

Research Brief: Val Verde Unified School District, CA

Case study school: Rainbow Ridge Elementary. How ultra-engaging, ready-to-use lessons—paired with a school-wide implementation strategy—inspired teacher engagement and consistent classroom use.

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From 8% to 75% SEL Teacher Adoption

SEL Fidelity drives impact
at Val Verde USD

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This research brief examines the immediate impact of Schoolbeat’s Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum on various educational outcomes, including teacher engagement and implementation fidelity with SEL, student behavior, SEL competencies, and conflict resolution skills. This report highlights the improvements observed in the 2024-2025 mid-year report with Schoolbeat compared to the outcomes from the 2023-2024 mid-year report generated with other SEL programs. Such remarkable changes in such a short period of time are rare for SEL programs and the impact of Schoolbeat appears to be significant and far-reaching in this regard. **Data and impact analysis beginning on page 4.**

Data and Impact Analysis

(Case study school: Rainbow Ridge Elementary)

Val Verde Unified School District contains 23 schools and 19,379 students. The student body at the schools served by the district is 79.8% Hispanic/Latino, 11% Black, 3.7% White and 2.6% Asian students.

The case study school Rainbow Ridge Elementary, located in Moreno Valley, CA, serves approximately 710 students in grade(s) K-5. The student body is diverse, with Hispanic students making up 79% of the student population, Black students 10%, and White students 5%. Other ethnicities make up the remaining student population. A significant portion of these students, around 91%, come from low-income families. The school is led by Principal Charles Downey, with support from a dedicated team of educators and staff who are committed to providing a supportive learning environment. Rainbow Ridge Elementary seeks to create a safe and inclusive environment for all students while adhering to the Val Verde Unified School District’s policies on non-discrimination and equal opportunity.

Overcoming Obstacles to Successful SEL Implementation

The implementation of SEL in schools is often subject to a number of obstacles. Addressing these obstacles requires strategic planning, professional development, stakeholder engagement, and ongoing support to create a supportive environment.

Obstacles to SEL Implementation	Schoolbeat's Impact
<p>Lack of time, resources and expertise: Schools often face tight schedules and limited resources or expertise, making it difficult to incorporate SEL programs into the curriculum.</p>	<p>Reduced time and training: Easy to use and requires very little to no implementation time or training; ongoing support from Schoolbeat customer success team.</p>
<p>Insufficient training: Teachers and staff may not receive adequate training to effectively implement SEL, creating inconsistencies in both application and outcome.</p>	
<p>Inconsistent implementation: Without a clear, school-wide strategy, SEL may be implemented inconsistently, reducing its effectiveness.</p>	<p>School-wide implementation: Provides ultra-engaging, ready-to-use SEL lessons and a school-wide strategy to improve teacher engagement and consistent use over time.</p>
<p>Resistance to change: There may be resistance from educators, parents, or administrators who are unfamiliar with SEL or skeptical about its benefits.</p>	<p>Reducing teacher resistance: Teachers are not intimidated by Schoolbeat; they immediately notice greater student engagement; the impact is visible and teachers show a greater willingness to use the program consistently.</p>
<p>Limited funding: Financial constraints can hinder the adoption of SEL programs, especially when resources are needed for materials, training, and additional staff.</p>	<p>High ROI: Schoolbeat enhances the return on investment (ROI) regarding SEL programs by delivering high teacher implementation fidelity, and measurable outcomes through an efficient, scalable, and effective platform.</p>
<p>Lack of measurement tools: Measuring the impact of SEL can be challenging, and schools may struggle when seeking to effectively assess progress and outcomes.</p>	<p>Measurement tools: Schoolbeat facilitates the assessment of ongoing changes regarding student behavior, relationships, and SEL; our daily wellness check-in and user-friendly dashboard displays student insights and progress on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis.</p>
<p>Cultural and contextual challenges: SEL programs must be adapted to fit the cultural and social context of the school community; generic programs may not address the specific needs of diverse student populations.</p>	<p>Cultural and contextual factors: Schoolbeat's modernized content targets a diverse group of students; our videos and activities resonate with students from various backgrounds and is subject to regular DEI assessments.</p>
<p>Focus on academic performance: With an emphasis on standardized testing and academic performance, SEL may not be considered a priority.</p>	<p>Integration with existing curriculum: Schoolbeat aligns with core standards, including ELA, and provides academic suggestions that complement our SEL lesson plans, like reading recommendations.</p>
<p>Integration with existing curriculum: It may be difficult to seamlessly integrate SEL into existing academic curricula without disrupting other essential learning objectives.</p>	
<p>Sustainability: Ensuring that SEL programs are sustainable over the long term, beyond the initial implementation, can be difficult, particularly when considering staff turnover and school leadership changes.</p>	<p>Sustainability: Due to its large content library and ease of use, along with its noticeable classroom results, teachers tend to use Schoolbeat on an ongoing basis; such engagement from teachers is essential to any successful SEL implementation.</p>

