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ABSTRACT

This executive summary describes the implementation and effects of Project Transition, a program designed to help high school freshmen succeed by combining three strategies: student-teacher clusters with shared schedules, extra time for teachers to work together, and teacher coaching to support instructional change. Project Transition was implemented at two high schools: one in Kansas City, Kansas, and the other in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It examined the effectiveness of the strategies on students' attendance and performance in the freshman year. Evaluation data came from student surveys, observations, interviews, focus groups, and school records. The project was more fully implemented at one high school than the other, and the planning process was stronger with more teacher involvement at the more successful school. At both schools, it created a more supportive environment for students and teachers, though in different ways. It achieved positive effects on selected academic outcomes at the school where it was more fully implemented. Students and teachers perceived benefits to and drawbacks from shared schedules, though teachers were less likely to perceive benefits. Daily teacher team meetings functioned stably, with content focused on student problems or integrated curriculum units. The coach and learning resource partners were generally not well received by teachers. The project had positive effects on student self-perception and small effects on student achievement at the more successful school. (SM)

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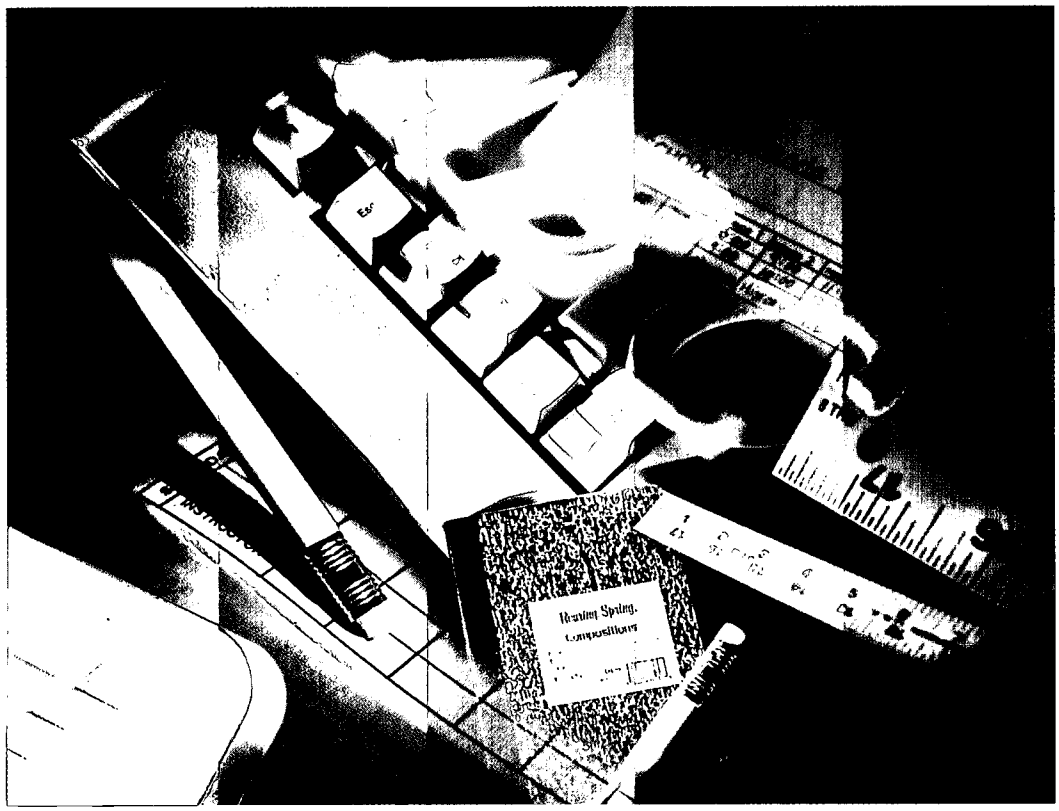
Executive Summary

PROJECT TRANSITION:

Testing an Intervention to Help High School Freshmen Succeed



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April 1999

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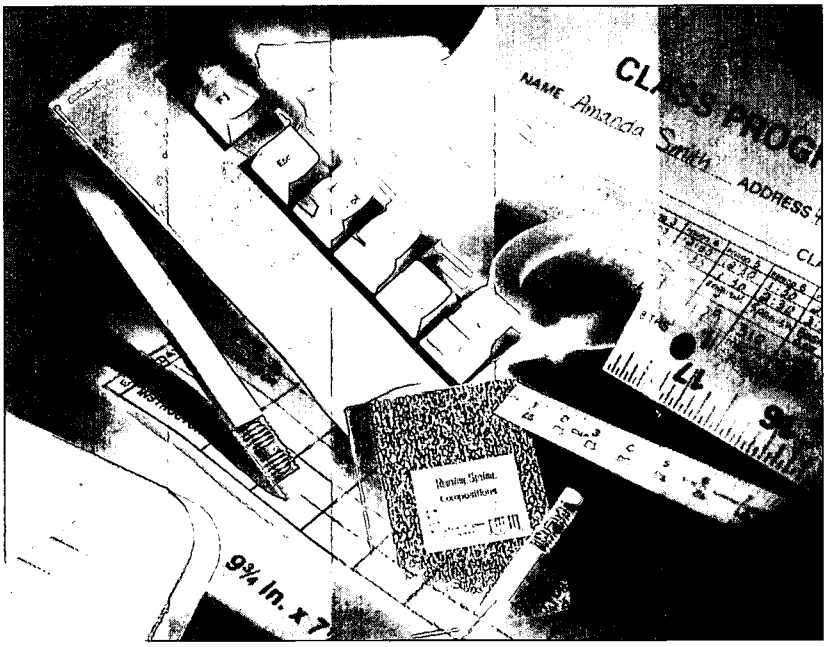

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The Project Transition demonstration was supported by five funders — the Ford Foundation, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the Helen Bader Foundation, Inc., The Joyce Foundation, and the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR), supported by the U.S. Department of Education — and the two participating school districts, the Kansas City, Kansas, Public Schools and the Milwaukee Public Schools.

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The findings and conclusions presented in this report do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of the funders.

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Preface

Much of what MDRC has learned about interventions for people who have dropped out of high school points toward the need to prevent school failure in the first place. As the nation seeks to ensure the effectiveness of its schools, we and others have argued that it is important to focus on the points of transition. How can schools improve the transition to kindergarten from Head Start, day care, or a state's pre-kindergarten program? How can the school-to-career transition be supported? And the question animating this report: How can high schools assist the transition from middle school, particularly for students at risk of school failure?

This is a report on the implementation and effects of Project Transition. Project Transition combines strategies that are becoming more common in K-12 settings across the nation: student-teacher clusters, extra time for teachers to work together, and a teacher "coach" meant to support instructional change. When implemented as a package, such an intervention tries to respond to two issues. First, can school be changed in ways that make students and teachers feel less anonymous and more engaged? Second, can this translate into improved student performance?

Because the elements of Project Transition are promising and are in the family of reforms being tried in a variety of schools, several years ago we decided to shine a hard light on what such a package might produce. To do so, we launched Project Transition's implementation in two large, urban high schools in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Kansas City, Kansas.

The report finds that Project Transition succeeded in creating a more supportive atmosphere for both students and teachers. At the school where the project was more fully implemented, it also produced positive though modest effects on students' academic outcomes. Given the strong research design underlying these results, the study provides reliable evidence on what such interventions can accomplish in a very short period of time. The report also clearly lays out the limits of such a strategy. As with all educational change, an intervention planned is not an intervention delivered. Further, this study shows that while a rather inexpensive but well-run intervention can improve important aspects of school performance, the effects are not dramatic. This underscores the need to consider well-implemented transition programs as just one element, albeit an important one, of a broader K-12 strategy.

We are grateful to the administrators, staff, and students at the sites and to the funders who supported Project Transition and this evaluation: the Ford Foundation, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Helen Bader Foundation, Joyce Foundation, and Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR, supported by the U. S. Department of Education), and the Kansas City, Kansas, Public Schools and the Milwaukee Public Schools.

Judith M. Gueron
President

Acknowledgments

Above all, the authors of this report are indebted to the teachers, administrators, and students at Pulaski and Schlagle High Schools. Their willingness to share their time, classrooms, and experiences and perceptions with the researchers was essential to our understanding of the unfolding of Project Transition at the two schools, and we appreciate their thoughtful feedback on an earlier draft of the report. While the list of school personnel at both schools is too long to acknowledge every staff member individually, we would be remiss if we did not note the special contributions made by Michael Sonnenberg, Richard Endres, and Bob Nerad at Pulaski, and also of Dee Sitzberger and Bettyann Brugger, who performed vital liaison functions when the resource support teacher left the project. At Schlagle, we are especially grateful to Mary Stewart, Emmerson Payne, Douglas Bolden, and Virginia Anderson.

The project would not have been possible without the aid and cooperation of key administrators and staff within the Milwaukee Public Schools and the Kansas City, Kansas, Public Schools, who strongly supported the research and made vital school records data available to us. In Milwaukee, we especially thank Cynthia Ellwood, Steve Baruch, and George Rennicke. In Kansas City, the efforts of Bonnie Lesley, Jim Jarrett, Larry Englebrick, Daryl Carlson, Mary Kay Graham, and Steve Rose are much appreciated.

