

REPORT CARD



School/Organization Name



PHILADELPHIA
OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL

Dear XXXX School,

During the 2025-2026 School Year, XX students participated in Philadelphia Outward Bound School (POBS) day programs and expedition. They created new and deeper connections with their peers and their chaperones, supported each other through challenges and problem-solving, created space to build positive relationships, and, most importantly, had fun together in the outdoors.

Students completed a retroactive, Pre/Post survey developed in partnership with the NOAM institute that includes scales developed through PEAR's Holistic Student Assessment (HSA). This survey is a self-report tool, which means that data is based on answers the students provide about themselves.

The survey is rooted in Outward Bound's Domains of Thriving Model which describes the Outward Bound outcomes we believe contribute to the holistic success and development of thriving individuals and society.

Students self-reported change on 4 scales after the day programs: Perseverance, Teamwork, Group Relationships, and Physical Confidence; and 9 scales after expedition programs: Assertiveness, Perseverance, Teamwork, Group Relationships, Physical Confidence, Self-regulation, Responsibility, Self-Awareness, and Learning Interest.

Sample questions include:

- I keep going with work even when it takes longer than I thought it would.
- I feel like other students understand me in this group.
- If I fail to solve a problem, I try again until I find the solution.
- I enjoy working in a team.
- I do well with physical challenges.

In addition to student self-report data, the POBS instructors who worked closely with your student crews shared their observations on the highlights and challenges they experienced with your students during the program. You'll find their observations and recommendations summarized on the following pages.

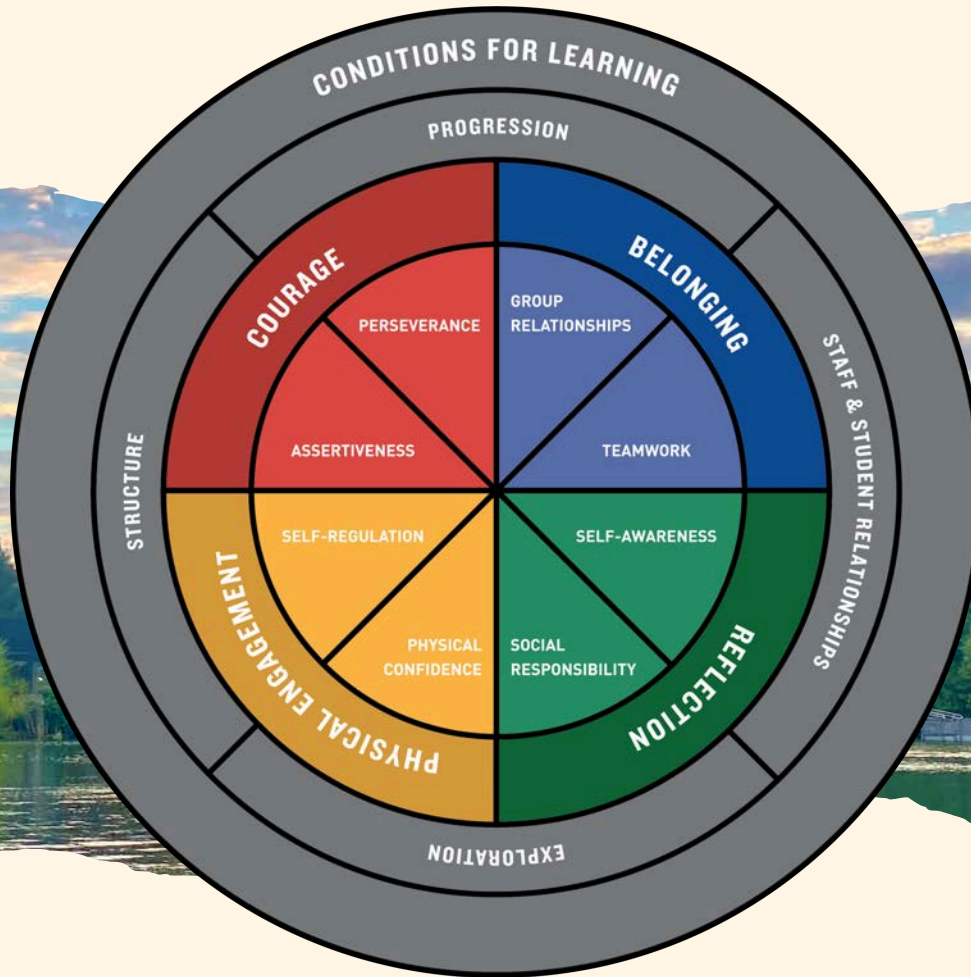
Thank you for being partners in youth development and your trust in POBS programming with your students and staff.

