

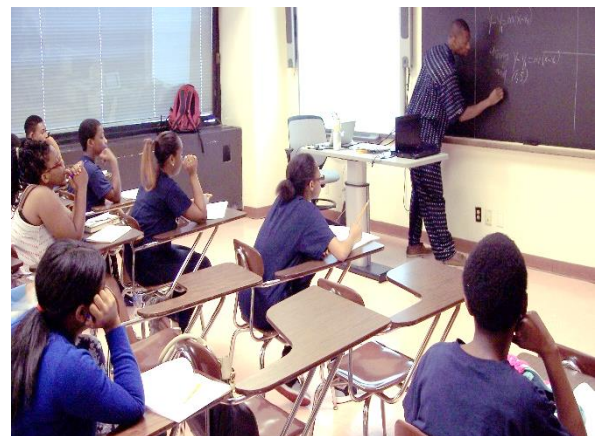
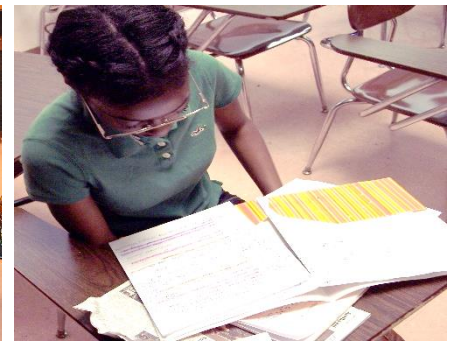
## Final Project Report

# BRIDGE TO HIGH SCHOOL SUCCESS



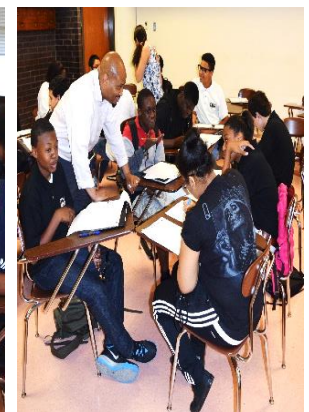
August, 2014

*Adelaide L. Sanford Institute, Bedford Academy High School, Benjamin Banneker Academy High School, Brooklyn High School for Law and Technology, and City Poly Tech High School extend their deep gratitude to the Charles Hayden Foundation for the opportunity to conduct the BHSS summer project. The project could not have been successful without their generous support.*



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## Background

During the fall of 2013 the Adelaide L. Sanford Institute (ASI) began working collaboratively with the principals of the following four Central Brooklyn high schools: Bedford Academy, Benjamin Banneker Academy, Brooklyn High School for Law and Technology, and City Poly Tech High School. After several intense discussion sessions, the principals of the four schools identified the common priority as the need to address the ninth grade student transition to high school. As a result, ASI together with the four high schools designed the Bridge to High School Success (BHSS) proposal. In the spring of 2014 the Charles Hayden Foundation awarded a \$20,000 grant to the Adelaide L. Sanford Foundation (ASI) to assist with the implementation of the BHSS proposal. It should be noted that in addition to identifying a common priority and developing the program design, the schools set aside resources to cover 75% (\$50,800) of the program costs.

## Project Partners and Roles

In addition to ASI and the four high schools, other key partners were Long Island University (LIU), Brooklyn and the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE). Partner roles are described below.

ASI served as the grantee. In this capacity, ASI was responsible for project facilitation, grant management (fiduciary conduit) and the final project report (including the expenditure report). The four schools provided the entering ninth grade students, content area, student support and supervisory staff. Long Island University provided the physical space for the project, **at no charge**, consisting of: 12 classrooms outfitted with smart boards; scheduled use of the Kumble Theatre (including AV equipment) and Spike Lee Auditorium; and access to college scheduled cultural programming and faculty presentations. The NYCDOE, through the office of the Chancellor, gave permission to conduct the summer project at an off-site public school location and provided lunch daily, delivery to LIU, and two staff to oversee lunch dissemination (as per Federal requirement).

## Project Design, Components, and Goals

BHSS accommodated **300** incoming ninth students, for four weeks (July 7 – 31, 2014); **5** hours a day, **4** days per week. The academic day consisted of one two hour blocks in English Language Arts and Math (all students received 2 hours of interactive instruction in ELA & Math each day). Additionally, Friday enrichment sessions were held to conduct: college and career awareness activities; the implementation of the Habits of Mind curriculum; team building activities; as well as sessions on issues around race/ethnicity, gender, and achievement.

The project consisted of three components: (1) Common Core Summer Institute (English Language Arts and Math) for incoming ninth graders; (2) school-focused enrichment activities; and (3) Professional Development, Networking and Collaborative Problem Solving for teachers and school leaders.

The primary focus of the BHSS project was to provide rigorous but highly engaging instruction on the new ELA and Math Common Core Standards. Instructional staff focused on building student confidence in: Reading (from a wide array of text across content areas and different cultural perspectives), Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. Teachers also emphasized the skills necessary for conceptual understanding and making progress with algebraic expressions, performing complicated algebraic manipulations, and understanding how algebraic manipulations behave. Math and ELA instructors utilized practice assessments that mirror the rigor of the new Common Core Assessments to guide instruction and monitor performance.

