



**PROMOTING POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AFTER SCHOOL**

**Services and Outcomes for
High School Youth in TASC Programs**

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Executive Summary

Transforming large, comprehensive high schools into small learning environments is a major theme in secondary education reform. Large urban school systems and other sponsors of school reform have acted on their beliefs that small school learning environments strengthen students' attachment to school, foster trusting relationships between students and adults, and ultimately improve students' academic achievement. Most small-school reforms focus on students' experience during the regular school day. The After-School Corporation (TASC) gives high school students access to these small-scale learning environments after school.

As described in this report, data from TASC's multi-year evaluation suggest that the personalization and supportive environments of these programs promote positive outcomes for the youth who participate. This is evident on the study's outcome measures of school attendance, Regents test success, and credit accrual for graduation. Descriptive analyses presented in this report affirm the strengths of these projects' after-school programming and suggest opportunities for further development. In particular, the evidence of positive, trusting relationships among students and between students and staff suggests untapped opportunities to launch learning activities capable of promoting student learning at higher levels.

Of the 25 grantees in the first round of projects in school year 1998-99, TASC funded four projects for high school students. Since, then, the number of high school projects has increased significantly. In school year 2003-04, TASC funded 14 nonprofit organizations to provide after-school services to high school students in 20 public schools. Seventeen of these projects were located in four-year high schools and three were in schools with other grade combinations (K-12, 6-12, and 7-12). Together, these TASC projects served 3,920 New York City high school students.

Like their elementary and middle school counterparts, TASC high school projects are expected to provide an array of arts, athletic, and academic activities. With experience, TASC has modified some of its staffing and attendance requirements to accommodate the special circumstances of high school students. For instance, TASC does not hold high school students to the five-day per week attendance rule. Nor does it require its usual 1:10 staff-student ratio for projects serving this population. What it does expect, however, and what the programs generally yield are staff and activities that provide opportunities for teenagers to pursue peer friendships, positive relationships with adults, and academic, artistic, and career interests that can help them plan for the future and take steps to implement their plans.

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PROMOTING POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AFTER SCHOOL

Services and Outcomes for High School Youth in TASC Programs

Transforming large, comprehensive high schools into small learning environments is a major theme in secondary education reform. Large urban school systems and other sponsors of school reform have acted on their beliefs that small school learning environments strengthen students' attachment to school, foster trusting relationships between students and adults, and ultimately improve students' academic achievement. Research in youth development backs up these beliefs by affirming the benefits of small settings in promoting youths' positive relationships with others and their engagement in learning.

Most small-school reforms focus on students' experience during the regular school day. The After-School Corporation (TASC) gives high school students access to these small-scale learning environments after school. As described in this report, data from TASC's multi-year evaluation suggest that the personalization and supportive environments of these programs promote positive outcomes for the youth who participate. This is evident on the study's outcome measures of school attendance, Regents test success, and credit accrual for graduation. Descriptive analyses presented in this report affirm the strengths of these projects' after-school programming and suggest opportunities for further development. In particular, the evidence of positive, trusting relationships among students and between students and staff suggests untapped opportunities to launch learning activities capable of promoting student learning at higher levels.

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This report presents evidence from TASC high school projects in Year 4 of the TASC program, which was school year 2001-02. Data were drawn from the sources used for the comprehensive evaluation of TASC after-school programs, conducted over the period 1998-2003. The following table presents data sources that provide information on eight TASC

projects that served students in grades 9-12 in school year 2001-02, which is the most recent year for which extensive project and student data are available. This report summarizes and explains the major findings emerging from analyses of these data.

**Data Available on TASC After-School Projects
in the High School Evaluation Sample, 2001-02**

School	PSA Site Visits	PSA Student Survey	PSA Staff Survey	PSA Site Coordinator Survey	PSA Principal Survey	TASC Project Attendance Data	DOE Data for Participants and Nonparticipants	DOE School Report Card
A	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
D	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
G	✓							✓
H	✓							✓

Characteristics of TASC Host Schools and After-School Participants

TASC projects for high school students are housed in varying types of schools. Despite the school variations, participants within these projects are demographically similar to nonparticipants in the same schools.

Schools Hosting TASC Projects for High School Students

Of the seven projects observed by PSA site visitors, five were located in four-year high schools and two were in schools that also served additional grades (i.e., K-12, 6-12). Their enrollments ranged from fewer than 150 students to more than 2,500. The schools were located in all five boroughs of New York City.

Strong similarities among TASC host schools emerged when TASC host schools were grouped by the grades they served, either grades 9-12 only or grades 9-12 plus additional grades. Compared to citywide averages, four-year high schools hosting TASC projects generally served greater numbers of black and Hispanic students, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, students designated as English Language Learners, and students receiving special education

services. In contrast, students in schools with non-traditional grade groupings that hosted TASC projects were far less likely to be among any of these demographic groups. According to the school report cards issued by the New York City Department of Education (DOE) for 2001-02:

- Four-year high schools hosting TASC projects enrolled significantly more black and Hispanic students than did high schools across New York City. Ninety-four percent of students in these host schools were black or Hispanic, compared with the citywide average of 70 percent. In contrast, non-traditional schools hosting TASC high school projects enrolled far greater numbers of white students than the citywide average for similar schools. Sixty percent of the students in these TASC host schools were identified as white, compared to 24 percent citywide.
- Nineteen percent of students were designated as English Language Learners (ELLs) in the four-year high schools hosting TASC projects, compared to a citywide average of 14 percent for similar schools. In the non-traditional host schools, the percentage of ELL students at 1 percent was well below the citywide average for similar schools, at 5 percent.
- On average, 72 percent of students in the four-year host schools were eligible for free or reduced price lunch, compared to 52 percent citywide¹. Twenty-three percent of students at the non-traditional host schools were eligible for free or reduced price lunch, compared to 66 percent at similar schools citywide.
- At four-year host schools, the percent of students eligible to receive special education services (13 percent) was slightly higher than the citywide average for similar schools (11 percent). At the non-traditional schools, the percent of students eligible to receive special education services at 9 percent was slightly lower than the average for similar schools (10 percent).
- Non-traditional host schools were far more likely to serve equal proportions of students across the four high school years, suggesting that their retention rates were significantly higher than that of four-year high schools hosting TASC projects.

Characteristics of Participants and Nonparticipants in TASC High School Projects

TASC participants and nonparticipants were similar in gender, recent immigration status, ELL status, eligibility for free or reduced priced lunch, and, to some extent, eligibility for special education services. The two groups differed in race/ethnicity, and school attendance rates. TASC participants were more likely to be students of color than were nonparticipants in the same school, and they attended school more frequently than did nonparticipants (see Appendix A for demographic information on TASC participants and nonparticipants in each host school).

¹ The eligibility rates reported are quite likely to be lower than actual eligibility rates. School staff report that high school students often do not return the completed USDA forms that are used to determine eligibility.

Information about student characteristics at host schools was available for six of the eight TASC high school projects for the 2001-02 school year. In these six sites, the proportion of high school students enrolled in the TASC after-school project ranged from a high of 96 percent to a low of 15 percent. In five of the six sites, students in grades 11 and 12 were disproportionately represented among program participants.

The proportion of female participants was similar to the proportion of female nonparticipants at three sites. At two sites, females made up a greater proportion of participants than nonparticipants. At the final site, boys were overrepresented among participants.

A complex picture emerged when evaluators compared the race/ethnic characteristics of participants and nonparticipants. The proportions of participants in each racial/ethnic group were about the same as those of nonparticipants at two sites. At the remaining four sites, a larger proportion of children of color were enrolled in the after-school program.

Few participants or nonparticipants were recent immigrants. Fewer than 3 percent of students were recent immigrants in five of the sites, with the proportion among participants roughly the same as among nonparticipants. At the remaining site, 25 percent of participants were recent immigrants, compared to 10 percent of nonparticipants.

High school TASC participants eligible to receive free or reduced price lunch ranged from 24 percent to 100 percent. At four sites, the proportion of eligible participants was approximately the same as the proportion of eligible nonparticipants. In one site, the proportion of eligible participants was substantially larger than the proportion of eligible nonparticipants attending the same school. In another site, the proportion of eligible participants was substantially lower.

The proportion of students who were eligible for special education services was approximately the same among participants and nonparticipants at three sites. In two sites, substantially fewer participants were eligible, and in one site substantially more were eligible.

In five of the six sites, approximately the same proportion of participants was eligible for ELL services as nonparticipants. In the remaining site, a larger proportion of participants than nonparticipants were eligible for these services.

In the 2001-02 school year, participants' school attendance rate ranged from 88 percent to 94 percent across the six sites, while the nonparticipant rate ranged from 70 percent to 92 percent. At four of the six sites, participants attended school at noticeably higher rates than nonparticipants.