Julie Stoffels, then of Alverno College, and Addye Hawkins of the Learning Exchange provided useful perspectives on the implementation process.

We are grateful to the project's funders. In particular, we would like to acknowledge Jeanette Mitchell of the Helen Bader Foundation and Susan Wally of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation not only for their financial support but also for facilitating MDRC's initial access and ongoing relationship with the school systems and the schools. We thank Stacey Daniels and Bob Jameson of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation for their role in coordinating the collection of additional data at Schlagle High School.

The student survey used in this study is a modified version of a survey developed by Jim Connell, who also provided useful guidance on its analysis.

A double dose of gratitude is due Edward Pauly. While at MDRC, he was instrumental in developing the demonstration design. Subsequently, as an outside reviewer, he offered trenchant and helpful comments on the report. Mary Hinton, formerly of MDRC, was crucial in guiding the implementation of Project Transition in Kansas City.

We thank also Anthony Alvarado, Thomas Bailey, Mary Jo Bane, Richard Murnane, Charles Payne, and Melissa Roderick for their careful and thoughtful critiques of an earlier draft.

Numerous MDRC staff members were important to our work on this report. Above all, thanks are due Robert Granger, Project Transition project director, who has provided wise counsel and ongoing assistance. Robert Ivry helped launch the demonstration and evaluation efforts. Daniel Friedlander and JoAnn Rock played a critical role in formulating the research design. Marilyn Price helped build good relationships with the participating sites. Anita Kraus, assisted by Galina Farberova, secured and processed the school records data. Julie O'Brien provided expert programming and analyzed the teacher survey data. Ramona M. Ortega and Anne Sweeney ably attended to the myriad details for report production. Fred Doolittle, Judith M. Gueron, James Kemple, Charles Michalopoulos, and Susan Poglinco provided useful reviews of the research design, results, and report.

Jean Akers edited the report with assistance from Robert Weber. Stephanie Cowell was responsible for word processing.

The Authors

Executive Summary

Increasingly in today's society, a high school diploma is a key to future economic prospects. In particular, it opens the door to postsecondary education. Yet many young people perform poorly in high school or drop out, with dropout rates being particularly high for students from families in poverty. To date, dropout recovery programs have had mostly discouraging results, and there is a pressing need for school reforms that *prevent* students' low achievement and failure in high school.

This report presents findings on the implementation and impacts of Project Transition, a research and demonstration program implemented at Pulaski High School in Milwaukee, during the 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years, and in Schlagle High School in Kansas City, Kansas, during the 1996-97 school year. The program was designed to test the effectiveness of a set of reforms intended to improve students' attendance and performance in the first year of high school (typically 9th grade). That is a pivotal time in which many students, particularly in urban areas, start on the path toward low achievement and dropping out.[1]

Project Transition implemented three primary strategies to change in the environment of 9th-grade students and their teachers. It established student-teacher teams of four core academic teachers (for math, English, science, and history or geography) and approximately 120 students who share many of the same core classes; introduced daily teacher team meetings for collaboration on professional development and on solutions to student problems; and created a coach position and other supports to aid teachers' professional development and efforts to improve instructional practice. Program developers expected these changes to alter students' and teachers' attitudes and behavior in ways that would help students make a successful transition from middle school to high school and ultimately improve their attendance and performance.

Project Transition was developed and evaluated by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), a private nonprofit organization that designs and studies initiatives to improve the well-being and self-sufficiency of low-income populations, including youth at risk of school failure. In developing Project Transition, MDRC held discussions with school administrators, education reform experts, key education constituency groups, policymakers, teachers, and students. MDRC introduced the reform to the two schools and provided ongoing technical assistance. In addition, MDRC designed and carried out the research agenda and provided feedback to the sites during the course of program operations. Project Transition was supported by five funders — the Ford Foundation, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Helen Bader Foundation, Joyce Foundation, and Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR), supported by the U.S. Department of Education — and the two participating school districts.

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[1]Robert Felner, Judith Primavera, and Ana Cauce, 1981, "The Impact of School Transitions: A Focus for Preventative Efforts," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 9(4): 449-459.

The remainder of this Executive Summary presents the Project Transition findings in brief, introduces a prototype of the project, and describes Project Transition's primary components and how they were intended to function. Next, it discusses the actual implementation at each of the two site and presents Project Transition's impacts on students. Finally, it discusses some implications of the findings.

I. Findings in Brief

- **Project Transition was more fully implemented at Schlagle High School than at Pulaski High School.**

All the elements of the project were fully in place for the entire demonstration at Schlagle, whereas at Pulaski, only the daily teacher team meeting component was. There were also qualitative differences in the program as implemented as each site. For example, the coach at Schlagle was more effective in engendering change in teachers.

- **Project Transition created a more supportive environment at both Pulaski and Schlagle for students and teachers alike.**

At Pulaski, students generally did not know their peers at the beginning of high school, and survey findings indicate that more Project Transition students (than their pre-Project Transition counterparts) reported knowing many of their classmates and feeling supported and respected by them. At Schlagle, where students probably knew more of their classmates at the start of school, the effects of Project Transition were reflected in students' improved relationships with teachers. For example, survey findings indicate that more Project Transition students (than their pre-Project Transition counterparts) reported that their teachers cared about them and held high expectations for them.

The field research at both sites indicated that clustering students in teacher-student teams and creating small groups of students who shared multiple classes facilitated students' adjustment to high school. The teacher-student teams enabled each teacher in a team to see the same students the other teachers on his or her team did. Daily team meetings provided teachers with time to share information about students and to collectively address students' problems. The daily team meetings — and in some cases the coach — also served to combat teacher isolation and to foster collaboration among teachers.

- **Project Transition achieved positive effects on selected student academic outcomes at Schlagle, where it was more fully implemented.**

At Schlagle, more students passed their courses — and thus increased their average number of credits earned — than did their pre-Project Transition counterparts. The increase in credits earned, though fairly small, was concentrated among students who had relatively low attendance rates in middle school. Project Transition did not have notable impacts on attendance or grade point averages (GPAs) at either school. However, students reported other positive effects at Schlagle: greater feelings of autonomy and higher levels of engagement in school (relative to their pre-Project Transition counterparts).

When interpreting the program's results, it is important to keep in mind that the study lasted two years at Pulaski and one year at Schlagle. The program might show more positive results at both sites over a longer period of time. In addition, the evaluation followed students only through 9th grade. It is possible that Project Transition, having changed the environment in 9th grade, will have effects on students that extend beyond that year.

II. The Project Transition Demonstration

A. Prototype of Project Transition

Project Transition was based on an earlier intervention that sought to counteract the negative effects of transitions to high school. The School Transitional Environment Program (STEP), designed by Robert Felner and his colleagues at Yale University as a 9th-grade program, consisted of the following reform components: creation of a stable cluster of 60 to 100 9th-grade students and four teachers of the primary academic classes; arrangement of the primary classes in close physical proximity to each other; and the use of a STEP teacher during homeroom to provide guidance and administrative counseling.

Felner and his colleagues conducted a number of studies of STEP and found both short- and long-term positive effects, including higher grades and attendance rates in the 9th grade[2] and significant positive differences in dropout rates, GPAs, and attendance rates later in high school. The findings demonstrated that creating a successful transition to high school could increase students' educational success.[3]

In part, the Project Transition demonstration was developed to replicate certain features of the STEP program on a wider scale and to subject them to further evaluation. In creating Project Transition, MDRC incorporated the cluster structure of the STEP program (which is common to many "school-within-a-school" interventions) and also sought to foster closer personal teacher-student relationships. In addition, whereas both STEP and Project Transition sought to create a more supportive environment for students, Project Transition also included the resources intended to create a more supportive environment for teachers' growth and staff development.

B. Components of Project Transition

Project Transition was designed to benefit students in large urban high schools that draw students from several feeder schools and have a history of high dropout rates and poor student performance. Within these settings, it was to be implemented for all students in their first year of high school, except those in special programs with schedules that precluded their participation. Figure 1.1 shows how the program's three reform elements — teacher-student teams with shared

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[2]Robert D. Felner, Melanie Ginter, and Judith Primavera, 1982, "Primary Prevention During School Transitions: Social Support and Environmental Structure," *America Journal of Community Psychology* 19(3):277-290.

[3]Robert D. Felner et al., 1993, "Restructuring the Ecology of the School as an Approach to Prevention During School Transitions: Longitudinal Follow-Ups and Extensions of the School Transitional Environment Project (STEP)," *Prevention in Human Services* 10(2):103-136.

schedules, daily teacher team meetings, and a coach and other supports — were intended to engender positive behavioral and attitudinal responses among teachers and students. In turn, program planners hypothesized that these responses would affect such academic outcomes as students' grades and credits earned, attendance, and disciplinary incidents.

The following sections explain how the components of Project Transition provided opportunities and resources for professional development, which came to be specifically viewed as the improvement of teacher practice. Project Transition planners did not prescribe specific instructional methods but, rather, that teachers, with the involvement of the coach, would identify and pursue methods of their own choosing.