## GOALS

- Provide an academic focus on reading, writing and mathematical skills that are foundational to success across content areas in high school. Incoming ninth grade students will be immersed in activities to provide early exposure to the rigor and standards that are expected of them in high school under the New York State Common Core mandates.
- Help students understand and reflect on the social-emotional challenges of transitioning from middle school to high school. Special attention will be placed on academic and personal behaviors (the full range of non-cognitive behaviors and Habits of Mind) that are essential in promoting a college-going and career ready mindset.
- Engage students in enrichment activities that focus on college awareness activities, career exploration, and specific activities that pertain to the specific school they will attend.
- Build positive relationships among 9<sup>th</sup> graders and between students and adults – teachers, counselors, administrators and student mentors - who will serve as a support system throughout the ninth grade experience.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Positive Mean change on pre / post assessments in ELA.
2. Positive Mean change on pre / post assessments in Math.
3. Improved student perceptions of the following Semantic Differential Dimensions:
  - a. School ( How I feel about School);
  - b. Reading (How I feel about Reading);
  - c. Writing(How I feel about Writing) ; and
  - d. Math (How I feel about Math).
4. Average daily attendance of 85%. This average daily attendance rate was selected after a review of research on the impact of successful summer bridge programs. For example, the Rand Corporation, 2011 study: *Making Summer Count* found that in successful externally led and district led summer programs, students attended a minimum of 81%. After careful consideration, program collaborators felt strongly that BHSS students must be in attendance at least 14 days of a 16 day program (85%).

## DATA ANALYSIS

Outcomes 1 and 2:

- Positive Mean change on pre / post assessments in ELA.
- Positive Mean change on pre / post assessments in Math.

**Chart 1. Percentage of students scoring at the Mean for ELA and Math and Mean Gain**

School	ELA Pre	ELA Post		Math Pre	Math Post	
% at/above Mean	50%	66%		38%	52%	
Total Mean Gain			+16			+14

In order to determine gains in ELA and Math, Mean scores were determined for both pre and post assessments for the four schools in aggregate/total. Gains reflect the difference between pre / post percent at/above the Mean for each area. Results of the analysis indicate post assessment Mean percent gains for both ELA and Math.

Outcome 3:

- Improved student perceptions of the following Semantic Differential Dimensions:
  - a. School ( How I feel about School);
  - b. Reading (How I feel about Reading);
  - c. Writing(How I feel about Writing) ; and
  - d. Math (How I feel about Math).

**Chart 2. Pre and Post scores on the Semantic Differentialia**

Stimulus	School		Writing		Reading		Math	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Total MEAN Change	17.8	19.65	17.1	19.66	18.1	19.99	18.3	20.47
Mean Difference		1.85		2.56		1.89		2.17

It is well established that student motivation and engagement in academic work is directly related to overall academic outcomes. Both experience and research also confirm that student attitudes are deeply related to motivation and social support from teachers and peers (1). As a result, BHSS collaborators wanted to determine if teacher and peer engagement / interaction practices impact new 9<sup>th</sup> grade student attitudes toward **School, Writing, Reading and Math**. To accomplish this analysis, the Semantic Differential was administered pre and post program implementation on each of the following stimulus words: **School, Writing, Reading and Math**. Chart 2. Indicates positive changes between pre and post administrations for all areas, with the largest in Writing.

Outcome 4:

- Average daily attendance of 85%.

**Chart3. School, Enrollment and Attendance**

School	Register	Average Daily Attendance
School A	89	88%
School B	90	84%
School C	46	85%
School D	53	91%
Total	278	87%

Research backs up the common sense notion that students will do worse in school if they aren't in class to learn. By ninth grade, school attendance can be a better predictor of dropout than eighth-grade test scores, (2). Along with behavior problems and failure of core academic courses, poor student attendance is a critical early warning sign of dropping out of school (3). BHSS classes in total had an average daily attendance rate of 87%. Specifically, on average 242 students were in attendance each day. The data for the BHSS project indicate that the average daily attendance exceeded the expected outcome by two percentage points.

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2. Balfanz, Robert et al., "Preventing Student Disengagement and Keeping Students on the Graduation Path in Urban Middle-Grades Schools: Early Identification and Effective Interventions." Educational Psychologist, 42(4), 223-235: Copyright 2007, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

3. Allensworth, E. M., & Easton, J. Q., What matters for staying on-track and graduating in Chicago Public High Schools: A close look at course grades, failures, and attendance in the freshman year. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, Consortium on Chicago School Research: 2007.