Average School Attendance Rate of Participants and Nonparticipants, 2001-02

Site	Participants		Nonparticipants	
	2001-02 School Attendance Rate	N	2001-02 School Attendance Rate	N
A	90.4	256	91.6	26
B	93.8	1,256	75.7	57
C	88.2	286	70.3	1,593
D	92.5	188	87.6	102
E	88.3	54	69.3	15
F	93.0	125	91.5	105

Enrollment and Attendance After School

High school students have many competing demands for their after-school time. Organized sports, babysitting duties at home, and part-time jobs are just a few of the activities that can prevent them from regularly participating in an after-school program. In addition, high school students are free to go home on their own, and the lure of unsupervised socializing and being able to make their own decisions about how they will spend their after-school hours compound the challenge of attracting and retaining teenagers in after-school programs. This means that after-school projects must target their resources carefully to appeal to this group.

Across the six after-school projects for which enrollment information for students in grades 9-12 is available, 2,165 students participated in TASC after-school projects for at least one day during 2001-02. Enrollment in individual projects ranged from a low of 54 to a high of 1,256. The number of high school students who enrolled increased slightly from the 1,976 who participated in the six projects the year before.

During Year 4 of the TASC program, the average project attendance rate for students in grades 9-12 was 28 percent. Averages at individual sites ranged from a low of 23 percent to a high of 57 percent.

**Number and Attendance Rate of High School Students Attending Programs,
2001-02**

Site	Number of Students Attending at Least One Day	Average Attendance Rate (in Percents)
A	256	25
B	1,256	23
C	286	32
D	188	34
E	54	49
F	125	57
TOTAL	2,165	28

Overall, 46 percent of high school-grade students attending the six TASC projects in 2001-02 were active attendees; that is, they attended their project at least 20 days during the school year and 20 percent of the days it was possible to attend during the period in which they were enrolled. Among the six sites for which data were available, the proportion of students who were active attenders ranged from a low of 41 percent of a participants to a high of 100 percent of participants.

**Proportion of TASC High School Participants Who Were Active Attendees,
2001-02**

Site	Percent Who Were Active Participants	N
A	42	256
B	41	1,256
C	46	286
D	44	188
E	65	54
F	100	125
TOTAL	46	2,165

TASC and the high school projects recognized the need to increase attendance rates and tackled it head on. Examples of activities undertaken to make project activities appealing and hence to encourage high attendance included the following:

- All of the high school projects allowed students to craft their own after-school schedule from an array of activities. Students suggested many of these activities. At one site, students could complete a program request form on which they presented an idea for a new after-school activity, a list of interested students, and

a budget. Project leaders implemented those activities that were presented coherently, were feasible, and generated high levels of student interest.

- One project concluded that the hour of homework it required immediately after the school day discouraged participation. It scheduled homework for the second half of the afternoon, thereby giving students a welcome break at the end of the regular school day.
- Another project offered snacks and open games to keep students in the building during the 15-minute break between the close of school and the beginning of after-school programming. These offerings encouraged students to stay in the building and participate in TASC activities.
- One high school project allowed students to choose credit-bearing electives for some after-school activities, such as drama and music. The electives appeared on students' official transcripts. "This shows universities that students went above and beyond what they were required to do," said the site coordinator. It also encouraged regular attendance, since students received credit only if they had three or fewer absences per activity per semester.
- At the same project, the site coordinator developed and won support for a year-long high school survival course that all entering freshman were required to attend once a week after school. Using the Overcoming Obstacles curriculum, the course covered such topics as conflict resolution, health education, and study and work skills.
- Staff at two projects alerted parents when their son or daughter did not attend after-school activities that day. In addition to increasing student attendance, this notification reassured parents that they knew where their adolescent was (or was not) after school.

Another spur to attendance was TASC's encouragement to high school projects to enroll more participants than they were contracted to serve.

Staffing of TASC High School Projects

Attracting and retaining high quality staff has been a major objective of the TASC initiative. In its first five years of operation, TASC spent upwards of \$1 million per year in site-based and centralized training and technical assistance for after-school staff in its project sites. At the high school level, the need for highly qualified staff was especially significant, because older youth tended to view after-school projects as resources for developing skills in an area of interest rather than just as places to socialize or stay safe. In general, high school after-school participants sought adults who could impart expertise in specialized areas, such as academic subjects, athletics, and visual and performing arts.

Hiring and Deploying Staff

In site visits to high school projects, observers reported that group leaders and specialists were usually certified teachers, college students, or graduate students. Other after-school staff positions included: full-time site coordinators, full- and part-time administrative assistants, part-time college counselors, parent liaisons, and volunteers.

According to staff surveys, TASC high school projects tended to hire a high proportion of their core staff from among the regular school day's certified teachers. In Year 4, 54 percent of the 79 staff members in TASC high school projects who responded to the TASC evaluation survey reported being employed by the host school. Overall, 44 percent of staff in the high school projects held teaching certificates, compared to 20 percent of staff in projects serving middle-grade students and 13 percent of staff in projects serving elementary-grade students. All of the project staff who were drawn from classroom teaching held teaching certificates, as did those drawn from pupil support positions. Of this latter group, half were administrators or instructional specialists. In addition, 19 percent of project staff who did not work at the host school reported holding a current teaching certificate.

Program Staff Also Working for the Host School, 2001-02, in Percents

Position at Host School	Percent of Program Staff (N=77)
Classroom teacher	41
Instructional specialist	5
Classroom aide/assistant	4
Administrator	3
Pupil support staff	1
Some other capacity	1
Do not work at the host school	46

Likewise, staff at high school after-school projects reported higher levels of education than their peers in middle and elementary school projects. According to staff surveys, 44 percent of high school project staff held masters degrees or higher, compared to 19 percent of staff at middle school projects and 11 percent at elementary school projects.

Staff Supervision

Site coordinators conveyed their vision of after-school programming to project staff primarily through staff meetings. In interviews, all but one site coordinator reported holding staff meetings at least once per month. Three sites held staff meetings either once a week or biweekly. One site brought staff together at monthly "soirees" where the site coordinator brought in food and local businesses supplied "goodie bags" of surprises. Like other staff

meetings, the soirees lasted an hour and included announcements, assessments of needs and progress, idea exchanges, and clarifications of administrative changes.

In Year 4 surveys, five out of six site coordinators reported holding monthly meetings for all project staff; the other site coordinator reported holding meetings less often. One-third of high school project site coordinators reported holding additional meetings for a subset of staff twice a month, one third did so monthly, and the remainder less often than once a month.

Training and Professional Development

Site coordinators of TASC high school projects participated in training more often than did any other after-school personnel. In interviews, site coordinators gave two reasons to explain why their staff participated less frequently: (1) staff perception that too much TASC training was geared to K-8 projects, and (2) the high numbers of certified teachers in after-school staff positions. Because certified teachers cost more per hour, resources with which to pay teachers to participate in training were already stretched thin. Compounding the problem was that teachers were unavailable during the regular school day for TASC training, and, correctly or not, they perceived their education and classroom experience as being beyond the level of TASC training. As one site coordinator said, “[The primary use of regular day teachers] makes staff development futile...either they have it or they don’t.” At this project, after-school staff and teachers from the regular school day came together for the only training the sponsoring organization offered in Year 4, *How to Write a College Recommendation Letter*.

Project Activities That Enable Students to Pursue Their Passions, Special Talents, and Interests

Grouping patterns, the environmental context in which after-school projects operate, instructional strategies used by staff, and project activities themselves all blended to create opportunities for youth in TASC after-school projects to pursue their passions, special talents, and interests.

Grouping Patterns

High school students usually picked their own activities. There were only two exceptions to this. One school required tutoring for some students; the other exception was the school, noted earlier, that required ninth-graders to attend an after-school freshman seminar once a week. High school activity groups varied in size according to the amount of student interest and the nature of the activity. For instance, tutoring was an individual or small group activity, while dance and athletics took place in larger groups.

Environmental Context

Most of the high school projects enjoyed ample space and materials. At one site, facilities included a Learning Studio (for tutoring and quiet study), a state-of-the-art dance studio, and a large swimming pool. Those few projects with cramped, poorly configured and equipped space suffered from tables and chairs getting in the way of cheerleading practice, a noisy math tutoring room, and broken equipment in the photography lab.

Creating a sense of community in a large, sprawling building was an issue in several high school after-school projects. Often, spaces for specialized activities—science labs, gymnasiums, theater, and computer lab—were located at opposite ends of the building from other activities. Projects that served smaller numbers of students sometimes had to take extra steps so that participants would not lose their identification with the project. Some projects scheduled as many activities as they could in classrooms adjacent to the after-school office, establishing a solid hub for the project. Others used classrooms around those specialized spaces. For example, a project in which dance instruction was particularly popular located its tutoring activities just above the dance studio.

