40%) suggested that there should be stricter consequences for misbehavior in the Mindful Moment program or that students who don’t behave should not be part of the program; however, this appeared to be in reference to the after-school Mindful Me program, rather than Mindful Moment. For example:

“How could the program be better? By letting all these kids be in the program, but if they be bad they got to get kicked out...” (ID #34)

“Get teachers to act like if they hear someone curse they will suspend you from the program.” (ID #44)

One student suggested that there should be more time in the program, one student wanted certain HLF staff members to return and wanted to get more students involved in the program, and one student requested a greater variety of recordings for the mindfulness practices.

III. Recommendations and Next Steps

Implications for programming. This evaluation provides a “snapshot” of school climate data and stakeholder program perceptions in two very different school contexts: a large urban high school and a small pre K-5 urban school with a history of mindfulness and yoga after school programming. The schools differ in their size, age and developmental stage of students, and history of collaboration with HLF. There is a clear contrast between the schools with respect to selected academic indicators of school climate and perceptions of key stakeholders regarding

program implementation. This contrast is useful for helping us to understand more about what is needed for successful implementation of the Mindful Moment program.

Principals, teachers, and students at both schools were generally quite passionate in articulating how the Mindful Moment program has potential to enhance the academic and life experience of urban students. Buy-in for the program concept was extremely high across the board, suggesting that the program philosophy and goals are consistent with those of key stakeholders.

Differences across the two schools centered primarily on perceptions of program implementation, with greater satisfaction expressed about program implementation at Coleman versus Patterson. These differences point to a number of recommendations for future successful program delivery, as outlined below.

Adequate HLF staffing. Patterson is very large, with approximately 1,100 students, making it more difficult to involve all teachers and students than at Coleman. HLF staffing was apparently not sufficient to deliver the programming in a way that involved enough students and teachers in this setting. The ratio of HLF staff to school size is a critical aspect to consider when planning and funding the project at a given school. Based on participant responses, it appears that a certain amount of visibility and “presence” in the school is needed to promote buy-in and engagement from teachers and students. Without this critical level, the program is not sufficiently imbedded as part of the school’s culture and runs the risk of seeming ineffective or peripheral. This issue could possibly be addressed by deciding to target only one grade or part of the student body, although it is not clear that the principal endorses that approach. If a whole-school approach is selected, however, adequate resources need to be allocated so that the program can reach all students and teachers.

Program consistency and structure. Problems in this area were highlighted by multiple participants at Patterson. While understaffing may be responsible in part, it is also clear that administrators, teachers, and even students value having clear program parameters, expectations, and schedules. Further refinement of the program model will likely facilitate this process, as it seems there are currently different levels of delivery (e.g., morning and afternoon practices versus morning only) and delivery modes (e.g., intercom versus occasional individual classroom visits). HLF staff and school administrators and teachers should agree on a clear plan and schedule before the start of the year, with frequent ongoing communication to ensure that this plan is maintained.

Adequate program exposure and dosage. Not all program components were implemented at Patterson—for instance, weekly yoga was not offered to students, and daily mindfulness practices were greatly limited in scope by the principal’s decision not to stop using the intercom system as a delivery mechanism. As a result, program exposure or dose was lower at Patterson than at Coleman. Whether or not these components are needed in order to produce significant benefits is not clear, but it is worth noting that the teachers at Coleman highlighted the value of these activities.

Multiple opportunities for teacher training and communication with HLF. Teachers were almost uniformly enthusiastic about the HLF founders and staff, but some were frustrated with what

they perceived as a lack of training time for themselves and their students in mindfulness, a lack of adequate “face-to-face” instruction time with students, and problems with consistency and scheduling. This was most true at Patterson, where teachers in general felt they had less access to HLF; however, teachers at Coleman, similar to Patterson, also expressed a desire for more training, check-ins, and contact with HLF. Teachers who had attended retreats or mindfulness trainings during professional development time reported extremely high levels of satisfaction with those experiences. Many teachers, however, felt that these experiences must occur more than once per year in order to maintain adequate levels of teacher involvement and HLF-teacher communication. Teacher training is an aspect of *staff outreach*, one of the program core components, and teachers’ interviews highlighted that this is a critical aspect of their ability to engage in the program and model skills for their students. In addition, teacher interviews also indicated that one of the key program benefits, in their view, was the fact that HLF staff were available to assist them in managing some of their more difficult students and that they highly valued the “face-to-face” time that HLF staff spent with these students and checking up on students in their classrooms. In addition, the more comfortable teachers feel with the practices, the more likely they are to practice alongside their students, which appeared to positively influence student buy-in.

