II. Theory of Change and Its Significance

II. Theory of Change and Its Significance

Introduction

Increasingly those working on complex social change initiatives seek to ground their work in a "theory of change." The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change has published several reports on the theory of change process that community groups can use to evaluate (or be evaluated on) their progress toward a long-term goal or set of goals. Aspen defines theory of change (TOC) as "a method that a community group can use to think critically about what is required to bring about a desired social change. It is a process designed to depict how a complex change initiative will unfold over time. It creates an illustration of all the various moving parts that must operate in concert to bring about a desired outcome" (Anderson 2006).

It sounds simple enough, but an even simpler way of thinking about a TOC is that it can address a myriad of questions about the work that a community group intends to do, the steps it should take to do it, and the "it" that the group wants to reach as its set of long-term goals. A TOC provides a structure for initiative planners to find answers to such questions as the following:

- *Why are we undertaking the actions that we are proposing to carry out? Why these actions and not others?*
- *What factors in our environment have led us to propose these actions? Are they the only ones that should be considered?*
- *What others might also work in our context?*
- *What do we expect will happen if we undertake these actions—in the immediate and long-term future?*
- *What are some milestones that we can reach that will let us know that we are on track?*

The theory of change that emerges from answering these questions provides a group with a plan for action, as well as indicators of progress and an internal guide for measuring how well an initiative is doing, or, put another way, for answering the question, "Is our work meeting the indicators of success, and, if not, what steps should be taken?" In effect, a TOC is a roadmap for measuring change, for acknowledging when progress has not been made, and for making needed revisions in the plan of action. A TOC is not meant to be written in stone but rather to provide a guideline for action that may need tinkering or substantial revision.

In addition to providing a structure to guide the work of a partnership, a TOC also provides a framework for a formal evaluation of an initiative that may include one or many sites or partnerships, each one guided by its own TOC. Complex, multisite, multipartner initiatives rarely have outcomes that can be linked directly to one aspect of the work or another. Unlike programs of which experimental and quasi-experimental studies might be possible—in which outcomes can be attributed to a specific program or strategy—complex, multisite initiatives cannot be studied in this way.

For this reason, PCAS chose to have a TOC to guide the planning and implementation of the work, but also to be used as the basis for an evaluation conducted by the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning. As the name implies, OMG sees its mission as helping complex, multisite initiatives such as PCAS develop and use a TOC to plan and guide their work. As evaluators, OMG strives to assess whether the TOC has proved valid—that is, has it led to the predicted outcomes, in which areas, and if it did not, why not?

Theory of Change in the PCAS Project

In the PCAS project, the TOC led to the development of both an initiative-wide TOC that guided the work of AED as well as individual, grantee-level, TOCs that guided the work of each site. In order to develop the TOC, each lead organization convened its partners to discuss and develop consensus around the site's TOC—a process involving a day of discussion, with follow-up revisions of the document developed. In addition, AED staff who facilitated the entire initiative met with OMG evaluators to discuss TOCs—both the initiative-wide TOC and the site-specific ones. As a result of these meetings,

PCAS developed outcomes and indicators—some common to all the sites and some specific to each site.

The following categories were used to assess progress in each site and across the initiative as a whole: 1) lead organization capacity for the work; 2) partnership development; 3) college access activities and outcomes for students; and 4) college success activities and outcomes for students.

Organization of This Section

This section includes:

1. OMG document explaining its approach to TOC
2. Initiative-wide TOC
3. Examples of two grantee-specific TOCs
4. Methodology for evaluating partnership development
5. Examples of feedback to site in an OMG site report

References

Anderson, Andrea A. (2006). *The community builder's approach to theory of change: A practical guide to theory development*. New York: The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change.

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II.1. OMG's Theory of Change Model: A Way of Evaluating Our Work

The following is drawn from OMG Center for Collaborative Learning's PowerPoint presentation in July 2004 introducing PCAS grantees to OMG's TOC model and the different steps to take in using it. Below are OMG's slides describing the TOC, as well as diagrams depicting its use in the form of a meeting with key stakeholders in a community partnership working on some aspect of the high school/postsecondary education continuum.

What is Theory of Change?

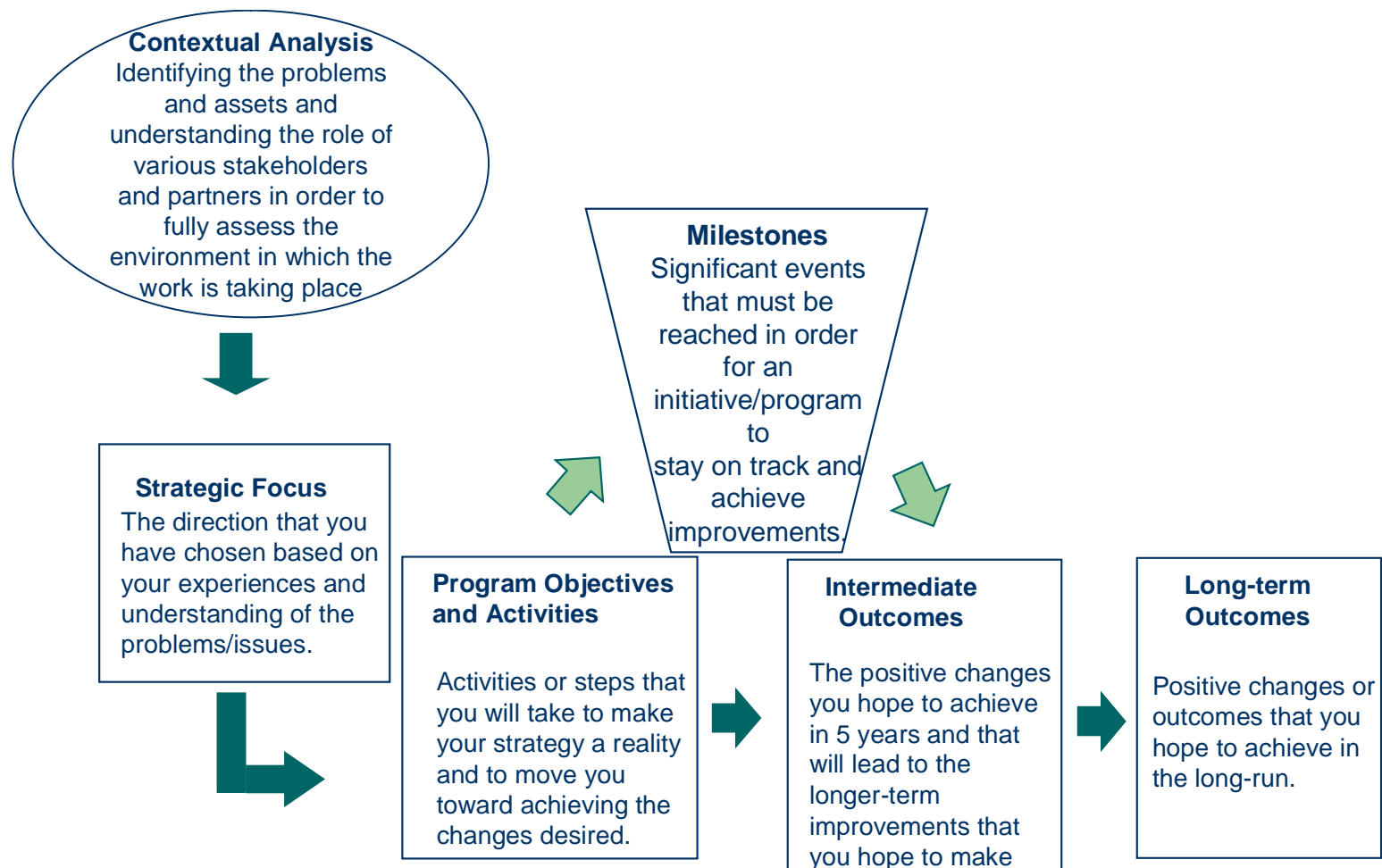- It is the process of articulating our assumptions, actions, and strategies and then linking them to desired outcomes.
- It is also the process of challenging the assumptions that we are making about the ways that we are going about impacting change in our communities.
- It maps out our expectations and the path for change and learning.
- It helps us determine how we can assess whether or not we are meeting our desired outcomes.
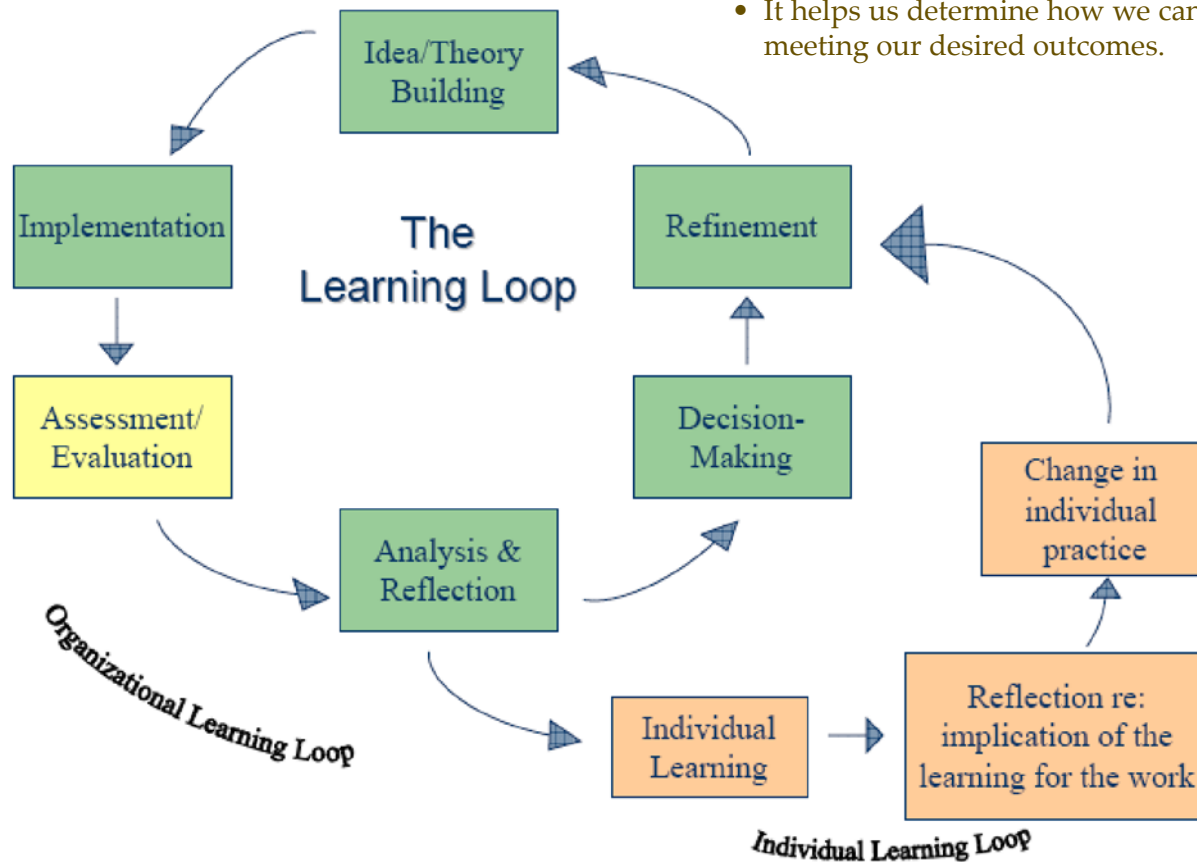
Why the Logic Model?