The use of the after-school project office as student space was unique to high school projects. In four of the projects serving high school students, the project office doubled as a drop-in center for after-school participants. Students came to the office during study hall and lunch or while waiting for activities to begin. Observers saw these students using computers (for homework, emails, and the Internet), reading, playing chess, and socializing with their peers and after-school staff.

Observation of an After-School Program Office

Beginning at noon, youth begin to drop into the after-school room, individually or in groups. After several minutes of socializing, they find their interest or the reason they came and get busy. Snacks—granola bars donated by area businesses—are on the tables; juice is in the refrigerator. Youth help themselves as if they are in their kitchen at home. One or another staff member greets every student, picking up the conversation from the last time they spoke: “Hey, Javonne, did you get that assignment in on time? Good, then how’d you do?” “Angelique, did you get those flyers out?” and a conversation follows about the logistics of posting the flyers. Another staff member asks, “Did you get someone to proofread your report?” The student responds, “Yes, we know we have to do that, so we’re all sharing our reports before we turn them in.” Throughout the day, there was a changing flow of students, clustering across ages, sitting at the tables, reading, using the textbooks that are available, conversing, using the computers, or just gathering in groups, following up on the day, their lives, the activities.

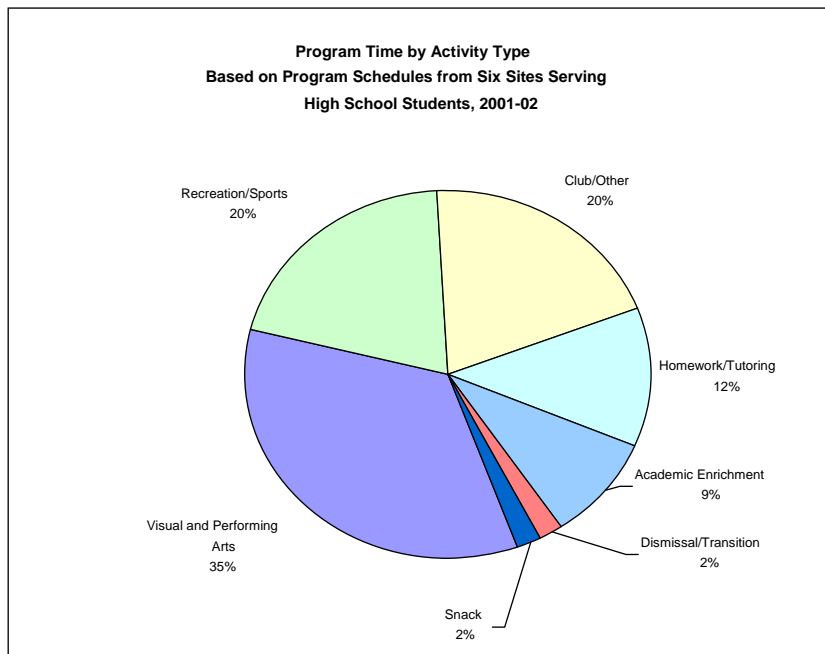
Student Advisory Council

“We are a group of students who come together to give ideas, coordinate parties, make up weird or interesting ideas, like ‘ethnicity day.’ We all wear our ethnic costumes, we talk about them, bring a dish to eat, and we end up going on a trip together. Kids who go on the trip get high academic averages.” Trips have included skating, going to the beach, and hiking in the mountains.

High school senior

Staff Instructional Strategies

Staff in high school projects served primarily as facilitators, coaches, and mentors. For example, staff were on hand to support peer tutoring, and they generally used guided-inquiry strategies to instruct students in activities such as mask-making, poetry, and yoga. They used direct instruction to teach students a new skill, such as playing the guitar or martial arts. Staff encouraged considerable student independence and decision-making. Site visitors saw no workbooks or textbooks. Instructors gave students individual feedback and saw to it that students reached consensus, as appropriate, about activities.



Staff spoke to youth encouragingly, sought to motivate them constructively, and maintained a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere. Leaders appeared to know how to engage youth and to create opportunities for student leadership. At one site, where all of the activities were geared towards a culminating performance, students discussed and rehearsed the roles they wanted to play in the show. Guided by their instructors, young drummers debated the order of their solos and appropriate lead-ins, while media and technology students developed ideas for stage lighting. At another site, youth wrote and published a school newspaper, organized poetry-writing sessions and readings, and participated on an advisory council that contributed to decisions about after-school programming.

Very positive interpersonal interactions dominated all of the sites. One observer noted:

Whatever effective instruction that emerges does so out of the personal commitment staff generate and encourage among youth, not because the specific content or instructional approaches are innovative or substantively challenging. In every activity, adults are informal, easy with youth, and in many ways demonstrate [that students] are the center of their interest and attention.

Despite these youth development activities, youth sometimes missed opportunities to stretch themselves because the content was not challenging enough, either academically and creatively. An after-school cheerleading coach (who was also a teacher during the regular day) summed it up this way: “There’s a lot of pressure to stay on top of our regular [school day]

responsibilities, and [after-school] seminars start so soon after class that we don't have time to prepare for them."

Project Activities

Surveys conducted for the evaluation asked site coordinators of projects serving high school students to identify their project's three top foci. All six site coordinators listed cognitive development as a primary emphasis. Half of the site coordinators included artistic development among top foci, and half listed cultural awareness and exploration. Other foci cited were civic engagement (2 of 6), physical development (2 of 6), building career opportunities (1 of 6), and health, well-being, and life-skills (1 of 6).

Opportunities for cognitive development. All of the high school projects offered activities with a cognitive component. Likewise, they all offered computers for student use. Other technology available to participants were advanced mathematical calculators, cameras, darkroom equipment, and sound systems.

In addition to offering traditional student tutoring in core subjects in subjects such as math, English, science, history, many projects developed their own unique and engaging literacy and numeracy activities. Poetry writing was popular, with one project arranging a monthly poetry slam at a nearby Barnes and Noble café. Students read their poetry in front of their peers and other coffee house guests. Said one student about this experience, "It's a chance

Opportunities for cognitive development included:

- Boat making
- Book club
- Computers
- Cooking
- Creative writing
- Debate club
- Investment club
- Learning Studio (tutoring)
- Liberation Hall (study hall)
- Math and science peer tutoring
- Newspaper club
- Poetry slams
- Study skills

to face people in public and [it] gives you experience you need. I am a dancer. It helps me with my stage fright. [It also] helps me say things in my poems...that I can't say any other way."

Opportunities for artistic development. The evaluation found a large overlap between after-school activities that targeted students' cognitive and artistic development. Creative writing, drama, and poetry slams, in addition to being art forms, developed students' literacy skills. At one project, students researched an upcoming drama production and scripted it with the help of a drama specialist. In a boat-making activity, students performed extensive math calculations and honed their literacy skills. Other activities that combined cognitive development and the arts involved mural painting, video production, and playing musical instruments.

Opportunities for youth development. TASC high school projects implemented many activities to strengthen students' awareness of and planning for their own future, their leadership

skills, and their avoidance of risk behaviors. Projects also conducted activities to increase students' cultural awareness and attachment to their community.

Youth at one TASC high school project explored culture and politics and beautified their neighborhood by painting murals aimed at raising community awareness. Other youth engaged in community service within their school building by, for example, tutoring younger students or participating in *Do Something*, a civics course popular with many TASC projects. At one project, eleventh-grade students in the *Do Something* club won a \$500 grant to lead a campaign against stereotyping in their school. Students surveyed their peers about stereotyping, made and hung posters to provoke awareness of stereotyping, and visited activist groups in the community who worked on similar issues. Another TASC project collaborated with its host school to address community crises. Participants led a candlelight vigil for victims of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and, shortly after that, held a memorial service for passengers killed in another airplane disaster. Students taught art and computer proficiency at senior citizens centers (two projects), designed community or rooftop gardens (two projects), organized food drives (one project), and held voter registration drives (one project).

These forms of community outreach also involved local businesses in TASC projects. Local merchants bought advertisements to fund one project's yearbook. Another project partnered with nearby businesses and universities to develop internships for high school participants. The site coordinator said, "I want students to be in [college] settings as much as possible, so that they become familiar and comfortable within them." Yet another project arranged for medical students from a nearby hospital to teach a course on HIV/AIDS, including HIV/AIDS prevention.

