



SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH
ASSOCIATES

Evaluation of Mentoring, Educational, and Employment Strategies to Improve Academic, Social and Career Pathway Outcomes in Persistently Dangerous Schools

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Planning Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the Mentoring, Educational, and Employment Strategies in Persistently Dangerous Schools grant program (MEES), The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has provided funding to nine schools that have been designated as “persistently dangerous” under the Unsafe School Choice Option of No Child Left Behind.¹ The grant provides funding for schools to create holistic, school-wide change in order to increase academic performance, improve student behavior and school climate, promote work readiness, and establish pathways to career and post-secondary options. To meet these goals, schools are restructuring in ways that significantly expand the levels of services provided to students and enhance coordination of these services within the schools and between the schools and their communities. The MEES grants range in size from \$3.5 to \$6.5 million per school; they were awarded for a period of 38 months, which includes a two-year implementation window, preceded by a planning period up to 14 months long. Grantees did not need to use the entire 14-month planning period, and could stagger the implementation of major components, but were expected to have all major components of their grant-funded reforms in place by the beginning of the 2009 school year.

This *Evaluation Planning Report*, prepared by Social Policy Research Associates (SPR), summarizes the evaluation data collected during the 14-month planning period, focusing on the process by which grantees organized their schools and communities to plan and design school-wide reform efforts aimed at improving academic performance and reducing school violence. Data for this report are drawn from two rounds of one-day site visits and two rounds of telephone interviews for each school, as well as a comprehensive review of documents and interviews with the staff from the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). Future data collection for the evaluation will include multi-day site visits in the spring of 2010, a one-day site visit in the summer of 2010, and telephone interviews with each school in the fall of 2010. These data will

¹ These schools include: Berkshire Junior/Senior High School (JSBS) in New Canaan, NY; W.E.B. Dubois HS in Baltimore, MD; and the following schools in Philadelphia, PA: John Bartram HS, FitzSimons HS, Lincoln HS, Germantown HS, Overbrook HS, University HS, West Philadelphia, HS.

be analyzed in conjunction with the MIS data for the Implementation Report to be submitted in December 2010.

The first two rounds of site visits documented grantees' planning processes for the grant and the implementation of their summer programs. During these visits SPR examined the staffing and leadership structure for the MEES grant, grantees' plans for delivering core services, and the obstacles that grantees faced as they rolled out their MEES-funded projects. SPR also conducted observations in the classrooms, during passing periods, and at lunchtime to further understand the climate of each school and the quality of its teaching and learning at the onset of the grant.

MEES Schools

The schools vary considerably in their size, student population, and available resources. Seven of the nine schools are located in Philadelphia and, therefore, share a similar district and community context. Of the remaining grantees, one school is located in Baltimore and the other in upstate New York. Seven schools, including six of the Philadelphia schools and W.E.B. DuBois HS in Baltimore, serve students in grades nine through twelve. The other two schools (FitzSimons HS in Philadelphia and Berkshire JSHS) serve male students only in grades seven through twelve.

Although each school is unique, they share certain characteristics. African Americans make up the majority of each schools' population. More than half (62 to 86 percent) of the students in these schools qualify for free or reduced-priced lunch. The schools are also experiencing steady declines in their enrollments, a trend influenced both by their statuses as "persistently dangerous" schools and by the emergence of local charter schools that compete for students. Moreover, the grantee schools struggle with underachievement, as demonstrated by students' low proficiencies in math and reading. At the Philadelphia schools, for example, only 11 to 29 percent of the students show proficiency in reading, and only 6 to 22 percent of the students show proficiency in math, as demonstrated by the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). The schools also struggle to maintain high levels of attendance. Data from the SDP show that the majority of students at the MEES schools are "chronically absent" (accrue eight or more days of unexcused absences) and that these absences occur most frequently in the ninth grade.

The schools are designated "persistently dangerous" because they have historically experienced high numbers of suspensions and expulsions due to violations related to drug possession and use, weapons, and assaults. Since receiving the MEES grant, two of the schools (W.E.B. DuBois HS

and John Bartrum HS)² have been removed from the “persistently dangerous” list because of decreases in the number of behavioral incidents.

In addition to the MEES grant, the schools have received other resources to further their goals of improving academic performance and creating positive learning environments. All of the schools in Philadelphia, for instance, have been designated as “empowerment schools” by the School District of Philadelphia, which entitles them to receive additional staffing and coaching to improve attendance, connect with parents, and enhance instruction. In addition, all Philadelphia schools received a grant called Classrooms for the Future, which provides laptops and electronic “white boards” to promote technology-based instruction. Because these additional resources complement the efforts of the MEES grants, SPR will be monitoring their influence throughout the course of the evaluation.

Grant Planning and Administration

The majority of the schools devoted the first 14 months of the grant period to designing and planning for services. Schools differed significantly in the percentage of the grant that they reserved for the planning year. According to the budgets included in the original proposals, the Philadelphia-based grantees dedicated approximately 10 to 20 percent of their grants to the planning year. The remaining two schools, Berkshire JSHS and W.E.B Dubois HS, reserved 26 and 50 percent of their budgets, respectively, for the first year of the grant. The higher planning-period budgets for these two schools reflect faster rates of grant implementation.

Planning activities included the hiring of leadership staff and the formation of teams to help design each aspect of the grant. Seven out of the nine grantees hired a Turnaround Principal (TAP) to oversee the grant. The role of the TAP is to serve as both an instructional leader and a grant administrator. Rather than hiring a TAP, W.E.B. Dubois HS in Baltimore hired a grant coordinator who serves in a similar role. In contrast, Berkshire JSHS’s MEES grant is led by the school principal, who is also the district superintendent. As was mandated by the grant, all schools created Turnaround Teams (TTs), distributed leadership teams whose role is to oversee grant planning and implementation. TTs typically include the school principal, the Turnaround Principal, teachers, school staff (e.g., climate managers), and students. TTs formed subcommittees to oversee specific grant components, such as summer bridge and mentoring programs. Because of the strong desire to involve teachers and staff in the planning effort, schools worked to recruit teachers to their TTs, some requiring that teachers sign up for

² University City HS was removed from the list in SY 2008-2009, but has subsequently been put back on the list in SY 2009-2010.

committees. Teachers attended TT meetings inconsistently, however, because of their teaching schedules. Through the TT and subcommittees, grantees worked hard to create buy-in for the design and implementation of core services.

Schools also hired teachers in order to deliver services under the grant, and have plans to hire yet more support staff in the early stages of grant implementation (fall 2009). As of Fall 2009, the schools had hired a total of 54 teachers and expected to hire as many as 17 more teachers this same year. The hiring of additional teachers is intended to reduce class size, especially in English and math classes. Schools plan to hire a number of support staff, including security staff, counselors, instructional specialists, mentoring staff, data specialists, and social workers. CBO partners at Philadelphia-based schools will bring in more support staff to provide case management, employment services, leadership training, and mentoring.

Schools also spent the planning phase developing and formalizing partnerships to deliver services. Several schools capitalized on existing school-based partnerships during the planning process, including CBOs in their TTs and leveraging their support to identify additional community resources that could be brought to the table. For instance, W.E.B. DuBois HS has a strong existing relationship with the Futures program at Johns Hopkins University and the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) in Baltimore, both of which played key roles in designing and delivering services under the MEES grant. Some of the Philadelphia schools leveraged existing partners, such as local universities, to participate in the planning process, involving them in the design of summer bridge programs and the Student Success Centers (SSCs). However, the partnership-building process was slow for schools, especially those in Philadelphia, due to district-level delays in releasing the Request For Qualifications (RFQ) for providers and in approving contracts. Philadelphia schools had not approved agreements with partners as of early November 2009, 16 months into the grant period.

Lastly, grantees spent planning resources providing professional development so that school leaders and teachers were adequately prepared to coordinate reform efforts. SDP is one of the most prominent TA providers for the seven Philadelphia-based schools. During the planning year, SDP held weekly Friday meetings with the TAPs and other key school and district staff (e.g., Office of School Climate and Safety staff) covering topics related to grant administration, school reform, and data tracking. In addition, schools received TA support from a number of contracted providers, particularly for designing mentoring services and developing the academy structure.

One element that affected the planning process was the level of "resource authority" that school leaders had over their grants, particularly as this authority related to issues such as curriculum selection, scheduling, and program development. Due to the strong role of the SDP in providing

oversight of the MEES grants, school leaders at the Philadelphia-based schools have less discretion over grant resources, curriculum, and the pace of implementation than do the leaders of W.E.B. Dubois HS and Berkshire JSHS.

Grant Activities and Services

Schools are designing services in five categories: (1) mentoring, (2) education, (3) employment, (4) school climate, and (5) case management. Some of these services affect the whole school, some target groups of at-risk youth, such as entering ninth graders and repeating ninth graders, and some are aimed at the individual youth who present the greatest challenges in terms of misconduct, truancy, and poor school performance. Many of the services can be seen as having effects at more than one of these levels. Most of the services designed as part of the MEES grants were expected to be launched in the fall of 2009.

Mentoring Services. Schools have not yet implemented mentoring services, but as of the fall of 2009, many of them had secured the partners who will guide them in the design and delivery of mentoring services. For their mentoring services, grantees are targeting mostly at-risk ninth graders, who have demonstrated poor academic performance and behavior. Several schools are also targeting upperclass students who have been identified as at risk of school failure by teachers and school staff. Schools are designing both adult and peer-based mentoring programs.

All schools are planning *adult mentoring* programs, which will match youth with adult mentors who will work with youth individually or in a group format. Schools will recruit mentors from existing staff, including teachers, counselors, assistant principals, academy leaders, support staff (e.g., school security), and individuals from faith-based, private, public, and non-profit organizations. To recruit these individuals, school leaders and mentoring chairs are using a variety of approaches: asking specific staff members to serve as mentors, providing information on how to become a mentor during staff meetings, conducting outreach to local community organizations, and soliciting support from local employers. Mentoring subcontractors are also expected to recruit mentors. Adult mentors are expected to meet weekly with their students and will engage in a number of activities, such as academic tutoring, college and career preparation, and life coaching. Mentoring relationships are expected to last from 18 months to two years.

Seven schools are also planning to offer *peer mentoring* services. Although a few schools are recruiting tenth to twelfth graders to serve as peer mentors, most schools are targeting eleventh graders so that their relationships with mentees can last more than one year.

Schools plan to select CBO providers through a request for proposal (RFP) process to implement their mentoring programs, including recruiting, screening, training peer and adult mentors,

creating mentor/mentee matches, training staff, providing technical assistance, and organizing monthly group mentoring activities. As of the fall of 2009, several schools, including Berkshire JSHS, had already received TA from mentoring providers, allowing them to launch this service during this school year.

Educational Services. Schools are designing a number of interventions aimed at improving the academic performance of at-risk students. These services include career academies, ninth grade academies, Twilight Schools and credit retrieval programs, and intensive English and math.

Career academies are “schools-within-schools” designed to engage students in their learning by linking academic concepts with the real world and with specific employment industries. For the most part, schools are using MEES grant funds to improve their existing career academies, by further integrating work-related content into the curriculum and connecting academy youth to internships and job shadowing opportunities. Schools plan to partner with local employers, community organizations, parents, and higher education institutions to provide students with a range of career development and work-based learning opportunities.

In addition to the career academies, six schools are implementing *Ninth Grade Success Academies* as a part of their service strategies. The ninth grade academies, which launched in September 2009, are new to these schools, and are designed to help entering ninth graders make smooth transitions to high school by creating personalized learning communities, using teacher teams, and providing additional academic support.

Schools are also using MEES grant funds to expand credit retrieval programs for students who have been expelled or are behind on their credits, overage, or chronically truant. One such program is *Twilight Schools*, which involves the school staying open during evening hours to accommodate students who are unable to attend school during traditional school hours. Four schools are planning to use MEES grant funds to support existing Twilight Schools as a part of their educational strategies. In addition, four additional schools are offering credit retrieval programs during school hours to students who are behind in their credits.

To further enhance students’ academic skills, four grantees are providing intensive math and English by increasing instructional time in these classes. Three of these grantees had implemented this strategy prior to the MEES grant but are using the grant to expand interventions to entering ninth graders.

Employment Services. Schools have designed employment services in order to prepare students for workforce and postsecondary pathways. Eight schools are implementing school-based employment centers that will serve as hubs for employment services. The goal of these

centers is to bring academic support and employment services together in one location where students can receive support for college exploration, career exploration, improved academic achievement, leadership development, and development of social skills. The schools in Philadelphia will create or expand Student Success Centers (SSCs), which serve as “one-stop shops” where students receive counseling, conflict resolution, work readiness training, academic tutoring, life skills training, and community referrals. Schools plan to hire CBOs to coordinate services that stem from their SSCs.

In addition, schools are expected to provide paid internships for eleventh and twelfth graders, and in some cases, even to ninth and tenth graders. Schools plan to coordinate internships through school-based employment centers. To date, the schools in Philadelphia have provided paid internship opportunities for upperclass students during summer bridge. However, these internships were not paid by the MEES grant because of delays in getting SDP approval to design and deliver the internships through the grant. As a result, schools leveraged other community resources to provide internships during the summer.

Students will also have the opportunity to participate in career exploration activities through job shadowing that reflects the career theme of each career academy. Further, schools are integrating work-ready curriculum within their classrooms. According to schools’ implementation plans, nearly all schools have plans to purchase additional curriculum, equipment, and supplies to integrate employment-related content, activities, and hands-on training into their classrooms.

School Climate/Environment Services. The MEES grant seeks to improve the climate of grantee schools as part of the strategy to reduce violence and improve academic performance. The Philadelphia schools hired a number of climate managers to coordinate with teachers and staff on strategies for reducing the numbers of behavioral incidents. Four grantees in Philadelphia are implementing in-school suspension programs as an alternative to out-of-school suspension. These programs will enroll up to 30 students for no longer than ten days each. In addition, several grantees are offering peer mediation and conflict resolution programs. Schools have provided professional development to teachers on classroom management and on how to identify signs of gang-related behavior so that staff can intervene as needed.

Case Management Services. Schools are planning to hire additional staff to provide case management and wraparound services. These staff, also called youth advocates and reengagement specialists, will work closely with students to identify their learning needs and develop plans to address those needs. In Philadelphia, schools are planning to expand the number of staff facilitating the district-wide Comprehensive Student Assistance Process (CSAP) at their schools. CSAP is a multi-step process that engages a team of staff to identify solutions to

students' behavioral and academic challenges. Berkshire JSHS is providing wraparound behavioral and mental health services through a clinical team of staff that includes a psychiatrist, social workers, a Behavior Management Specialist (BMS), climate managers, and mental health professionals from the community.

Summer Bridge Programs

The MEES schools provided two types of programs over the summer. W.E.B. Dubois HS provided traditional summer school programs for students who failed one or more classes, and the seven Philadelphia schools provided summer bridge programs, which served as transition programs preparing incoming ninth graders for high school. A total of 731 students received grant services over the summer. Summer bridge programs were intended to remediate students' basic skills, introduce students to the culture of high school, and give failing students a second chance for promotion. Summer bridge programs lasted approximately five weeks and offered a balance of academic and enrichment services. In addition, summer bridge programs were distinguished by small class size and a personalized and nurturing approach to instruction.

Summer bridge programs structured academic services on students' academic levels, so students were grouped according to their learning needs. This way, students' learning was focused and targeted in order to best prepare them for high school. In Philadelphia, remedial students were required to review basic reading and math using SDP's mandated Voyager curriculum. This curriculum ensured some consistency in the classroom for remedial students, serving as a common platform for students needing to master the academic standards that will allow them to advance to the next grade level. For students who were on grade level, academic skills were reinforced through a variety of curricula that schools selected, including on-line curriculum that had the capability to tailor instruction to students' academic levels.

Enrichment activities, which included field trips, helped students socialize with their peers and teachers in an informal social setting. These and other experiences promoted positive relationships among peers and between students and teachers. Because the summer programs were not mandatory for all students, enrichment activities acted as incentives that helped to improve student recruitment and improve program attendance and behavior.

Moreover, schools provided employment services in the form of job-readiness training for summer bridge students and paid internships for the upperclass students who were hired to work as interns in the program. Summer bridge students received structured career readiness training in the form of workshops or classes, and teachers often reinforced these skills throughout the summer, such as when they reminded students of the links between doing well in school and

doing well in a work environment. Some of the key skills that teachers reinforced included coming to school on time, behaving cooperatively with peers, and engaging in school work.

Although we do not yet have data on youth outcomes from the summer bridge program, several school leaders provide anecdotal evidence that students who participated in summer bridge adjusted smoothly to high school, as a result of the relationships that they formed with their peers and teachers. Summer bridge programs in Philadelphia were implemented for the first time in the summer of 2009; school leaders expect to use the lessons from this first year of implementation to refine the program and increase enrollment in the summer of 2010.

Conclusion

MEES schools have made significant progress during the 14-month planning phase. During this period, schools have mobilized core stakeholders within the school and in the community, formed TT committees, and designed multiple programs and educational interventions that are new to each school. As of the fall of 2009, all grantee schools had begun the implementation phase of the grant. Schools had hired 54 teachers to reduce class size. Five schools had launched Ninth Grade Success Academies to ease the transition of ninth graders. Seven out of the nine schools had launched or expanded credit retrieval programs with the MEES grant to provide credit deficient students the opportunity to “catch up” and earn credits at an accelerated rate. Lastly, school staff had received extensive professional development on a number of topics, such as classroom management, conflict resolution, curriculum planning, and mentoring services. During the planning phase, schools also leveraged resources from existing partners to plan and design services.

Although schools accomplished a great deal in the first 14 months of the grant, they also faced a number of challenges. Some of these challenges were related to the school and its context, some to grant administration and planning, and others to grant implementation. School-context-related challenges are particularly difficult to address, because they are often outside the immediate control of the grant administrator. First, more than half of the schools have old and awkwardly designed buildings and facilities that make it difficult for them to create career academies and small learning environments. Second, schools have historically had high turnover among school leaders and teachers, making it difficult for leaders to gain buy-in from teachers for new reforms. (Two schools—Germantown HS and University City HS—have new principals starting in SY 2009-2010, and another school, West Philadelphia HS, has had turnover in the Turnaround Principal position since the start of the grant.) Finally, historically low rates of parent participation make it difficult for school leaders to have an influence on students and to enforce standards around truancy and academic discipline.

Schools also faced challenges in grant planning and administration. First, Philadelphia school leaders lack authority over some key resources and decisions, something that school leaders viewed as prolonging the planning phase of the grant and slowing implementation of key grant activities. Secondly, school leaders found it challenging to gain buy-in for grant reforms among teachers and staff. Teachers' schedules often made it difficult for them to participate in the TT and in grant planning efforts. Further, veteran teachers often were skeptical of reform efforts, having seen multiple waves of reform move through the schools. Moving forward, schools are working on ways to increase broad participation in grant-funded activities. Thirdly, school leaders often faced steep learning curves when it came to planning grant activities. For instance, most schools did not have expertise in mentoring and found it challenging to design this aspect of their programs without input from mentoring partners and providers.

Lastly, launching the summer bridge programs was a major challenge for schools, absorbing most of schools' planning time in the spring of 2009. Recruiting students for summer bridge proved to be difficult during the first year of implementation, because feeder schools were unaware of the program and many details about the programs were not settled until late in the planning stage. Most school leaders realized that their original enrollment goals for summer bridge were unrealistic and subsequently adjusted them (among all the schools considered together, enrollment goals declined from 2,085 students to 731 students). Most Philadelphia schools had trouble getting in place agreements with providers for enrichment services, and faced challenges in getting field trips approved by SDP.

Despite challenges faced in the planning year, school leaders and staff expressed great excitement and optimism about what lies ahead in SY 2009–2010. The effects of the MEES grants are evident at all the schools—in smaller class sizes, shared planning time for teachers, new programs for credit-deficient students, and increased supportive services. It is apparent that, in most cases, school stakeholders are prepared to create fundamental change in their schools—change that all stakeholders hope will lead to dramatic reductions in violence and improvements in academic performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

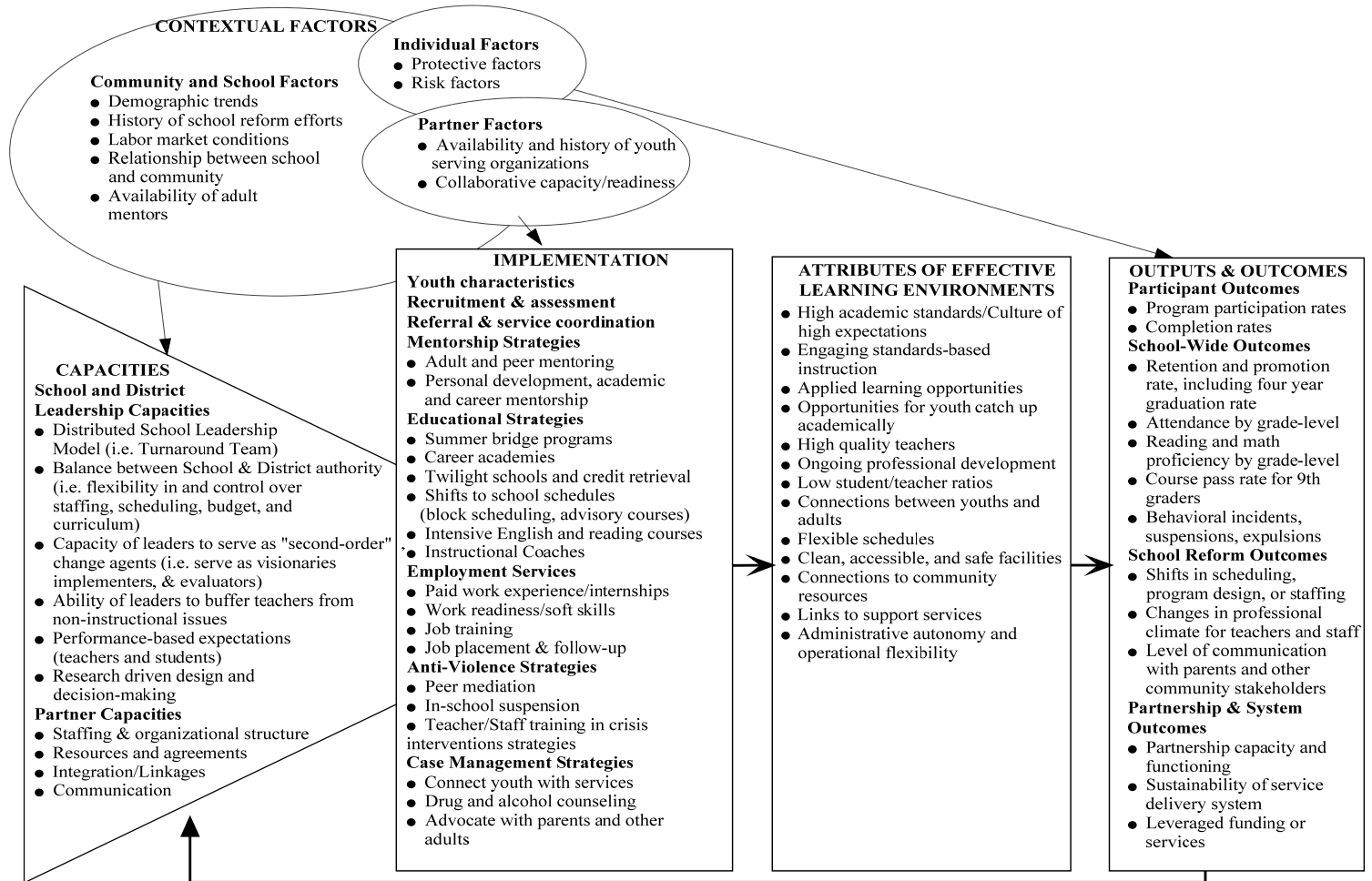
Under the Mentoring, Educational, and Employment Strategies for Persistently Dangerous Schools grant program (MEES), The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has provided funding to nine schools that have been designated as “persistently dangerous” under the Unsafe School Choice Option of No Child Left Behind.¹ In addition to having high rates of school violence, these schools have high dropout rates and low academic achievement. The schools that have been funded vary in size from large to small. The funding from this grant supports whole-scale school reform and creates intensive interventions for the youth who are most at risk of school failure. Specifically, schools are using the funding to develop a variety of violence-prevention strategies focused on mentoring, education, employment, improvement of school climate, and case management.

DOL awarded a contract to Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) to evaluate how these nine high schools have planned, designed, and implemented their programs and services. This *Evaluation Planning Report of the Mentoring, Educational, Employment Strategies (MEES)* grant program presents findings from two rounds of site visits and two rounds of telephone interviews during the 14-month planning period, focusing on the process by which grantees organized their schools and communities to plan and design school-wide reform efforts. This report includes only a minimal amount of information on grant implementation, as most schools had only just begun implementation in Fall of 2009. The Implementation Report, to be submitted in December 2010, will assess schools’ first-year implementation experiences and preliminary outcomes. In this chapter, we describe the conceptual framework and research questions guiding the evaluation. Next, we summarize our data collection methods and conclude with an overview of the rest of the report.

¹ These schools include: Berkshire Junior/Senior High School in New Canaan, NY; W.E.B. Dubois HS in Baltimore, MD; and the following schools in Philadelphia, PA: John Bartram HS, FitzSimons HS, Germantown HS, Lincoln HS, Overbrook HS, University HS, West Philadelphia, HS.

Exhibit I-1: Conceptual Framework

Mentoring, Educational, and Employment Strategies



Conceptual Framework

The primary goal for the evaluation is to understand the implementation strategies that grantees are using to successfully “turn around” poor academic achievement, decrease school violence, and improve post-graduation and career prospects. The conceptual framework for the evaluation is presented in Exhibit I-1. This framework outlines the central features of the initiative and serves as an important foundation for our analytical approach and work plan. Below, we identify the key features of our framework, which include the contextual factors that influence programs’ success, various implementation models that schools are adopting, attributes of effective alternative education programs, and outputs and outcomes that we are assessing as part of this evaluation.

Contextual Factors

Research suggests that community context can affect students’ engagement in school. In particular, high-poverty communities are associated with poor engagement and learning in school. To understand this relationship in the grantee schools, we are documenting the schools’ community contexts, which include such factors as the extensiveness of youth development resources and employment opportunities. Understanding the context of each school, including its relationship with the surrounding community, will help us to better understand the school’s implementation experiences as well as youth and school-level outcomes. Our framework also considers as contextual the various school factors that may affect grantees’ and youths’ success, including the size of the school, the school’s history of school reform, the quality of its teachers, the presence of enrichment activities, the degree of parent involvement, and linkages with community organizations.

Individual-level contextual factors are also integral to the achievement of outcomes. These factors—which can either increase risk or protect against negative outcomes—include such characteristics and attributes as existence of learning disabilities, strength of familial support, presence of pro-social peers, and access to positive adult role models.

Finally, partner-level contextual factors have the potential to influence the success of the initiative. Among these factors are the presence and history of youth-serving organizations in the community, the quality of the infrastructures of support provided by these organizations, and the collaborative capacity and readiness of the various partners to engage fully in the initiative.

District and School Leadership Capacities

The left side of the framework includes a “capacities” box that outlines district, school, and partnership leadership capacities. In order to understand the role of school leaders in managing and driving forward the initiative, we are looking at the relationship between the grantee school districts and each grantee school, focusing on the role of each in staffing, scheduling, budget management, and curriculum. We are also assessing the capacities of the school principal and the Turnaround Principal to effectively bring about school change through the MEES grant, looking at the extent to which they buffer teachers from non-instructional issues and channel school resources towards instruction. We are also assessing how leadership is distributed within the school, including the role of the “Turnaround Team” and core partners in the design and implementation of school reform. Chapter III of this report provides findings on the quality of district and school leadership to date.

This initiative requires that schools partner effectively with mentoring and case management service providers as well as employers and the workforce development system. In order to understand the success of these partner-driven programs, we are examining the capacity of partners and their relationships to the school. This includes a focus on staffing and organizational structure at the partnership level, the ability of partners to develop formal agreements and share resources, the integration of services, and the quality of communication among partners. Data on the quality of partnerships will be explored in the Implementation Report, after schools have developed their partnerships.

Implementation

Within the program implementation box, we have outlined the breadth of services that youth may access as part of this initiative. In the next two rounds of site visits, we will look carefully at the characteristics of youth participants as a way of framing the types of outcomes that schools can realistically achieve. For instance, the age group (e.g., ninth graders) that a specific program targets for specialized services will shape the types of outcomes we should expect. We are also examining schools’ recruitment practices; that is, how they identify the most needy students for participation in the initiatives that are supported by the MEES grant. In Chapter V, we include an analysis of recruitment activities for the summer bridge programs, since this service occurred during grantees’ planning phase. Once grantees have fully implemented their projects, we will look more closely at recruitment, how youth are assessed, and how the results of assessments are used to tailor academic plans and supportive services.

Chapter IV of this report provides an overview of the types of services that schools are implementing, or plan to implement in the school 2009–2010 school year (SY). Through the

evaluation, we are assessing the quality of adult and peer mentoring strategies and the degree to which these strategies provide youth with academic and social support. We are also looking at a broad range of educational approaches and strategies, including summer bridge programs, career academies, twilight schools and credit retrieval, block scheduling, intensive English and reading courses, reduced class size, and instructional coaches. In addition, we are examining employment strategies, including paid work experience, internships, work readiness training, job training, and job placement. This report describes employment services that were available in summer bridge programs and internship opportunities that were offered during SY 2008–2009. A deeper analysis of employment services will be included in the Implementation Report.

We will document the range of anti-violence programs that are provided, with a focus on peer mediation, conflict resolution, and crisis intervention. Finally, because of the general life barriers faced by so many youth, programs are planning to provide access to case management services, which can help youth to access supportive services.

Attributes of Effective Programs

Our model assumes that youth and school-level outcomes depend, to a large degree, on the quality of services that are offered. There is a growing consensus, through the federal Youth Vision work, of what constitutes high quality education. We are using these attributes to guide our data collection and analysis. Key attributes, as illustrated in our model, include the following:

- high academic standards and a culture of high expectations
- engaging, standards-based instruction
- applied learning opportunities
- opportunities for youth to catch up academically
- high-quality teachers
- ongoing professional development
- low student/teacher ratios
- connections between youths and adults
- flexible schedules
- clean, accessible, and safe facilities
- administrative autonomy and operational flexibility

We believe that exploring these dimensions of program quality, within the broader areas of project design and implementation, will help to uncover why some sites are more successful than

others and explain much of the variation in the outcomes obtained by their youth and their schools. Our core implementation site visit, scheduled for Spring 2010, will focus on assessing the quality of services using this framework.

Outputs and Outcomes

The quality of the program's design and implementation should lead to a number of participant-level and school-wide outcomes, which are shown on the far right-hand side of our framework. Intermediate outcomes relate to levels of program participation and rates of program completion, while longer-term outcomes relate to the effect of participation on the schools. As an example of data collection on intermediate outcomes, we are tracking the number and types of youth who receive mentoring services or who are placed into paid internships. These opportunities play a critical role in a school's efforts to prepare its students for the likelihood of longer-term success in schooling and/or in the workplace. In addition to gathering this kind of participation data, the evaluation is tracking a number of school-wide outcomes, including promotion and retention rates (e.g., the percentage of ninth graders who progress to the tenth grade), attendance, course completion rates, reading and math proficiency levels, and rate of suspensions and expulsions. In addition to looking at these school-wide outcomes, the evaluation is assessing how MEES grants have changed the structure and operation of the schools. For instance, we are documenting structural shifts in scheduling, program design, and staffing; changes in the professional climate for teachers and other school staff; and changes in the level of communication among school officials, parents, and community stakeholders. Finally, because the initiative has the potential to have lasting partnership and system-level outcomes, the evaluation is tracking changes in partnership capacity and the sustainability of the service delivery system. We will document preliminary outcomes and outputs in the Implementation Report.²

Study Questions

The framework described above serves as the basis for the following major research questions:

- What contextual factors are important for understanding the design, implementation, and outcomes of the grant-funded activities?
- What is the process of designing the initiative? How did grantees mobilize partners to participate in this initiative?

² Note that, because the evaluation ends mid-way through grant implementation (December 2010), the evaluation will only be able to track preliminary outputs and outcomes arising from the MEES grants.

- What are the strategies schools adopt to bring about reform and what are the challenges in implementing these strategies?
- What are the key characteristics of effective approaches for increasing academic achievement and completion in schools that are classified as “persistently dangerous”?
- What outcomes at the participant, school, and system levels can be expected to result from this effort?

These major research questions and other related, more-specific questions can be classified into six major categories: (1) context, (2) school leadership, (3) design, (4) partnerships, (5) service delivery/implementation, and (6) outputs and outcomes. A full list of questions is included in Appendix A.

Data Collection Methods

This study includes several data collection methods: (1) telephone interviews, (2) site visits, (3) document review, and (4) analysis of MIS data. Exhibit I-2 includes a summary of data collection methods and the status of these activities.

**Exhibit I-2:
Summary of Data Collection Activities**

Activity	Timeline
Telephone Interviews	Round 1: Fall 2008 Round 2: Fall 2009 Round 3: Fall 2010
Site Visits	Round 1: Spring 2009 Round 2: Summer 2009 Round 3: Spring 2010 Round 4: Summer 2010
Document review	Ongoing
Collection and analysis of MIS Data	Grantee submissions begin December 2009

Telephone Interviews

SPR will conduct a total of three rounds of telephone interviews with grantees to document their progress and track developments at each school. These interviews occur between each round of site visits. To date, we have conducted two rounds of one-hour telephone interviews with the

grant administrators, principals, and Turnaround Principals. These interviews focused on grantees' progress with the grant planning process and covered the status of key services, staffing and hiring, timeline for implementation, and any roadblocks that grantees may have encountered. The final round of telephone interviews with grantees is scheduled to occur in fall 2010.

SPR staff also conducted two interviews with staff from the School District of Philadelphia (SDP), including the Program Manager and the Research Associate hired for this grant. These interviews documented the district's implementation of the MEES grant, including technical assistance and oversight of grant planning.

Site Visits

The evaluation includes four rounds of site visits to document grantees' planning and implementation experiences. The goals of the site visits are to document (1) the key contextual variables that may shape the design, planning, and implementation of the grants, (2) the approaches that grantees use to improve academic achievement and reduce violence, (3) the quality of services that grantees are providing, and (4) the barriers and facilitators that grantees experienced.

The first and second round of site visits lasted one day each. The first round of site visits to all nine grantees occurred in spring 2009. These visits occurred in the midst of the schools' planning period, and we documented and assessed their planning process and their experiences bringing key stakeholders together to turn around the schools. The second round of visits occurred in summer 2009. The goal of these visits was to document the schools' summer programs, particularly summer bridge, a key educational strategy to promote smooth transitions to high school. We visited all of the grantees except Berkshire JSHS, which did not design a specific summer program. In lieu of a site visit to Berkshire JSHS, we completed an in-depth phone interview. The third round of site visits, planned as paired two-day visits, are scheduled to occur in spring 2010. The third visit will focus on assessing the influence of grant reforms on schools. The final round of one-day site visits will occur in summer 2010. This report draws on data from the first two rounds of site visits.

In the first two rounds of site visits, we interviewed at each school individuals in the following roles:

- **School leaders.** We interviewed the principal and Turnaround Assistant Principal (TAP) to obtain a good understanding of their process for transforming their school. These interviews focused on the school's vision for grant planning and

implementation, goals for staffing and hiring, and goals for improving academic performance and reducing school violence.

- **Teachers.** We interviewed reading and math teachers to document their priorities for improving students' core skills, the methods they used to engage students, and their roles in the grant planning process.
- **School staff.** These individuals generally included the Climate Manager, security officers, dean of students, student advisors, parent ombudsman, and others. Interviews with these staff provided data about the school climate, trends in school violence, coordinated efforts to reduce violence, and priorities for change.
- **Partners.** Many schools had not yet developed partnerships during the planning phase. However, several schools had existing school-based partners that we were able to interview during the first two rounds of site visits. These interviews focused on the partners' roles at the school and in implementing the MEES grant.
- **Students.** We conducted focus groups with different groups of youth, including incoming ninth graders, current ninth graders, and upperclass students. These sessions focused on students' perspectives on their communities, educational experiences, the school climate, the quality of teaching and learning, and opportunities for employment.

In addition to conducting these interviews, we observed a number of classrooms where interventions were being practiced, including reading and math classes and enrichment classes that occurred during the summer bridge programs. We also observed students during passing time and at lunch to understand the nature of student interactions with peers and adults. These observations allowed us to get a baseline sense of the school climate so that we could monitor shifts in climate arising from grant reforms. We plan to conduct additional observations during subsequent rounds of site visits to capture the nuances of the programs that schools are implementing through this grant.

Document Review

In addition to carrying out the data collection activities outlined above, we thoroughly reviewed a number of grantee documents for this report, including grantee proposals, implementation plans, school newsletters, relevant school reports, and school-level data. The document review process provided background information about the schools that allowed us to tailor our telephone interviews and site visits to each school's particular context. We plan to continue to review documents as the evaluation progresses to ensure that we capture the developments at the schools.

Quantitative Data

This evaluation will also examine quantitative data to better understand school- and participant-level outcomes. Grantees will be submitting MIS data on a quarterly basis, starting in December 2009. This data will include information on student demographics, achievement patterns, attendance, and behavioral incidents. Our analysis of this data will be included in the Implementation Report.

Remainder of the Report

In the remainder of this report, we present our findings from the data collected during the grant's planning phase. Chapter II provides an overview of the grantee schools and communities focusing on achievement and enrollment data, labor market conditions, and the presence of school violence. Chapter III provides an overview of the administration of the grant, including the over-arching goals for the grant, staffing, leadership, and budget. Chapter IV summarizes the key services that schools have designed in the areas of education, employment, case management, supportive services, and anti-violence services. Chapter V analyzes the summer bridge programs that were developed by the majority of grantees. Chapter VI summarizes key grantee accomplishments to date and notes the challenges faced by the grantees during project planning and early implementation.

II. OVERVIEW OF GRANTEE SCHOOLS

The overarching goal of the Mentoring, Educational, and Employment Strategies (MEES) grant is to “turn around” schools that have been challenged by persistent violence and severe underachievement of their student bodies. In this chapter, we provide descriptions of the grantee schools and the conditions under which teachers, administrators and students endeavor to provide and receive a quality education. We begin with a brief overview of each school, focusing first on the grantee schools located in urban centers and then moving to Berkshire JSHS, a residential educational program located in a rural section of eastern New York. Next, we highlight emerging themes across the urban schools, shedding light on the multiple obstacles that pose impediments to teaching, learning, and safety. The chapter closes with a brief discussion about the MEES grant’s relationship to other reform initiatives and the challenges and opportunities that arise as a result of intense efforts to create change via multiple avenues of reform.

Overview of Schools and Communities

As described in this section, each of the MEES grantee schools has a unique history and community context that influences the pace of reform. Of the nine grantee schools, eight are located in large urban centers—seven in Philadelphia and one in Baltimore.

Philadelphia Schools

The seven Philadelphia schools that are MEES grantees are John Bartram HS, FitzSimons HS, Germantown HS, Lincoln HS, Overbrook HS, University City HS, and West Philadelphia HS. All are part of the School District of Philadelphia. Demographic data for these schools are provided in Exhibit II-1. Data from the 2007–2008 school year reveal that these schools serve a predominantly low-income population, as measured by the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch, with Lincoln HS having the lowest percentage of low-income students at 62 percent and FitzSimons HS having the largest at 86 percent. Moreover, Exhibit II-1 shows that African Americans are overrepresented in MEES grantee schools, making up an

**Exhibit II-1:
Demographic Data – Philadelphia Schools**

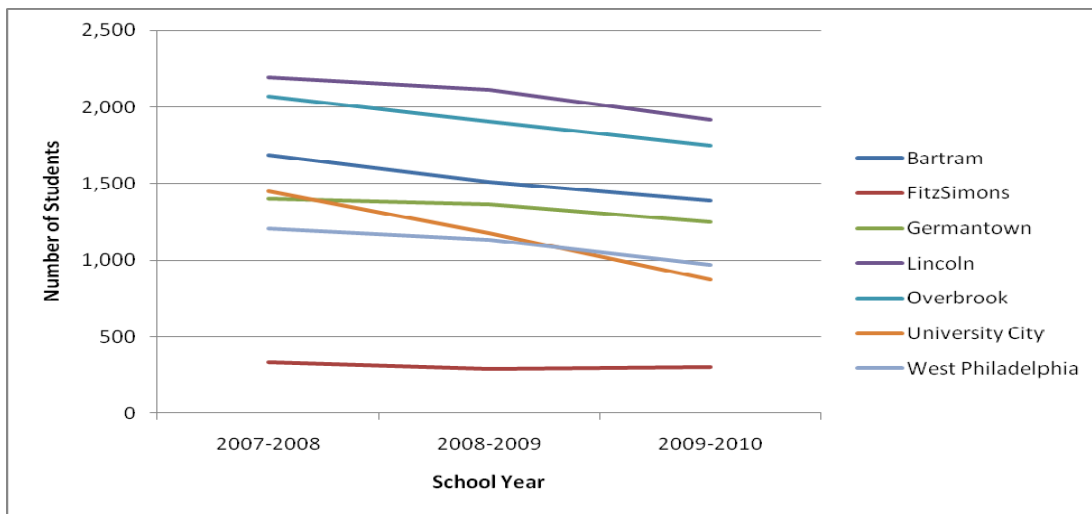
School Year	Total	African American	Latino	Asian	White	Other	Free/ Reduced lunch eligible
School District of Philadelphia							
2009-2010	163,064	61.2%	17.6%	6.2%	13.3%	1.8%	
John Bartram HS							
2007-2008	1,687	93%	1%	3%	2%	1%	80%
2008-2009	1,514	92%	1%	4%	2%	1%	
2009-2010	1,388	93%	1%	4%	1%	0%	
FitzSimons HS							
2007-2008	336	99%	1%	0%	0%	0%	86%
2008-2009	290	99%	1%	0%	1%	0%	
2009-2010	304	99%	0%	0%	1%	0%	
Germantown HS							
2007-2008	1,399	97%	1%	0%	1%	1%	72%
2008-2009	1,364	98%	1%	0%	1%	0%	
2009-2010	1,251	98%	2%	0%	0%	0%	
Lincoln HS							
2007-2008	2,194	42%	16%	6%	35%	1%	62%
2008-2009	2,114	44%	18%	6%	32%	1%	
2009-2010	1,921	41%	18%	6%	34%	1%	
Overbrook HS							
2007-2008	2,070	98%	1%	0%	0%	0%	72%
2008-2009	1,905	98%	1%	0%	0%	0%	
2009-2010	1,745	98%	1%	0%	1%	0%	
University City HS							
2007-2008	1,450	96%	2%	1%	0%	0%	81%
2008-2009	1,176	96%	2%	1%	1%	0%	
2009-2010	872	96%	1%	1%	1%	1%	
West Philadelphia HS							
2007-2008	1,207	98%	1%	0%	0%	0%	81%
2008-2009	1,132	98%	1%	0%	0%	0%	
2009-2010	969	97%	1%	1%	1%	1%	

average of 97 percent of the student body across all Philadelphia MEES grantee schools except Lincoln HS. Lincoln HS has the most diverse student body of all the Philadelphia MEES grantee schools, though African Americans still make up the largest racial grouping at 41 percent. The overrepresentation of African Americans is striking, particularly when compared to Philadelphia’s population, which is only 43 percent African American.