The Real ROI of SEL with Schoolbeat

Schoolbeat enhances the return on investment (ROI) for social-emotional learning (SEL) programs by delivering measurable outcomes through an efficient, scalable, and effective platform. Here's how.

Cost-Effective implementation: Schoolbeat's user-friendly pedagogical design requires minimal planning and preparation from teachers, thus reducing time spent on lesson plans while increasing focus on student engagement. This leads to a significantly higher utilization rate, which fully leverages school investments in SEL programs.

Measurable outcomes: Schools that implement Schoolbeat often report significant reductions in behavioral issues, like fewer low-level referrals, office referrals, and suspensions. These improvements demonstrate tangible progress, which helps justify continued funding and support for SEL initiatives. Schoolbeat's user-friendly dashboard provides administrators and educators with a clear picture of student progress and risk insights on an ongoing basis, thus simplifying data-based decision-making.

Scalability and versatility: Schoolbeat is designed to address the needs of all students, from whole-group instruction to targeted Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. By reusing user-friendly restorative practices tools like **Zoom-Out** and **Zoom-In**, along with breathing exercises, consistent support can be provided across different need levels without any additional investments in separate programs.

Increased student engagement: By incorporating interactive videos, real-world scenarios, and self-paced activities, Schoolbeat resonates with students, fostering greater participation and internalization of SEL concepts. This leads to better classroom behavior, improved peer relationships, and enhanced academic focus, all of which contribute to long-term academic and social success.

Teacher adoption and efficiency: Teachers, even those who are initially skeptical, embrace Schoolbeat due to its ease of use and effectiveness. The program's well-structured weekly schedule supports consistent implementation, maximizing the impact of SEL with minimal disruption to existing routines. The videos not only model positive behaviors for students, but they also model good SEL teaching practices for educators.

Reduced disciplinary costs: With de-escalation and stress management tools like the **Zen Zone**, Schoolbeat helps prevent conflicts and suspensions, reducing the costs associated with managing behavioral issues and lost instructional time.

Schoolbeat ensures that schools and districts achieve meaningful, long-lasting benefits from their SEL investments by combining efficiency, scalability, and evidence-based results.