Internships and college visits introduced TASC's high school participants to career and higher education options. One project arranged Saturday college tours for students and their parents. After eating lunch with college students, one high school student said that she now knew that she would fit into the college scene just fine. Two projects arranged internships in community businesses. To prepare students to apply for jobs and college, several projects offered resume writing and SAT prep courses. Another had an even more extensive approach for college-bound

Youth Venture Clubs: Bringing Together Cognitive Skills, Artistic Skills, and Youth Development

Spunky, a senior at one of the TASC host schools, wanted to do something to make her community a better place. An avid poet, Spunky came up with the idea for a book filled with inspirational poetry that would help uplift those around her. Two of her friends shared her inspiration, and together they formed the group Poetry for the Soul and set out to create a book of poetry.

Poetry for the Soul had the good fortune of conceiving their idea at the same time that Youth Venture, an organization dedicated to teaching youth about business development, began working with their TASC after-school program. Poetry for the Soul put together a proposal for a book that would require a \$1000 budget and presented it to Youth Venture, who in partnership with TASC funded the project. TASC also located an "ally" for the group, a writer who was willing to mentor the students after school and on weekends, and Youth Venture offered on-going support such as workshops in effective presentations and community marketing.

During Spring 2002, Poetry for the Soul solicited poems from throughout the community and received several hundred responses. Youth Venture put them in touch with an environmentally friendly printing company, and the group was also able to attract several local merchants, including Barnes & Noble, to help sell the book. Barnes & Noble also offered space for poetry slams. In Fall 2003, the students edited the book. The final layout occurred in late February, with publication of *Poetry for the Soul* shortly thereafter.

students, offering them SAT preparation courses, college and scholarship resources, career panels, training in study skills, college exploration, and resume workshops. In addition, Columbia University undergraduates, trained by The College Board, led a free eight-week SAT preparation course at this site. Twenty TASC students took the course, which met twice a week. This TASC program also offered scholarships so that seniors in the after-school program could attend a school-sponsored college tour in Washington, D.C.

In 2001-02, several high school projects joined in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program, which funds academic support and career preparation for 14- to 18-year-old low-income students at risk of dropping out of school. As part of the program, each site provided a group of 30 TASC Fellows with an advisor to help the students develop goals, objectives, and strategies for academic improvement, career planning, and work experience. Fellows met these goals and objectives by participating in the after-school program and in a summer institute. During after-school hours, Fellows were expected to engage primarily, but not exclusively, in educational and leadership activities. Summer activities centered largely on employment and internships. Several months later, sites reported having placed students in internships at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Children's Museum of Manhattan, Mt. Sinai Hospital, local middle and elementary schools (as tutors), and after-school sponsoring agencies.

TASC projects for high school students fostered leadership by involving students in student council and student-directed activities. While team-building took place every day, one project placed particular emphasis on leadership on Fun Fridays, when activities focused on cooperating within a group. Another project scheduled weekly rap sessions where students talked about issues at their TASC projects and in their personal lives. Still another project offered students the *Holistic Individualized Program* (HIP), which taught conflict resolution, anger management, and relaxation techniques.

TASC Scholars and Mentors: Everyone Gains

In Year 3, TASC implemented the TASC Scholars Program, which trained TASC high school participants to work as group assistants, tutors, and mentors in TASC projects serving elementary school students.

To become a TASC Scholar, high school participants had to maintain a B-average or better and agree to attend workshops at the Hunter College School of Education. These workshops focused on developing the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective after-school staff. Once placed at an after-school project, TASC Scholars were provided an annual stipend of \$1200 as well as on-site supervision at both the high school and elementary school sites.

In Year 4, TASC implemented the TASC Mentors program, which mirrored the TASC Scholars program in every way except that high school students were placed in TASC middle school projects rather than projects hosted by elementary schools. Provided by the City University of New York, training for the TASC Mentors included: Understanding Adolescent Development, Literacy and Academic Support, Healthy Choices in Conflict, Self-Esteem and Body Image, and Program Evaluation and Wrap-up.

By working in the TASC middle school programs, TASC Mentors provided a positive role model for their younger peers, earned money, developed their resume, and honed workplace skills. While TASC Mentors did not work alone with students, they provided much needed assistance to group leaders. This meant that they helped middle school students while also helping TASC projects to increase their staff-to-student ratios in a cost-effective way.

Although health topics such as birth control and HIV prevention were reportedly part of the freshman seminar offered at one high school, observers saw no health education taking place. Only one of the seven site coordinators across high school and combination projects reported health education and life skills development a priority in their project.

Opportunities for physical development. Sites did, however, provide many occasions for students to develop their physical health. Students participated in basketball, cheerleading, dance (Hip Hop, Salsa), martial arts, soccer, weight training, and yoga, filling the available slots for these activities to capacity. At a high school that houses a pool, swimming instruction, taught by the school's physical education teacher, was available four days a week. On two days a week, youth learned swimming skills; on the other two, they played water games. This balance allowed students to learn skills as well as to learn to enjoy water sports and exercise. The large pool, built for swim meets, had diving blocks at one end and bleachers along the side. It was located in a greenhouse-like structure, with sunlight pouring in from the ceiling and windows. Youth were eager to swim. Many become adept at the crawl stroke, and one student mastered the butterfly stroke.

Changes in the Educational Performance of TASC Participants

In general, the analysis of change in educational performance suggests that the supportive, personalized environments created by TASC high school projects promoted improvements in participants' educational performance. This analysis is constrained, however, by several significant challenges. Measuring achievement change at the high school level is problematic in New York City schools because the system (like most others) does not administer comparable annual achievement tests in grades 9-12. Consequently, it is not possible to map individual-level change over time in these grades. Complicating the current analyses even more are pre-existing differences in average prior achievement levels between TASC program participants and nonparticipants. In general, before enrolling in a TASC high school project, TASC participants performed at a higher level than did nonparticipants in the same schools, as measured by standardized test scores and school attendance rates.

Another consideration in the analysis of TASC high school data is the very different circumstances of each of the host schools in the evaluation sample. Major differences in project enrollment size and programming made combining results across all TASC projects serving grades 9-12 infeasible. For that reason among others, this section of the report breaks out analyses by host school.

Methods Used by the Evaluation to Assess Achievement Change Using the Regents Exams

Evaluators selected four measures for assessing comparative student achievement among TASC participants and nonparticipants: (1) whether participants and nonparticipants had passed selected Regents exams required for a Regents-endorsed high school diploma and the grade level

at which the student passed the exam; (2) the proportion of participants and nonparticipants who had passed five or more Regents exams; (3) the average number of credits toward graduation earned by participants and nonparticipants; and (4) the change in the cumulative number of high school credits a student had earned at the end of the year prior to enrolling in a TASC project, compared to the number earned after a year of exposure. Where the evaluation had test results for sufficient numbers of students, it analyzed results for subgroups of students, formed on the basis of such factors as eighth-grade achievement levels, host school attended, and eligibility for ELL or special education services.

Overall Patterns of Performance of Regents Exams

In 2001-02, a higher proportion of participants than nonparticipants passed the English Regents exam by the end of twelfth grade, and more participants than nonparticipants passed this exam prior to entering twelfth grade. In general, the evaluation found that TASC participants were much more likely to pass selected Regents exams and were much more likely to pass five or more Regents exams than were students who did not participate in TASC projects (see Appendix B for a discussion on New York State requirements for Regents exams and Appendix C for the percent of students passing each type of Regents exam, by participation level).

TASC participants were also more likely to have passed their first Regents exam in mathematics required for an Advanced Regents Diploma (the Mathematics A or Mathematics Sequential 2 exams) prior to entering twelfth grade than were nonparticipants. Substantial differences were evident in the proportion of participants who had passed their first Regents exam in science compared to nonparticipants.

More participants than nonparticipants had passed the Regents exam in global history and geography by the end of tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. Likewise, more participants than nonparticipants had passed the Regents exam in U.S. history and government by the end of eleventh and twelfth grades.

The proportion of students who had passed five or more Regents exams varied across sites. A larger proportion of participants than nonparticipants had passed five Regents exams by the end of twelfth grade.

Overall Patterns of Credits Earned Toward Graduation

In sites for which sufficient data on high school credits earned were available, the average number of credits earned in 2001-02 among participants was significantly higher than the average among nonparticipants (see Appendix D for the average number of high school credits earned by participants and nonparticipants, by host school). Again, this is not surprising given differences in attendance rates and test scores of TASC participants and nonparticipants prior to enrolling in a TASC project.