See you next season,

Philadelphia Outward Bound School

Domains of Thriving (DoT)

The Domains of Thriving framework and tool combines Outward Bound's 60+ year history with the latest insight and research on social-emotional development. Developed in partnership with Dr. Gil Noam, the Domains of thriving highlights the four areas of human development that are impacted on an Outward Bound course: Courage, Belonging, Reflection, and Physical Engagement. Each domain includes two specific social-emotional skills on which Outward Bound focuses .



From 2017-2020, The Outward Bound Professional Learning Lab worked with Gil G. Noam, Ed.D., Assistant Professor, Harvard Medical School, and founder of the Partnerships in Education Resilience (PEAR) and the NOAM Institute, to complete a program evaluation. This process built a shared understanding of proven social and emotional learning practices, developed and tested tools to measure impact for students (The Domains of Thriving, above), and created a system of field observations to see staff in action.

PROGRAM IMPACT

8/14-18/2025

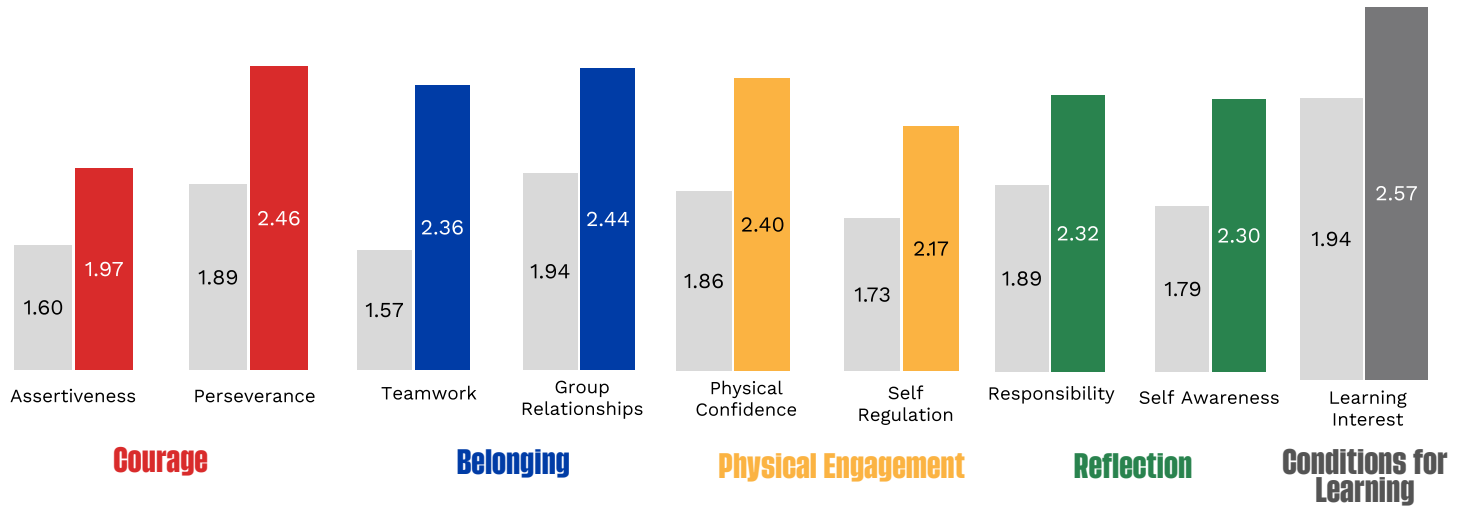
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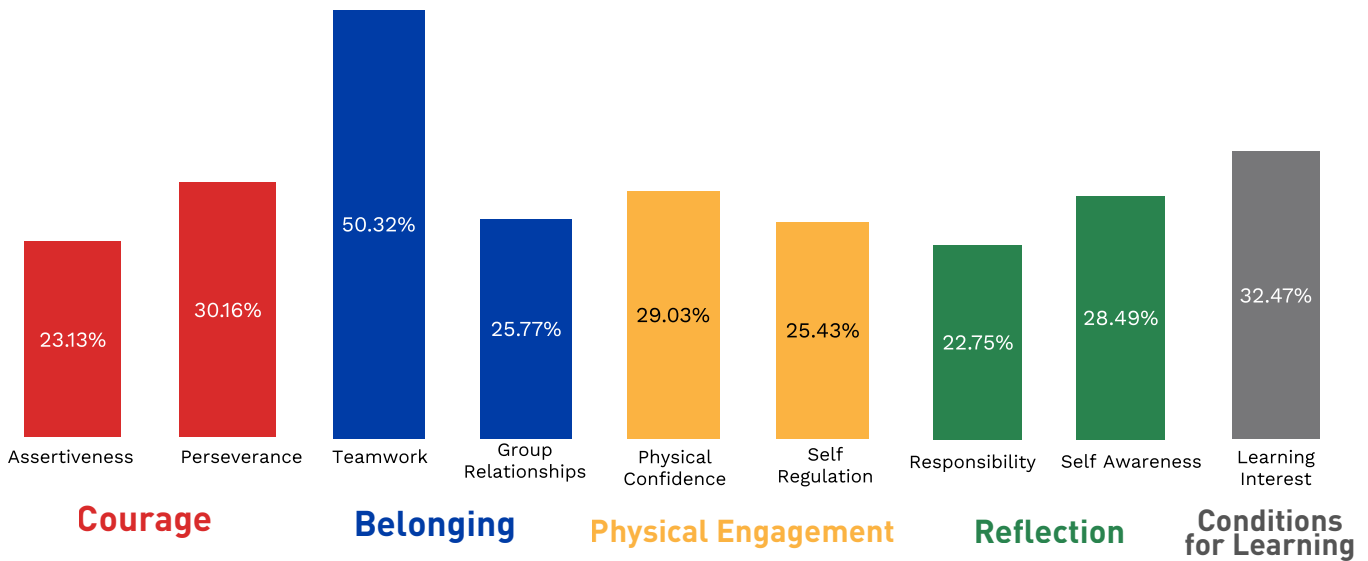
START

