

## **NDPS Certification Program Field Project Report**

Maximize Your Potential Academic Enhancement Program (MAX)

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*Key words:* Youth Development, Tutoring, Out-of-School Time Programming

## Funding Sources

### Project Cost and Budget Narrative

|  | <b>Program Budget</b> |
|--|-----------------------|
| <b>Staff salaries and wages</b>        | \$34,764              |
|  |                       |
| <b>Supplies and materials</b>          | \$3,200               |
|  |                       |
| <b>Food</b>                            | \$15,200              |
|  |                       |
| <b>Marketing and Advertising</b>       | \$1,500               |
|  |                       |
| <b>Transportation</b>                  | \$2,500               |
|  |                       |
| <b>Trips and Tours</b>                 | \$2,900               |
|  |                       |
| <b>Misc. (background checks, etc.)</b> | \$2,200               |
|  |                       |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>\$62,264</b>       |

### Scope and Setting

MAX Academic Enhancement was an eight-month pilot program that utilizes tutoring in conjunction with lecture-driven workshops to assist 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools to achieve academic success. All program participants resided in CHA Public Housing communities or lived in Housing Choice Voucher households. The purpose of this program was to give Charlotte Housing Authority (CHA) youth an academic and professional boost by supporting them through college and career exploration, one-on-one and group tutoring in Math and Language Arts, and life skills workshops.

### Staffing Pattern

The staff consisted of the Lead Program Facilitator, and two Tutors/Mentors. A University of North Carolina at Charlotte Masters of Social Work (MSW) Student Intern provided additional support to the participants.

### Population Served

There were 15 actively enrolled participants.

#### Race/Ethnicity

- 14 Black/African-American
- 1 Hispanic or Latino

#### Gender

- 8 males
- 7 females

#### Grade Classification

- 2 eighth graders
- 5 ninth graders
- 8 tenth graders

#### Participant Selection Criteria:

8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools who resided in CHA Public Housing communities or lived in Housing Choice Voucher households.

## Project Origination

While there are many tutoring programs across Mecklenburg County, we believe what set MAX Academic Enhancement apart was that along with tutoring, the program also addressed issues students faced beyond the classroom and was focused on assisting high school youth.

## Issues Addressed

Afterschool programming for children in grades 6-12 provide academic benefits to older youth during a time when they may be losing interest or are feeling disengaged from school.<sup>1</sup> Studies consistently show that when older youth participate in afterschool programs they demonstrate improved homework completion, improved study habits and motivation, increased school attendance, increased standardized test scores and are at lowered risk of dropping out of school.<sup>2</sup> There are nearly 10 million children in that age range that are unsupervised during after school hours and are responsible for taking care of themselves.<sup>3</sup> Studies show that older youth are at a higher risk of engaging in juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and sex between the hours of 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm. <sup>4</sup> Afterschool programming also gives students the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and gain knowledge they can apply in the real world such as financial literacy or stress management. <sup>5</sup> These are some of the few reasons that we considered when developing and implementing the MAX Academic Enhancement program to serve CHA youth.

## Desired Outcomes and Measurable Objectives

There are many things that impact a student's academic success, therefore, metrics used to measure the impact and success of the MAX Initiative were changes in students' grade point averages (GPA) and changes in students' levels of social and academic self-efficacy. The two measurement instruments used to evaluate students' performance were Ralf Schwarzer's Social Self-Efficacy Scale<sup>6</sup> and Ralf Schwarzer's Academic Self-Efficacy Scale<sup>7</sup>. These two scales captured the students' personal growth throughout the program.

The target goals of the program were an increase in GPA among 90% of students and an increase in social and academic self-efficacy among 70% of students. It was believed that those target goals were reasonable for the population served. Increased capability to overcome challenges and belief that their actions are responsible for successful outcomes are essential for a student's overall academic success and personal development.

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<sup>1</sup> Weiss, Heather B. (August 2004). Understanding and Measuring Attendance in Out-of-School Time Programs. *Harvard Family Research Project*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project, 7. Retrieved April 10, 2015 from <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/publications-series/issues-and-opportunities-in-out-of-school-time-evaluation/understanding-and-measuring-attendance-in-out-of-school-time-programs>.