All schools in this study have been given the label of “Persistently Dangerous,”¹ though the years spent with this designation vary by school. The “Safe Schools Option” under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandates that a school labeled as persistently dangerous notify students and families of this designation and provide transfer options to students who wish to relocate to a different school. This may explain why overall enrollment at all Philadelphia MEES grantee schools has been on a steady decline over the past three years, as evidenced by the total enrollment numbers in Exhibit II-1 and in the graph below (Exhibit II-2).

Declining enrollment poses distinct challenges for MEES grantee schools. Declining enrollment means reduced funds from the state, since much federal and state education funding is generated on a per-pupil basis. And as these schools work diligently to effectively design and implement new programs to turn their schools around, declining enrollment makes it difficult to measure the effectiveness of reform efforts.

**Exhibit II-2:
Enrollment Trends in Philadelphia High Schools**



¹ For example, in Pennsylvania, a “Persistently Dangerous School” (PDS) is defined as one in which the number of dangerous incidents per year reaches or exceeds 20 or a number equal to 2 percent of the school’s enrollment. A “dangerous” incident is defined as a weapons possession incident resulting in arrest (guns, knives, or other weapons) or a violent incident resulting in arrest.

Persistently dangerous schools are given this label because the number of dangerous incidents on campus exceeds a threshold that is predetermined by the state. For the Philadelphia MEES grantee schools, the overall rates of dangerous incidents (as well as the types of incidents) vary widely across schools, as reflected in Exhibit II-3. It should be noted that while all students are expected to follow the school district’s Code of Conduct, schools have some discretion with respect to how they handle and report behavioral issues. It is therefore difficult to compare rates of dangerous incidents across schools, since higher numbers of incidents could be a reflection of stricter policies, not greater violence. What can be noted, however, is that rates of dangerous incidents declined in four of the seven schools between the 2007–2008 and 2008–2009 school years (John Bartram HS, Germantown HS, Overbrook HS, West Philadelphia HS). FitzSimons HS had a very slight increase in behavioral incidents but Lincoln HS had a significant increase (18.5 percent), as did University City HS (22.3 percent).

**Exhibit II-3:
Behavior Data – Philadelphia Schools**

School Year	Enrollment	Overall Incident Rate ²	Suspensions	Disciplinary Transfers/Expulsions	Arrests
John Bartram HS					
2007-2008	1,687	27.9%	390	49	32
2008-2009	1,514	22.5%	251	63	26
FitzSimons HS					
2007-2008	336	138.1%	392	27	45
2008-2009	290	139%	333	29	41
Germantown HS					
2007-2008	1,399	105.9%	1,280	109	92
2008-2009	1,364	88%	1,036	95	74
Lincoln HS					
2007-2008	2,194	46.2%	866	35	113
2008-2009	2,114	64.8%	1,195	49	125
Overbrook HS					
2007-2008	2,070	38.1%	617	67	104
2008-2009	1,905	28.4%	427	37	77

² We define the overall incident rate as the total number of suspensions, disciplinary transfers, expulsions, and arrests divided by number of students. For this reason, schools with particularly high numbers of behavioral incidents can have overall incident rates that exceed 100 percent.

School Year	Enrollment	Overall Incident Rate ²	Suspensions	Disciplinary Transfers/Expulsions	Arrests
University City HS					
2007-2008	1,450	58.9%	766	25	63
2008-2009	1,176	81.2%	849	21	85
West Philadelphia HS					
2007-2008	1,207	76.7%	801	75	50
2008-2009	1,132	51.2%	462	72	46

In addition to existing in challenging environmental contexts, MEES grantee schools also struggle with poor academic performance. All Philadelphia MEES grantee schools have received the lowest ranking under NCLB (Corrective Action II) for failing to reach Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals for several years in a row. Exhibit II-4 offers a picture of the severity of the situation, as measured through Pennsylvania System School Assessment (PSSA)³ results in reading and math.

According to PSSA measures, the most academically successful of the Philadelphia MEES grantee schools is Lincoln HS, and yet less than a third of its student body is proficient in reading and even fewer are proficient in math. University City HS has the lowest PSSA scores, with only roughly one in ten students demonstrating proficiency in reading and one in twelve demonstrating proficiency in math. These numbers underscore what Bartram HS’s principal calls the “sense of urgency” undergirding the need for reform, particularly when these numbers are compared against overall district scores (37 percent proficient in reading; 33 percent proficient in math).

³ For high schools in the state of Pennsylvania, Adequate Yearly Progress is determined by performance and participation in state tests (PSSA) and graduation rates. To make AYP goals, 95 percent of a school’s student body (and any subgroups with 40 or more students) must take the test. The schools must then meet predetermined proficiency targets for the whole school and for all subgroups. They must also have an 80 percent on-time graduation rate or show an increase from the prior year.

**Exhibit II-4:
PSSA Scores – Philadelphia Schools**

School Year	% Proficient Reading	% Proficient Math
School District of Philadelphia		
2007-2008	34.9%	30.9%
2008-2009	37.4%	32.6%
John Bartram HS		
2007-2008	15.4%	8.5%
2008-2009	11.5%	10.6%
Fitzsimons HS		
2007-2008	17.1%	22.0%
2008-2009	14.4%	18.0%
Germantown HS		
2007-2008	12.6%	9.1%
2008-2009	12.7%	9.3%
Lincoln HS		
2007-2008	29.3%	18.2%
2008-2009	23.3%	13.3%
Overbrook HS		
2007-2008	21.3%	14.5%
2008-2009	14.4%	12.8%
University City HS		
2007-2008	11.6%	5.9%
2008-2009	11.4%	8.6%
West Philadelphia HS		
2007-2008	15.0%	9.0%
2008-2009	12.1%	8.8%

While the numbers give some sense of the academic and climate challenges faced by these schools, they do not tell the whole story. In the following section we provide a snapshot of the neighborhood sections of Philadelphia in which MEES grantee schools are housed. This is then followed by short descriptions of the schools themselves. These descriptions provide a sense of the physical, social, and psychological contexts within which teachers, administrators, and students endeavor to provide and receive quality education.

Neighborhood and School Contexts

The seven MEES grantee schools are located in nearly every section of Philadelphia, including North, Northeast, Northwest, Southwest, and West Philadelphia. While each neighborhood is unique, they share some similar traits. For example, African Americans make up the majority of the population in all neighborhoods wherein MEES grantee schools are located and a large segment of these populations is also low-income. West Philadelphia and the Mayfair neighborhood in Northeast Philadelphia were predominantly white and middle class in the recent past but recently became more diverse as this population moved out into the suburbs. North Philadelphia and West Philadelphia were noted by respondents as having high rates of gang activity. West Philadelphia, where three MEES schools are located, also has a high number of institutions of higher education, including the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, University of the Sciences in Pennsylvania, and St. Joseph's University.

The following section offers a brief description of each school, highlighting particular aspects of its community context as well as the school's history, with an emphasis on factors that contributed to the school being designated "persistently dangerous."

FitzSimons HS (North Philadelphia). FitzSimons HS is an all-male public middle and high school serving students in grades seven through twelve. FitzSimons HS is a comparatively small school, serving 304 students, almost all of whom are African American and the majority (86 percent) of whom are eligible for free/reduced lunch. Prior to 2005, FitzSimons HS was a coeducational middle school, serving students in grades six through eight. In an attempt to improve school performance, Victory Schools, Inc., which managed the school at the time, divided the school into single-sex academies and added a high school component. Despite these changes, FitzSimons failed to meet the Academic Yearly Performance goals and was taken back over by the School District of Philadelphia.⁴

Lincoln HS (Northeast Philadelphia). Lincoln HS has the most diverse student population of all the Philadelphia MEES grantee schools. This school year (2009-2010), African Americans comprise 42 percent of the student population at Lincoln. Whites make up the second largest racial grouping at 34 percent and Latinos are the third largest grouping at 18 percent. Lincoln also has the smallest number of students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch—62 percent, as compared to a range of 72 percent to 86 percent at the other schools. A few years ago, Lincoln HS made a switch from being a magnet, "all academy" high school with selective admissions to a non-selective, comprehensive high school. Since then, Lincoln HS has

⁴ As of the 2008-2009 school year, FitzSimons HS had failed to meet its AYP goals for six years.

experienced more incidences of violence and has struggled to meet testing and outcome targets. For the current 2009-2010 school year, Lincoln HS moved into a new building. The new building, however, is too small for the current enrollment, so school staff are still contending with some facility issues, such as working out traffic patterns within the school to minimize disruption and creating office space for key support staff.

Germantown HS (Northwest Philadelphia). Built in 1914, Germantown HS is one of the oldest schools in the country. The school has faced challenges with leadership turnover, having had four acting principals in the 2008-2009 school year. It has an academy structure in place, with three career academies (Communications, Honors, and Health and Life Sciences) and one academy (the Keystone Academy) designed for students who find themselves off-track to graduation. To accommodate a growing student body, Germantown HS added multiple “wings” to its main building over the course of a few decades, making it too large for its current student body. The rise in neighborhood violence has had a direct impact on school violence, as neighborhood conflicts often continue into fights and altercations at school.

John Bartram HS (Southwest Philadelphia). John Bartram HS is located in an economically distressed neighborhood that has experienced significant decline after a local electric company that employed a large portion of the neighborhood’s residents closed down five years ago. The school has a strong leader in the Principal, who has been at the school for six years. John Bartram HS had been on the Persistently Dangerous Schools list from 2003 to 2007 but the label was removed in September 2008.⁵ While this is an indicator of marked progress, school leaders are still concerned because high crime and poverty in the surrounding community continue to have an impact on the school. As Principal McAlister states, “The things that manifest themselves in the community manifest themselves in the school.”

West Philadelphia HS (West Philadelphia). West Philadelphia HS’s current principal is widely respected by students and teachers alike. There is a sense that teacher recruitment and retention, which has historically been a problem for the school, are beginning to improve under the current administration. Gangs are a key concern at West Philadelphia High School. A joint taskforce involving school police at West Philadelphia High and the Philadelphia Police Department documented the existence of at least four different youth gangs in the vicinity of West Philadelphia HS whose members were suspected of being involved in school violence. West Philadelphia HS’s building was built to accommodate 4,000 students, yet the total school

⁵ Pennsylvania requires that a school remain at least two years without a persistently dangerous label before it can “officially” remove the label.

population is less than 1,000, so the school has had to close off the third and fourth floors of the building so that it can better monitor students.

Overbrook HS (West Philadelphia). Most of the teachers at Overbrook High School have been there for more than 30 years and many of the Teach for America teachers stay for three years, when they are only required to stay for two. The school's hands-on principal, who makes visibility and relationship-building a priority, feels that the school's successful teacher retention rates have to do with the culture of the school, which she describes as being a "family- and community-like atmosphere" in which all of the teachers, support staff, and administrative staff know each other. Although gangs are present in the neighborhoods surrounding Overbrook HS, their presence within the school has been minimized through extensive security measures. These measures include a reduction in the number of entrance points into the school, the use of metal detectors, and the erection of traffic barricades at the end of the school day in order to keep traffic away from the front of the school, preventing non-students from driving directly up to the campus.

University City HS (West Philadelphia). University High School is located within very short walking distance of Drexel University and the University of Pennsylvania. Staff at the high school have worked diligently to curtail gang-related incidents on campus, particularly through partnerships with the police and community organizations. University City HS has had persistent academic challenges, having been unable to meet its AYP goals for six years. Its status as a Persistently Dangerous School, however, has fluctuated. It was placed on the PDS list for the first time in 2006-07 and remained on the list through the 2007-08 school year. The school's PDS designation was removed in the 2008-09 school year, only to be reassigned in the 2009-10 school year. Its principal was transferred to a different school at the beginning of the 2009-10 school year, after having served at University City HS for four years.

Baltimore—W.E.B. DuBois High School

W.E.B. DuBois HS is a neighborhood high school located in northeast Baltimore. Like those of Philadelphia MEES grantee schools, W.E.B DuBois HS's population is predominantly low-income and African American, though the percentage of students eligible to receive free or reduced lunch is considerably smaller than that of the Philadelphia schools and smaller than the average for Baltimore City Schools (see Exhibit II-5.)

**Exhibit II-5
Demographic Data – W.E.B. DuBois HS in Baltimore**

School Year	Total	African American	Latino	Asian	Other	White	Free/Reduced lunch Eligible
WEB DuBois HS							
2008-2009	598	96%	0.6%	0.3%	0.3%	2%	58.3%
Baltimore City Schools							
2008-2009	82,266	84.4%	2.8%	0.7%	0.3%	7.8%	74.6%

While the number of students who are eligible for free/reduced lunch is smaller compared to that in Philadelphia schools, the number has increased significantly from 49.5 percent in the 2007–2008 school year. Moreover, the number of students receiving special education services has steadily increased, from 16.7 percent in 2003 to 27.4 percent last year.

Several years ago, W.E.B. DuBois HS was part of a larger, comprehensive neighborhood high school (Northern High School) which had about 2,100 students. In school year 2000–2001, the school district implemented a small schools policy and divided several large high schools into small academies. Consequently, Northern High School was separated into three separate schools, each with a different academic focus and with about 700 students at each school. W.E.B. DuBois HS, whose focus is environmental science, is one of those high schools. It shares its campus and school building with a second high school, Reginald F. Lewis High School. While the two high schools are officially separate, they still share much of the same physical space, including the cafeteria, gymnasium, and some hallways. The W.E.B. DuBois HS and Reginald F. Lewis HS principals developed two different schedules for the schools to reduce the potential for interaction.

The current Principal has brought a sense of stability to the school and under her leadership the school environment has improved greatly, resulting in W.E.B. DuBois HS’s removal from the Persistently Dangerous Schools list this year (2009-2010), after five years on the list. This was due in part to the fact that the Principal was able to readily access grant funds that allowed her to implement a reform plan early in her tenure.

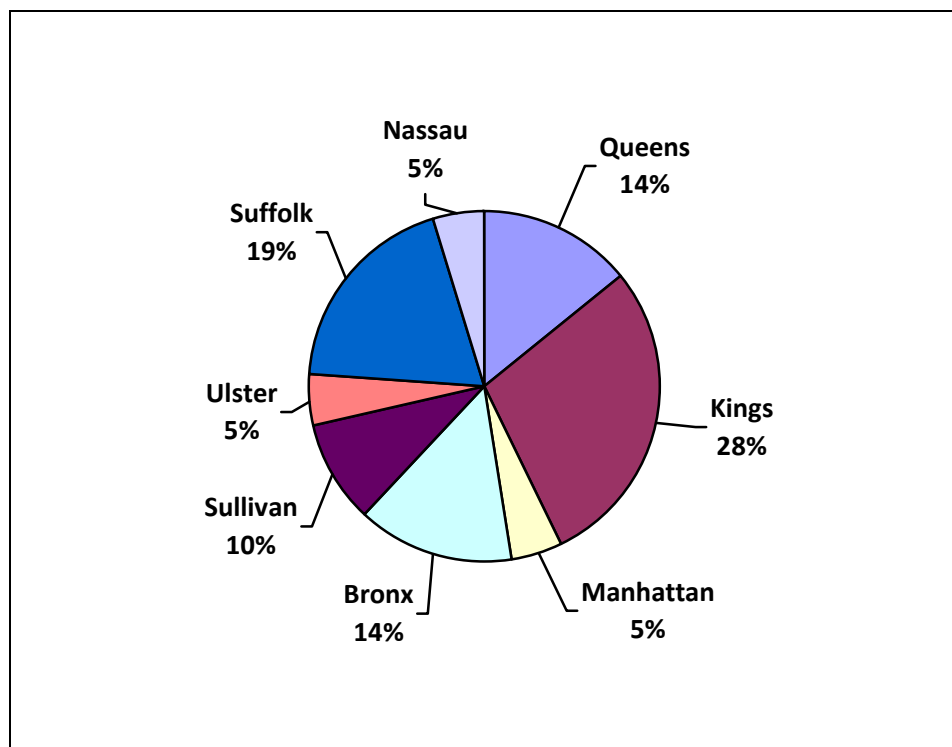
Berkshire JSHS in Canaan, NY

Founded in 1886, Berkshire JSHS is a unique residential treatment program that provides comprehensive social, psychological, academic, and vocational programs to young men who are challenged with behavioral and emotional difficulties, family problems, substance abuse, and

other issues that render it difficult for them to be educated in a traditional public school. These young men are referred to the program from one of three primary sources: New York school districts, the Department of Social Services, or the court system. Berkshire's 2,000-acre campus is located in an expansive landscape of mountains, farmland, and lakes.

Berkshire JSHS serves male youth from grades eight through twelve in a year-round structure, and in small classes made up of six to twelve students each. Students come to Berkshire JSHS from a variety of communities in New York State. Exhibit II-6 below shows the geographic diversity of Berkshire JSHS students.

**Exhibit II-6:
Home Districts of CSE (Committee on Special Education)-Placed Youth at Berkshire JSHS (updated November 2009)**



Located two and a half hours north of New York City, Berkshire JSHS is a significant distance from major metropolitan cities or towns, freeing students from the “city-life distractions” that can sometimes lead to problematic behaviors or create more challenges for already troubled youth. Ninety-eight percent of Berkshire JSHS students have at least three mental health diagnoses, and 80 percent are diagnosed with Conduct Disorder or Oppositional Defiant Disorder. About half are considered “hard-to-place,” meaning that they have high needs due to

trauma or mental illness. In the last three years, more than 33 percent of students were ninth graders and roughly a third of those students were ninth grade repeaters. Exhibit II-7 provides other demographic data for Berkshire’s student population.

**Exhibit II-7:
Demographic Data – Berkshire JSHS**

School Year	Total	African American	Latino	Asian	White	Free/Reduced Lunch Eligible
2007-2008	146	58%	13%	1%	28%	100%
2008-2009	109	53%	11%	<0%	36%	100%

All students in the Berkshire program are low-income and, as with the other MEES grantee schools, African Americans make up the majority of the student population at 58 percent.⁶ Because this is a highly trauma-influenced population, behavioral incidences occur on a daily basis. Staff report that the school typically has three or more violent incidents a day. The most common incidents involve aggression, runaway behavior, fighting, and alcohol use.

The nature of this school’s student body – wherein students rotate in and out of the school and have an average enrollment period of between nine to twelve months – makes it challenging to create a baseline against which to measure academic progress of students over time. DOL developed separate and distinct performance measures for Berkshire JSHS, which SPR will use to track outcomes at this unique school.

Areas of Potential Grant Influence

The data presented thus far offer a picture of the difficulties teachers and students face as they seek to meet performance standards and maintain a safe and secure environment. Many of the challenges facing MEES grantee schools are the result of forces that cannot be adequately controlled or are difficult to contain or mitigate, such as poverty, mental health concerns, gang membership, and unstable home environments. In this section, we present a number of school-level challenges that can be controlled, modified, or mitigated, and that the MEES grant may help to address. School leaders hope to see positive changes in these areas over the course of grant implementation.

⁶ African Americans make up 19 percent of the population of New York State.

Attendance

Poor attendance is a major challenge for the MEES grantee schools.⁷ Like declining enrollment, poor attendance makes it difficult to ensure that students are getting the instruction necessary to achieve and progress academically. Exhibit II-8 below shows that overall attendance at W.E.B. DuBois HS and at the Philadelphia MEES grantee schools is low and that, for the Philadelphia Schools, truancy numbers are high.⁸

**Exhibit II-8:
Attendance**

School Year	Average Daily Attendance	Number of Truancies per 100 Students ⁹
Bartram HS		
2007-2008 80.4%		79.73
2008-2009 81.0%		80.25
FitzSimons HS		
2007-2008 75.2%		90.18
2008-2009 75.6%		86.55
Germantown HS		
2007-2008 77.9%		74.55
2008-2009 73.3%		83.14
Lincoln HS		
2007-2008 80.1%		72.93
2008-2009 78.7%		74.79
Overbrook HS		
2007-2008 76.7%		80.39
2008-2009 77.7%		84.88
University City HS		
2007-2008 76.6%		86.97
2008-2009 72.8%		91.24
West Philadelphia HS		

⁷ Attendance rates are not applicable to Berkshire JSJS, as it is a residential program.

⁸ Truancy rates were not available from W.E.B. DuBois HS.

⁹ SPR calculated the rates of truancies per 100 students with enrollment and truancy numbers for the years provided.

School Year	Average Daily Attendance	Number of Truancies per 100 Students ⁹
2007-2008 77.5%		77.38
2008-2009 78.0%		82.24
W.E.B. DuBois HS		
2007-2008 81.6%		
2008-2009 79.7%		

Reports from the School District of Philadelphia indicate that a majority of students at the MEES grantee schools were “chronically absent” (accrued eight or more days of unexcused absences). The district also reports an alarming statistic: a majority of the students who had fewer than four unexcused absences in eighth grade were chronically absent during their ninth-grade year.¹⁰ In other words, many students did not have truancy problems until they hit the ninth grade. This underscores that the ninth grade is a critical period for these students and is a core reason that, as described in Chapter IV, schools have targeted many MEES funded interventions specifically at ninth graders.

Academic Preparation

Poor reading and math proficiency scores, as measured by the PSSA, indicate that many students at grantee schools are not adequately prepared for the ninth grade. For example, 75 percent of Lincoln HS’s incoming students were one or more grade levels behind in reading when the school applied for the MEES grant. Moreover, district data show significant numbers of students at target schools (19-29 percent) must repeat the ninth grade because they cannot pass their ninth grade courses. As illustrated in Exhibits II-9 and II-10, many of these students fail to be promoted even after *repeating* the ninth grade and eventually drop out. These data suggest that schools face serious challenges as they seek to improve academic performance, not just in helping students to re-learn the basic skills they need in order to succeed in high school, but in creating mechanisms for students to “catch-up” once they have fallen behind.

¹⁰ Percentages varied across schools, from 50 percent of Germantown HS’s chronically absent 9th graders to 100 percent of FitzSimons HS’s chronically absent students having had fewer than 4 absences as 8th graders.

**Exhibit II-9:
Grade Promotion for First-time Ninth Graders (2007–2008) – Philadelphia**

School	1st-time 9th Grader Enrollment¹¹	# 1st-time 9th Graders Promoted	# 1st-time 9th Graders Failed to Promote	# 1st-time 9th Graders Dropped Out
John Bartram HS	425	255 (60%)	116 (27%)	49 (12%)
FitzSimons HS	86	47 (66%)	25 (29%)	16 (19%)
Germantown HS	350	206 (59%)	122 (35%)	9 (3%)
Lincoln HS	566	307 (54%)	180 (32%)	55 (10%)
Overbrook HS	452	315 (70%)	86 (19%)	17 (4%)
University City HS	325	168 (52%)	119 (37%)	38 (12%)
West Philadelphia HS	263	152 (58%)	70 (27%)	34 (13%)

**Exhibit II-10:
Grade Promotion for Repeating Ninth Graders (2007–2008) – Philadelphia**

School	Repeating 9th Grader Enrollment¹²	% Repeating 9th Graders Promoted	% Repeating 9th Graders Failed to Promote	% Repeating 9th Graders Dropped Out
John Bartram HS	239	89 (37%)	32 (13%)	90 (38%)
FitzSimons HS	22	5 (23%)	4 (18%)	7 (32%)
Germantown HS	147	53 (36%)	11 (7%)	34 (23%)
Lincoln HS	307	91(30%)	73 (24%)	101 (33%)
Overbrook HS	221	57 (26%)	65 (29%)	44 (20%)
University City HS	125	36 (29%)	29 (23%)	63 (50%)
West Philadelphia HS	166	42 (25%)	46 (28%)	50 (30%)

As is discussed further in Chapter IV, the MEES grantee schools are addressing this challenge by providing intensive “basic skill” development for ninth graders and by expanding credit retrieval programs where students can make-up academic credits at their own pace.

¹¹ Numbers do not add up to 100% due to student transfers into and out of the school.

¹² Numbers do not add up to 100% due to student transfers into and out of the school.

Parent/Community Involvement

School leaders across multiple sites feel that increased parent and community involvement are a key component of successful reform efforts. However, they also feel that this is one of their biggest challenges. At University City HS, for example, staff estimate that in a school of approximately 1,200 students, the parents of only about 60 students attended parent-teacher conferences. Teachers at this school also state that most of their students have the ability to achieve, if only they could participate in class every day. They add that the context of students' lives often makes learning challenging. Many students in these schools have unstable home environments, are in the foster care system, do not live with their parents, or are "latch key kids." Many simply suffer from the common effects of poverty, such as poor nutrition and transportation challenges. School leaders claim that it is not uncommon for students to come to school tardy, without having eaten breakfast.

While leaders at schools such as University City HS feel that they have made significant progress in developing strong relationships with families, leaders at other schools feel frustrated by how immensely challenging it is to get parents to participate in school events. Leaders at John Bartram HS state that they continue to create events aimed at bringing more parents into the school and getting them involved, but they feel that progress is slow. One example related by a respondent follows:

Last week we had a big Oktoberfest [for the ninth grade academy] and we had food and invited parents and we had something like 30 parents [show up]. It was frustrating because the academy had 300 kids so that's just 10 percent. We had 400 parents at back-to-school night in September, which is good, but it's still not 50 percent [of the total school population.] Parent engagement is still really challenging. Only two parents came when we did our Student of the Month awards and we had chosen ten students!

While Bartram HS leaders are clearly frustrated, they also acknowledge the fact that many of their students come from families with low levels of education, which means that the school has a responsibility to communicate to parents about the importance and benefits of participation. Moreover, the ability of many parents to participate is constrained by a variety of factors, such as inflexible work schedules and limited transportation options. For example, the Student of the Month award ceremony at John Bartram HS took place at lunch time, which likely posed a problem for working parents. School leaders acknowledge this and are thinking through alternatives. The MEES grant will support community-based and case management programs that school leaders hope will deepen the engagement of parents and other community members in the school.

School Environments

For all students, a stable school setting is important for academic success. For students with challenging home environments, stability at school is even more essential, not just for academic success but for overall well-being. The importance of feeling safe in school cannot be overstated and the creation of safe spaces that foster student learning is essential for schools that want their students to achieve. One of the core goals of the MEES grants is to assist schools to create more stable and safe school environments.

One theme in the first round of student interviews was the role of security in affecting students' sense of safety. At Lincoln HS, for example, youth felt that much of the rule-breaking and violence was due to ineffective security guards that befriended students and inconsistently enforced rules. In 2009, school leaders at Lincoln HS recognized this problem and took swift action to remedy it, replacing lenient security guards with new personnel. In contrast, at West Philadelphia HS, the principal felt that security personnel were too heavy-handed. She felt that guards failed to treat students with respect and that this lack of respect contributed to or exacerbated existing behavioral problems. The principal therefore discussed issues of respect with all staff and replaced personnel who didn't "get the message." She explains:

The problem was the adults in the building and the culture of the school is to deal with kids heavy-handedly. Kids don't respond to that. We moved people out of the building. I want staff to deal with kids in a more respectful manner. If adults change their own behavior, then the kids will change their behavior. So I moved staff around, changed leaders, and had some security officers who weren't getting the message to move out. We had a discipline officer here for 10 years and he was the worst at dealing with the students.

Students at University City HS state that the key to effective security is the development of a relationship of trust between students and security personnel. Students felt that the hiring of more guards at the school did not make the school any safer. The key, state these students, is not to bring in *more* guards, but to give students and guards a chance to develop relationships with one another so that students can trust that the guards are, in fact, concerned about their safety and well-being.

Another factor influencing the climate of schools is the transfer rate for students. Students are transferred from school to school, particularly if they have a history of behavioral problems. Staff and students at Lincoln HS state that the high transfer rate at their school leads to significant challenges in terms of climate. Staff report that about 325 students transfer into Lincoln HS each year, and that about 15 to 18 percent of the student body is lost to transfers each year as well. They report that five percent of the students who transfer into Lincoln do so

because of disciplinary issues, and that 75 percent of them have already “served time” at an alternative school and are returning to a comprehensive high school *other* than where the behavioral incident occurred. One school leader from Overbrook complained that all but one of the district’s “disciplinary schools” had been shut down. These were schools to which expelled students and students with behavioral problems were sent. This school leader was concerned about the fact that his school’s “problem students” would thus be returned to his school, providing challenges to the school’s recent climate improvements.

The practice of transferring “problem students” forces students and teachers to adjust to constantly shifting populations, which can impact not only academics but efforts to create a stable school culture. Moreover, students are not impervious to the actions of the adults around them and they question the decisions made by adults in the name of “security.” One student from University City HS, for example, stated that kicking students out of school and sending them to another school is “not the best answer.” Instead, she said, schools need to find a way to change the school climate and students’ behavior. Indeed, in order to create a singular school culture, as many of these schools want to do, grantee schools are using MEES funds to design alternative disciplinary structures, such as in-school suspension, that will help to address students’ behavioral issues while also keeping them on track academically.

Affective Needs

This is a population where you have to meet the affective needs of the kids first. If these kids don’t think you care about them, they don’t care what you bring to their cognitive table. These kids, before their cognitive needs are met, their affective needs must be met—and they must be met in school.

- Principal, Bartram HS

The quote above reflects a keen understanding of the needs of the critical populations served by MEES grantee schools. For students living in neighborhoods marked by violence and within households that may not be able to provide ideal support structures due to issues of poverty or challenging social circumstances, prioritizing the affective needs of students is a critical step in helping students to create a path for success. According to a school leader at University City HS, schools need to be a sign of hope for students. He adds:

Many times in urban communities, that’s what’s missing. It’s very nihilistic, there’s no hope, there’s so much negativity. Outside of the skills we give them, outside of the coping mechanisms that we can give them, outside of the services we provide them, I think the best things we can do for our urban schools in our urban cities is to provide hope, and that’s what we’re able to do here with this grant.

Students can have hope, it seems, when they feel cared for and believe that the adults in the school think they matter.

To meet the affective needs of students, administrators and teachers across MEES grantee schools are working to build better relationships with students and their families. Overbrook HS's principal, for example, makes a point of being visible to students, of being in the hallways during passing periods and at lunch time, and University City HS's Turnaround Assistant Principal also places a priority on making himself more accessible to students. Bartram HS's principal emphasizes the importance of relationship-building in the school's reform efforts:

The most important piece that we work on is to know every student by name, and that students have an adult that they have a relationship with, and to make sure that every student has a positive relationship with at least one adult in the building. The [MEES] grant builds and sustains this piece.

As described in Chapter IV, schools are using MEES grants to fund mentoring and case management programs that are designed to address students affective needs and to connect them with caring adult role models within the school.

Student Pride

Though interviews with some students reveal that they have a strong concern about the quality of their education and a desire to learn in a positive and safe environment, certain actions by other students—such as urinating in the hallways or leaving trash all over school grounds—are indicators of resistance or apathy towards the school and staff. Poor attendance, declining enrollment, and damage to school property reflect both a lack of engagement in the school community and the absence of a feeling of ownership of the school in general. Schools are addressing this resistance by developing creative strategies to keep students engaged, and to help them become more interested in, and feel a part of, the greater school context.

Grantee schools are tackling student engagement issues from different angles. Overbrook HS changed its student uniforms to include each class's graduating year, hoping that this will help students feel part of the overall school culture and envision themselves as graduates. At West Philadelphia HS, ninth graders' school uniforms differ from those of other students—they have orange shirts with blue logos, in contrast to the blue shirts and orange logos of older students. These uniforms make ninth graders stand out, giving them their own identity as a group and helping the school carry out its goal of intensively nurturing these students and keeping them out of trouble. West Philadelphia HS has also created logos for each academy and each academy has put up banners in its hallways—another effort to devise ways for students to anchor themselves in school culture.

A school leader at University City HS believes that in order to address issues of engagement, the school needs to come up with ways to make students stakeholders in the school. He has begun the process by including student voices in the plan to turn around the school. He sat with the student government and together they talked about the problems at the school. He noted that once youth feel as though they are being heard, they are better able to handle situations. In prior times, youth were alienated and not consulted about issues at the school. Now they have been invited to serve on a student advisory board for the MEES grant. Students have expressed enthusiasm about their ability to participate and become decision-makers for their school. Not all schools have student advisory boards on their Turnaround Teams but all do make it a practice to hold focus groups with students to solicit student opinions.

Complementary Initiatives

In addition to the MEES grants, target schools are involved in several other initiatives and programs designed to help them improve academic and behavioral outcomes for their students. Exhibit II-11 below lists many of the other concurrent initiatives and programs taking place in MEES grantee schools. These multiple reform efforts reflect the aggressiveness with which MEES grantee schools are addressing their academic performance and behavioral challenges. As illustrated in Exhibit II-11, all the MEES grantee schools in Philadelphia were given “Empowerment School” status by the district. Empowerment schools are given extra staff resources to help with academic performance and behavioral issues, including advisors, instructional specialists, and parent ombudsmen. Classrooms for the Future is another initiative that complements the academic goals of the MEES grant by supporting “21st Century Teaching” through increased access to cutting-edge technology in the classroom.

**Exhibit II-11:
Other Initiatives**

Initiative	Bartram HS	Berkshire JSHS	DuBois HS	FitzSimons HS	Germantown HS	Lincoln HS	Overbrook HS	University City HS	West Philadelphia HS
<p>Empowerment School Status</p> <p>Provides resources and staff to underperforming schools or schools undergoing corrective action. Staff can include advisors, instructional specialists and parent ombudsmen.</p>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Imagine 2014*</p> <p>SDP's five-year strategic plan.</p>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Small Learning Communities</p> <p>Awards grants to local education agencies to implement structures to improve academic achievement, such as career academies, "houses" within a school, or personalization strategies.</p>					✓				✓
<p>GEAR UP</p> <p>Provides activities and support to increase readiness and success in postsecondary education.</p>					✓				
<p>Classrooms for the Future*</p> <p>A grant given to SDP to foster 21st Century Teaching through increased access to cutting edge technology in the classrooms.</p>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Single School Culture Initiative*</p> <p>SDP initiative to increase safety in schools through a comprehensive model aimed at problem-solving, prevention, intervention, and recovery.</p>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Comprehensive Student Assistance Process*</p> <p>SDP-wide program to offer three-tiered support and assistance to students with academic, behavioral and/or attendance difficulties.</p>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Initiative	Bartram HS	Berkshire JSHS	DuBois HS	FitzSimons HS	Germantown HS	Lincoln HS	Overbrook HS	University City HS	West Philadelphia HS
ELECT/CTC Delivers specialized academic and social services to assist teen parents in completing their high school education and making successful school-to-work transitions.							✓	✓	
Project 720 Implements a rigorous preparatory curriculum to ensure that all students are prepared for postsecondary education or careers.					✓				
AT&T Grant Provided vertical teaming for eighth and ninth graders to prepare eighth graders for ninth grade.					✓				
PAHSCI (Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative) Provides high school instructional coaching and mentoring to improve student achievement and spark education reform.					✓				
City Year Places tutors and mentors in Philadelphia high schools for one year.	✓							✓	
DOL School Violence Grant (CISP/Learning to Work) Provides work readiness training in the form of internships, skill development, and counseling as a dropout-prevention strategy for at-risk ninth graders.							✓	✓	
Title 1 IDEA Part B of the IDEA provides funds to state and local educational agencies to provide services to children with disabilities in public education to prepare them for future independent living, education, and employment.		✓							
21st Century Afterschool Fund		✓							

All Philadelphia MEES grantee schools have also implemented a Comprehensive Student Assistance process, which is a district-wide program that offers three-tiered support and assistance to students with academic, behavioral, and/or attendance difficulties.

Because the MEES grant shares broader goals with the other initiatives, it offers schools the opportunity to better achieve their overall objectives through thoughtful alignment of strategies and resources. For example, West Philadelphia HS is using the MEES grant to supplement work being done through its Small Learning Communities (SLC) Grant. As indicated in Exhibit II-11, the purpose of the SLC grant is to provide structural support for improving academic achievement via the development of an academy structure, personalization strategies, and related initiatives. The MEES and SLC grants have some specific overlapping objectives, such as reducing student misbehavior, removing barriers to learning, improving student achievement, and providing counseling support. Therefore the MEES grant will allow the school to delve even more deeply into addressing its challenges, particularly with the help of a “change coach” who will guide school leaders in setting up a leadership team, forming committees, and making sure leaders are on track with implementation.

In Baltimore, the MEES grant provides W.E.B. DuBois HS with the resources necessary to implement reform plans that had already been in place but had no funding for implementation. These plans had been devised by the principal at W.E.B. DuBois HS in response to the school’s failure to meet AYP goals and its status on the Persistently Dangerous Schools list. Because it had a plan in place, W.E.B. DuBois HS was able to move quickly, implementing reform as soon as it received funding through the MEES grant.

While many of these initiatives are underway and complement the goals of the MEES grant, some school leaders are still challenged to get overall “buy-in.” A leader at one school explains the challenges she faces with respect to skepticism about school reforms:

Getting buy-in is still a major issue here...teacher buy-in. They are still shaky about the whole process. And their rationale is that they’ve seen grants come and go and what makes this one any different? I think there are concerns about sustainability and just the culture of the folks in the building. We have folks who have been here for years on top of years and they have seen a lot of changes. I think that’s where people are, so I have to do a lot of canvassing, a lot of stroking. It makes my job hard.

Despite these challenges, this school leader also feels excited about the promising future that the MEES grant can bring about. She is optimistic about her school’s ability to effect change because it has an influx of new teachers who bring new ideas and fresh energy. She feels that once she can get all the teachers on board, they will be able to move forward.

In the next chapter, we discuss MEES grantee schools' visions for change and how they plan to bring them fruition. Specifically, we focus on the planning phase of the MEES grant and the broader goals that these schools hope the grant will help them achieve.

III. GRANT PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

In this chapter, we discuss grant planning and administration for the MEES grants, with a particular focus on the accomplishments of the planning year and the role of school leaders in facilitating change within grantee schools. We begin by presenting an overview of the goals of the MEES grant and the activities associated with the planning year. We then move into a detailed discussion of grant leadership, including the role of the Turnaround Team, school district, grant administrator (or Turnaround Principal), school principal, and staffing. We conclude with a discussion of grant-related partnerships and capacity building.

Overview of Goals and Vision for the Grant

The grant has given us the resources, the money, the excitement, not only to plan—because we have always been planning in urban education—but given us the money to make it real.

- School Leader, University City HS

The MEES initiative represents a significant effort to “turn around” the schools that are most in need. The MEES grants, totaling \$3.5–\$6.5 million per school, are of sufficient size to give school administrators hope that they can transform their schools’ climates, expand the capacities of their teaching and support staff, and extend networks of support through enhanced relationships with community partners and parents. The grants provide enough funding for schools to reconfigure themselves in ways that may significantly expand the level of services provided to students and enhance coordination of these services within the school and with the community.

The goal of the MEES initiative is to create interventions at three levels. At each school, the grant funds (1) interventions that affect the whole school; (2) interventions that target particular “at-risk” populations for services, particularly entering ninth graders and repeating ninth graders; (3) and intensive interventions for individual students who present the greatest challenges relating to misconduct, truancy, and poor school performance.

Each grantee outlined its initial plans to achieve these aims in its proposal to DOL. Subsequently, during the planning phase of the grant, each school developed and refined its goals for grant implementation; these goals were academic, social and behavioral, employment-related, and structural and institutional. During the planning phase, schools also worked with DOL to develop a set of performance goals for the grants. (A separate set of performance targets were set for Berkshire JSHS because of the residential nature of the school and the time-limited nature of services that the school provides.¹ Generally, however, the performance goals for Berkshire JSHS overlap considerably with those of the other schools.) Exhibit III-1 provides a broad view of goals at different levels, and how they map to DOL’s performance targets.