- It draws from our experiences and beliefs - the things we al ready know.
- It asks us to make a connection between our program's activities and what we hope to achieve (outcomes).
- Once the link between actions and outcomes is clear, we can begin to track and evaluate our progress through data collection and documentation.
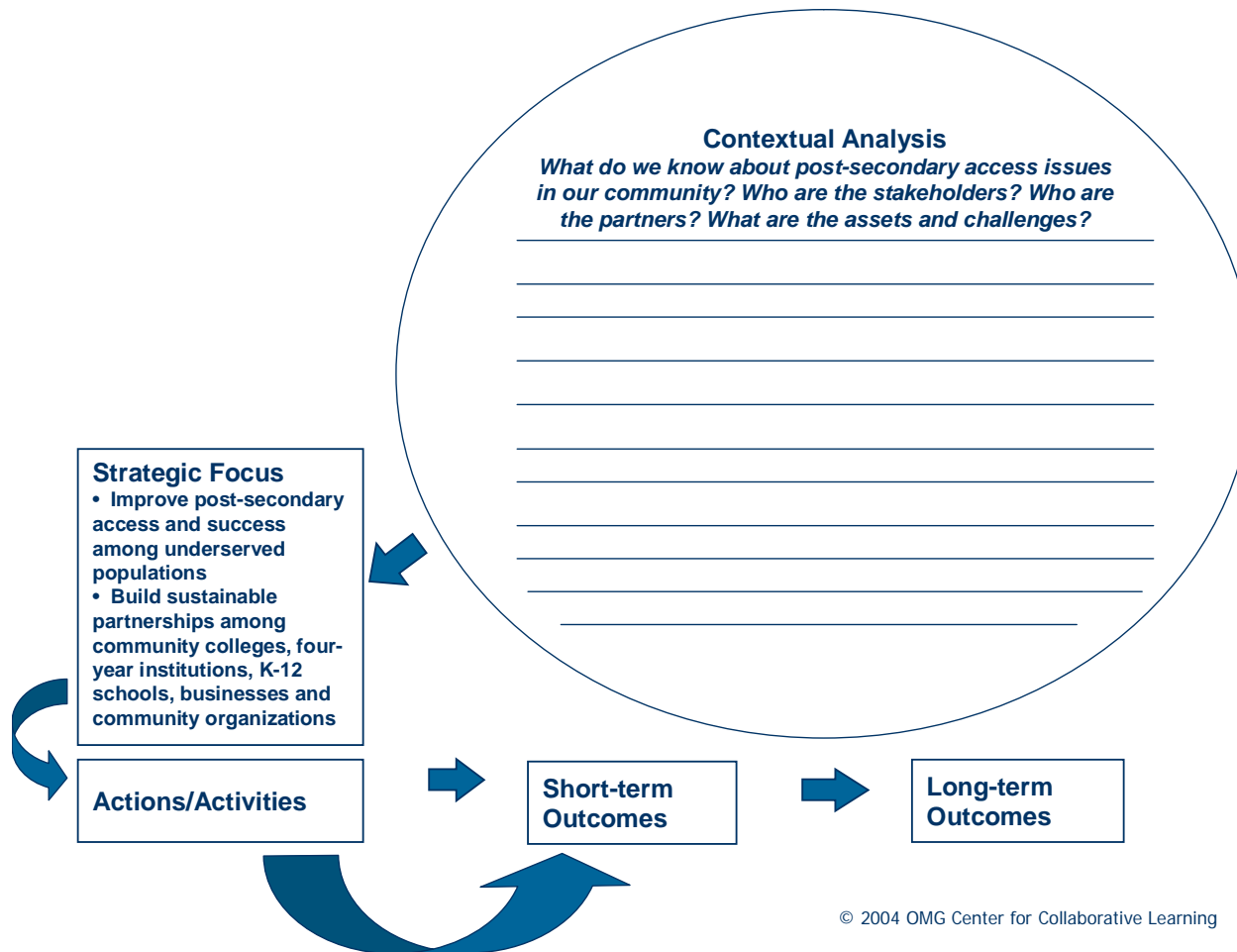
- We can use the Theory of Change model to determine the right data to collect.
- With an improved ability to track our progress, we can make mid-course corrections based on what we are learning.
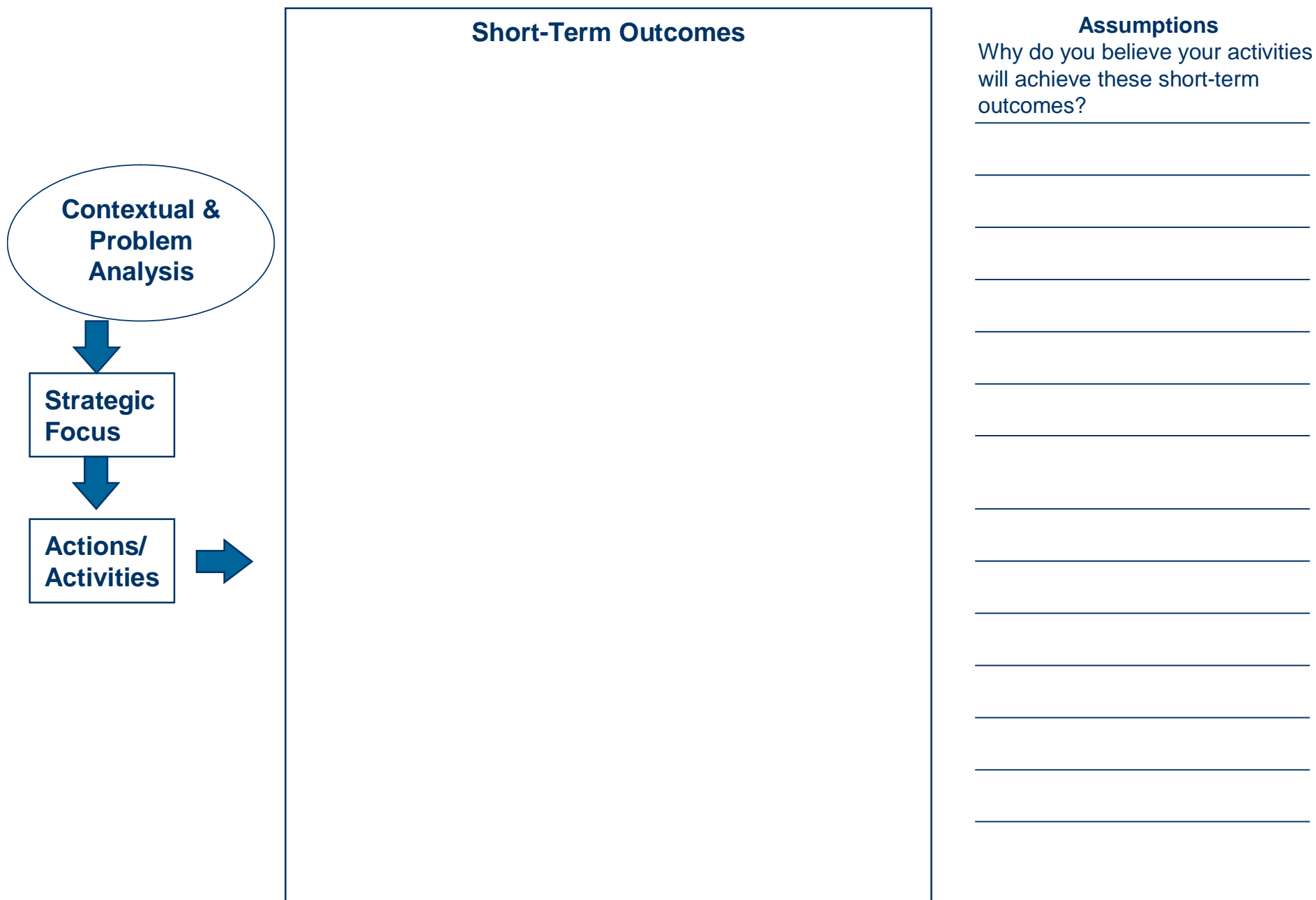- We can use the Theory of Change for our own evaluation, planning and management decisions.

Contextual Analysis
Identifying the problems and assets and understanding the role of various stakeholders and partners in order to fully assess the environment in which the work is taking place

Milestones
Significant events that must be reached in order for an initiative/program to stay on track and achieve improvements.

Strategic Focus
The direction that you have chosen based on your experiences and understanding of the problems/issues.

Program Objectives and Activities

Activities or steps that you will take to make your strategy a reality and to move you toward achieving the changes desired.

Intermediate Outcomes

The positive changes you hope to achieve in 5 years and that will lead to the longer-term improvements that you hope to make

Long-term Outcomes

Positive changes or outcomes that you hope to achieve in the long-run.

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Beginning to Apply the Theory of Change Logic Model to the PCAS Program

1. Who is our constituency/community – who are we serving and who are we accountable to?
2. What are the problem/issues that we're trying to address through our programs and partnership-building?
3. What are the assumptions that we're making about our approach – why do we think that our approach will work?
4. What is the difference (the desired outcomes) that we aim to make as a result of our programs and our partnership-building efforts?

5. What are the activities that we are undertaking to meet these desired outcomes?
6. Do our strategies and actions connect logically to our desired outcomes?
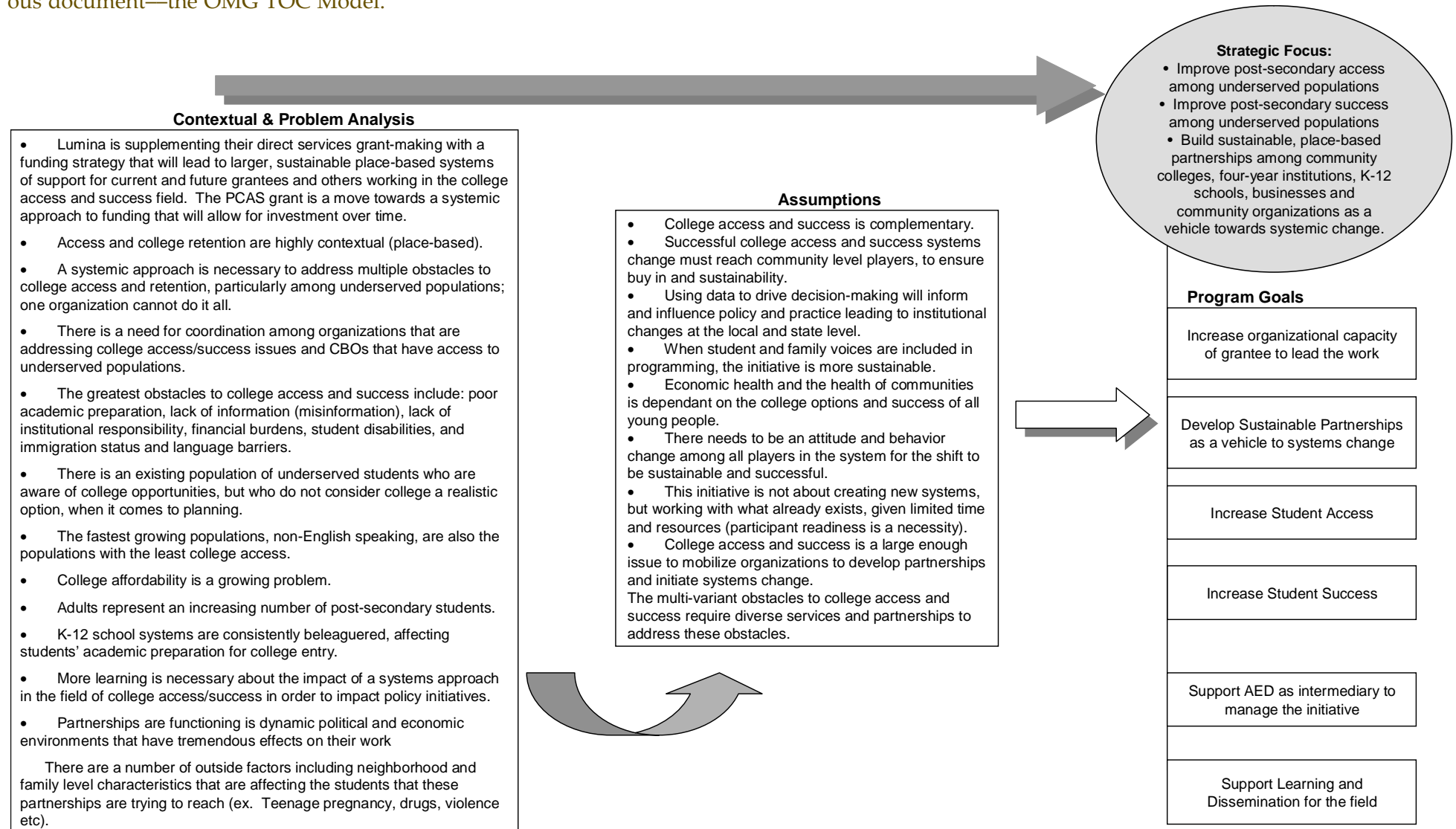7. How will we monitor our success – how will we measure our outcomes?

Contextual Analysis
What do we know about post-secondary access issues in our community? Who are the stakeholders? Who are the partners? What are the assets and challenges?

Strategic Focus
• **Improve post-secondary access and success among underserved populations**
• **Build sustainable partnerships among community colleges, four-year institutions, K-12 schools, businesses and community organizations**

Actions/Activities

Short-term Outcomes

Long-term Outcomes

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Actions/Activities

Assumptions

Why do you believe these activities address the post-secondary access challenge in your community? How do you think these actions will contribute to the development of sustainable partnerships?

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Contextual & Problem Analysis

Strategic Focus
• Improve post-secondary access and success among underserved populations
• Build sustainable partnerships among community colleges, four-year institutions, K-12 schools, businesses and community organizations

With respect to individual student services

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With respect to partnership development

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Short-Term Outcomes

Assumptions
Why do you believe your activities will achieve these short-term outcomes?

Contextual & Problem Analysis

Strategic Focus

Actions/ Activities

Long-term Outcomes

What are the changes you hope to see longer-term? What are the individual level changes you hope to see? Organization level? Community level?

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Contextual & Problem Analysis

↓

Strategic Focus

↓

Actions/ Activities

↓

Short-term Outcomes →

II.2. Initiative-wide TOC

Below is the TOC created for PCAS in collaboration with OMG Center for Collaborative Learning, using the steps noted in the previous document—the OMG TOC Model.

Strategic Focus:
- Improve post-secondary access among underserved populations
- Improve post-secondary success among underserved populations
- Build sustainable, place-based partnerships among community colleges, four-year institutions, K-12 schools, businesses and community organizations as a vehicle towards systemic change.

Contextual & Problem Analysis

- Lumina is supplementing their direct services grant-making with a funding strategy that will lead to larger, sustainable place-based systems of support for current and future grantees and others working in the college access and success field. The PCAS grant is a move towards a systemic approach to funding that will allow for investment over time.

- Access and college retention are highly contextual (place-based).

- A systemic approach is necessary to address multiple obstacles to college access and retention, particularly among underserved populations; one organization cannot do it all.

- There is a need for coordination among organizations that are addressing college access/success issues and CBOs that have access to underserved populations.

- The greatest obstacles to college access and success include: poor academic preparation, lack of information (misinformation), lack of institutional responsibility, financial burdens, student disabilities, and immigration status and language barriers.

- There is an existing population of underserved students who are aware of college opportunities, but who do not consider college a realistic option, when it comes to planning.

- The fastest growing populations, non-English speaking, are also the populations with the least college access.

- College affordability is a growing problem.

- Adults represent an increasing number of post-secondary students.

- K-12 school systems are consistently beleaguered, affecting students' academic preparation for college entry.

- More learning is necessary about the impact of a systems approach in the field of college access/success in order to impact policy initiatives.

- Partnerships are functioning is dynamic political and economic environments that have tremendous effects on their work

There are a number of outside factors including neighborhood and family level characteristics that are affecting the students that these partnerships are trying to reach (ex. Teenage pregnancy, drugs, violence etc).

Assumptions

- College access and success is complementary.
- Successful college access and success systems change must reach community level players, to ensure buy in and sustainability.
- Using data to drive decision-making will inform and influence policy and practice leading to institutional changes at the local and state level.
- When student and family voices are included in programming, the initiative is more sustainable.
- Economic health and the health of communities is dependant on the college options and success of all young people.
- There needs to be an attitude and behavior change among all players in the system for the shift to be sustainable and successful.
- This initiative is not about creating new systems, but working with what already exists, given limited time and resources (participant readiness is a necessity).
- College access and success is a large enough issue to mobilize organizations to develop partnerships and initiate systems change.

The multi-variant obstacles to college access and success require diverse services and partnerships to address these obstacles.

Program Goals

Increase organizational capacity of grantee to lead the work

Develop Sustainable Partnerships as a vehicle to systems change

Increase Student Access

Increase Student Success

Support AED as intermediary to manage the initiative

Support Learning and Dissemination for the field

Partnerships for College Access and Success Logic Model

Program Activities

Grantee Organizational Capacity
•Develop data collection plan (ability to track students impacts)
•Develop and manage work plan and provide TA to partners
•Strengthen partnership facilitation role
•Develop evidence-based culture in partnership by learning about and adapting effective research-based models
•Strengthen advocacy role to begin shifting attitudes and behavior in all players and influence policy

Partnership Development
•Formalize partnership purpose and structure
•Determine operating procedures and individual partner roles
•Incorporate stakeholder (inc. student) and community input into partnership development, programming and advocacy work to ensure buy-in
•Leverage additional resources to ensure partnership sustainability
•Develop partnership communication strategy in efforts to shift community attitudes
•Increase college access/success advocacy to shift attitudes and behaviors among all players (students, parents, school staff, community members and service providers)

Student Access
•Adapt and develop performance-based student access models that meet the needs of the target population with services that include:
Student preparation inc.quality education, wrap-around services, information sharing and community awareness building.