NOW

The Average Retro-Pre/Post Score graph shares the student-reported average for each SEL scale at both the “START” of Outward Bound and “NOW,” at the end of Outward Bound.



The Percent Growth graph shows the average percentage of growth students reported from the beginning to the end of program on each SEL scale.



The following questions invited students to reflect on their Outward Bound program by asking the extent to which they agree with each statement because of their Outward Bound experience. The graphs below show the average response to each question.

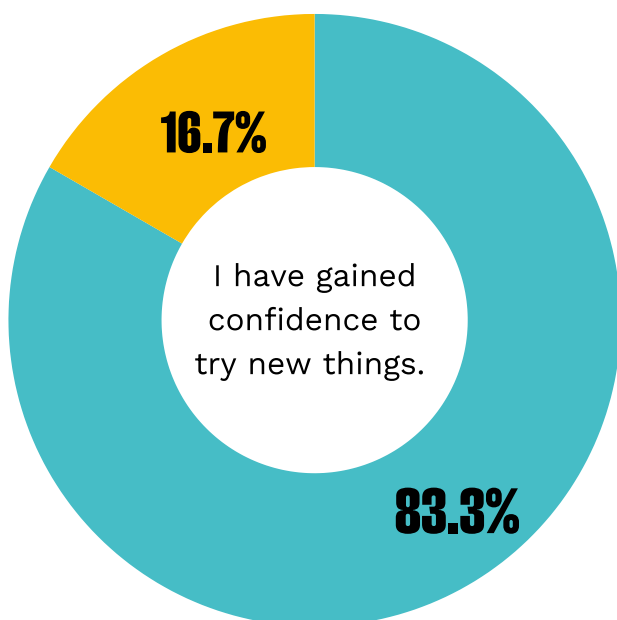
100% of students strongly agreed or agreed that they are more aware of how to support those around them.