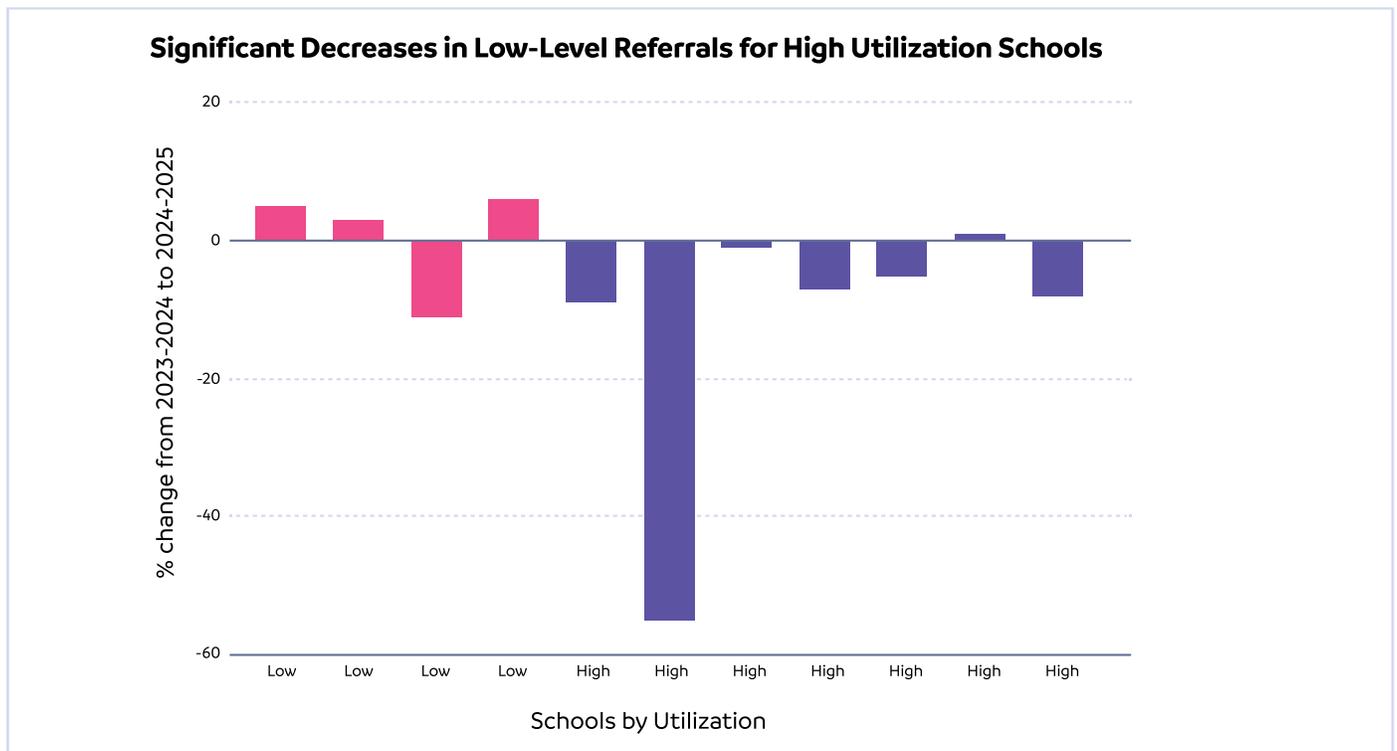


Global Val Verde Unified School District Implementation

As of September 2024, 12 schools in Val Verde Unified School District have implemented the Schoolbeat SEL program. Since then, global teacher adoption of Schoolbeat during the 2024–25 school year has surged — rising from 8% in 2023–24 to 75%. Within Val Verde, 8 of those 12 schools have each completed between 12,000-34,200 activities over the course of the 2024-2025 school year. For the purpose of this research, these schools are classified as **high-utilization** schools. The remaining four schools completed between 2,300 and 11,000 activities and are classified as **low-utilization schools**. These 2 groups were compared to evaluate the impact of Schoolbeat on behavior referrals, ease of teaching, student relationships and behaviors in the classroom. In addition, district attendance data was evaluated to determine any changes in attendance from the 2023-2024 school year to the 2024-2025 school year.

High Fidelity SEL Drives Down Low-Level Behavior Referrals

An analysis of 2024–2025 school year discipline data compared to 2023-2024 data reveals a clear connection between the intensity of Schoolbeat implementation and reductions in behavioral incidents. Low-utilization schools showed little net change in behavior referrals with a mean change of **+0.75% increase** across the four schools. Taken together, in the 2024-2025 school year, these low-utilization sites essentially maintained their baseline level from the 2023-2024 school year. In comparison, high-utilization schools averaged a **-12% decrease** in behavior referrals in the 2024-2025 school year compared to the 2023-2024 school year (**one school decreased 55%**), a substantially larger drop across the seven schools. Educators in the high-utilization schools implemented regular Schoolbeat SEL routines to help students recognize and regulate emotions before conflicts escalated. This data reinforces how fidelity of implementation drives outcomes. Although 75% of Val Verde USD teachers implemented Schoolbeat, the schools that fully integrate Schoolbeat as a Tier 1 SEL practice experienced notable and measurable improvements in behavior referrals.