Implications for future research/program evaluation. Our qualitative interviews suggested that all five of the core program components identified by HLF played an important role in impacting students and teachers. At Coleman, all five components were implemented relatively consistently, and the stakeholders we interviewed (particularly the principal and teachers) clearly felt that the program was an integral part of school activities and made a noticeable difference in promoting calm behavior and a positive environment for learning.

Mindful Moment program conceptual model. The qualitative data provided preliminary support for the conceptual model displayed in Figure 1. That is, the interview responses were generally consistent with the associations hypothesized in the model. Implementation of the five program components was linked in participants’ responses with improved emotion awareness and self-regulation, leading to better behavioral outcomes with positive implications for learning.

The conceptual model, however, requires further refinement and elaboration before fidelity measures can be developed to assess fidelity of implementation (i.e., whether the program is being delivered as intended). It is not yet clear, for example, what dosage is needed for each program component and to what extent this may vary by school. Is mindfulness practice needed in both the morning and afternoon, or is morning only sufficient? Should the practices last 15-20 minutes or, as some stakeholders suggested, only 10 minutes? What specifically should staff outreach involve? Teachers at both schools highlighted the importance of teacher training, including retreats and professional development time, and the need for continued contact and feedback periodically over the year. How often should HLF have organized contact with groups of teachers, and what should that contact consist of? While the Student Ambassador program was not mentioned as frequently as other program components, it was clearly a valued component of the program for both teachers and students (additional quotes available). The number of Ambassadors, the timing and extent of their training, and their specific role in program implementation requires further specification.

The interviews provide insights that may help to further refine these parameters. For instance, most (but not all) teachers highlighted the morning mindfulness practice as the more critical time period. There was widespread feeling that the practices should be more varied, suggesting that fresh content may be as important as timing in understanding the impact of the mindfulness practice component.

The qualitative data suggest potential additional mechanisms of program action, including positive student relationships with HLF staff and not only student but also *teacher* self-regulation and teacher perceived support. They also suggest the importance of identifying and assessing barriers and facilitators for program delivery, including teacher and student buy-in and adequate numbers of HLF staff.

The qualitative data also suggest directions for the selection of quantitative measures in future studies. As noted above, reliable metrics for assessing each program core component are needed. In addition, measures of program mechanisms of action should include student emotion awareness, stress management/calming, and self-regulation of emotions and behaviors, as well as possibly measures of teacher self-regulation and perceived support and students' perceived connectedness with others and perceived emotional support. Observations of classroom behavior may also be important for capturing some of the program effects noted by stakeholders (e.g., increased calmness and readiness for learning following mindfulness practices) as well as facilitating factors (e.g., teacher participation in mindfulness) and barriers (e.g., lack of teacher and student program buy-in). Interviews and surveys with school administrators and teachers to track organization-level program implementation and program effects may also be useful. For instance, it would be useful to evaluate how many and which students are sent to the Mindful Moment room and whether the number of office referrals for these particular students' decreases over time and classroom behavior improves.

In sum, this preliminary evaluation provides a starting point for the development of research hypotheses, as well as assessments of program fidelity of implementation and measures of key program mediators and outcomes.

Table 2. Patterson interviews: Summary of perceptions and themes.