**Exhibit III-1:
Goals of the MEES Grants**

Goals	School Goals	DOL Performance Goals²
Academic Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce dropouts, particularly by targeting ninth graders • Improve academic performance (test scores, pass rates) • Improve graduation rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease rate of first-time ninth graders failing • Decrease rate of repeating ninth grade students failing for a subsequent year • Increase percentage of students testing at grade level • Increase percentage of students who are no longer basic-skills deficient • Increase graduation rate
Behavioral/School Climate Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve school climate • Reduce violence and behavioral disruptions on campus • Move off of the list of schools classified by NCLB as persistently dangerous • Increase enrollment (reverse trend towards declining enrollment) • Improve students’ connectedness to school and adult mentors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Average Daily Attendance (ADA) • Decrease percentage of students who miss 54 or more days • Decrease the rate of all incidents involving suspension, expulsion, or arrest • Decrease the rate of severe incidents that count towards persistently dangerous school status • Decrease the rate of students becoming involved in the juvenile justice system • Increase percentage of students participating in adult mentoring program

¹ As described in Chapter II, Berkshire JSHS is a residential high school for students referred through NY school system, social services, or the court system. Most students stay at Berkshire JSHS for nine to twelve months.

² Goals are still in draft form until CBO partners have the opportunity to negotiate measures.

Goals	School Goals	DOL Performance Goals²
Employment/ Postsecondary Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make learning relevant through integration of Career and Technical Education (CTE) content into curriculum • Create bridges to the workplace through internship opportunities • Improve linkages to post-secondary institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase percentage of graduating seniors who enroll in post-secondary education
Structural/ Institutional Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create smaller learning environments (ninth grade academies and career academies) • Reduce class size • Improve professional climate for teachers (i.e. through shared planning time) 	

As illustrated in Exhibit III-1, the MEES grants aim to bring about a range of academic shifts at the school leading to increased test scores, reduced dropouts, a decrease in the percentage of repeating ninth graders, and improved graduation rates. The grants also hope to bring about shifts in student behavior and school climate by increasing student attendance, reducing violence, and improving the quality of relationships that students have with adult role models and mentors. As the academic performance and school climate of the schools improve, school leaders hope that word of positive change will get out into the community, and enrollment numbers will begin to increase. The grant also hopes to improve the relevancy of high school for students, through an increased focus on work readiness and established pathways to career and post-secondary options. Finally, schools are using the MEES grant to create lasting reforms in the structure of teaching and learning, through the creation of ninth-grade academies, career academies, and shared planning time for teachers.

Because the grants are focused on holistic reform of the school environment, most of the performance targets and grant-related goals focus on school-wide change, rather than specific programs within the school. In the words of a staff member at West Philadelphia HS, the goal of the grants is to “radically change the way kids learn and treat each other.”

Planning Phase of MEES Grant

The MEES grants were awarded for an initial period of 38 months, with up to a 14-month planning period. Schools did not need to use the entire 14-month planning period, and could stagger the implementation of major components, though DOL hoped that all aspects of the grant

would be implemented by Fall 2009. Exhibit III-2 provides an overview of size of the MEES grant, along with the amount of the budget reserved for the planning phase (based on the original budgets in grantees' proposals).

**Exhibit III-2:
Budget (from original proposals)³**

School	Planning Year	Percentage for Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Total
John Bartram HS	\$632,293	10%	\$2,813,047	\$2,889,811	\$6,335,151
Berkshire JSHS	\$933,968	26%	\$1,314,827	\$1,314,827	\$3,563,523
W.E.B DuBois HS	\$1,773,846	50%	\$1,286,731	\$502,975	\$3,563,552
FitzSimons HS	\$710,247	20%	\$1,424,796	\$1,428,479	\$3,563,523
Germantown HS	\$716,345	11%	\$2,794,869	\$2,823,938	\$6,335,151
Lincoln HS	\$661,469	10%	\$2,821,136	\$2,852,547	\$6,335,151
Overbrook HS	\$1,040,659	16%	\$2,680,109	\$2,614,383	\$6,335,151
University City HS	\$681,550	11%	\$2,791,294	\$2,862,307	\$6,335,151
West Philadelphia HS	\$965,402	15%	\$2,707,647	\$2,662,102	\$6,335,151

As illustrated in Exhibit III-2, six schools were awarded \$6.3 million and three schools were awarded the smaller amount of \$3.5 million. Grant awards were based on the size of the school's student body. Schools serving more than 1,000 students could apply for the \$6.3 million grant, while those serving fewer than 1,000 students could apply for the \$3.5 million grant.

Schools differed significantly in the percentage of the grant that they reserved for the planning year. W.E.B. DuBois HS and Berkshire JSHS planned to spend a relatively large proportion of the grant (50-26 percent, respectively) in the first year because school leaders wanted to implement some aspects of the grant right away. The Philadelphia-based schools, in contrast, reserved the majority of their funds (80–90 percent) for the implementation years. Generally, schools that received smaller grants expended a higher percentage of their grants in the planning year compared to those that received larger grants.

³ Despite numerous requests, we were not able to get revised budget numbers from the schools or school districts. Budgets may have been changed significantly since the original proposal, so these are mere estimates.

W.E.B. DuBois HS and Berkshire JSHS began implementing certain elements of the grant as early as Fall 2008. In these two cases, school stakeholders felt that the needs of the students required that they move quickly. A school leader for W.E.B. DuBois High School said, “Looking at the needs of our children, we did not think that we would be able to sit around [for fourteen months] and talk about what we were going to do.” Thus, these schools moved quickly in implementing pieces of their plans that were already “in the pipeline,” such as in-school suspension and credit retrieval programs. Meanwhile, they also spent time developing leadership teams and subcommittees that planned those pieces of the grant projects that were completely new to the schools—such as the mentoring programs.

The seven Philadelphia-based schools, on the other hand, spent more than a year on planning activities. During this period, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) was heavily involved, spending considerable time working to build the capacity of the schools to implement the grant, preparing an RFQ for grant contractors, and coordinating cross-site learning. Meanwhile, schools worked to create leadership teams for the grant, construct collective visions of what the grant could achieve, build buy-in from teachers and school staff, and develop plans for grant implementation.

As will be discussed further in later sections, many of the administrators and teachers at Philadelphia schools were frustrated by the slow pace of the planning period. Like school leaders at W.E.B. DuBois HS and Berkshire JSHS, they felt that the needs of their students demanded quicker action, but the pace of implementation at the district level prohibited them from moving more quickly. Yet, as will be discussed further in our discussion of the district’s role, staff also felt that the SDP was effective at building the capacity of the schools to implement the initiative effectively and did so in a way that could lead to potentially sustainable reforms.

Although grantees took different approaches to the planning year, all school stakeholders were delighted to move into the implementation phase of the grant in the Fall of 2009, where they could see students actually engaging in the programs they had worked so hard to develop.

School and Grant Leadership

School and grant leadership is essential to grant planning and implementation. School reform requires shifts in the culture of the school, including most prominently the values, aspirations, and behaviors of teachers, students, parents, and other school stakeholders. It requires the kind of strong vision and leadership that inspires trust—trust that increased work and effort will yield tangible benefits. As a school leader from University City HS put it, school reform is about

“pushing people out of their comfort zones, pushing them to do things in new ways so they can help kids.”

Grant leadership included the Turnaround Team (TT), a distributed leadership team whose role is to oversee grant planning and implementation. Most grantees also hired a Turnaround Assistant Principal (TAP), whose role is to serve as both an instructional leader and a grant administrator. School districts provide oversight over the grants to varying degrees, but all have a role in grant implementation through their influence on hiring, contract approval, curriculum selection, and professional development. Finally, school principals play an important role in grant implementation, sometimes in providing oversight for the grant effort, and sometimes in just helping to establish the large-scale vision and tone for reform. In the following sections, we describe the roles of each of these leaders or leadership groups in relationship to the MEES grant.

Turnaround Team

ETA’s Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) for the MEES grant required that each grant be led by a Turnaround Team (TT). The role of the TT is to guide planning and implementation throughout the term of the grant, often by establishing subcommittees focused on aspects of grant implementation. If effectively run, the TT is a change strategy in and of itself, in that it supports collaborative decision-making, promotes buy-in, and contributes to a professional culture of high expectations and group accountability.

All of the MEES schools formed TTs, which generally met monthly throughout the planning stage of the grant.⁴ All but one of the schools formed TT sub-committees that worked on planning particular programs or interventions. For instance, most schools had subcommittees that worked on planning the summer transition program, the mentoring program, case management, employment strategies, and academic interventions. Subcommittees tended to meet weekly or bimonthly, as necessary to prepare for implementation.

Exhibit III-3 highlights the members of the TT and subcommittees at each school. As illustrated in the table, all of the schools have school leaders or school administrators on the TT.

Administrators include the school principal and the Turnaround Principal or grant administrator, and sometimes other vice principals. The Turnaround Principal (grant administrator) organizes the TT meetings, supervises subcommittees’ progress, and acts as a liaison between the

⁴ Berkshire JSHS’s TT only met for a short time.

subcommittees and the principal. The role of administrative leaders will be discussed in more detail in a subsequent section of this chapter.

**Exhibit III-3:
Turnaround Team Members**

	School Leaders	District Staff	Community Members⁵	School staff	Teachers	Students	Parents
Bartram HS	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Berkshire JSHS ⁶	✓	✓ ⁷		✓			
W.E.B. DuBois HS	✓		✓	✓	✓	* ⁸	✓
Fitzsimons HS	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Germantown HS	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lincoln HS	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Overbrook HS	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
University City HS	✓			✓	✓	✓	
West Philadelphia HS	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	

School staff and teachers contributed to grant planning and implementation primarily through their participation in the TT and its subcommittees. All of the grantees included school staff on the TT; these were typically the climate manager, guidance counselors, the parent ombudsman, security staff, school nurses, and others. In general, staff were selected to serve on the TT because they play a role in facilitating a positive school climate. All but one school (Berkshire JSHS) included teachers in the TT committee. Most school leaders felt strongly that the initiative needed teacher input and buy-in to be successful. For example, a school leader at West Philadelphia HS said,

It would be easy to plan the pieces out with just the administration because we don't teach classes, but it's important to us to have plans

⁵ These may include CBOs, the mayor's office or other local officials, law enforcement, foundations.

⁶ The TT at Berkshire JSHS is no longer an active committee. The committee met for several months to discuss grant planning and then disbanded.

⁷ At Berkshire JSHS, district staff and school administrators are the same people.

⁸ W.E.B. DuBois HS got student input on the planning process through student focus groups, but did not have students play a role on the TT.

generated by the teachers so that they have ownership of them....We want reform to come from the teachers.

Because of the strong desire to involve teachers and staff in the planning effort, schools worked hard to recruit teachers to the TT team, some requiring that teachers sign up for committees. Teacher attendance at TT meetings was inconsistent, however. Because of their teaching schedules, teachers have less time available during the regular school day to participate in planning meetings, and often have life commitments that make it difficult for them to stay after school for such meetings. As a result, many schools had teachers who served on the TT “in name only.” To encourage participation, schools paid teachers and staff for time spent in planning meetings, but still found it challenging to find a time when teachers could regularly participate. The lack of consistent teacher participation contributed to a feeling among administrators that teachers—particularly veteran teachers—lacked knowledge about the grant and had not bought into it.

Only Berkshire had a district representative play a role on its TT, and that is essentially because the superintendent of the district is also the principal of Berkshire JSHS. However, as will be discussed further in our discussion of the role of the school district, lack of participation on the TT does not necessarily reflect a lack of involvement on the part of the district. The School District of Philadelphia plays a very active role in the MEES grants through its continuous contact with the Turnaround Principals, but leaves the day-to-day planning of grant activities to the TT.

Most TT committees also include community stakeholders. Community stakeholders include community-based organizations, foundations, law enforcement agencies, and representatives from the mayor’s office. For instance, the TT for W.E.B. DuBois HS includes staff from the John Hopkins Center for the prevention of youth violence, the Baltimore Police Department, and YMCA of Central Maryland. West Philadelphia High’s TT includes the Philadelphia Education Fund.

Students also played an ongoing role in the design of grant-funded programs, helping to make sure that grant programs are “relevant” for students. For instance, University City HS created a Student Advisory Council that acted as a subcommittee of the TT committee and influenced the design of the mentoring and summer transition programs. Six of the other schools had youth leaders participate on the TT. W.E.B. DuBois HS did not have students participate on the TT, but the administrators did hold a series of focus groups with students to get their input on grant programs. Finally, four schools had some degree of parent participation on the TT, at least during some period of the planning process. Parent participation, however, remained very weak.

Overbrook HS, for instance, has one parent who participates on the school's TT, but that parent is a relatively new addition to the team.

In sum, the TT committee has generally been a successful planning tool for the eight schools who have continued to use it. Through participation in the TT, diverse stakeholders have provided input into the planning process for the grant. The TT subcommittees have done most of the planning for grant elements, such as the summer transition and mentoring programs. It has been challenging, however, for schools to get consistently broad participation on their committees from teachers and community members, two groups whose participation is thought by leaders to be essential for the success of the effort.

School District

The school district is the grant recipient for each of the nine MEES grants and, in all cases, played an instrumental role in preparing the grant proposals. For two of the schools, however, the district's role in planning for and providing oversight of the grant has been small. Berkshire JSHS is the only school in the Berkshire Union Free School District (BUFSD) and the superintendent of the district also acts as the principal of the school and the leader of the grant. Thus, for Berkshire JSHS there is not really a distinction between the district and the school. Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) is playing a relatively hands-off role in the MEES grant, as the grant is being managed at the school level. This is due in part to a Fair Student Funding model that BCPS implemented in SY 2007–2008, which provided school principals with more decision-making power over budgets. In contrast to BCPS or BUFSD, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) is playing a large role in the seven Philadelphia-based MEES grants. SDP provides fiscal oversight of the grants, provides extensive technical assistance (TA) to schools, is responsible for developing the RFQ for CBO vendors, and is also playing an important role in hiring and curriculum selection.

The office in charge of the MEES grants at SDP is the Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation. The team that works on the MEES grants includes the director of the Office of Multiple Pathways, two program managers, and a research associate. The role of the program managers is to oversee the schools' hiring processes, contracting of services, insurance-related needs, and grant budgets. Program managers also convene weekly TA meetings with TAPs and coordinate between the MEES grant and other district initiatives. Program managers have regular, almost daily, contact with each of the schools. In addition to the program managers, the MEES team at the district includes a full-time research associate, whose role is to document and evaluate the initiative, and to provide data to the schools that can inform their decision-making. Finally, schools receive support from other SDP offices that complement the goals of the MEES

grants. To further its goal of creating a Single School Culture,⁹ the SDP Office of School Climate and Safety provides support and staff to the schools, and the Office of Teaching and Learning provides professional development support to teachers and makes district-wide decisions about curriculum.

The seven Philadelphia schools are generally appreciative of the role that SDP is playing with the MEES grants, particularly in its role as TA provider (discussed further in the capacity building section). SDP has helped to offload some of the bureaucratic demands of the grant, worked collaboratively with schools to create the RFQ for grant contractors, and provided support to schools throughout the design process. One school leader described the district as playing the role of providing “collaborative oversight,” while another said, “[SDP] played an integral part in providing us what we needed and allowing us to make choices.” As suggested by this quote, the District aims to achieve a delicate balance of setting common standards for the schools (i.e., related to hiring, selection of contractors, and curriculum), while providing school stakeholders with opportunities to shape the standards and tailor the initiative to the particular needs and character of their schools. Further, SDP has worked to link the MEES grant interventions with other district-initiated reforms, including SDP’s 2014 strategic plan. This has the potential to increase the sustainability of MEES-related reforms. One school leader at University City HS said,

When you have the school district involved you cannot be myopic... They force you to think globally, which is good because that’s how you create sustainability.

The strong role of the SDP, however, has created bureaucratic challenges and slowed the pace of grant implementation. Philadelphia school leaders generally do not have the discretion and authority they need to move autonomously or quickly. The most commonly cited challenge of working with SDP relates to the schools’ lack of access to and autonomy over the grant budget during the planning year. For instance, during the planning year, many school leaders complained that they did not get MEES funds released that could pay for planning time. Instead of using MEES grant funds, schools were encouraged by SDP to use Title I funds for MEES planning. During the planning year, schools also often needed to shift around and refine their budget estimates to fit evolving implementation plans, but found making even small adjustments to the budget cumbersome and difficult. In some cases, the DOL approval process for budget-

⁹ Single School Culture is an SDP initiative. It is a way of organizing and running a school that focuses on creating shared norms, beliefs, values, and goals and results in agreed-upon processes and procedures for improving climate and behavior. The district focuses on SSC through professional development and student involvement at each of the SDP grantee schools.

related shifts may have caused delays, yet schools viewed this primarily as a SDP-related challenge.

SDP's oversight of the RFQ process for bringing mentoring, employment, leadership, and case management contractors on board is another area that proved challenging. School staff were eager to bring on contractors in the Spring of 2009, so that those contractors could play a role on the TT committees and help to design the programs that they would operate within the schools. SDP went through a collaborative process to develop an RFQ that would ensure that schools would select high-quality vendors. The process, however, was much slower than schools expected. Although school staff originally anticipated that SDP would release the RFQ in January 2009, the RFQ was not released until September 2009. One teacher who was engaged in planning at one school expressed a common frustration about the slow pace of the process.

[The Student Success Center] is all planned and we're ready to implement it, but there is no money to hire people. The district said it will release the RFP in January, then March, then April, but there is still no movement... We need 150 internships to start in the fall, but we can't do that without the staffing in place.

According to SDP, the RFQ took time because it was a complicated document requiring a thoughtful approach and design. The slow release of the RFQ meant that schools could not thoroughly plan for the grant. Without CBO partners on board, schools were forced to guess about issues related to how many students could be served and the types of services that would be provided.

SDP's influence over hiring contributed to delays in project implementation simply because the hiring process is slow. For instance, early on in the grant planning process, schools interviewed and selected staff to serve as Turnaround Principals, and sometimes waited for months for SDP to approve those decisions. In at least two cases, the school's choice for Turnaround Principal was denied without explanation by SDP and the school was forced to begin the lengthy hiring process anew.

Finally, district-wide decisions related to curriculum choice and scheduling influenced grant implementation in Philadelphia. For instance, early during the planning year, the Philadelphia superintendent, Dr. Arlene Ackerman, made a decision that all high schools would use A/B scheduling.¹⁰ Several schools that had proposed and planned to institute block scheduling had to shift their plans considerably to accommodate this decision. As will be discussed further in

¹⁰ A/B scheduling means that students take four classes a day and alternate from one day to the next (4 classes Monday and 4 different classes on Tuesday).

Chapter V, several schools had gone through a lengthy and thoughtful process to select curriculum for their summer bridge programs, only to then discover that SDP was requiring that all schools use the Voyager Curriculum with their credit-deficient students. Generally, these types of mandatory District-wide initiatives made school leaders feel stifled in their ability to achieve the aims of the grant.

In conclusion, school leaders have a mixed view of the contribution of SDP leadership to MEES grant planning and implementation. On the negative side, many school leaders seemed to be poorly informed about the timeline and budget for grant planning, and often did not understand the reasons behind decisions made at the district level. Further, the involvement of SDP may have slowed the pace of grant implementation at the seven Philadelphia-based grantee schools, particularly when compared to the two other schools that received grants. On the other hand, school leaders appreciate the role that SDP plays in capacity building and its efforts to help address the challenges facing schools. Further, school leaders appreciate SDP's efforts to align the MEES grant with other district initiatives (i.e., strategic plan for 2014), and hope that implementation will be more effective and more sustainable because of SDP's efforts.

Turnaround Principal/Grant Administrator

Although the MEES grant does not require a Turnaround Principal, seven of the nine schools created a Turnaround Assistant Principal (TAP) position. The TAP plays the dual role of grant administrator and instructional leader, managing both the administrative aspects of the grant and helping to provide leadership and vision for the grant reforms within the school. Although W.E.B. DuBois HS does not have a designated TAP, the school does have a Grant Coordinator, whose role is very similar to that of a TAP. In contrast, Berkshire JSHS's MEES grant is led by the school principal, who is also the district superintendent (see section on school principal for more detail). Exhibit III-4 lists each school's TAP/grant coordinator (hereby referred to as TAP), along with that person's tenure in the position, hire date, and experience.

**Exhibit III-4:
TAP/Grant Administrator Leadership**

School	TAP/Grant Coordinator	Date hired	Tenure at school as of 9/09	Prior positions
John Bartram HS	Mei Mei Kwong	11/08	11 months	Teacher professional development
W.E.B. DuBois	April Lewis ¹¹	7/08	14 months	District staff (grant administration)
FitzSimons HS	Joan Weeks-Moore	11/08	11 months	Assistant principal
Germantown HS	Beverly Barksdale ¹²	2/09	6 months	Instructional coach (at Germantown HS)
Lincoln HS	Beverly Wallace	9/08	12 months	Middle School administrator
Overbrook HS	Mark Williams	1/09	9 months	Special Ed teacher, Deputy Sheriff
University City HS	Rod Sutton	9/08	12 months	Teacher (22 years in education)
West Philadelphia HS	George Apostol	11/08-7/09	7 months	Special education coordinator/teacher
	Richard Joseph (TAP)	7/09	2 months	District empowerment team/ special education

As illustrated in Exhibit III-4, most of the TAPs were hired in Fall 2008, and the average tenure at the beginning of the implementation year (September, 2009) was approximately ten months. Since the launch of the grant, West Philadelphia HS is the only grantee school where there has been turnover in the TAP role. TAPs generally have extensive experience working in the field of education, with a special focus on teacher professional development and special education. The Overbrook TAP has an interestingly atypical background, in that he worked as a Deputy Sheriff in San Diego before beginning his work in special education in 2006. Only one TAP has previous experience working at the target school (Beverly Barksdale, Germantown HS) and only three have previous full-time experience in grant or school administration (Beverly Wallace, Lincoln HS; April Lewis, W.E.B. DuBois HS; Joan Weeks-Moore, FitzSimons HS). Thus, TAPs generally had considerable work to do to build relationships and trust among veteran teachers, who viewed them as newcomers, and to ramp up on their new administrative role. In particular, many TAPs indicated that they needed additional support to manage the paperwork associated with the grant.

¹¹ April Lewis is paid directly by the Baltimore City Public Schools as a district employee, but she is located full-time at W.E.B. DuBois HS and acts as a regular school employee.

¹² Worked as Instructional coach at GHS for 6.5 years prior to being hired as the TAP.

As the grant shifts into the implementation phase and contractors come on board in Philadelphia, the role of the TAP is shifting. Rather than focusing exclusively on grant administration, TAPs are taking on leadership roles over certain aspects of the initiative. For instance, the TAP of West Philadelphia HS and Lincoln HS are also acting as the principals of the ninth-grade academy. The TAP of Overbrook HS is acting as the director of the OASIS credit retrieval program. Several TAPs were beginning to feel anxious about balancing these multiple roles, worried that the new roles they are taking on will compromise their abilities to provide oversight for the grant. The evaluation will continue to look closely at the role of the TAPs within grantee schools, to understand how the evolving roles of the TAPs influence grant implementation.

School Principal

For each of the nine schools, the school principal is a member of the TT, and plays an important role in articulating a vision for the MEES grant reforms and helping to coordinate MEES efforts with other reform efforts within the school. Generally, the primary role of the principal is to improve the quality of teaching and learning within the school. A visible and charismatic school principal sets the tone for teachers and students and helps to raise collective expectations and performance.

Although the principal provides direct oversight over the TAP or grant administrator, the TAP/grant administrator generally has a high degree of autonomy and decision-making power when it comes to grant-related activities. Still, in most of the sites we visited, there appeared to be a strong collaborative relationship between the principal and the TAP. In contrast, at Berkshire JSJS the school principal (who is also the district superintendent) makes most decisions related to the grant. Exhibit III-5 lists the principals at the grantee schools, along with their lengths of tenure and experience.

As illustrated by Exhibit III-5, as of the beginning of the implementation year (September 2009) six years was the longest tenure of any of the current principals; the average tenure was about two and a half years. Saliyah Cruz, who has been principal at West Philadelphia HS for two years, is the second-longest tenured principal in the history of the school. Although there is a relatively high degree of leadership turnover at the grantee schools, most of the principals have extensive experience as school administrators and in the field of education. Most of the principals taught school before moving into an administrative role. Further, several of the principals worked in administrative capacities at other grantee schools. For example, Constance McAllister was an assistant principal at Germantown HS before becoming principal of John Bartram HS.

**Exhibit III-5:
Principals and Tenure at Schools**

Grantee	Principal	Year hired	Tenure at school as of 9/09	Previous experience (est.)
John Bartram HS	Constance (Connie) McAlister	2003	6 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approx. 15 years
Berkshire JSHS	James Gaudette ¹³	2004	5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 years in school administration
W.E.B. DuBois HS	Delores Berry	2003	6 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31 years in education
Fitzsimons HS	Daryl Overton	2006	3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 years in administration • 24 years in education
Germantown HS	Jose Lebron and Ozzie Wright (Interim Co-principals)	2008 (left June 2009)	7 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retired principals with extensive administrative experience
	Margaret Mullen-Bavwidinsi	2009	New	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 10 years of administrative experience
Lincoln HS	Donald Anticoli	2008	1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 7 years administrative experience
Overbrook HS	Ethelyn Payne Young	2005	4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 years in administration • 34 years in education
University City HS	Anthony Irvin	2006 (left June 2009)	3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 years administration • 30 years in education
	Timothy Stults	2009	New	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 years in education
West Philadelphia HS	Saliyah Cruz	2007	2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 years in administration • 12 years in education

Germantown HS and University HS both have new principals starting at the beginning of SY 2009–2010 and these principals are striving to ramp up quickly on grant reforms. Although both of these principals have prior administrative experience, they are each transitioning into a new kind of setting. Margaret Mullen-Bavwidinsi, at Germantown HS, is transitioning from serving as the principal of a K-8 school, where she won accolades for her work with special needs students. Meanwhile, Timothy Stults, who is taking over the principal position at University High School, is new to Philadelphia, having previously worked as an administrator in

¹³ James Gaudette is the Superintendent of Berkshire Union Free School District and the Principal of Berkshire Junior and Senior High School (which is the only school in the Berkshire Union Free School District).

Washington State. Each has received special support from the SDP and the TAPs at their schools during the process of becoming oriented to the MEES initiative. The transition in leadership has created some anxiety among staff, who do not know how the incoming principals will influence grant implementation. For instance, a school leader at Germantown HS said, “With every leader comes a new vision...[The new principal is] allowing the staff to keep the vision and the mission that they created [for the grant], but it’s different when you create it together.” Although there are challenges associated with new leadership, it can be a positive factor for the schools, particularly if new leaders are competent and reform-minded.

Generally, principal leadership at the grantee schools appears strong, particularly at those schools with stable leadership. For instance, Delores Berry of W.E.B. DuBois HS has made a strong impact on the school since taking over leadership in 2003. During the 2002–2003 school year, W.E.B. DuBois HS had five principals, and violence that put it on the list of persistently dangerous schools. After six years of Berry’s leadership, W.E.B. DuBois has been removed from the persistently dangerous schools list. In 2008, the Greater Baltimore Committee named Ms. Berry principal of the year for her work linking students to post-secondary options. She also plays a role coaching other principals in the district.¹⁴ Similarly, Ethelyn Payne Young at Overbrook HS is a charismatic and visible leader who is well respected by teachers and on a first-name basis with her students.

Although principal leadership generally appears to be strong, principals differ in the degree to which they take a hands-on role within the school. Some principals conduct regular observations of teachers and are highly visible during passing periods, while at some other sites students we interviewed did not know the name of the principal. The evaluation will continue to look at the role of the school principals, particularly as it relates to the culture of target schools and the degree of trust that teachers and other school stakeholders have in the reform process.

Staffing for Grant Implementation

The MEES grant is increasing services and reducing class size through a sizable increase in staffing at each of the schools. Schools have hired teachers and some support staff in order to deliver services under the grant, and have plans to hire more staff in the early stages of grant implementation (Fall 2009). Additionally, CBO partners at Philadelphia-based schools will hire support staff to provide case management, employment services, leadership training, and mentoring. Exhibit III-6 shows the number of teachers who have been hired by the DOL grant,

¹⁴ <http://www.gbc.org/news.aspx?id=1061>

both for the summer bridge programs (discussed in detail in Chapter V) and for the regular school year. The exhibit also shows the additional teachers that school leaders expect to hire with grant funds later in SY 2009–2010.

**Exhibit III-6:
Teachers Hired with DOL Funds as of October 2009**

Site	Teachers Hired for Summer Programs	Teachers Hired for SY 2009-2010	Teachers yet to be Hired for 2009-2010
John Bartram HS	11	9	0
Berkshire JSJS	n/a	4	3-5
W.E.B. DuBois HS	9	6	0
FitzSimons HS	7	0	2
Germantown HS	15	7	0
Lincoln HS	10	8	2
Overbrook HS	12	5	0
University City HS	10	9	5
West Philadelphia HS	9	6	0

The increase in teaching staff has led to a great deal of enthusiasm at the schools. As will be discussed further in Chapter IV, schools are using the new hires to reduce the sizes of their core English and math classes and to enhance academy electives. At University City HS, for example, class size in core reading and math is now less than 10 students a class. In addition to having smaller classes, many Philadelphia-based schools are beginning SY 2009–2010 with shared planning time for teachers, which provides new teachers with the types of professional development and peer support they need to succeed. One school leader at Bartram HS said,

The new teachers are young, enthusiastic, and committed. We just have to give them more professional development and, when we have common planning time, the veteran teachers will also be able to advise, coach, and mentor the teachers.

The grant is also funding a number of support staff, including security staff, counselors, instructional specialists, mentoring staff, data specialists, and social workers.¹⁵ For instance,

¹⁵ Because many grant partners were selected as of early Fall 2009, SPR was not able to get a firm estimate of staffing for the grant. This is something that will be included in the Early Implementation Report, due in December 2010.

Berkshire JSHS has hired three case management staff, called Behavioral Management Specialists (BMS), four mentor coordinators, nine mentor outreach coordinators, two teaching assistants, and a literacy/math coordinator. Many staff will not be hired by the school, but through CBO partners who will be providing wraparound services to students. For instance, FitzSimons HS, which is developing a Student Success Center, will select a CBO partner who will hire three reengagement specialists, two career specialists, one drug/alcohol counselor, and case managers/counselors to staff the center.

As described in Chapter II, there are a number of non-DOL initiatives within grantee schools that have also led to increased staffing. For instance, all of the Philadelphia-based grantees are empowerment schools, which means that each receives a social worker and parent ombudsman in order to increase parent and community participation. Some schools, such as Germantown HS, are receiving additional “achievement teachers” through SDP to reduce class size and provide the flexibility for shared planning time. One challenge facing school leaders is how to adequately support all of these incoming teachers and staff, and to differentiate between MEES-funded teachers and those whose salaries are funded by other initiatives.

Although many school leaders anticipated hiring challenges related to district procedures or teacher’s union requirements, the hiring process at the beginning of SY 2009–2010 appears to have gone smoothly. Bartram HS, for example, had all of its new teaching staff for SY 2009–2010 hired by July. During the summer, schools engaged new teachers in a range of professional development activities, on topics ranging from lesson planning to classroom management. Historically, the schools have struggled with teacher and staff retention. The hope is that with additional instructional specialists, shared planning time, and wraparound case management staff to intervene with students who are having trouble, teachers will not feel so alone in their classrooms and the schools will be able to better retain them.

In some schools, the increase in staffing raised questions about the sustainability of MEES programs and reforms after the sunset of the grant. Even in Philadelphia, where grant efforts are well-aligned with the 2014 strategic plan for SDP, schools will not likely be able to sustain these staffing levels or the wraparound services without the grant. School stakeholders would like to see additional funding, particularly through the end of the 2013–2014 school year (when the SY 2009–2010 ninth graders graduate), but also hope that the “burst” of reforms that MEES is bringing about will lead to a shift in the culture of the school that can be sustained once the grant has ended.

Formation of External Partnerships

The MEES schools are partnering with CBOs to provide mentoring, case management, employment, and other services within the school (e.g., leadership and conflict mediation programs). The goal of bringing on CBO partners is to ensure high-quality wrap-around services for students. This section provides a brief overview of the process whereby partnerships were formed and developed during the planning year. Chapters IV and V will discuss partners and their roles in providing specific services.

In the guidelines for the grant, DOL encouraged the use of a competitive process for selecting sub-grantees or contractors, and grantees have generally taken this approach. The process for vetting partners, however, has been slower than anticipated. In Philadelphia, the RFQ was released by SDP in September 2009, and key partners were expected to begin work by mid-November, 2009. (See text-box for detailed information on the types of services requested through the SDP RFQ.) Grantees are eager to get the contracts with external partners established so that they can begin to provide services. Given that few grant-related partnerships were established at the time of our first site visits, it is too early to assess the quality of these partnerships.

Most grantees had strong existing partnerships on which they built for the grant. For instance, W.E.B. DuBois HS has a strong existing relationship with the Futures program and with Johns Hopkins University. Further, Baltimore City Public Schools had already formed tight relationships with the police department and with juvenile justice in another grant funded by DOL,¹⁶ and the district believed that this relationship helped to facilitate the involvement of these agencies on the TT at W.E.B. Dubois HS. University City HS has strong pre-existing relationships with the Netter Center at the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University. University City HS partnered with these groups for their summer bridge program, and plan to deepen these partnerships during the regular school year.

Some existing partnerships with CBOs were strained by the slow release of the RFQ in Philadelphia. Partner organizations eagerly awaited the release of the RFQ so that they could apply to provide services. Many partners and school stakeholders felt impatient during the planning period and pressed school leaders to act more quickly. One school leader reported, “It wasn’t easy dealing with some of the community stakeholders who felt as though they were the

¹⁶ DOL’s grants for School-District Based Strategies for Reducing Youth Involvement in Gangs and Violent Crime supported the school district’s efforts to better coordinate with juvenile justice, police, workforce development, and other partners to intervene with youth offenders or those at risk of gang involvement. The School District of Philadelphia and Baltimore City Public Schools were recipients of these grants.

ones to make the decisions.” Furthermore, many partners wanted to play a role in designing the initiative at the school, but school leaders were reluctant to involve partners before the competitive bidding process had run its course. Ultimately, however, partners understood that the timing was the responsibility of the SDP, not the individual schools.

Overview of School District of Philadelphia RFQ

The SDP released an RFQ in September, asking for contractors to submit their qualifications to provide a number of services within the MEES grantee schools. After contractors submitted their applications, schools selected those partners that they planned to work with (some of whom they had previous relationships with). Not all schools were looking to hire contractors in all areas. The contract period is for one year, with a possible renewal year. SDP requested qualifications from CBOs for provision of the following services:

- **Task 1: Mentoring.** Bidders must show a minimum of three years experience providing evidence-based mentoring programs. They must also clarify the methods they would use for selecting, screening, and training mentors; the methods they would use for recruiting and retaining mentees; and how they would give attention to concepts such as conflict mediation, leadership, communication, adolescent development, self-esteem, client confidentiality, etc.
- **Task 2: Educational Strategies.** Bidders are expected to submit separate applications for each of the following areas, and no one organization is expected to play all of the following roles.
 - 2.1: *Academy development*, including experience providing TA and in implementing career academies (which involves, for example, outreach to employers)
 - 2.2: *Academic transition programs*, with a focus on math and reading remediation
 - 2.3: *Summer and after-school activities*, with a focus on enrichment and increasing students’ engagement
 - 2.4: *Dropout prevention strategies* that support services specifically targeted at youth at risk of dropping out
 - 2.5: *Instructional capacity building*, related to instructional leadership, data-driven practice, and curriculum enhancement
 - 2.6: *Environmental/climate strategies*, including character education, value-directed learning, classroom management, problem solving decision-making, etc.
- **Task 3: Career Coordination and Student Employment.** Providers need to have at least five years experience training people to fill the following roles:
 - 3.1: *Teacher in the workplace* trainer who will provide teachers with the skills they need to tie lessons more clearly to the work world
 - 3.2: *Internship and wage intermediary*, who will work from the Student Success Center, identify internships for students, and handle all payroll-related activities

In our implementation report, due Fall 2010, we will consider the capacity of partners, the quality of partnerships, and the degree of coordination between partners. The RFQ developed by SDP suggests that there will be a broad array of partners working at Philadelphia-based schools, each providing a subset of services. For instance, Overbrook HS anticipates working with five separate CBO partners to run grant programs. If those services are fragmented and diffuse, then they are unlikely to bring about the kinds of integrated and broad-scale reform that the grant aims to achieve. Some schools have discussed establishing a lead partner, who can coordinate the work of other providers. This strategy may help to bring all the providers under a common umbrella, thus making the various services more accessible to students, teachers, parents, and other school stakeholders.

Capacity Building and Support

Capacity building and support are essential to the success of the MEES initiative. Shifting the culture of the school requires enhancement of the preparation, skills, and capacities of school leaders and school staff. Throughout the planning year of the grant, a variety of different technical assistance (TA) providers worked to build the capacity of school leaders and staff to drive change. TA providers were hired by the individual school, by the school district, and by DOL. The primary areas of TA were grant administration, mentoring programs, and academic academies.

SDP is one of the most prominent TA providers for the seven Philadelphia-based grantees. During the planning year, there were weekly Friday meetings with the TAPs and other key school and district staff (e.g., Office of School Climate and Safety staff, etc.) covering a range of issues related to grant administration, school reform, and data tracking. The text box on TA topics for Philadelphia TAPs highlights core topics included in these meetings. These TA meetings became a forum for other TA providers to present information. For instance, American Institute of Research (AIR) and Philadelphia Academies both presented at the Friday TAP meetings. The district also contracted with the Center for Secondary School Redesign (CSSR) to facilitate workshops for TAPs on team building, leadership, and increasing parental involvement. The meetings were praised by TAPs, who said it provided them with the skills they needed to manage the grant and to understand best practices in implementing grant strategies. It also acted as a “learning cluster,” helping schools learn from each other and share best practices. One TAP indicated that the trainings helped him think of himself as a “change agent” rather than just a grant administrator.

One major area of TA from outside providers is mentoring. The mentoring part of the grant is new for all of the schools, and creates unique challenges in schools and communities where it has been historically difficult to recruit adult mentors. Berkshire JSHS faces particular challenges in designing a mentoring program because of the school’s rural residential nature. Thus, Berkshire has spent a great deal of the planning year working with New York Mentor to design a program that will pair students with adults in their home communities—so that when a student returns home he has an adult to whom he can turn for support. Since the design of the program was established, Berkshire JSHS has been working with United Way of Southeastern PA on varied aspects of their mentoring program, such as how to select mentors. The United Way of Southeastern PA, which provided TA to many of the schools on mentoring, was seen as a very effective TA provider by respondents.

Another major area of technical assistance was related to the development of academies, including both ninth-grade academies and career academies. As will be described further in Chapter IV, some schools already had career academies in place, but are looking to strengthen them by providing more electives and by deepening connections with employers. Schools have received, or are in the process of receiving, TA on career academies from a number of sources (see Exhibit III-7 for a list of TA providers). The scope and pace of work differs significantly by school, depending on where the

TA Topics for Philadelphia TAPs

- Grant management
- Benchmarking/pre-testing
- Data tracking at the school level
- City’s case management model
- Mentoring
- Limited contract agreements
- MOUs
- Career and Technical Education vs. Small Learning Communities
- Summer instruction
- Filling school-based positions
- Change in leadership
- Title I
- Teacher recruitment
- Structuring Federal reports
- Initiative integration planning
- School climate change
- Improvement of student achievement
- DOL performance measures
- Labor relations
- Philadelphia Academies training
- Advantage (District’s financial system)
- RFQ/RFP process
- DOL resources
- Student success centers
- Voyager training (curriculum)
- Payroll
- Student employment
- Transportation
- Processing trips
- American Institute for Research (AIR)

school is in the process and what providers it is working with. One challenge is that many TA providers are still in a “learning stage,” gathering information on the needs of the school, but not yet able to provide practical and targeted advice for how the school should move forward.

Finally, several respondents indicated that their Federal Project Officer (FPO) had been helpful in guiding their grant planning and implementation. Berkshire JSHS’s principal indicated that he relies on his FPO to help him answer questions about DOL guidelines and to understand what his priorities should be around grant implementation. Similarly, the TAP at University City HS indicated that his FPO has provided very helpful feedback in the area of budgeting.

**Exhibit III-7:
Technical Assistance Providers**

TA Provider	Content of TA
Access411	Mentoring, school safety (W.E.B. Dubois HS)
American Institutes of Research (AIR)	Career academies, conflict resolutions, internships, and character education
Branch & Associates	Assistance in rolling out each school’s mentoring program
Center for Secondary School Redesign (CSSR)	Career academies and leadership
John Hopkins Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence	Consultation on school climate (W.E.B. Dubois HS)
John Hopkins Talent Development High Schools (Center for Social Organization of Schools)	Ninth grade academies, teacher teams, career academies (W.E.B. Dubois HS and John Bartram H.S.)
New York Mentor	Assistance with design of mentoring program (Berkshire JSHS)
Philadelphia Academies	Internships
School District of Philadelphia (SDA)	Grant administration and oversight
United Way of Southeastern PA	Monitoring and selecting CBOs, mentoring

Discussion and Lessons Learned

In the first 15 months of the MEES grants, schools worked diligently to form collaborative leadership teams, design new programs, and build buy-in for the grant reforms among school stakeholders. Although the planning process generally went smoothly, the effects of the planning and capacity building that occurred in SY 2008-2009 are ultimately best judged by the effectiveness of implementation efforts.