Student Success
• Adapt and develop performance-based student success models that address student needs through campus interventions including academic and personal counseling, transition management, social/cultural integration, working student and family supports and others.

Support AED as the Intermediary
•Facilitate Learning Institute
•Conduct site visits
•Provide TA to individual sites around their work plan and developing data collection systems
•Disseminate information for replication and policy advocacy
• Establish list serve for information sharing - provide information on effective systems and structures

Support Learning
•Develop accessible evaluation products
•Inform field of philanthropy
•Provide information to advance local and state policy and practice

Intermediate Outcomes*
2 years

Grantee Organizational Capacity
•Designated staff and resources to implement workplan and data collection
•Developed partnership management protocol including partner (CBO) assistance, outreach and referral system
•There is public discourse and media coverage around issues of college access and success
•There is influence among local policy makers/some policy change
Partnership Development
•Operating procedures , partnership goals and partner roles are formalized.
•Community involvement and stakeholder feedback is institutionalized
•Has leveraged additional resources for the partnership
•The partnership is acknowledged by the community as THE source for college access and success information (partnership is acknowledged as an entity/an integral part of the college access and success infrastructure)
Increase Student Access
•There is a clearly developed pipeline for college access and it is clear what components are missing, which ones should be addressed and more safety nets are ensured for all youth (these pipelines/models are site-specific to meet the local socio-economic and demographic needs).
•Grade-level appropriate strategies are in place along the above-mentioned pipeline to accommodate students at every entry level
•There is transparency about the services available to all the stakeholders including community members, parents etc.
•Increase in the number of collaboratives with 4 year institutions and community members
Increase Student Success
•There is a clearly developed pipeline for college success and integral components are being provided (or developed) by partnership members.
•Strategies are in place to accommodate students at every entry level, with varying academic and personal needs that impact college success.
Support AED as intermediary to manage the initiative
•The Learning Institute has facilitated inter-site learning.
•There is an active dialogue between AED, the grantees and among grantees in efforts to support learning and disseminate information.
Support Learning
• Lumina utilizes early lessons learned in support of their programming work

Long-term Outcomes*
5+ years

Grantee organizational capacity
•Data collection informs future programming
•Work plan is implemented and regularly revisited to allow for learning and organizational flexibility
•Influences local policy and community leaders using data from partnership access/success programs

Partnership Development
•Partnership has increased the number of members providing greater variety of services
•Regularly seeks stakeholder input into programming and new partners
•Has implemented outreach, communications and advocacy strategy
•Impact on local policy
•There is a sustained business plan / action plan with designated funding
•There is a designated budget line in the local government budget

Student access
•Has increased the number of target population students obtaining college access information by X% including increases in number of students enrolled in college prep curriculum, those who completed FAFSA form, took SAT
•Increase in number of target population who graduate from High School, apply to a post secondary program, are accepted into a 2 or 4 year school; or complete training certificate program

Student success
•Increase in number of students who returned for the second term, second year, completed 2 year degree, completes certification program, transferred to 4 year school by X%
•Higher education institutions replicate the college access and success programs for all students
Support AED as intermediary
•Has facilitated learning across PCAS sites
•Supports other communities in replication process
•Disseminates learning through products and activities
Support Learning
• Lumina is called on to advise local and national policy work in the field of college access and success.
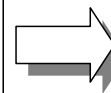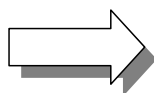
II.3. Evaluating Partnerships––OMG's Methodology

In order to address college access and success concerns effectively through PCAS, it is essential to mobilize a broad array of organizations and constituents to work together for systemic change. Sustainable, place-based partnerships among community colleges, four-year institutions of higher learning, K-12 schools, community-based organizations, and businesses are vehicles toward systemic change. At the same time, to ensure the sustainability and significant scale of this change, community, family, and student buy-in is necessary.

To document the development and evolution of the partnerships in this initiative, OMG developed a framework for assessing partnership strength. Based on a literature review, interviews with experts in the field, and our experience, there are five areas that play a defining role in the success and sustainability of partnership structures: partnership purpose, membership characteristics, process and structure, communication, and staff and resources. The framework below presents brief descriptions of these five areas and the attributes of a well-developed, strong partnership model within each of the five areas.

1. Purpose

In a strong partnership, partners should be able to articulate a similar **vision**, with a clearly agreed upon mission for the partnership. In addition, partners should have defined short- and long-term partnership **goals, objectives** and strategies that are realistic and periodically revised with the availability of new data.

2. Membership characteristics

A strong partnership should have the **appropriate variety of members**, including representatives from each segment of the community who will be affected by its activities such as students, parents, colleges, school district reps, and financial aid organizations. This required mix of participants is sustained through membership changes and turnover.

There should also be evidence of **mutual respect, trust, understanding** among the stakeholders and of their differing roles and organizational differences. The group should be able to handle difficult discussions and resolve conflicts respectfully and consensually, and strong working relationships should exist among most members.

Members should **see the work of the partnership their self-interests** and can articulate how they (or their organizations) will benefit from participating in the collaboration and that the advantages of membership will offset the costs.

Finally, the partnership will have to have **legitimacy in the community**, and be perceived as the authority for college access and success. Member agencies should be well regarded in the community.

3. Process/Structure

In strong partnerships, **members share a stake in both process and outcome** and have regular and meaningful input into the work. In addition, members articulate ownership of both the way the group works and the results achieved as a result of their work.

In order to facilitate **effective partnership participation**, committee structures with strong leadership should be developed and partners should attend, well organized and well run regular meetings.

All partners should **clearly understand their roles and responsibilities**, and should be help accountable for their work.

Evaluation and feedback mechanisms should be in place to ensure the partnership's flexibility and responsiveness to change.

4. Communication

The partnership should have **effective communication practices** including formal and informal opportunities to interact regularly and often, update one another, discuss issues openly and convey all necessary information to one another and to people outside the group.

5. Staff and Resources

The partnership requires **strong leadership** with authoritative knowledge about college access and success issues. The leadership

should have process, meeting facilitation and interpersonal skills and be able to carry out the role with fairness. Because of these and other qualities the leader will be granted legitimacy by the partnership members.

Finally, a strong partnership requires **adequate human and financial resources** to support its operations and ensure that an effective resource development plan is in place to increase funding.

Data collection and analysis

Once the framework was constructed, OMG developed interview guides with a series of questions that touched upon all of the five areas and above highlighted attributes within these areas. The guides included prompts that allowed the interviewers to ensure that all the key concepts were addressed in the interview.

Because we anticipate observing partnership changes over time, we will be using similar question guides each year, to gauge and document partnership progress. Individual interviews with key partnership members and the grantee were conducted in all eight PCAS sites in two-person teams during our site visits.

For reliability purposes, the two evaluators analyzed their interview notes separately and assigned a value from 1 to 5 for each of the attributes. After this process was completed the two evaluators met to discuss the assigned attribute values and agree on the final value. If the evaluators disagreed, the decisions were reviewed with support from the interview notes, until a consensus was reached. In the site write-ups, attribute values are averaged for each of the five key partnership areas. So for example, for the 5th area – Staff and Resources, if the values for strong leadership and adequate human and financial resources were 2.5 and 3.5 respectively, then the reported value for the Staff and Resources area would be 3 (2.5+3.5/2).

6. Reflections from Grantee on Using a TOC

The New York City grantee provides some insight on using a TOC as a framework for understanding its work with community-based organizations and community colleges around GED students. In this case, the TOC served as a roadmap for achieving the grantee's goal of effecting policy change in New York City around youth who drop out of high school. The grantee developed this document in July 2005, a full year after its first use of the TOC. The TOC is indirectly referenced in the document in the visual representation of the grantee's partnership and long-term goals.

Youth Development Institute of the Fund for the City of New York
New York City Partnership for College Access and Success Partnership Chart
Goal: To Increase opportunities for college access and success for disconnected youth between the ages of 16-24, who have dropped out of school or are near to dropping out.outh Development Institute of the Fund for the City of New York

Promising Practices Partnership

Advisory body which brings together institutions to expand college access and increase success
Establishes and oversees the pilot project: The Local Network (LN)
Disseminates research on promising practices in college access and success for disconnected youth
Identifies and addresses policy gaps in the city-wide infrastructure for creating supports and resources for disconnected youth

Community Based Partners: Good Shepherd Services, Goddard Riverside Community Center, Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation, The Forest Hills Community House,
Education Partners: CUNY and the CUNY Central Office of Collaborative Programs, New York City College of Technology, Bushwick Community High School, Region 4 of the NYC Department of Education
Managing Partner: The Youth Development Institute/Fund for the City of New York

Youth Development Institute (YDI)

Lead agency/managing partner
Responsible for the grant
Sub-grants to members of the PPP and the Local Network CBO
Convenes, coordinates and documents the activities of the PPP and the LN and captures and communicates lessons learned
Provides technical assistance to the Local Network

Staff:
Peter Kleinbard
Director, YDI and Vice President, Fund for the City of New York
- Responsible for all programs at YDI

Theresa Greenberg
Deputy Director, YDI and Director of the NYC Partnership for College Access and Success
- Overall responsibility for the project
- Supervises the partnership coordinator
- Accountable to the work of the partnership on the project
- Oversees the convening of the partnership

Vivian Vazquez
Partnership Coordinator
- Manages the day-to-day work of the partnership
- Coordinates meetings and all communication to partners
- Documents the work of the Local Network and the PPP
- Captures and communicates lessons and assists sites to identify and adapt practices
- Accountable for the work of the partnership on the project
- Convenes partnership

Local Network

Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation

A YDI grantee, responsible for pilot implementation of the LN
Reports to the PPP its structure, activities, progress of students and of the LN collaboration
Utilizes the PPP for reflection, feedback and support

Staff:
Emily Van Ingen
Assistant Executive Director, CHLDC
- CBO administrator with overall responsibility for College Access and Success through the LN

Meghan Gray
Local Network Director
- Manages the LN and works with collaborating partners (school/CUNY)
- Recruits the youth cohort and tracks their progress
- Develops, coordinates and monitors services for the youth cohort and builds institutional support
- Collects data on activities
- Reports regularly to the PPP
- Maintains a working relationship with the Project Coordinator of the PPP

New York City College of Technology

Serves as the college partner of the LN, responsible for pilot implementation

Staff:
Bonnie August
Provost
- Responsible for College Access and Success work from the college
- Brings college resources to the table (e.g. provides opportunities for college preparation activities such as summer orientation, college tours, test-taking workshops, facilitates the admissions)
- Meets regularly with the LN to support and monitor project goals

Vanessa Villanueva
Admissions Counselor
- Assists with the admissions and financial aid process for the Local Network cohort
- Assists with the colleges' class registration process for the Local Network cohort
- Provides information to the LN on student characteristics, activities and academic progress
- Responsible for data collection for the project

III. Data Capacity, Collection, and Use

III. Data Capacity, Collection, and Use

Introduction

Data sharing across K-12 and postsecondary systems and institutions has become critical in national efforts to address the achievement gap for underrepresented students in K-16 education. Projects such as the Data Quality Campaign, the Social Science Research Council's Transitions to College Program, and Lumina Foundation for Education's Achieving the Dream initiative are all involved in developing the policies and tools to make K-12 and postsecondary data available for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to address the impediments to access and success of underrepresented students. The Pathways to College Network's best postsecondary access practices report, *A Shared Agenda* (2004), and the Education Trust's *College Results Online* (comparing postsecondary institutions' graduation rates across demographic categories) are examples of disseminating practical data for policymakers, practitioners, families, and students (Pathways to College Network 2004; Balfanz & Letgers 2004; the Education Trust 2005; and the National College Access Network 2007).

Data Collection and Use in PCAS

In PCAS, data collection and use was a central aspect of the work of the partnerships. Partners were essential to providing the data, forming agreements about sharing data, and using data to improve programming in their own institutions as well as to inform the public. Because data around college access and success are highly political, we begin this section with four case studies illustrating how some of these political issues were addressed. Certainly there are no easy solutions for addressing such issues, but the experiences of the PCAS sites will provide valuable insight into how sensitive issues were successfully addressed by PCAS partnerships.

Data in PCAS were used in the following ways:

- First, to assess local needs: How well prepared were students to enroll in college in their senior year? How many low-income, under-represented students enrolled in postsecondary education in September following graduation; how many enrolled in the spring semester? Of these students, how many needed to take one or more remedial courses? How many of the students who enrolled completed the first year?
- Second, to address the data needs of the PCAS project to determine the impact of its work with students in terms of their graduation and college entry.
- Third, to communicate successes and challenges to the members of the partnership and community.

Organization of This Section

To illuminate data collection and use in PCAS grantees and provide guidelines on how a local partnership might adapt these approaches, this chapter contains the following materials:

1. Case studies of four PCAS grantees (including the role of the partnership in data collection and use; how agreements were developed among partners; what challenges were encountered and overcome in data collection; and what political issues emerged in data collection and use and how they were addressed)
2. Tools to address some issues in data collection and use such as confidentiality
3. How to use National Student Clearinghouse data to inform work at the high school or school-district level
4. Sample use of data by two PCAS sites to inform postsecondary institutional planning
5. Using data to publicize successes

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III.1. Data Case Studies

These case studies describe how four PCAS grantees used data to inform and improve their work to increase postsecondary access, remediation, and/or retention raters among underserved young people in their communities. The grantees involved in this process were in Burlington, VT, Chattanooga, San Antonio, and Seattle. Completing these "data" case studies included:

- Drawing up protocol questions for leadership at each of the four grantee lead organizations
- Conducting a one or 1.5-hour interview with leadership based on these protocol questions
- Following up to obtain documents related to each grantee's data work (e.g., data sharing agreements, student/family release forms, IRB requests, and partnership/stakeholder meetings related to data collection and analysis)
- Writing up draft case studies based on these interviews and sending each individual draft to its respective lead organization for feedback and addressing additional questions
- Making final revisions

The questions used to identify the main details of each grantee's story—how it incorporated data collection into all aspects of their work, how it used and shared data with partners—particularly the K-12 and postsecondary ones—and the outcomes occurring as a result of this work.