**Percent of Students Passing Five or More Regents Exams,
by Participation Level, 2001-02**

Site	Status	Percent Passing 5 or More Regents Exams by the End of:				N			
		9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
B	Nonparticipants	0	0	--	--	17	10	3	0
	All Participants	0	30	89	90	416	386	247	162
	Active Participants	0	34	91	87	185	122	133	69
C	Nonparticipants	0	1	14	8	737	356	154	101
	All Participants	0	0	30	43	108	90	50	30
	Active Participants	0	0	29	41	42	43	24	17
D	Nonparticipants	0	10	58	23	21	20	33	22
	All Participants	0	40	59	46	60	57	39	32
	Active Participants	0	44	71	71	26	25	17	14
F	Nonparticipants	0	61	83	73	29	36	23	15
	All Participants	0	54	91	97	23	26	45	31
	Active Participants	0	54	91	97	23	26	45	31

On average, participants earned more high school credits in 2001-02 than did nonparticipants. This pattern held true throughout the high school years. Among the four sites for which information was available, the average number of credits toward graduation during the 2001-02 school year ranged from 8.3 to 10.4 for participants, and from 6.7 to 9.5 for nonparticipants. In each site, participants earned a higher average number of credits than nonparticipants.

**Average Credits Earned by Participants and Nonparticipants, 2001-02,
Weighted by Proportion of Students at Each Grade Level**

Site	Participants		Nonparticipants	
	Academic Credits Earned	N	Academic Credits Earned	N
A				
B	10.2	1,163	7.8	41
C	8.3	280	6.7	1,231
D				
E	10.4	52	9.5	12
F	9.3	119	8.9	85

In the two sites for which sufficient data were available, evaluators examined the pattern in the average number of high school credits earned, controlling for participants' and nonparticipants' eighth-grade performance on the statewide English Language Arts/Reading examination. In one site, the differences between participants and nonparticipants were greatest among students who had scored in the second proficiency level (of four), indicating "Basic"

performance. In the other site, the differences were greatest among students who had scored in the second or third proficiency level, indicating “Proficient” or “Advanced” performance.

Changes in School Attendance Rates

The clearest change to emerge from a student’s participating in a TASC high school project was improved school attendance. While in most cases the attendance of both participants and nonparticipants declined over grades 9-12, TASC high school participants’ attendance decline after a year of participation was far smaller than that of nonparticipants with similar records of prior attendance. For example, participants who were in the lowest attendance quartile in the year before enrolling in a TASC project decreased their attendance by 1.5 percentage points after one year of TASC participation, while the attendance of similar nonparticipants dropped by 3.9 percentage points. Participants’ attendance rates declined by the equivalent of 4.4 school days less than did similar nonparticipants’ rates.

In some cases, TASC participants actually increased their attendance over the prior year and made significant attendance gains in comparison to nonparticipants with similar attendance records. TASC high school participants who were in the second-lowest quartile of attendance in the prior year (attending 88 to 94 percent of the time), increased their percentage of attendance by an average of +2.9 percentage points, compared with the average drop of 9.8 percentage points by nonparticipants. This gain indicates that on average, after one year of participation, TASC high school participants who were in the second-lowest quartile during the year before enrolling in a TASC program increased their school attendance by 22.8 days more than the nonparticipants who had similar attendance patterns in the prior year.

The benefits are even more compelling when viewed in terms of the attendance gains of *active* TASC participants in the second-lowest quartile of school attendance prior to joining a TASC program. Here, active TASC participants averaged 28.9 more days of school – in a 181-day school year – than nonparticipants with similar attendance patterns in the previous year. (For more comparisons on the attendance of TASC participants and nonparticipants, see Appendix E.)

Other Evidence of Benefits for After-School Participants

Participants in TASC projects benefited from their activities both academically and developmentally. The academic emphasis not only made them better students, but also opened their eyes to educational possibilities beyond high school. Developmental activities engaged youth with their peers and with TASC staff, teaching them about relationships, teamwork, and responsibility.

Academic Benefits

Observational evidence suggests that TASC projects affected high school youths' school performance both directly and indirectly. After-school projects supported regular-day schoolwork by assisting students with their homework, offering for-credit after-school courses, and conducting make-up labs. The availability of school-based resources made it easier for students to complete their regular-day schoolwork and for teachers to raise their quality standards. Opportunities to visit colleges and explore careers helped students make more meaningful connections between school today and life tomorrow. Finally, after-school activities and positive staff-student relationships created new incentives for students to attend school regularly.

Supporting students' schoolwork. Each project developed its own approach to helping after-school youth complete homework. One project employed teachers to tutor in the subject they taught during the regular day. Depending on the day of the week, students could drop in with homework questions or get additional help in French, Spanish, English, math, and science. Another project trained students who excelled in math and science to tutor their peers, a practice that received one of TASC's Promising Practices awards. Still another project solicited additional grant funds to support a full-time, certified teacher who tutored across subjects in a school classroom called the Learning Studio. This teacher was available throughout the school day, and was assisted by college interns who volunteered to work in the project several hours a day. On the day that observers visited this project, the teacher coached an immigrant student through a writing assignment. The student and the teacher took turns reading an essay aloud, with the teacher identifying vocabulary words for the student to learn. The scene was calm, concentrated, and positive. Later, the student told site visitors that this teacher was helping him to learn English by lending him library books on tape. The teacher talked enthusiastically about the student's progress and proudly displayed an article on the after-school program that the student had written and published.

As noted earlier, several high school projects offered for-credit courses after school. One project offered a math research course in which students earned two credits toward graduation and learned about math topics not covered during their regular day course (e.g., Pascal triangles, linear equations). This project also offered after-school make-up classes for students who missed the regular school day. The principal described the impact of providing such courses:

Administrative Perspectives on Program Results

"The message has to go out that our [school's positive academic] results here have not come from a 9-3 schedule [alone]... I more than partially attribute that to after-school... We've created a culture of a full-service organization. ... School is here from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. What does that mean? It means that all enrichment, remediation, and college prep activities are attached to or in collaboration with our after-school program... The outcome is not just for kids. After many years here, in a place that used to shut down at 3:00 p.m., I now have a good percentage of the staff here after hours, working with kids."

Principal

"The change in this building [due to the after-school program] is big.... To get kids to stay for tutoring was unheard of. With the after-school, there is math peer tutoring and science tutoring. Since the birth of the math [peer tutoring] program, kids get together, work with the tutors, and have fun. To walk into this library to see kids [at work] is wonderful. Who would have imagined three years ago that would happen?"

*Assistant Principal for
Budget and Operations*

[Let's] say a kid is in chemistry and is absent for lab. By offering a make-up lab in the after-school program, you are accomplishing lots. You run the lab, improve attendance, kids are encouraged to come for make-up work, kids are staying in the building after school, and the services are provided by the teachers who are there during the day. It also indirectly forces the teachers to communicate with parents, because everyone needs parent permission... When kids stay for enrichment classes or tutoring, all these are by-products of the services provided by the after-school program.

Leveraging school resources. After-school projects not only provided students places to learn and socialize, they also encouraged teachers and staff to tap into school resources. For instance, making the library and the computer room available to the after-school project enabled teachers to raise their standards for the quality of the content and format of students' writing. A history teacher said, "The computer lab originally was used to surf the net, now students concentrate on getting their work done. Teachers know there is no excuse for not getting it done. They require kids to type their papers." A site coordinator told site visitors, "If I close the library, I have a riot on my hands." When evaluators observed this library, about 30 youth were working in groups and individually. One parent had stopped by with her young child and was reading to her. Students were mostly absorbed in study groups, but several informal conversations were taking place as well. Some students were working solo. Everyone concentrated on the task at hand, with a great variety of content and many social and academic interactions among youth and between youth and adults.

"Help is the number one thing that is offered in the program. Sometimes in class there is simply not enough time to ask the right questions and grasp a particular concept properly, but there is ample time in free periods and after school at the Learning Studio."

From an article written by an ELL student who participates in a TASC after-school program

Making connections to college and job opportunities. Traditional assistance in preparing for college—organizing college tours, preparing students to take Regents and SAT exams, helping them write resumes, introducing careers by placing students in internships, helping write college essays, and assisting in filling out and filing financial aid applications—are part of every TASC project that serves high school students. However, much of the groundwork for becoming college-bound takes place earlier and involves strengthening students' attachment to school and learning, and developing their understanding of the myriad opportunities open to them. Students who take advantage of projects' on-going academic support and arts enrichment are more attractive to universities. As one assistant principal stated, "Our kids were always well-prepared for college, but they weren't well rounded. When they applied to college, they were someone's poor cousin. In the after-school project, we want to give them the experiences that the rich suburban kids have."

"I like the classes like tutoring, SATs, and social studies. They're really helpful. Last year I got 350 for both tests, and this year I got 1140!"