One core issue revealed during the planning period is the level of discretion that schools have over issues such as curriculum, scheduling, and program development. Much of the research on

school reform points to the importance of “resource authority,” the ability of school leaders to make mission-based decisions regarding people, time, money, and programs.¹⁷ W.E.B. Dubois and Berkshire JSHS school leaders have considerable resource authority, while the leaders at Philadelphia-based schools do not. During the planning year, school stakeholders in Philadelphia experienced frustration at their lack of resource authority, particularly their authority over budgets and curriculum. At the same time, leaders at the Philadelphia-based schools see the value in participating in “clustered reform,” where SDP builds capacity, raises standards, and helps to leverage learning and innovation across sites. For the Philadelphia schools, the balance in authority between the district and the schools is an important issue that we will continue to document.

Finally, as they move into the implementation year, school leaders continue to face challenges as they seek to create a collaborative culture. Research on effective high-poverty-area schools consistently finds that collaboration and shared responsibility for achievement are essential to their success.¹⁸ The TT committee and subcommittees are key vehicles for collective leadership and decision-making, just as shared planning time is a vehicle allowing teachers to collaborate and problem-solve. The vehicles for collaboration are in place, but participation by teachers and community members remains lower than school leaders would like. It is important that schools not abandon collaborative efforts now that the planning year is over. Building collective buy-in is difficult, but is likely to become easier now that school leaders can point to programs and services that the grant is supporting. The first year of implementation is an opportunity to engage in team-based reflection that can improve grant services and build a professional climate that can be sustained beyond the sunset of the grant.

¹⁷ Calkins, A., Guenther, W., Belfiore, G. Lash, D. (2007). *The Turnaround Challenge: Why America’s best opportunity to dramatically improve student achievement lies in our worst-performing schools.* Mass Insight Education and Research Institute.

¹⁸ Ibid.

IV. OVERVIEW AND STATUS OF GRANT ACTIVITIES

According to ETA's Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) for the MEES grant, grantee schools are to implement program models and strategies that address three levels of interventions: (1) reforms that affect the whole school; (2) interventions aimed at particular target groups of at-risk youth, such as entering ninth graders and repeating ninth graders; and (3) intensive interventions for individual youth who present the greatest challenges relating to misconduct, truancy, and poor school performance. In an effort to achieve these aims and align interventions with school and district-level goals, each school has planned to implement a number of evidenced-based program models in the areas of mentoring, education, employment, case management, and violence prevention strategies.

This chapter provides an overview of the strategies and interventions schools are implementing and supporting with grant funds. We discuss strategies in five categories: mentoring, academic performance, employment, school climate and student behaviors, and case management. An overview of interventions discussed in this chapter is presented in Exhibit IV-1. The Exhibit illustrates the implementation status of core grant activities as of September 2009.

Mentoring Strategies

Research suggests that mentoring programs, when carefully designed and well run, can provide positive influences, one-on-one support, and advocacy to youth in need of extra attention. In addition, positive mentoring experiences can be effective for helping youth overcome the risk factors that can lead to problems such as educational failure, dropping out of school, and involvement in gang crime and drug abuse. To realize these benefits, schools have planned to implement a combination of adult and peer-mentoring programs as a part of their grant activities.

However, many factors, such as delays in subcontracting with CBO mentoring providers, have delayed the implementation of nearly all grantees' adult mentoring programs. To date, none of the Philadelphia schools have launched their mentoring components. Berkshire JSHS and W.E.B. DuBois HS have made some progress in selecting CBO providers; however, these programs have yet to be fully launched. Nevertheless, schools continue to work diligently to get

**Exhibit IV-1
Overview of Strategies Proposed by Grantee Schools**

☐ = still in planning stages

✓ = implementation begun

✓* = existed prior to grant, but work will be furthered by grant

Proposed Strategies	Total # of grantees adopting strategy	John Bartram High School, Philadelphia	Berkshire High School, Canaan, NY	W.E.B. DuBois High School, Baltimore	Fitzsimons High School, Philadelphia	Germantown High School, Philadelphia	Lincoln High School, Philadelphia	Overbrook High School, Philadelphia	University City High School, Philadelphia	West Philadelphia High School
Mentoring Strategies										
Adult mentoring (e.g., Life Coaching or Primary Person model)	9	☐	✓	✓	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Peer Mentoring	7	☐			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Educational Strategies										
Summer Bridge or Summer School Program	8	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Career Academies, further integration of work ready curriculum and content	7	✓*	✓*			✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓
Ninth grade success academies	6	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Twilight Program or Credit Retrieval Academy for credit deficient students	7		✓*	✓*	✓	✓*		✓*	✓*	✓
Reduction of class sizes by hiring more teachers	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Intensive English and Math	7	✓			✓	✓	✓*	✓*	✓	✓*
Joint planning time for teachers	8	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Proposed Strategies	Total # of grantees adopting strategy	John Bartram High School, Philadelphia	Berkshire High School, Canaan, NY	W.E.B. DuBois High School, Baltimore	Fitzsimons High School, Philadelphia	Germantown High School, Philadelphia	Lincoln High School, Philadelphia	Overbrook High School, Philadelphia	University City High School, Philadelphia	West Philadelphia High School
Employment Strategies										
Create and/or bring to scale on-site employment focused center (e.g., Student Success Center)	7	✓*	✓*		✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓*	✓
Internship opportunities (for targeted group)	9	✓*	✓*	□	□	□	□	✓*	✓*	□
Strategies to improve school climate and behavior										
Peer Conflict mediation program, youth leadership program, life skills program (e.g., youth court, rites of passage.)	7		✓	✓*	□	□	□	✓*		□
In-school suspension program	5		*			□	□	□	✓	
Strategies for case management										
Case management center ("Student Success Center")	7	✓*			✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓*	✓
Hire additional case management staff who will work with students who are most vulnerable and their parents	9	□	✓	✓	□	□	✓	✓	□	✓

these programs up and running, and nearly all schools plan to fully implement their mentoring programs by January 2010.

Adult Mentoring Programs

In keeping with ETA's requirement that grantees include adult mentoring as a component of their mentoring strategies, all nine schools have proposed to implement adult mentoring programs.

Target Mentees

Grantee schools have used various criteria to define the groups and types of students who will receive mentoring. Many schools have specified that these "at-risk students" are incoming ninth graders who are failing math or English, are truant or have attendance problems, lack credits, are over age, and/or have high rates of school suspensions. A few schools are also targeting upperclassmen (i.e., tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders) with similar problems.

Berkshire JSHS plans to implement a school-wide adult mentoring component in which every single student is paired with an adult mentor, based on the argument that all students at the school are equally "at risk." Overbrook HS is targeting both ninth and tenth graders who are at risk of dropping out, in order to provide struggling students with additional support and to prevent some students from "slipping through the cracks." W.E.B. DuBois HS is targeting 75 ninth, 50 tenth, 25 eleventh, and 25 twelfth-grade students who have a history of poor attendance, low academic performance, and high rates of school suspensions.

As illustrated in Exhibit IV-2, target mentees are often students who are most at risk of dropping out of school. To identify these students, schools are reviewing academic records, looking specifically for students who lack credits and have a history of poor school performance. For instance, the W.E.B. DuBois' Student Support Team (SST) currently works with school staff to identify students that are in need of additional resources to help support their achievement and social goals. After identifying students and their needed supports, the SST works with school counselors and the "Community School" site coordinator to link students with services and resources. Prior to the start of school, the SST will identify those students most in need of mentoring and make referrals to the mentoring program.

**Exhibit IV-2:
Target Mentees for Adult Mentoring Programs**

	Target Mentees	Number of Students
John Bartram HS	At-risk/hard to serve students	100
Berkshire JSHS	School-wide ¹	All enrolled students
FitzSimons HS	Incoming ninth graders	All incoming ninth graders
Germantown HS	Students enrolled in the Credit Recovery Program	100
Lincoln HS	Incoming ninth graders, particularly students who are at risk of dropping out (based on eighth grade records).	No target number
Overbrook HS	Incoming ninth and tenth-grade students who are at-risk of dropping out	215
University City HS	Ninth-grade students who are at risk of dropping out (based on eighth grade records, 80 percent attendance rate, failing math and English)	60
W.E.B. DuBois HS	75 ninth, 50 tenth, 25 eleventh, and 25 twelfth grade students with poor attendance, low academic performance, high rates of school suspensions and/or office referrals	175
West Philadelphia HS	Ninth graders who are at risk of dropping out	75

Mentor Recruitment

All nine schools have identified members of both the school staff and the community as persons who can serve as adult mentors. In most cases, adult mentors include teachers, counselors, assistant principals, academy leaders, school support staff (e.g., school security), and individuals from faith-based, private, public, and non-profit organizations. To recruit these individuals, school leaders and mentoring chairs are using a variety of approaches: asking specific staff members to serve as mentors, providing information on how to become a mentor during staff meetings, conducting outreach to local community organizations, and soliciting support from local employers. Because schools are targeting varying numbers of students to receive adult mentoring and will be using different ratios of mentors to students, the targeted numbers of mentors vary.

¹ While Berkshire JSHS is targeting students school-wide, school leaders reported that students with the “highest level of need” (i.e., those who have experienced trauma, multiple diagnoses, and are severely credit deficient) will be matched with a mentor first.

For instance, John Bartram HS is targeting 100 students for adult mentoring services, will use up to a 1:2 adult-to-student match, and is recruiting 75 adults from the school staff and community to serve as mentors. At a somewhat larger scale, Overbrook HS is targeting 215 students for its adult mentoring program; the 90 school staff members the school hopes to recruit as mentors will be matched with these students at a 1:2 ratio, and the 35 community members to be recruited will be matched at a 1:1 ratio.

Matching Adult Mentors and Mentees

To ensure the best matches between mentors and mentees, all schools have established formal application and selection procedures for adult mentors. According to implementation plans, schools will contract with a CBO to oversee these activities, which will include reviewing mentor applications, conducting in-person interviews, and providing training for mentors. However, at the time of the site visits, a number of schools had not yet entered into a formal contract with a mentor provider, so this process is not yet fully developed.

Once mentor providers are on board, schools plan to match students and adult mentors based on a number of criteria, including racial/ethnic background, gender, geographical location, and students' needs. For Berkshire JSJS—a residential facility where students live and, after a given period, return to their home communities—one matching criterion takes priority: a mentor must reside in a student's home community so that the student has support in dealing positively with challenges and difficulties during and after his transition home.

FitzSimons HS, an all-male school, has also identified a single criterion as most important. To create same-gender matches, all of the 30 school staff members serving as mentors are male. Research suggests that using a same-sex mentoring approach can be especially beneficial to males from female-led households and youth in trouble with the law. FitzSimons HS's goal in using the same-sex mentoring approach is to provide their students with positive male role models. School leaders from other schools are also trying to recruit African American mentors, due to the large numbers of African American students attending their schools. In addition to considering specific factors in how students and adult mentors are matched, schools are also considering the number of students they will match with an adult mentor. Of the nine schools, six plan to use a one-on-one mentoring approach for their adult mentoring programs.² Because some school leaders anticipate difficulties in recruiting volunteer mentors, they plan to match each mentor to more than one student. For instance, as mentioned previously, Overbrook HS will be using a 1:2 school staff-to-student match, while University City HS will use a 1:3 match.

² These six grantees include Berkshire JSJS, FitzSimons HS, Germantown HS, Overbrook HS, W.E.B. DuBois HS, and West Philadelphia HS.

Adult Mentoring Activities

Mentoring relationships will range in length from 18 months to two years. School leaders reported that this span of time would allow mentors and mentees to build rapport with each other and engage in interactive activities. However, how mentors and mentees spend their time together will vary depending on the focus of each school's adult mentoring program and the specific needs of target students. Mentoring activities will include the following:

- **Tutoring and academic assistance**, in which mentors provide extra instructional assistance in core subjects where improvement is needed (i.e., math or English). In addition, mentors may talk with students about the importance of school and strategies for how to be more successful in their classes.
- **College preparation**, in which mentors help students recognize the importance of continuing their education beyond high school and help them understand and accomplish the steps needed to do so.
- **Career preparation**, in which mentors help students see the links between their current interests and hobbies and future careers or professional fields, and provide information on the expectations employers have about attitude, preparedness, and skills. Activities might include bringing the youth to the mentor's place of work, teaching a career-related skill, or helping the student to secure a summer job or internship.
- **Life coaching**, in which mentors serve as positive role models. In most cases, mentors use their own life paths, choices, and challenges as the basis for helping students recognize and expand their horizons of opportunity and deal positively with challenges and difficulties.

As mentioned previously, schools plan to use one-on-one and group mentoring approaches to provide assistance and support to target students. Some schools also plan to facilitate monthly mentoring activities and workshops, in addition to the weekly meetings mentors and mentees are to hold after school, during lunch, or on early dismissal days. In the following two examples, we provide overviews of how W.E.B. DuBois HS and Berkshire JSHS have structured the time mentors and mentees will spend together.

Overview of W.E.B. DuBois Adult Mentoring Strategies

One-to-One Mentoring. W.E.B. DuBois HS will use a one-to-one mentoring approach to establish positive relationships between students and adult mentors. The focus of these relationships will be on improving academic performance and helping youth stay in school, avoid drug abuse, resist anti-social behaviors such as violence and gang involvement, and develop skills for the workplace. Mentors will meet with their mentees at least once a week for a minimum of one hour each visit. Mentors will be matched with individual students through an interviewing process and will work with the same student for an 18-month period.

Group Mentoring. W.E.B. DuBois HS will also provide workshops/seminars that will complement the one-on-one mentoring relationships. The workshops/seminars will focus on life-skills topics such as goal setting, decision-making, time management, dating, managing relationships, college admissions, physical health, and responsibility, and will be facilitated by the various mentors, school staff, and guest speakers. Other topics will be added, depending on the needs of students.

Workplace Mentoring. Finally, workplace mentoring and/or apprenticeship opportunities will be made available to students in the mentoring program and provided in collaboration with staff implementing the employment strategies component of the grant. Ninth-grade students will work through the FUTURES Works³ program to develop job readiness skills and will be offered summer employment opportunities. In collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) and school counselors, students in grades eleven and twelve will be matched with local businesses and organizations in apprenticeship programs in which they will participate throughout the school year. W.E.B. DuBois HS school leaders expect that the participating organizations will provide employment opportunities for students at the end of the school year or assist them in finding employment in their fields of interest or study.

³ FUTURES Works is a dropout prevention partnership operated by Baltimore City Public Schools in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Employment Development.

Overview of Berkshire JSHS Adult Mentoring Strategies

Berkshire JSHS partnered with The Mentoring Partnership of New York to devise a mentoring program model that would fit the school's residential structure. This model uses multiple approaches to structure how mentors and mentees spend their time:

- **At-Home Mentoring.** Because Berkshire JSHS students often face challenges when they return to their home communities (e.g., engaging with former peer groups and family members), Berkshire JSHS, an all boy residential school, is pairing students with mentors who reside in the student's home community. Thus, when a student returns to visit his home community during a weekend, the student will be able to meet with his mentor. Similarly, Berkshire JSHS has designed these mentoring relationships to continue six months after students are discharged to provide them with additional support during this pivotal transition period.
- **E-Mentoring.** With this approach, mentors and mentees will maintain ongoing communication through the Internet. The expectation is that while the student is residing within the residential facility, the mentor will communicate with the mentee by email once a week.
- **Service Learning Mentoring.** Mentors come to Berkshire JSHS's campus to meet with students once every other week. Mentors will take students to participate in local community projects organized by such entities as the Edna St. Vincent Millay Society (horticulture) and the Pine Haven Nursing Home. The goal of service learning mentoring is to allow students to build an understanding of the value of giving back and helping others.

Peer Mentoring Programs

Seven schools are implementing peer-mentoring programs in addition to their adult mentoring programs.⁴

Target Mentees

For their peer-mentoring programs, schools are targeting incoming ninth graders. Some schools are targeting the entire ninth-grade class, some are targeting a specific number of students in the class, and others are targeting only those identified as being "at risk" or having academic or behavioral challenges. Exhibit IV-3 provides an overview of the students schools are targeting for their peer mentoring programs.

⁴ These seven grantees include John Bartram HS, FitzSimons HS, Germantown HS, Lincoln HS, Overbrook HS, University City HS, and West Philadelphia HS.

**Exhibit IV-3:
Target Mentees for Peer Mentoring Programs**

	Target Mentees
John Bartram HS	100 Incoming ninth-grade students
FitzSimons HS	Ninth-grade students
Germantown HS	150 at-risk incoming ninth-grade students
Lincoln HS	300 at-risk incoming ninth-grade students
Overbrook HS	235 incoming ninth-grade students
University City HS	Incoming ninth-grade students
West Philadelphia HS	Incoming ninth-grade students (based on early identification of academic or behavioral challenges)

Mentor Recruitment

In nearly all cases, schools are recruiting peer mentors from among students in the upper grades who have leadership abilities and positive school performance and behaviors. By targeting these students, school leaders hope to ensure that peer mentors possess the characteristics and qualities needed to positively influence the lives of target mentees. Exhibit IV-4 provides an overview of the numbers and types of students grantees are targeting to serve as peer mentors:

**Exhibit IV-4:
Target Mentors for Peer Mentoring Programs**

	Target Mentors
John Bartram HS	100 eleventh and twelfth-grade students
FitzSimons HS	50 tenth, eleventh, and twelfth-grade students
Germantown HS	50 eleventh-grade students
Lincoln HS	100 tenth and eleventh-grade students
Overbrook HS	80 tenth and eleventh-grade students with leadership abilities
University City HS	Twelfth-grade students
West Philadelphia HS	50 “rising” eleventh and twelfth grade students

While schools are targeting tenth, eleventh, and twelfth-grade students to serve as peer mentors, eleventh-grade students are being targeted more often than any other group. School leaders target eleventh-grade students more frequently than twelfth-grade students because they would

like mentoring relationships to last more than one year. As of fall 2009, no peer mentors had been selected due to delays in selecting mentor providers.

Matching Peer Mentors and Mentees

As is the case for their adult mentoring programs, schools will rely on their mentoring partners to develop and facilitate peer mentor selection processes. In most cases, the selection process includes recruiting, screening (i.e., reviewing grades and attendance records and interviewing), and training mentors, then matching each mentor with a mentee. The final process through which mentors will be paired with mentees will not be clear until grantees select mentoring providers, which is likely to occur by January 2010. Overall, grantees will match mentees with mentors whom they feel can serve as positive role models.

Peer Mentoring Activities

With the exception of FitzSimons HS, all schools are using a group mentoring approach for their peer mentoring programs. In two cases (John Bartram HS and Lincoln HS), peer mentors will work in pairs to provide support to incoming ninth graders. In four cases, each mentor will be paired with two to three mentees.⁵ This group structure will provide incoming ninth graders with additional support and assistance in their transitions to high school, by creating a network of peers who can assist with conflict resolution, guidance on how to navigate school services, and connection with a positive role model.

Peer mentors and mentees will generally meet weekly during school hours, after school, during lunch, and on early dismissal days. West Philadelphia HS has developed a plan under which peer mentoring will be a component of the instructional day. The school has a “Leadership Course” that all eleventh and twelfth grade students will participate in. Since “rising eleventh and twelfth grade students” are the target mentor group, the school plans to develop a “Freshman Seminar” that will be run parallel with the Leadership Course, and in which paired mentors and mentees will be given time to meet. Schools also will provide monthly mentoring activities, such as community service activities and social events.

Of the seven schools, only one, Lincoln HS, administered a peer-mentoring program prior to receiving the DOL grant. In this case, the program will be expanded with grant funds. Lincoln HS’s peer-mentoring program, “Peer Group Connection,” is based on a model developed by the Princeton Center for Leadership Training. Through this program, tenth and eleventh grade peer mentors are trained in a for-credit course to serve as team mentors to groups of ninth graders. Peer mentors practice communication skills, develop a greater appreciation for individual

⁵ These grantees include Germantown HS, Overbrook HS, University City HS, and West Philadelphia HS.

differences, and learn problem-solving skills that they can apply to real life situations. Additionally, mentees meet in small groups with peer mentors to examine peer pressure, relationships, academic concerns, and other common issues facing high school students.

Through the DOL grant, Lincoln HS plans to integrate mentoring services into the summer bridge program. In addition, Lincoln HS will also create a rostered time for peer mentors and mentees to meet during school hours, provide ongoing training for mentors, organize a mentor and mentee retreat, and design a monthly incentive program for peer mentoring groups. Overall, all schools plan to create peer mentoring programs that connect ninth graders to positive role models, ease their transition into high school, and encourage academic excellence.

Management Structure of Mentoring Programs

According to the grant solicitation, the CBO selected to lead each school's mentoring program must be experienced in providing social services in schools with large numbers of high-risk students or in operating mentoring programs. Accordingly, all schools have plans to select a CBO provider through a request for proposal (RFP) process. The selected CBO will implement all aspects of a school's mentoring program, including recruiting, screening, and training peer and adult mentors; creating mentor/mentee matches; training staff; providing technical assistance; and organizing monthly group mentoring activities.

As noted above, Berkshire JSHS received technical assistance from The Mentoring Partnership of New York to devise a mentoring program model that would fit its school structure. The Mentoring Partnership of New York provided technical assistance and training to Berkshire JSHS staff and selected mentor coordinators and mentor associates. As a result of this assistance, Berkshire JSHS was able to develop an appropriate mentoring model and hire four mentor coordinators and nine mentor associates.

Given the lack of proximity of Berkshire JSHS to its students' home communities, mentor coordinators are to oversee Berkshire JSHS's mentoring program in four regions throughout the State of New York (Western, Central, Southern, and Capital). Their duties include creating mentor applications, recruiting and selecting mentor associates in their regions, and supervising mentor associates. Mentor associates play a key role in recruiting and selecting mentors, coordinating mentoring events, providing training, and supervising community mentors. Mentoring associates also participate in transitional case-management sessions with the Behavior

Management Specialist (BMS)⁶ and the School Guidance Counselor to assist students in reintegrating into their home communities.

In addition to selecting CBOs to provide oversight of their mentoring programs, John Bartram HS, FitzSimons HS, Germantown HS, and Overbrook HS have also identified school staff who will oversee and/or supervise their mentoring programs. In a similar way, Berkshire JSHS's Vice President of Community Programs will have complete oversight of the school's mentoring component, even though the school has hired mentoring coordinators and associates within four regions throughout the State of New York.

Education Strategies

Grantee schools are implementing a variety of educational strategies to improve student achievement and overall school performance, improve classroom instruction, decrease dropout rates, and provide additional support to teachers and struggling students. In this section, we provide an overview of the educational strategies schools are implementing.

Summer Transition Programs for Entering Ninth Graders

As a part of their educational strategies, eight of the nine schools are implementing summer transition programs (i.e., summer bridge programs) that target entering or returning ninth graders, including those identified as being at risk of dropping out of high school.⁷ These programs include academic instruction, including reading and math remediation, work readiness training, and enrichment activities that foster academic, social, personal, and career development. In Chapter V, we provide an in-depth overview of the summer bridge programs grantee schools implemented during the summer of 2009.

Career Academies

Kids understand that we are not a vertical school anymore, that we are a career academy. We've established that culture through letters to the parents, through phone calls, and we set it up last year by communicating it to the kids, letting them know what would happen, and it kind of fell into place.

- School Leader, John Bartram HS

⁶ BMS utilize behavior modification strategies with students during and outside of class time, and serve as liaisons between teachers and counselors.

⁷ These grantees include John Bartram HS, FitzSimons HS, Germantown HS, Lincoln HS, Overbrook HS, University City HS, W.E.B. DuBois HS, and West Philadelphia HS.

Career Academies are organized as small learning communities, or “schools-within-schools,” in which groups of students stay with a core group of teachers over the years they are in high school.⁸ Of the nine schools, seven are using career academies as a part of their educational strategies.⁹ Breaking up large high schools into smaller units personalizes learning for students, makes learning relevant by using careers as a context for learning, and helps students learn about future career opportunities. The career academy approach is a strategy or reform that affects the whole school. In this section, we provide an overview of the career academies the seven schools are developing and improving with MEES grant funds.

Career Academy Structure

All seven schools reported operating career academies prior to receiving the MEES grant; however, they all have plans to improve these academies by developing criteria for enrollment, hiring additional teachers to create smaller class sizes, offering more elective courses and incentives, and using the academies as a training module for internships. In an example of using the academy to serve as a basis for internships, students at Berkshire JSHS who desire to participate in an internship or hold a job on or off campus are required to attend and successfully complete two prerequisite courses (i.e., one in the appropriate career academy and a workforce development course).

A number of schools are striving to make each career academy unique by requiring their students to wear the same uniform, creating academy-specific signage, establishing a separate entrance, and using academy-specific colors for classroom doors and lockers. By personalizing each academy, school leaders anticipate that students will be able to easily identify with their academy, teachers, and peers. For instance, one teacher at West Philadelphia HS stated:

Last year we designed logos for each academy and a logo company sponsored the banners. So, each academy now has their own banners up in their hallways. Ninth graders are wearing their own school uniform shirts....It makes it very easy to see when our kids are in the wrong space.

Each academy also has thematic instruction that is linked to the specific academy theme, and teachers have common prep time to coordinate with one another. In using these components to design their career academies, school leaders hope to create more cohesive and structured academies.

⁸ Kemple, J.J., Poglinco, S.M., Snipes, J.C. (1999). *Career Academies: Building Career Awareness and Work-Based Learning Activities Through Employer Partnerships*. Manpower Demonstration Research Corp., New York, NY.

⁹ These grantees include John Bartram HS, Berkshire JSHS, Germantown HS, Lincoln HS, Overbrook HS, University City HS, and West Philadelphia HS.

In regards to staffing, schools generally have team of teachers for each academy to increase the personalization of the school and to create opportunities for teachers to collaborate for the benefit of their students. In addition, schools have “Academy Coordinators” to lead each career academy. Teachers are responsible for delivering education and career services to students and academy coordinators are responsible for overseeing all components of the academy, including staff, students, and community partners.

In a few cases, schools are using MEES grant funds to hire additional staff for their career academies in order to increase the level of support to students. For instance, school leaders at Overbrook HS are staffing each roughly 300-student academy with an assistant principal, an academy coordinator, a team of teachers, and a counselor. The goal is to ensure that each student has an assigned assistant principal, academy coordinator, counselor, and team of teachers to whom he or she can go for assistance. Other schools have plans to provide additional counseling support to each student to ensure that each student has a postsecondary plan.

Career Academy Themes

Schools offer a minimum of three theme-based academies to prepare students for work or college study in a particular field. In most cases, a student will choose an academy based on his or her interests; in some cases, however, a student may be assigned to an academy. Among all the schools with career academies, the following career and technical areas are represented:

- **Construction trades** – architectural drafting, carpentry, electrical and power transmission installation, plumbing, welding, etc.
- **Agricultural science** – floriculture and greenhouse management, food science, landscape design, and animal science
- **Business and finance** – accounting, banking, computer software operation, network administration, desktop publishing, etc.
- **Communications and graphic arts** – digital media, photography, film and video production, etc.
- **Health and science** – medicine, nursing, medical imaging, etc.
- **Information technology** – computer systems, database administration, telecommunications, web page design, digital/multimedia arts
- **Culinary arts and hospitality** – baking, hospitality administration/management, travel and tourism, etc.
- **Law and public safety** – law, justice system careers, public safety
- **Transportation** – automotive repair and troubleshooting
- **Education** – teaching careers
- **Creative and performing arts** – painting, sculpture, ceramics, printmaking and crafts, instrumental music, vocal music, dance, and drama

Exhibit IV-5 provides an overview of the specific career academies each grantee has made available to its students.

**Exhibit IV-5:
Types of Career Academies**

	Construction Trades	Agricultural Science	Business/Finance	Communications & Graphic Arts	Health and Science	Information Technology	Culinary Arts & Hospitality	Law and Public Safety	Transportation	Education	Creative & Performing Arts
John Bartram HS					✓	✓					✓
Berkshire JSHS	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓		
Germantown HS				✓	✓					✓	
Lincoln HS		✓	✓		✓	✓					
Overbrook HS			✓		✓					✓	
University City HS					✓	✓		✓			
West Philadelphia HS			✓						✓	✓	✓

As illustrated in Exhibit IV-5, the most common academy themes are business/finance and health and science, reflecting the desire of school leaders to provide training to youth in high-growth industries. Not listed in the exhibit are two more specialized academy themes: a sports and recreation career academy at Berkshire JSHS, and a “Crossroads Academy” or Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC) academy at Lincoln HS.¹⁰ Through these academies, schools are attempting to provide students with a range of knowledge, skills, and training in a variety of fields.

Career Academy Curriculum

Because career academies often combine academic and vocational curricula into an integrated career theme, the curricula schools are using for career academies include academic courses that meet high school graduation and college entrance requirements, project-based learning experiences, and internships that bring together skills acquired from academic and career classes. For instance, at Berkshire JSHS, a student interested in working at the dining hall will receive

¹⁰ JROTC is a Federal program sponsored by the United States Armed Forces in high schools across the United States.

instruction in basic sanitation techniques, measuring, and fractions in their academy classes. In addition, each student is required to participate in a five-week workforce development course in the proposed internship. School leaders reported that students are required to participate in the workforce development course for 80 minutes every other day, to be prepared to enter the world of work by learning good work habits such as punctuality and important skills such as completing an application.

Career academy curricula also include work-based learning experiences and enrichment activities for students (e.g., internships, job shadowing, guest speakers, seminars, field trips). In most cases, these activities will be supported by industry partners. Schools will establish partnerships with local employers, community organizations, parents, and higher education institutions to provide students with a range of career development and work-based learning opportunities. For instance, at John Bartram HS, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders will have the opportunity to participate in internships within their academy fields, while ninth graders will participate in job shadowing. Students at Berkshire JSHS will attend an internship fair to learn about available internships as well as possible job sites, and each student will be given the opportunity to select an internship of interest. Overall, school leaders hope the curricula they are using for their career academies will motivate students, connect the school to business and community partners, and give students practical applications related to their studies.

Ninth Grade Success Academies

In addition to career academies, six schools are also implementing Ninth Grade Success Academies as a part of their academy structures.¹¹ The Ninth Grade Success Academy is a component of the Talent Development High School Model, a school reform strategy developed by the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk at Johns Hopkins University.¹² Success Academies are designed to help entering ninth graders make a smooth transition to high school by creating small, personalized learning communities, using teacher teams, and providing additional academic support.

To make their Ninth Grade Success Academies into small, personalized learning communities, schools are separating ninth graders from the rest of their students. For instance, W.E.B DuBois

¹¹ These six grantees include John Bartram HS, Lincoln HS, Overbrook HS, University City HS, W.E.B. DuBois HS, and West Philadelphia HS.

¹² Components of the Talent Development High School Model include high expectations, Ninth Grade Academy, extended class periods, Talent Development specific courses, “extra help,” career academies for upper grades, professional development, “teaming,” family and community involvement, and alternative programs, such as Twilight Schools.

HS's Ninth Grade Success Academy is housed on the third floor of the school building, restricting student movement to one hallway. The other five grantees have adopted similar approaches by locating Ninth Grade Success Academy classrooms, lockers, and staff in specific hall wings or on their own floors, requiring students to wear uniforms, and, in some cases, scheduling separate lunch periods. School leaders and staff noted that these strategies are allowing them to create personal connections with students, minimize distractions, and promote small but structured community environments.

In regards to staffing, Ninth Grade Success Academies are often staffed with an academy leader and an interdisciplinary team of teachers who work together to ensure that every student is recognized, supported, and able to achieve success. For instance, at West Philadelphia HS, incoming and repeat ninth graders are separated into teams with teachers, and an "Individual Learning Plan," documenting areas of success and needed growth, is developed with each student. In addition, teachers in each team have a common planning period to maximize opportunities for collaboration and shared learning.

Overall, school leaders anticipate that the small class sizes and team-teaching structure of their Ninth Grade Success Academies will assist in improving the academic achievement of entering ninth graders by providing them with personalized support and a more engaging learning environment. School leaders and staff from all sites stated that the Success Academy approach serves as a bridge that helps students adjust academically and socially to the rigors of high school.

Twilight Schools and Credit Retrieval Programs

Because school leaders recognize that the traditional school structure and schedule does not meet the needs of all their students, seven schools plan to implement (or support their existing) Twilight Schools¹³ and/or credit retrieval programs.

Program Structure and Target Group

Both Twilight Schools and credit retrieval programs are alternative education programs that are nested within more traditional educational offerings. These programs, which differ slightly in their approaches, generally target overage and under-credit students who often present the greatest challenges in terms of misconduct, truancy, and poor school performance.

¹³ These eight grantees include Berkshire JSHS, FitzSimons HS, Germantown HS, Overbrook HS, University City HS, W.E.B. DuBois HS and West Philadelphia HS.

Four schools are planning to use MEES grant funds support their existing Twilight Schools as a part of their educational strategies.¹⁴ Twilight Schools, a component of the Talent Development High School Reform Model, are generally offered in the evening hours to accommodate students who are unable to attend school during traditional school hours. Overbrook HS, W.E.B. DuBois HS, and West Philadelphia HS are operating their Twilight Schools Monday through Friday between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. University City HS is taking a different approach: because the School District of Philadelphia is mandating middle and high schools to implement the “Oasis Program,” University City HS has merged its previously existing Twilight School with its newly implemented Oasis Program. The Oasis Program is a one-year rigorous, accelerated academic program designed to help students improve their literacy and math skills, as well as the opportunity for earning credits towards graduation and grade promotion. The Twilight School/Oasis program at University City HS is now operating during regular school hours, as opposed to the evening hours, and targets a selected group of 120 ninth grade students who are overage and lack credits.

Three schools are also offering credit retrieval programs as a part of their educational strategies.¹⁵ These programs are generally offered during school hours to enrolled students. FitzSimons HS and Germantown HS are operating their credit retrieval programs during school hours concurrently with their career academies, which allows credit retrieval students to follow a schedule similar to that of the rest of the school. Berkshire JSHS’s credit retrieval program is somewhat different: because most students at Berkshire JSHS are behind on credits, school leaders have extended the school day by one hour and twenty minutes to allow nearly all students to enroll in 40 additional minutes of credit retrieval.

Initially, Lincoln HS proposed to implement a credit retrieval program (Black and Gold Academy), which would target 300 ninth and tenth grade repeaters. However, at the time of the first site visit (March 2009), school leaders stated that they are not creating this program. As of September 2009, Lincoln HS “bought slots” for its under-credit and overage students at alternative schools throughout Philadelphia because it no longer has space in its new building to house these students. Roughly 275 students have been transferred to alternative schools.

Exhibit IV-6 provides an overview of the students grantees are targeting through their Twilight School or credit retrieval programs.

¹⁴ These four grantees include Overbrook HS, University City HS, W.E.B. DuBois HS, and West Philadelphia HS.

¹⁵ These four grantees include Berkshire JSHS, FitzSimons HS, Germantown HS, and W.E.B. DuBois HS.

**Exhibit IV-6:
Target Students for Twilight Schools and Credit Retrieval Programs**

School	Name of Program	Target Group
Berkshire JSHS	Credit Retrieval and Academic Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students lacking credits
W.E.B. DuBois HS	Transitional Evening School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeating ninth grade students who have poor attendance, disciplinary problems and/or who have experienced course failure.
	Credit Recovery Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who failed algebra and/or English I
FitzSimons HS	Leon H. Sullivan Life Opportunity Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who are overage and lack credits
Germantown HS	Keystone/Success Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200 students who are “off-track to graduate” (i.e., overage, lack credits)
Overbrook HS	Twilight School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who are overage and lack credits
University City	Twilight School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 120 ninth grade students who are overage and lack credits
West Philadelphia	Twilight School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who are overage and lack credits

Given that these Twilight Schools/credit retrieval programs are offered during evening hours or in some cases as separate academies, these programs have a full complement of staff, including program coordinators, teachers, and counselors. All seven Twilight School/credit retrieval programs will have credentialed teachers to provide instruction and academic support to students. In addition, W.E.B. DuBois HS reported staffing its program with a counselor to facilitate a life-skills seminar and to provide one-on-one counseling to students. In contrast, University City HS reported selecting an educational provider through an RFP process to manage and provide program services. Overall, schools are staffing their Twilight Schools/credit retrieval programs with staff to oversee the daily operations of the program and to provide instruction and supportive services to students.

Curriculum and Instructional Strategies

Twilight Schools and credit retrieval programs use a number of instructional strategies to provide academic support to students. These instructional strategies include online and web-based instruction, project-based learning, and small class sizes. For instance, Berkshire JSHS is using a

technology-based curriculum from Pearson's Education¹⁶ software that includes educational programs such as Fast Math, Read 180, and Quiz Show Testing. School leaders reported that these web-based programs allow students to work at their own pace, allow for distance learning or remote access, and include assessments so that students' progress can be tracked over time.

In addition, other schools are using district-wide curricula and project-based learning to provide personalized instruction and hands-on experience to students. For instance, W.E.B. DuBois HS is offering classes in Math, English, Biology, U.S. History, Spanish, and Physical Education. While class sizes are not to exceed twenty students, school leaders reported that the teacher-to-student ratio is generally 1:12. Additionally, in Philadelphia, the Oasis Program uses an alternative curriculum aligned to the Philadelphia School District's core curriculum. The curriculum features innovative teaching approaches, including project-based learning and the use of technology in the classroom, and training in career awareness and preparation, career acquisition (i.e., obtaining a job), career retention and advancement (i.e., life skills), and entrepreneurship.

Overall, grant-funded Twilight School and credit retrieval programs are structured to provide personalized instruction and one-to-one support to target students. While a number of schools were implementing these programs prior to receiving the MEES grant, they are all planning to expand these programs to serve more students and to provide additional support (e.g., instructional strategies and staff such as case managers). In the following example, we provide an overview of the Twilight School/credit retrieval program being implemented at W.E.B. DuBois HS.

¹⁶ Pearson provides scientifically research-based print and digital programs to help students learn at their own pace: <http://www.pearsoned.com/about/index.htm>

Overview of W.E.B. DuBois HS Transitional Evening School

Target Group: The W.E.B. DuBois Transitional Evening School (TES) is an after-school program targeting repeating ninth graders (students 16 and over who have spent two or three years in the ninth grade) who have poor attendance, disciplinary problems, and/or who have experienced course failure.

Services & Sequence: TES operates from 3:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. TES students meet in a small class setting (no more than 12 students), allowing for individualized and small-group instruction. Students attend two ninety-minute classes and one seminar class (30 minutes) at a time. Ninety-minute classes include Math, English, Biology, U.S. History, Spanish, and Physical Education. A thirty-minute seminar class, facilitated by a guidance counselor, includes discussions and activities involving career exploration, college preparedness, conflict resolution, anger management, time management, and social skills development. Classes are scheduled in five cycles of nine weeks each (including a six-week summer session), and students are provided with an “HSA Academy” to prepare them for the Maryland High School Assessment Program (HSA).¹⁷ In addition to the academic interventions, students participate in one-to-one counseling sessions and receive bi-weekly progress reports and awards for attendance and academic achievement. Staff supporting TES include one facilitator (administrative responsibilities), four teachers, one counselor, and one records clerk.

Program Outcomes: As of August 2009, W.E.B. DuBois HS had enrolled 23 students in TES during the fall and spring sessions, and 18 students of the same cohort completed the program in the summer of 2009. School leaders reported a 99 percent decrease in suspensions among TES youth and a total of 133 credits earned towards graduation (7.4 credits per student). For the 18 completers, school leaders reported a 72 percent attendance rate. Of the completers, four students were promoted to the tenth grade, seven promoted to the eleventh grade, and two promoted to the twelfth grade. Furthermore, nine students passed their HSA tests.

Intensive English and Math

The School District of Philadelphia’s mandated that all high schools utilize “corrective reading and math” for ninth graders whose test scores show that they could benefit from basic skill development in math and English. The seven Philadelphia-based grantee schools are using MEES grant funds to help them adopt the new curriculum and to hire teachers to lead the corrective math and English classes. Corrective reading and math is a comprehensive intervention that uses decoding and comprehension strategies with students performing one or more years below their grade levels. With this intervention, each lesson is scripted and is 45 minutes in length, and students are grouped based on their assessment level. Some school staff

¹⁷ The Maryland High School Assessments (HSA) are tests that measure school and individual student progress toward Maryland's High School Core Learning Goals in English, Government, Algebra/Data Analysis, and Biology. Passing the HSA is a graduation requirement beginning with the graduating class of 2009. Students take each test whenever they complete the course

were frustrated by the SDP mandate that schools use corrective reading and math because they spent time in SY 2008-2009 planning for to provide intensive English and Math through other strategies, and had already scheduled students for classes before being notified about the shift to corrective reading and math at the beginning of SY 2009-2010. The corrective math and reading program, however, is compatible with the goals of the MEES grant in that it focuses on the development of core competencies in English and math.

Employment Strategies

*There are a lot of kids looking for jobs. We need more job opportunities.
When youth can't find a legal job, they're going sell [drugs].*

- Student, John Bartram HS

As the above quote suggests, students have a particularly difficult time obtaining employment, either because of the lack of available jobs and/or competition for the jobs that do exist. Schools are therefore implementing a range of employment strategies to ensure that students acquire the knowledge and skills needed to obtain employment and/or enter college. In this section, we provide an overview of the employment strategies schools are planning to implement.

School-Based Employment Centers

In an effort to assist students in developing long-term employment and educational goals, eight schools are creating or expanding school-based employment centers that serve as hubs for employment services.¹⁸ The goal of these centers is to bring academic support and employment services together in one location where students can receive support for college exploration, career exploration, improved academic achievement, leadership development, and development of social skills. In all eight cases, these centers are available to all students, and thus have the potential to affect the whole school.