- What was the original local context for collecting and using data on postsecondary access and success on students targeted by the partnership?
- What were the major partnership and programmatic issues that was needed to address in undertaking this work?
- Who was involved in the work of making agreements regarding data sharing and use; what processes did you use to collect and share your data (i.e., how were FERPA issues addressed)?

- What strategies were used to address issues such as engaging individual stakeholders in the partnership around the use of institutional data or in finding ways to avoid the institutional "blame game" in collaborating on a specific challenge?
- What data has been most useful for your partnership in improving work on postsecondary access and success? Why?
- What was learned about your partnership's capacity to use data, about the roles and responsibilities of your partners around data, the resources necessary to collect and understand it, and about the relationship between the data collection process and the sustainability of your work?

Each grantee's data case study hints at much more than the process of data collection and analysis. For example, Burlington's process unearthed the need to expand work at one university beyond a continuing education division to include other academic divisions within the institution. The data work of the Burlington PCAS also revealed the importance of continued work at the state level to garner support for dual enrollment throughout Vermont. In the case of both San Antonio and Chattanooga, data proved to be the glue that maintained their partnerships, the path that shifted their focus from college access to remediation and retention issues for students in their first year of college, and the key to building trust among all stakeholders. For Seattle, data moved the partnership from a strictly workforce development intermediary to one that works in partnership with a community college to develop and deliver courses for adult workers at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

Some follow-up questions in thinking about your own work as you read these case studies may include:

- What resonated for you in these stories?
- What confirmed some of what you already know?
- What challenged some of what you know?
- What questions do you have and how do you think you can address them?

Although each grantee's journey to successful use of data to drive its work and create opportunities for strengthening the PCAS partnerships is different, the goal of using data to foster student success in a postsecondary setting is virtually the same. Many thanks to the following people who provided useful insights during interviews as well as helpful comments and feedback on the various drafts: Gilberto Ramón and Eyra Perez, San Antonio Education Partnership; Daniel Challener and Debra Vaughan, Chattanooga Public Education Foundation and Charlotte Smith, Stacy Lightfoot, and Susan Street at the College Access Center, Chattanooga; Rich Tulikangas and Dhyana Bradley, Linking Learning to Life; and Susan Crane and Heather Worthley, Port Jobs in Seattle.

Linking Learning to Life

Because of Vermont's small population, people do know each other and are involved in other's meetings . . . see each other at the grocery store and have other interactions, which makes the process of building a relationship or partnership that much easier.

-Rich Tulikangas, Executive Director, Linking Learning to Life

Introduction

The story of Linking Learning to Life's work on college access and success—in the city of Burlington and in the rest of Vermont—is one of developing relationships and building commitment to education as a means to economic development. Linking Learning to Life leads a dynamic partnership whose core purpose is to improve access to college and successful college completion for Vermont youth who face significant barriers to pursuing postsecondary education. Before Partnerships for College Access and Success (PCAS), LLL had been successfully providing postsecondary access opportunities for low-income students, students of color, first generation college goers, students with disabilities, and refugee students in Burlington and in other parts of Vermont through its dual-enrollment program, College Connections. High school sophomores, juniors and seniors could take college courses for high school and college credit at five local postsecondary institutions since 1998. However, before joining PCAS, following students into college to track their success as college students was not a part of the program. Essentially, the program knew about the effectiveness of College Connections in terms of student enrollment and completion of the dual-enrollment courses, but not whether this experience contributed to students' success in postsecondary education.

History

Beginning in 2002, Rich Tulikangas, the LLL executive director, began fielding questions from their partners about what happened to the College Connections students after they graduated from high school. LLL's Advisory Board also began to ask similar questions. There was also, according to Tulikangas, "considerable interest from other school districts" to learn of the work of College Connections in increasing "opportunities for vulnerable populations" to attend and succeed in college.

Because of these inquiries, it became evident that LLL needed more than "a little anecdotal evidence" of college enrollment, retention, and attainment for their College Connections students. This was especially the case if LLL wanted to determine whether College Connections helped keep students in college and to provide evidence to other school districts in the state that the program could work for them as well.

With the AED invitation to apply for the PCAS initiative in April 2004 came the "recognition that there was a real interest in postsecondary access and success," which Tulikangas knew LLL needed to pursue in order to sustain College Connections. Although the partnership was "extremely excited about the opportunity provided by PCAS . . . to follow the students after they left high school," there remained "a little trepidation about capacity [to collect and analyze data]," Tulikangas said.

Building the Partnership

The implications of the PCAS initiative meant much more than collecting data on students at the postsecondary level. One immediate result of the grant was the recognition by Tulikangas and his LLL staff that a re-clarification of the roles of the college partners was necessary in order to collect data and address any academic issues faced by College Connections students once enrolled in college. This re-clarification was especially necessary with the University of Vermont. Prior to PCAS, LLL's partnership with the university was exclusively with its continuing education division around dual enrollment.

Now LLL faced the task of "getting beyond the boundaries of continuing education to the academic side of the university," according to Tulikangas. LLL and the University of Vermont's continuing education office brought together faculty and representatives from the admissions office, the Learning Co-Op (an on-campus academic support group), and the President's Office to discuss new and different ways of partnering. The result was the beginning of a new relationship with the University of Vermont, one that opened the door to the sharing of postsecondary student data for LLL.

"It was really easy for us," Tulikangas said. Not only was LLL able to track students at the University of Vermont with few challenges, but it also did not have to engage in an Institution Review Board (IRB) process with three of their six postsecondary partners (University of Vermont, Community College of Vermont, and Champlain College). An IRB process is usually required of any researcher or organization seeking to do research or gather data on any group of students enrolled at a given college or university. This review process can sometimes take months to complete at one college or university—much less six—before data is released to a researcher or an organization. The amount of time this has saved LLL has made it easier to track student progress while College Connections students transition from high school to college, a critical time for tracking student retention.

Getting their postsecondary partners to agree to share their data was relatively easy because LLL had already built an effective working relationship with them, one in which they agreed to a mechanism for sharing student information after high school graduation. The college partners agreed to a waiver process which was reviewed by each of them internally. "It is also the Vermont way to approach issues in a less bureaucratic and more personal way whenever possible, especially when trusting relationships have already been established," Tulikangas said.

Data Collection Challenges and Addressing Them

However, according to Tulikangas, while it has been "easy" for LLL to obtain confidentiality waivers from students and parents, there are still "data gaps for students who've gone on to schools outside of Vermont" And although there has been some use of the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to track College Connections students at out-of-state colleges, "it's still a work-in-progress" in LLL's overall data collection activities. Apparently a Facebook blog created by a college student intern at LLL this past year helped track down three out-of-state students, more than had been tracked with NSC data up to that point. This is because LLL works primarily through the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) to obtain follow-up data for participating students. VSAC recently purchased NSC membership so that LLL will now also have access to using this source to track down additional information on students.

Because of the evidence gathered to date of College Connections' positive impact on students, there have been no significant challenges in terms of program or partnership development. "Mostly there's been excitement about the good numbers we have on student enrollment and retention rates," Tulikangas said. The combination of "high engagement" in classes and "high rates of retention" among the College Connections students has meant support for LLL's efforts to take its work statewide. For Tulikangas, "everything's working."

The success of College Connections is in part due to a variety of student supports developed as part of the program. Most important is the role of the College Connections coordinator. The coordinator works with students through each step of the process, which includes the exploration of college courses; preparing students for the Accuplacer assessments and reviewing results; the completion of student registration with all college partners; counseling students related to appropriate course selections; follow-up with students and instructors; and advising students related to next steps and college applications. Most importantly the coordinator also conducts a daily homeroom for

students at Burlington High School, which enables close and ongoing follow-up with those students.

Student recruitment for College Connections takes place primarily through the College Connections coordinator and the school liaisons at each participating high school. They all work closely with the school guidance counselors, special educators, ESOL teachers and other school staff to identify the students who can most benefit from the program and meet the target criteria. Once the program has been established in a school, student-to-student recruitment becomes more important.

However, maybe not "everything's working" for LLL. Tulikangas indicated that LLL needed additional capacity within its staff to analyze data and create useful reports from a FileMaker Pro database for their partners, including participating high schools and colleges. Nevertheless, LLL staff have learned that they "*do* have the capacity to collect this data," thanks to their partners, and they have also "learned some great things about their partners." Of particular note is their willingness to take a leap with LLL to tackle college success issues by tracking students once they enroll in college and to report the data so as to illuminate College Connections' effectiveness in preparing students for college.

Accomplishments

- **More attention at state level,** with LLL working to bring more attention to its work and specifically to raise more funds for its College Connections (dual-enrollment) work, which led to the incorporation of dual enrollment as part of the state's Workforce Development bill (which passed in June 2007).
- **Expanded supported from Vermont Student Assistance Corporation**, which greatly enhanced its commitment to LLL in 2006 by integrating College Connections into its statewide GEAR UP (federal college access program) strategic plan. The commitment includes six years of substantial funding and expansion support for College Connections.

- **Greater engagement of University of Vermont,** with the institution bringing together representatives from the president's office, the admissions department, the college of arts and sciences, student support services, and continuing education to design a comprehensive approach to student support.
- **Data sharing agreements,** established in 2005, enabled LLL to track Burlington students and graduates with the Burlington School District, the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, Community College of Vermont, and the University of Vermont.
- **Numbers of students tracked** includes 47 College Connections students who enrolled in postsecondary institutions in 2005, along with 39 students from its 2006 cohort. Of the original 47 in 2005, all but three remained enrolled at their respective institutions after their first year (or 94 percent); the complete data for the 2006 cohort had not been analyzed at the time of this writing. But 32 of the 39 (82 percent) from the 2006 cohort were enrolled in college during fall 2006

Glossary

College Connections – Linking Learning to Life's dual enrollment program for its high school students

ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages; programs intended to assist immigrant students in their learning of English

Facebook – a social networking website that allows people to communicate with their friends and exchange information, including (in this case) alumni of a given high school or postsecondary institution

IRB – an Institutional Review Board, standard at any postsecondary institution; sole purpose is to ensure that all research conducted at a given institutions or about that institution and its students meets a set of ethical guidelines, including confidentiality, regardless of the researchers whom are conducting it

LLL – Linking Learning to Life, the lead organization for the PCAS work in Burlington and in the State of Vermont

NSC – National Student Clearinghouse, a nonprofit organization whose sole purpose is to provide (for a fee) school districts and postsecondary institutions verification of postsecondary and secondary student degree and diploma attainment, as well as enrollment status

VSAC – Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, the state's financial aid agency

Chattanooga Public Education Foundation

AED and Lumina Foundation asked this community to make a proposal to increase the number of high school students who enter and graduate from college. It's rare for a national foundation to come to a local foundation to request a proposal. It means they think this community is doing good work, and they want to help it succeed.
-Dan Challener, President, Chattanooga Public Education Foundation

Introduction

The Partnerships for College Access and Success (PCAS) initiative added to and greatly enhanced the ongoing K-12 reform work of Chattanooga Public Education Foundation (PEF) and its partners. Challener's statement above indicates a sense of trust in PEF's district and postsecondary partners and a long-term commitment to education reform. Combined with the work of the College Access Center (CAC), Chattanooga PEF has spent more than a decade building trust with its partners around sharing data to improve their work in reforming K-12 education and providing successful programming around postsecondary access and retention.

History

Chattanooga PEF's partnership story began with the merging of the 63 percent Black city system with the nearly all-white county school district in 1997—becoming Hamilton County Schools. The merger provided the spotlight necessary for K-12 reform in a county that was 60 percent white, 36 percent African American, and split between urban and suburban Chattanooga and semi-rural Hamilton County. The geographic, racial, and socioeconomic diversity of these students created the context in which school and other civic leaders saw reform as a must.

Of greater significance that this merger of districts was the school board's decision, the following year, to gradually move toward creating a single track system—rather than a general, vocational, and college preparatory one. It was a move that brought the issue of college access and success into sharp focus. A single-track system meant a more rigorous, postsecondary preparation curriculum for all Hamilton County's students. It also meant that all Hamilton County students would be able to complete the coursework required by most colleges to gain admission.

This decision was controversial, given that some segments of the community believed that a college preparatory curriculum for all students would entail reducing academic rigor. Despite this opposition, school and civic leadership concluded that a new approach to public education was necessary. "When that [a single-track system] was pushed here, there was a real donnybrook," recalled PEF's President Dan Challener. "The university and the business leaders turned the tide." As stated above, PEF had provided expertise, leadership, and financial support to Hamilton County Schools since 1988, and the merger of the two districts and the single-track curriculum greatly enhanced PEF's role as a partner in reform within the school district and the community.

In addition, a five-year grant from the Carnegie Corporation under its high school reform initiative, Schools for a New Society in 2001, not only enhanced PEF's capacity to fulfill its mission and expand its partnership with the school district and CAC, but also laid the groundwork for developing partnerships with Chattanooga State Technical Community College and the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga (UTC). Schools for a New Society focused on high school reform, including the use of data as a catalyst for specific programmatic reform efforts. PEF was now a central player in the community's high school reform efforts and in developing better connections between the school district and the postsecondary community.

However, this work required that PEF and its eventual partners improve their use of data, especially in terms of tracking both students'

high school graduation rates and the transition of Hamilton County students from high school to college. For CAC, one of the key PCAS partners, the issue of reliable data became crucial, since at that point information on student acceptances and postsecondary enrollment was self-reported. "The numbers were definitely inflated," Stacy Lightfoot, the current director pointed out. PEF had some experience collecting data on Hamilton County schools, including during a U.S. Department of Education-funded study on teacher quality. Yet looking at a much larger volume of data across the K-16 spectrum was something with which PEF had little experience.

The hiring of Debra Vaughan as director of evaluation and research increased PEF's capacity to process data and use it to improve PEF's education reform efforts with Hamilton County/Chattanooga schools. For the past five years, Vaughn has strived to "inform the work through data to tell the story" of the changes necessary to make school district reform, especially high school reform, a reality. Although Vaughan had access to school district data, including comprehensive exam and standardized test scores, student attendance records, and rates of student promotion from grades 9 to 10, she did not have access to student records at the local postsecondary institutions.

Both PEF and CAC, which began to place college advisors in most high schools in 2003-04, were struggling to collect postsecondary data, expand their work, and provide needed programs for Hamilton County Schools. AED's invitation to PEF to apply for the PCAS initiative was an opportunity that both organizations needed to move their work forward. The activities that resulted from the PCAS invitation helped forge a partnership between PEF and CAC, one which included reliance on data as a critical component of their work.