<sup>2</sup> Kennedy, E., Wilson, B., Valladares, S., & Bronte-Tinkew, J. (June 2007). Improving attendance and retention in out-of-school time programs. *Child Trends*, 17. Retrieved April 10, 2015 from [www.childtrends.org/files/child\\_trends-2007\\_2007\\_06\\_19\\_RB\\_AttendandReten.pdf](http://www.childtrends.org/files/child_trends-2007_2007_06_19_RB_AttendandReten.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Afterschool Alliance (2004). *America After 3PM: A Household Survey on Afterschool in America*. Washington, DC. Retrieved April 10, 2015 from [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/press\\_archives/america\\_3pm/Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/press_archives/america_3pm/Executive_Summary.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California (May 2006). *California survey teens. Teens at risk: incidence of high-risk behaviors: Crime, gangs, drugs; need for after-school programs*.

<sup>5</sup> Afterschool Alliance (2004). *America After 3PM: A Household Survey on Afterschool in America*. Washington, DC. Retrieved April 10, 2015 from [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/press\\_archives/america\\_3pm/Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/press_archives/america_3pm/Executive_Summary.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> The GSE is a 10-item scale designed to assess optimistic self-beliefs used to cope with a variety of demands in life. The scale was designed to assess social self-efficacy, i.e., the belief that one's actions are responsible for successful outcomes. The scaled score for each question ranges from 1 to 4. Higher scores indicate stronger patient's belief in self-efficacy.

<sup>7</sup> The GSE is a 10-item scale designed to assess optimistic self-beliefs used to cope with a variety of demands in life. The scale was designed to assess academic self-efficacy, i.e., the belief that one's actions are responsible for successful outcomes. The scaled score for each question ranges from 1 to 4. Higher scores indicate stronger patient's belief in academic self-efficacy.

### Strategies and/or Interventions

This program provided after school tutoring, field trips, life skills training, and guest speakers to CHA youth in grades 8 through 10.

### Project Timeline

September 2015 to June 2016.

### Special Conditions and/or Expertise Required to Carry Out the Project

The tutors needed to be able to assist the participants with their homework and facilitate life skills workshops from the Overcoming Obstacles Curriculum.

### Outcomes and Achievements

| <u>Measure</u>                             | <u>Program Start</u> | <u>Program End</u> | <u>Change</u>              |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Average GPA                                | 2.82                 | 3.25               | .43 (15.24%)<br>Increase   |
| Social Self-Efficacy Scale Average Score   | 31.83                | 31.56              | -.28 (-0.848%)<br>Decrease |
| Academic Self-Efficacy Scale Average Score | 28.83                | 31.89              | 3.06 (10.61%)<br>Increase  |

| <u>Measure</u>  | <u>Target</u> | <u>Actual</u>  | <u>Difference</u>   |
|---|---------------|--|---|
| Percent of Students with an Increased Grade Point Average (GPA) | 90%           | 50% Increased<br>(37.5% Had No Change)<br>(87.5% combined) | 40% Below Target<br>2.5% Below Target for<br>Students with no GPA<br>change and an increase |
| Percent of Students with Increased Social Self-Efficacy         | 70%           | 44.4%  | 25.6% Below Target  |
| Percent of Students with Increased Academic Self-Efficacy       | 70%           | 77.8%  | 7.8% Above Target   |

### Outcomes Related to School Completion, Dropout Prevention, and/or Graduation Rates

The outcomes were related to dropout prevention because all the students were at risk of dropping out of school because of academic struggles or behavioral factors. All the participants have remained in school.

### Current Status Project

The program was restructured using the lessons learned from this cohort and will start October 2017.

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## **Role in Project as a NDPS Certification Program Participant**

I aided in the program design and managed the program.

## **Lessons Learned**

To strengthen the Maximize Your Potential Academic Enhancement program, a list of recommendations have been made based on metric results and assessments by students. The program is in hiatus and being revised to address these recommendations with plans to relaunch in the fall of 2017.

The Lead Program facilitator and tutors were tasked with both implementing and refining the program. This often put limitations on their ability to effectively plan and prepare for daily sessions. The time commitment was much greater than imagined. It didn't fully account for time needed to complete relevant tasks such as event planning, team meetings, debriefs, community events, locating resources for remediation and alternative assignments, food preparation, and several other responsibilities that cannot be fulfilled within the current time constraints.

It is proposed that a full-time program coordinator be hired who is responsible for developing the curriculum and refining the program. This would allow facilitators to focus more on the implementation, which would greatly improve the effectiveness of the program.

## **Advice for Dropout Prevention Practitioners About the Project**

- Capture and document as much data, photography and video on the program and participants as possible for future program evaluation needs.
- If program components are not working, don't be afraid to make programmatic changes during the session.