## EXPENDITURES

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION				
Project Name	Bridge to High School Success			
Project Start Date	7/7/2014			
Project End Date	7/31/2014			
Project Budget	\$20,000			
SCHOOLS:	PROJECT ALLOCATIONS	SCHOOL EXPENDITURES		
Bedford Academy	\$5,000	\$4,914		
Benjamin Banneker	\$5,000	\$4,917		
Brooklyn Law & Tech	\$5,000	\$5,001		
City Poly Tech	\$5,000	\$5,337		
PROJECT DIRECT COSTS	AGGREGATE EXPENDITURES			
Travel/Transportation	\$5,645			
Technology/Equipment				
Publications, communications and outreach	\$1,908			
Supplies (printing, copying, postage, paper, notebooks, etc.)	\$2,593			
Text Books				
Food	\$1,776			
Project Incentives ( tee shirts, bags, etc.)	\$6,974			
Parent Involvement	\$1,273			
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$20,169</b>			
SCHOOL ITEMIZATION	Bedford Academy	Benjamin Banneker	Brooklyn Law & Tech	City Poly Tech
Travel/Transportation	0	\$1,700	\$1,000	\$2,945
Technology/Equipment	0	0	0	0
Publications, communications and outreach	\$1,908	0	0	0
Supplies (printing, copying, postage, paper, notebooks, etc.)	\$2,296	\$229.30	\$68	0
Text Books	0			0
Food		\$606.71	\$511	\$658
Project Incentives ( tee shirts, bags, etc.)	\$710	\$2,381.35	\$2,149	\$1,734
Parent Involvement			\$1,273	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,914</b>	<b>\$4,917</b>	<b>\$5,001</b>	<b>\$5,337</b>

## CONCLUSIONS

During the transition into high school, incoming ninth-grade students encounter a confusing range of new emotions, faces, responsibilities, distractions, social situations, and intellectual challenges. Also, for those students who enter high school unprepared academically, emotionally, or socially, the stakes are incredibly high: "... for every full-year course that ninth grade students fail, their chance of graduating in four years decreases by 30 percent". (Neild, 2009)

The Bridge to High School Success (BHSS) project was designed to address the areas of the ninth grade transition challenge. BHSS consisted of three components: (1) Common Core Summer Institute (Summer Bridge) for incoming ninth graders CCSI); (2) school-focused Enrichment Activities; and (3) Professional Development, Networking and Collaborative Problem Solving for teachers and school leaders. After careful review of the outcome data, observations, and debriefing feedback from staff, and students, the following were concluded:

1. Student participants had an average Mean gain of +16 in English Language Arts and + 14 in Math. This finding would suggest that the BHSS project had a positive impact on student performance in the target areas. This finding was also supported by the following feedback statements:
  - a. A teacher from City Poly Tech stated "...the college tours and class program were good experiences for students and for me. The student's growth from the beginning to the end was really monumental. One student went from a 50% to an 80% in just three weeks."
  - b. A student from Bedford Academy stated "At first I did not know what to expect and I really did not want to be in school during the summer. But after being in the program, I learned so much! I learned how complex characters are developed, evidenced-based answers, and the importance of using SAT vocabulary. This will help me be successful when school begins."
  - c. Another student stated that "... all students should have this opportunity."
2. Surveys of student perceptions of School, Writing, Reading and Math revealed a positive change between pre and post administrations. The implication of this finding is that participation in the BHSS project had a positive impact on student attitude toward school in general and, specifically, in the areas of writing, reading and math.
3. Students attending the BHSS project had an average daily attendance rate of 87%. A closer look at all data elements also suggests that when students attend the summer bridge on a consistent basis there is a positive impact on academic outcomes in ELA and Math, as well as attitudes toward school and academic pursuits. However, project collaborators were concerned about the 36 students that made up 13%. Given the importance of attendance to 9<sup>th</sup> grade success, it was felt that more needed to be done to proactively address daily attendance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

End of program data and staff / student feedback indicate that the Bridge to High School Success summer bridge program exceeded expected outcomes on the measures of pre/post scores in ELA and Math; pre/post student perceptions of School, Writing, Reading and Math; and student attendance. Program collaborators concluded that BHSS was successful in addressing the 9<sup>th</sup> grade transition challenge. As a result, program collaborators make the following recommendations:

1. Ensure that program planning is in sync with funder scheduling. Specifically, BHSS planning should begin during the fall semester.
2. Collaborating schools should identify teacher leaders to serve on the BHSS planning team. This will allow for greater integration of curricula, scheduling, and enrichment planning.
3. BHSS planning team should draft a policy statement to offer elective credit as an incentive for attendance.
4. BHSS planning team should investigate alternative lunch providers. Also, collaborators should seek student input regarding daily menus.
5. Collaborating schools must ensure that project partners are identified early and included in the planning process.
6. Professional development opportunities for project staff should include strategies that target support strategies within content lessons; improving student engagement; and teacher planning and instruction within block scheduling.
7. Ensure that during the 2015 summer bridge program that staff be scheduled for common planning time. Also, the planning team should design concrete collaborative activities for all participating schools.
8. Planning team should investigate incentives for peer interns and tutors, i.e., service credit, stipends, etc.
9. Collaborating schools and university partner should plan and schedule specific on campus opportunities that are designed to broaden student perspectives and aspirations.
10. Collaborating schools should design and implement a strategy to track the performance of BHSS students during the school year.