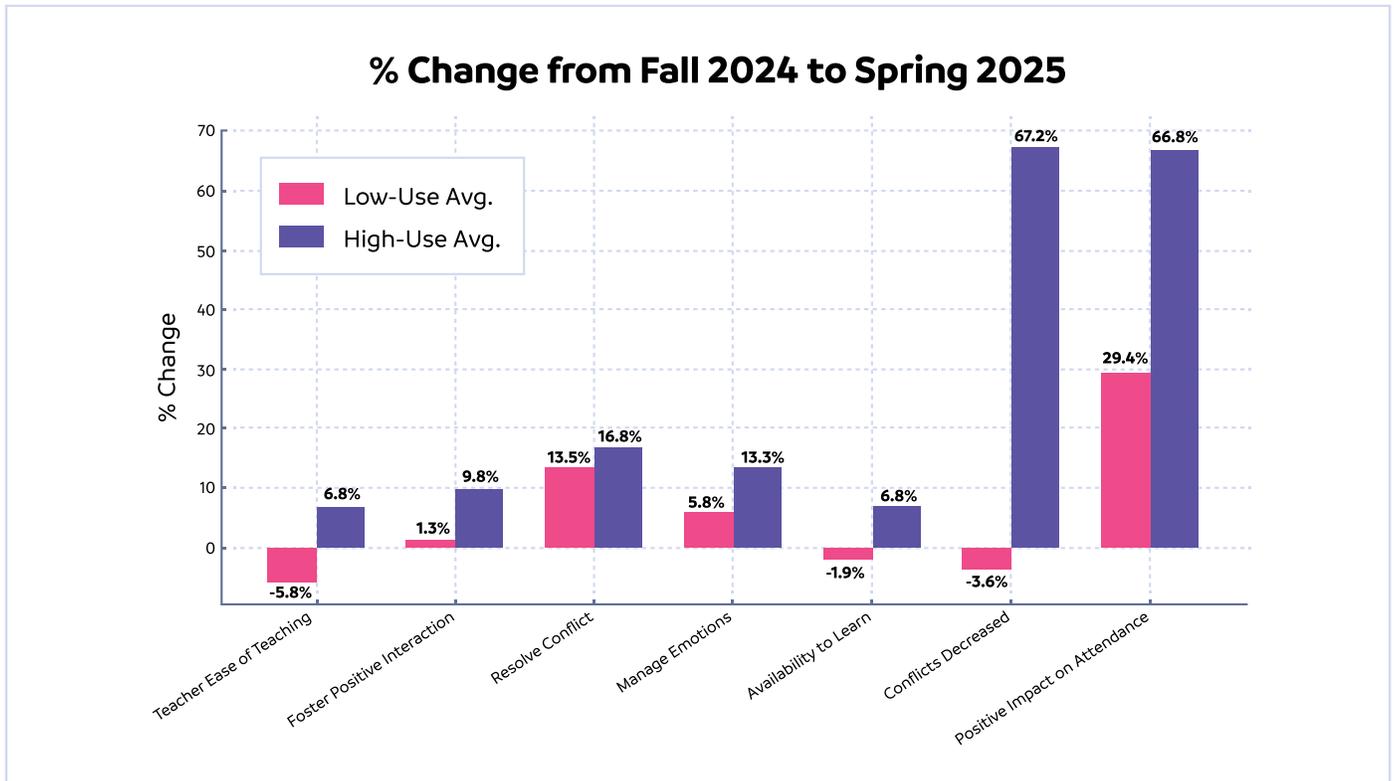
When SEL Sticks, Students Thrive: High-Utilization Schools Lead the Way

Monthly teacher surveys conducted on the Schoolbeat platform highlight how high-fidelity implementation drives broader improvements in ease of teaching, classroom climate, and student readiness to learn. Across every indicator, high-use schools reported larger positive changes than their low-use counterparts during the 2024–2025 school year.

High-implementation schools demonstrated double-digit gains in nearly every area—most dramatically in the percentage of teachers reporting that **student conflicts decreased (67.2% vs. -3.6%)** and that Schoolbeat **positively impacted student attendance (66.8% vs. 29.4%)**. Even in domains where low-use schools saw improvements (for example, conflict resolution and emotion management), the high-use sites posted significantly larger increases, underscoring the value of consistent SEL practice. Conversely,

low-use schools showed stagnation or decline in several critical metrics, including teacher ease of teaching (-5.76%) and students' availability to learn (-1.92%), suggesting that inconsistent exposure to Schoolbeat's SEL routines limits the program's impact.

These findings reinforce that fidelity matters: when Schoolbeat and its features are implemented as a core Tier 1 SEL practice, schools not only see measurable gains in student skills—positive interactions, conflict resolution, and emotional management—but also experience improved classroom conditions and stronger indicators of attendance and engagement. High-use implementation creates a compounding effect where students are more available to learn and teachers find instruction easier, ultimately driving better academic and behavioral outcomes.