- **Teacher-student teams with shared schedules**

Teacher-student teams were established by grouping together four teachers, each from one of the core academic subjects (math, English, science, and history or geography) and approximately 120 students (the equivalent of four classes of 30 students each). This system allowed all four teachers in a team to share the same students. Whereas students in traditional high schools often feel little support from educational staff during their first year of high school,[4] the creation of teacher-student clusters was aimed at enabling teacher teams to work together with one group of students and to come to know them well, thus increasing students' sense of support.

Within the student-teacher teams, student schedules were to be structured so that each student had a group of a dozen or so peers who shared the same schedule for the four core classes. This arrangement is referred to as shared scheduling. Research suggests that during the transition year, many students feel anonymous and isolated because they know and are known by only a small proportion of their classmates, which reduces the support they receive from peers.[5] For students, teaming combined with shared scheduling aimed to create small, stable groups of classmates who acted as support networks.

More specifically, shared schedules would ensure that the average student had a group of approximately 14 classmates with whom she or he had attended all four academic classes. A full class (approximately 30 students) comprised two groups of 15 from the same team, but the groups were paired differently for each core class. In this way, entire classrooms of students would not follow the exact same schedule for their core subjects, yet students would have a stable group of peers.

The student-teacher teams with shared schedules were to be in place only for the four academic subjects. For lunch and the other four class periods in the school day (consisting of electives, required classes such as physical education, and in some cases study hall), schedules were not prescribed, and students had the opportunity to interact with others.

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[4]E. Seidman et al., 1996, "The Impact of the Transition to High School on the Self-System and Perceived Social Context of Poor Urban Youth," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 24(4): 489-515.

[5]Felner, Primavera, and Cauce, 1981.

- **Daily teacher team meetings**

In the traditional high school structure, teachers have few opportunities to interact with their colleagues regarding classroom instruction, students, and creative problem-solving. As envisioned by Project Transition planners, the daily teacher team meetings — to last the equivalent of one class period — represented a change in this structure and sought to achieve two principal objectives. First, they would provide a forum in which teachers, who were working with the same group of students, could collaborate to identify and resolve students' problems before these became overwhelming. Second, they would create an environment in which teachers were active participants in their own professional development to improve instructional methods and to respond to the specific challenges faced in the classroom. The meetings were intended to encourage teachers to reinforce, review, and revise their efforts as part of an ongoing process.

- **Coach and other supports**

The Project Transition coach position was envisioned as a primary support role to be filled by an experienced, full-time person. The coach would be a nonsupervisory peer for the Project Transition teachers, whose main function would be to enhance their professional development.

The coach position was unusual in that it was intended to provide a source of intensive, one-on-one assistance and stimulation typically unavailable to teachers. Program planners hypothesized that the coach would facilitate teacher collaboration by modeling encouragement, feedback, and constructive criticism to the teacher teams and by helping teachers reflect on their current practice, improve their instructional methods, and identify effective strategies for engaging students in coursework and supporting students who fell behind.

Planners anticipated that the coach's specific duties would vary in response to teachers' needs but would include facilitating teacher team meetings; observing classes, including demonstration of lessons; organizing of professional development opportunities for teachers; and facilitating lesson sharing among teachers. In addition, a school's specific instructional or curricular foci, such as cooperative learning and career exploration, were considered areas for the coach's input.

Secondary supports provided in Project Transition included the learning resource partner; mandatory summer institutes, consisting of several days of professional development and planning; and supplementary funds for use by the teacher teams for professional development resources. The learning resource partner was a local institution or agency that would support the Project Transition coach and provide ongoing technical assistance and professional development for the teachers.

C. An Overview of the Demonstration Sites

Both Pulaski and Schlagle were large comprehensive high schools in urban school districts. The schools were composed of 9th through 12th grades and had high percentages of students of color and students receiving free or subsidized lunch (see Table 1). Both sites had characteristics — such as a high percentage of students with low GPAs, a high percentage of drop-

outs, and a decline in student GPAs and attendance from 8th to 9th grade — that Project Transition was intended to influence, and thus were considered viable sites for the demonstration. In addition, Pulaski had particularly high absence rates.

As a consequence of a student choice program, students came to Pulaski from many different middle schools within the district. During the demonstration period, students from approximately 20 (middle or K-8) schools attended Pulaski, and no more than 10 percent of the 9th-grade class came from the same school. Thus, Pulaski students made the transition from their middle school knowing relatively few of their classmates. In contrast, nearly 70 percent of Schlagle students came from four middle schools in the district (with about half of the students arriving from two of those schools) and were thus likely to have entered Schlagle knowing many of their classmates.

Table 1

Ninth-Grade Characteristics for Pre-PT Groups

	Pulaski	Schlagle
Race/ethnicity (%)		
Black	51.0	77.0
Hispanic	8.0	2.0
Other	41.0	21.0
Receive free or reduced price lunch (%)	62.0	50[a]
GPA	1.32	2.06
Absence rate (%)	30.9	16.6

SOURCE: Student records from Milwaukee and Kansas City Public Schools.

[a] This figure is approximate and not available from Kansas City Public Schools student records.

The schools' teaching staffs also had the potential to be affected by Project Transition. Before the demonstration, team structures did not exist at either sites, so teachers were not accustomed to teaching the same students their colleagues taught. In addition, there was little evidence of teacher collaboration at either Pulaski or Schlagle.

D. Implementation Time Frame

The demonstration began at Pulaski with a planning phase during the 1994-95 school year. Project Transition was implemented at Pulaski and studied by MDRC during 1995-96 and 1996-97. Schlagle's planning phase began in the latter part of the 1994-95 school year and continued throughout the 1995-96 school year, while Project Transition was being implemented at Pulaski. Implementation and effects of Project Transition were studied by MDRC at Schlagle for a single school year, 1996-97. The intervention was planned originally as a one-year research and demonstration project for both sites. Near the end of the first year at Pulaski, MDRC, Pulaski

staff, the Milwaukee Public Schools, and the project's funders decided to extend the demonstration for a second year to allow for more complete implementation and a more thorough test of the intervention. Thus, the second year of the demonstration at Pulaski coincided with the first year at Schlagle.

E. Costs of the Demonstration

The primary costs of Project Transition included the team meeting time and funding for the coach and other supports. The daily teacher team meetings were created by reducing the teaching load of the 12 Project Transition teachers by one class period. In order to prevent redistributing classes and thus increasing class size, the participating districts provided funding for additional personnel to cover the loss of classroom teaching time of the Project Transition teachers. The coach's salary and fringe benefits were equivalent to their salaries as classroom teachers in the district. Thus, the cost of the coach varied according to the particular district's salary guide and the teaching experience of the individual. For the demonstration, MDRC provided the funding for the coach's salary and fringe benefits for two school years in each site. MDRC also provided the funding for the activities of the learning resource partner and for teacher professional development, including the costs of the initial summer institute at each site.

F. Project Transition Evaluation: Data Sources and Research Methods

Several data sources were used to evaluate the implementation of Project Transition. The implementation experiences were assessed during the demonstration period using field research — including a mix of observations, interviews, and focus groups conducted at the two schools — as well as telephone updates by MDRC researchers. Field research at the sites began with the project's implementation. Although there were data on the planning process, the field research did not encompass the experiences of teachers' or students' pre-Project Transition counterparts.

In order to estimate Project Transition's effects on students, data were obtained from two sources. First, a survey was administered to each group of students during the spring semester of their 9th-grade year. The Student Survey contains a range of questions designed to capture students' perceptions of the quality of their relationships with peers and teachers, their ability to do well in school, and their engagement in school. Second, school records data were provided by the Milwaukee and Kansas City Public Schools systems. School records contained demographic information for each student and data on grades, credits earned, and attendance during the 9th grade.

Project Transition's effects on students were estimated using a *cohort comparison design*, in which each year's entering 9th-grade class is referred to as a *cohort*. At Schlagle, for example, data were obtained for two cohorts: the 9th-grade class in the year before Project Transition's implementation (school year 1995-96) and the 9th-grade class in the year of Project Transition's implementation (school year 1996-97), referred to as the pre-Project Transition and Project Transition groups, respectively. Data for the pre-Project Transition group provide an estimate of the typical experiences and school performance of 9th graders at Schlagle in the absence of Project Transition. The differences in student experiences and performance, or outcomes, between the pre-Project Transition and Project Transition groups represent the *impacts*, or effects, of Project Transition.

A potential limitation of the cohort comparison design is that unforeseen historical events may compromise the validity of the impact estimates. For example, if a new curriculum is introduced during the years in which Project Transition is implemented, it becomes difficult to attribute differences in student outcomes across cohorts to Project Transition, because they may rather be due to the curriculum change. Another example, especially relevant to Pulaski, is an event that changes the types of students who attend the school. Changes in district policy during the second year of Project Transition's implementation caused many students who typically would have entered 9th grade at other high schools to attend Pulaski instead. Data from the school records indicate that these students had somewhat higher grades in middle school, so it is possible they were more engaged in school than the "average" Pulaski student. This change suggests that the estimated effects of Project Transition at Pulaski may be positively biased. Although the method of estimating program impacts accounts for differences across cohorts on several measures of school performance before 9th grade, the impacts presented for Pulaski should be interpreted with caution.