High school senior

Strengthening students' attachment to school. TASC after-school participants consistently said that they attended school more often because of the after-school programs. A principal confirmed this. "Our attendance has always been very high, but it's higher now. Kids will say 'I had to come in. I have basketball this afternoon. If I didn't come to school, they wouldn't let me play.'" But it's not just the activities that drew students in. The relaxed setting of the after-school program showed a side of adults that students might not otherwise see. Speaking about the teachers who work in the after-school program, one student said, "As a result of being in the program, you appreciate them more.... After I saw the way [Mr. S.] was with us, I started respecting him as a person... and as a teacher. Now I go to class more... He's my best teacher."

"Helping to shape and develop whole people through our expertise, caring, and unique programming after-school. In every interaction, activity, and relationship, students' social emotional development is front and center."

Posted on the door of a high school after-school project

Developmental Benefits

In all seven sites visited, observers reported that youth were highly engaged in their activities and/or used the time to socialize informally with their peers. No discipline issues were observed. This degree of engagement can be attributed to three program structures and characteristics: (1) the high quality of interactions between students and staff; (2) students' ability to choose and often lead their after-school activities, which kept participants coming back to the program and drew new students in; and (3) project activities' response to high school students' developmental needs for interpersonal and social growth.

Student-staff interactions. Positive staff-student relationships were a vital component of every activity observed. In most of the activities, staff verbalized encouragement and praise. This was not lost on youth. In surveys, high school participants from two projects reported positive interactions with staff (83 percent) and a high level of trust of their after-school staff (84 percent).

Student focus groups verified these findings. Talking about the relationship between students and staff, one student at a large, low-performing school said:

"You don't have to worry about being yourself here. You can ask anyone around here for help and you'll get it... [If they can't help you,] they'll show you someone who can."

High school student

Fostering a Sense of Belonging

"The [school administration] is fixated on Regents exams and standards...it's a coercive, top to bottom relationship...kids who are miserable during school are relaxed after-school...it's a more loving atmosphere...it's giving them something they belong to...something they need to keep coming back to...a sense of belonging to the 'after-school gang.' Anytime you get students and adults working together in this building, it's got to be helpful."

English teacher

"Without after-school they'd be on the streets or at home alone. Gang activity has declined; they're going for the activities and are not joining gangs."

Social studies teacher and dean

"Before I started in the after school program. I went out with everyone. I found everyone got me in trouble.... The first thing I thought was I could stay here in the after school so I'm not in trouble."

High school student

When I have a question, I go to [the site coordinator]. She asks you to think about what options you have. Even though she is a professional, she really gives you advice as a friend. But she still maintains her role as a coordinator and an adult. It's an alternative place. Instead of hanging out, you can actually come here. It's a secure place... [the site coordinator] is always in your face—in a good way; she's involved; she really makes sure she's involved in what's important.

Other students echoed this perspective:

- “There’s always someone here, and they’d be PESTERING YOU [emphasis in original] and telling you that you need help. But they really care about the kids.”
- “There are good vibes here. The rest of the school is crazy; I get some breathing space when I come here!”
- “The after-school program has changed my attitude. I’m not as lazy as I used to be. ...It’s nag, nag, nag, but it’s very helpful nagging.”

Staff, too, were at the after-school program first and foremost because they enjoyed working with their peers and with youth in a more relaxed setting. A teacher who worked with special needs students during the regular day ran the after-school project’s computer lab. She explained that, before working in the after-school program, she was on the verge of quitting her job. Then her positive interactions with after-school participants reminded her of why she became a teacher and re-energized her regular teaching. One project’s after-school yoga teacher reported teaching for free because by the time the site coordinator needed a yoga instructor money had run out. The yoga teacher said, “I just love this school...so I don’t mind...I used to teach French here during the day.” A security guard summed up what site visitors heard across projects. “I’m not here for the money; it’s about the kids. In the after-school program they’re more relaxed. I keep them safe, but here I’m also their friend.”

Youth interactions. Students’ interactions with each other mirrored their interactions with staff. Students exhibited a strong sense of teamwork and camaraderie at each site visited. They encouraged one another to try out new activities, complimented each other’s accomplishments, greeted newcomers with affection and enthusiasm, and, in the great majority of cases, matched their tone to the activity at hand. They were loud and boisterous while swimming and playing basketball, smiled broadly while dancing, and studious while at computers or being tutored. At one site, observers noted “an easy informality prevailed among youth; they were comfortable with peers and obviously took good advantage of the opportunity to connect after school. In several classes (weight training, college advising, art), the activity took a back seat to the socializing youth did, but they were working with some of the tools that were available to them. In other activities, such as peer tutoring, students had a decidedly academic focus.” At another site, the observer wrote, “Youth are strongly bonded; interactions were consistently warm, supportive, and interested. Youth unanimously express deep appreciation for the staff and the opportunity to work together within the after-school programs. Testimonials are legion. A visitor feels the close-knit relationships readily, just by hanging out

in the after-school room or in activities. As kids congregate, they shake hands, put an arm on a shoulder, even hug. They ask after one another and after the adults.”

More information on students’ reactions to their TASC experiences and their competencies are presented in Appendix F.

Conclusion

In his article, “The Case for New Village Schools” (*Education Week*, 12/05/01), Tony Wagner, co-director of The Change Leadership Group at Harvard University, described the feel of a small school:

Teachers come to know their students well—their interests, strengths, and weaknesses as learners. Knowing students deeply, teachers are far more able to coach, nurture, and demand excellence from each one. No student remains anonymous or falls through the cracks. Equally significant, the entire school, as well as individual classrooms and advisory groups, is characterized by a strong sense of community, where learning and helping one another have become shared responsibilities. Strikingly, one finds no graffiti or bathroom smoking in these schools. They belong to the students, as much as to the adults.

Site visits to TASC projects that served high school students revealed how closely these projects resembled the learning environments sought by small schools. Although TASC high school projects often struggled to meet their daily attendance targets, youth who did attend felt deeply connected to their peers and teachers in the after-school program. They also benefited from enrichment activities that were otherwise missing in their lives. TASC projects offered tutoring, dance, music, drama, cheerleading, martial arts, and many other activities that, for either logistical or financial reasons, their students could not obtain anywhere else.

Through powerful relationships with their peers and teachers and through the opportunity to experience new activities, TASC high school participants used the after-school hours to expand their vision of who they were and the role that school played in their future. The task that remained for these projects was to build upon the relationships and expectations that they had already established and to support their staffs and students in achieving higher levels of learning and personal accomplishment.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Demographic Characteristics of Participants and Nonparticipants in Projects Serving High School Students

Grade-Level Distribution of Participants and Nonparticipants at the Host Schools, 2001-02, in Percents

Grade	Site											
	A		B		C		D		E		F	
	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants
9	*	30	32	33	49	38	22	32	*	33	28	18
10	*	26	18	31	25	31	22	30	*	26	34	21
11	*	23	5	20	11	17	33	21	*	20	23	36
12	*	18	0	13	8	10	24	17	*	7	15	25
Un-Graded	*	3	46	3	7	2	0	0	*	13	0	0
N=	26	256	57	1,256	1,593	286	102	188	15	54	105	125

* Data were suppressed because fewer than 10 students fell into the category.

Gender Distribution of Participants and Nonparticipants at the Host Schools, 2001-02, in Percents

Gender	A		B		C		D		E		F	
	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants
Male	54	51	60	46	48	48	59	51	*	65	29	31
Female	46	49	40	54	52	52	41	49	*	35	71	69
N=	26	256	57	1,254	1,583	284	102	187	15	54	105	124

* Data were suppressed because fewer than 10 students fell into the category.

**Race/Ethnicity Distribution of Participants and Nonparticipants
at the Host Schools, 2001-02, in Percents**

Race/ Ethnicity	A		B		C		D		E		F	
	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants
White	*	32	2	3	2	3	78	76	*	*	2	2
Black	*	22	40	23	54	59	12	9	*	*	51	64
Hispanic	*	26	53	66	43	37	6	6	*	89	12	9
Asian and Others	*	20	5	8	1	1	4	9	*	*	35	25
<i>N</i> =	26	256	57	1,239	1,576	285	100	188	15	53	103	121

* Data were suppressed because fewer than 10 students fell into the category.

**Distribution of Free- and Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility among Participants and
Nonparticipants at the Host Schools, 2001-02, in Percents**

Eligibility for the Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Program	A		B		C		D		E		F	
	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants
Eligible	*	48	88	82	94	92	30	24	100	100	73	92
Not Eligible	*	52	12	18	6	8	70	76	0	0	27	8
<i>N</i> =	25	244	49	1,197	1,363	272	96	185	13	50	98	118

*** Data were suppressed because fewer than 10 students fell into the category.

**Distribution of English Language Learner Status
among Participants and Nonparticipants, 2001-02, in Percents**

English Language Learner Status	A		B		C		D		E		F	
	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants
English Language Learner	*	1	11	8	23	29	0	1	*	17	0	1
Not English Language Learner	*	99	89	92	77	71	100	99	*	83	100	99
<i>N</i> =	26	256	57	1,256	1,593	286	102	188	15	54	105	125

* Data were suppressed because fewer than 10 students fell into the category.