Districtwide SEL Push Reduces Absenteeism

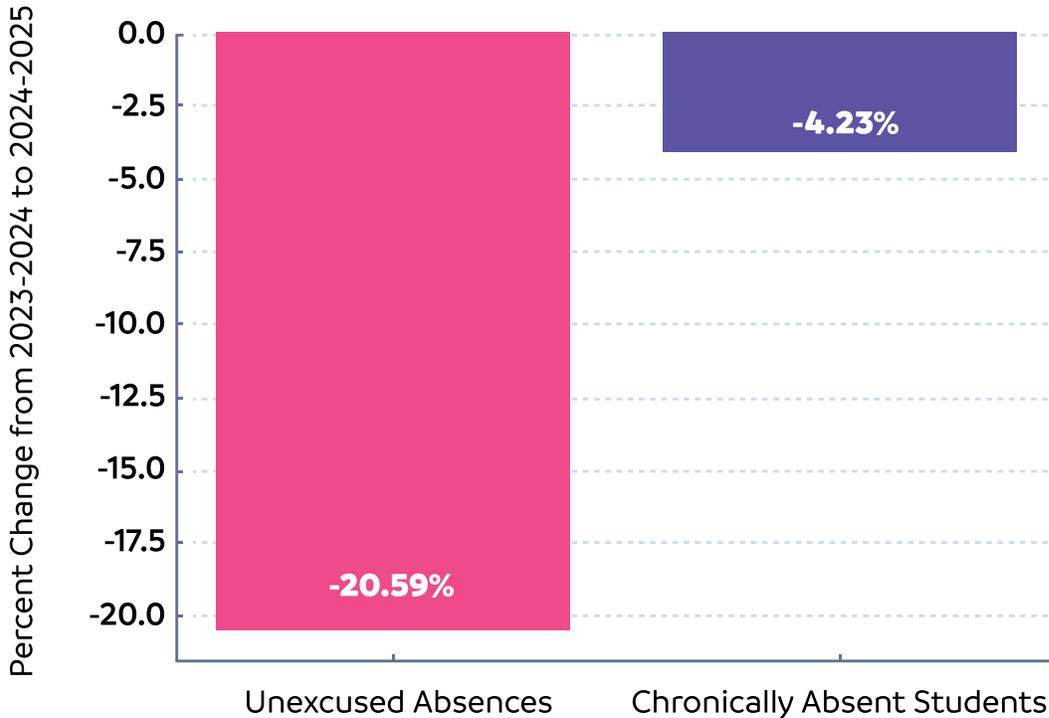
During the 2024–2025 school year, when most schools across the district implemented Schoolbeat with high fidelity, student attendance data showed significant, measurable improvements compared to the prior year.

- **Unexcused absences fell by 20.59%.**
- **The percentage of students identified as chronically absent declined by 4.23%.**

These reductions indicate that consistent, districtwide SEL programming not only supports student well-being but also contributes to stronger attendance outcomes—fewer unexcused absences and a smaller population of chronically absent students.



District-Wide Decrease in Absenteeism with High-Fidelity Schoolbeat Implementation



Rainbow Ridge Elementary: Key Findings and Impact

Rainbow Ridge Elementary: Deep Dive in Schoolbeat Implementation

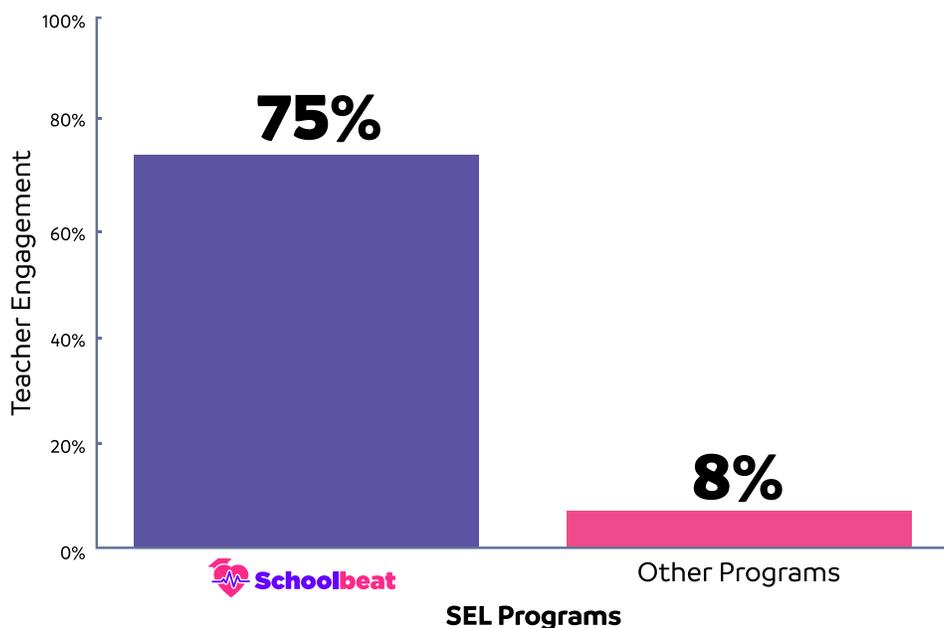
The implementation of Schoolbeat has been efficient and impactful at Rainbow Ridge Elementary, thanks in part to a user-friendly pedagogical design that requires minimal planning from teachers. Initially skeptical due to past experiences with other SEL programs, teachers have quickly embraced Schoolbeat's engaging, ready-to-use and well-structured approach. A typical weekly schedule includes whole-group video sessions and discussions on Mondays, student-led exploration on Tuesdays, deeper discussions and role-playing on Wednesdays, and quizzes and journaling on Thursdays and Fridays. Beyond the core curriculum, Schoolbeat's restorative practices like **Zoom-Out**, **Zoom-In**, and breathing exercises have been effectively integrated into Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, providing targeted support. The **Zen Zone** serves as a reliable space for de-escalation, with students finding comfort in the familiar content. This multifaceted approach not only fosters social-emotional growth, but it also enhances classroom dynamics and individual student well-being.