III. Findings on the Implementation of Project Transition at Pulaski High School

A. Planning Process

- **The planning process at Pulaski was relatively short and lacked strong initial ownership by Pulaski teachers.**

After MDRC and the district selected Pulaski High School for implementation, MDRC staff presented the project to Pulaski staff, who voted on whether to move forward with the project. Sixty percent of the faculty voted to do so. This was lower than the 70 percent benchmark set by MDRC, the Pulaski administration, and district officials as necessary for implementation. However, the principal was eager for the project to move forward and persuaded influential faculty members to accept it. Next, district and school administrators, in conjunction with MDRC, identified personnel to participate in Project Transition. The majority of the Project Transition teachers volunteered to participate in the program (although some needed a measure of persuasion by school administrators). Once identified, Pulaski staff had about six months (excluding the summer break) to plan for the new demonstration. Teachers and administrators interviewed the two applicants for the coach position. The candidate hired as the Project Transition coach had previously been a mentor teacher within the Milwaukee Public Schools system.

Alverno College, a local undergraduate institution with a focus on teaching, was chosen as the learning resource partner, and a professor from Alverno was selected as its representative. Alverno was widely known throughout the area for its professional development programs for teachers and for its particular focus on alternative methods of student performance assessment.

B. Teacher-Student Teams with Shared Student Schedules

- **Students generally favored shared schedules, but teachers were less likely to perceive benefits.**

Three teacher-student teams consisting of approximately 120 students and their four core subject teachers existed for the duration of the demonstration period. Within each team, shared student schedules existed for only the second year of the demonstration.

Students in focus groups indicated initial positive reactions to shared schedules, reporting that it facilitated their entry into a new school; provided them with a ready set of classmates with whom to establish friendships; helped them develop feelings of security; and in some cases, made it easier to study with or request help from peers. As the school year progressed, students became more ambivalent about shared schedules. They still perceived advantages to the arrangement but expressed boredom and a desire to meet more people as well. In contrast to students' generally favorable reactions, teachers for the most part did not perceive any important benefits for students; rather, they felt shared schedules encouraged immature behavior and was socially restrictive.

C. Daily Teacher Team Meetings

- **The daily teacher team meetings functioned stably throughout the demonstration period, with content focused on student problems or integrated curriculum units.**

The teacher team meetings were well received by Project Transition teachers, who viewed their meeting time as an opportunity to escape the isolation of the classroom and to offer and receive mutual support. Topics for team meetings were determined by teachers, and the coach rarely facilitated the meetings. Although some teams were more focused than others, all teams spent much of their time discussing either "problem" students or instruction related to integrated curriculum units.

Teachers generally viewed problem behavior and poor academic performance as arising from students' home situations, or from other forces outside the classroom, and largely beyond their control. Discussion of students typically centered on students' personal problems and strategies to support the students or help solve the problems. Teachers spent relatively little team meeting time talking about educational or instructional methods that might affect students' work or behavior. When teachers did talk about setting common expectations for students, they more often spoke of behavioral than of academic expectations.

Discussion of integrated curriculum units focused on the development and execution of the units or of field trips. Teachers enjoyed collaborating on units, and two of the three teams made extensive use of them. On the whole, teachers reported that the experience of being involved in integrated projects was satisfying for students and teachers alike.

D. Coach and Other Supports

- **The coach and learning resource partner were generally not well received by teachers and were regarded as ineffective in stimulating change.**

A few teachers reported that the coach was helpful, mostly in a capacity resembling his former role as a mentor teacher — but generally he was perceived as less effective than he might have been. Midway through the second year of the demonstration, the coach departed to take an-

other position in the district, and the vacant position was not refilled. Instead, funds for the coach position were used to support paraprofessionals assigned to each team.

One difficulty facing the coach was the lack of consensus among the teachers about how he could help them. Teachers' ideas of specific tasks the coach could perform were wide-ranging in purpose and in level of required expertise. For example, some teachers expected the coach to handle such duties as the logistics for field trips. On another level, one teacher regretted that the coach did not model lessons in her subject area — in this case, an area in which he did not have substantive expertise. Some teachers also resisted the coach's attempts to observe their classrooms. Additionally, the coach himself defined his role passively as an enabler of the teachers rather than as an agent of change, and was thus perceived to be ineffective in bringing about reform in teacher practice.

Teachers reported that, overall, the learning resource partner was perceived to have a minimal impact on the project. A combination of other commitments, little support for or from the coach, and an early conflict with one team teacher may explain her minimal contribution.

E. Summary

Pulaski staff believed that Project Transition helped the school move toward a more personalized environment for both teachers and students as well as toward more hands-on learning. The team meetings increased the degree of interaction among the Project Transition teachers in a school in which isolation was the norm. This interaction manifested itself primarily in the discussion of student problems and the creation and use of integrated curriculum units by two of the three teams. Some Project Transition teachers altered and expanded their instructional practices, especially in response to the introduction of integrated units, but is appears that Project Transition was not a catalyst for instructional change to the degree some parties to the demonstration had hoped.

IV. Findings on the Implementation of Project Transition at Schlagle High School

A. Planning Process

- **Faculty and administration at Schlagle were actively involved in the planning process and helped generate support for the project.**

The Kauffman Foundation (the major local funder of Project Transition) helped to generate the district's interest and support for the project. A reform that focused on creating student "houses" or schools-within-schools, similar to Project Transition's teacher-student teams, had been implemented previously in some schools in the district. School district officials identified Schlagle, which had not been affected by that reform, as an appropriate site for the demonstration. Having learned from the Pulaski intervention, MDRC staff and Schlagle administrators constructed a process that encouraged full participation by teachers in the planning of Project Transition's implementation. Schlagle teachers were engaged early on in extensive discussions about all the elements of Project Transition, and a quarter of the school's faculty signed up to

serve on a planning committee. One of the committee's main tasks was to identify what school personnel considered the problems facing 9th graders. In identifying areas they wished to affect, Schlagle personnel came to understand how the Project Transition framework could be used as a vehicle to help solve these problems. The committee members also became responsible for advocating for the project among the entire faculty, and ultimately the faculty vote to accept Project Transition was unanimous.

Near the end of the lengthy planning process, which lasted about 14 months (three semesters), school administrators selected the teachers to participate in Project Transition from a group of volunteers. The Learning Exchange, a known and respected technical assistance provider with experience in teacher-centered professional development, was designated the learning resource partner. Input from district officials and the Kauffman Foundation, as well as the Learning Exchange's previous professional development activities at Schlagle, contributed to the selection of the Learning Exchange as the learning resource partner. A Learning Exchange employee was chosen to be their representative during the Project Transition demonstrations.

Teachers interviewed four applicants for the coach's position, and the assistant principal and the Learning Exchange's representative observed the two finalists in their classrooms. The person hired was a middle-school teacher in the district who had more than 30 years of teaching experience including experience with teacher teaming. The representative from the learning resource partner had previously worked with the person selected as coach, and they had established a good working relationship before their involvement with Project Transition.

B. Teacher-Student Teams with Shared Student Schedules

- **Over time, both students and teachers perceived benefits from as well as drawbacks to shared schedules.**

Three teacher-student teams whose students shared schedules were created at the start of the demonstration and existed throughout the year. According to focus groups, student reactions to shared schedules were positive at the very beginning of the school year, because this scheduling helped students adjust to their new surroundings. However, within a few months, students reported that they were tired of seeing the same people so much and desired more opportunities to meet other students. They also reported discomfort with the ease with which gossip and rumors circulated within their peer networks. As students became further accustomed to the team arrangement, their complaints lessened. At the start of the year, teachers perceived benefits to teacher-student teams and shared schedules. They believed that students could get to know each other better, and they also a perceived a decrease in misconduct in the hallways and in tardy arrival at subsequent classes. Later in the school year, however, teachers reported that they were sensitive to both student boredom with the same peer group and their reduced contact with students outside their team.

C. Daily Teacher Team Meetings

- **The daily teacher team meetings evolved over the course of the project to expand from a focus on student behavior to a wider variety of topics, including student academic achievement.**

During team meetings, teachers engaged in discussions about a variety of issues, such as the formulation of team goals; their expectations about student behavior and academic performance; coordination of new policies and activities; assessment of professional development needs; and evaluations of classroom proceedings, including student progress and behavior.

Although teachers initially viewed teaming primarily as a way to manage student behavior, they gradually began to focus on student academic achievement. An increased focus on academics was encouraged by the coach, the assistant principal, and the learning resource partner's representative (also referred to as the Project Transition leadership), and combined with practical professional development to address ways to strengthen classroom practice.

D. Coach and Other Supports

- **The coach and learning resource partner were instrumental in engaging teachers in the process of examining and, in some cases, altering instructional practice.**

The coach's major activities were to facilitate teacher team meetings, to visit classrooms, and to plan professional development activities. The coach's role was accepted by teachers, who were receptive to her ideas and input, which also included constructive criticism. Virtually all teachers reported that the coach fulfilled a useful purpose in Project Transition, served as a source of support, and helped them to develop as teachers.

The coach was heavily supported by Schlagle's assistant principal, who often cofacilitated team meetings, collaborated with the coach in discussions of individual teachers' progress and in planning professional development activities, and handled operational details of the project.

The chief role of the learning resource partner's representative was to assist Schlagle staff in professional development activities. She focused on encouraging teachers to use innovative classroom practices, particularly cooperative learning techniques. The learning resource partner's representative shared written materials with teachers and modeled instructional and management techniques for them. These activities occurred primarily while she cofacilitated (with the coach and assistant principal) the full-group team meetings (consisting of all 12 Project Transition teachers), which were generally held twice a month after school, or when she participated in the quarterly Project Transition staff retreats.