Collaborating on Data Collection

Both PEF and CAC needed more and improved data. As a key part of its work with PCAS, PEF needed data on school district graduates—their postsecondary enrollment, remediation, retention, transfer,

and graduation patterns—in order to work with PCAS partners in addressing any challenges evident in those patterns. CAC needed access to data to assess the key variables in the successful transition of Hamilton County students to college, including the need for college advising in the district's high schools. "The idea was, rather than having isolated programs, we should all be working together," said Susan Street, the director of CAC at that time. "We've operated in isolation for too long."

Indeed, PCAS became more than a partnership between PEF and CAC. Even before PCAS work started in earnest, PEF and CAC began to deepen their collaborations with Chattanooga State and University of Tennessee-Chattanooga. Although Street's initial attempts at collaboration with the postsecondary institutions were unsuccessful in 2004, with PEF's assistance, CAC and the school district eventually gained access to enrollment, retention, and remediation data from Chattanooga State and UTC. PEF worked with the two postsecondary institutions to create data-sharing agreements so that data would be available to the other partners. This process included meetings with the college presidents and the Hamilton County school superintendent.

In addition, PEF and CAC worked together to collect student graduation and college acceptance data through student and parent release forms. In collaboration with the school district, PEF and CAC also enrolled Hamilton County's high schools in the National Student Clearinghouse to track students as they enrolled in institutions outside the region or state or transferred elsewhere from Chattanooga State or UTC.

The target populations for PEF and CAC's work are economically disadvantaged students and students who are the first in their families to pursue college. The two organizations are working with all 17 Hamilton County high schools, but their primary target groups for PCAS are students in three high schools—one urban, one suburban, and one rural. "Although 70 percent of Hamilton County's high school graduates enter college, there are gaps by ethnicity, socioeconomic

status, gender, and geography, and many students do not complete college," Street said.

CAC work had revealed these gaps early in its PCAS work. However, before addressing them, CAC and PEF worked to develop a "college-going" map tracing where all graduating seniors of Hamilton County Schools' attended college in 2004 and 2005. It was a positive approach to using data to show that access was working well, but it was not enough for CAC or PEF. As Debra Vaughan pointed out, "Sending kids into college under-prepared doesn't do them a very good service."

Sharing Data: Developing a Common Language

Collecting data from Hamilton County Department of Education (HCDE) and the two postsecondary institutions to inform high school reform efforts required sensitivity to confidentiality and political issues. Debra Vaughan worked with Kirk Kelly, the district's director of testing and accountability, to collect and analyze the data. Once analyzed and reconfigured for their audience, data would be shared with PCAS leadership teams composed of senior staff from both HCDE and PEF. Data were also shared with high school principals at monthly principal meetings facilitated by PEF. Principals received disaggregated and district-level data for their high school, as well as data identifying the rankings of their high school among the 17 in the district without identifying any schools except their own. Often principals with a lower ranking would ask another principal with a high ranking in a particular area (e.g., reading or math scores) to identify him/herself and discuss the best practices that had helped the school achieve its ranking.

Communications between "these administrators changed because of data," according to Vaughan, as data provided "a common language that could be used as a tool in their efforts." Sharing and trust grew out of this use of data since the purpose of these monthly principal meetings was not to single out principals whose high schools were not performing well but to help everyone improve their practices.

Decreasing the Math Remediation Rate at Local Postsecondary Institutions

The work of PEF and CAC on postsecondary education shifted toward college remediation and retention in 2005. Hamilton County Schools, Chattanooga State, and UTC had tried many times to come together to look at the issue of college preparation and remediation. Given the potential for blame on this topic, it was understandable that the parties were reluctant to meet. But PEF had gained a reputation for neutrality with its ongoing Schools for a New Society work and its offices were seen as a safe space to discuss preparation, remediation, and retention—especially rates of student remediation in mathematics. More than 50 percent of Hamilton County's graduating seniors—many with excellent math grades—found themselves in remedial math courses in their first postsecondary semester.

However, although the school district was eager to discuss mathematics remediation rates and the two local postsecondary institutions allowed PEF and CAC access to their data, another partner, the Lyndhurst Foundation—a local foundation working, in part, to improve Chattanooga's schools—actually played the role of neutral facilitator. The head of the foundation, Jack Murrah, was instrumental in bringing all parties together—including the two college presidents, the school superintendent, high school principals, and math faculty from the district, Chattanooga State, and UTC. These meetings were "the first time the three institutional heads had sat down at a table together to consider common concerns," according to Vaughan. She added that because Murrah "listens to all sides," the stakeholders trusted him as facilitator, and this helped get "the various math faculties on the same page."

Despite the potential for conflict, it is clear—in part from the high-quality data that has been collected—that PEF, CAC, and their partners are committed to working through their differences to create long-term reforms across the K-12 and postsecondary continuum. According to CAC director, Stacy Lightfoot, and to PEF's Debra Vaughan, "It's a matter of just having the right people on board," and using data "in the right ways."

Accomplishments

- **Shared responsibility among partners for data sharing and analysis**: PEF, CAC, HCDE, Chattanooga State, and UTC all play a role in collecting, sharing, analyzing, and using data to improve the preparation of students for college and increasing student retention rates in college.
- **Working across systems to improve student outcomes, particularly around math remediation:** Math faculty from the school district and the two postsecondary institutions, as well as the school superintendent, college chancellor, and university president have met in gatherings facilitated by PEF and Jack Murrah of the Lyndhurst Foundation to bridge the math gap between sixth grade and the second year of college for their students. In addition, a summer conference on numeracy has been proposed to bring the issues discussed within the partner ship to a wider audience.
- **College acceptance rates**: During the 2004-05 and 2005-06 school years, 66 percent of the 613 high school seniors that the Chattanooga partnership tracked for its PCAS work applied to college. Of this 66 percent (404 students) who applied to either a two or four-year institution in those years, 100 percent were accepted.
- **Comparative college acceptance rates**: As stated in the above bullet, the college acceptance rate for PCAS seniors from 2004 to 2006 was 66 percent. This is the same as the college acceptance rate in the U.S. overall and higher than the rate for African American graduating seniors in 2004 in the U.S. as a whole—62 percent.
- **Trend data:** From 2004 to 2006, the percentage of all HCDE graduates enrolled in college was 69.5 percent, 68.7 percent, and 70 percent respectively (1,313, 1,324 and 1,499 respectively for those three years. Although the percentage has been relatively constant, the numbers of students enrolled in college has increased dramatically—by 14.2 percent since 2004—because the total number of HCDE graduates has increased.

Glossary

CAC – The College Access Center, the main partner of PEF involved with facilitating the PCAS work in Chattanooga

HCDE – Hamilton County Department of Education, the school district partner of PEF

PEF – The Public Education Foundation, the lead organization for the PCAS work in Chattanooga

Single-track – sorting or grouping of students by intellectual capabilities into one category (regardless of testing or academic performance), in this case, a college-preparatory group or track

Tracking – 1. the sorting or grouping of students into one or more categories based on their intellectual capabilities (based on testing or past academic performance); 2. researchers or evaluators following a group of students, a project, or an experiment over a period of time in order to understand the outcomes that a group of students experience, or occur as a result of a given project or an experiment
Trend data – data starts from a baseline of similar facts that can be tracked over a given period of time, usually yielding some information on changes in outcomes (or not) in the time period examined

UTC – The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, the four-year college partner of PEF

San Antonio Education Partnership

A great deal of learning has occurred through the Partnerships for College Access and Success work, which has underscored the value of personal relationships and their role in establishing an operational base for systemic changes. -Gilberto Ramón, Executive Director, San Antonio Education Partnership

Introduction

Over the past four years, Partnerships for College Access and Success (PCAS) has helped the San Antonio Education Partnership shift its focus from providing scholarships to meritorious, underrepresented students to include improving college retention and degree attainment—rather than college access alone—as a critical component of its mission. According to Gilberto Ramón, the executive director, this has fostered a "high level of activity and dedication to college access and success," as well as the Partnership's assumption of "a greater responsibility in linking partners and their resources."

For Ramón and the San Antonio Education Partnership, PCAS came at a time of organizational transition, as increasingly Board members and the public wanted to understand what happened to the Partnership's scholarship students once they enrolled in college. When the invitation to become a PCAS grantee came to Ramón, who had been executive director of the Partnership since 1996, he was in consultation with his board of directors about creating a new strategic plan. This plan would include working with the city's colleges and universities on remediation and retention issues because it was clear to Ramón and other Partnership members that helping students get into college was hardly enough—data showed that most of their college-going students were unable to take credit-bearing courses, and the majority of those placed in remedial courses did not complete their first year. Addressing these issues through improving students' academic preparation at the secondary level and supporting students at the college level, including using student data to inform planning and program development, has been the core purpose of the San Antonio Education Partnership from 2004 to 2007.

History

The San Antonio Education Partnership has worked with low-income, predominantly Latino, students in the majority of the 19 independent schools districts in the region since 1988. Its purpose is to provide scholarships and other assistance to students who otherwise could not attend college. From the start, the Partnership has asked students to sign contracts requiring them to maintain a minimum of a B average and a 95 percent attendance rate while in high school to qualify for a $1,000-a-year scholarship for college. Because of the very nature of this work—raising money for scholarships from corporate sponsors, private philanthropy, and other sources— the need for data was "inherent from the beginning [of the Partnership]," according to Ramón.

The Partnership's launch began with the tenure of San Antonio mayor Dr. Henry Cisneros, who convened a diverse group that became the San Antonio Education Partnership. The group included business leaders (represented by the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce), two community organizations with great credibility in the San Antonio community (Communities Organized for Public Services and Metro Alliance), school superintendents; a college president; and the City of San Antonio. From the beginning the major issue the Partnership sought to address was low student achievement and high school graduation rates in the region's 19 independent school districts. The Partnership was concerned about the impact these low rates had on hiring practices of the area's employers, who increasingly needed a highly skilled workforce, and the community as a whole, with so few of its students graduating high school, much less going on to college. Dr. Cisneros' relationships with various sectors of the San Antonio community, combined with his popularity, enabled the San Antonio Education Partnership to raise money whenever needed in its first years of existence.

With the loss of Dr. Cisneros to the Clinton Administration in 1993 and with concerns about the job options aspect of the program, the Partnership's corporate sponsors exhibited a "lot of distrust," Ramón explained, in that they did not believe that the process included their workforce concerns, nor did they believe "in the numbers on college access." Ramón's first task as the new executive director of the Partnership in 1996 was to regain the trust of the Partnership's corporate sponsors before the end of their five-year commitments. According to Ramón, "I overcame the distrust of the Partnership's Board [which had many corporate sponsors on it] and overcame their distrust of the numbers" by "overloading them with information [about the students]." Within two years, the number of corporate sponsors committed to providing scholarship funds had increased beyond the original 15 to 30.

This dramatic increase in corporate support was accomplished, at least in part, by more sophisticated collection and reporting of data, both to inform the Partnership's work and to communicate its impact to the corporate sponsors. Previously, the Partnership's in-school advisors had gathered data on the number of Partnership scholarships awarded (and indirectly, the number of San Antonio-area students with B averages and 95 percent attendance rates) and the number of students accepted to college based on student transcripts and contracts as well as acceptance lists from local colleges. Data collection grew to include lists of actual enrollment from local colleges, as well as the number of courses completed by Partnership scholarship students and their college GPA.

In effect, the increased questions around process, effectiveness, and outcomes from corporate sponsors spurred the San Antonio Education Partnership to gather data from the schools and school districts on student achievement and program effectiveness. The City of San Antonio assisted by increasing its contributions to the Partnership: a grant of $195,000 from the city's Job Training Partnership Act federal grant in 1994 increased to $450,000 from the city's general fund by 1999. In addition, because the city wanted more follow-up with the area's students after their high school graduation, it paid for the Partnership to hire a retention and follow-up staff person in 1999. With

this support, within three years of his hire, Ramón and the Partnership had made its data collection and database more sophisticated and its evidence of effectiveness more compelling. In fact, according to Ramón, the Partnership had "shifted" the trust of its sponsors from one of commitment to Dr. Cisneros' original vision of the Partnership to one of "trusting the organization."

Yet even with more advanced technology, a dedicated staff person to track student outcomes after high school, and a huge city and corporate commitment, new issues had emerged by 2003. "We could collect almost everything we wanted from the schools, but we didn't have the capacity to do everything we could with it," Ramón stated. Further, the major challenges emerging from the data was the high rates of students needing remediation in college and low rates of student retention and graduation. In reviewing its data on its recent high school graduates who were eligible for the scholarship fund, the San Antonio Education Partnership discovered that only about 20 percent of the students who attended a two-year institution received an AA degree of certificate or transferred to a four-year college or university. However, the Partnership's Board was mainly concerned with rates of student high school graduation and college enrollment rather than increasing student attainment of a degree or certificate. As Ramón put it, "there was a philosophical difference between him and the Board around college success," with the "leadership still focused on college access."

Data Collection and Its Challenges

With the invitation from PCAS for the San Antonio Education Partnership to apply for a planning grant in April 2004 came the opportunity for Ramón to accelerate his negotiations with his Board on the college success issue—and in effect to change the Partnership's focus from college acceptance to college retention, transfer, and graduation. After a commitment to work on all aspects of college success was solidified in the Partnership's new strategic plan and Eyra Perez was hired to manage the PCAS work, the next step was to obtain data from the local colleges on student rates of remediation, retention, and

graduation. In doing so, the Partnership faced two major challenges: issues around the confidentially of student data and "avoiding the blame game'—as discussed briefly below.

Confidentiality Challenges

At first, student confidentiality issues kept college doors closed to the Partnership. Ramón explained: "Part of the challenge [with colleges and universities] has been that only one college president has been on the Board since the start of the Partnership." Ramón and his staff took a look at their student and parent data release forms at the high school level and realized that these would not be sufficient for the local colleges. They also looked at forms from other organizations, including ones developed by Chattanooga Public Education Foundation, a fellow PCAS grantee. Eventually the Partnership Board helped form a committee consisting of a college president, a school superintendent, and representatives from the two community groups to iron out the legal issues as the Partnership designed a new student data release form for the postsecondary level. It took nearly a year to vet and review the new release form so that the Partnership could use it to collect data at all area colleges and universities. Ramón maintained that he "never envisioned that most of Eyra's time her first year" would be spent "getting the data form together!"

