

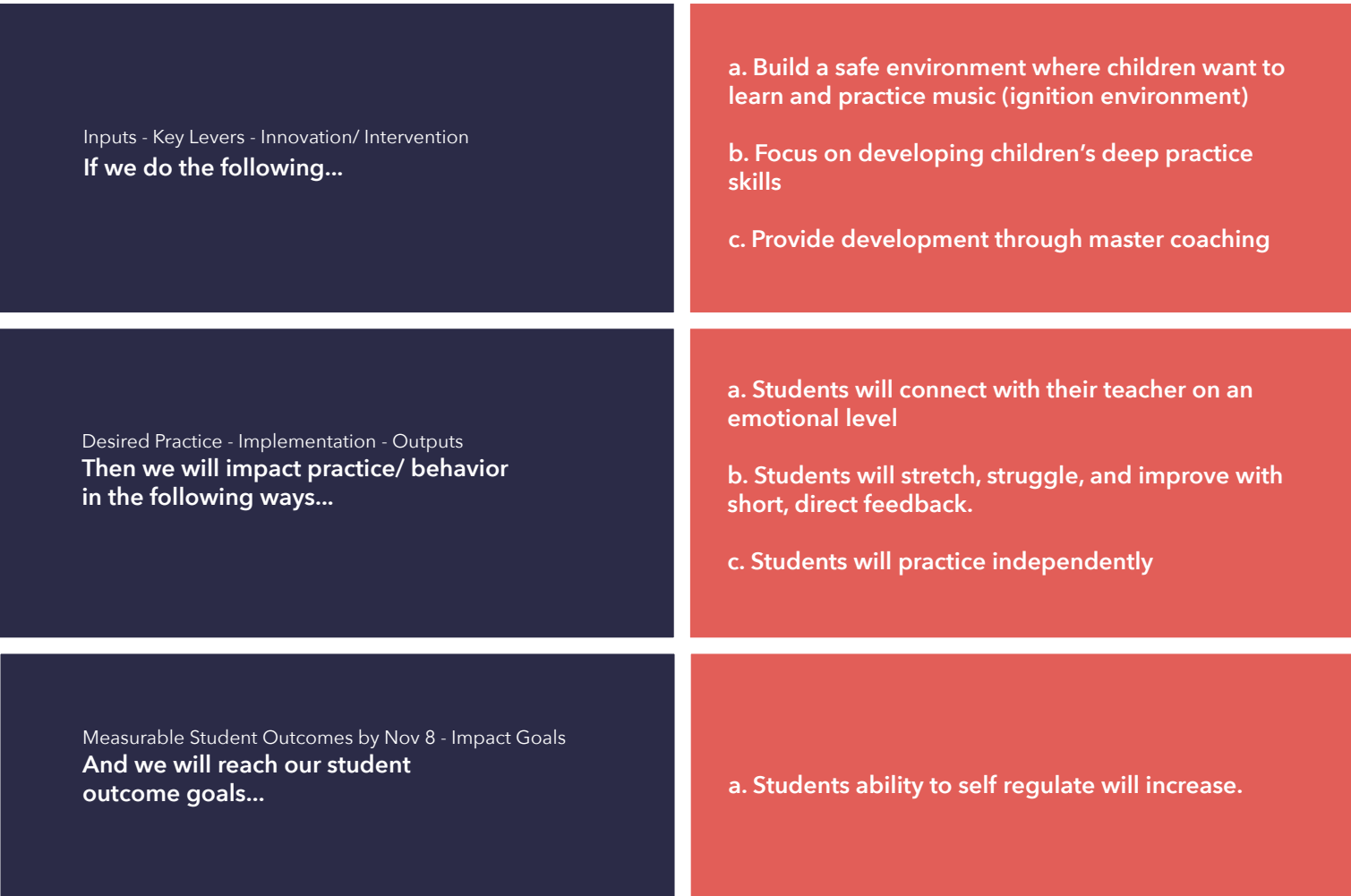
## Base Academy of Music & Lee A. Tolbert Community Academy