Teachers received feedback about their classroom performance and acted on suggestions they received to improve their classroom practice. Specifically, the Project Transition leadership encouraged teachers to use cooperative learning and interdisciplinary units as new teaching techniques. The Project Transition leadership provided support and instruction (often in the form of one-on-one interaction with the coach or learning resource partner's representative) on how to use cooperative learning in classrooms, which each teacher had tried by the end of the school year. All teams developed interdisciplinary units during their team meetings, and one team developed collaborative lesson plans.

E. Summary

All the Project Transition components were in place from the outset at Schlagle, but the roles, activities, and priorities of the students and teachers, the learning resource partner, and the assistant principal evolved throughout the demonstration period. Although teachers ultimately felt supported by their fellow team members, and reported that their sense of teacher isolation was replaced with a stronger sense of community, the examination of teacher practice was a challenging process. Some teachers strove to increase their sense of efficacy, but others cited students' lack of motivation as a reason for low achievement. Teachers sometimes expressed frustration when they raised their expectations of students and students did not respond as expected. Differing perspectives and experiences during the intervention caused teachers to challenge each other, and team meetings sometimes became confrontational. Over the course of the year, some teachers made strong progress in classroom management and in instructional techniques. Others began to actively evaluate status quo practices within schools and within the teaching profession as well as their own connection to these practices.

V. MDRC's Approach to Implementation

Because activities at Schlagle began nearly a year later than at Pulaski, MDRC staff benefited from their experience at Pulaski, which helped guide the introduction of Project Transition to Schlagle staff as well as the subsequent implementation experience. MDRC's approach to implementation at Schlagle differed from that at Pulaski in two important ways. First, because of time constraints, the planning process at Pulaski was relatively short, whereas Schlagle had the advantage of a considerably longer planning period. In addition, MDRC engaged Schlagle staff in a thorough participatory planning process, but planning at Pulaski paid less attention to building substantial support for the project. Second, MDRC's primary goal for Project Transition evolved over time toward a focus on improving teacher instructional practice. MDRC also came to emphasize the coach's role as instrumental in encouraging teacher improvement. The goal of improving instructional practice was not explicitly addressed at Pulaski at the outset of the project; in MDRC's presentation of the project to Schlagle, it took on greater importance. The different approaches to the planning process at each school and the varying degrees of explicitness about instructional improvement as a goal may have contributed to the extent to which the project was implemented in each site.

VI. Findings on Project Transition's Impacts on Students

Project Transition's impacts on students were calculated from data gathered from both surveys and school records. As mentioned earlier, the program's impacts are calculated as differences in student outcomes for the pre-Project Transition and Project Transition groups. The impacts at Pulaski, which had two Project Transition groups, are presented for the second year of implementation, that is, for 9th graders in the 1996-97 school year. For ease of presentation, impacts are shown for a subset of the full range of outcomes analyzed. The impacts reported here, however, are representative of the program's overall effects.

When interpreting Project Transition effects, it is important to remember that the extent of implementation varied across the two schools, so that "Project Transition at Pulaski," for example, should be taken to mean Project Transition as it was implemented there. Also, as noted earlier, the impacts presented for Pulaski should be interpreted with caution, since a group of students who may have been atypical were enrolled in the school during the evaluation. Finally, only differences in student outcomes that are statistically significant at the 10 percent level are interpreted as program impacts. An impact that is statistically significant is considered to represent a true difference between the groups rather than a difference arising by chance. Significance at the 10 percent level implies that there is only a 10 percent likelihood that the difference is due to chance.

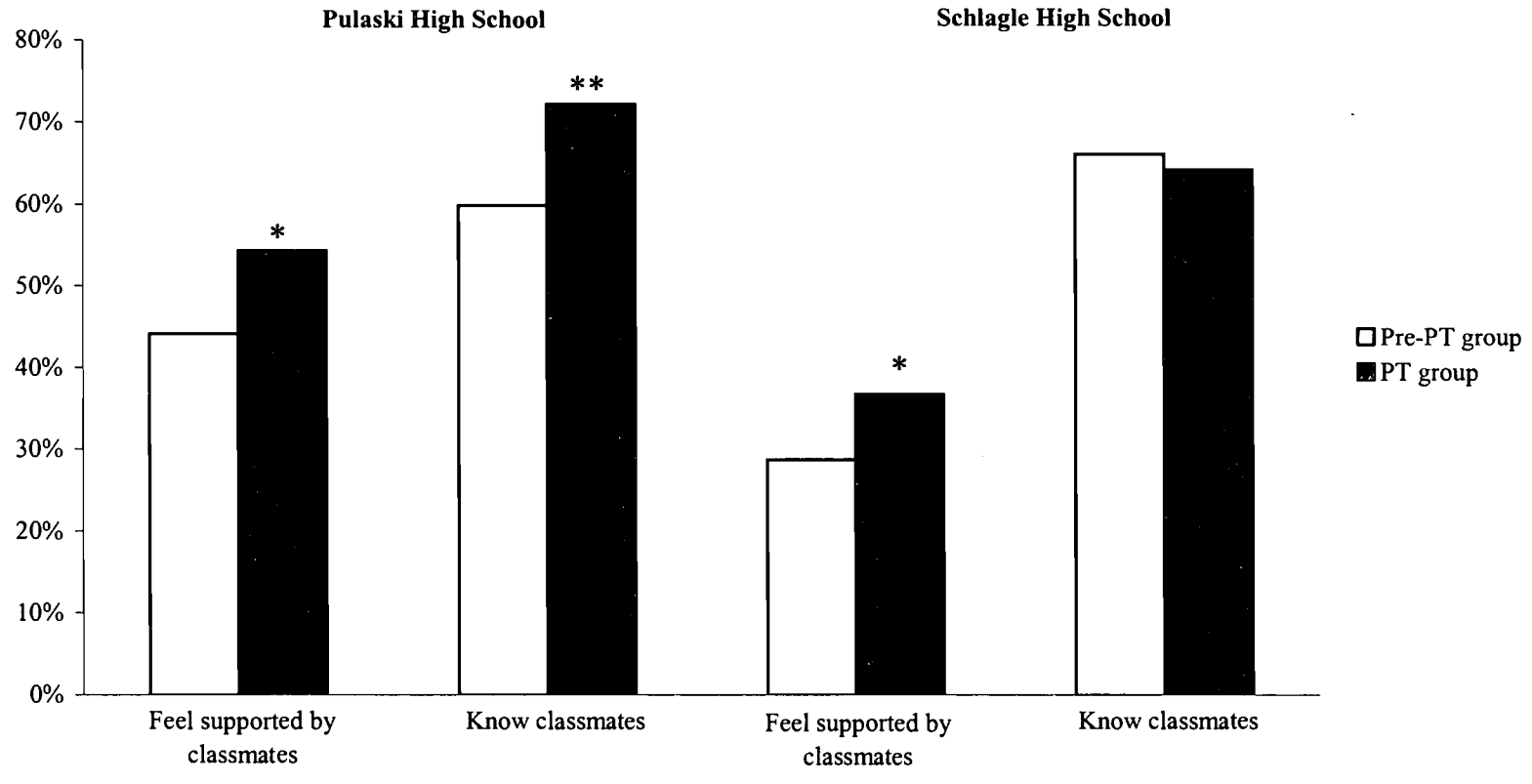
- **Project Transition created a more supportive school environment for students at both schools, in different ways. At Pulaski, it improved students' relationships with classmates, and at Schlagle, it improved students' relationships with teachers.**

The Student Survey contains several questions designed to measure the quality of students' relationships with classmates and teachers. For the analysis, student responses to each group of related questions were averaged to form a summary outcome measure. A high rating was defined as an average value above a certain threshold (the average value among students with low to moderate attendance rates). At Pulaski, Project Transition students reported higher ratings than did their pre-Project Transition counterparts on five of the six outcomes measuring relationships with classmates. Figure 1 reflects this pattern of impacts at Pulaski, showing the percentage of students providing high ratings on two of the six outcomes — the extent to which students feel supported by their classmates and the extent to which they know their classmates. (The remaining four outcomes measure the extent to which students feel that their classmates are not biased against them, they enjoy being with their classmates, their peer culture values proacademic behavior, and their peer culture values working hard in school.) The figure shows that 54 percent of students in the Project Transition group gave a high rating on the extent to which they feel supported by their classmates compared with 44 percent of students in the pre-Project Transition group, a difference that is statistically significant.

At Schlagle, in contrast, Project Transition produced inconsistent effects on students' relationships with peers. Students in the Project Transition group provided higher ratings than pre-Project Transition students on two of the six outcomes and lower ratings on one outcome; differences for the remaining three were not statistically significant. For example, Project Transition students at Schlagle reported higher levels of classmate support than did pre-Project Transition students, but they did not provide higher ratings on the extent to which they knew other students (see Figure 1). The difference in impacts across the two schools is probably due to the fact that student familiarity at Schlagle was already fairly high before the implementation of Project Transition, leaving less room for improvement. The majority of students who attended Schlagle came from four middle schools, whereas Pulaski students came from over 20 (middle or K-8) schools.