	N (%)
Teachers (n = 11)	
Overall impressions of program	
Positive	8 (72.7%)
Mixed/neutral	2 (18.2%)
Negative	1 (9.1%)
Recommend program?	
Yes	7 (63.6%)
Yes in theory	2 (18.2%)
Need more info/no response	2 (18.2%)
Want program to continue?	
Yes	9 (81.8%)
No strong opinion	2 (18.2%)
Positive impact for students?	
Yes	11 (100%)
Benefits for students	
Improved emotion regulation and responses to stress	8 (72.7%)
Improved student behaviors and readiness to learn	6 (54.5%)
Positive HLF staff/student relationships	5 (45.5%)
Student enjoyment of program	4 (36.4%)
Mindful Moment room as safe space	3 (27.3%)
Benefits for teachers	
Stress reduction	7 (63.6%)
Positive retreat/training experiences	5 (45.5%)
Implementation problems	
Lack of program presence	7 (63.6%)
Lack of consistency and structure	6 (54.5%)
Understaffing	4 (36.4%)
Inadequate HLF staff to teacher communication	3 (27.3%)
Repetitiveness of mindfulness practice	3 (27.3%)
Students using Mindful Moment room to avoid class	2 (18.2%)
Suggestions for program improvement	
Reach more students/program integration into school activities and curricula	7 (63.6%)
Improve consistency and organization	6 (54.5%)
More retreats and trainings	6 (54.5%)
Re-instate intercom for mindful practices	6 (54.5%)
Increase HLF interactions and class visits	5 (45.5%)
Increase HLF visibility in school	4 (36.4%)
Increase number of HLF staff	4 (36.4%)

Students (<i>n</i> = 11)	
Recommend program?	
Yes	9 (81.8%)
Benefits for school	
Program reduced fighting/improved emotional wellbeing	7 (65.6%)
Improved teacher interaction with class	1 (9.1%)
Experienced personal benefits?	
Yes	7 (65.6%)
No	1 (9.1%)
Not aware of program	1 (9.1%)
Personal benefits	
Enhanced capacity for emotion regulation	6 (54.5%)
Mindful Moment as safe place to express emotions/receive support	4 (36.4%)
Building relationships/community	3 (27.3%)
Implementation problems	
Lack of buy-in from some students	4 (36.4%)
Declining participation	1 (9.1%)
Suggestions for program improvement	
Reduce # of students who use Mindful Moment room to get out of class	3 (27.3%)
Hold therapy group in Mindful Moment room	1 (9.1%)
Include additional activities (e.g., garden)	1 (9.1%)
Increase HLF activities and involvement with students	1 (9.1%)
Reduce length of mindfulness practice	1 (9.1%)
Increase variety of mindfulness practices	1 (9.1%)

Table 4. Coleman interviews: Summary of perceptions and themes.

	N (%)
Teachers (n = 10)	
Overall impressions of program	
Positive	10 (100%)
Recommend program?	
Yes	10 (100%)
Want program to continue?	
Yes	10 (100%)
Positive impact for students?	
Yes	10 (100%)
Benefits for students	
Improved emotion regulation and responses to stress	10 (100%)
Improved student focus and readiness to learn	9 (90%)
Positive HLF staff/student relationships	6 (60%)
Learning coping skills with long-term implications	2 (20%)
Personally benefitted from program?	
Yes	10 (100%)
Benefits for teachers	
Stress reduction/increased calm	6 (60%)
Support from HLF staff in managing student behavior	6 (60%)
Implementation problems	
No problems	3 (30%)
Some problems with program buy-in among older students	3 (30%)
Suggestions for program improvement	
Increase variety of mindfulness practices	7 (70%)
More trainings/refresher sessions	5 (50%)
Include female HLF staff member	4 (40%)
Additional training for certain HLF staff members in working with children	2 (20%)
More work with children not engaging in Mindful Moment	1 (10%)
Incentive system for program participation	1 (10%)
Use different room for Mindful Moment	1 (10%)
More program space	1 (10%)
Students (n = 10)	
Overall impressions of program	
Positive	10 (100%)
Perceived benefits for school	
Yes	10 (100%)

Experienced personal benefits?	
Yes	9 (90%)
Not clearly articulated	1 (10%)
Implementation problems	
Some students do not engage with program/makes it more difficult for other students to benefit	5 (50%)
Suggestions for program improvement	
No suggestions	3 (30%)
Stricter consequences for students who don't behave*	4 (40%)
Get more time in the program	1 (10%)
Get more students involved	1 (10%)
More variety in mindfulness practices	1 (10%)

*These suggestions appeared to have been largely made in reference to the after-school Mindful Me program.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDES

Principal Interview Guide

Thank you for speaking with me today. I'm going to be asking you some questions about your experience with the Mindful Moment program that you have chosen to offer at your school. As we discussed I'll be audio recording our conversation.

