

# EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS • BRAVO Youth Orchestras 2024-2025

BRAVO participation is associated with **stronger attendance, increased engagement, and positive student identity development.**

## PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

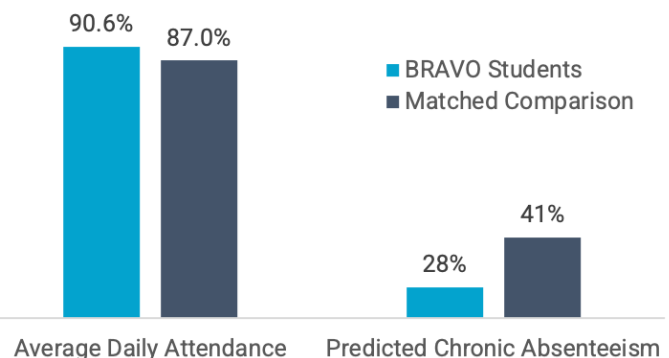
Since 2013, BRAVO Youth Orchestras has provided ensemble music instruction in the Roosevelt cluster of K-12 schools in North Portland. Part of the international El Sistema movement, BRAVO is grounded in the belief that music, community, and social justice can work together to expand opportunities for young people. The program serves students in a community that has historically experienced underinvestment, providing sustained access to music education and a supportive learning environment.

## ATTENDANCE IMPACT

BRAVO's clearest measurable impact was on school attendance. Compared with a rigorously matched group of similar students, BRAVO participants had **average daily attendance rates 3.6 percentage points higher.**

BRAVO students were also **13 percentage points less likely to experience chronic absenteeism.**

**BRAVO students attended more school and were less likely to be chronically absent than a matched comparison group of similar students from the same schools**



**BRAVO students attended school 6.5 more days than similar peers over the course of the school year.**

Over the course of a school year, this difference translates into **approximately 6.5 additional days of school attendance.**

In practical terms, this means BRAVO students were consistently more present for instruction, increasing their access to learning time and school-based supports.

Not all outcomes showed measurable differences; BRAVO participation was not associated with differences in math scores, reading scores, or disciplinary events during the study period.

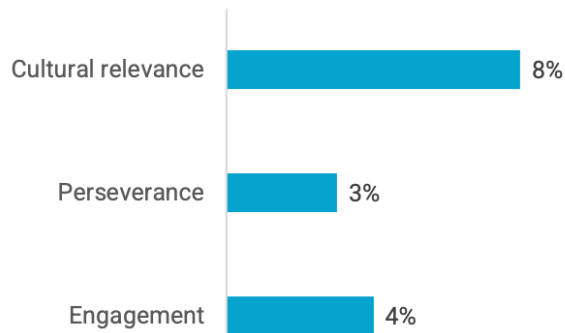
## STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Over the course of the school year, BRAVO students reported positive shifts in key aspects of their experience. The largest was an 8 percent increase in cultural relevance, indicating that students increasingly felt the program reflected and respected their culture.

**Students described “being a musician” as an important part of their identity and reported strong relationships with program staff.**

Gains were also observed in two social-emotional domains: engagement (+4%) and perseverance (+3%). Together, these changes suggest that being in BRAVO is associated with positive shifts in students’ active participation and willingness to persist through challenging tasks.

### BRAVO students reported fall to spring gains in engagement, perseverance, and cultural relevance of programming



## HOW THE EVALUATION WAS CONDUCTED

The evaluation combines student survey responses with school administrative data on attendance, discipline, and academic achievement.

## HOW COMPARISONS WERE MADE

For outcome analyses, BRAVO students were matched with similar students from the same schools based on:

- Gender
- Race/ethnicity (student of color status)
- Special education eligibility
- English learner status
- Prior academic achievement

Analyses also accounted for grade level.

## STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

Evaluation findings point to several encouraging signals about BRAVO's role in students' lives. Compared with similar peers, BRAVO students attended more school—equivalent to more than an additional week of instruction over the course of the year. Students also reported positive shifts in engagement and perseverance and expressed a strong sense of identity as musicians.

Together, these findings suggest that BRAVO is strengthening students' connection to school. In the context of Oregon's ongoing challenge with chronic absenteeism, programs that foster belonging and connection can play an important role in keeping students engaged.

Based on the evaluation findings and a collaborative sense-making process with BRAVO's leadership team, five strategic opportunities emerged to support the program's continued growth.

1. **Strengthen the student pipeline** from PreK through elementary and middle school
2. **Expand outreach** to ensure participation reflects the Roosevelt cluster community
3. **Invest in Teaching Artist** retention and continuity
4. **Continue supporting students' identity development** as musicians
5. **Strengthen data systems** for continuous improvement

Together, these strategic priorities provide a roadmap for strengthening BRAVO's reach, stability, and long-term impact for students in the Roosevelt cluster.