At Schlagle, Project Transition increased student ratings on four of the five outcomes measuring their relationships with teachers, but it had no significant effects on these outcomes at Pulaski. The results shown in Figure 2 are representative of this overall pattern. The figure shows

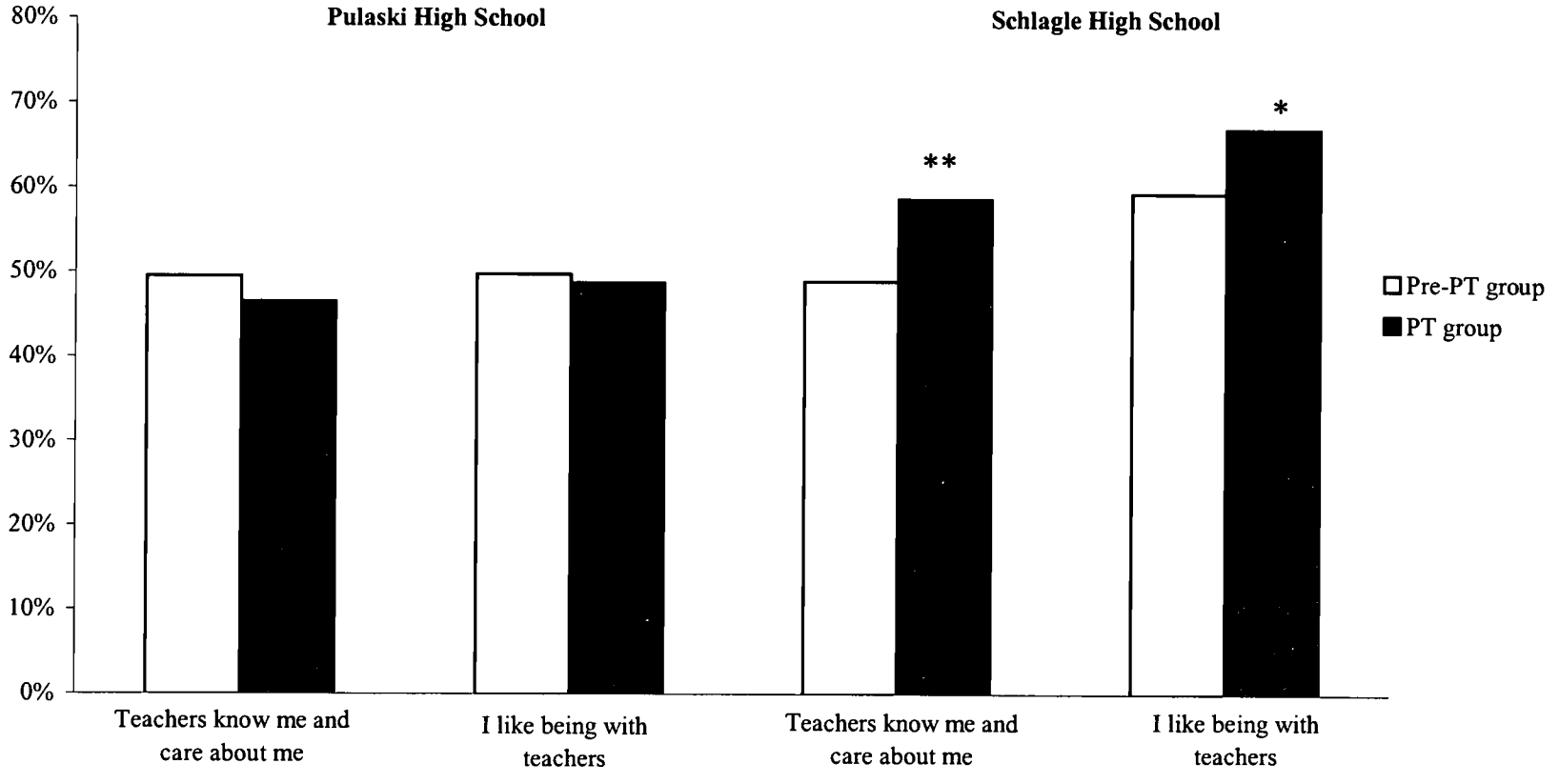
Figure 1
Impacts of Project Transition on Students' High Ratings of the Quality of Their Relationships with Classmates



SOURCE: Project Transition Student Survey.

NOTE: Asterisks indicate that the difference between the pre-PT and PT groups (the impact) is statistically significant (significance levels are the following: * indicates significance at 10 percent, ** at 5 percent, and *** at 1 percent).

Figure 2
Impacts of Project Transition on Students' High Ratings of the Quality of Their Relationships with Teachers



SOURCE: Project Transition Student Survey.

NOTE: Asterisks indicate that the difference between the pre-PT and PT groups (the impact) is statistically significant (significance levels are the following: * indicates significance at 10 percent, ** at 5 percent, and *** at 1 percent).

the percentage of students providing high ratings on two of the five outcomes — the extent to which students feel that their teachers care about them and the extent to which they like being with their teachers. (The remaining three outcomes measure the extent to which students feel that their teachers treat them fairly, their teachers have high academic expectations for them, and what they are learning in school is important for their future.) Project Transition at Schlagle increased ratings on both of these outcomes, whereas Project Transition at Pulaski had no statistically significant effect on either measure. For example, 67 percent of Project Transition students at Schlagle provided a high rating on the extent to which they liked being with teachers, compared with 59 percent of pre-Project Transition students.

- **Project Transition had positive effects on students' self-perceptions at Schlagle, but no measurable effect at Pulaski.**

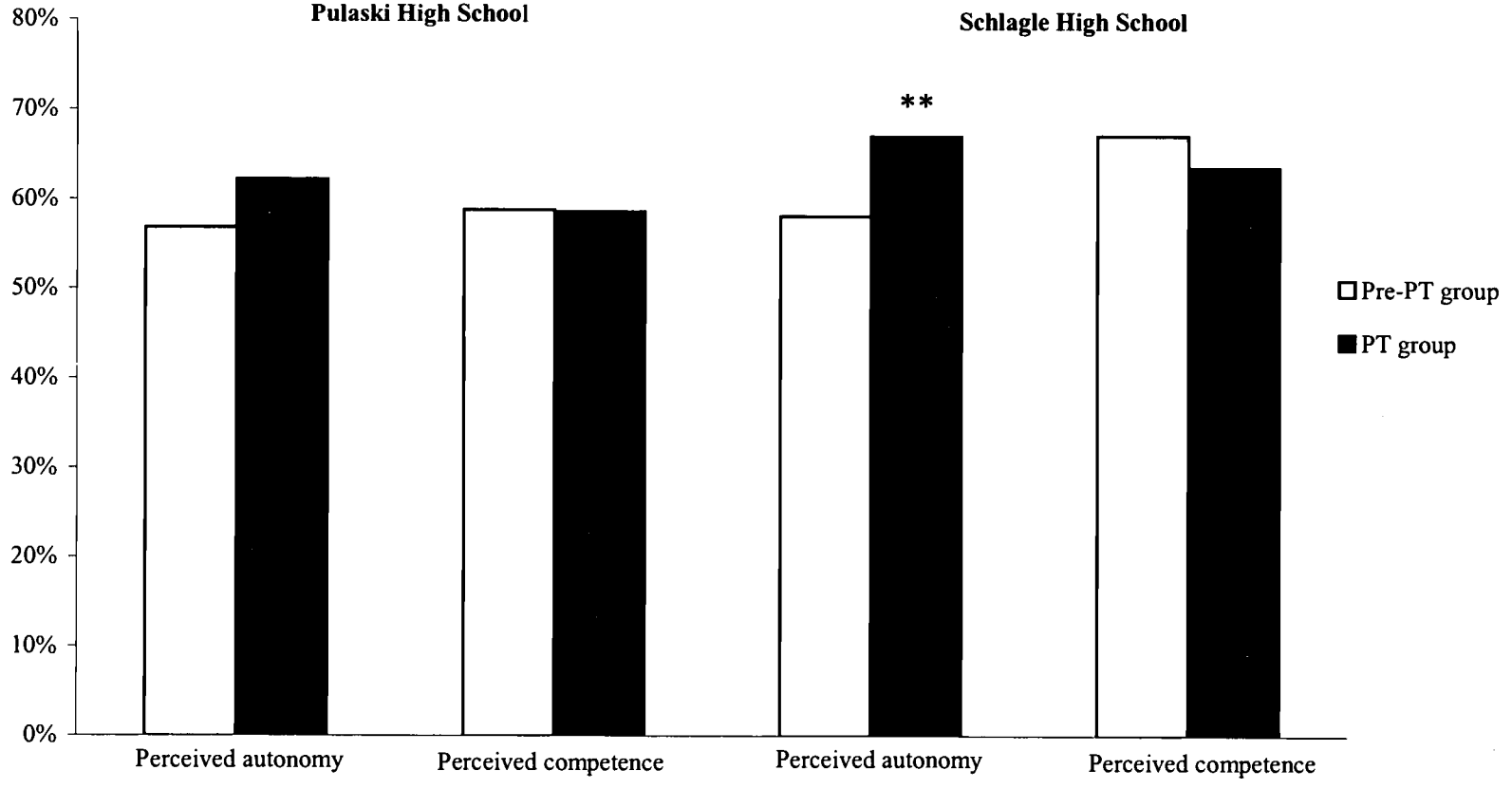
The Student Survey measured self-perceptions of students' academic ability and engagement in school, which were anticipated to improve in a more supportive environment. Figure 3 presents impacts on two of the four outcomes measured — the extent to which students do class work because they feel it is important (autonomy) and the extent to which they feel they have the ability to do well in school (competence). (The remaining two outcomes measure the extent to which students have constructive responses to problems they might have in school: the extent to which they do not assign blame to external factors, primarily teachers, and the extent to which they turn inward and attempt to solve the problem.)