Avoiding the Blame Game

Ramón stressed the importance of open communication with the partners about the implications and use of data. Both he and Perez often talk with school district superintendents, college presidents, and other stakeholders in small groups or one-on-one before the larger Partnership and Board meetings to ensure that all parties understand the data to be discussed at the meeting. Both see these discussions as vital to avoiding the "blame game. "When I haven't done that . . . that's when we get into the blame game," Ramón explained, citing one example of college remediation data being analyzed at the last minute before a Partnership committee meeting, with no time for prior discus-

sion with the key school district and college stakeholders. As a result a disagreement arose at the meeting over who was to blame for high remediation numbers at one particular college. Although Ramón resolved the disagreement and the meeting on remediation moved forward, he was reminded of a valuable lesson:

Partners can be a great resource once they understand the numbers and what they mean for our work, but you need to be strategic . . . about getting buy-in, especially about "how the data can be used."

In summary, it is clear that keeping all partners informed has been well worth the effort and has ensured that the San Antonio Education Partnership is a true "partnership"—with all partners dedicated to a unified agenda and assuming responsibility for carrying out that agenda.

Accomplishments

- **Expansion of San Antonio Education Partnership** to include local two-year and four-year colleges and universities.
- **Revision and development of a student/parental release form** for the release of data to the Partnership, which passed legal muster with its partnering colleges and universities and independent school districts.
- **Expansion, in 1996, of the annual City of San Antonio appropriation** to the San Antonio Education Partnership to $1.5 million.
- **Strengthening of transfer agreements** between two- and four-year colleges and universities partnering with San Antonio Education Partnership.
- **College acceptance rates:** During the 2004-05 and 2005-06 school years, 90.2 percent of the 3,543 high school seniors who a) met the San Antonio Education Partnership's scholarship eligibility requirement and b) applied to college were accepted.
- **Comparative college acceptance rates**: Of the 2,327 high school seniors in 2004-05 who met the San Antonio Education Partnership's scholarship eligibility requirement, 71 percent had enrolled in a two- or four-year institution by fall 2005

(compared with 66 percent in the US overall and 61 percent of Latinos nationally in 2004).

Glossary

Credit-bearing courses – courses that count toward a certificate, major or degree at a given postsecondary institution

Data sharing agreements – formal arrangements between two parties (in this case, SAEP and its postsecondary partners) to share confidential data regarding a particular set of subjects, e.g., students, teachers, patients, or other kinds of clients

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) – passed by Congress in 1982 to provide training and employment services to people facing barriers to employment, particularly young adults

Partnership, the – shorthand for the San Antonio Education Partnership

Remediation – the process in which students enroll in non-credit college courses in order to meet the basic requirements of preparation for credit-bearing college courses, usually as a result of a college entrance exam in Math or English

Transfer agreements – formal arrangements between different postsecondary institutions (commonly between 2- and 4 year-institutions) to accept a student based on previous coursework, including the majority of credits earned at the first institution

Port Jobs and Airport University

It's always been about figuring out what the needs were in the most poignant areas for workers and employers, by working through issues with all of the partners and linking our services. -Susan Crane, Executive Director, Port Jobs

Introduction

Much of the work of Port Jobs before 9/11 focused on matching adult jobseekers at the Seattle-Tacoma (Sea-Tac) International Airport with employers' living-wage job opportunities. But with 9/11 came an increased need to provide services to adult workers for whom English was not a first language and who were not yet U.S. citizens because the majority of private security screeners at Sea-Tac Airport were immigrants of limited English proficiency. This meant forming new relationships with Port Jobs's partners and finding new ways of thinking, particularly in connecting the Port Jobs workforce development projects with postsecondary access and training. This new focus on partnership development and linking postsecondary training to workforce also meant continuing Port Jobs's commitment to collecting and using data to support this work.

History of Port Jobs

Port Jobs has always been data-driven in its mission to address the workforce needs of the Port-related employers, and the living-wage needs of clients looking for steady employment. The Port Jobs executive director, Susan Crane, emphasized the need for data to support the organization's work of helping employers with living-wage jobs and skilled workers find one another in the Port-related economy. Port Jobs gathers its economic data through research on wage scales and employment pathways, as well as through focus groups and interviews with clients and employers.

Airport University is the natural progression of the Port Jobs workforce development mission. According to Crane, "Applied research that serves both employers and job seekers . . . this is what Port Jobs was designed to do in the first place. It's always been about figuring out what the needs were in the most poignant areas." When Airport Jobs opened at Sea-Tac International Airport in 2000, Port Jobs created a new database to track clients and services provided, as well as the types of jobs in which clients were placed. Although its workforce development mission had not changed, Port Jobs's approach to addressing its mission expanded to include postsecondary training for airport workers through a partnership with South Seattle Community College (SSCC).

This partnership intensified in the months after the airport security crisis created by 9/11 at airports throughout the US. The newly created Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) requirements that workers have US citizenship and proficiency in English meant that many risked losing their jobs by the end of 2002. For Sea-Tac Airport, this meant that more than 1,000 security workers could face termination in a matter of a few months.

For Crane, Port Jobs and SSCC, the TSA/English language proficiency requirement gave their work "a social justice purpose," as they discovered they had "shared values" around helping these workers keep their jobs. In a matter of weeks, Port Jobs and SSCC had helped 650 security screeners in citizenship preparation and ELL classes, while also preparing them for the TSA security exam. In 2003, Port Jobs and its local partners (including SSCC and the King County Dislocated Worker Program) received the Governor's Award for Workforce Best Practices as a result of these efforts. Crane stated:

We are proud that this collaboration helped 400 people—50 percent of the incumbent screeners assessed by TSA and nearly two-thirds of the screeners Port Jobs and their partners worked with—to retain their jobs. That is a significant figure, especially in light of the 10 to 15 percent retention rate in similar airports nationwide. .This award belongs to everyone who was apart of this effort.

This first foray into postsecondary adult education gave Port Jobs and SSCC the opportunity to think about "looking for the next thing to do," according to Heather Worthley, research and program developer at Port Jobs.

History of Airport University

Airport University was born of the idea to offer postsecondary training opportunities to Sea-Tac Airport's low-income and immigrant workforce, expanding the Port Jobs partnership with SSCC in the process. Given the realities of low-wage service-industry work and small employers at the airport, it made sense to all parties involved to provide the building blocks for pathways to living-wage work at Sea-Tac. The AED invitation to apply for the Partnerships for College Access and Success (PCAS) initiative accelerated the process to develop Airport University.

Staff at Port Jobs began to develop the concept of providing modules at Airport University in 2004, just as Port Jobs had become a PCAS grantee. A module is a two-week class session that concentrates on basic skill development in areas that would help workers earn a promotion or an increase in hourly wages. In addition to an ELL and security exam preparation module, Port Jobs and SSCC developed full quarter-length courses in basic computer, business, and leadership/supervision skills. Students who complete these courses can earn college credit. Scholarships are also available to enable students to take on-campus courses offered by SSCC, Highline Community College, and other local colleges. The partners hope to expand Airport University to include more on-site, credit-bearing classes that could be applied toward a certificate or a degree.

Building the Airport University Partnership through Data Sharing

Over the past two years, Port Jobs and SSCC have served more than 100 students through Airport University. The Airport Jobs database has been expanded to also serve as the university's database, providing a "seamless system," although, Crane said, "the database was not designed with Airport University in mind." SSCC has been an active partner in collecting and entering data into the combined database by providing Port Jobs with a staff person on site at Sea-Tac to enter data on Airport University students. Port Jobs also works with a consultant who helps collect and analyze data.

"It's a marriage," Crane chuckled in reference to the partnership with SSCC. Although Port Jobs and the workforce development staff at SSCC may have shared values, "we have to work it all through," Crane said, referring to the details of how to do their collective work with students.

In addition to tracking data on enrollment and course completion, Port Jobs interviewed 93 Airport University students to learn more about their needs, challenges, and postsecondary aspirations for themselves and their children, and whether Airport University was meeting their needs. The results show that most Airport University students are interested in continuing their education and obtaining a two- or four-year postsecondary degree, even though many are not certain how to prepare for this process. Port Jobs' survey also notes that about a third of these students aspire to work in fields unrelated to their work at Sea-Tac Airport. Given Port Jobs' history and progression, this data should lead to Airport University serving as an important example of using workforce development principles to create a gateway for immigrant adult workers to a postsecondary certificate and degree program—an example that others working in workforce development and adult education should emulate.

Accomplishments

- **A strong partnership** maintained by Port Jobs and South Seattle Community College in their work with Airport University.
- **Five credit-bearing college classes** offered at Airport University, including Leadership for Leads, Beginning Computers, and a bridge course (keyboarding) before students can take Beginning Computers.

- Through in-depth interviews, the partnership has learned that airport employers have been very flexible in allowing employees to make shift changes in order to attend college classes.
- **$100,000 earmarked** for Airport University in the 2008 Labor, Health, Human Services and Education Appropriations by U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-Washington).
- **Numbers served.** Port Jobs's Airport University has served over130 students, with a class completion rate of close to 80 percent. In addition, 76 scholarships have been distributed to Airport University students who have gone on to take additional college classes outside the airport.

Glossary

Airport University – created by Port Jobs in 2004 to provide postsecondary education opportunities to workers at Sea-Tac Airport

ELL – English language learners, or individuals lacking proficiency in English

Port Jobs – otherwise known as the Office of Port Jobs, includes a variety of projects around workforce development and—in the case of Airport University—connecting workforce development to postsecondary access and success opportunities

Sea-Tac Airport – Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, the physical location of Port Jobs and Airport University

SSCC – South Seattle Community College, a major partner of Port Jobs

III.2. Tools to Address Data Collection and Capacity Issues

Tools for addressing some data capacity issues with PCAS grantees stemmed from AED work undertaken in collaboration with JBL Associates in spring 2005. We asked the eight grantees to develop a one-page document describing their data capacities and needs in terms of increasing their capacity to collect and analyze data (including hardware and software needs). AED provided this information to JBL Associates, which then followed up with one-hour telephone surveys of all grantees to gather more detailed information about their data capacities and needs.

2a. JBL Associate's Executive Summary of Findings

The Academy for Educational Development (AED) asked JBL Associates (JBLA) to review and assess database plans and progress of each of the eight individual partnerships participating in Lumina's Partnerships for College Access and Success (PCAS) project in March and April 2005.

At this point, AED and OMG Center for Collaborative Learning, the third-party evaluator for PCAS, had developed seven cross-site indicators: three for college access, and four for success (see below).

Our goal with this study was to find out how much progress each site has made towards tracking indicators, whether or not their database plans include steps to track indicators, and what resources would be required. If sites notified us of their inability to track cross-site indicators, we investigated whether this was due to the nature of their partnerships and participating students, and if so, whether they have considered the development and tracking of alternative, site-specific indicators.

In addition to determining each site's capacity for tracking cross-site, or site-specific, indicators, we assessed the resources required to meet database needs in terms of software/hardware capacity, legal/confidentiality issues, data collection and database linking.

JBLA began by reviewing background material provided by AED both from individual partnership sites and from OMG's previous analyses of sites' data progress. Whenever possible, we briefly touched base with each site's Technical Advisor (TA) at AED. TA's provided us with an initial impression of the site's progress and/or barriers to completion. We then scheduled conversations with site directors, who in some cases included their database analysts on the call to help provide us with technical details.

It should be noted that most partnership sites have not yet implemented their programs, nor have they begun to collect data. Therefore, it was sometimes difficult for project directors to provide concrete assessments of their needs, as many were thinking of databases in more abstract terms and having trouble conceptualizing technical or

Cross-Site Indicators (PCAS & OMG)						
Access			Success			
Percent of students completing FAFSA	Percent of students applying to college	Percent of students gaining college acceptance	Articulated plan to integrate college success programming into implementation activities	Percent of students enrolling in 2 and 4 year college/certificate program	Percent returned for the *second term* of the certificate program/ 2- and 4-year college	Percent of students completing their first year

legal issues that may or may not arise. Resources were often expressed in terms of staffing needs, or the need for an outside technical consultant, and cost estimates were not always available.

One common complaint we heard from sites is that they are unaware of how to track students once they matriculate from the high school to colleges outside their region or state. In most cases, sites have developed partnerships with local schools and statewide systems to exchange data at no cost. However, it may be useful to provide sites with information on accessing data from the National Student Clearinghouse, if such funding is available, and if tracking beyond the state system is desirable.

Summaries of our conversations with each site and analyses of their data-related needs follow. Whenever possible, we have listed both their immediate needs to implement tracking of partnership participants, as well as business implications and long-term data collection goals.

2b. Sample Responses

Examples of responses from the grantees in New York City and San Antonio to AED's request for information on grantees' data capacities and needs—as well as the JBL Associates' telephone survey follow-up—are below. The main thing to note is that both samples include a look at the kinds of data that must be collected, the staffing and time required to collect and analyze it, the need for data sharing agreements and confidentiality waivers to collect data, and the hardware and software needed to save and "crunch" it.

New York City Partnership for College Access and Success

Data Capacity and Needs

We are pleased to provide a brief overview of our thoughts on data collection for the New York City Partnership Project. It is important that we design our data collection around program features that will have an impact on students and on elements of the Local Network (LN) that promote college access and support. It will also be important

to look at the quality of the partnership quality between CUNY and the CBO and how current research on best practices will inform the project and visa versa. This kind of data collection will require additional resources.

Data Capacity

1. **Youth Development Institute**
   Through YDI's Young Adult Capacity Initiative, we are currently working on collecting data that includes the following on activity of 13 community-based organizations working with young adults: enrollment, program participation, goals of participants regarding education, employment, community service, and participant educational and employment outcomes.

2. **CUNY**
   CUNY's Student Information Management System includes personal identifying information, initial placement test scores, course registrations, grades, GPAs, credit accumulation, retention from one semester to the next, and graduation.

3. **CBOs (Several examples)**
   Grade-level or status (out-of-school), ethnicity, gender, colleges that participant applies to, colleges that accept participant, GPA, SAT score, programs and organizations referred to, programs that referred participant to CBO, program events and counseling sessions attended, financial aid received, family income and eligibility for financial aid, first-generation college-bound, first generation in USA, college attended, retention in college, services provided post-admission to college, and student income post-admission to college

   Integration of internal program expectations and external requirements that allow for more effective measurement of outcomes. Student demographic information, alumni contact information and post graduate achievements, student attendance, leadership skills, NYS Regents scores, credits earned for each cycle

Several CBOs reported using tracking systems for the following funding streams: U.S. Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, U.S. Department of Education 21st Century Community Learning Centers, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, Beacons and OPTIONS programs.