The School District of Philadelphia's strategic plan (Imagine 2014) includes the expansion of school-based employment centers, or rather "Student Success Centers" (SSCs), within all District high schools. School leaders described SSCs as "one-stop shops" where students receive counseling, conflict resolution, work readiness training, academic tutoring, life skills training, and community referrals. To provide these services to students, SSCs will have a variety of staff. For instance, Germantown HS plans to use grant funds to hire a SSC Coordinator, two Career Specialists, one Post-Secondary Specialist, three Re-Engagement Specialists, and one

¹⁸ These eight grantees include John Bartram HS, Berkshire JSHS, FitzSimons HS, Germantown HS, Lincoln HS, Overbrook HS, University City HS, and West Philadelphia HS.

drug and alcohol counselor. Each of these staff members has certain key roles and responsibilities:

- **SSC Coordinators** will manage SSC operations, including implementing a comprehensive data collection and analysis project, supervising professional staff and student interns, building partnerships with community organizations, and establishing working relationships with school administrators, staff, teachers, students, and parents.
- **Career Specialists** or case managers will work with school administrators and teachers to coordinate school-wide employment-related programs for students that will include content such as workplace mentoring, resume development, college visits, and intensive internships for seniors.
- **Post-Secondary Specialists** will manage college access activities at each school through the creation and coordination of college informational events and college excursions. In addition, these staff are responsible for designing and implementing lessons, workshops, and orientations that pertain to goal mapping and college preparation. Other key tasks include developing teacher partnerships, providing academic tutoring monitoring, registering and preparing students for PSATs, SATs and ACTs, and helping students search for colleges, apply to colleges, apply for financial aid, and select colleges.
- **Re-Engagement Specialists** will work with no more than 40 students at a time who are currently truant, at risk of dropping out, or who have already dropped out. Overbrook HS is also using re-engagement specialists to manage its “Welcome Center” for students reentering Overbrook HS from juvenile placement, incarceration, foster care placement, hospitalization, or drug/alcohol treatment.
- **Drug and Alcohol Counselors** will provide counseling, treatment, and referral services to students and their parents who struggle with substance abuse.

Because SSCs promote collaboration between schools and local community service providers, schools planned to sub-contract with community-based and educational support organizations to assist in delivering services

Of the seven Philadelphia schools, three (John Bartram HS, Overbrook HS, and University City HS) operated SSCs prior to receiving the MEES grant. These SSCs are currently providing services to students; however, grantees plan to increase these services by hiring additional staff, including the staff mentioned above. For instance, University City HS will expand its SSC by hiring a career specialist and a post-secondary specialist.

Internships

We need paid internships so we can learn stuff and enjoy being educated and getting money. Most jobs don't pay a lot... At my recent job, they paid me below minimum wage, but I couldn't say anything because I wasn't really supposed to be working.

- Student, John Bartram HS

According to the MEES grant solicitation, grantees' employment strategies are to include internships for eleventh and twelfth graders. All nine schools are therefore planning to provide paid internships to both eleventh and twelfth graders and, in some cases, to ninth and tenth graders as well. To develop these paid work experiences, school leaders are encouraging career coordinators and career specialists to develop relationships and linkages with local employers and community organizations.

Career specialists in Philadelphia-based schools are planning to develop and coordinate internships for target students through the SSC. These career staff are going to work closely with school leaders and teachers to identify youth to participate in paid internships, and with local employers and organizations to develop internship slots. For instance, at Lincoln HS, career specialists will work closely with local employers and with PYN's internship team to develop internships for students through Youth Workforce Investment initiatives. Once internship slots are developed, Academy Coordinators and Counselors will forward to the career specialist the names of students identified as candidates for internships, based on specific criteria (grades, behavior, attendance) and special attention to "at-risk" students. The career specialist will develop and place students in internships that align with their academy focus. In addition, Lincoln HS plans to provide an internship orientation for selected students that will include topics such as workplace etiquette; it also plans provide training for employers on topics such as workplace mentoring. The overall goals of these activities are to create sustainable internships and to ensure that students are supported and engaged in meaningful tasks.

As shown in the examples below, both Berkshire JSHS and W.E.B. DuBois HS are using similar, yet distinct strategies to provide internship opportunities for their target students.

Berkshire JSHS's Strategies to Connect Students with Internships

The goal of Berkshire JSHS's employment strategies is to ensure that all students are trained and prepared to enter the workforce. Accordingly, the school is building off its current complement of internships and externships to provide work-learning experiences to all enrolled students.

Internships are open to all students in the areas of Auto Mechanics, Culinary Arts and Hospitality, Agricultural Science, Business and Finance, Sports Recreation, and Construction Trades. During intake, students are exposed to the available internships and, if they opt to, will use their flex period (i.e., elective) to participate in a five-week course in one of the areas above. Students participate in these courses for 80 minutes every other day, receiving both classroom and hands-on training. Once students successfully complete their five-week courses, they are interviewed by the Internship Coordinator and placed in an internship. Students are paid \$7.25 for each hour worked, the cost of which Berkshire JSHS is subsidizing with MEES funds. School leaders reported that ten students, to date, have participated in automotive internships, seven in horticulture, four in recreation, and six in carpentry.

Externships are off-campus jobs available to students who have successfully completed an internships. Externships are unsubsidized positions for which students are required to interview with local employers. Students typically work on the weekends and during holiday seasons for roughly ten hours a week. In addition, students maintain these positions for as long as they last or until they are discharged from Berkshire JSHS or lose their off-campus privileges. To date, Berkshire has placed a total of 20 students in externships.

Money students earn through their internships or externships is deposited into an account kept for each student. Students have access to these funds once they are discharged. In addition, Berkshire JSHS uses an internship coordinator and mentors to train, evaluate, and provide workplace mentoring to students. Mentors receive professional development and support that includes supervision techniques for working with difficult youth, training in career technical education curriculum and assessments, and logistical and scheduling assistance. Through these development activities, school leaders want to ensure that students are provided with safe, focused, and productive work experiences.

While paid internships are often limited to eleventh and twelfth grade students, some schools are also creating paid and unpaid workplace learning experiences, such as job-shadowing, for ninth and tenth graders. For instance, Overbrook HS has merged its Learning to Work (LTW) and Oasis Program in order to provide students with both credit retrieval and employment services.¹⁹ The Learning to Work Program supplements the Oasis program by providing project-based

¹⁹ The LTW strategy is a dropout prevention strategy that partners CBOs with diploma granting entities to provide job readiness and employment opportunities to students who have had trouble achieving success in a traditional school setting. The LTW component is supported with grant funds from another DOL grant.

career exploration activities, job readiness training, and internships to overage and under-credit ninth and tenth graders. Staff from the partner CBO deliver LTW activities, and students are expected to exit the program with improved literacy and numeracy skills (at least two grade levels better) and paid work experience. Although all schools are not providing paid work experiences to ninth and tenth graders, all, at minimum, plan to expose these students to various careers through job shadowing activities.

W.E.B. DuBois HS's Strategies to Connect Students with Internships

W.E.B. DuBois HS, in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED), is implementing internship programs for twelfth and eleventh graders. These programs will expose target students to basic life skills development and career exploration. The school anticipates that 50 percent of all graduates will be placed into post-secondary educational or career-related programs, or obtain unsubsidized employment.

For the **Eleventh Grade Program**, W.E.B. DuBois HS is targeting 75 eleventh grade students who are in good academic standing. Program activities include a one-day-a-week non-paid internship followed by a six-week, paid summer job experience. According to the implementation plan, students will be matched with job placements in their specific areas of career interest. In addition, students will participate in one semester of life skills, college preparation, and job readiness training.

The **Twelfth Grade Program** will target 75 twelfth graders with sufficient credit hours, who are on track for graduation. These students will be offered early release from school to engage in a range of paid internships or work-learning experiences. MOED will work with local organizations and employers to develop content-driven internships that reinforce classroom learning and allow students to gain experience in entry-level careers. Additionally, in collaboration with local universities and community colleges, twelfth graders who plan to major in engineering will be released to take a freshmen college course required for engineering majors.

Toward the end of his or her senior year, each student will develop, in conjunction with a MOED One-Stop Career Center case manager, a transition plan that will include next steps for the student to take in pursuing his or her career goals. Twelfth graders will also receive follow-up services for one year from an MOED case manager. With grant funds, W.E.B. DuBois HS plans to subsidize student internships, and school leaders expect twelfth graders who are on track to graduate to apply to internships in the 2010 spring semester.

Strategies to Improve the School Climate and Student Behavior

According to ETA's grant solicitation, grantees are to develop both school-wide activities and interventions targeted towards specific groups of students that are designed to improve student behavior and school climate. In accordance with this expectation, schools are planning to implement a number of school-wide and student-centered strategies to address their school climate issues, and to augment other key strategies. Below we provide an overview of environmental and behavioral strategies schools are planning to implement.

In-School Suspension Programs

Four grantees are planning to implement in-school suspension programs as a strategy to improve student behavior and school climate.²⁰ School leaders reported that the goals of these programs are to reduce the number of repeat suspensions and to provide students with a safe learning environment. In addition, school leaders view in-school suspension programs as having the corrective function of out-of-school suspensions but lacking the latter's stigma (in-school suspensions are not permanently included on a student's academic record). Thus, these programs are seen as academically sound programs that give students a second chance.

All four schools adopting this approach plan to staff their in-school suspension programs with two teachers (one math and one English) and a re-engagement specialist from the SSC. Teachers will be responsible for designing and implementing a curriculum for the in-school suspension program, while school leaders are to develop a protocol for re-engagement specialists to assist in providing social and emotional support to in-school suspension students and in reintegrating them back into their original classrooms.

Schools plan to enroll no more than 30 students in their in-school suspension programs and students are to be assigned to the program for no longer than ten days. In addition, schools will develop criteria for students to enter the programs as an alternative to suspension for first-time offenders of district-wide Level I infractions (minor) and certain Level II infractions (major).²¹ While school leaders from all four schools have diligently been planning their in-school suspension programs, University City HS is the only school that had successfully launched its program as of Fall 2009. School leaders from other schools attributed the lack of classroom

²⁰ These four grantees include Germantown HS, Lincoln HS, Overbrook HS, and University City HS.

²¹ Level I infractions include discipline incidents that are low-level intensity and do not threaten serious bodily harm to others or create a hostile environment to the school community. Level II infractions are discipline incidents that severely interfere with the learning and safety of others, are of a treating or harmful nature, an/or are legal violations, warranting administrative interventions.

space and a slowed hiring process to the delay in the launch of their in-school suspension programs.

Life Skills and Leadership Development Programs

At least seven grantee schools are planning to implement life skills and leadership development programs to address school climate and student behavior issues. In most cases, these programs aim to build the self-esteem and confidence of students. Further, the majority of these programs have the specific goal of developing students' communication, decision-making, and conflict-resolution skills.

Some schools have planned interventions that target specific groups of at-risk youth, such as incoming ninth graders, while other interventions are designed to be implemented school-wide. As an example of the former approach, John Bartram HS is planning to implement the Talent Development Freshman Orientation Seminar, a three-week seminar that specifically targets incoming ninth graders. Through this intervention, the school plans to provide lessons on high school orientation (e.g., classroom and school rules), study skills (e.g., note taking, time management), human relations (e.g., problem solving, resisting peer pressure), social skills (e.g., active listening, cooperation), and a host of other topics. As an example of a school-wide intervention, Berkshire JSHS is implementing an Adventure Based Counseling program available to all students that includes experiential learning and group- and team-building activities.

Life skill and leadership development programs vary in the groups they target and the strategies and approaches they use. Nevertheless, they all attempt to build the interpersonal skills and support the holistic and moral development of students. In the following example, we provide an overview of one life skill and leadership development program.

Overview of W.E.B. DuBois HS's Peers Making Peace Program

Peers Making Peace is a peer-mediation program aimed at teaching students pro-social conflict resolution skills. The goal of the program is to improve the school environment by reducing violence and discipline referrals and by increasing academic performance. The program is based on a combination of strategies:

- life and social skills training
- training in conflict prevention and resolution
- parental involvement in conflict resolution education
- peer-led modeling and coaching
- creation of a supportive school environment

Through the Peers Making Peace program teams of students are trained to serve as drug-free role models and “neutral third parties” who act as mediators in peer conflicts. A volunteer program staff serves as the peer mediation program facilitator. Students are nominated by their peers and teachers or nominate themselves to serve as peer mediators. Students selected as peer mediators participate in a peer mediation training led by the program facilitator, who is required to attend a two-day Peers Making Peace training.

The Peers Making Peace program will be housed within a classroom at W.E.B. DuBois HS, and the peer mediation facilitator and DOL Grant Coordinator, in consultation with the principal, will develop a schedule of mediation opportunities. Students will be informed of the process for participation in peer-led mediations, and referrals will be accepted for mediations and scheduled according to the developed schedule.

Targeted Professional Development

All grantee schools are providing a range of professional development opportunities to school leaders and teachers that focus on techniques and interventions teachers can use to better manage their classrooms and to identify gang-related behavior and signs. These services are provided by school staff (such as climate managers and mental health specialists), technical assistance providers, and external providers (in conferences and workshops).

For instance, in Philadelphia, a number of schools are using grant funds to hire climate managers from the district's Office of School Climate and Safety. These staff are located at school sites and will be responsible for helping to improve each school's culture and climate. In addition, these staff will assist in expanding the schools' professional development offerings. For instance, climate managers will develop and facilitate a series of faculty and staff trainings on climate-related topics such as de-escalation, conflict resolution, structured/socialized lunch, anger management, and anti-bullying.

In addition, the grant is also creating opportunities for school leaders and teachers to participate in professional development conferences and workshops. For instance, W.E.B. DuBois HS is providing training in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to school leaders and staff. According to the implementation plan, PBIS is a systems approach to enhancing the capacity of schools to educate students through development of research-based school-wide and classroom-centered discipline systems. The PBIS process focuses on improving a school's ability to teach and support positive behavior for all students. PBIS is thus not a program or curriculum, but rather a team-based process for systemic problem solving, planning, and evaluation. To implement PBIS throughout W.E.B. DuBois HS in SY 2009–2010, school leaders developed a PBIS team that observed models of PBIS being implemented at other school sites, and participated in a two-day training. Following these activities, the PBIS team is to work with a PBIS technical assistance coach to implement the model school-wide.

Schools are providing targeted professional development through a variety of methods. In some cases, these activities have been delayed due to challenges in hiring staff and contracting with technical assistance organizations. Nevertheless, school leaders continue to research training opportunities to provide to school staff.

Case Management Strategies

To improve social services linkages and to centralize school-based supportive services that address the academic, behavioral, and employment needs of youth, grantee schools are supporting a number of case management positions. In this section, we provide an overview of the new staff positions schools are creating to address the specific needs of youth.

Academic Counselors and Support Staff

To augment the educational interventions and to address barriers to academic success, all grantee schools have hired or will hire school counselors and support staff. These staff play two key roles: (1) coordinating with school administrators, teachers, and parents to create educational plans with students and (2) ensuring that students are receiving the necessary supports and services needed to achieve academic excellence. In some cases, schools are using these staff to work with specific target groups, such as at-risk ninth graders.

In Baltimore, W.E.B. DuBois HS is providing case management and support services to students through the FUTURES Works Program.²² This program is housed in a large classroom at

²² FUTURES Works is a dropout prevention partnership operated by the Baltimore City Public Schools in partnership with MOED.

W.E.B. DuBois HS, and is staffed with a Program Coordinator and three Youth Advocates. Utilizing a team approach, youth advocates meet with students weekly, or more frequently as needed, to build each student's life skills, improve his or her school attendance and academic achievement through individual and group activities, and develop concrete short and long-term goals. W.E.B. DuBois HS is using several other case-management strategies through FUTURES Works to improve students' academic success:

- Advocates meet quarterly with the school's counselor and students to identify areas of strength and weakness.
- Advocates encourage students to meet with their teachers and ask for special support or consideration in coach classes.
- FUTURES Works staff members provide quarterly individualized incentives for positive academic performance.
- Staff refer students to other supportive services in their neighborhoods, such as the Youth Opportunity Community Centers, which have open computer labs.
- Advocates refer students to Twilight classes to help them make up missed credits.

Staff of FUTURES Works also meet with parents and school staff to address the developmental needs of individual students and to provide program incentives, counseling, and other interventions designed to motivate students to succeed, such as guest speakers and field trips.

All grantee schools in Philadelphia are using MEES funds to expand the number of staff facilitating the district-wide Comprehensive Student Assistant Process (CSAP) at their schools. CSAP is a systematic mechanism of identification, intervention, referral assistance, and support/follow-up. CSAP has a school-wide component and three tiers of progressive support; each CSAP tier is guided by a four-phase approach that includes referral, team planning, intervention and recommendations, and follow-up. The three tiers of support and intervention are as follows:

- **Tier 1.** At this level, teachers meet regularly with their small learning community, grade group, or academy colleagues to identify and implement strategies for the classroom. These meetings are generally facilitated by academy leaders.
- **Tier 2.** At this level, a core team of trained professionals (i.e., referring teacher, counselor, academy leader, and nurse) meet with the student's parents to develop an intervention plan that is designed to address the needs of the student and or family. This plan can include both school-based and community-based supports, and the team can include an auxiliary member such as the school psychologist.
- **Tier 3.** At this level, the focus is on an evaluation for change of placement when a student is not achieving success due to educational or behavioral reasons. Staff will follow district and state procedures to find the proper placements for these students.

To facilitate the CSAP approach, a team of staff identifies barriers that prevent a student from learning, and works to remove those barriers by accessing school and community-based resources. Philadelphia schools are using a number of academic and support staff—including a CSAP coordinator, school administrators, school counselors, academy leaders, and student advisors—to support CSAP. These staff work collectively to provide services and develop intervention plans that address the specific needs of the student. Although CSAP was in place prior to the MEES grant, Philadelphia schools reported using grant funds to hire additional counselors and support staff, such as a re-engagement specialist, to further support the CSAP process.

As mentioned previously, all Philadelphia schools planned to hire re-engagement specialists for their SSCs. These staff will work with no more than 40 students at a time who have been identified as truant, at risk of dropping out, or who have already dropped out. These staff will provide several key supports, including reviews of students' educational histories, (credits attained, courses passed, and schools attended), assessments of students' needs unrelated to school, and necessary partner referrals. Overall, the goal of hiring these staff is to re-engage at-risk and struggling students into an educational pathway.

Behavioral and Mental Health Staff

Grantees schools' case management strategies also involve support for behavioral and mental health staff, including social workers, mental health clinicians, and drug and alcohol counselors. In many cases, these staff will work within the school setting to assist students in reducing barriers to learning and promoting positive emotional development. Additional strategies and activities include group and school-wide intervention strategies that aim to increase students' skills in communication, stress management, and anger management, and consultation and training to school administrations and teachers.

Berkshire JSHS is providing a wraparound of behavioral and mental health services through a clinical team of staff that includes a psychiatrist, social workers, a Behavior Management Specialist (BMS), and a mental health professional from the community. The goal of this approach is to bridge the line of communication between mental health clinicians and school staff, so that behavioral and mental health interventions are included in all aspects of a student's program. Currently, Berkshire JSHS is supporting six BMS positions, of which three are supported with grant funds. According to school leaders, these staff provide crisis intervention counseling when students are pulled out of class or are in crisis, and suggest alternative ways students can respond to various situations. In addition, these staff serve as liaisons between teachers and other mental health staff, communicating key information to staff regarding the possible reasons behind a student's behavior (e.g., family death, not taking medications, etc.).

At Baltimore's W.E.B. DuBois HS, mental health clinicians will conduct intake assessments and screenings with ninth graders in FUTURES Works. These screenings cover a range of areas, including family, education, and mental health. Based on a student's assessment results, the clinician will conduct a range of activities with the student, including group therapy and activities, and in some cases individual therapy. In addition, W.E.B. DuBois will be implementing an intervention model called Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS)²³ and has plans to include mental health clinicians as members of this team.

Overall, schools are planning to use grant funds to expand their behavioral and mental health staff, because school leaders see these staff as providing important interventions that keep students stabilized in academic programs.

Conclusion

In summary, MEES grant funds are enabling grantee schools to create or expand an array of mentoring, education, employment, and school environment interventions to improve school performance and the overall school climate. In some cases, these strategies target the entire student population; in other cases, they are aimed at specific target groups, such as incoming ninth graders. In addition, schools are providing a range of supports and professional development activities to school staff to improve classroom instruction and management, and to implement a number of evidenced-based practices and programs.

School leaders spent most of 2008-2009 school year designing their programs and developing the contractual relationships necessary to bring community-based partners on board to deliver mentoring, case management, and employment programs. In Philadelphia, key partners and staff had not yet come on board as of September 2009, resulting in delayed implementation of "community-based services" at seven of the nine schools. In contrast, all schools have made significant progress in implementing their educational strategies, which include summer bridge programs, Ninth Grade Success Academies, career academies, and intensive math and English. In most cases, schools were able to restructure their existing programs or provide training to their current staff to move these components forward without contracting with external partners. In the next chapter, we provide a detailed description of MEES grant-funded education intervention—the ninth grade "transition" programs that launched and operated in the summer of 2009.

²³ Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports has been established by the Office of Special Education Programs, US Department of Education to give schools capacity-building information and technical assistance for identifying, adapting, and sustaining effective school-wide disciplinary practices.

V. SUMMER BRIDGE PROGRAM

An important goal for the MEES grantees is to ensure that incoming ninth graders transition smoothly and successfully into high school. Ample research shows that the transition into high school is a critical juncture for students, a time when they move from smaller and more supportive middle schools to larger high schools, and where academic and social demands are higher. While this time can be exciting for students, the transition can also be filled with great anxiety and stress. As a result, the transition to high school is often marked by increased disengagement and declining motivation, particularly for low-achieving youth. Extensive research shows that unsuccessful high school transitions can contribute to high dropout rates, low on-time graduation rates, and low achievement.¹ One study found an average drop in grades of 18 percent following the transition to high school, a decline comparable to two letter grades.² Research suggests that those most negatively affected are disproportionately made up of students from the poorest families and communities. It has been established that economically disadvantaged students lose ground during the summer months, particularly in reading, and this “summer loss” may be a key reason why low-income students fall behind their more advantaged peers. To address these challenges, most schools have created summer bridge programs to help students make a smooth and successful transition to high school.³ Through summer bridge, schools seek to improve students’ academic skills, boost their enthusiasm and motivation for learning, and build positive relationships with teachers and peers.

¹ Herlihy, C. (2007a). Toward ensuring a smooth transition into high school. Washington, DC: National High School Center, American Institutes for Research. Retrieved November 12, 2009, from http://www.betterhighschools.org/docs/NHSC_TowardEnsuring_051607.pdf

² Roderick, M., & Camburn, E. (1999). Risk and Recovery from Course Failure in the Early Years of High School. *American Educational Research Journal*, 36(2), pp.303-343.

Roderick, M. (1993). *The Path to Dropping Out: Evidence for Intervention*. Westport, CT: Auburn House.

³ Berkshire did not develop a summer bridge program per se because of the school’s year-round structure. W.E.B. Dubois HS in Baltimore did not develop a summer bridge transitional program for incoming ninth graders, but instead created summer programs for credit retrieval for repeating ninth graders and those who failed core classes.

In this chapter, we discuss the diverse range of organizational and instructional approaches that schools have developed for their summer bridge programs. We begin with a description of summer programs in general, at the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) and the Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS), to provide a context for summer bridge programs. We then discuss the broad goals of the summer bridge programs, including the target group and recruitment practices. We then discuss the programmatic characteristics of the summer bridge programs, including the program schedule, school climate, and leadership and staffing. Next, we describe the core services offered in the summer bridge programs, and end the chapter with a discussion of challenges and lessons learned.

Background on Summer School Programs

SDP and BCPSS offer a diverse range of summer programs. In Baltimore, students who have not met standards for their grade-level promotion, or who are in need of graduation requirements, must enroll in a summer school program to advance to the next grade or to graduate on time. Students with educational disabilities can also enroll in summer school to reinforce their academic skills. W.E.B. Dubois HS in Baltimore has developed several summer programs that target repeating ninth graders and ninth graders who failed core classes. These programs include Future Works, the Transitional Evening School (TES), and the Summer Academy, a newly established program that enabled students to earn credits over the summer.

Berkshire did not offer a traditional summer program for its students, but instead provided Adventure Based Counseling (ABC), which is also offered during the school year. This program uses group counseling techniques to develop problem-solving skills and promote positive relationships among students and staff. Because Berkshire's summer program differed so widely from that of the other eight schools, we exclude it from this analysis.

In Philadelphia, the target schools developed summer bridge programs for the first time in the summer of 2009, to offer incoming ninth graders the opportunity to experience life in a comprehensive high school. These programs lasted five weeks for six out of the seven schools. One school's program lasted four weeks. Students were encouraged to enroll in a summer bridge program closest to their homes, but they could attend any summer bridge program in the city. Most students enrolled in a summer bridge program at the high school where they planned to attend in the fall.

In Philadelphia, summer bridge programs are clearly distinguished from summer school. Incoming ninth graders can attend summer bridge programs if they are on grade level, or if they are credit deficient. Summer school, in contrast, is required for students in grades nine to eleven who have failed two or more core academic classes and need to recover credits in order to

advance to the next grade. These students can attend summer school at any of the 21 comprehensive high schools in the district. Twelfth graders who need one or two credits to graduate can attend summer classes at a Senior Center located at a designated high school. Distinguishing summer bridge from summer school was important for the students that we interviewed, many of whom did not want to be associated with the stigma of summer school. An incoming ninth grader at West Philadelphia HS told us the following:

Summer bridge is not summer school. If you're in summer school it means you didn't pass your classes and you seem dumb. In summer school, you don't go on field trips every Friday. In summer bridge, it's your choice to come here. It's to help you. It's not mandatory.

In addition to the four- and five-week summer bridge programs at the MEES-funded schools, the SDP held a short summer bridge program for all empowerment schools in the district that included students in kindergarten, middle school, and high school. The summer bridge programs at these schools lasted two hours per day for three days at the end of August 2009. This program was designed as an orientation to the school for incoming students and was not funded by the MEES grant.

Goals for Summer Bridge

The program is good for kids because this is their opportunity to meet other students from other schools, and some of them are a little apprehensive about starting a new school. It's a good experience for them to come in and get firsthand information rather than just coming in September and looking at this big building and wondering what to do.

- Staff Member, Lincoln HS

As suggested by the quote above, the primary goal of the summer bridge programs was to introduce incoming students to the high school environment so that they could get acclimated to the school culture, its rules, norms, and behavioral and academic expectations. In addition, schools established the following related goals for summer bridge:

- **Academic support.** An important goal for summer bridge programs is to provide students with extra instructional time in reading, writing, and math so as to give them the extra help they need to build their academic readiness and prepare for the demands of high school. The extra instructional time also gives students who failed the eighth or ninth grade a second chance for promotion.
- **Social support.** Schools also provided social support for students during the summer months, through a range of enrichment activities, to give students the opportunity to get to know and develop positive relationships with their teachers and peers. Schools strongly believed that social support is vital to engaging students over the summer, sparking their interest in high school, and enhancing

their motivation to learn. As discussed below, social support services varied widely but provided students the opportunity to have fun as they learned.

- **College preparation and career development support.** A number of schools incorporated early college awareness and career readiness training into the summer bridge curriculum, including an emphasis on higher education access and success, so that students could draw connections between classroom learning and their future goals. By offering college awareness and career options during summer bridge, schools hoped to show students the multiple pathways they can use to achieve their long-term goals.

Schools varied somewhat in their level of emphasis on these three goals. In general, academic support was the cornerstone of summer bridge programs and was the most important goal identified by the schools. Social support was also articulated as an important goal, but these activities varied in their quality and duration. Lastly, although providing college preparation and career development was a goal that was identified by many schools, this goal was not consistently implemented. As discussed below, these goals guided the design and structure of the summer bridge programs.

Recruitment and Enrollment in Summer Bridge

Schools established a diverse target group for summer bridge in order to reach a wide spectrum of students who could benefit from additional support during the summer. Identifying a target group enables schools to specifically focus their outreach efforts so that they can be strategic about how to best plan and coordinate their recruitment activities. Exhibit V-1 summarizes the target groups for summer bridge.

As shown in Exhibit V-1, the schools in Philadelphia targeted all incoming ninth graders for summer bridge, including “rising” ninth graders—incoming students who were on grade level and proficient in reading and math, based on their eighth grade grades and test scores. These students (the “rising” ninth graders) made up about 70 percent of the total number of enrolled students. Students who failed core classes in the eighth grade made up about 30 percent of the total number of enrolled students. Two schools specifically targeted repeating ninth graders—W.E.B. Dubois HS and University City HS. W.E.B. Dubois HS offered the Future Works program over the summer for students who failed the ninth grade and the Summer Academy for ninth graders who needed to pass core courses in order to be promoted to the tenth grade. University HS offered credit retrieval classes for repeating ninth graders.

**Exhibit V-1
Summer Bridge Target Groups and Enrollment⁴**

School	Target Group(s)	Planned Target Enrollment⁵	Adjusted Target Enrollment	Failing 8th Graders⁶	Rising 9th Graders	Total Enrollment
John Bartram HS	Incoming ninth graders	250	170	30	100	130
	Credit-deficient eighth graders					
W. E. B. Dubois HS	Repeating ninth graders	80 60		0	65 repeating 9 th	65 ⁷
	Ninth graders who failed core classes					
FitzSimons HS	Incoming ninth graders	100	n/a ⁸	19	16	35
	Credit-deficient eighth graders					
Germantown HS	Incoming ninth graders	400	125	50 69	119	
	Credit-deficient eighth graders					
Lincoln HS	Incoming ninth graders	300	150	21	75	96
	Credit-deficient eight graders					

⁴ Schools differed in how they calculated their enrollment numbers. Some schools counted all students who signed up for summer bridge, even if students subsequently dropped out. Other schools only counted students who enrolled in the program for the duration of the summer.

⁵ This number is taken from grantees' proposals.

⁶ This category refers to students who are at risk of failing the eighth grade because they failed core classes and are credit deficient.

⁷ Of the 65 students enrolled in summer programs at W.E.B. Dubois, 58 students attended the Summer Academy, a four-week summer school; and 17 students attended the Transitional Evening School (TES), an accelerated credit retrieval program for out-of-school youth. Of the 17 students enrolled in TES, ten of them attended both TES and the Summer Academy. TES is offered year-round but also offers a six-week summer program to allow students to continue to earn credits over the summer.

⁸ FitzSimons and Overbrook did not adjust their original enrollment goals.

<u>School</u>	<u>Target Group(s)</u>	<u>Planned Target Enrollment⁵</u>	<u>Adjusted Target Enrollment</u>	<u>Failing 8th Graders⁶</u>	<u>Rising 9th Graders</u>	<u>Total Enrollment</u>
Overbrook HS	Incoming ninth graders Credit-deficient eighth graders	250	n/a	40 90	130	
University City HS	Incoming ninth graders Repeating ninth graders Credit-deficient eighth graders	400	50	35	30 incoming 11 repeating	76
West Philadelphia HS	Incoming ninth graders Credit-deficient eighth graders	285 150		20	60	80
TOTAL						
					440 (Rising 9 th Graders)	
					76 (Repeating 9 th graders)	
				215/731 (30%)	516/731 (70%)	731
		2065	705			

Recruitment Strategies

Schools developed a range of recruitment strategies to identify target students for the summer bridge programs. These strategies differed for W.E.B. Dubois HS and the seven Philadelphia high schools. At W.E.B. Dubois HS, staff invited target students to attend the summer programs and sent letters home to parents to inform them about the programs. The schools in Philadelphia used a variety of approaches to reach incoming ninth graders. First, school staff coordinated with feeder schools to identify and recruit students for summer bridge. Teachers made presentations at the feeder schools' assemblies, distributed flyers, sent letters home to parents, and invited eighth graders to visit their high schools. In addition to these recruitment efforts, schools reviewed students' academic data to identify those whom they wanted to specifically target for summer bridge, including students with low attendance, low test scores, low reading and math levels and high behavioral incidents. For instance, Lincoln HS worked with its feeder

schools to access students' eighth grade data so that staff could meet with students and their parents to inform them about summer bridge.

Examples of Recruitment Strategies

John Bartram HS started recruiting students for summer bridge in March and April 2009. The TAP and members of the summer bridge committee reached out to feeder schools to schedule meetings with eighth grade teachers and counselors to inform them about the program. John Bartram HS teachers also made announcements at school assemblies, visited middle school classrooms, and brought high school students to middle schools to talk about their experiences at John Bartram HS.

Overbrook HS held an eighth grade summer bridge program rally at its auditorium, where approximately 300 students were bussed in from five feeder middle schools. In addition to students, about 150 parents attended the rally. During this event, Overbrook HS staff provided an overview of the summer bridge program and its goals and expectations. After the rally, Overbrook HS staff generated a list of potential incoming ninth graders and worked in teams to call students' homes to encourage them to apply to the program.

Schools realized that they needed to include parents in their recruitment efforts to gain their support and buy-in for the program. One school leader at Bartram HS reflected on this strategy:

We can't rely on kids to communicate the importance of the program to the parents. We have to work directly with parents and convince them to encourage their children to enroll.

As such, schools often involved parents in their recruitment efforts, by calling them and visiting their homes (since some of the phone numbers were disconnected). For instance, when the TAP at West Philadelphia HS discovered the week before summer bridge started that only one student had registered for the program, he and two teachers collected student addresses and telephone numbers, and began "knocking on doors" and making phone calls. Several schools held assemblies to inform parents about summer bridge, but attendance at these events was generally low. At Lincoln HS, for example, staff convened two parent meetings but only about 10–15 parents showed up.

Challenges with Recruitment

We really need to do a much better job when we go out and talk to our middle schools and our K-8 schools about West Philadelphia and what we have to offer. We are absolutely focusing on getting these kids interested into coming to the summer program because they need to be able to be prepared for their high school year. They need to know what the ninth grade academy is all about, meet their teachers and so forth.

- School leader, West Philadelphia HS

Many of the Philadelphia high schools struggled to recruit the number of students that they had hoped to enroll in summer bridge, despite their focused recruitment efforts. Across the board, schools noted that recruitment was hampered partly by the schools' negative reputations. The seven Philadelphia schools are known to be under-achieving and have a track record of school violence. For these reasons, students and parents were reluctant to enroll in the summer programs offered at the target schools. In addition to these challenges, the school staff identified other barriers that hampered their recruitment efforts:

- **Feeder schools and students misunderstood the details of the summer bridge program.** In some cases, there was misunderstanding about the details of the summer bridge program, including the start date, the program services, and the target population. School leaders at Germantown HS, for example, indicated that a number of feeder school principals were confused about the schedule for Germantown's summer bridge program. One feeder school principal told his students that Germantown's summer bridge program ended at 1 pm rather than 3 pm. When students started the program, they were frustrated that they needed to stay longer than they expected. Another feeder school principal referred its students to a different summer bridge program because he did not know that Germantown's program allowed students to make up credits. School leaders at West Philadelphia HS indicated that there was also confusion about the start date for its summer bridge program because the district office sent letters to students with the wrong start date. As a result, students showed up on the wrong day and decided not to enroll in the program after all.
- **Coordinating with feeder schools was sometimes difficult.** Although some schools in Philadelphia were able to successfully coordinate with feeder schools, others found coordination somewhat challenging. First, schools had difficulty accessing data about students so that they could identify the most needy students for summer bridge and begin planning and coordinating their service plans. Overbrook HS, for example, had a difficult time accessing student files prior to the summer bridge program. Summer bridge teachers noted that having access to student records would have helped them tailor instruction to students who needed extra academic support. Second, several schools did not have a history of collaboration with feeder schools, so they struggled to gain access. School leaders hope that relationships with the feeder schools will strengthen by the time they are ready to recruit students for the summer 2010.
- **Communicating with parents about summer bridge was difficult.** A number of schools reported that they were unable to successfully reach parents through their outreach efforts, so many parents were unaware of the program. This was true despite many efforts by schools to hold parent meetings and call parents to encourage them to apply to the program. John Bartram HS was unable to get some parents to submit the required paperwork so that students could be eligible for a paid stipend offered by the Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) for participating in the summer bridge program. As a result, many students were unable to get paid over the summer, and were not interested in enrolling in the program.

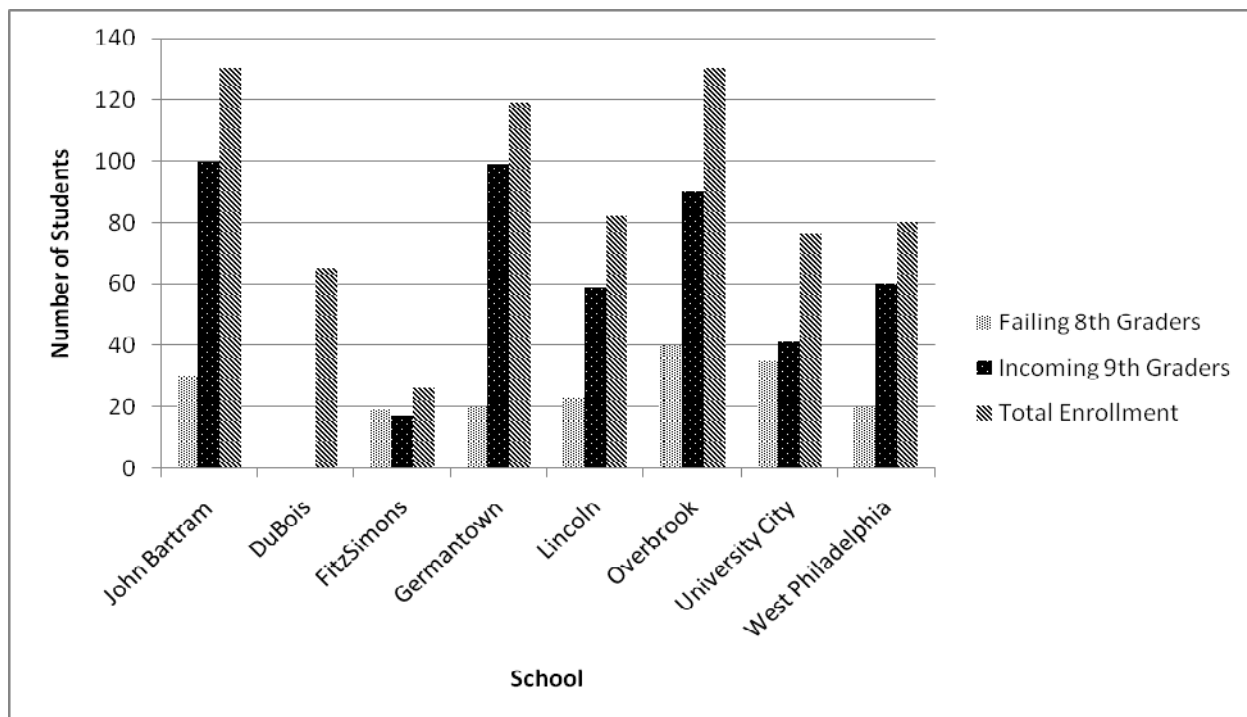
- **Students lacked an interest in attending school over the summer.** An important challenge faced by all schools was motivating students to attend school over the summer. Even though summer bridge programs in Philadelphia offered enrichment activities, including field trips, students would rather enroll in summer camps or work in summer jobs.

In addition to these challenges, one school, Lincoln HS, did not have a facility to house the summer bridge program until two weeks before the program start date. As a result of this uncertainty, the TAP and teachers had a difficult time recruiting students.

Enrollment

Because of the challenges with recruitment, schools struggled to meet their planned enrollment goals for summer bridge. As show in Exhibit V-2, schools had originally planned to enroll 2,065 students in their summer programs. Six out of the eight schools that offered summer bridge reduced their original enrollment goals (to a total of 705 for those six) when they realized it would be difficult to meet their planned goals. Two of the schools—Germantown HS and Lincoln HS—cut their enrollment goals approximately in half. Other schools also reduced their overall enrollment goals due to the recruitment challenges discussed above. For instance, schools discovered that the summer bridge program was competing with many other summer programs in the local area, including paid summer jobs or other summer schools available through the school districts. Since students had the option of attending summer school at any school, schools had a tough time attracting students to their programs. In addition, the schools in Philadelphia were offering summer bridge for the first time, and many of them had not solidified their outreach and recruitment plans early enough in the school year to reach the high volume of students that they had hoped to reach. Further, feeder school patterns shifted in some schools, which affected plans for summer bridge enrollment. By adjusting the enrollment goal for summer bridge, schools felt that they were establishing more realistic enrollment goals for the program.

Exhibit V-2: Enrollment Summary



In total, 731 students enrolled in a summer program—666 students in Philadelphia and 65 students at W.E.B. Dubois HS in Baltimore. As mentioned previously, approximately one-third (30 percent) of these students had failed core classes in the eighth grade and were required to attend summer bridge to retrieve credits in order to be promoted to the ninth grade. The remaining 70 percent showed proficiency in reading and math and were on grade level. While we do not have data on the characteristics of all of the students who attended summer bridge, the student characteristics at two schools—John Bartram HS and FitzSimons HS—provide a glimpse at the types of students who attended summer bridge in the summer of 2009.⁹ Below is a summary of student characteristics at these two schools.

⁹ We did not systematically collect data about student characteristics because most schools did not have this data available at the time of the site visit. The data that we have for John Bartram HS and FitzSimons were provided by the School District of Philadelphia.

**Exhibit V-3:
Sample Summer Bridge Student Characteristics**

	John Bartram	FitzSimons
Average daily attendance	79.7%	63%
Percent with 3+ absences	52%	Not recorded
Percent proficient or advanced in math	34% 8%	
Percent proficient or advanced in reading	39% 14%	
Total enrolled	130	35

As shown in Exhibit V-3, the students who enrolled in summer bridge at John Bartram and FitzSimons HS struggled with their reading and math skills. Only about one third of John Bartram HS students showed proficiency in math and reading, and even fewer students at FitzSimons showed proficiency in these areas. These two schools had mixed results with their average daily attendance. At John Bartram HS, for example, more than half of the students were absent more than three times over the summer. According to SDP’s calculations, this means that the average student missed more than one week of the five-week program. While these student characteristics do not include the entire summer bridge student population, they represent a snapshot of the kinds of challenges that both schools face as they seek to improve student learning over the summer and into the school year.