Project Transition at Pulaski had no effects on any of the outcomes measuring students' self-perceptions (see Figure 3). Neither of the differences in ratings for perceived autonomy or perceived competence is statistically significant. Project Transition had modest effects at Schlagle, producing positive and significant impacts on two of the four outcomes. As shown in Figure 3, for example, 67 percent of Project Transition students provided high ratings for autonomy compared with 58 percent of pre-Project Transition students, and this difference is statistically significant. The difference for perceived competence, although negative, is not statistically significant.

Figure 4 presents impacts for the two outcomes measuring engagement in school — affective engagement (the extent to which students report that they like school) and behavioral engagement (the extent to which they report working hard in school). Project Transition at Pulaski did not have significant effects on student engagement, as measured by either outcome. At Schlagle, Project Transition had no measurable effect on affective engagement but produced a small increase in the percentage of students providing high ratings for behavioral engagement; 67 percent of Project Transition students provided high ratings for this outcome compared with 60 percent of pre-Project Transition students, a difference that is statistically significant at the 11 percent level.

- **Project Transition produced small effects on student achievement at Schlagle, primarily for those with relatively low attendance rates in middle school. Project Transition produced no measurable effects on student achievement at Pulaski.**

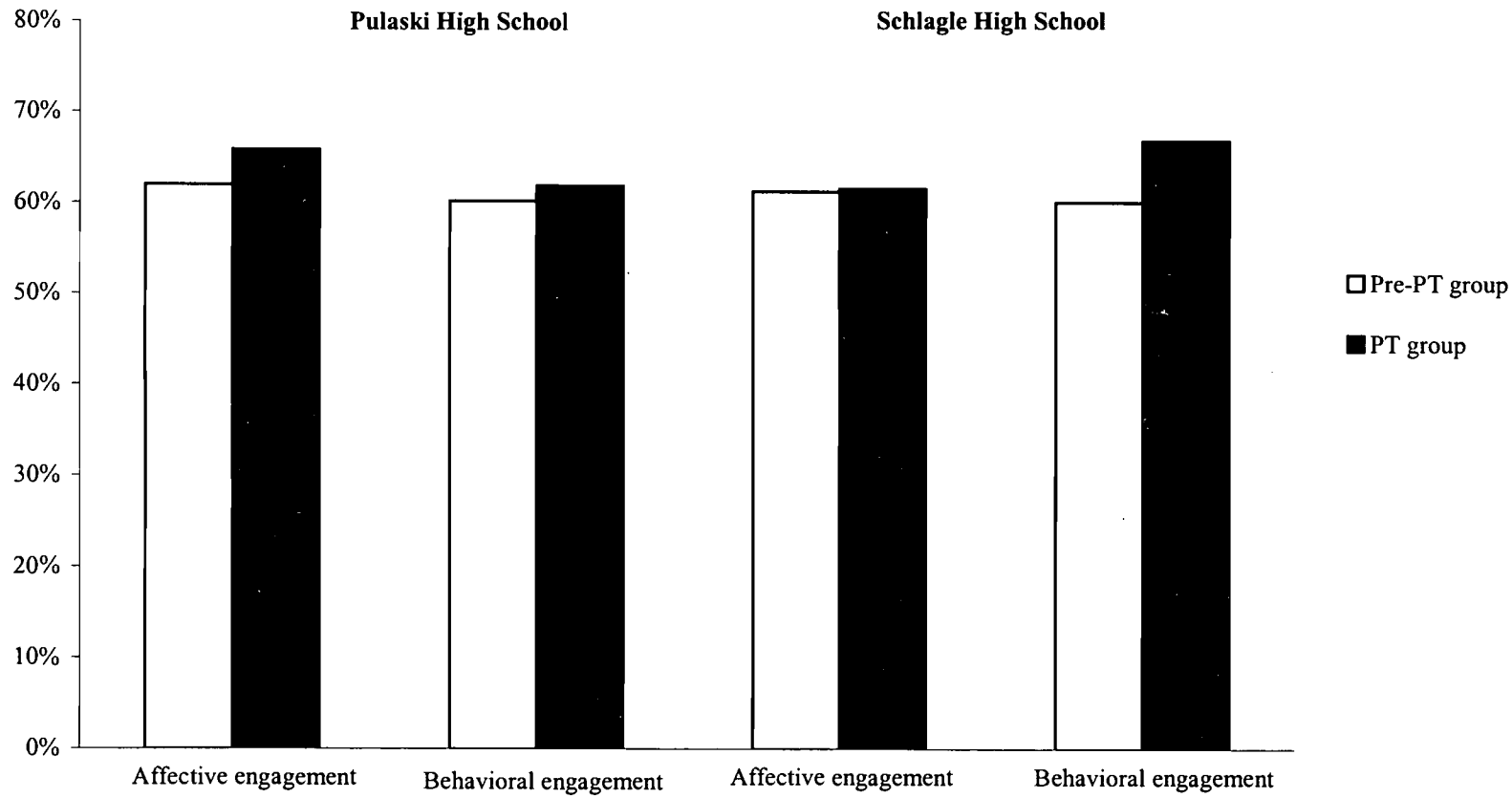
Figure 3
Impacts of Project Transition on Students' High Ratings on Self-Perceptions of Autonomy and Competence



SOURCE: Project Transition Student Survey.

NOTE: Asterisks indicate that the difference between the pre-PT and PT groups (the impact) is statistically significant (significance levels are the following: * indicates significance at 10 percent, ** at 5 percent, and *** at 1 percent).

Figure 4
Impacts of Project Transition on Students' High Ratings of Their Affective and Behavioral Engagement in School



SOURCE: Project Transition Student Survey.

NOTE: None of the differences shown in this figure are statistically significant.

Several measures of achievement in 9th grade are available from school records data. Tables 2 and 3 present outcomes and impacts for grades, credits earned, and attendance. (Other outcomes analyzed in the evaluation were dropout rates during 9th grade and the number of suspension referrals and suspensions. These data are available only for Schlagle.) At Pulaski, Project Transition produced no significant changes in grades or in the percentage of courses passed and did not reduce absence rates (see Table 2). For example, students in the pre-Project Transition group were absent on average 30.9 percent of the time, compared with 29.7 percent for Project Transition students. The difference, 1.3 percentage points, is not statistically significant. Impacts estimated for the subset of students thought to be at relatively greater risk for school failure — those with low attendance rates in 8th grade — were no different from those reported in Table 2.

The top panel of Table 3 presents impacts for all students at Schlagle, and the bottom panel for those with low 8th-grade attendance rates, considered to be at risk for school failure. Among all students, Project Transition had no effect on average GPA but did increase the percentage of students with higher than a D average; 80.7 percent of Project Transition students had a GPA higher than 1.0, compared with 74.5 percent of pre-Project Transition students, for a statistically significant difference of 6.2 percentage points. Consistent with this impact, Project Transition students passed their courses at a higher rate than did their pre-Project Transition counterparts.

The bottom panel shows that these impacts are more pronounced for students with low attendance rates before 9th grade. For example, Project Transition increased the rate at which they passed their courses by a statistically significant 9.6 percentage points. In fact, the impacts presented for the full sample of students are driven entirely by the impacts for this subset of students; there were no significant impacts on these outcomes for the group of students with high attendance before 9th grade or for those considered at lower risk for later school failure.

VII. Implications

- **Project Transition by itself had only modest effects on student outcomes, but it may serve as a foundation for other interventions.**

At a time when many large urban high schools are impersonal environments that foster a sense of isolation among both students and teachers, it is notable that Project Transition reduced the extent to which this was true at both Pulaski and Schlagle. By creating an amount of support that typically does not exist at public schools, Project Transition improved students' relationships with others in the school and reduced the sense of professional isolation that so many teachers experience. The elements of Project Transition may serve as important complements to other interventions. For example, a reform designed to introduce a new curriculum or teaching method might be more easily implemented and more successful if there were teacher teams and a coach to facilitate collaboration among teachers.

- **Educational reforms are, at best, difficult to implement, but several factors can positively affect change.**

Table 2
Impacts on Selected Measures of 9th-Grade Achievement for Project Transition Students at Pulaski High School

Measure	Pre-PT Group	PT Group[a]	Difference
Average GPA	1.32	1.38	0.06
Percentage with GPA higher than D average	58.3	57.1	-1.2
Percentage of courses passed[b]	60.1	63.0	2.9
Absence rate[c]	30.9	29.7	-1.3
Sample size	359	404	

SOURCE: Student records from the Milwaukee Public Schools.