Data Needs

We look to develop a data collection plan and process with the assistance of AED that is feasible given project resources

- Ability to capture current services and new services for college access and success.
- Ability to capture student demographics, impact of services on the students and impact while in college
- Ability to track incremental progress of goals and student outcomes at certain point in time
- A tool that takes advantage of the data collection systems of the CUNY College and of the community based organization that are partners in the Local Network
- A system with query fields related to the progress of the Local Network (LN) , for example, structure of the LN, roles and responsibilities, youth participation, and monitoring of goals.
- Assessment tool for tracking and learning about current and emerging promising practices/relationship to research about good practice of the Promising Practices Partnership; and integration of promising practices in their own organizations, and how the partners will work together.
- Tool to assess the impact of the work of the LN on the CUNY college

San Antonio Education Partnership Data Collection Capacity and Needs

Current Data Collection and Management Capacity:

The Client Services Information System (CSIS) was developed in 1999 specifically for the San Antonio Education Partnership. Its purpose is to facilitate the automated data processing capabilities for reconciling and manipulating student data essential to documenting program success. The system is year-2000 compliant and is a PC-based application written primarily in Visual Basic 6. The database backend consists of Access 2000 database, with the reporting environment developed in Seagate Crystal Reports 8.

The CSIS is a comprehensive information system that provides for the recording of demographic and academic client information for high school and Education Partnership recipients attending college. It allows for the tracking of student clients for the entire time they remain in the San Antonio Education Partnership program and for the documentation of academic benchmarks attained by clients. The system has been expanded to include basic employment and college graduation information. The system is able to generate various types of reports based on factors, such as client characteristics, college enrollment, scholarship dollars expended, and college graduation data.

Data Collection Needs

Three specific areas of need are identifiable at this point. These are:

- Additional programming financial support to develop and install more sophisticated report formats to generate reports related to outcomes. Currently, additional key report formats are needed to present information in new, previously unused ways.
- Additional programming financial support is also needed to develop and install data sharing links between field staff and the central office. Currently, additional staff in each of the 15

high schools collects data and transfers that data via paper format to the central office for inputting. The vision is to have a program that will allow staff to send their data electronically to the central office where it will be "integrated" in the central database. This additional linking capacity may also apply to college/university database system.

- Data Analyst position. Funding is required to add a data analyst position to coordinate data collection and provide analysis for more effective use of collected data. No such position currently exists in the organization, and consequently the full use of data currently collected is not maximized.

2c. PCAS Data Capacity Summary and Budget

JBLA completed a data capacity study of the eight partnerships involved with the PCAS project funded by the Lumina Foundation. We enjoyed speaking with each of the partnerships' project directors and found their very diverse plans to be quite interesting.

While the majority of the directors had clearly articulated, detailed plans about their goals and wishes for their PCAS project, JBLA noted a wide range of understanding regarding exactly how they would actually complete each task to reach their goals: some partnerships are well underway in jumping the hurdles they have encountered, while others have not yet realized some of the hurdles they will be facing. Further, some of the partnerships were able to describe exactly what additional resources they need, while others were not necessarily as clear. One thing was unanimous, however: they all stated that they could use additional resources of one type or another.

The most frequently stated common problem across the partnerships was the difficulty they are experiencing collecting or linking the appropriate data needed for the project. There are many cases where the data are available, but perhaps not in a proper, easy-to-use form, or it can't be linked easily with data from another sources. Many of the partnerships are interested in designing and implementing data systems at some level within the partnership to facilitate data collec-

tion and reporting. The next largest problem we heard about is time: many of the partnerships felt they benefit from additional resources to help pay for additional staff dedicated to the PCAS project.

On the other hand, there were infrequent reports of the lack of data, the lack of plan, or the inability to work with the data once it is gathered.

The partnerships all have diverse plans, data elements and focus groups. Therefore, we feel it is important to note that it is not statistically appropriate to combine the partnerships' data into one large, project-wide database.

In this report, we detail the data capacity and identify the needs of each of the partnerships. JBLA has also attempted to assign a monetary figure to the partnerships' needs. This was not always possible as, many times, the scope of the specific needs was unclear. In these instances, JBLA offers that the partnership needs to undertake more research in order to determine the scope of the need.

Below is a *Sample Budget Table* identifying the main areas in which the grantees demonstrated a need to increase or enhance their data collection capacity. We asked each grantee to provide an estimate of how much it would cost per year to build up their data capacity so that they could incorporate the data piece in their work, and prorated the amount for a 17-month period (covering the last 17 months of the initial PCAS implementation period). We submitted these facts and figures to Lumina Foundation for Education, which then provided each grantee a supplemental grant award in October 2005.

Data Collection Needs and Budget	
Needs	*Projected Costs*
Staffing (part-time and full-time)	
Hardware (computer for new staff person and fees)	
Software (systems and programming adaptation)	
Data Sharing Fees (including National Student Clearinghouse fees)	
Total by Year	
Grand Total	

III.3. Three Approaches to Addressing Confidentiality

The PCAS grantee in San Antonio discovered at an early stage in the data collection process that its confidentiality release forms were inadequate to the task of passing legal scrutiny from a postsecondary institution perspective. Adapting a confidentiality agreement provided by the Chattanooga grantee and then vetting it with its partners gradually enabled the grantee to develop the forms below.

The Chattanooga grantee's student authorization and educational release form is below. Although they have these forms for use by students and parents, they have not been used because of the grantee's existing relationship and contract with the Hamilton County Department of Education (HCDE), which has authorized the grantee to obtain students' information from the district for reporting purposes.

New York City grantee's approach was to seek approval from New York City Technical College's Institutional Review Board to conduct research on students attending the college—the students whom the grantee and its partnership intended to track while in college.

Student Authorization & Educational Release Form

IMPORTANT: This form is needed to better assist you when you are in college. Please complete and sign below. If you have any questions, please call Evra Perez at 220-9900 ext 235.

High School:		Class of:
Social Security #:		Date of Birth:
First Name:	Middle Initial:	Last Name:
Home Address:		City:	Zip Code:
Home Phone #:	Cell #:	Email Address:	Zip Code:
2nd Address Where You Can Be Contacted:	City:	Zip Code:	Phone #:
College/University You Plan To Attend Upon Graduation from High School OR You Are Currently Attending:		College Major (if undecided, please leave blank):
Do you plan to transfer to another University? Yes No	If yes, please provide name of university and approximate date of transfer:

I authorize the San Antonio Education Partnership to have access to my academic and enrollment information at any college/university I attend in an effort to assist in successful completion of my undergraduate education. Specifically, the San Antonio Education Partnership may have access to: semester and cumulative grades, courses enrolled/completed, major, degree plans, degree(s) earned, and graduation/transfer date(s). I also authorize the San Antonio Education Partnership to share my educational record with institutions of higher education to facilitate college enrollment and completion.

This authorization is valid for a maximum of five years after high school graduation or until graduation from college. I, or my parent if I am under the age of 18, may request from the San Antonio Education Partnership a copy of my educational records disclosed.

I give my permission to the San Antonio Education Partnership to amend this form in the event I transfer from the college initially noted when originally signed. I also authorize the San Antonio Education Partnership to have access to degree earned information. I understand that the information collected will be used to compile program reports and will be shared with school districts and local colleges/universities to document program effectiveness.

Student Signature:	Date:
Parent Signature:	Date:

Parent/Guardian Signature Required If Student Is Under The Age of 18 At The Time Form Is Completed:

Please return this top copy to:
San Antonio Education Partnership, 206 San Pedro Ave., Suite 200, San Antonio, Texas, 78205

04/2007

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CHATTANOOGA STUDENT AUTHORIZATION & EDUCATIONAL RELEASE FORM

High School: _____

Year of Graduation: _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT:

Student Name (Please Print):_____   Date of Birth:_____

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print): _____

Parent/Guardian Home Address: _____

Home Telephone #: _____   Cell Phone #:_____

Parent Work #:_____   Email address: _____

College/University you plan to attend:_____

I authorize Hamilton County Department of Education, or agencies conducting research for or on behalf of Hamilton County Department of Education, to have access to my school records after I graduate. Further, I authorize Hamilton County Department of Education, or agencies conducting research for or on behalf of Hamilton County Department of Education, to have access to my academic, financial, and enrollment records and work with any college/university I attend in the effort to assist in successful completion of my undergraduate education. I give my permission to the Hamilton County Department of Education to amend this form in the event I transfer from the college initially noted when originally signed.

This authorization is valid for a maximum of six years after high school graduation or upon graduation from college, whichever comes first.

Student Signature: _____   Date: _____

PARENT SIGNATURE REQUIRED IF STUDENT IS UNDER THE AGE OF 18:

Parent Signature: _____   Date: _____

New York City Partnership for College Access and Success

Youth Development Institute/Fund for the City of New York

Submitted to

New York City Technical College

Institutional Review Board

The New York City Partnership for College Access and Success, funded by the Lumina Foundation for Education through the Academy for Educational Development, is sponsoring a pilot project designed to increase access and retention in postsecondary education for youth, 16 to 24 years of age, who have returned to school or a community program for a high school diploma or GED, and seek to go to college. The Youth Development Institute of the Fund for the City of New York is the managing partner of this initiative.

New York City Technical College has agreed to be a partner with Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation to support disconnected youth through the college admissions process and participation in postsecondary education.

Data to be collected from New York City Technical College are the following:

➢ Number of students in the project registered for classes per semester

➢ Students' grades and grade point average

➢ Number of credits earned by each student

➢ The type of financial aid packages students received

➢ Results of placement exams

➢ Remedial classes taken by the students and outcomes

➢ Percent of students enrolled in a 2 and 4 year college or certificate program

➢ Percent returned for the second term of a certificate program or 2 /4 year college program

➢ Percent of students completing their first year of a 2/4 year or certificate program

Data that will be collected from New York City Technical College will be used to inform the partnership's system of support for students to be successful in college and identify additional strategies for working with disconnected youth who desire to attend college and be successful in postsecondary education.

The partnership will ensure confidentiality by not using individual student names and assigning a number to each student for purposes of identification. Only aggregate information will be utilized in reports to the partnership.

III.4. Using National Student Clearinghouse Data

The National Student Clearinghouse (http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/default.asp) is a nonprofit organization whose sole purpose is to verify postsecondary and secondary student degrees, diplomas, and enrollment. Tracking progress by surveying students after high school—particularly students who have moved away to attend a postsecondary institution—has been shown to be an unreliable source of data. The National Student Clearinghouse addresses the need for reliable data in this area. The clearinghouse typically works with colleges, universities, high schools, and high school districts to reduce some administrative burden of providing educational record verification. At the same time, the clearinghouse is charged with maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of records in their care in complying with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

For the purposes of the PCAS initiative and our grantees, the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data filled a serious gap in their data collection work. Because the PCAS grantees work at the community level, most students to be tracked would likely be attending local colleges and universities—making data collection relatively easy. However, for students who have left the local area for college, our grantees worked with their target high schools and school districts and with NSC to track high school graduates through student social security numbers, date of birth, or student ID numbers. Typically, grantees were able to cover the costs of collecting NSC for their target high schools with PCAS funding.

Sample materials below from the Chattanooga grantee were used by some PCAS partnerships in working with principals from the target high schools. Materials include a chart used at monthly meetings with high school principals at Hamilton County Department of Education to illustrate where the school ranked compared with other high schools while not revealing scho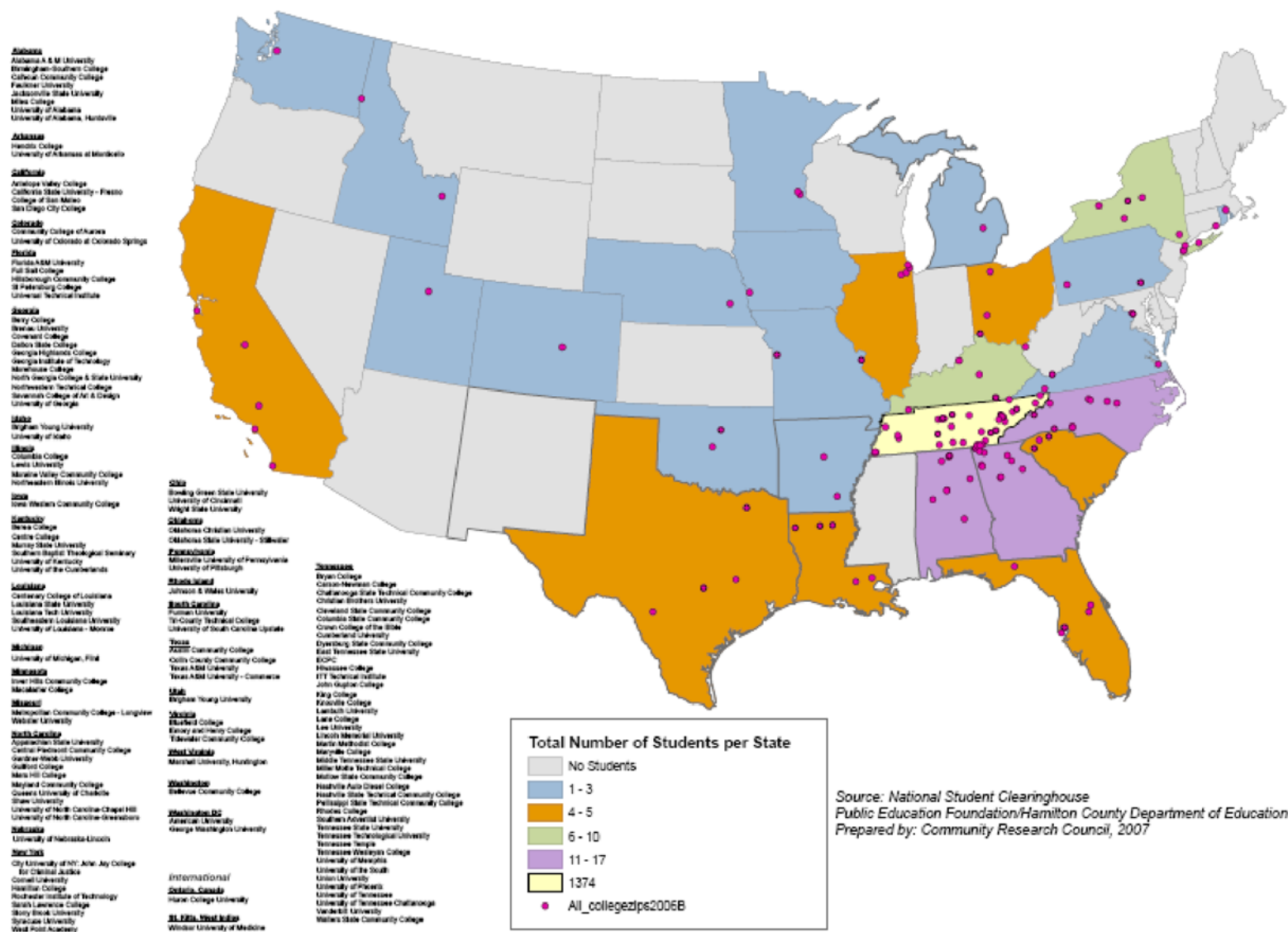ol names other than the one in which the principal works. A discussion of the implications of such data and how to use it to improve programming at the high schools allowed principals to share experiences and ideas for improvement in a confidential setting. Also included is a "college-going" map that the Chattanooga PCAS showing the colleges in which the HCDE class of 2006 enrolled, using NSC data to provide enrollment information on the out-of-state and out-of-county students.