Please tell me about what aspect(s) of the program have been delivered at your school.
[Probe re morning and afternoon mindful practices, the cool down room, teacher yoga class.]

What has been your experience with the program so far?
[Probe regarding positive and negative experiences]

How do you think the program has affected your students, if at all?
[Probe regarding positive or negative changes, as well as what aspects of the program the teacher believes have impacted students most and why]

How has the program impacted you, if at all?
[Probe regarding which aspects of the program have been most impactful and why]

What is your impression of how teachers feel about the program?

What is your impression of how students feel about the program?

What aspects of the program do you believe are working well?
[Probe regarding why these aspects are working well.]

What aspects of the program do you believe are not working as well as you would like?
[Probe regarding why these aspects are not working well.]

What have been barriers or challenges to implementing the Mindful Moment program at your school?

What sorts of solutions do you think are possible for these challenges, if any?

In what ways do you think the program could be improved?

Would you recommend this program to other principals? Why or why not?

What are your thoughts about offering the program at your school next year and beyond?

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your experience with the program?

Thank you for your time. [Provide the \$25 gift card.]

Teacher Interview Guide

Thank you for speaking with me today. I'm going to be asking you some questions about your experience with the Mindful Moment program that is being offered at your school. As we discussed I'll be audio recording our conversation.

First it would be helpful if you could tell me a bit about your position at the school – what grade you teach, what subject, etc.

Please tell me about what aspect(s) of the program you participate in.
[Probe re morning and afternoon mindful practices, the cool down room, teacher yoga class.]

What has been your experience with the program so far?
[Probe regarding positive and negative experiences]

How do you think the program has affected your students, if at all?
[Probe regarding positive or negative changes, as well as what aspects of the program the teacher believes have impacted students most and why]

How has the program impacted you, if at all?
[Probe regarding which aspects of the program have been most impactful and why]

What is your impression of how teachers feel about the program?

What is your impression of how students feel about the program?

What aspects of the program do you believe are working well?
[Probe regarding why these aspects are working well.]

What aspects of the program do you believe are not working as well as you would like?
[Probe regarding why these aspects are not working well.]

What have been barriers or challenges to implementing the Mindful Moment program at your school?

What sorts of solutions do you think are possible for these challenges, if any?

In what ways do you think the program could be improved?

Would you recommend this program to other teachers? Why or why not?

What are your thoughts about offering the program at your school next year and beyond?

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your experience with the program?
Thank you for your time. [Provide the \$25 gift card.]

Student Interview Guide

My name is _____ and I'm from Johns Hopkins University. I'm going to be asking you some questions about what you think of the Mindful Moment program at your school. I'm going to record this conversation so I can keep track of all the things you say, but I won't use your name. You don't need to say your name on the tape.

Remember you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to answer and you can stop at any time.

Are there any questions before we get started?

Can you describe the Mindful Moment program to me?

[Probe regarding what activities happen at the school and what the students understand about the purpose of the program]

How do students participate in the program?

Tell me about whether you think that the program has made any changes at your school. What kind of changes?

[Probe regarding the way teachers treat students, how often students misbehave, what happens when students misbehave]

Tell me whether you think the program has made any changes for you and other students. What kind of changes?

Would you recommend the program to a friend? Why or why not?

What are some things you like about the program?

What are some things you don't like so much or wish were different about the program?

How could the program be better?

Tell me about whether you want the program to continue next year.

What else would you like me to know about the Mindful Moment program?

Thank you for talking with me today. [Provide a gift card.]