Increased Teacher Engagement with SEL

Schoolbeat's intuitive and accessible platform significantly increases teacher engagement with SEL practices. Rainbow Ridge Elementary currently boasts a **75% rate of teacher engagement**, compared to 8% with the other SEL programs that have been implemented in the past. This teacher engagement rate is higher than any other SEL engagement rate seen by Val Verde USD over the past 10 years. This remarkable increase in comfort and consistency regarding SEL can be attributed to Schoolbeat's well-structured yet flexible content.

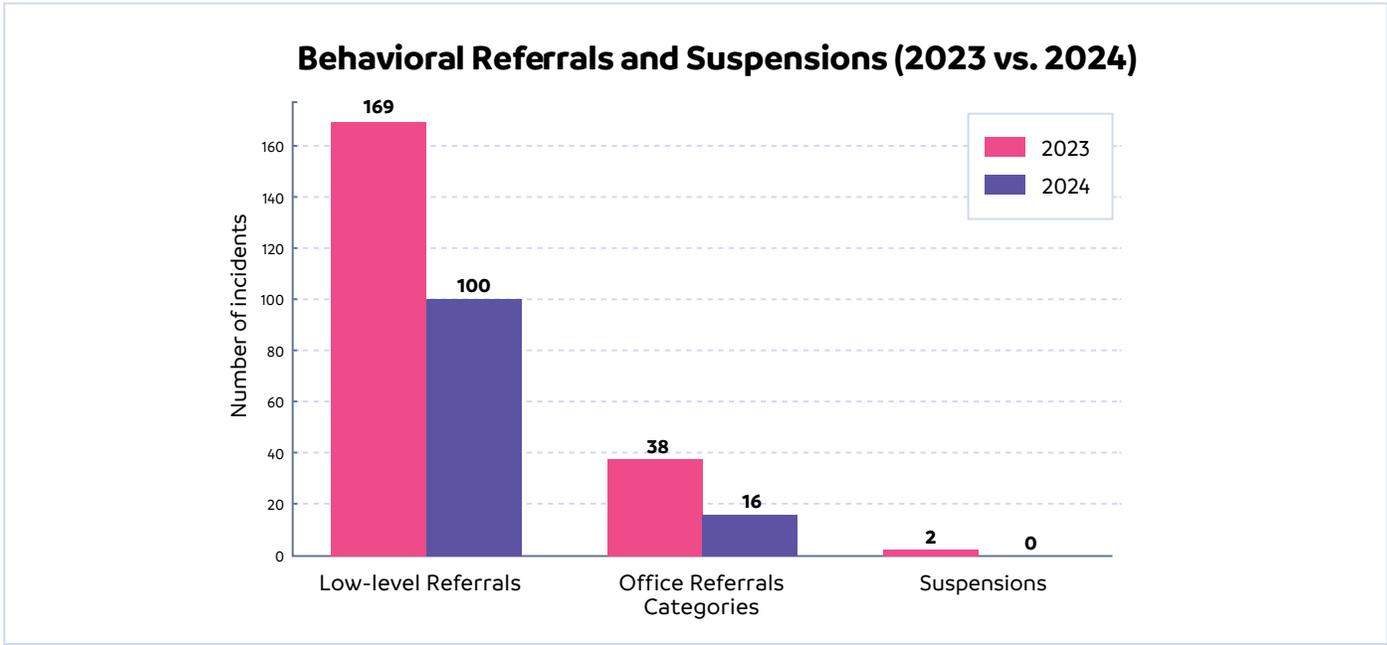


Teacher Engagement with SEL Programs at Rainbow Ridge



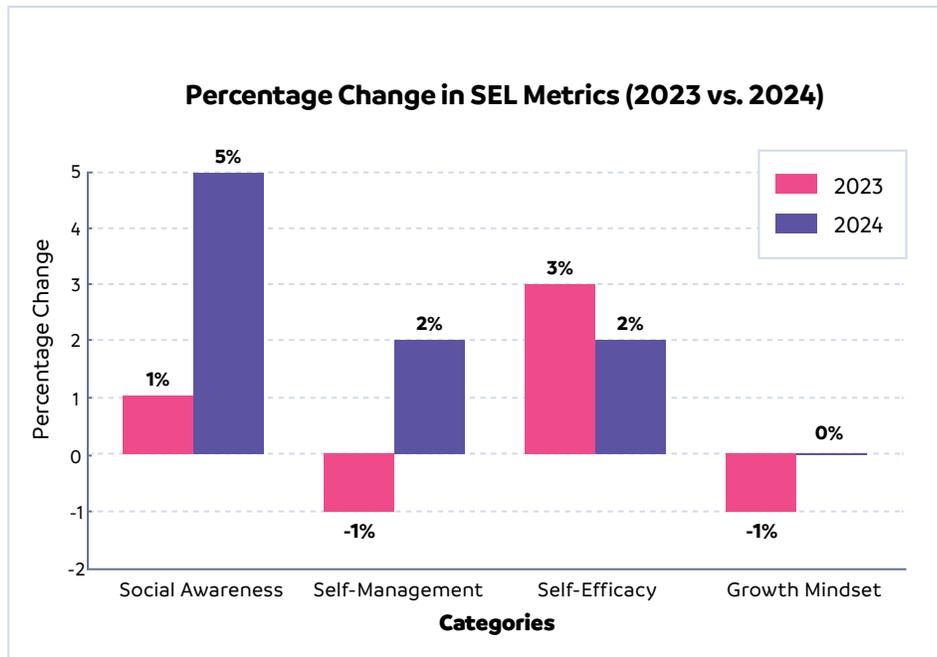
Improved Student Behavior

Since implementing Schoolbeat, Rainbow Ridge Elementary has observed a **40% reduction in low-level behavioral referrals** and a **58% reduction in office referrals** when comparing this year's results with Schoolbeat and last year results with other SEL programs. In addition, there have been **zero suspensions**, down from two in the fall of 2023. The platform's real-world scenarios and interactive modules help students internalize appropriate behavioral responses, creating a more positive classroom environment.