Programmatic Characteristics of Summer Bridge

Below we discuss the key features of summer bridge programs, including locations and schedules, school climates, staffing, and professional development.

Location and Schedule

Schools developed their own program schedules, which typically lasted all day. Students at the Philadelphia summer bridge programs attended their programs every day, except for students at Lincoln HS, who attended four days a week (Monday through Thursday). On average, students in the Philadelphia schools attended the programs for 7.25 hours per day for four to five weeks, depending on the school.¹⁰ Students at W.E.B. Dubois HS’s summer programs attended the

¹⁰ Six out of the seven schools in Philadelphia operated summer bridge for five weeks. The exception is West Philadelphia HS, which operated summer bridge for four weeks. W.E.B. Dubois HS in Baltimore operated its summer programs for six weeks.

program for 7.5 hours a day, for an average of about two weeks, depending on when they completed their courses and “tested out” of them. W.E.B. Dubois HS’s program lasted six weeks.

Two schools paid their students to participate in summer programming—John Bartram HS and W.E.B. Dubois HS. Students at John Bartram HS were paid \$7.50 per hour for 120 hours if they met the income eligibility requirements established by the Philadelphia Youth Network, which received WIA funds to provide summer work experience opportunities.¹¹ Students at W.E.B. Dubois HS who enrolled in the Futures program and Summer Academy were paid \$6.55 per hour for up to 30 hours per week for five weeks. Students could receive a raise to \$7.15 per hour for the sixth week of the program if they showed satisfactory performance.

Two out of the seven schools in Philadelphia (Lincoln HS and Overbrook HS) operated their summer bridge programs offsite. Lincoln HS was in the process of transitioning from an old outdated building to a new school building, and was unable to house summer bridge onsite. As a result, Lincoln HS’s summer bridge was held at the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush High School, a small high school in a suburban area of Northeast Philadelphia. Overbrook HS was operating a summer school onsite and wanted to separate students in the summer bridge program from students in the summer school. Thus, Overbrook HS’s summer bridge program was held at St. Joseph’s University, a private university located near the high school. School leaders at Overbrook HS felt that housing the summer bridge program at a college campus was a good way to build students’ early college awareness so that they would be motivated to complete high school and attend college.

School Climate

The schools operated summer bridge in diverse school settings that may have affected the school climate. Documenting this context is important because a growing body of research attests to the importance of school climate as a factor that can critically affect students’ learning experience. Research on school climate in high-risk urban environments indicates that a positive, supportive, and culturally conscious school climate can significantly and positively shape the degree of academic success experienced by urban students,¹² and can help students who are transitioning to

¹¹ A full discussion of John Bartram HS’s work experience/service learning opportunities is included in the Employment Services section below.

¹² Haynes, N. M., & Comer, J. P. (1993). The Yale School Development Program process, outcomes, and policy implications. *Urban Education*, 28(2), 166-199

a new school.¹³ We examined school climate through observations in classrooms, during lunchtime, and in between classes. During our observations, we documented the physical structure of the school building and the interactions between students and teachers and between students and their peers, which we define as key factors that can both affect and help to define the broad concept of school climate. We also examined students' sense of physical and emotional safety through their feedback on interactions with peers and staff.

The climate during summer bridge differed widely by school. These differences stemmed partly from the physical structure of the buildings in which the programs were housed. Six out of the eight schools that offered summer programs housed their programs onsite at the school. Four of these schools also offered summer school onsite, although in each case the summer school program was located in a separate area of the school to discourage students in the summer school program from interacting with summer bridge students.¹⁴

The climate of the summer bridge programs that were located offsite (Lincoln HS and Overbrook HS) appeared to differ somewhat from those of the programs operating onsite. At Lincoln HS, students appreciated the clean, spacious, and well-lit classrooms at Benjamin Rush Middle School, where the summer bridge program was located. At Overbrook HS, students and staff enjoyed the serene, green, and natural environment of the college campus where summer bridge was held. Students especially appreciated the opportunity to interact with college students and professors. As an incoming Overbrook HS ninth grader said,

The college is quiet, and it's in a better environment. Like you wouldn't want to be in summer school and its hot and sweaty and everybody complaining. But here, you [are] in a good environment. You got a lot of green stuff around, baseball fields, a soccer field.

The on-site summer bridge programs at Philadelphia schools varied in their physical environments. Some of the classrooms appeared clean, bright, and energizing. The classrooms at John Bartram HS, for example, were filled with student work, including charts and graphs of student accomplishments for the week, and pictures and projects that they were working on. In contrast, Germantown's large physical structure was dark and did not seem well cleaned. Along the same lines, the school climate at W.E.B. Dubois HS appeared informal. The classes were not fully set up, lights were not fully lit, there was no air conditioning in the classrooms, and the halls and classes were not adequately swept.

¹³ Freiberg, H. J. (1998). Measuring school climate: Let me count the ways. *Educational Leadership*, 56(1), 22-26.

¹⁴ The schools in Philadelphia that offered summer school included John Bartram, Overbrook, and University City. W.E.B. Dubois HS does not offer summer bridge, but rather summer programs for credit retrieval.

Despite the variations in the physical condition of some of the classrooms for summer bridge, most students reported feeling physically and emotionally safe while they were in the programs. This sense of safety was reinforced by classroom customs and the small class sizes. At several schools, teachers included a structured morning greeting activity so that students would acknowledge each other and recognize the particular circumstances that each student brought to the class. FitzSimons HS, for example, started the day with a morning convocation, when staff and students reviewed the norms of the program, reviewed the schedule of activities, recited the summer bridge pledge, and formally recognized students' positive behavior and work. At John Bartram HS, students did a welcoming greeting or activity that introduced them to their peers. This activity was intended to promote positive relationships among peers and between students and teachers because it encouraged students to open up about their personal situations in case they needed support.

In general, most schools reported few behavioral incidents during summer bridge and attributed this to a more relaxed atmosphere over the summer. Schools generally tried to adhere to the same discipline policy as they did during the school year. These policies included no cell phones and the use of metal detectors to discourage students from bringing in weapons and electronic items such as iPods, pagers, and cell phones. We noticed, however, that some schools did not enforce the "no cell phone" rule.

Promoting a Positive School Climate During Summer Bridge

Overbrook HS hired a climate manager to work during summer bridge who met with students regularly to inform them of who he was, dispel the myths about Overbrook HS, reinforce the school's expectations for students, and provide an overview of Overbrook's discipline policies and academic expectations. The climate manager and other staff were highly visible during lunch, passing periods, and in the classrooms, so that students could build relationships with them and see them as a resources if they need additional support. Should disciplinary issues arise, the Climate Manager met with students individually to address the problems.

Staffing

Summer bridge was staffed with a diverse range of personnel to offer the full spectrum of educational and enrichment services. As an organizing tool, we categorize the summer bridge staff into the following key categories:

- **Administrative staff**, including the Turnaround Principal (TAP), summer bridge program director, Student Success Center (SSC) Coordinator, office aides, and secretary. These staff were responsible for coordinating, supporting, and

overseeing the daily operations of the summer bridge programs. There were 30 administrative staff across the schools.¹⁵

- **Teaching staff**, including teachers and instructional specialists who teach academic classes. There were 83 teachers and two instructional specialists across all the programs.
- **Climate staff**, including security personnel, the climate manager, and student advisor/counselor and parent ombudsman. There were 24 climate staff across all the programs.
- **Partner staff**, including staff from community-based organizations (CBOs) who provided enrichment activities. There were approximately 40 partner staff across all the programs.¹⁶

In addition to these paid staff, two schools (University City HS and West Philadelphia HS) benefited from the use of university student interns who helped staff with various administrative functions during summer bridge. As discussed below, schools also employed student interns to assist teachers, escort students on field trips, mentor students, and provide additional administrative and classroom support. These interns are not counted as staff in this section.

At the Philadelphia schools, the TAP served as the principal for summer bridge. As principal, the TAP was responsible for staffing the program, overseeing the instruction, communicating with the district about programmatic needs, including supplies and other resources, and ensuring that the operations ran smoothly. At three schools (W.E.B. Dubois, University City, West Philadelphia), there was also a summer bridge program director, who supported the TAP and oversaw some of the administrative functions. The director led the design of summer bridge, provided support to teachers, and coordinated with CBO providers. At University City and West Philadelphia HS, the summer bridge directors were also ninth grade teachers and taught some of the classes.

¹⁵ The total number of staff in each category includes both full-time and part-time staff.

¹⁶ This number is an estimate, based on the number of CBO staff that were working in summer bridge at the time of the site visit. Some schools were planning on adding more CBO staff over the summer. It is likely that there were more CBO staff who provided enrichment activities, but the data were not available during our site visit.

Exhibit V-4 Summer Bridge Staff

School	TAP	Summer Program Director	Teachers	SSC Coordinator/Staff	Aides	Instructional Specialist	Student Advisor/Counselor	Parent Ombudsman	School Security	CBO /Partner Staff	Climate Manager	Assistant/Secretary	Other	Total Positions
John Bartram HS	✓		✓ 11		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	20	
W.E.B. DuBois HS	✓	✓	✓ 9						✓	✓		✓	✓	18
FitzSimons HS	✓		✓ 7			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				17
Germantown HS	✓		✓ 15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		30
Lincoln HS	✓		✓ 10	✓			✓	✓		✓				24
Overbrook HS	✓		✓ 12				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			25
University City HS	✓	✓	✓ 10						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25
West Philadelphia HS	✓	✓	✓ 9	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓	37

As shown in Exhibit V-4, West Philadelphia HS hired the most staff for summer bridge, yet its total enrollment was only 80 students. Even though some of these staff worked part-time, the staff-to-student ratio was approximately 1:2. FitzSimons HS had a similar staff-to-student ratio.

Teachers made up the largest personnel category for the summer bridge programs. This is not surprising, given that a central programmatic feature of summer bridge was small class size. The DOL grant provided funding for a large number of teachers so that students would have adequate support in a small and nurturing environment. While we were unable to collect consistent data about the average class size for all the schools, several schools reported that the average class size was about 15–20 students per class. One school, FitzSimons HS, had approximately five to

six students in each class because the overall enrollment was 36 students. John Bartram HS's teacher-to-student ratio was 1:9, which provided opportunities for high levels of attention and support. The class size in summer bridge is dramatically lower than that of the regular school year. In Baltimore the average class size during the school year is approximately 27 students,¹⁷ and in Philadelphia, 21 students.¹⁸ According to some students, the small class size enabled them to stay focused on their work. One 17-year-old student at W.E.B. DuBois HS's Transitional Evening School said,

I like the number of students that we have here. If there was a whole bunch of students, there would be a lot of distractions and people wouldn't be passing.

An important feature of summer bridge is that many of the teachers in the program were also ninth grade teachers from the same school. All of the summer bridge teachers at FitzSimons HS, for example, will work directly with the ninth grader cohort during the 2009–2010 school year. Two-thirds of the staff who worked in summer bridge at John Bartram HS will work with the ninth graders in the 2009–2010 school year. Encouraging ninth grade teachers to teach summer bridge was intentional, as school leaders hoped that students could start building relationships with teachers early. The TAPs and principals recruited the teachers, many of whom were enthusiastic to work with new students and were drawn to the opportunity to take part in a new program. One teacher at John Bartram HS said,

We'll have early interactions with the kids that we're going to have in the fall. A lot of the kids that are in the program will be in our classrooms. For me, that's why I volunteered to do it. To enter the school year with at least some kids from the summer is great, especially having that preliminary emotional work done.

While most schools hired teachers from within the school, district and union policy required that open positions be posted to the public. School leaders indicated that current teachers at the local school had priority, but it was sometimes necessary to hire new teachers for summer bridge because of the shortage of teachers interested or available to teach in the target schools. For example, West Philadelphia HS had to hire a math teacher from another school to teach summer bridge because there were very few math teachers available to work over the summer. W.E.B. DuBois HS had a difficult time recruiting teachers to work over the summer, and subsequently

¹⁷ http://www.baltimorecityschools.org/News/PDF/stateofschools08_12_08.pdf, accessed on November 18, 2009. This number reflects the 2008-2009 school year.

¹⁸ http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/tables/sass_2008_08.asp, accessed on November 18, 2009. This number reflects the 2008-2009 school year.

hired mostly new teachers from Teach for America for its summer programs. Lincoln HS hired at least four staff members who were not from the school.

Many teachers in the summer bridge programs had experience working in traditional summer school programs. For example, 52 percent of summer bridge teachers at John Bartram HS and just over half of the teachers at FitzSimons HS reported that they had worked in traditional summer school programs in previous years.

Students may benefit from the continuity of having the same teachers during the summer and then during the school year because teachers will have had a chance to get to know students and their learning needs. On the other hand, students may benefit from a fresh start with a new teacher, particularly if they did not experience great success with their teacher during the summer. We will continue to document the experiences of ninth graders in subsequent rounds of site visits and document the extent to which summer bridge made a difference to students' transition into high school.

Professional Development and Teacher Input

Summer bridge staff at the Philadelphia schools participated in a host of professional development and training activities prior to the start of the program. The depth and breath of professional development activities varied widely by school depending on the type of instructional program a school implemented and the school's general approach to summer bridge. In Philadelphia, at minimum, teachers were required to attend training on the use of the Voyager Curriculum, a mandatory, remedial curriculum for students who failed core classes in the eighth grade. As part of this training, teachers received an overview of the goals for summer bridge and its links to the MEES grant. Other schools that used specialized curriculum such as that developed by Talent Development and Classroom Inc. received additional instructional support over the summer. Teachers at FitzSimons HS, John Bartram HS, and Lincoln HS received training in how to incorporate the Classroom Inc. curriculum into summer bridge.¹⁹ For this curriculum, an instructional coach visited the schools weekly to assist with lesson planning and provide coaching on how to implement the activities outlined in the curriculum. Teachers at West Philadelphia HS received coaching from the Talent Development coach at Johns Hopkins University to ensure that the instruction carried out over the summer would connect to the curriculum of the ninth grade academy. Several schools in Philadelphia also received professional development from the Center for Secondary School Redesign (CSSR) on lesson

¹⁹ Classroom Inc. is an online curriculum that incorporates reading, math and project-based learning techniques.

planning for project-based learning. Professional development for W.E.B. Dubois HS teachers is highlighted below.

Professional Development for the Summer Program at W.E.B. DuBois HS

Staff at W.E.B. Dubois HS in Baltimore, MD participated in three main DOL-funded professional development opportunities over the summer. First, teachers were trained in Classroom Organization and Management, a program that helps teachers create and manage effective learning environments. In addition, teachers for the Transitional Evening School (TES) participated in a two-day workshop on how to do lesson plans and engage students. Lastly, a team of school leaders from W.E.B. Dubois HS attended a training on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS), an approach to addressing behavioral and discipline needs in order to improve student achievement.

In addition to receiving the professional development outlined above, teachers at two schools (W.E.B. Dubois and Overbrook HS) attended a staff retreat to bring staff and teachers together to discuss academic goals, priorities in the curriculum, and best practices for engaging students.

In general, teachers had mixed reactions to the professional development opportunities that were available to them. Teachers attended the required planning meetings for summer bridge, but some of them felt that they had little say in the core decisions that affected the design of summer bridge, especially the curriculum. For instance, teachers at several Philadelphia schools felt that when the district mandated the use of the Voyager Curriculum, it took away their sense of autonomy and stifled the innovation that they hoped to bring to the program. Many of these teachers indicated that they had planned on using a different curriculum for remedial students to maximize their ability to engage students in creative ways. When teachers were required to use Voyager, they felt disempowered and discouraged. One teacher at Lincoln HS said,

I don't know if I would say that we had a whole lot of input in terms of "yes" and "nos." It was more, "Here are the materials we are looking at, what do you think?" Outside of the opinions we gave, I don't think we had a lot of input into the materials.

Despite SDP's mandated curriculum, most teachers in the Philadelphia schools indicated that they had ample opportunities to shape the design of the summer bridge program through the summer bridge committees that were formed as a result of the MEES grant.²⁰ Summer bridge committee members typically included teachers, the TAP, and relevant community partners. The

²⁰ All schools in Philadelphia formed sub-committees that focused on planning for summer bridge.

committees met regularly to decide on enrichment activities and curriculum to enhance the Voyager Curriculum. Teachers were also integrally involved with the recruitment for the program, meeting with teachers and students from feeder schools and calling parents to encourage them to apply to the program. The teachers at John Bartram HS, for example had a lot of input into their program. They conceived of the “green” theme and successfully wrote a grant to the Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) to provide stipends for eligible students. As a result of these efforts, many of the teachers had a strong sense of ownership for the program.

Services in Summer Bridge

As mentioned above, the services available through summer bridge were intended to reinforce core academic skills and provide students with fun and enriching activities to enhance their learning. Below we discuss the following services available through summer bridge: (1) academic instruction, (2) enrichment activities, and (3) employment services.

Academic Instruction

Academic services in summer bridge were geared towards academic enrichment and remediation. Academic enrichment services included a review of reading, writing, and math skills for students that were on-grade level. Academic remediation services focused on correcting students’ reading and math skills so that they could catch up and receive a passing grade in order to advance to the next grade level. At W.E.B. Dubois HS in Baltimore, academic services were designed for failing ninth graders, so classes were offered in the specific courses of study that students failed, such as math, English, health, science, and Spanish. Students attended academic classes in the morning for approximately three hours out of the 7.5-hour school day.

In Philadelphia, academic services differed for the two basic categories of students—remedial students who failed core eighth grade classes, and “rising ninth graders” or those on grade level. Remedial students, or those who were credit deficient, worked on basic reading and math, using the mandated Voyager curriculum, a standardized curriculum for credit-deficient students. Students who were on grade level were usually pre-tested in reading and math so that teachers could tailor instruction to their academic levels. For instance, students at West Philadelphia HS and Overbrook HS who were on grade level were pre-tested using the Achieve 3000, an online reading curriculum. Test results were subsequently used to determine students’ reading levels and class instruction was tailored to their levels.

Some schools further divided the students based on other factors such as high achievement and interest in enrichment activities. For example, John Bartram HS divided its on-grade-level students into three separate groups based on their choice of service learning activity (these included recycling, healthy eating, and sports and health). Lincoln HS grouped the high achieving students together so that they could learn Algebra and science, two classes that were not available to other students. Below we provide details about how Lincoln HS grouped its students in summer bridge.

Grouping Students by Academic Levels

Lincoln HS fine-tuned its grouping system to include three core groups of students for whom instruction was tailored:

- **Group A: Proficient.** Students worked on a condensed version of the school-year ninth grade curriculum, which included Algebra I, science, and English.
- **Group B: Basic.** Students were taught English and math using the Kaplan K-12 Summer Ventures curriculum, which was aimed at reinforcing students' skills and keeping students on track academically.
- **Group C: Remedial.** Students received English and math instruction through the district-mandated curriculum Voyager, which includes basic math and reading.

Developing a grouping system enabled teachers to provide differentiated instruction and ensured that students were placed in classes that were appropriate for their levels of proficiency.

Overview of Summer Bridge Curricula in Philadelphia

With the exception of the mandated Voyager curriculum for remedial students, schools had autonomy to choose their own curricula. Exhibit V-5 summarizes the diverse range of curricula that the schools in Philadelphia used in summer bridge.

The following is a summary of the curricula listed in Exhibit V-5:

- **Voyager** is a standardized curriculum for students who failed core classes; it focuses on basic reading and math. This curriculum requires that students take assessments at the beginning and at the end of the program. University City and West Philadelphia HS decided to use this curriculum for all of their students, regardless of their academic levels, to reduce the burden on teachers.
- **Classroom Inc.** is a software program that creates simulations of real life contexts that can be used in math and English lessons.

- **Achieve 3000** is a web-based literacy curriculum that focuses on reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing proficiency. Students were pretested on their reading skills and were assigned lessons based on their reading abilities.
- **Kaplan Summer Ventures** is a reading and math intervention program that focuses on study skills and basic skills proficiency.
- **Study Island** is a web-based reading and math curriculum that covers the State of Pennsylvania standards and is tailored to students' academic levels.
- **Cognitive Tutor** is a tutoring program that tailors math instruction to students' levels and is used to supplement math instruction.
- **Apangea** is an online math curriculum that includes differentiated math instruction and tutoring with the support of a live, on-line tutor. West Philadelphia HS was the only school to use this curriculum during summer bridge; it supplemented the Voyager curriculum. West Philadelphia HS will be using this curriculum during the school year, so teachers were pleased that students were getting a brief introduction to its content.

**Exhibit V-5:
Summary of Philadelphia's Summer Bridge Curricula**

	<u>Voyager</u>	<u>Classroom Inc.</u>	<u>Achieve 3000</u>	<u>Kaplan Summer Ventures</u>	<u>Study Island</u>	<u>Cognitive Tutor</u>	<u>Apangea</u>
John Bartram HS	✓						
FitzSimons HS	✓	✓					
Germantown HS	✓		✓	✓			
Lincoln HS	✓			✓			
Overbrook HS	✓	✓	✓				
University City HS	✓	✓			✓	✓	
West Philadelphia HS	✓		✓				✓

Many schools used online instructional programs such as Achieve 3000, Apangea, and Study Island as either the core curriculum or a supplement to the Voyager curriculum. There were several reasons why schools decided to use online curricula during summer bridge. First, many schools in Philadelphia use online curricula during the school year and teachers wanted students to be exposed to the ninth grade curriculum over the summer so that they could learn how to use the technology, access the live tutor, and navigate help features of the programs. In addition, school leaders liked that the online curricula had the ability to tailor instruction based on students' academic levels and needs. This feature was valuable for the summer bridge students, according to staff, because it enabled them to learn at their own paces and be fairly self-directed in their schoolwork.

In general, the mathematics program for all of the students in summer bridge focused on problem solving, data interpretation, and computation. While the remedial students learned the basic computational skills associated with addition, subtraction, multiplication, and integers, students who were proficient in basic math learned Algebra. As mentioned above, two schools—University City and West Philadelphia HS—decided to use the Voyager Curriculum for all of their students, despite the fact that this curriculum was designed for remedial students. For students who were already proficient in basic math, working on what they had already mastered was frustrating. One incoming ninth grader at West Philadelphia HS said, “They teach me stuff I already know. Our teacher’s treating us like we’re in second grade, giving us subtraction and addition.” This sentiment suggests that a more differentiated curriculum may be needed across the schools. While some schools tried to tailor their curricula to students’ academic levels, this practice was not applied consistently across schools.

The primary focus of the reading curriculum was on developing writing skills and reading comprehension skills rather than basic reading skills. Students read assigned books and wrote in their journals about their daily experiences in the program and about the books that they read. For instance, students at John Bartram HS were all reading the same book, *We Beat the Streets*, about three young men who grew up in an impoverished neighborhood and made a pact to attend medical school and become doctors. Students frequently discussed the book and practiced their writing in their journals.

Overall, the choice of curriculum for remedial students was a fairly contentious issue for teachers, who were initially told by SDP that they had autonomy to choose a curriculum for those students. After many months researching and planning for the program, SDP suddenly mandated the Voyager curriculum for remedial students. This decision frustrated teachers, who felt that they did not have much control over the curriculum.

Instructional Methods

We observed a variety of instructional methods that teachers used during summer bridge. Teachers felt that they were most successful at engaging students when they used a multi-method approach in the classroom. In general, a multi-method approach means that while a curriculum might center around math and reading, teachers have the *flexibility* to develop methods that make learning consistently interesting to youth. The mix of methods used across schools included: traditional whole group (“chalk and talk”) instruction; independent work paired with individual tutoring; computer instruction and exercises; and a range of creative games. As described in the example below, teachers incorporated project-based learning techniques into all of their classes whenever possible.

Examples of Project-Based Learning

John Bartram HS students in the recycling group worked on a recycling project that required them to keep track of all the compost, recycling, and trash that was produced by the summer bridge program. At the end of each day, students measured the weight of items placed in waste bins and plotted this number on large sheets of butcher paper that were displayed in the class. These large graphs visually displayed the amount of waste that students were throwing away and recycling each day. By calculating the amount of garbage that was produced and putting the data in an understandable form, students learned basic math skills.

University City HS students had the opportunity to enroll in a Green Camp at the Academy of Natural Sciences where they learned about different ecosystems, with a focus on watersheds and clean water. Students went out into the field and tested water at different locations around Philadelphia and recorded their findings in a binder. This project reinforced students' writing and computation skills.

In addition to project-based learning techniques, teachers used technology to enhance instruction and engage students. For example, as a vehicle to practice their reading and writing, students at Overbrook HS used computers to create comic books. Students took pictures of themselves and uploaded them to create stories about their lives. Overbrook also used Texas Instrument (TI) NSpire calculators in its math classes.²¹ In addition, many schools, such as Germantown HS, were in the process of creating templates for digital portfolios that will be required for students to complete during the school year. Germantown HS hired a computer specialist for the summer to introduce students to the software programs that will be used during the school year and to get them started on developing their digital portfolios.²² The computer specialist also helped teachers integrate technology into lesson plans. Computer-based instruction was possible at Germantown HS because of a grant from Classrooms for the Future,²³ which provided 64 laptops and four interactive whiteboards.

Teachers also made an effort to inject some fun and excitement into their classes by playing games. Teachers at University City HS, for example, played Jeopardy with students as a way to learn academic materials. Students in one class were divided into two teams that worked together to solve math problems; the teacher explained how to find the right answer only if the teams were unable to find solutions. In addition, teachers at W.E.B. Dubois HS incorporated students' cultural backgrounds into the lessons by encouraging them to bring in food from their

²¹ The TI NSpire calculator is an integrated system that combines handheld computers and computer software with assessment tools to gauge student understanding of math concepts.

²² This position was also supported by a grant from Classrooms for the Future.

²³ The Classroom for the Future grant provides laptops and white boards to select schools. The program is funded by the state.

countries of origin. Another teacher at the school made a point of incorporating real-life situations into the classroom by linking the lessons to how students could make money. For instance, students explored just how much more money they could make over time if they passed math and went to college.

These teaching strategies suggest that some classes in summer bridge took a decidedly more relaxed approach to learning than a traditional year-round classroom. This finding was confirmed by several teachers, who admitted that they were more relaxed about the coursework in summer bridge than during the school year. A teacher at West Philadelphia HS went even further in noting that the relaxed atmosphere allowed her to accomplish what she considered an important goal:

My classroom is a little bit more relaxed [in the summer]. I try to make it more fun and a very relaxed atmosphere...I sit and talk and just try to get to know students...I just want to get to know them, get a feel for them, know how they learn and interact with each other....things that will help me as a teacher.

Enrichment Activities

Enrichment services were an essential aspect of summer bridge programs because they provided social support and made the summer bridge program interesting and exciting. Students typically attended enrichment activities in the afternoon, either onsite or offsite, for approximately three to four hours per day depending on the length of the program day. On average, students attended approximately 15 to 20 hours per week of enrichment activities, which was equivalent to the amount of time that students spent in academic services. Schools had flexibility to design their own enrichment activities and made use of community-based organizations to deliver the bulk of these services.

Research shows that providing enrichment activities as a form of social support can have positive effects on students attending summer programs. This support is vital as students transition into high school, a time when friendships and social interactions are particularly important for adolescents. For instance, one study found that students who participated in a number of social interactions, including field trips, group meetings, and sports received fewer failing grades and missed fewer days of school than students who did not participate in such activities.²⁴ Programs

²⁴ Cognato, C.A. (1999, October). *The effects of transition activities on adolescent self-perception and academic achievement during the progression from eight to ninth grade.*

that provide opportunities for social interaction with older peers can also help dispel some of the misconceptions about high school. Exhibit V-6 summarizes the types of enrichment activities carried out by the schools.

**Exhibit V-6:
Enrichment Activities**

	<u>Visual Arts</u>	<u>Performing Arts</u>	<u>Sports</u>	<u>Life Skills</u>	<u>Adult Mentoring</u>	<u>Culinary Arts</u>	<u>Field Trips</u>	<u>Other</u>
John Bartram HS	✓		✓			✓	✓	
W.E.B. DuBois HS	✓			✓			✓	
FitzSimons HS	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Germantown HS	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Lincoln HS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Overbrook HS	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
University City HS	✓		✓				✓	✓
West Philadelphia HS	✓						✓	

The following is a summary of these activities.

- **Visual arts.** All schools provided activities that engaged students in some form of visual arts, including murals arts, puppets, and comic books. Students learned about the fundamental principles of drawing, painting, and creating comic books through different media.
- **Performing arts.** These were activities that involved dance, drama, music, or poetry/spoken word. Four schools offered activities related to the performing arts.
- **Sports.** Sports was an important activity for many schools because it allowed students to play outside, work in teams, learn new games, and learn about fitness and sportsmanship. Some of the popular sports included basketball, kickball, and softball.
- **Lifeskills.** A number of schools incorporated life skills into their menus of enrichment activities; the activities focused on leadership training, team building, communication skills, violence prevention, gang awareness, and diversity workshops.
- **Adult mentoring.** Two schools (Overbrook HS and Lincoln HS) offered adult mentoring through the use of CBO staff who were hired to provide leadership training. The structure of the mentoring activities was fairly informal, but adults met with youth individually and in groups, and made time to get to know them so that youth could seek their mentorship if needed.

- **Culinary arts.** Two schools provided classes in culinary arts, which focused on healthy eating and healthy bodies (John Bartram HS) and cooking from around the world (Germantown HS).
- **Other.** The following activities were only available at University City HS.
 - *Technology and Broadcasting.* Approximately 15 students at University City HS enrolled in this activity, held at the Drexel University campus a block away from the school. Students learned how to do podcasting, video and music editing, and emailing. Students had full access to a computer lab and were taught how to search the internet, set up email accounts, and use the editing equipment/software. Students worked on several group projects, learning how to develop music and how to create a music video. As a final product, students recorded a rap music video that was shown to other students in the program.
 - *Green Camp.* Approximately seven students enrolled in this camp located at the Academy of Natural Sciences Museum. Students learned about ecosystems and took field trips to measure water quality.
 - *Work-study class.* This unpaid class was only available to repeating ninth graders to give them the opportunity to learn job skills over the summer so that they could work in paid internships in the fall. However, this class was not popular; only two students signed up.

Enrichment Activities at FitzSimons HS

FitzSimons HS contracted with a community-based provider called Nu Sigma Youth Services, Inc., (NSYS), a chapter of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, to provide a range of enrichment activities during summer bridge. NSYS was selected because of its experience working with African American males. NSYS's group leaders taught visual art, drama, and music. NSYS also operated an afternoon sports program, engaging students in baseball, lacrosse, and soccer, as tools to provide physical activity and foster cooperative group skill development. In addition, NSYS staff facilitated weekly violence-prevention activities, with a focus on self-esteem, peer pressure, anger management, and conflict resolution.

Field Trips

In addition to these activities, schools planned field trips during the summer. While the number and type of trips varied significantly by school, these trips included visits to college campuses, museums, local parks, a local farm, sporting events, and even museums in New York and Washington D.C. Schools usually planned weekly fieldtrips as a way to break up the structure of the program and to expose students to new settings. This was important, according to school

leaders, because it allowed students the opportunity to see new places and interact with students in a different social setting. A school leader at West Philadelphia noted:

I think that socially the field trips helped the students a lot. It helped them to feel like they had fun in the summer, because of course, many of our kids don't have a vacation. They learned some things about being together, working together. They got a chance to know their teachers outside of the classroom and experience some extracurricular activities.

A few schools made sure that the trips were closely connected to their instructional themes so that students could see linkages between what they learned in the classroom and what they were experiencing outside the classroom. For example, FitzSimons HS scheduled its trip to Washington D.C. during a week when the program was covering the “social development” theme. As an out-of-state trip, it reinforced students’ social skills and behavior when they were in a new environment. John Bartram HS also tried to coordinate its field trips with class lessons. For instance, the recycling group took a field trip to the local water company to learn about the importance of water conservation and career opportunities at the local company.

Field trips were generally available to everyone in the programs, except for students in some of the summer programs at W.E.B. Dubois HS. At W.E.B. Dubois HS, only students enrolled in the Futures summer program were allowed to go on field trips. Students in the Summer Academy and Transitional Evening School were focused squarely on academic remediation and field trips were not part of the program. Some schools used field trips as incentives for good behavior. Students who did not abide by the program rules were barred from going on field trips.

Schools struggled to get approval for field trips from the School District of Philadelphia because, according to respondents, the district was not well equipped to handle these requests over the summer due to limited capacity and other logistical barriers. SDP needed to carefully assess the risks associated with each trip, and as result, took a great deal of time to approve planned field trips. Nonetheless, some schools forged ahead, because the trips were promised to students and staff did not want to disappoint them. John Bartram HS, for example, planned 24 trips for the summer, but none of them had been approved prior to the start of the program. The lack of approval meant that transportation was also not approved. Since the transportation company needed a deposit to reserve the buses, the TAP used her own money for the deposit; otherwise the trips would not have been possible. West Philadelphia HS was also unable to get district approval for transportation for its field trips. Fortunately the school’s onsite partner, the Netter Center, was able to leverage its own resources to pay for transportation so that students could attend field trips. Because fieldtrips were viewed as essential to engaging students, schools

hoped that the School District of Philadelphia will be better prepared next summer to address transportation challenges.

Schools also struggled to get approval from the School District of Philadelphia to pay for snacks for the field trips because, according to the Turnaround Principals, snacks were not part of the line item for the summer bridge budget. One teacher, for example, requested fresh fruit for his field trip, but the TAP indicated that she would not be able to get approval for fresh fruit, saying, “It’s easier to get approval for water.” As a result, many teachers paid for student snacks out of their own pockets, because they felt that it was important for students to stay nourished during the sometimes long field trips.

Structure of Enrichment Activities

The structure of enrichment activities varied widely across the schools. In general, enrichment activities were offered in the afternoon so that students could enjoy them after they worked on their academics. The exception is John Bartram HS, which integrated enrichment activities throughout its curriculum. John Bartram HS’s emphasis on incorporating service learning activities into its program meant that hands-on enrichment activities were imbedded in the classes throughout the day. For example, students in the Sports and Health group played sports in the gym in the morning after they reviewed their reading and math lessons. In the afternoon, this group went to the football field to clean the field, working in teams to pick weeds, pick garbage, paint the lockers, and take pictures and document the process.

There were several ways in which students were assigned to enrichment activities. At John Bartram HS, FitzSimons HS, Germantown HS, and University City HS, students could choose the enrichment activity in which they would remain for the duration of the summer.²⁵ At University City, students had the opportunity to rotate through all five enrichments during the first three days of the program to see which one they liked best. This way, they learned about each enrichment before selecting one for the summer. Other schools allowed students to choose an enrichment activity, also called an elective, each week and then rotate to a different elective the next week. This approach allowed students to experience all of the enrichment activities available over the summer. Lincoln HS and Overbrook HS used this approach. In a third type of approach, used by West Philadelphia and W.E.B. Dubois HS, students attended all of the enrichments in the afternoon and were divided into small groups to facilitate small group instruction.

²⁵ At John Bartram HS, students in the remedial group were assigned to the Gardening group, so they did not have the option of choosing their enrichment activity.

Service Delivery Arrangements

The enrichment activities offered at the Philadelphia schools were delivered by CBOs that received limited contract agreements from the district to provide services over the summer. The providers that were selected have extensive experience serving at-risk youth and have established relationships with the schools in Philadelphia. The number of service providers selected at each school to provide enrichment services varied. For example, at least three schools (Germantown HS, Lincoln HS, and Overbrook HS) contracted with three providers to deliver a range of enrichment services. The CBOs alternated the days on which they were at the school, so that students would receive a diverse range of activities throughout the week. For instance, at Lincoln HS, Kids First, a CBO that provides leadership and life skills training, was at the school twice a week for 1.5 hours a day. Another provider, Heart Speak, a visual and performing arts organization, provided services for two hours a week in the afternoon. Several schools hired about one to two providers to deliver enrichment services.

In contrast with the other schools, John Bartram HS did not hire CBOs to deliver its enrichment services because its program was focused on service learning projects that incorporated hands-on learning, and thus were delivered directly by the school teachers.

CBOs provided their own staffing to deliver services. Two schools—FitzSimons and Germantown—provided additional staffing support to the CBO staff. At FitzSimons HS, classroom teachers co-facilitated the afternoon enrichment activities so that students had continuity in staffing. This approach also ensured that discipline issues were minimized, as students were expected to adhere to the same discipline policies with CBO staff as they were with their academic teachers. At Germantown HS, classroom teachers were assigned to enrichment classes to support instruction and facilitate classroom management. This strategy ensured that there were always at least two adults in a class to address behavioral issues and minimize class disruptions.

As with the academic classes, schools also relied on student interns for additional support during the enrichment activities. Interns helped teachers with project activities by setting up the classrooms and games and working closely with students to help them with their work. Interns also escorted students on field trips, to the restrooms, and to the lunchrooms. These interactions with older students were opportunities for incoming students to get peer support, which staff believed would help them better understand the expectations of high school.

Overall, students and staff highly valued the enrichment services that were available. They felt that these activities provided strong social support, which was essential to helping students transition into a new school environment. One school leader at John Bartram summed up her perspectives about the service learning and enrichment services at her school:

Service learning was the most impactful [part of summer bridge]. The student ownership piece made it effective. They owned it. Our kids learned about healthy eating. Our kids learned about recycling. They learned about the correlation between sports and healthy eating. Having them learn in a way that is not in a classroom environment was also helpful. They drew pictures about it, they wrote about it.

Employment Services

The schools felt that an important goal of summer bridge is to connect students' learning to their future lives and goals. To meet this goal, schools provided employment services during summer bridge in the form of career readiness training for students and hands-on work experience/internships for upperclass interns. These services varied in how they were designed and delivered.

Career Readiness Training for Summer Bridge Students

They tell you how to build resumes, so when we get to high school we already got our resumes done.

- Incoming ninth grader, Overbrook HS

Career readiness training was provided to students who attended summer bridge and to the upperclassmen who served as interns for summer bridge. We discuss services for these two groups of students separately.

There are different ways in which career readiness skills were taught to summer bridge students. As shown in Exhibit V-7, five out of the eight schools that provided summer bridge specifically incorporated career readiness training into their curricula. This training usually consisted of training in soft skills, including developing a resume, searching for a job, dressing for work, and interviewing for a job. Schools also emphasized factors that affect success in high school, such as time management, academic credits, and college planning. Below are some generalizations about how career readiness training was delivered for summer bridge students.

- **Career readiness workshops were offered as an elective in a classroom format.** Germantown HS offered career development classes as an elective, or enrichment, that was available to students through the Student Success Center (SSC). A dedicated SSC staff person was available to work with the approximately 15 students who signed up for this elective. Some of the topics covered in this class included how to talk to teachers, how to manage your time, how to select classes to ensure on-time graduation, and how to find resources in

the school. Other topics focused on career preparation, including how to choose careers and how to select colleges.

- **Career readiness skills were integrated into the school day.** Some schools incorporated career readiness training throughout the program, making this activity available to all students.
 - At **Lincoln HS**, different groups of students met with the SSC Coordinator every day for one hour to learn work-readiness skills and learn about career options after high school and beyond. Students learned about community resources such as the Pennsylvania Career Guide, took a career interest inventory, and took a personality test to better understand how their interests map to their career options. Teachers also emphasized career development in the classroom, reinforcing the connection between doing well in school and finding a good job.
 - At **Overbrook HS**, students met with the SSC Coordinator, who held workshops on career and college readiness. Students learned about how to complete the FAFSA form, develop a resume, apply for jobs, and earn the right credits to qualify for college.
- **Career readiness was informally introduced in the classrooms.** Some schools that did not formally provide career readiness training made an effort to instill in students the importance of acquiring a strong work ethic so that they would succeed in school and in their careers. At John Bartram HS, for example, students were paid for their participation in the program and teachers often reminded students that participating in the program was similar to working a job. As such, students were expected to be on time, complete their work, and work in a team environment.

**Exhibit V-7:
Summary of Career Readiness Services for Summer Bridge Students²⁶**

	Career Readiness Workshops/Job Readiness Training	Career Exploration Activities	Career Assessments
John Bartram HS		✓	
W.E.B. DuBois HS	✓		
Germantown HS	✓		
Lincoln HS	✓		✓
Overbrook HS	✓		✓
University City HS	✓	✓	✓

In addition to career readiness workshops, two schools informally offered opportunities for students to explore career options through their enrichment activities. At John Bartram HS, students discussed career opportunities while they were on field trips, including trips to the local water company, sporting events, colleges, and other sites. This way, students could draw direct links among what they observed on field trips, schoolwork, and real jobs. At University City HS, students who enrolled in the offsite enrichment activities at Drexel University and the Academy of Natural Sciences Museum were exposed to a variety of career options in technology and the natural sciences.

In sum, career readiness skills were often reinforced in a classroom format. In some cases, these classes were led by CBO staff who were contracted to provide employment services. For example, prior to the beginning of the academic classes during summer school, students at W.E.B. Dubois HS participated in a two-week career readiness workshop that was delivered by the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development (MOED), the local workforce development agency. In other cases, career readiness training was provided by SSC Coordinators who were hired to provide formal career readiness training to prepare students for high school and help them get a jumpstart on their plans for the future.