Chattanooga's Data for High School Principals

Below is a sample chart that the Chattanooga grantee would use as part of its monthly meetings with the high school principals at HCDE. The idea here is to give each principal data for their school and to illustrate where they rank compared to the other high schools while not revealing the names of any other high school other than the one in which the principal represents. A discussion of the implications of such data and how to use it to improve programming at the high schools ensues, giving the principals an opportunity to share experiences and ideas for improvement in a confidential setting.

Percentage of 2006 graduates enrolled in 2 or 4 year colleges	
School	Percentage
	96%
	85%
	82%
	81%
	78%
	76%
Your School	76%
	76%
	75%
	74%
	73%
District	73%
	60%
	54%
	52%
	48%
	no data

Percentage of 2005 graduates enrolled in 4 year colleges	
School	Percentage
	72%
	57%
Your School	52%
	50%
	50%
	48%
	48%
	44%
District	44%
	40%
	35%
	33%
	29%
	29%
	25%
	16%
	no data

Colleges and Universities Attended by Hamilton County Public School Graduates - Class of 2006

Total Number of Students per State

- No Students
- 1 - 3
- 4 - 5
- 6 - 10
- 11 - 17
- 1374
- • All_collegezips2006B

Source: National Student Clearinghouse
Public Education Foundation/Hamilton County Department of Education
Prepared by: Community Research Council, 2007

III.5. Sample Use of Data to Inform Postsecondary Institutional Planning

The next set of documents from the Chattanooga and New York City grantees show their collection and use of data to illuminate remediation and retention issues, which entailed a discussion with their postsecondary partners and other stakeholders at the table. Of special note was the reality that math remediation was the central issue for both grantees, given that low student math skills were the major obstacle to increasing student retention in both communities.

Chattanooga's Use of Data

Below are samples of data collected and analyzed by the Chattanooga PCAS grantee—the Chattanooga Public Education Foundation –as part of its work to inform its postsecondary partners of a challenge in its college success work that needed to be addressed, as well as in its Practitioners Group meetings with high school and college math faculty as part of the effort to align math curriculum between K-12 and the local postsecondary institutions. The data below were also used as part of the symposium "A Driving Force: Community Partnership Strategies for Using Data to Improve Postsecondary Access and Success among Underrepresented Students" at the American Education Research Association (AERA) annual conference in April 2007, demonstrating yet another approach for disseminating data and informing the field of new and interesting work with data gathering through a community partnership. The data fields below were the first step in the process of collecting data for analysis and use with the Chattanooga grantee's partners.

| Hamilton County-Chattanooga	Data Collected
9-10th Grade Promotion Rates (Disaggregated)	X
Attendance Rates (Disaggregated)	X
State Assessment % Passing (Disaggregated)	X
State Assessment % Scoring Advanced (Disaggregated)	X
College Readiness EXPLORE 9th Grade (Disaggregated)	X
College Readiness PLAN 10th Grade (Disaggregated)	X
College Readiness ACT 12th Grade (Disaggregated)	X
Number of Diplomas	X
Graduation Rate	X
Number/ Percentage of Students Enrolled in College (National Student Clearinghouse) (Disaggregated)	X
Post-Secondary Persistence Rates (National Student Clearinghouse) (Disaggregated)	X
Math and English Remediation Rates (Local Universities)	X

Remediation Rates

Percentage of HCDE Freshmen Enrolled in Remedial Courses
Fall 2005 - Spring 2006
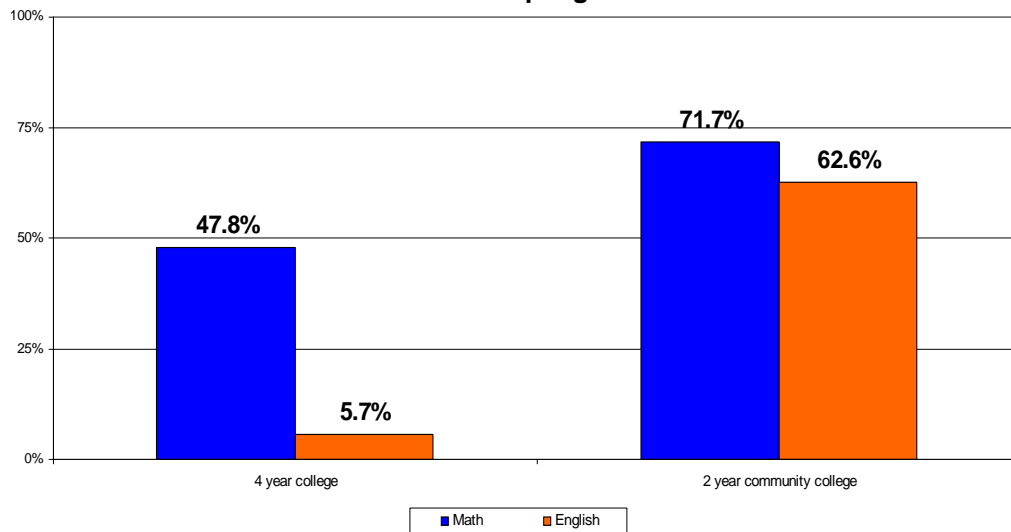
Student Success - Institution Success

Percentage of Students Earning Credit toward Graduation
Of students enrolled in Math/English
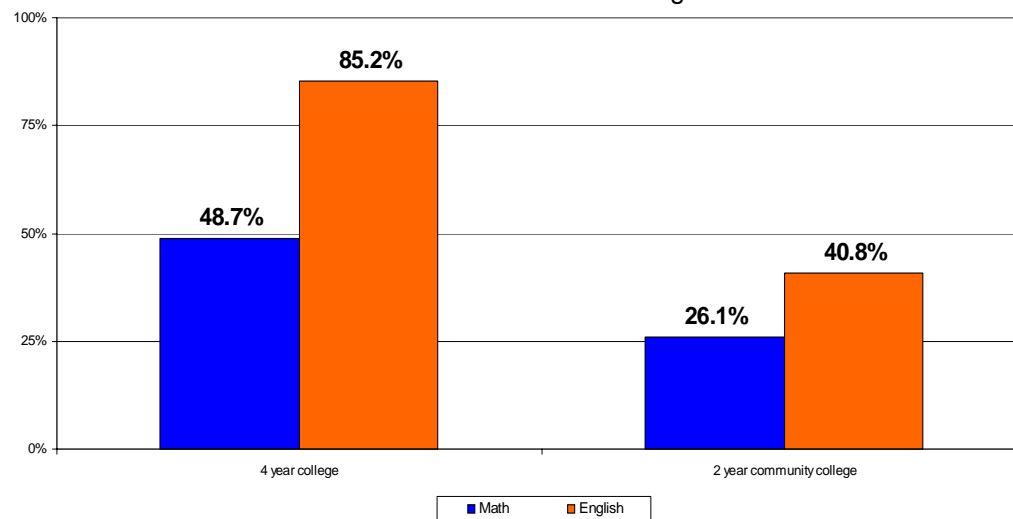
III.6. Publicizing Successes

Below are recent examples of press coverage of recent successes in the work of the Chattanooga grantee, its partners, and the community in general. These articles are a testimony for how press coverage can work to engage a community in this work.

GRADUATES

Number of Hamilton County Schools graduates enrolled in college after graduation:

- 2004: 1,313
- 2005: 1,324
- 2006: 1,499

Chattanooga Times Free Press

Chattanooga Now www.timesfreepress.com

Sunday, May 8, 2007 ~ To Give The News Impartially Without Fear or Favor ~ B1

College focus paying off
High school reforms lead to hike in students continuing education

By Christina Cooke Staff Writer
EDITOR'S NOTE: For audio with this story, log on to www.timesfreepress.com

Attending college did not seem like a possibility to 19-year-old Dawit Willis until this year.

The Tyner Academy senior lost his mother to cancer when he was 2, never met his father and has supported himself for most of his life by working in barbershops, garages and now Bi-Lo.

He knew the money he earned was not enough to cover the cost of college tuition, he said.

"I've always seen myself going to college in the future. I just never knew exactly how I was going to get there," he said.

Last summer, Dawit moved by himself from Atlanta to Chattanooga to live with the family of a friend who moved as well. He enrolled at Tyner Academy, where he met with college adviser Sarah Broadnax most days during his lunch period.

With her help, Dawit gained admission to Tennessee State University and earned a $20,000 Horatio Alger National Scholarship.

"I don't think it would have been possible (without Dr. Broadnax)," he said. "I wouldn't have had anyone to help me go to college."

More students in Hamilton County are attending college than ever before, according to data from the National Student Clearinghouse, which tracks enrollment in colleges and universities around the country. The number of Hamilton County Schools seniors who continued to college after high school graduation rose 13 percent to 1,499 between 2005 and 2006.

"We have a bunch of different programs as part of the high school reform that have come together to produce this effect," said schools spokeswoman Danielle Clark.

Since 2001, Hamilton County Schools and the Public Educa- tion Foundation have put in place a series of reforms to personalize students' high school experience, encourage them to stay in school and give them options after they graduate, Ms. Clark said.

The district switched to a single curriculum, which eliminated the vocational path and ensured each graduate has the credits necessary for post-secondary education.

In addition, high schools developed academies, or small learning communities in which students focus on particular professions such as construction, technology, teaching or health care.

The changes have ensured that once students graduate from Hamilton County schools, they have choices, Ms. Clark said. "They're not stuck at a crossroads where they have to settle with what they're given," she said.

Superintendent Jim Scales has said he would like to increase the college-going rate to 85 percent by 2011.

The College Access Center, on Chestnut Street in downtown Chattanooga, has helped schools in their push to send more students to college, educators say. The organization has helped fund 12 college advisers who work alongside the guidance counselors in 12 high schools. The program costs the school system $150,000 a year.

Over the years, the application process has become more and more daunting, said Charlotte Smith, executive director of the College Access Center.

"The federal paperwork to apply to a college, let alone a selective college, can overwhelm a family, especially students who are first generation," Ms. Smith said. "Demystifying the process of applying for college and financial aid has been so important."

At the beginning of each year at Tyner Academy, Dr. Broadnax asks seniors to identify five colleges they would like to attend, including one local school.

She distributes college and financial aid applications, counsels students in how best to fill them out, sets deadlines for completed applications and calls their parents if she does not receive them on time.

"I'm one who believes all kids should have the opportunity to go to college, regardless of their (grade point average)," Dr. Broadnax said.

Red Bank High principal Gail Chuy said her school's college adviser takes a tremendous load off the school's guidance counselors.

"If you're going to increase college attendance and college preparedness, we have to have fewer counselors per caseload," Ms. Chuy said. "(Our college advisers) take special projects off the backs of counselors so they can do academic counseling."

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HAMILTON COUNTY GRADUATION RATE
2003: 69 percent 2004: 69.8 percent 2005: 70.2 percent 2006: 73.7 percent
Source: Hamilton County Schools

Chattanooga Times Free Press

Chattanooga Now   www.timesfreepress.com

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High school graduation rates, college attendance up

By Beverly A. Carroll Staff Writer

The number of Hamilton County high school students earning diplomas and entering college has increased each year since the district launched a comprehensive reform effort six years ago.

"This was a good day. Any day is a good day when you can say 175 more kids who graduated from our schools in 2006 went to college than did in 2005," Hamilton County Board of Education Chairman Joe Conner said Wednesday. "We are excited about that and anxious to increase that number, as well as our graduation rates, which are moving up."

In a news conference at Tyner Academy, county schools officials reported that the number of students graduating from high school has increased from 1,715 in 2002 to 2,148, or 73.7 percent, in 2006. The number of students enrolling in college rose from 1,313 in 2004, the first year the data was tracked, to 1,499 in 2006, an increase of 14 percent, records show.

Superintendent Jim Scales, who was hired last year, said the goal is to have 85 percent of graduates attending college.

"One of the major initiatives of Strategic Plan 2011 is to increase our college participation," Dr. Scales said. "It's a systematic effort, kindergarten through high school. We have the programs in the elementary school, we have the middle school initiative and we are in the high school reform. All of the initiatives we put in place filter up."

The Public Education Foundation of Chattanooga received a grant to track college attendance rates three years ago. The information shows that students attend colleges across the nation, including some institutions — Brown, Cornell, Rice and Vanderbilt — that are ranked among the top 20 schools in the U.S. News and World Report College Rankings, according to system spokeswoman Danielle Clark.

In the last decade, Hamilton County educators and the PEF implemented a number of programs aimed at improving student performance from elementary school through high school. Programs focusing on math and reading were phased in over the years, supported by public and private grants.
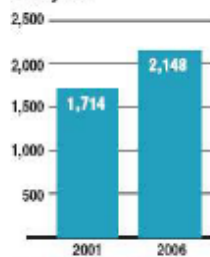
In 2001, with an $8 million grant from Carnegie of New York that was matched by PEF, each of the district's 17 high schools crafted a reform program that fit its students, faculty and community. Academies, schools within schools that blended academics with career themes, sprung up as did a focus on supporting students in the transition from eighth grade to ninth grade.

Research showed that students who failed to make it from the ninth grade to the 10th grade had a greater chance of eventually dropping out of school.

"The most telling figure is the increase in the ninth- and 10th-grade promotion rates," said Sheila Young, Hamilton County associate superintendent of secondary schools. "It wasn't unusual to see 47 percent of freshmen coming back to school who were not true sophomores. We don't see that happening."

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Hamilton County seniors earning a diploma in four years

	2001	2006
	1,714	2,148

Source: Hamilton County Department of Education

Staff Graphic by Beck Towbry