Enhanced SEL Competencies

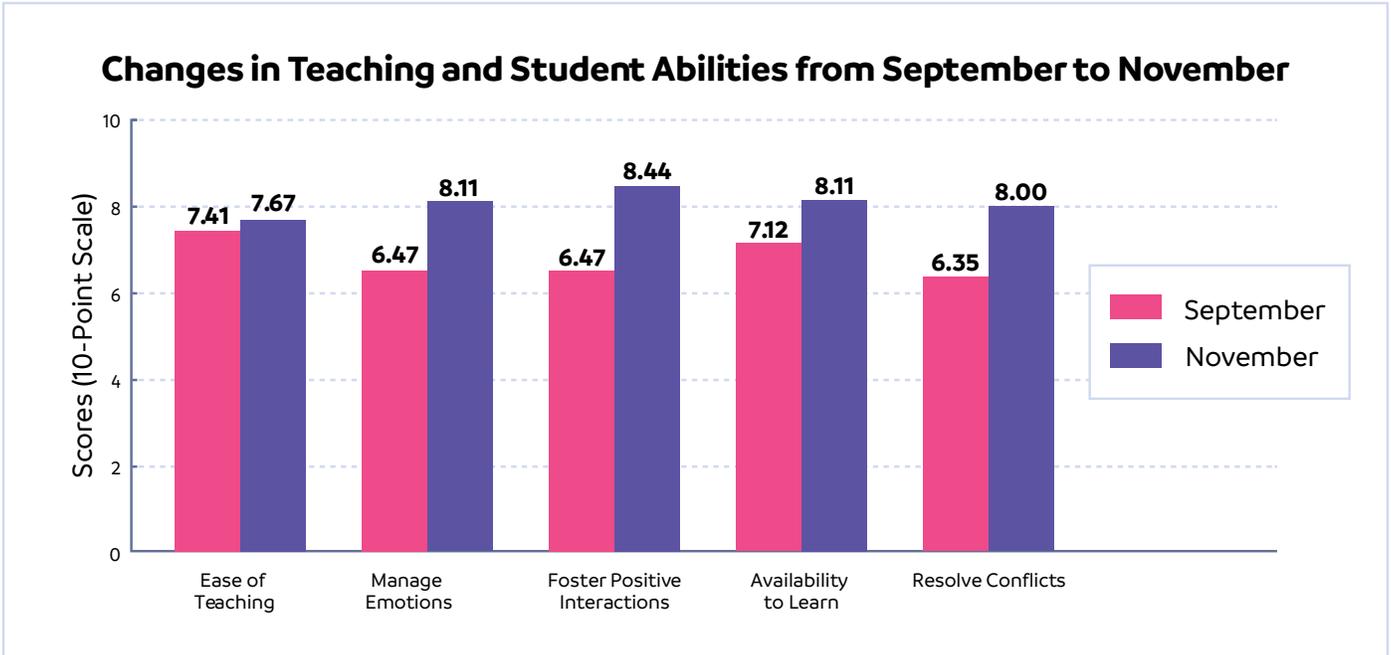
Using district-based SEL data, students using Schoolbeat showed marked improvements in SEL competencies in the 2024-25 school year compared to last year, including greater **social awareness (4% increase)**, **self-management (3% increase)**, and **growth mindset (1% increase)**. A slight decrease was noted in self-efficacy (1% decrease).





Improved Ease of Teaching and Student SEL Competencies

The results demonstrate significant improvements across all measures in just 90 days (September to November 2024). **Ease of teaching increased modestly by 3.5%**, reflecting a smoother instructional process. Students showed notable growth in their **ability to manage emotions, with an increase of 25.4%**, along with their ability to **foster positive interactions, which surged by 30.5%**. Additionally, **students' availability to learn improved by 13.9%**, indicating enhanced readiness for academic engagement. The most impressive change involves **students' ability to resolve conflicts, which rose by 26%**. These results highlight meaningful progress in both teaching conditions and students' social-emotional skills over a short period, showcasing the effectiveness of targeted interventions and strategies.



Conclusions

Val Verde Unified School District's yearlong evaluation of Schoolbeat demonstrates how high-fidelity SEL implementation delivers measurable and lasting benefits for both teachers and students. From stronger staff engagement to improved student outcomes, the results underscore that when social-emotional learning is embedded as a core Tier 1 practice, the entire school community thrives. Across every measure—teacher engagement, student behavior, attendance, SEL skills, and literacy—the strongest gains occurred in schools that implemented Schoolbeat consistently and with high fidelity. These findings confirm that meaningful, school-wide SEL integration is a catalyst for both social-emotional and academic growth, setting the stage for continued success in the years ahead.

The findings from this research brief also underscore the transformative impact of Schoolbeat regarding the highly successful implementation of SEL at Rainbow Ridge Elementary. It is important to note that the changes discussed in this case study can be attributed to Schoolbeat, since no other factors—such as educational staff or school administration changes, or any changes to data collection and interpretation methods—were implemented during the comparison periods. This consistency supports the conclusion that the impact observed is directly tied to the implementation of Schoolbeat.

Through its user-friendly pedagogical design, engaging content, and measurable outcomes, Schoolbeat addresses common challenges in SEL adoption while delivering significant improvements in student behavior, teacher engagement, and SEL competencies. By fostering a culture of empathy, accountability, and resilience, Schoolbeat not only enhances individual student outcomes, but it also strengthens the overall school community. As schools continue to prioritize SEL as an essential component of education, Schoolbeat's scalable and effective approach has positioned the software as a leading solution when seeking both short and long-term success, as well as fostering student well-being and academic achievement.

Keywords: social-emotional learning (SEL), teacher engagement, student engagement, behavior referrals, suspensions, social awareness, self-management, self-efficacy, growth mindset, conflict resolution, return on investment (ROI), Tier 2, Tier 3, de-escalation strategies, self-regulation

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