Hands-on Work Experience For Summer Bridge Interns

Schools hired a number of interns to work over the summer to support teachers and students in the program. These internships were intended to provide upperclassmen the opportunity to gain

²⁶ FitzSimons HS and West Philadelphia HS did not formally offer career readiness training for summer bridge students.

work experience, provide mentoring opportunities for incoming students, and encourage positive social interaction between incoming students and older students. Students were paid between \$7.25 and \$7.50 per hour for the duration of the summer. The MEES grant did not fund these internships because the School District of Philadelphia did not release the funds to support summer internships. Instead, funds for student interns were made available by PYN or other community partners. Exhibit V-8 summarizes the number of interns across the schools.

As shown in this exhibit, West Philadelphia HS hired the largest number of summer interns (20). These interns were coordinated by the school’s in-house partner, the Netter Center, which leveraged WIA funding from PYN to pay the interns.

**Exhibit V-8:
Student Interns for Summer Bridge**

School	Number	Amount Paid
John Bartram HS	8	\$7.50/hr
W.E.B. Dubois HS	n/a	
FitzSimons HS	15	\$7.50/hr
Germantown HS	15	\$7.25/hr
Lincoln HS	4	\$7.25/hr
Overbrook HS	8	\$7.25/hr
University City HS	6	\$7.50/hr
West Philadelphia HS	20	\$7.50/hr

Interns were selected in different ways. In most cases, interns were recruited by the TAP or nominated by teachers to work in summer bridge because of their strong potential for leadership. These students usually had good grades and did not have behavioral issues. Students needed to apply for the position and be interviewed by the TAP to demonstrate their commitment and readiness for the position. At West Philadelphia HS, interns heard about the positions through an announcement on the school’s PA system. Students later met in a classroom to learn about the positions and fill out applications. Most of the interns we spoke to said it was not competitive to get the internships—they just needed to fill out an application and interview for the position. Most of the students who applied for the positions got the jobs.

The roles and responsibilities of the interns were fairly consistent across schools. In general, interns were expected to assist teachers by working as teachers’ aides. In this role, interns helped teachers set up and clean up the classrooms and performed paperwork, such as making copies and filing. Interns also directly supported the TAP and other office staff by carrying out various administrative duties. In addition, interns supported students by helping them with their work in

the classroom, escorting them to the restrooms and lunchrooms, monitoring the hallways, and passing out meals for breakfast and lunch. Interns at FitzSimons HS and University City HS led the morning convocations, in which students greeted each other and reviewed the activities for the day. Interns at John Bartram HS were expected to develop their academic skills on the job. For instance, they wrote weekly articles for the summer bridge newsletter and participated in the same classroom activities as the students. They read the same book as the incoming students and worked on the same assignments. This way, the interns benefited from additional academic reinforcements during the summer and were better able to help the younger students with their work.

Many of the interns took their responsibilities seriously and viewed the internships as real jobs. This quote from an intern at West Philadelphia HS is illustrative:

They treat us like young adults. The job is like a real job. You have to do what they tell you to do. You have to be patient. You have to help the students. It doesn't look like it because when you're in the classroom you just talk to them. The job gives you skills for a real job, so you know what to expect from a real job.

Another student intern at Lincoln HS said,

I want to be a social worker because I want to work with kids. We talk a whole lot, and I am getting more comfortable talking with people younger than me. It's hard for me to get to know people, but here it's teaching me how to be outgoing and how to talk to people more.

It is clear from these quotes that the internships provided valuable work experience opportunities for students. Because many students indicated that it was difficult to find summer employment with little or no work experience, they were eager to gain some work experience through the internships.

“Campus Pals” to Summer Incoming Students

Germantown HS hired student interns called “Campus Pals” who were upperclass students from grades 10–12. Campus Pals distinguished themselves from other summer bridge students by wearing green t-shirts. Campus Pals were referred to the TAP by their teachers and attended a meeting held on a Saturday when they were given more information about the internship. One “pal” described what he learned about the internship during this meeting: “They gave us an idea of what the program was. They told us it was going to be a mentoring program, that we would go on trips, and that we had to build relationships with the students.”

Campus Pals ran errands for teachers and administrators and did various administrative tasks. As part of their training, the Pals took a career readiness class with the SSC Coordinator four days a week, meeting in the morning to discuss postsecondary options, career opportunities, and college plans. The Pals were also developing resumes during our visit.

Several schools provided formal training for the interns on what was expected and required of the position. Interns at West Philadelphia HS, for example, received a one-week orientation to the internship prior to summer bridge, where they helped teachers clear out the classrooms and prepared materials for the program. Students also received training on how to mentor students and work cooperatively with teachers. At the end of the internship, each intern was expected to produce a career portfolio that included a resume, completed scholarship applications, and completed college applications.

In general, most schools did not offer formal training for interns. In fact, most of the interns were expected to learn on the job, and they were often told what to do when they arrived at school. Interns at several schools often waited around for the TAP or other staff person to tell them where to go and what to do. Some teachers observed that the interns could have been better assessed and selected, because many of them seemed too young and, according to one teacher, were “looking for girlfriends” in the program. Some school leaders learned that interns required more structured training and support than what was provided to them. One school leader at West Philadelphia HS reflected on this lesson:

We had upper class students who we paid to be teacher assistants. That became a problem because in many ways those students were not as prepared as they should have been. They didn't understand their roles and they became like another ninth grader for some of the teachers and they were actually distracting rather than helpful. So we need to do a much better job of preparing them. We want to have upper classmen come in and support the incoming ninth graders but we need to do a much better job at preparing them to do that. We need to be better at selecting the students as well.

Incentive/Reward System

Schools developed an incentive and reward system to engage youth and retain their interest in the summer bridge program. The existence of a reward system emerged as particularly important for the students who attended summer bridge, because many of them may have been unaccustomed to positive reinforcement. Receiving recognition and/or tangible rewards often served as a significant incentive for increasing motivation and excitement for high school. Schools developed several different types of incentives, including the ones discussed below.

- **Paid stipends.** Two schools offered paid stipends to students for attending summer bridge (John Bartram HS and W.E.B. Dubois HS). This incentive was designed to reward students for their time and participation. At the time of the site visit, John Bartram HS was in the process of developing its policy for “docking” student pay for misbehavior and lack of participation.
- **Field trips.** As mentioned above, fieldtrips were popular incentives because they allowed students to attend fun activities outside the classroom. While all students

were eligible to attend these trips, they were also used as incentives by the schools to reward and punish students for misbehavior.²⁷

- **Snacks and meals.** Schools provided breakfast and lunch and snacks on fieldtrips, which staff felt were remarkably effective retention tools.
- **A culture of recognition and reinforcement.** More than providing direct rewards such as bus tokens and snacks, some schools worked to establish a culture of reinforcement under which students had their hard work and accomplishments formally recognized. At FitzSimons HS, students earned t-shirt pins for good behavior and good class work. As students earned more pins, they were able to redeem them for special prizes, such as lunches and extra field trips.

Conclusion

As discussed throughout this chapter, there were two types of programs that the schools provided over the summer—traditional summer school programs for students who failed one or more classes at W.E.B. Dubois HS and, at the Philadelphia schools, summer bridge, a transition program to prepare incoming ninth graders for high school. Summer bridge was intended to give students the help they needed to remediate their basic skills, introduce them to the culture of high school, and give failing students a second chance for promotion. In addition, summer bridge was distinguished by its small class sizes, highly prescribed curriculum for remedial students, and a personalized and nurturing approach to instruction. Several key themes emerged in this chapter. We explore these themes in the following paragraphs.

Recruiting students for summer bridge proved to be difficult during this first year of implementation. Most schools realized that their original enrollment goals for summer bridge were unrealistic and subsequently adjusted them (among all the schools considered together, enrollment goals declined from 2,085 students to 705 students). Schools felt that their original enrollment goals were unrealistic because the programs had not yet been widely publicized and some schools had not solidified their recruitment plans with feeder schools.

Schools organized their summer bridge services based on a variety of factors. Academic services were structured based on students' academic levels, so students were grouped according to their learning needs. This way, students' learning was focused and targeted in order to best prepare them for high school. In Philadelphia, remedial students were required to review basic reading and math using SDP's mandated Voyager curriculum. This curriculum ensured some consistency in the classroom for remedial students, serving as a common platform for students needing to master the academic standards that will allow them to advance to the next grade level.

²⁷ Students in W.E.B. Dubois HS Transitional Evening School and Summer Academy were not eligible to go on field trips because they needed to focus on academic remediation.

Students who were on grade level had their skills reinforced through a variety of curricula that schools selected, including on-line curriculum that had the capability to tailor instruction to students' academic levels. The use of on-line curricula in summer bridge emerged as a key feature in many schools because schools felt that it was a promising way to address students' skills deficiencies and prepare students for the academic rigor of high school.

Grouping students by academic “tracks” was a strategy to ensure that some order and consistency was present in the summer bridge curriculum. This practice was also a way to differentiate instruction so that students were learning at their own levels. However, this practice may leave some students unchallenged, since in many cases challenging curriculum was only available to high-achieving students. Moving forward, schools may want to revisit their strategies for grouping students so that all students have the opportunity to experience both challenging and appropriate curricula.

Schools provided employment services through summer bridge in the form of job readiness training for summer bridge students and paid internships for students in the upper grades. Summer bridge students received structured career readiness training in the form of workshops or classes and these skills were often reinforced by teachers throughout the summer, reminding students of the links between doing well in school and doing well in a work environment. Some of the key skills that teachers reinforced included importance of coming to school on time, behaving cooperatively with peers, and engaging in school work.

Students were extremely positive about their experiences in summer bridge. Most students portrayed their classes as interesting and engaging, especially because the program provided a diverse and engaging mix of activities. Enrichment activities, which included field trips, helped students socialize with their peers and teachers in an informal social setting. These and other experiences promoted positive relationships among peers and between students and teachers. Even though schools struggled to get approval for the field trips, many schools were able to take field trips because they either got approval at the last minute or, in the case of one school, used the personal financial resources of the TAP to pay for the deposit for the transportation and hoped to get reimbursed by the district.

Students reported that their teachers were supportive and provided them with a lot of attention, which was not typical of their previous educational experiences. Students' positive perception of the program may reflect the fact that teachers reported providing high levels of support and personalization during summer bridge, working to adapt the curriculum to the students' needs whenever possible.

We do not have data on youth outcomes from the summer bridge program. Several school leaders did, however, provide anecdotal evidence that students who participated in summer bridge adjusted smoothly to high school, as a result of the relationships that they formed with their peers and teachers. For example, one school leader at John Bartram HS said,

Students were more relaxed who had been apprehensive about high school....They got to know the teachers well so they could build a relationship with them. The relationship building was better between students and teachers, which made for better communication and better classroom management. This made for better transitions.

This finding is consistent with studies showing that the social support available during summer bridge programs, particularly on field trips and in interactions with older peers, promotes positive relationships with peers.²⁸

Although we have some information on the social outcomes of summer bridge, we know very little about students' academic outcomes. We do know, however, that students were frequently tested during summer bridge to measure their learning gains, if any. While this data was not available for this report, we will examine the changes that may have occurred in students' academic performance due to their participation in summer bridge, in the Implementation Report.

Given that summer bridge programs in Philadelphia were implemented for the first time in the summer of 2009, schools may need to reflect on their achievement goals for the program. Moving forward, the summer bridge programs in Philadelphia have strong momentum from the summer of 2009. Schools put into place the core structures for future program implementation, including their processes for recruiting students; they learned lessons about the academic and enrichment activities that meet students' learning needs; and they staffed their programs in ways that allowed the schools to fully support students and excite them about coming to high school. We are excited to continue to document and assess the program's development in future site visits.

²⁸ York, M. and Tross, S. (1994). Evaluation of Student Retention Programs: An Essential Component.

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VI. CONCLUSION

In this planning report, we provided an overview of the MEES grantee schools and communities, a detailed description of grant administration during the planning process, an overview of the core service approaches that grantees are adopting, and a detailed review of the summer bridge programs that occurred at eight of the nine schools. In this final chapter, we summarize the core accomplishments of grantee schools to date, as well as the challenges they faced as they designed and launched their grant-funded reforms. We conclude by summarizing what we believe schools should focus on in order to achieve the most successful outcomes.

Key Accomplishments

MEES schools have made significant progress during the 14-month planning phase. During this period, schools have mobilized core stakeholders within the school and in the community, formed TT committees, and designed multiple programs and educational interventions that are new to their schools. As of the fall of 2009, all grantee schools have begun the implementation phase of the grant. W.E.B. DuBois HS and Berkshire JSHS started implementation as early as fall 2008, while the first implementation activity for the Philadelphia-based grantees was the 2009 summer bridge program. Below we summarize key grantee accomplishments to date. Note that all these accomplishments were discussed in detail in previous chapters.

- **Within the first seven months of the grant, all schools hired or appointed leaders to oversee and coordinate the grant program.** In the case of Philadelphia schools, a Turnaround Assistant Principal (TAP) was hired at each school to lead the grant. At W.E.B. DuBois HS, a full-time grant administrator was hired to direct the grant. At Berkshire JSHS, the school principal and district superintendent assumed leadership for the MEES grant. These staff were responsible for convening teachers and other relevant stakeholders to plan and design the reforms that were being funded by the MEES grant. They handled all the administrative aspects of the grant and helped to develop the missions of the grant reforms.
- **Eight of the nine schools developed and sustained collaborative Turnaround Team (TT) committees and subcommittees that helped to design each of the grant reforms.** Eight schools formed and regularly convened TT committees that

included the school principal, the TAP or grant administrator, teachers, school staff, students, and community partners. The TT subcommittees played an essential role in designing summer bridge programs, mentoring programs, career and ninth grade academies, employment services, and school climate-related interventions, most of which were anticipated to begin in fall of 2009. Berkshire JSHS developed a TT, but then disbanded the committee.

- **W.E.B. Dubois and Berkshire JSHS successfully launched a number of grant-funded programs in SY 2008–2009.** These two schools implemented a range of grant programs by spring 2009: in-school suspension, case management, and employment services that included soft-skill work skills training and internships.
- **Eight grantee schools created summer transition programs, which provided academic and enrichment services to 731 students.** All of the Philadelphia-based schools created programs to serve incoming ninth graders and eighth graders who needed to earn additional credits in order to progress to the ninth grade. The W.E.B. DuBois HS program served returning ninth graders and credit-deficient students in a traditional summer school format.
- **At the beginning of SY 2009–2010, 54 teachers had been hired and schools had dramatically reduced class size.** One goal of the grant was to hire additional teachers, so that students—particularly ninth graders—could get more intensive academic instruction through reduced class sizes. This is occurring, and respondents indicated that it is already having a positive impact on students and improving the climate for teachers. The smaller classes provide an opportunity for more intensive and personalized instruction.
- **Six schools are using MEES grant funds to operate ninth grade success academies in the 2009-2010 school year.** As described in Chapter IV, six schools launched ninth grade success academies with the MEES funds. The goal of such academies is to ease the transition of ninth graders into high school by creating small learning communities that give students a space in which they can learn and thrive. The academies create separate spaces for ninth graders, to minimize the interaction of ninth graders and other students at the high school.
- **Seven of the nine schools are using MEES grant funds to operate credit retrieval programs in 2009-2010 school year.** These programs, supported by the grant, are offered to overage and under-credit students either during the day or after the regular school day ends. Credit retrieval programs provide students the opportunity to earn academic credits at a faster rate than in a traditional classroom, allowing them to get back on track academically.
- **All schools have begun extensive capacity building and professional development activities.** Throughout the planning period of the grant, schools engaged with a variety of different technical assistance providers. All schools received some guidance in preparing and planning their mentoring programs, and many received assistance in planning for career or ninth grade academies. Further, in Philadelphia, TAPs received extensive TA in grant administration and in program planning from the School District of Philadelphia.

As summarized above, the schools have made considerable strides in the first 14 months of the grant. As of fall 2009, schools were establishing partnerships with providers for services. Most schools expect that all major program components will be launched by the middle of SY 2009–2010.

Challenges

Although schools accomplished a great deal in the first 14 months of the grant, they also faced a number of challenges. These challenges were of three distinct types: (1) those involving the school itself and its context, (2) those related to grant administration and planning, and (3) those in the area of grant implementation. These challenges, detailed throughout this report, are summarized below.

Contextual and School-Based Challenges

- **More than half of the schools have outdated and/or overly large facilities.** An important goal of the MEES grant is to support the development of small learning environments so that students can develop positive relationships with their teachers and peers. However, a number of the grantees (John Bartram HS, Germantown HS, University City HS, West Philadelphia HS) are housed in large buildings, built to accommodate a student body larger than what currently exists. As a result, these schools are struggling to create small learning communities. In addition, because the buildings are old and run-down, it has proven difficult to find space that is suitable to house certain programs, such as the Student Success Center (SSC). To address such challenges, Lincoln HS moved into a new building in SY 2009–2010. Another school, West Philadelphia HS, hopes to move into a new building within the next several years. Other schools are looking for creative ways to reconfigure their space in order to accommodate programs and achieve the goals of the grant.
- **Schools have low levels of parental involvement.** Staff at grantee schools continually struggle to engage parents in their students' education. Schools have actively solicited parents to participate in the Turnaround Teams, but have received little in the way of real participation. Schools in Philadelphia also struggled to get parents to encourage their children to apply for the summer bridge programs. Schools are revisiting their strategies for how to best engage parents, and the School District of Philadelphia hired TA contractors to provide assistance in this area.
- **The two schools that combined middle and high school-aged youth found it difficult to find complementary grant funds that could serve seventh and eighth graders.** In addition to being all-boys schools, both FitzSimons HS and Berkshire JSHS are combined middle school–high schools. Although the MEES grants were designed to foster whole-school reform, they also specify that ninth graders be singled out for intervention, and do not specify services for seventh or

eighth graders. As a result, school staff have had to search for additional resources/grants to support activities for middle school students. They have also found it challenging to implement aspects of the grant, such as the summer bridge program, that are best suited to more traditional high schools.

- **Schools have historically experienced a high degree of leadership turnover.** Two of the high schools (Germantown HS and University City HS) have new school principals at the start of the 2009–2010 school year, while another (West Philadelphia HS) has a new Turnaround Principal. This pattern is in keeping with historical trends at these schools. The principal at West Philadelphia HS, for example, has been at the school for only two years, yet has the second-longest tenure in the school’s history. The lack of consistent leadership makes it challenging for schools to promote continuity for school reforms, and sometimes makes it difficult for leaders to gain buy-in among staff and teachers. School stakeholders, particularly veteran teachers, are less likely to trust and invest in reforms initiated by new leadership, particularly if they believe that the new leaders are not going to stay. New leaders also lack continuity in relationships, both within the school and with community members.

Challenges in Grant Administration and Planning

- **The Philadelphia schools’ lack of authority over key resources in the planning year slowed implementation and created frustration.** The School District of Philadelphia (SDP) provided oversight of the seven Philadelphia-based grants. Throughout much of the planning year, school leaders expressed concern that they did not have enough control over the DOL funds, contracts with partners, hiring, or curriculum to adequately plan and design their projects. Most school leaders would have started implementation earlier, but did not have the authority to hire staff or providers to deliver services. Although SDP envisioned that grantees would not begin implementation until the fall of 2009, school leaders were not always fully aware of or in agreement with SDP’s timeline.
- **Schools have had difficulty engaging teachers in the planning effort.** School leaders generally felt that it was important to have teachers help design the grant reforms. However, because teachers teach classes during the day, and often need to leave campus after school, they have less time to participate in planning than administrators and other school staff. Further, time spent on grant planning activities is voluntary for teachers and school staff, and therefore even when they do participate they tend to do so inconsistently. To address this issue, schools tried to schedule meetings after school, and to pay teachers for their time.
- **In some cases, the TT was not viewed as an efficient vehicle for decision-making.** Although the TT is a required element of the grant, some respondents viewed the committee as ineffective and unnecessarily bureaucratic. For instance, the principal of Berkshire JSHS felt that it was more efficient to meet with and get core feedback from staff on a case-by-case basis, rather than through regular committee meetings.

- **Schools have not been as successful as they would like to have been in building buy-in for reform among school stakeholders.** Many respondents at the various schools noted that teachers, parents, and students were unaware that the school was about to undergo major restructuring as a result of the MEES grant. Respondents attributed the lack of information to low levels of participation on the part of staff, teachers, and parents in the grant planning process, as well as a lack of initiative on the part of school leaders to get the word out. Some staff who were involved in the planning effort were unclear about their role and level of influence. Also, veteran teachers at some of the schools have resisted the process, expressing a belief that “this soon will pass.” In response to this challenge, school leaders made a concerted effort to publicize the reforms towards the end of SY 2008–2009 and to get “thought leaders” within the schools actively engaged.
- **Partnerships were slow to develop because the RFQ for contractors at the seven Philadelphia-based schools was delayed until September 2009.** The RFQ process to hire subcontractors to deliver key services was delayed because SDP was slow to develop and issue the RFQ. Schools expected the RFQ to be released by SDP as early as January 2009, so that partners could help plan services for the fall. Instead, the RFQ was released in September and partners were not expected to begin work until mid-November 2009 at the earliest. The process for developing and releasing the RFQ also affected the summer bridge programs because schools were unable to effectively plan for key services such as field trips and other enrichment activities. To address this challenge, schools sometimes identified contractors that were willing to work with short-term, “limited contract agreements.”
- **Schools found it challenging to design the mentoring program and to identify qualified mentoring program providers.** The mentoring program was new to all of the grantee schools, and has been the most difficult of the programs to design. For example, because of the unique residential nature of the school, Berkshire JSHS spent over a year working with TA providers to develop a mentoring program that could provide support to students while they are on the school campus and when they return to their home communities. The Philadelphia schools often had to scale back their programs by reducing the number of students that they hoped to serve, so that they could make sure that their mentoring programs could provide high quality support. W.E.B. DuBois had difficulty identifying an appropriate subcontractor for this grant component. Although the mentoring program was challenging for schools to design, it is also one of the elements that the schools are most excited about as they move forward with implementation.

Implementation Challenges

- **Schools found it difficult to recruit students for summer bridge programs.** Recruiting students was challenging for several reasons. First, some teachers indicated that they had difficulty forming strong connections with the feeder schools to recruit students. Feeder schools often lacked accurate information

about the target audience for the program, its logistics (i.e., length of day, location) and its activities. In many cases, there were a number of competing programs that students could enroll in. Some grantee schools in Philadelphia planned to hire a CBO to help recruit students for the summer bridge program, but because the district process for issuing an RFP to hire the CBO was delayed, schools were unable to hire CBOs before the summer. Finally, the negative reputations associated with the high schools often hindered recruitment efforts. School leaders were hopeful that, given the positive track record established by the program, the 2009-2010 recruitment process would be smoother.

- **Schools had difficulty accessing resources for summer bridge programs.** Staff indicated that although their schools could access funds from the district to purchase supplies for the program, the process for getting approval to use these funds was very cumbersome. According to staff, it took a long time for money to become available and staff needed to go through a lengthy approval process in order to receive the funds. In order to provide some services in a timely manner, including snacks for field trips, some staff had to pay for some of the supplies with their own money, planning to submit invoices for later reimbursement.
- **SDP approval for summer bridge field trips often did not occur in a timely manner.** Field trips were a major aspect of all the Philadelphia-based summer bridge programs, yet schools had a difficult time getting field trips approved by the school district. Although school staff started the approval process for the majority of the trips in May, many of the trips did not get approval until after the summer bridge program had started. Some of the trips were not approved until the night before the trips were to occur, making it very challenging for school staff to plan. One school leader, who felt strongly that students should have field trips, paid the transportation deposit for those trips in advance with her own money to ensure that the trips would occur.
- **Summer bridge teachers felt a loss of autonomy and control when the district mandated a particular curriculum for the program.** At many Philadelphia schools the summer bridge planning committee (a subcommittee of the TT) spent a great deal of time researching curricula for the summer program. When SDP mandated that schools use the Voyager curriculum with “remediation students,” teachers became frustrated because the requirement would restrict their use of the curricula they had already selected. In addition, there was some concern about the Voyager curriculum itself. Because the summer bridge program operated for only five weeks, teachers found that the “scripted” nature of the curriculum, which required students to achieve certain benchmarks each week, made it difficult for students needing additional time to learn certain topics.
- **Two schools experienced some shifts in funding that affected implementation of some MEES-related activities.** Berkshire JSHS had approximately eight internship supervisors who instructed students on various occupational trades such as plumbing, electrical wiring, tractor safety, and gardening. Although these staff were active prior to the MEES grant, they helped to support the internships that are funded by the MEES grant. Berkshire subsequently lost funding for these positions and laid off the internship supervisors. A single internship coordinator

currently teaches all workforce courses. Germantown HS's funding decreased significantly because enrollment dropped in the 2008–2009 school year.

Implications of Findings

Despite the numerous challenges faced in the planning year, school leaders and staff expressed great excitement and optimism about what lies ahead in SY 2009–2010. The effects of the MEES grants are evident at all the schools—in smaller class sizes, shared planning time for teachers, increased programs for credit-deficient students, and increased supportive services. It is apparent that, in most cases, school stakeholders are prepared to create fundamental change in their schools—change that all stakeholders hope will lead to dramatic reductions in violence and improvements in academic performance.

In order to bring about such change, grant reforms will need to focus on creating integrated reform (rather than a series of separate programs), enhancing communication and collaboration, improving the quality of the teaching staff, and creating small learning communities and collaborative structures that will outlast the MEES funding stream. To do this, schools will need to deepen buy-in for systemic reform among veteran teachers and increase the engagement of parents and community members. In SY 2009–2010, school leaders will also need to establish quality partnerships with outside CBO providers, and make sure that the efforts of outside partners comprise a coherent and seamless service strategy.

Effective grant implementation also requires that school leaders look closely at student data, observe and assess programs for quality, provide clear feedback to staff so that they can improve, and work continuously to raise stakeholders' expectations of what the schools can achieve. Research consistently shows that high achieving, high poverty schools require strong leaders who use achievement and behavioral data to set goals and provide clear and ongoing feedback to staff.

This planning evaluation report provides a detailed description of the grantee schools, lessons related to grant administration and planning, as well as an overview of the strategies and approaches that grantees are using to reform their schools. In SY 2009–2010, the evaluation will continue to closely track the accomplishments of grantees, document challenges, and highlight promising practices. Further, in the Implementation Report, SPR will look more closely at the influence of leadership, capacity building, and partnerships on the outcomes arising from early implementation of the grants.

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Appendix A:

Research Questions

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Appendix A: Research Questions

Context

- What contextual factors have been important for understanding the design, implementation and outcomes of the program?
 - What are the relevant community factors, such as the seriousness of youth gangs and youth violent crime in the neighborhood surrounding the high school, the dropout rate, labor market conditions, general law enforcement climate?
 - What are the relevant school factors, such as the history of the school and its relationship to parents and surrounding community? Existing academic reform, mentorship, case management, employment, violence prevention, or other dropout prevention strategies?
 - What are the relevant individual factors, such as supportive families, peer groups and/or gang associations of participants?
 - What are the relevant partner factors, such as the availability of mentoring programs, the history of faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) and other service providers in the school and surrounding community?

School Leadership

- What is the leadership structure of the school?
 - What is the composition of the Turnaround Leadership Team at the school? What is its role in making decisions at the school and in implementing this grant?
 - What is the role of the Turnaround Principal and how does this individual fit into the broader decision-making structure for the school?
 - What is the role of the school district relative to school leaders in making key decisions about the school, such as hiring principals and teachers, deciding on core providers of services, allocating resources, developing curriculum, and scheduling classes?
- To what extent did the schools change leadership in their restructuring efforts?
- What are the specific “second-order” change skills that schools’ leaders need to effectively turnaround these low performing and persistently dangerous schools?
 - To what extent do school leaders inspire and lead the school community to shift existing practices? What is the role of school leaders in motivating the school community to take on reform?

- To what extent are school leaders directly involved in the design and implementation of the reforms?
- To what extent are school leaders involved in monitoring the effectiveness of reforms and their impact on student learning? How effective are school leaders at providing feedback and adapting approaches to achieve the desired aims?
- What kind of support do school leaders have from the district office and community to effectively implement this grant?
 - What factors influenced leaders' ability to gain support and buy-in?
 - To what extent is there an incentive structure for school leaders to successfully turn their schools around?
- How do school leaders mobilize partners, including workforce development, youth development programs, and teachers' unions to buy-in to this initiative?

Design

- What was the grantee planning and design process?
- What is the scope of the project (key partners, structural shifts to the school day)?
- What is the nature of the project design and why were particular strategies chosen?
 - What specific groups are targeted?
 - What is the strategy/model for providing mentoring and case management?
 - What is the strategy/model for enhancing educational achievement and reducing the dropout rate and violence, overall and for targeted groups?
 - What is the strategy/model for improving the school environment and student behavior, overall and for targeted groups?
 - What is the strategy/model for providing employment services and internships to students?
 - What is the strategy/model for providing professional development and capacity building support to teachers and other school staff?
- What indicators of success were developed for the project during the planning/design phase (e.g., for increasing participants' math and reading scores, decreasing number of ninth grade dropouts, reducing school suspensions)?
- What initial plans for sustainability (after federal funds end) were developed during the design phase?
- How were appropriate partners or providers selected for participation in the program, including during the planning/design phase?

- What is the leadership or management structure of the grant, including key staff and budget? What methods are used to manage the program and coordinate contracts among partners?
- What strategies do school leaders use to gathering input and buy-in on design elements from teachers, parents, and other school stakeholders?
- What were the challenges and effective strategies of the planning and design process?

Partnerships

- Who are the key partners in this effort? How were they selected and mobilized? What are their specific roles in this project?
- What partnership arrangements have been established and how are resources being leveraged to achieve the grant's objectives?
 - What is the grantee's relationship with partners, such as the local workforce system (One-Stop system), employers and corporations, and faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) providing various direct services (e.g., mentoring, case management, employment services, etc.)?
 - To what extent are federal and non-federal leveraged resources being contributed to the program?
- What is the nature of the grantee's referral system with partners to ensure that participants' various needs are met?
- How well have these partnerships worked overall and how have they evolved over time?
- To what extent are these partnerships formalized (e.g., memoranda of understanding, letters of commitment, cost-sharing agreements, information sharing agreements, referral systems, etc.)?
- What have been the barriers and best practices for inter-partner communication and coordination (different philosophies toward youth, MIS issues, etc.)?

Service Delivery/Implementation

- What is the quality of school and program leadership?
- What are the characteristics of students enrolled overall and in the targeted interventions?
- How are youth recruited and/or identified for targeted services (e.g., using indicators such as chronic truancy, discipline problems, special education placement, low reading and math scores)?
- How effective are outreach and recruitment services?

- What types of basic intake services, such as assessments of needs and interests, are provided and how do they vary by participant-type?
- How is mentoring provided to participants, and by which specific provider(s)?
- How is case management provided to participants, and by which specific provider(s)?
- What is the full range of education, employment, anti-violence, mentorship, case management, and supportive services available to youth, how do they vary by status (e.g., youth who have been retained vs. those who have not, at-risk vs. adjudicated), and who delivers each service?
- Which services target the whole school?
- Which services target particular students? What intensive services are targeted for individual youth who present the greatest challenges?
- Which services are available to participants through the local One-Stop Career Center system? What One-Stop services are accessed? How many youth access them?
- To what extent do partners effectively coordinate education services with employment and workforce services?
- How well do the services meet the needs of different participant-types (e.g., younger vs. older youth, adjudicated vs. at-risk)?
- What are the primary challenges in working in these schools? What are the facilitators? What practices are particularly effective?
- What strategies does the school use to promote high expectations of students and program participants?
- What strategies does the program use to ensure that staff are appropriately equipped to work with program participants (e.g., professional development, collaborative and or team teaching models)?
- What data collection and reporting procedures have been implemented by the grantee? What challenges have they faced in implementing the management information system (including reporting on those fields required by the DOL template)?
- What have been the most significant implementation issues that grantees and partners have faced? What strategies were used to overcome these challenges, and with what success?

Outputs and Outcomes

- What proportion of participants take part in the various education, employment, violence prevention, mentoring, case management, and other services? What proportion complete particular services?
- What outcomes has the school achieved? Examples of outcomes to be examined include the rate of grade promotion and retention, school attendance, reading and

math gains, standardized test scores, and behavioral incidents such as suspensions and expulsions.

- How do outcomes vary by different types of participants (e.g., younger youth vs. older youth)?
- Have there been any significant, unanticipated outcomes?
- To what extent are grantees able to effectively capture, track, and report outcomes, including those required by the DOL template? Major challenges?
- What have been the school-level outcomes of the grant project?
 - Structural shifts in scheduling, program design, or staffing structure that facilitates enhanced outcomes?
 - Professional climate for teachers and other school staff? Clear performance-based expectations of teachers?
 - Formal mechanisms of communication with parents and other community stakeholders?
- What have been the partnership- and system-level outcomes of the grant project?
 - New or strengthened partnerships and service delivery system?
 - Leveraged funding?
 - Changes in system-level policies or practices to facilitate effective coordination and enhanced outcomes?
 - Concrete plans for sustainability of partnerships and service delivery system? For replicability district-wide?
- How much variation is there in overall grantee performance after controlling for differences in local context and participant characteristics?
- How do grantees that are successful differ from those that are not (e.g., in design, implementation, contextual factors)?

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Appendix B:

Grantee Summaries

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School District of Philadelphia: Bartram High School Turnaround Project 2009 Grantee Summary

Initiative Name	The Bartram High School Turnaround Project		
Grant Size	\$6,335,151		
Type of School	Comprehensive High School, grades 9-12		
Baseline Data			
	SY 2007-2008	SY 2008-2009	SY 2009-2010
Enrollment	1,687	1,514	1,388
	SY 2007-SY 2008		SY 2008-2009
Average daily attendance	80.4%		81.0%
Number of serious incidents per 100 students¹	4.7		5.6
Number of suspensions per 100 students²	23.1		16.6
Percent proficient or advanced in reading³	15.4%		11.5%
Percent proficient or advanced in math	8.5%		10.6%
Graduation rate⁴	44.4%		

¹ Calculated at SPR by dividing the number of total serious incidents (including abductions and attempts, assaults, drug and alcohol offenses, fires, moral offenses, robbery and weapons) per school year by the total enrollment.

² Calculated at SPR by dividing the number of suspensions per school year by the total enrollment.

³ Percent proficient or advanced in reading and math according to the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) proficiency levels.

⁴ According to the National Governor's Association calculation based on the number of ninth graders entering this high school in the 2004-2005 school year and who graduated by 2008.

This data was only available for the 2007-2008 school year.

Summary of Initiative Components	
Strategy	Activities as of Fall 2009
<p>(1) Turnaround Team. Establish a school-based Turnaround Team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formed a Turnaround Team (TT), which is convened by a fully dedicated Turnaround Assistant Principal (TAP). The TT includes the school principal, the Health Academy Coordinator, the Climate Manager, a Social Studies Teacher, and 2-3 students. • Subcommittees of TT correspond to the interventions and academies that the grant will institute, including summer bridge, mentoring, and four career academies (Crossroad/JROTC, health, performing arts, and business and technology). Subcommittees meet on an as-needed basis.
<p>(2) Mentoring. Create a diverse menu of coordinated, structured mentoring programs for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mentoring provider was not selected as of October 2009. Staff estimate that provider will be on board as of mid-November 2009. • Program will target 100 ninth grade mentees. These mentees will be paired with teachers and other adult staff mentors. Each mentor will be paired with two students (2:1). The mentee is also paired with a peer mentor. Ratio for peer mentoring is 1:1.
<p>(3) Educational Strategies. Create smaller learning communities and improve academic performance of students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a five-week Summer Bridge Program for incoming ninth graders that served 130 students. Activities for 2009 centered on a “Bartram Goes Green” theme. Students engaged in basic skill development and in service-learning based on “green themes” of gardening, recycling, healthy eating, and sports and health. • Created career academies that will launch in SY 2009-2010. The academies include Crossroad/JROTC, health, performing arts, and business/technology. The school also created a ninth grade academy. • Reduced class size by hiring additional teachers. Grant funds have been used to hire additional teachers, while Title I funds will be used to support professional development for teachers on instructional strategies. • Implemented joint planning time for all teachers with the goal of increasing capacity and sharing instructional materials and strategies. Grant funds will be used for professional development for teachers on how to use student data to drive instruction. • Hired four content-specific Instructional Specialists who will work with content teams and model strong instructional practice for new teachers.
<p>(4) Employment Strategies. Fully integrate employment strategies into the school’s academic program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bartram HS had a pre-existing Student Success Center (SSC) which is being expanded with the MEES grant. As of October 2009, Bartram had selected a CBO partner but they were not yet on site. Once on board, case managers will work with administrators and teachers to coordinate school-wide employment related programs for youth. Programs will be tailored to each grade-level, include six-week summer work readiness programming, and include elements such as workplace mentoring, resume development, college visits, and intensive internships for seniors.

<p>(5) Improve School Environment and Student Behavior. Implement research-based programs to improve the school environment and student behavior.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bartram HS currently has a climate manager, provided by the School District Office of School Climate and Safety, who has helped Bartram HS to make progress towards getting off the Persistently Dangerous School list for the first time in five years. Under this grant, Bartram HS's Climate Manager is providing professional development to faculty and staff on issues such as de-escalation, conflict resolution, structured/socialized lunch, anger management, and anti-bullying. Bartram HS is also expanding their "Platinum Club" which provides incentives and rewards to students with strong attendance and good behavior.
<p>(6) Case management. Create team based approach to case management to ensure that all students' social/behavioral and academic needs are met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bartram HS currently houses a modified Student Success Center (SSC) that they plan to bring to scale through this grant. The center will grow in size so that it can serve more students. SSC forms the nexus for varied career development and support programs for youth at the school. The CBO partner had been selected as of November 2009, but is not yet on site. The grant will fund staff for the center. • Bartram has a functioning Comprehensive Student Assistance Program (CSAP) which uses student data and a team approach to student assessment to plan interventions for students. Bartram HS plans to strengthening the CSAP with these grant funds.
<p>Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School District of Philadelphia used a competitive procurement process to identify CBOs to provide services under this grant related to mentoring, academy development, summer programming, and Student Success Center Services. • Partners for summer bridge program: Classrooms, Inc., Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, Philadelphia Youth Network • Moving forward Bartram HS may partner with Education Works (SSC).
<p>Desired Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase daily attendance by 10 percent. • Decrease serious incidents of student misbehavior and student suspensions by 10 percent. • Increase the percentage of ninth graders promoted to the tenth grade on time by 10 points. • Decrease the numbers of students dropping out of school by 10 points. • Increase percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on their PSSA exams in English and Math by 10 points. • Increase number of students in paid internships by 10 percent.

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**Union Free School District, New York:
Berkshire Junior/Senior High School, Project Smart Grantee
2009 Grantee Summary**

Initiative Name	Project Smart, Berkshire Junior/Senior High School		
Grant Size	\$3,563,523		
Type of School	All male residential junior/senior high school, grades 8-12		
Baseline Data			
	SY 2007-2008	SY 2008-2009	SY 2009-2010
Average current enrollment¹	146 109		106
	SY 2007-SY 2008	SY 2008-2009	
Average daily attendance	97%	98%	
Number of serious incidents per 100 students²	221.2		
Number of suspensions per 100 students	30.8		
Percent passing NY Regents Exams in English³	38%	80%	
Percent passing NY Regents Exams in math	37%	5%	

¹ Because Berkshire students stay for varying lengths of time (usually nine months to one year), the total number of students enrolled is greater than the average daily enrollment, which is reflected here.

² This data was not available for 2008-2009.

³ <http://www.greatschools.net/modperl/achievement/ny/255#regents>

Summary of Initiative Components	
Strategy	Activities as of Fall 2009
<p>(1) Turnaround Team. Establish a school-based Turnaround Team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially formed a Turnaround Team (TT) that guided the planning process. The TT included the school principal, the superintendant and assistant superintendent, the CEO of Berkshire, the Deputy Director of Community Programs, the Union President of Residential Services, the retired Union President of Teachers, the Director of Curriculum and Technology, the Dean of Students, the Clinical Coordinator, and a professional grant writer. The TT had subcommittees, including the Academic Leadership team, led by the Director of Curriculum and Technology, as well as the Clinical team, led by the Dean of Students and Clinical Coordinator. As of summer 2009, the Turnaround Team was no longer meeting and the school principal was overseeing grant implementation. The two leadership teams continue to meet.
<p>(2) Mentoring. Create a diverse menu of coordinated, structured mentoring programs for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of fall 2009, the Mentoring Partnership of New York had provided technical assistance to Berkshire JSHS to create a mentoring program to fit the school's residential structure. As of November 2009, the Service Learning Mentoring component had been launched, with 52 students participating. Berkshire JSHS still plans to launch the At-Home Mentoring and E-mentoring components, for students after they have returned to their home communities. Hire d four mentor coordinators and nine mentor outreach coordinators to staff the mentoring component. The mentor coordinators supervise the program, including creating applications and overseeing mentor coordinators, who in turn oversee the mentors. All students at Berkshire JSHS are targeted for mentoring, though the primary focus initially will be on those students with the highest level of need.
<p>(3) Educational Strategies. Create smaller learning communities and improve academic performance of students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded school day by 40 minutes to allow for a credit retrieval program, which utilizes Pearson's Ed software, Fast Math, Read 180 and Quiz Show Testing. As of fall 2009, there were 53 students in credit retrieval, with an average class size of four students to allow for more individualized attention. Hire d a Masters Special Education Teacher who provides support to teachers through researching best practices and providing professional development training to teachers. The Masters Special Education Teacher is working on launching a Freedom Writers component to give students an opportunity to work on developing a journal about social and personal issues, based on viewing the movie <i>Freedom Writers</i>. The Academic Leadership team works one-on-one with teachers to implement Strategic Reading and Math, which focuses is a strategy to ensure that Berkshire JSHS meets state standards. Teaching assistants support teachers by working one-on-one with students.