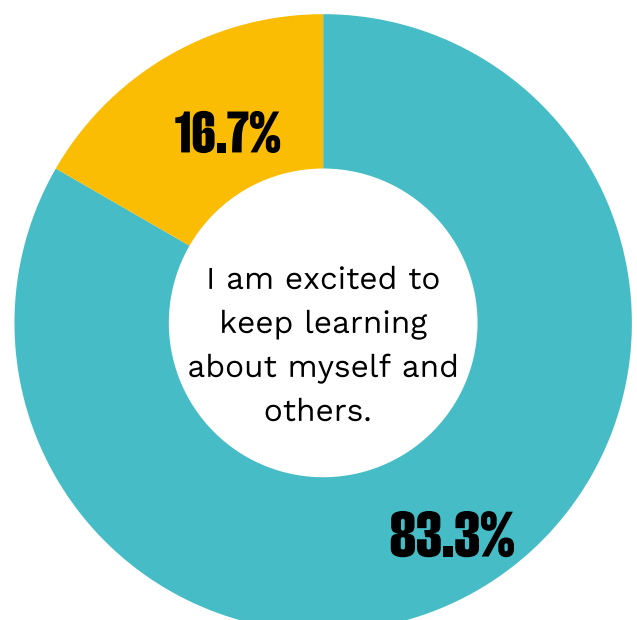
100% of students strongly agreed or agreed that they feel more connected to their group.



83.3% of students strongly agreed or agreed that they have gained confidence to try new things.



83.3% of students strongly agreed or agreed that they are excited to keep learning about themselves and others.



■ Agree ■ Disagree

INSTRUCTOR NARRATIVES

Below are observations from POBS instructors on both the growth and areas of challenge for your students. These comments can serve as a reflection and a tool to take the relationships and learnings from your OB program back to your programming.

BELONGING: GROUP RELATIONSHIPS

Both groups entered the trip with a mix of familiarity and nervousness. Students knew each other before, but their closeness varied, and the wide age range created some initial imbalance in cohesion. Over time, shared experiences, structured activities, and downtime helped them develop stronger bonds and mutual trust. Older and more confident students often stepped into teaching or leadership roles. Initiatives like switching boat partners and doing 5-finger bios encouraged students to connect beyond their closest friends. Evening shoutouts and highlights/lowlights provided a safe space for reflection and recognition. That being said, Fights flared up during stressful tasks (e.g., fire lines in the heat), often tied to students taking on rude tones. These conflicts were short-lived and typically resolved through instructor facilitation or natural cooling-off. Despite conflicts and uneven dynamics, no one felt excluded. The group bonded over shared struggles and fun experiences, and quieter students gained confidence with peer support.

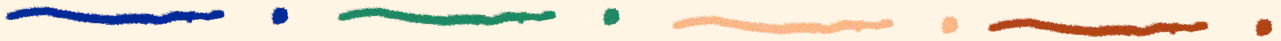
PHYSICAL ENGAGEMENT: PHYSICAL CONFIDENCE

Students entered the courses with varying levels of experience and ability, but all demonstrated significant improvement in their physical skills, resilience, and comfort in the outdoor environment. Some students picked up strokes and steering quickly, while others took more time, but everyone showed major improvement by the end of the week. Students became more efficient at paddling and learned to sustain energy by pacing with fire lines, water breaks, and games on the river. Students rapidly developed self-care and preventative strategies—managing gear, staying hydrated, and finding ways to make themselves more comfortable in camp. Even students with limited swimming experience were able to challenge themselves safely. The combination of structured challenges (paddling, fire lines) and unstructured play (swimming, games) allowed every student to test limits and leave the course with greater physical confidence than when they arrived.

REFLECTION: SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Students showed growth in taking responsibility for themselves, each other, and the group over the course of the trips. Though responsibility was uneven at times, they increasingly demonstrated accountability, care for one another, and the ability to own mistakes. Students modeled accountability in evening meetings - two students that had a conflict took ownership for their parts in a fight without instructor prompting. Older students took responsibility for supporting younger peers, consistently encouraging others throughout the course. Many students relied on instructors to solve problems or complete tasks they could do themselves. Instructors redirected them to peers or used questioning to guide them toward taking responsibility. Disagreements often erupted due to struggles with respectful communication and responsibility for group harmony. By the end of the trips, students demonstrated stronger ownership, accountability, and peer care, even if it wasn't always consistent.

See You Next Year



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