**Distribution of Special Education Status of Participants and Nonparticipants,
2001-02, in Percents**

Special Education Status	A		B		C		D		E		F	
	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants	Nonparticipants	Participants
Eligible for Special Education	*	10	44	3	11	5	8	9	0	17	1	2
Not Eligible for Special Education	*	90	56	97	89	95	92	91	100	83	99	98
<i>N</i> =	26	256	57	1,256	1,593	286	102	188	15	54	105	125

* Data were suppressed because fewer than 10 students fell into the category.

APPENDIX B

Context for Assessing Change in Achievement in New York City for Grades 9-12

One component of the efforts to improve public school education and to raise standards of student performance in New York has been a series of increases in the minimum requirements for high school graduation, which are set by the New York State Board of Regents. Currently, two types of high school diplomas are endorsed by the Board, the Regents Diploma and the Advanced Regents Diploma. Local school districts may also choose to award a Local Diploma. Starting with the class of students who first entered grade 9 during the 2001-02 school year, students are required to earn at least 22 units (each unit equals two credits) in the following areas, in order to earn a Regents Diploma.

Course Units Required for a Regents Diploma

Subject Area	Units
English	4
Social Studies	4
Science	3 At least one in life sciences and one in physical sciences
Mathematics	3
Visual arts and/or music, dance, or theater	1
Health education	½
Physical education	2
Other subjects	4½

In addition to the course unit requirements, students who first entered grade 9 in September 2001 must pass five Regents examinations with scores of 65 or higher in English, mathematics, global history and geography, United States history and government, and science.

Regents Exams Required for Graduation

Grade	English/ Language Arts (ELA or Reading)	Mathematics	Other
9-12	Regents Exam in Comprehensive English	Regents Mathematics Sequential I and II Exam or Mathematics A Exam	Regents Exam in Global History and Geography
Regents Exam in US History and Government			
Regents Mathematics Sequential III Exam or Mathematics B Exam		Regents Exam in a Life Science	
		Regents Exam in a Physical Science	
			Regents Exam in a Language Other Than English *

* Students who complete an Arts in Career and Technical Education Sequence as a substitute for the language requirement do not have to pass this exam.

During the 2001-02 school year, the percent of students citywide who passed each of the Regents exams at the level required for a Regents diploma (a score of 65 or higher on a scale from 0 to 100) ranged from 39 percent on the Math Sequential I exam to 96 percent on the exams for languages other than English. Among the students attending three of the four host schools where results for all Regents exams were available, higher proportions of students passed the Regents exams than among all high school students citywide.

Percent of All Students Who Passed Selected Regents Exams, 2001-02

Regents Examination	Percentage of Students Passing with Scale Score of 65 or Higher					
	All Schools Citywide	Host Schools				
		B	C	D	E	F
English	55	90	57	89	33	77
Sequential Math I	39	88	28	21		97
Sequential Math III	69	78	59	69		74
Biology	71	96	57	73		98
Global Studies	54	86	41	83		90
US History and Government	64	83	65	87		81
Languages Other than English	96	94	95	96		86

* Only the English Regents was required at Schools A and E. Incomplete results were reported for School A.

APPENDIX C

Achievement on the Regents Exams among TASC High School Participants and Nonparticipants, 2001-02

Site	Participation Status	Percent Passing Their First Required Mathematics Regents Test by the End of:				N			
		9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
B	Nonparticipants	12	20	--	--	17	10	3	0
	All Participants	17	37	79	79	416	386	247	162
	Active Participants	21	38	84	76	185	122	133	69
C	Nonparticipants	1	5	7	10	737	356	154	101
	All Participants	1	3	12	27	108	90	50	30
	Active Participants	0	7	12	29	42	43	24	17
D	Nonparticipants	5	25	39	27	21	20	33	22
	All Participants	33	56	41	47	60	57	39	32
	Active Participants	31	60	41	64	26	25	17	14
F	Nonparticipants	7	70	65	53	29	36	23	15
	All Participants	4	58	71	61	23	26	45	31
	Active Participants	4	58	71	61	23	26	45	31

Site	Participation Status	Percent Passing Their First Science Regents Test by the End of:				N			
		9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
B	Nonparticipants	76	40	--	--	17	10	3	0
	All Participants	90	92	96	94	416	386	247	162
	Active Participants	92	82	97	93	185	122	133	69
C	Nonparticipants	24	34	36	57	737	356	154	101
	All Participants	40	39	62	43	108	90	50	30
	Active Participants	40	40	54	47	42	43	24	17
D	Nonparticipants	57	50	73	27	21	20	33	22
	All Participants	82	77	59	47	60	57	39	32
	Active Participants	77	76	76	71	26	25	17	14
F	Nonparticipants	100	89	96	73	29	36	23	15
	All Participants	91	92	96	97	23	26	45	31
	Active Participants	91	92	96	97	23	26	45	31

Site	Status	Percent Passing Global History and Geography Regents Test by the End of:				N			
		9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
B	Nonparticipants	0	30	--	--	17	10	3	0
	All Participants	1	84	98	92	416	386	247	162
	Active Participants	1	90	98	90	185	122	133	69
C	Nonparticipants	4	32	55	27	737	356	154	101
	All Participants	6	39	72	73	108	90	50	30
	Active Participants	5	37	75	65	42	43	24	17
D	Nonparticipants	0	70	91	91	21	20	33	22
	All Participants	2	86	77	72	60	57	39	32
	Active Participants	0	84	88	86	26	25	17	14
F	Nonparticipants	7	86	96	87	29	36	23	15
	All Participants	13	88	98	94	23	26	45	31
	Active Participants	13	88	98	94	23	26	45	31

Site	Status	Percent Passing U.S. History and Government Regents Test by the End of:				N			
		9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
B	Nonparticipants	0	10	--	--	17	10	3	0
	All Participants	0	5	84	93	416	386	247	162
	Active Participants	0	7	87	91	185	122	133	69
C	Nonparticipants	0	9	49	55	737	356	154	101
	All Participants	0	9	68	77	108	90	50	30
	Active Participants	0	9	67	71	42	43	24	17
D	Nonparticipants	0	0	91	96	21	20	33	22
	All Participants	2	2	74	78	60	57	39	32
	Active Participants	0	4	82	93	26	25	17	14
F	Nonparticipants	0	11	78	87	29	36	23	15
	All Participants	0	4	89	87	23	26	45	31
	Active Participants	0	4	89	87	23	26	45	31

APPENDIX D

Credits Earned Towards Graduation by TASC High School Participants and Nonparticipants, 2001-02

Site	Status	Average Number of Credits Earned During First Year of Exposure	N	SD	Statistical Comparison to Nonparticipants	
					Statistically Significant at p<.05	Effect Size
B	Nonparticipants	7.82	41	4.34	--	--
	All Participants	10.16	1,163	3.24	Yes	0.54
	Active Participants	11.02	477	2.72	Yes	0.74
C	Nonparticipants	6.66	1,231	4.08	--	--
	All Participants	8.33	280	3.67	Yes	0.41
	Active Participants	8.73	127	3.65	Yes	0.51
E	Nonparticipants	NA	12	4.46	--	--
	All Participants	10.41	52	4.04	NA	NA
	Active Participants	11.21	34	3.12	NA	NA
F	Nonparticipants	8.95	85	3.24	--	--
	All Participants	9.31	119	2.96	No	0.11
	Active Participants	9.31	119	2.96	No	0.11

There was insufficient data for analysis of the number of credits earned from Sites A and D. Effect sizes greater than 0.10 are in bold type.

Site	Status	Average Number of HS Credits Earned by:				N			
		9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
B	Nonparticipants	11.38	NA	NA	NA	13	8	2	0
	All Participants	11.56	9.83	9.94	9.12	346	378	247	161
	Active Participants	12.58	10.70	10.64	9.20	150	120	133	69
C	Nonparticipants	5.88	6.79	8.33	8.90	598	318	145	98
	All Participants	7.40	7.95	10.10	9.93	106	88	49	30
	Active Participants	7.93	8.76	9.52	9.88	42	41	23	17
E	Nonparticipants	9.45	NA	NA	NA	11	1	0	0
	All Participants	9.69	NA	NA	NA	18	13	11	4
	Active Participants	11.27	NA	NA	NA	11	5	9	3
F	Nonparticipants	NA	8.72	9.41	6.53	13	34	23	15
	All Participants	10.28	9.13	9.69	8.32	18	26	45	30
	Active Participants	10.28	9.13	9.69	8.32	18	26	45	30

Statistically significant differences between participants and nonparticipants are in bold type.