<p>(4) Employment Strategies. Fully integrate employment strategies into the school's academic program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-Campus Career Center/Vocational Career Academies are provided by the Workforce Development Team to all students. This five-week course corresponds to the student's proposed internships and is required before students are placed in internships. Students then enroll in the Workforce Development Training Course before applying for an internship. • After completing this course, students enroll in on-campus internships. As of fall 2009, 16 students have participated in on-campus internships, where they receive minimum wage (\$7.15/hour). • Students who successfully complete an internship have an option of being placed in an off-site externship. As of fall 2009, 16 students have participated in externships. • Students at Berkshire are also eligible for on-campus jobs in areas such as the culinary arts, recreation, the greenhouse, etc. • Thirteen students with severe needs have been placed in the Therapeutic Small Animal Program, where they are able to practice work behavior and relationship-building by caring for baby lambs or chicks.
<p>(5) Improve School Environment and Student Behavior. Implement research-based programs to improve the school environment and student behavior.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented an Adventure-Based Counseling Program, which uses an experiential learning model to strengthen youths' key life skills such as communication, decision-making, trust, conflict-resolution, etc. So far, two counselors have been hired to staff the program. • Implemented a monetary adjustment schedule, in which money that students earn through their jobs and internships can be deducted from their account if they violate school rules. • Supplemented existing in-school suspension program with additional case management.
<p>(6) Case management. Create team based approach to case management to ensure that all students' social/behavioral and academic needs are met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hired three additional case managers/Behavioral Management Specialists (BMS) to coordinate with the Residential Treatment Center, provide crisis counseling, and consult with staff on students' progress. BMS staff act as liaisons between students and staff. This intervention has allowed social workers to provide increased individualized attention, due to decreased case loads. • The clinical team has developed a comprehensive Incident Report Plan to guide school-wide interventions.
<p>Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berkshire JSHS has partnered with The Farm, the nonprofit agency at the school, and the Mentoring Partnership of New York. • Other organizations that Berkshire JSHS has partnered with to provide internships and community service opportunities for students are Edna St. Vincent Millay Society, Pine Haven Nursing Home, Soma Catering, Hitching Post Café, and Tommy Hilfiger. • They also plan to pursue partnerships with regional WIBs in the future.

Desired Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decrease students dropping out of mentoring, educational, and employment programs by 5 percent.• Decrease students dropping out of programs to improve school environment and case management efforts by 10 percent. [The grant document contradicts itself and also says 5% in several places.]• Decrease in behavioral incidents at schools and the Residential Treatment Center (RTC) by 5 percent. [The grant document contradicts itself and also says 5% in several places.]• Increase in student effort by 10 percent.• Increase in students passing course by five percent.• Increase in reading scores by 5 percent.• Increase in math scores by 5 percent.
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**Baltimore City Public School System
W.E.B. DuBois High School
2009 Grantee Summary**

Initiative Name	W.E.B. DuBois High School		
Grant Size	\$3,563,552		
Type of School	Comprehensive High School, grades 9-12		
Baseline Data			
	SY 2007-2008	SY 2008-2009	SY 2009-2010
Enrollment	606 655		598
	SY 2007-SY 2008	SY 2008-2009	
Average daily attendance	84.1%	81.6%	
Number of serious incidents coded as persistently dangerous offenses per 100 students	3.8	1	
Number of suspensions per 100 students	55.5	30.9	
Percent proficient or advanced in reading¹	38.6%	50.9%	
Percent proficient or advanced in math	47.5%	55%	
Graduation rate²	65%	63.87%	

¹ Percent proficient or advanced in reading and math according to the Maryland Student Assessment (MSA) proficiency levels, 2009 Maryland Report Card.

<http://www.mdreportcard.org/Assessments.aspx?K=300418&WDATA=school>

² Graduation rate according to the Maryland Report Card: "Graduation rate is the percentage of students who receive a Maryland high school diploma during the reported school year."

<http://www.mdreportcard.org/Graduation.aspx?K=300418&WDATA=school>

Summary of Initiative Components	
Strategy	Activities as of Fall 2009
<p>(1) Turnaround Team. Establish a school-based Turnaround Team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formed a Turnabout Team (TT), led by the grant coordinator, which meets monthly. Members include a number of internal stakeholders including at the district level, the Executive Director of Secondary Schools, the Executive Director of Student Support, and the Director of Safe and Supportive Schools. At the school level, the team consists of the principal, a full-time Project Coordinator, and the director of the Johns Hopkins Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence. The TAT also includes external partners, including the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED), the Maryland Mentoring Partnership, Baltimore Police Department, Huber Memorial Baptist Church, the Johns Hopkins Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence, Baltimore Mental Health Systems, Blueprint for Youth, and the YMCA of Central Maryland.
<p>(2) Mentoring. Create a diverse menu of coordinated, structured mentoring programs for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established partnerships with two mentoring CBOs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the Maryland Mentoring Partnership. This component will serve 100 students total, with the Maryland Mentoring Partnership working with 50 students with disabilities and Big Brothers/Big Sisters working with 50 students total (40 girls and 10 boys).
<p>(3) Educational Strategies. Create smaller learning communities and improve academic performance of students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented the Talent Development High School Model (TDHS), a model that includes small learning communities, with interdisciplinary teacher teams that share the same students and have common daily planning time; curricula leading to advanced English and mathematics coursework; academic extra-help sessions; staff professional development strategies; and parent- and community-involvement in activities that foster students' career and college development. Implemented a Ninth Grade Success Academy for entering ninth graders, which has enrolled 82 students to date. Staff also held interim conferences with students to provide more one-on-one academic contact. Implemented a Transitional Evening School for repeating ninth grade students, in order to help them catch up academically. To date, TES has enrolled 23 students for the fall and spring, 18 of whom also completed the summer program. Implemented a six-week Summer Program for incoming ninth graders which ran three different programs over the course of the six weeks, including FUTURES Works, the Transitional Evening School and the Summer Academy. Sixty-five (65) students total participated in the summer program.
<p>(4) Employment Strategies. Fully integrate employment strategies into the school's academic program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established partnership with the Mayor's Office of Employment Development to provide unpaid school-year internships and paid summer internships to 75 juniors, as well as providing 75 seniors with work learning experiences and connections to One Stop Centers. Two career navigators have been hired to staff the employment program.

<p>(5) Improve School Environment and Student Behavior. Implement research-based programs to improve the school environment and student behavior.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Strategies (PBIS) Program, a systematic process to promote positive behavior across the school and improve bonds between students and adults. • Began conducting three hour-long anger management groups per week, with one group for women, one for ninth and tenth-graders and a third for eleventh and twelfth-graders. The grant funded one part-time staff person for this component.
<p>(6) Case management. Create team based approach to case management to ensure that all students' social/behavioral and academic needs are met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched the FUTURES Works Program. This program has been in BCPSS for over 20 years, but was only started at W.E.B. DuBois HS with the MEES grant funds. The program targets all ninth graders and focuses on improving attendance, academics and behavior. Hired two youth advocates to support the Futures Program. During SY 2008-2009, 137 students were enrolled in FUTURES Works. • W.E.B. DuBois HS expanded counseling services. The school hired a substance abuse counselor and a mental health clinician. • Began training for a peer mediation program. Grant coordinator received training from Peers Making Peace and plans to hire two advisors to begin implementation.
<p>Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johns Hopkins University to advise the school on ways to reduce violence and to provide TDHS Facilitator to implement the TDHS model. • Maryland Mentoring Partnership and Big Brothers/Big Sisters provided mentors to students. • Moving forward, W.E.B. DuBois HS plans to partner with Baltimore Mental Health Services (BMHS) to provide mental health professionals at the school. • Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) links youth to internships, provide career development services, and parents to Career Centers. MOED also implemented the FUTURES program at the school and provide case management services. • Baltimore Police Department to coordinate peace keeping functions.

<p>Desired Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease dropout rate to 3 percent. • Increase the number of students passing algebra and English by 20%. • Decrease the number of suspensions for dangerous/violent offenses below the “persistently dangerous” classification. • Reduce the overall suspension rate by 20 percent. • Decrease in short and long-term suspensions by 20-25 percent. • Decrease in arrests, fires, other serious incidents by 20-25 percent. • Increase in students promoted to the tenth grade by 20 percent. • Increase in students promoted to the 11th grade by 20 percent. • Increase in students passing Algebra 1 and English 1 in the ninth grade by 25 percent. • Increase in students passing Geometry and English 2 in the tenth grade by 25 percent. • Ninety percent of participants will complete the ninth grade with at least 90 percent attendance and 70 percent GPA (sic). • Ninety percent of the 175 youth assigned to mentors will complete 18 months of one-on-one and group mentoring activities. • One hundred percent of juniors and seniors will be exposed to life skills, career exploration and 50 percent of graduates will be placed in postsecondary education or unsubsidized employment.
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School District of Philadelphia: FitzSimons High School Turnaround Project 2009 Grantee Summary

Initiative Name	The FitzSimons High School Turnaround Project		
Grant Size	\$3,563,523		
Type of School	All male middle school and high school, grades 7-12		
Baseline Data			
	SY 2007-2008	SY 2008-2009	SY 2009-2010
Enrollment	336 290		304
	SY 2007-SY 2008	SY 2008-2009	
Average daily attendance	75.2%	75.6%	
Number of serious incidents per 100 students¹	29.2	19.3	
Number of suspensions per 100 students²	116.7	121.7	
Percent proficient or advanced in reading³	17.1%	14.4%	
Percent proficient or advanced in math	22%	18%	
Graduation rate⁴	64.5%		

¹ Calculated at SPR by dividing the number of total serious incidents (including abductions and attempts, assaults, drug and alcohol offenses, fires, moral offenses, robbery and weapons) per school year by the total enrollment.

² Calculated at SPR by dividing the number of suspensions per school year by the total enrollment.

³ Percent proficient or advanced in reading and math according to the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) proficiency levels.

⁴ According to the National Governor's Association calculation based on the number of ninth graders entering this high school in the 2004-2005 school year and who graduated by 2008.

Summary of Initiative Components	
Strategy	Activities as of Fall 2009
<p>(1) Turnaround Team. Establish a school-based Turnaround Team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formed a Turnaround Team (TT), which is convened by a fully dedicated Turnaround Assistant Principal (TAP). The TT consists of school administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents and community stakeholders. The TT meets monthly. • In addition, the TT formed five subcommittees to oversee the planning and implementation of the five MEES strategies. These subcommittees meet weekly.
<p>(2) Mentoring. Create a diverse menu of coordinated, structured mentoring programs for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date, no mentoring partner has been selected, though FitzSimons HS plans to pair each freshman student with an adult mentor for 18 months, once the component is launched.
<p>(3) Educational Strategies. Create smaller learning communities and improve academic performance of students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a five-week Summer Bridge Program to prepare incoming ninth graders for high school. It targeted both failing eighth graders and rising ninth graders. The program had a “Building Bridges for Life” theme and was focused on students’ physical and emotional health and academic success. Thirty-five (35) students attended the Summer Bridge Program. Enrichment activities included visual and performing arts, sports and recreation, and violence prevention workshops. • Implemented a corrective reading and math program for incoming ninth graders, as part of a district-wide initiative. • Implemented Oasis Program as a rigorous one-year credit retrieval program for overage and undercredit students. • Created joint planning time for faculty teams to improve intervention and support structure for students.
<p>(4) Employment Strategies. Fully integrate employment strategies into the school’s academic program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program plans to create a school-based Student Success Center (SSC), where case managers will work with administrators and teachers to coordinate school-wide employment related programs for youth. However, as of October 2009, the CBO provider had not been identified. • Hire d 15 student mentors during the Summer Bridge Program to support students and teachers, as well as to provide work experience for the mentors themselves. • Program plans to develop an internship program for eleventh and twelfth-graders. To date, this component has not been finalized or launched.

<p>(5) Improve School Environment and Student Behavior. Implement research-based programs to improve the school environment and student behavior.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cre ated four-year looping advisories, in which students stay with the same advisory teacher and cohort of students throughout their four years in high school. Funds will also provide professional development to teachers on how to effectively use advisory time. • Instituted a school-wide incentive program, which includes teacher acknowledgement of students with good behavior and academic performance. • The program will engage all ninth and tenth graders in a Rite of Passage leadership program for high school boys which will focus on in family responsibilities, self esteem, sex education, alcohol and drug education, and leadership. As of October 2009, the CBO for this component had not yet been selected.
<p>(6) Case management. Create team based approach to case management to ensure that all students' social/behavioral and academic needs are met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FitzSimons HS plans to build on the strength of Comprehensive Student Assistance Program (CSAP) that is already in place. As of October 2009, the CBO partner had not been identified and no additional case managers had been hired. • Program will develop a new Student Success Center that will form as a nexus for varied career development and support programs for youth. As of October 2009, the CBO provider had not been brought on board and staff for the SSC had not been hired. However, the school has identified a space for the center.
<p>Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School District of Philadelphia used a competitive procurement process to identify CBOs to provide services under this grant related to mentoring, academy development, summer programming, and Student Success Center Services. • Program partnered with Nu Sigma Youth Services, Inc., a chapter of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, to provide a range of enrichment activities during Summer Bridge Program. • As discussed above, as of October 2009, FitzSimons HS had not brought on the CBOs for its project components, due to delays with the RFP process.
<p>Desired Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase daily attendance by 10 points • Decrease serious incidents of student misbehavior and student suspensions by 10 percent • Increase the percentage of ninth graders promoted to the tenth grade on time by 10 points. • Decrease the numbers of students dropping out of school by 10 points • Increase percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on their PSSA exams in English and Math by 10 points • Increase number of students in paid internships by 10 percent

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School District of Philadelphia: Germantown High School Turnaround Project 2009 Grantee Summary

Initiative Name	The Germantown High School Turnaround Project		
Grant Size	\$6,335,151		
Type of School	Comprehensive High School, grades 9-12		
Baseline Data			
	SY 2007-2008	SY 2008-2009	SY 2009-2010
Enrollment	1,399	1,364	1,251
	SY 2007-SY 2008		SY 2008-2009
Average daily attendance	77.9%		73.3%
Number of serious incidents per 100 students¹	10.7		8.9
Number of suspensions per 100 students²	91.5		76.0
Percent proficient or advanced in reading³	12.6%		12.7%
Percent proficient or advanced in math	9.1%		9.3%
Graduation rate⁴	32.2%		

¹ Calculated at SPR by dividing the number of total serious incidents (including abductions and attempts, assaults, drug and alcohol offenses, fires, moral offenses, robbery and weapons) per school year by the total enrollment.

² Calculated at SPR by dividing the number of suspensions per school year by the total enrollment.

³ Percent proficient or advanced in reading and math according to the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) proficiency levels.

⁴ According to the National Governor's Association calculation based on the number of ninth graders entering this high school in the 2004-2005 school year and who graduated by 2008.

Summary of Initiative Components	
Strategy	Activities as of Fall 2009
(1) Turnaround Team. Establish a school-based Turnaround Team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formed a Turnaround Team (TT), which is convened by a fully dedicated Turnaround Assistant Principal (TAP). The team consists of school administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents and community stakeholders/partners. Team meets monthly.
(2) Mentoring. Create a diverse menu of coordinated, structured mentoring programs for students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program has begun identifying volunteers and mentees for both peer and adult mentoring programs, which are scheduled to launch in SY 2009-2010. As of October 2009, however, a CBO mentoring provider had not yet been selected. For adult mentors, the TAP is reaching out to teachers and staff, and to eleventh graders for peer mentors. The goal is to have at least an 18-month mentoring relationship.
(3) Educational Strategies. Create smaller learning communities and improve academic performance of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant funds support Germantown HS's existing Success Academy, which is a credit retrieval academy that serves about 200 overage and credit deficient Germantown HS students. Created a four-week Summer Bridge Program around the theme "Healthy Mind, Body and Soul" for incoming ninth graders (both rising ninth graders and failing eighth graders) to prepare students for how to navigate Germantown HS. One hundred and nineteen (119) students total participated in the program. Hired seven new teachers to reduce class size and allow for common planning time. As of October 2009, Germantown HS still planned to hire two full-time instructional coaches to support teachers.
(4) Employment Strategies. Fully integrate employment strategies into the school's academic program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Began development of a school-based Student Success Center (SSC), where case managers will work with administrators and teachers to coordinate school-wide employment related programs for youth. As of October 2009, the CBO provider had not yet been selected and SSC staff had not been hired. Engaged students in a WorkReady Program over the summer, which provided students with paid internships. The TAP is developing a program to provide internships during the school year as well but a provider for this component had not been identified as of October 2009. Began process to strengthen existing career academies through workforce programs and career electives (e.g., genetics and forensic science in the Health and Life Sciences Academy; journalism and photography in the Communications Academy).
(5) Improve School Environment and Student Behavior. Implement research-based programs to improve the school environment and student behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In October 2009, Germantown HS staff were in the process of creating an in-school suspension program, where students will have support of two additional teachers and the re-engagement specialist to keep them from falling farther behind on school while suspended. As of October 2009, the space was ready but teachers to staff it were not yet in place. Program plans to engage students in a Rites of Passage program, which will focus on family responsibilities, self esteem, sex education, alcohol and drug education, and leadership. However, the CBO provider for this component had not been selected as of October 2009.

<p>(6) Case management. Create team based approach to case management to ensure that all students' social/behavioral and academic needs are met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begun development of a school-based Student Success Center (SSC), where varied career development and support programs for youth will be based. As of October 2009, the CBO provider had not yet been selected and SSC staff had not been hired. The TAP planned to hire an SSC Coordinator, career specialists, a post-secondary specialist, re-engagement specialists, and a drug and alcohol counselor, as well as possibly a grief counselor. • Germantown HS already has a functioning Comprehensive Student Assistance Program (CSAP) in place for addressing school, target group, and individual challenges to school success. Germantown HS will continue to use this model in conjunction with the SSC.
<p>Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School District of Philadelphia used a competitive procurement process to identify CBOs to provide services under this grant related to mentoring, academy development, summer programming, and Student Success Center Services. • The Center for Secondary School Redesign (CSSR) assisted Germantown HS in helping to shift the structure and culture of the school. Since the beginning of the grant, the International Center for Leadership and Education (ICLE) has replaced CSSR in this capacity. • Germantown HS has also been receiving technical assistance through United Way from John Thomas Branch Associates for the mentoring component. • For Summer Bridge, Germantown HS contracted with individuals within the community to provide enrichment activities such as tap dancing, character development, and comic book creation. • Philadelphia Academies, Inc. provided assistance in planning for increased integration of workforce and career preparation into the career academies.
<p>Desired Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase daily attendance by 10 percent. • Decrease serious incidents of student misbehavior and student suspensions by 10 percent. • Increase the percentage of ninth graders promoted to the tenth grade on time by 10 points. • Decrease the numbers of students dropping out of school by 10 points. • Increase percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on their PSSA exams in English and Math by 10 points. • Increase number of students in paid internships by 10 percent.

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School District of Philadelphia: Lincoln High School Turnaround Project 2009 Grantee Summary

Initiative Name	The Lincoln High School Turnaround Project		
Grant Size	\$6,335,151		
Type of School	Comprehensive High School, grades 9-12		
Baseline Data			
	SY 2007-2008	SY 2008-2009	SY 2009-2010
Enrollment	2,194 2,114		1,921
	SY 2007-SY 2008	SY 2008-2009	
Average daily attendance	80.1%	78.7%	
Number of serious incidents per 100 students¹	6.3	10.6	
Number of suspensions per 100 students²	39.5	56.5	
Percent proficient or advanced in reading³	29.3%	23.3%	
Percent proficient or advanced in math	18.2%	13.3%	
Graduation rate⁴	33.7%		

¹ Calculated at SPR by dividing the number of total serious incidents (including abductions and attempts, assaults, drug and alcohol offenses, fires, moral offenses, robbery and weapons) per school year by the total enrollment.

² Calculated at SPR by dividing the number of suspensions per school year by the total enrollment.

³ Percent proficient or advanced in reading and math according to the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) proficiency levels.

⁴ According to the National Governor's Association calculation based on the number of ninth graders entering this high school in the 2004-2005 school year and who graduated by 2008.

Summary of Initiative Components	
Strategy	Activities as of Fall 2009
<p>(1) Turnaround Team. Establish a school-based Turnaround Team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formed a Turnaround Team (TT), which is convened by a fully dedicated Turnaround Assistant Principal (TAP). The TT includes the TAP, principal, senior academic leadership, teachers, staff, parents and students. The TT meets monthly. • Subcommittees of TT originally corresponded to the five MEES strategies, but were revised for SY 2009-2010. They now include: Positive Lincoln Climate, Student Voices, Community Partners, Parent Involvement and Mentoring.
<p>(2) Mentoring. Create a diverse menu of coordinated, structured mentoring programs for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program will target 100 ninth grade mentees, with the most at-risk students paired with adult mentors and the rest with peer mentors. To date, the program has been identifying mentors and mentees but has not yet launched the program, as they are waiting on a CBO provider. Staff estimate that provider will be on board as of mid-November 2009.
<p>(3) Educational Strategies. Create smaller learning communities and improve academic performance of students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a five-week Summer Bridge Program for incoming ninth graders and credit-deficient eighth graders that served 96 students. Activities for 2009 centered on core academic subjects, career exploration and enrichment activities. • Created a Ninth Grade Academy for SY 2009-2010. • Reduced class size by hiring additional teachers. • Implemented joint planning time for all teachers with the goal of increasing capacity and sharing instructional materials and strategies. MEES grant funds will be used for professional development for teachers on how to use student data to drive instruction. • Implemented corrective reading and math as part of a district-wide initiative. Program also used grant funds to purchase licenses for Achieve 3000, a web-based reading program that allows students to read materials at their own levels.
<p>(4) Employment Strategies. Fully integrate employment strategies into the school's academic program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began work on the Student Success Center (SSC). As of October 2009, Lincoln HS had selected a CBO partner, Philadelphia Academies, but this provider was not yet on site. A re-engagement specialist/social worker has been hired. Once the CBO partner is on board, they will begin hiring the following staff: director, coordinator, postsecondary specialist and career development specialist. In addition, the district will assist with necessary renovations in the space identified to accommodate the center. Programs will be tailored to each grade-level, will include six-week summer work readiness programming, and include elements such as workplace mentoring, resume development, college visits, and intensive internships for seniors. • Hired four student interns for Summer Bridge, whose responsibilities included assisting teachers and mentoring participants about social and academic expectations of high school.

<p>(5) Improve School Environment and Student Behavior. Implement research-based programs to improve the school environment and student behavior.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began work on an in-school suspension room, which will allow students to keep up with their academic work while on suspension. Lincoln HS has identified a space but has not yet hired the necessary teachers to staff the program, which will hold no more than 25 students when fully operational.
<p>(6) Case management. Create team based approach to case management to ensure that all students' social/behavioral and academic needs are met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began work on the Student Success Center (SSC). As of October 2009, Lincoln HS had selected a CBO partner, Philadelphia Academies, but this provider was not yet on site. A re-engagement specialist/social worker has been hired. Once the CBO is on board, they will begin hiring the following staff: director, coordinator, postsecondary specialist and career development specialist. In addition, the district will assist with necessary renovations in the space they have already identified to house the center. The role of the re-engagement specialists is to intervene with students who are currently truant, at risk of dropping out, or who have already dropped out. • Lincoln HS has a functioning Comprehensive Student Assistance Program (CSAP) which uses student data and a team approach to student assessment to plan interventions for students. Lincoln HS plans to strengthen the CSAP with the MEES grant funds.
<p>Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School District of Philadelphia used a competitive procurement process to identify CBOs to provide services under this grant related to mentoring, academy development, summer programming, and Student Success Center Services. • Partners for the Summer Bridge Program included Philly Project PRIDE, Heart Speak and Kids First, who provided afternoon enrichment activities. • Moving forward, Lincoln HS staff anticipate partnering with Education Works and Philadelphia Academies, Inc.
<p>Desired Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase daily attendance by 10 percent. • Decrease serious incidents of student misbehavior and student suspensions by 10 percent. • Increase the percentage of ninth graders promoted to the tenth grade on time by 10 points. • Decrease the numbers of students dropping out of school by 10 points. • Increase percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on their PSSA exams in English and Math by 10 points. • Increase number of students in paid internships by 10 percent.

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School District of Philadelphia: Overbrook High School Turnaround Project 2009 Grantee Summary

Initiative Name	The Overbrook High School Turnaround Project		
Grant Size	\$6,335,151		
Type of School	Comprehensive High School, grades 9-12		
Baseline Data			
	SY 2007-2008	SY 2008-2009	SY 2009-2010
Enrollment	2,070	1,905	1,745
	SY 2007-SY 2008	SY 2008-2009	
Average daily attendance	76.7%	77.7%	
Number of serious incidents per 100 students¹	3.6	3.2	
Number of suspensions per 100 students²	30.5	22.4	
Percent proficient or advanced in reading³	21.3%	14.4%	
Percent proficient or advanced in math	14.5%	12.8%	
Graduation rate⁴	43.3%		

¹ Calculated at SPR by dividing the number of total serious incidents (including abductions and attempts, assaults, drug and alcohol offenses, fires, moral offenses, robbery and weapons) per school year by the total enrollment.

² Calculated at SPR by dividing the number of suspensions per school year by the total enrollment.

³ Percent proficient or advanced in reading and math according to the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) proficiency levels.

⁴ According to the National Governor's Association calculation based on the number of ninth graders entering this high school in the 2004-2005 school year and who graduated by 2008.

Summary of Initiative Components	
Strategy	Activities as of Fall 2009
(1) Turnaround Team. Establish a school-based Turnaround Team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire d a Turnaround Assistant Principal (TAP) to lead the Turnaround Team (TT). The team consists of school administrators, teachers, staff (such as a school nurse, teacher aides, cafeteria staff and climate staff), students, parents and the mentoring partners. The TT meets monthly.
(2) Mentoring. Create a diverse menu of coordinated, structured mentoring programs for students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of October 2009, the Castle Coaches (adult mentor) and Panther Partners (peer mentor) programs had not been launched. While the program has begun identifying potential mentors and mentees, the CBO provider had not yet been selected. • The program plans to add home visits to the mentoring component, where staff will visit the homes of students who have been regularly tardy or delinquent.
(3) Educational Strategies. Create smaller learning communities and improve academic performance of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire d five additional teachers to reduce class size. Program also hired four instructional coaches (math, science, English and social studies) to work with teachers to improve instruction. • Teache rs received professional development from SDP around classroom development, teaching strategies, and single school culture. • Created a five-week Summer Bridge Program for rising ninth graders and credit deficient eighth graders. The program included core academic preparation, as well as enrichment activities and elective courses. One hundred and thirty (130) students participated in Summer Bridge. • Cre ated an Oasis Program/Accelerated Academic Academy, which is a one-year rigorous academic program designed to help overage and under-credit students improve their math and literacy skills and gain credit towards graduation. Communities in Schools and Philadelphia Academies, Inc. are the CBO providers for this component. • Implemente d common planning time by restructuring schedules to allow teachers to meet daily. • Restructured the school into six career academies—Health, Finance, Urban Education, Liberal Arts, a Ninth Grade Success Academy and an Accelerated Academic Academy (Oasis program). Overbrook HS has contracted with Communities in Schools, Inc. to be the provider for this component.
(4) Employment Strategies. Fully integrate employment strategies into the school's academic program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broug ht existing Student Success Center (SSC) to scale. As of October 2009, two additional case managers had been hired and there are plans to further staff the SSC through grant funds. The SSC is run by a teacher, in conjunction with the leaders of the academies and an assistant principal. Going forward, the SSC will be expanded, though renovations had not yet begun as of October 2009. • Hire d eight student interns to staff the Summer Bridge program, allowing them to gain work experience.

<p>(5) Improve School Environment and Student Behavior. Implement research-based programs to improve the school environment and student behavior.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported and expanded Panther Peace Core (peer resolution and conflict mediation). This student leadership program engages upperclass students to be mentors to ninth and tenth graders. Supported and expanded PRIDE Program (leadership development) focused on teaching students to be self-advocates, as well as on personal mental health and healthy behaviors. Hired two teachers and a re-engagement specialist to staff an in-school suspension program, so that students will not fall farther behind in school while suspended. As of October 2009, however, there was not sufficient facility space to house the program. The program will launch as soon as space is identified.
<p>(6) Case management. Create team based approach to case management to ensure that all students' social/behavioral and academic needs are met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brought existing Student Success Center (SSC) to scale. As of October 2009, two additional case managers had been hired and there are plans to further staff the SSC through grant funds. The SSC is run by a teacher, in conjunction with the leaders of the academies and an assistant principal. Going forward, the SSC will be expanded, though renovations had not yet begun as of October 2009. Overbrook HS has a functioning Comprehensive Student Assistance Program (CSAP) in place for addressing school, target group, and individual challenges to school success. Overbrook HS will continue to use this model in conjunction with the SSC.
<p>Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School District of Philadelphia used a competitive procurement process to identify CBOs to provide services under this grant related to mentoring, academy development, summer programming, and Student Success Center Services. During Summer Bridge, Overbrook HS partnered with Philly Project PRIDE, Heart Speak and Kids First to provide enrichment activities. Program has contracted with Communities in Schools to be the provider for the career academy structure that the school has adopted. Communities in Schools and Philadelphia Academies, Inc. are the CBO providers for the Accelerated Academic Academy/Oasis Program, as they were originally the providers for the Learning to Work program, which merged into this component.
<p>Desired Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase daily attendance by 10 percent. Decrease serious incidents of student misbehavior and student suspensions by 10 percent. Increase the percentage of ninth graders promoted to the tenth grade on time by 10 points. Decrease the numbers of students dropping out of school by 10 points. Increase percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on their PSSA exams in English and Math by 10 points. Increase number of students in paid internships by 10 percent.

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School District of Philadelphia: University City High School Turnaround Project 2009 Grantee Summary

Initiative Name	The University City High School Turnaround Project		
Grant Size	\$6,335,151		
Type of School	Comprehensive High School, grades 9-12		
Baseline Data			
	SY 2007-2008	SY 2008-2009	SY 2009-2010
Enrollment	1,450	1,176	872
	SY 2007-SY 2008		SY 2008-2009
Average daily attendance	76.6%		72.8%
Number of serious incidents per 100 students¹	5.2		6.6
Number of suspensions per 100 students²	52.8		72.2
Percent proficient or advanced in reading³	11.6%		11.4%
Percent proficient or advanced in math	5.9%		8.6%
Graduation rate⁴	46.4%		

¹ Calculated at SPR by dividing the number of total serious incidents (including abductions and attempts, assaults, drug and alcohol offenses, fires, moral offenses, robbery and weapons) per school year by the total enrollment.

² Calculated at SPR by dividing the number of suspensions per school year by the total enrollment.

³ Percent proficient or advanced in reading and math according to the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) proficiency levels.

⁴ According to the National Governor's Association calculation based on the number of ninth graders entering this high school in the 2004-2005 school year and who graduated by 2008.

Summary of Initiative Components	
Strategy	Activities as of Fall 2009
<p>(1) Turnaround Team. Establish a school-based Turnaround Team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire d a Turnaround Assistant Principal to lead the Turnaround Team. The team consists of school administrators, teachers, staff, a parent ombudsman, and students. The TT meets monthly. • In addition, the TT formed subcommittees for each of the five MEES strategies.
<p>(2) Mentoring. Create a diverse menu of coordinated, structured mentoring programs for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of October 2009, University City HS had contracted with Met, Inc. to be the provider for the mentoring component, though the actual program had not yet been launched. • University City HS plans to pair all ninth graders with either a peer or adult mentor, with the most at-risk students receiving adult mentors. Adult mentors will provide guidance on education and employment, while peer mentors will focus on the transition period, navigating high school, and conflict resolution. • The mentoring component will be run through the existing Student Success Center (SSC), which will be brought to scale under the grant.
<p>(3) Educational Strategies. Create smaller learning communities and improve academic performance of students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhan ced STEM activities for the Technology and Science Academy at UCHS through strengthened partnerships with the Academy of Natural Sciences. • Created a five-week Summer Bridge Program for repeating ninth graders, rising ninth graders, and credit-deficient eighth graders to prepare students for how to navigate University City HS. Eighty (80) students participated in Summer Bridge. Summer Bridge provided career exploration, core academics, credit retrieval and enrichment activities, such as technology and broadcasting and mural arts. • Hired nine additional teachers in order to reduce class sizes for all ninth and eleventh grade English and math courses. This also allowed University City HS to implement joint planning time for all teachers with the goal of increasing capacity and sharing instructional materials and strategies. • Hired two instructional coaches for English and math teachers in order to improve instruction. • Laun ched an Oasis Program for overage and under-credit students at University City HS, though the specific target is repeating ninth graders. The Oasis Program provides accelerated academic programming to allow students to retrieve credit for graduation. • Implemente d corrective reading and math as part of a SDP initiative.

<p>(4) Employment Strategies. Fully integrate employment strategies into the school's academic program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented a WorkReady curriculum in conjunction with the Oasis Program, with Communities in Schools and Educational Works as partners who will train students for internships. They plan to scale up this program and integrate with the larger student body, through the SSC. • Program plans to implement internships for juniors and seniors. As of October 2009, University City HS was very close to signing a contract with a CBO provider for this component. • University City HS had an existing Student Success Center (SSC) but plans to bring it to scale with DOL funds, through hiring a new director and more staff members, such as a college coordinator and a career coordinator. Internships and other employment-related programming will be offered through the SSC. University City HS has contracted with the Netter Center of the University of Pennsylvania to be the provider for the SSC.
<p>(5) Improve School Environment and Student Behavior. Implement research-based programs to improve the school environment and student behavior.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided training to school staff on creating an improved School Culture, and partnering with the School District's Office of School Climate and Safety to support programs in peer mediation, anti-bullying, student courts, and conflict resolution. • Created an In-School Intervention Program (ISIP), as a form of in-school suspension to allow suspended students to keep up with their academics. The program will also include case management.
<p>(6) Case management. Create team based approach to case management to ensure that all students' social/behavioral and academic needs are met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University City HS houses a modified Student Success Center (SSC) that they plan to bring to scale through the MEES grant. The center, which currently only has one staff member, will grow in size so that it can serve more students. SSC forms the nexus for varied career development and support programs for youth at the school. As of October 2009, University City HS had hired a SSC director and planned to hire the rest of the staff during the fall of 2009. • University City HS has a functioning Comprehensive Student Assistance Program (CSAP) with a joint case management team that meets weekly to discuss how to meet the needs of special populations. The school will continue to use this model in conjunction with the SSC.
<p>Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School District of Philadelphia used a competitive procurement process to identify CBOs to provide services under this grant related to mentoring, academy development, summer programming, and Student Success Center Services. • For Summer Bridge, University City HS established partnerships with Drexel University and the Academy of Natural Sciences, both of which formed the foundation for increased partnering during the school year. • CBO providers with whom University City HS will be working moving forward are the Netter Center (SSC), Met Inc. (mentoring), Education Works and Communities in Schools (WorkReady curriculum) and Philadelphia Academies, Inc. (internships).

Desired Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase daily attendance by 10 percent.• Decrease serious incidents of student misbehavior and student suspensions by 10 percent.• Increase the percentage of ninth graders promoted to the tenth grade on time by 10 points.• Decrease the numbers of students dropping out of school by 10 points.• Increase percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on their PSSA exams in English and Math by 10 points.• Increase number of students in paid internships by 10 percent.
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School District of Philadelphia: West Philadelphia High School Turnaround Project 2009 Grantee Summary

Initiative Name	The West Philadelphia High School Turnaround Project		
Grant Size	\$6,335,151		
Type of School	Comprehensive High School, grades 9-12		
Baseline Data			
	SY 2007-2008	SY 2008-2009	SY 2009-2010
Enrollment	1,207	1,132	969
	SY 2007-SY 2008	SY 2008-2009	
Average daily attendance	77.5%	78%	
Number of serious incidents per 100 students¹	6.4	6.2	
Number of suspensions per 100 students²	66.4	40.8	
Percent proficient or advanced in reading³	15%	12.1%	
Percent proficient or advanced in math	9%	8.8%	
Graduation rate⁴	43.4%		

¹ Calculated at SPR by dividing the number of total serious incidents (including abductions and attempts, assaults, drug and alcohol offenses, fires, moral offenses, robbery and weapons) per school year by the total enrollment.

² Calculated at SPR by dividing the number of suspensions per school year by the total enrollment.

³ Percent proficient or advanced in reading and math according to the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) proficiency levels.

⁴ According to the National Governor's Association calculation based on the number of ninth graders entering this high school in the 2004-2005 school year and who graduated by 2008.

Summary of Initiative Components	
Strategy	Activities as of Fall 2009
<p>(1) Turnaround Team. Establish a school-based Turnaround Team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire d a Turnaround Assistant Principal (TAP) to lead the Turnaround Team (TT), which consists of the chairs of the subcommittees, academic coordinators, a parent, a guidance counselor, students, a social worker and the Philadelphia Education Fund. The TT meets monthly. West Philadelphia HS also formed a Central Leadership Team which consists of the TAP and dean of students. • The TT formed subcommittees, including the ninth grade action committee, the student success center committee, the career action committee, the teaching and learning action committee and the leadership resiliency action committee.
<p>(2) Mentoring. Create a diverse menu of coordinated, structured mentoring programs for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of October 2009, no CBO provider had been identified to implement the mentoring component of the grant. The program had originally planned for peer mentoring, life coaching and service-centered mentoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Peer Mentoring. Fifty (50) peer mentors will be selected each year for the program, and each will be matched with three ninth graders to participate in structured mentoring activities after school, during lunch, or on early dismissal days. — Life Coaching. Seventy-five (75) of the most at risk ninth graders, those that display two or more eighth grade indicators of dropping based on Balfanz and Neild (2006) study, will be paired in a 1:1 relationship with trained West Philadelphia High School faculty, staff, and community volunteers. — Service Centered Mentoring. One hundred (100) ninth and tenth graders who are succeeding in the classroom will work with faculty and volunteers from the University of Pennsylvania in association with City Year. One mentor will work with four mentees through this project.
<p>(3) Educational Strategies. Create smaller learning communities and improve academic performance of students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructured the school into four career academies: Automotive, Business, Creative and Performing Arts, and Urban Studies, as well as a new Ninth Grade Academy. The CSSR model advocates development of small schools in order to help manage student behavior, create a family atmosphere, and improve outcomes. • Cre ated Summer Success Academy for incoming ninth graders and credit-deficient eighth graders to prepare students for how to navigate West Philadelphia HS. A total of 80 students enrolled in Summer Bridge. • Laun ched a Ninth Grade Twilight School for repeating ninth graders and ninth graders who show signs of early course failure during the school year. • Expanded current use of double dosing in English and math and will use grant funds to integrate intensive interventions (Read 180, Cognitive Tutor) designed to increase literacy and numeracy for students. Also implemented corrective reading and math as required by SDP.

<p>(4) Employment Strategies. Fully integrate employment strategies into the school's academic program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began process to bring existing Student Success Center (SSC) to scale. The SSC will be the center for varied career development and support programs for youth. At West Philadelphia HS, the SSC/Netter Center/PYN will also oversee all the other vendors and act as a hub for services. Currently, the Netter Center of the University of Pennsylvania oversees this component with Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) and Philadelphia Academies, Inc. • Offered internships over the summer to 20 West Philadelphia HS students. Student interns acted as teaching assistants and academic mentors during Summer Bridge. In addition 15 seniors were placed in internships at the University of Pennsylvania. • Continued the Netter Center's College and Career Pathways Sessions in a weekly afterschool program that emphasizes real-life readiness training through career mapping, paid internships, etc.
<p>(5) Improve School Environment and Student Behavior. Implement research-based programs to improve the school environment and student behavior.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of October 2009, the following components had yet to be implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Contract with CBO to provide student leadership and resiliency training so students can become positive peer influences and self-advocates. The focus will be on personal mental health and healthy behaviors. — Create peer mediation program that will serve as an alternative to suspension and enable students to realize their leadership potential. A CBO partner will be selected through an RFP process to run this program. — Create four-year looping advisories, in which students stay with the same advisory teacher and cohort of students throughout their four years in high school.
<p>(6) Case management. Create team based approach to case management to ensure that all students' social/behavioral and academic needs are met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began process to bring existing Student Success Center (SSC) to scale. The SSC will be the center for varied career development and support programs for youth. At West Philadelphia HS, the SSC/Netter Center/PYN will also oversee all the other vendors and act as a hub for services. Currently, the Netter Center of the University of Pennsylvania oversees this component with Philadelphia Youth Networks (PYN). • Hire d a social worker and social work intern who work through the SSC as well as through the Netter Center's community school. • Helped students develop Personal Education Plan (PEP)/Individual Learning Plan (ILP) to document successes and areas for growth. • West Philadelphia HS already has a functioning Comprehensive Student Assistance Program (CSAP) in place for addressing school, target group, and individual challenges to school success. West Philadelphia HS will continue to use this model in conjunction with the SSC.

<p>Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School District of Philadelphia used a competitive procurement process to identify CBOs to provide services under this grant related to mentoring, academy development, summer programming, and Student Success Center Services. • Partnered with Mural Arts, Spiral Q Puppet Theater and Urban Nutrition to provide enrichment activities at Summer Bridge. • The Netter Center of the University of Pennsylvania and PYN provided internship and employment services through the SSC and Summer Bridge programs.
<p>Desired Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase daily attendance by 10 percent. • Decrease serious incidents of student misbehavior and student suspensions by 10 percent. • Increase the percentage of ninth graders promoted to the tenth grade on time by 10 points. • Decrease the numbers of students dropping out of school by 10 points. • Increase percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on their PSSA exams in English and Math by 10 points. • Increase number of students in paid internships by 10 percent.