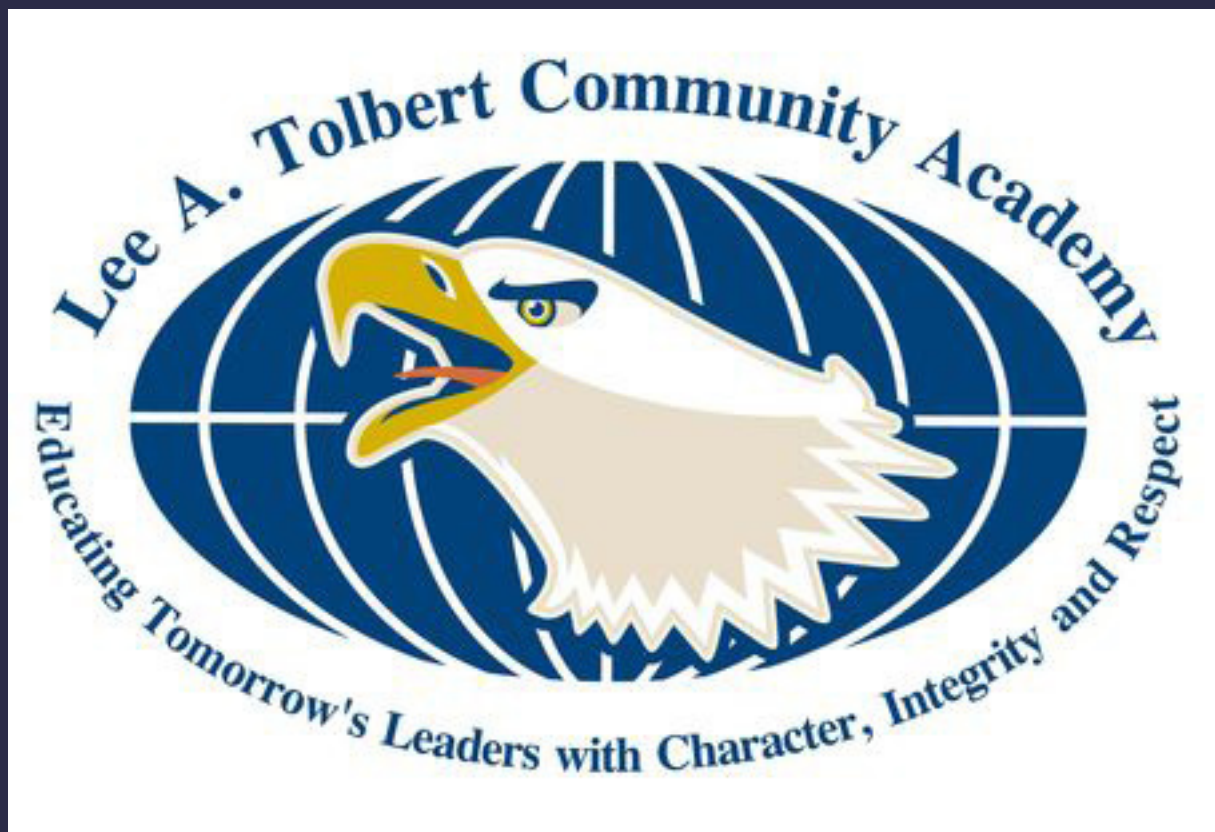


Base Academy of Music combines mentoring with private music lessons to positively impact social and emotional development and make music accessible and affordable for all children. BAM currently serves more than 100 students in Kansas City, MO.

LATCA chose to partner with the Base Academy of Music (BAM) to help foster social and emotional development among their students, given the school’s notable experience with students facing trauma and the frequent need for behavioral interventions at school. Thus the purpose of research at LATCA was to test the conjecture that exposure to BAM would increase students ability to self-regulate, as evidenced by fewer reports of behavioral interventions and/ or referrals for students taking the private music lessons. LATCA chose the music teacher to serve as the Lead End User.