**Average Number of High School Credits Earned,
by Performance on the Eighth-Grade ELA Exam**

Eighth-Grade Proficiency Level -- ELA	Site	Participation Status and Duration	Average Number of Credits Earned in First Year of Exposure	N	SD	Statistical Comparison to Nonparticipants	
						Statistically Significant at p<.05	Effect Size
1 - Below Basic	C	Nonparticipants	5.24	185	3.69	--	--
		All Participants	5.64	33	3.89	No	0.11
		Active Participants	6.20	15	4.13	No	0.26
	F	Nonparticipants	--	--	--	--	--
		All Participants	--	--	--	--	--
		Active Participants	--	--	--	--	--
2 - Basic	C	Nonparticipants	6.28	403	3.93	--	--
		All Participants	8.30	70	3.32	Yes	0.51
		Active Participants	8.41	22	3.25	Yes	0.54
	F	Nonparticipants	9.06	17	3.74	--	--
		All Participants	8.91	18	3.33	No	-0.04
		Active Participants	8.91	18	3.33	No	-0.04
3 - Proficient and 4 - Advanced	C	Nonparticipants	8.54	153	4.44	--	--
		All Participants	9.24	41	3.77	No	0.16
		Active Participants	9.53	17	4.17	No	0.22
	F	Nonparticipants	9.81	49	2.50	--	--
		All Participants	10.38	62	2.40	Yes	0.23
		Active Participants	10.38	62	2.40	Yes	0.22

Effect sizes greater than 0.10 are in bold type.

APPENDIX E

Change in School Attendance Rate by Prior Level of Attendance After One Year of Exposure to TASC, Weighted, 2001-02

School Attendance Quartile During Year Prior to Exposure to TASC	Participation Status and Duration	Average Percentage Point Change in School Attendance Rate	N	SD	Statistically Significant at p<.05 Compared to Nonparticipants	Effect Size Compared to Nonparticipants	Change in Days (181-Day Year)	Net Change in Days Compared to Nonparticipants
1 – Lowest Quartile (Below 88%)	1-Year Non participants	-3.92	503	0.090	--	--	-7.1	--
	1-Year Participants	-1.48	997	0.034	Yes	.27	-2.7	4.4
	1-Year Active Participants	-1.23	344	0.031	Yes	.30	-2.2	4.9
2 - Second Quartile (88% to 94%)	1-Year Non participants	-9.75	1281	0.218	--	--	-17.6	--
	1-Year Participants	2.89	261	0.128	Yes	.58	5.2	22.8
	1-Year Active Participants	6.26	70	0.120	Yes	.73	11.3	28.9
3 - Third Quartile (94% to 98%)	1-Year Non participants	-7.23	986	0.161	--	--	-13.1	--
	1-Year Participants	-1.19	640	0.093	Yes	.38	-2.2	10.9
	1-Year Active Participants	0.33	170	0.066	Yes	.43	0.6	13.7
4 - Highest Quartile (Above 98%)	1-Year Non participants	-5.01	989	0.118	--	--	-9.1	--
	1-Year Participants	-1.54	948	0.063	Yes	.29	-2.8	6.3
	1-Year Active Participants	-0.73	298	0.041	Yes	.36	-1.3	7.8

Effect sizes greater than 0.10 are in bold type.

APPENDIX F

TASC High School Participant Competencies and Reactions, 2000-01

Engaging Students in Learning

Academic benefits. Forty-six percent of TASC high school students believe they received academic benefits from their TASC participation (“agreed a little” or “agreed a lot), as measured by the following survey items:

- The after-school program has helped me learn to speak and understand English better.
- The after-school program has helped me read and understand more.
- The after-school program has helped me feel more comfortable solving math problems.
- The after-school program has helped me finish my homework.
- The after-school program has helped me feel more comfortable writing papers.
- The after-school program has helped me feel more confident about my school work.
- The after-school program has helped me to use computers to do homework or other activities.

*Descriptive Statistics:*²

Alpha	Minimum possible score: 42 Maximum possible score: 63					
	Mean	Standard Deviation	75 th Percentile	25 th Percentile	% Variance btw. Sites	% Variance w/in Sites
.91	54.8	6.7	61	50	21%	79%

² Except where noted, descriptive statistics are provided for Year 3 middle and high school survey responses combined.

Building a Sense of Community

Program connections. Seventy-two percent of TASC high school participants reported a strong connection to their after-school project (“agreed a little” or “agreed a lot”), as measured by the following survey items:

- This is a comfortable place to hang out.
- I feel like I belong here.
- I feel like I matter here.
- I feel like I am successful here.
- I feel like my ideas count here.

*Descriptive Statistics:*³

Alpha	Minimum possible score: 30		Maximum possible score: 45		% Variance btw. Sites	% Variance w/in Sites
	Mean	Standard Deviation	75 th Percentile	25 th Percentile		
.86	40.4	4.3	44.0	38.0	5%	95%

Scale source: Public Private Ventures/Safe Havens VYSO Youth Survey (1997), Belonging Scale

TASC community. Eighty-five percent of TASC high school participants reported that their TASC project is a community in which people work together (“agreed a little” or “agreed a lot”), as measured by the following survey items:

- People care about each other in this program.
- Students in this program don’t seem to like each other very well.
- Students in this program work together to solve problems.
- Some other student will try to help me when I am having a problem.
- At the after-school program, teachers and students treat each other with respect.
- Students in this program just look out for themselves.
- Students in this program are willing to go out of their way to help someone.
- The students in this program don’t really care about each other.
- Students at this school don’t get along together very well.
- Students in this program are mean to each other.

³ Data include elementary, middle, and high school student survey responses.

Descriptive Statistics:

Alpha	Minimum possible score: 60 Maximum possible score: 90					
	Mean	Standard Deviation	75 th Percentile	25 th Percentile	% Variance btw. Sites	% Variance w/in Sites
.80	77.8	6.3	82.0	74.0	16%	84%

Scale source: Child Development Project, Sense of School as a Community Scale, Developmental Studies Center

Developing Relationships between Children and Adults

High school staff interactions. Eighty-three percent of TASC high school students reported positive staff interactions (“agree a little” or “agree a lot”), as measured by the following survey items:

- At the after-school program, teachers don’t care what I think.
- At the after-school program, teachers punish kids without knowing what happened.
- At the after-school program, teachers and students don’t seem to like each other.

Descriptive Statistics:

Alpha	Minimum possible score: 18 Maximum possible score: 27					
	Mean	Standard Deviation	75 th Percentile	25 th Percentile	% Variance btw. Sites	% Variance w/in Sites
.72	23.7	2.7	26.0	22.0	13%	87%

Scale source: Child Development Project, Trust in and Respect for Teachers Scale, Developmental Studies Center

High school trust of staff. Eighty-four percent of high school students felt a high level of trust in the TASC after-school staff (“agree a little” or “agree a lot”), as measured by the following survey items:

- At the after-school program, teachers always try to be fair.
- At the after-school program, the teachers really care about me.
- At the after-school program, the teachers always keep their promises.
- At the after-school program, I feel safe and comfortable with the teachers.
- At the after-school program, I feel that I can talk to the teachers about things that are bothering me.

Descriptive Statistics:

Alpha	Minimum possible score: 30 Maximum possible score: 45					
	Mean	Standard Deviation	75 th Percentile	25 th Percentile	% Variance btw. Sites	% Variance w/in Sites
.85	39.9	4.2	44.0	37.0	16%	84%

Scale source: Child Development Project, Trust in and Respect for Teachers Scale, Developmental Studies Center

Exposing Students to New Experiences

Opportunities available through the TASC program. Slightly more than half of high school students (58 percent) agreed (“agreed a little” or “agreed a lot”) with the statements listed below:

- I get a chance to do new things here.
- I get to do things here that I don’t usually get to do anywhere else.
- I get to work on projects here that make me think.
- I get to go places that I usually don’t get to go.
- There is a lot for me to choose from here.
- The activities really get me interested.

*Descriptive Statistics:*⁴

	Minimum possible score: 36 Maximum possible score: 54					
	Mean	Standard Deviation	75 th Percentile	25 th Percentile	% Variance btw. Sites	% Variance w/in Sites
.86	47.8	5.2	52.0	45.0	13%	87%

Scale source: Public Private Ventures/Safe Havens VYSO Youth Survey (1997), Challenge Scale

⁴ Data include elementary, middle, and high school student survey responses.