NOTES: All impacts for each school are regression-adjusted using the baseline characteristics listed in Tables 5.3 and 5.4.

Statistical significance levels for impacts are the following: * indicates significance at 10 percent, ** at 5 percent, and *** at 1 percent.

[a]The PT group here is defined as Project Transition 9th graders in the second year of implementation.

[b]Percentage of courses passed is equal to credits earned divided by credits attempted.

[c]The absence rate is defined as days absent divided by days enrolled. The sample size for these measures is 391 for both pre-PT and PT groups.

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Table 3
Impacts on Selected Measures of 9th-Grade Achievement for Project Transition Students at Schlagle High School

Measure	Pre-PT Group	PT Group[a]	Difference
All students			
Average GPA	1.92	1.95	0.04
Percentage with GPA higher than D average	74.5	80.7	6.2 **
Percentage of courses passed[b]	77.1	81.4	4.3 **
Sample size	368	395	
Absence rate[c]	16.6	15.3	-1.3
Sample size	398	437	
Students with low 8th-grade attendance			
Average GPA	1.27	1.37	0.10
Percentage with GPA higher than D average	54.1	64.2	10.1 *
Percentage of courses passed[b]	60.6	70.2	9.6 **
Sample size	118	128	
Absence rate[c]	28.1	25.6	-2.5
Sample size	132	143	

SOURCE: Student records from the Kansas City Public Schools.

NOTES: All impacts for each school are regression-adjusted using the baseline characteristics listed in Tables 5.3 and 5.4.

Statistical significance levels for impacts are the following: * indicates significance at 10 percent, ** at 5 percent, and *** at 1 percent.

[a]The PT group here is defined as Project Transition 9th graders in the second year of implementation.

[b]Percentage of courses passed is equal to credits earned divided by credits attempted.

[c]The absence rate is defined as days absent divided by days enrolled.

Project Transition combined structural changes and other resources envisioned to decrease student anonymity and support instructional change. Although Project Transition's implementation was less complete at Pulaski, the school's experience was by no means atypical of schools attempting to affect important changes. Indeed, the more successful implementation at Schlagle may be a less typical outcome of a school intervention experience. Nonetheless, the contrasting experiences suggest that several elements must exist if a reform is to be fully implemented.

First, teachers and administrators must have both the *incentive* and the *capacity* to change. This point is illustrated in several ways by the experience at Schlagle. The assistant principal's involvement in the project may have increased teachers' sense of accountability for the success of the project. In addition to guiding the planning effort, she frequently attended teacher team meetings and joined the coach in observing teachers in their classrooms. The assistant principal's strong support probably also increased the coach's ability to implement changes and the teachers' willingness to work with and take suggestions from her.

Additionally, two factors outside the school may have increased Schlagle's incentive to implement Project Transition. First, a similar type of reform, centered on student clustering, had been implemented in other schools in the district, with positive results. Thus, teachers at Schlagle, compared with their counterparts at Pulaski, may have viewed student clustering more favorably and been more willing to try it. Second, the local foundation that served as one of the funders of the demonstration had worked with the district on past reforms. The foundation was instrumental in generating interest in and support for the project by school district officials.

Schlagle also benefited from the skills brought to the demonstration by several of the major actors in the project, contributing to the Project Transition team's capacity to change. The assistant principal, coach, and staff member who represented the learning resource partner were knowledgeable about the reform process, had considerable experience and expertise in instructional and classroom management techniques, and were respected by the Project Transition teachers. For example, the coach at Schlagle was valued by teachers for her skills as a mentor and facilitator as well as for her strong familiarity with techniques such as cooperative learning. Her counterpart at Pulaski, in contrast, came to the job with less directly applicable experience. Providing training for this role may be a necessary prerequisite to the intervention.

Another element in place at Schlagle was a consensus that a problem existed and that the intervention might solve it. Partly as a result of the longer planning period, Schlagle staff were engaged in extensive discussions about the project and came to believe that Project Transition was a vehicle to help solve the problems facing 9th graders. Thus, although the teachers' definition of the underlying problem was somewhat different from the assistant principal's (the teachers focused more on student behavioral problems than academic issues), both parties saw a reason to implement Project Transition.

- **The most difficult element of educational reform may be changes in teaching methods.**

The teacher teams and the coach position were designed to bring about increased professional development and to improve teaching methods. In fact, recent research in education suggests that changing what happens in the classroom may be the most important element of reform.

However, at least initially, at neither school did teachers use the daily team meetings to focus on teaching methods. At Pulaski, where change in teaching practices was not emphasized as a key element of Project Transition, it was not a natural outgrowth of Project Transition's implementation. Moreover, many teachers at Pulaski were resistant to activities designed to change teacher practice, such as classroom observation and feedback by the coach.

The experience at Schlagle illustrates that changing teaching methods is difficult even when it is emphasized as a key goal of the intervention. Teachers began to focus on this aspect of change only after prodding from the coach and assistant principal. The findings from both schools suggest that learning to teach in new ways is difficult. School reforms designed to alter teaching practice must be thoughtfully designed to provide teachers with the encouragement and support to do so.

Selected Publications on MDRC Projects

Education Reform

The Career Academies Evaluation

A 10-site study of a promising approach to high school restructuring and the school-to-work transition.

Career Academies: Early Implementation Lessons from a 10-Site Evaluation. 1996. James Kemple, JoAnn Leah Rock.

Career Academies: Communities of Support for Students and Teachers—Emerging Findings from a 10-Site Evaluation. 1997. James Kemple.

The School-to-Work Project

A study of innovative programs that help students make the transition from school to work or college.

The School-to-Work Transition and Youth Apprenticeship: Lessons from the U.S. Experience. 1993. Thomas Bailey, Donna Merritt.

Home-Grown Lessons: Innovative Programs Linking School and Work (Jossey-Bass Publishers). Book. 1995. Edward Pauly, Hilary Kopp, Joshua Haimson. Revised version of a 1994 MDRC report.

Learning Through Work: Designing and Implementing Quality Worksite Learning for High School Students. 1994. Susan Goldberger, Richard Kazis, Mary Kathleen O'Flanagan (all of Jobs for the Future).

Home-Grown Progress: The Evolution of Innovative School-to-Work Programs. 1997. Rachel Pedraza, Edward Pauly, Hilary Kopp.

Other Programs for Youth

The JOBSTART Demonstration

A test of a program combining education, training, support services, and job placement for very disadvantaged young high school dropouts.

JOBSTART: Final Report on a Program for School Dropouts. 1993. George Cave, Hans Bos, Fred Doolittle, Cyril Toussaint.

The Career Beginnings Evaluation

An evaluation of a program that seeks to increase college attendance and improve job quality among disadvantaged high school students.

Career Beginnings Impact Evaluation: Findings from a Program for Disadvantaged High School Students. 1990. George Cave, Janet Quint.

The Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects (YIEPP) Demonstration

A test of a school-conditioned job guarantee for low-income youth.

Lessons from a Job Guarantee: The Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects. Monograph. 1984. Judith Gueron.

Note: For works not published by MDRC, the publisher's name is shown in parentheses.

Programs for Teenage Parents on Welfare

The LEAP Evaluation

An evaluation of Ohio's Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP) Program, which uses financial incentives to encourage teenage parents on welfare to stay in or return to school.

LEAP: Final Report on Ohio's Welfare Initiative to Improve School Attendance Among Teenage Parents. 1997. Johannes Bos,Veronica Fellerath.

The New Chance Demonstration

A test of a comprehensive program of services that seeks to improve the economic status and general well-being of a group of highly disadvantaged young women and their children.

Lives of Promise, Lives of Pain: Young Mothers After New Chance. Monograph. 1994. Janet Quint, Judith Musick, with Joyce Ladner.

New Chance: Final Report on a Comprehensive Program for Young Mothers in Poverty and Their Children. 1997. Janet Quint, Johannes Bos, Denise Polit.

Parenting Behavior in a Sample of Young Single Mothers in Poverty: Results of the New Chance Observational Study. 1997. Martha Zaslow, Carolyn Eldred, editors.

Project Redirection

A test of a comprehensive program of services for pregnant and parenting teenagers.

The Challenge of Serving Teenage Mothers: Lessons from Project Redirection. Monograph. 1988. Denise Polit, Janet Quint, James Riccio.

The Community Service Projects

A test of a New York State teenage pregnancy prevention and services initiative.

The Community Service Projects: Final Report on a New York State Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and Services Program. 1988. Cynthia Guy, Lawrence Bailis, David Palasits, Kay Sherwood.

About MDRC

The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) is a nonprofit social policy research organization founded in 1974 and located in New York City and San Francisco. Its mission is to design and rigorously field-test promising education and employment-related programs aimed at improving the well-being of disadvantaged adults and youth, and to provide policymakers and practitioners with reliable evidence on the effectiveness of social programs. Through this work, and its technical assistance to program administrators, MDRC seeks to enhance the quality of public policies and programs. MDRC actively disseminates the results of its research through its publications and through interchanges with a broad audience of policymakers and practitioners; state, local, and federal officials; program planners and operators; the funding community; educators; scholars; community and national organizations; the media; and the general public.

Over the past two decades — working in partnership with more than forty states, the federal government, scores of communities, and numerous private philanthropies — MDRC has developed and studied more than three dozen promising social policy initiatives.

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