## Theory of Action





#### **SCHOOL BACKGROUND & PROBLEM OF PRACTICE**

Lee A. Tolbert Community Academy (LATCA) is a K-8 public charter school founded in 1999 with a focus on preparing students for entrepreneurial leadership in the 21st century. Located in the Center City neighborhood in midtown Kansas City, the school serves more than 500 students who are 100% free and reduced lunch, primarily African-American, and 10% have an individualized education plan (IEP). The school is sensitive to the fact that a majority of their students have experienced some sort of trauma. In response, the school has ensured all staff are trained in various methods of care and instruction. They are a trauma-informed school, a B.I.S.T. (Behavior Intervention Support Team) school, and a P.B.I.S. (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) school. They have multiple community partnerships to serve students in need of extra, holistic supports. Through the LINC (Local Investment Commission), they provide extended day care for students to accommodate parents working non-traditional work schedules.



## METHODOLOGY

Reflecting the study purpose, the Lead End User (LEU) and BAM founder chose to prioritize students known as “frequent fliers”, or those frequently requiring interventions, for recruitment. The counselor and teachers were asked to help identify students who could benefit most from the additional support provided by BAM. Once identified, parents of students were contacted for permission to participate in BAM and the research study. In total, six students, approximately one in each grade, took BAM lessons.

In addition to collecting the number of interventions/referrals by their teacher or an administrator, students completed “exit tickets” that asked them questions about each of the key levers, some of the desired practices, and the outcome goal in the Theory of Action after each lesson. Specifically, the Social Support Scale (Pagago, 2001) and four scales from the Youth Experiences Survey (Identity Exploration, Effort, Goal Setting, Emotion Regulation; Larson, 2000) were used to assess the BAM teacher’s ability to provide an ignition environment, deep practice, and master coaching (key levers); the student’s emotional connection and “stretching” (desired practices); and self-regulation during the activity. Last, anecdotes were collected from the students’ homeroom teachers.

## FINDINGS

There was not enough time in the short 3-month testing period to measure change in association with BAM exposure with only six students. However the findings are promising given these limitations. First, students reported that the key levers and desired practices did occur. Students rated experiencing “a little” identity exploration during BAM Lessons (e.g., “This activity got me thinking about who I am”), which the BAM founder relates to an ignition environment. Students reported “definitely” putting all their energy into practicing, pushing themselves, and focusing during BAM lesson (deep practice). On average, students gave high ratings (4.6 and 3.8 out of 5) for trusting the BAM teacher/feeling valued by the BAM teacher and relating to the BAM teacher as a mentor, respectively (master coaching, emotional connection). These are all extremely significant given the short amount of time students experienced BAM.

There was also some evidence that students ability to self-regulate increased. For example, students reported learning about and practicing regulating their emotions quite a bit during their BAM lessons. Then, there were several anecdotes by students classroom teachers and parents. One teacher commented that after starting BAM lessons, she noticed positive behavior changes in one student such that he needed less referrals. “He is able to be a little bit more reasonable when he is upset rather than the immediate escalation to land in the SMARTE room. He still has those moments, but it’s no longer daily/hourly.” Another teacher commented on the visible changes in his student, “He went from never being focused in my class to being laser focused in his lesson. It was like a whole new student.” Unfortunately the intervention/referral data during the study time period was not systematic enough to glean potential impact.



## CONCLUSIONS

Overall, Lee A. Tolbert is excited to continue to partner with BAM to provide its' service to their families. They continually express how impressed they are with the difference they feel the program has made for their students in a short time period. While the results of the research are promising, the results are bounded by the time and sample size limitations. To address these limitations, BAM is continuing this research with Tolbert and another local school while also planning to conduct a larger research study across the organization, which serves more than 100 students, in the future.