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ABSTRACT

A study examined whether career academy programs, with their tailored curricula, dilute content of required curricula, and whether academy students who follow this alternative course of study are less prepared to score well on standardized tests. Data were gathered through site visits to seven schools, review of reports and documents, and interviews with principals, counselors, academy coordinators, teachers, and students. Three key characteristics defined the academy model: small learning community; college preparatory curriculum with a distinct career theme; and partnerships with employers, communities, and higher education. Findings indicated academy curricula did not hinder students from completing courses required for graduation; any effects of test taking on academy programs (or vice versa) were overshadowed by the generally negative opinion and by the disruptions to school operations those testing requirements produced; and teachers and students found these tests burdensome, students sometimes resisted taking them, and skepticism about their value and their validity was broadly expressed. Steps suggested for academy programs were to give increased attention to building and maintaining a coherent and stable educational experience for students in each academy; to explore more ways to demonstrate their students' unique attainments; and to find ways to ensure their students succeed in the standardized testing environment. (YLB)

Course Taking, Test Preparation, and Career Academy Programs

Findings from a Field Study

Thomas J. Smith

MDRC

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The Author

I. Introduction

Over the past two decades, the Career Academy model has spread widely across the landscape of secondary education in the United States. Launched initially as a modest program variation within high schools in Philadelphia, there were an estimated 3,000 Academies established in districts throughout the country by 2000.

Support networks have grown up around this expanding population of programs. The Career Academies Support Network, at the University of California, Berkeley, and the National Academies Foundation in New York City work on a national level. Local organizations, such as the Philadelphia Academies, Inc., assist programs in individual communities. A national evaluation project, sponsored by the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor, and a group of foundations, is underway to provide long-term evidence of the effectiveness of nine Career Academies.

The popularity of Career Academies reflects several trends. The most important, perhaps, is the widespread interest in raising the quality and achievement of public education, which arose in the early 1980s with publication of *A Nation at Risk*. The quality of public education has been a prominent national topic, and strategies that show potential for its improvement — especially in the context of urban education — have drawn attention.

Career Academies appeared to show promise, and they possessed other intriguing qualities as well. The best of them featured active partnerships with the private sector, and thus resonated with the burgeoning policy interest in school-to-career strategies. Though they did not embrace traditional vocational learning strategies, they nevertheless emphasized the real connection between learning and earning. Academies also appealed to a range of student ability levels, and stressed not immediate employment but academic achievement and post-secondary education. In addition, Academies — which, by design, are small in scale — fit naturally with the movement of the past two decades to "deconstruct" large and impersonal high school settings. The creation of individual "houses" and small learning communities to personalize the school experience dovetailed well with the Academy approach.

Academy programs, therefore, had appeal both on their own merits, and also in the larger context of school reform. School districts or individual principals interested in adding an innovative program within a stable, established setting could do so. Likewise, those seeking broader strategic reform could use the Academy model as a tool for bringing about change within the individual school or, over time, within the larger school district.

The widespread adoption of Academy programs has naturally generated attention and concerns among educators and policymakers. With the current stress in U.S. education on curricular rigor and accountability, Career Academies have raised a new set of questions in the minds of educators and policymakers. Two in particular are the subject of this paper:

1. Do Academy programs help or hinder students to complete courses that are required for graduation from high school or entry into college?

2. Do Academies enhance student readiness, preparation, or performance on the high-stakes tests they increasingly are required to take?

These questions emerge in current discussions of public education for several reasons, among which the theme of accountability is paramount. Current debate about education is frequently couched in terms of performance measurement, and the resulting calls for national standards and testing have found receptive audiences in states and local communities. States have been particularly energetic in implementing new achievement testing programs and putting greater emphasis on programs already in place.

Added to this is the growing importance of post-secondary education of all kinds. While the traditional emphasis on four-year college attendance remains strong, there is a heightened interest in seeing more (if not all) youngsters continue schooling for career-related reasons. An ever-increasing demand for a skilled and educated workforce has reinforced the message students are receiving that a high-school diploma no longer guarantees long-term success in the labor market. Participation in community college, professional institutes, and other educational tracks are viewed as all-but-essential complements to work after high school.

The focus on standards in combination with the need to encourage higher levels of student educational attainment has brought renewed attention to the high school curriculum. Many argue that it is no longer sufficient that schools focus solely on core skills, but instead should help students build a foundation for their education after graduation. This new emphasis manifests itself, for example, in the incorporation of prerequisite courses for admission to state universities into secondary curricula and a mounting pressure for students to complete an even fuller roster of required courses.

At the same time, schools are called upon to demonstrate that what they teach actually "works" as measured increasingly by student performance in standardized tests. Whether test scores are ultimately found to be an adequate — or accurate — gauge of school performance, there can be no question that, in today's environment, they are taken seriously and that they command a substantial commitment of resources.

How these broader education issues play out in the context of Academy programs has emerged as an important concern, and one that this paper addresses specifically by asking: Do Academy programs, with their tailored curricula, dilute the content of the required curricula, and are Academy students, who follow this alternative course of study, less prepared to score well in standardized tests?

A. Plan of this Study

This study represents an initial attempt to answer qualitatively the two issues posed above. Based on an examination of current practices in Academy programs in six school districts, it is part of a project jointly administered by Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) and the Career Academy Support Network (CASN), administered by the University of California, Berkeley. A related purpose of the project is to help inform the work of CASN, which provides technical assistance to Academies across the country.

Though more modest than a quantitative approach based on a statistical examination of actual student course completion, grades and test scores, this qualitative study gathered evidence through site visits, interviews, and review of available reports and documents to address these questions:

- How are Academy students informed and counseled about course requirements?
- How is student completion of courses — especially district-wide required courses — monitored?
- Do conflicts arise between Academy curriculum and district curriculum, and if so, how are they resolved?
- What preparation or assistance is available to Academy students for taking high-stakes tests, and how does it differ from that available to the general student population?[1]

The descriptions and discussion that follow are derived from observations and interviews at the schools themselves. Interviews were conducted with the following groups:

- Principals
- School counselors
- Academy coordinators
- Teachers
- Students

Interview protocols were prepared for each of these groups, with the aim of eliciting their distinct perspectives on the questions noted above, and a "building" perspective was adopted in this study to develop information within a given high school in a school district. The information reported here reflects actual practice (and attitudes) in individual buildings, even though what goes on within the school might vary somewhat from the stated policies of the school districts of which they are a part. Thus, for example, under Academy program policy students are "cohort-rostered" to take courses with their Academy peers to the extent possible.

In individual schools, however, teacher availability or individual student course preferences (such as a desire to take a particular elective course, or an Advanced Placement course) may limit the extent to which cohort rostering is actually practiced.

Indeed, a broad finding of this study is that building practices, especially practices adopted by individual high schools to accommodate the conflicting demands of individual programs (including Academies), testing requirements, graduation requirements and individual

[1]Tables A and B, included in the Appendix, provide a more formal statement of the investigative framework employed.

student needs have as much, if not more, effect on the operation of Academy programs as the programs do on course-taking and test preparation.

B. The Schools and the Programs

For the study, a total of seven schools in six school districts were visited.[2] Table 1 provides summary detail about each school and its history and experience with Academy programs. A mix of schools was selected, with both long-established and newly formed Academy programs. One purpose in doing this was to develop some comparative insight on how new programs met district-wide curriculum and testing requirements while seeing to their own development and operations. (Though the schools are identified by name in tables, they remain anonymous elsewhere in the report in order to preserve confidentiality and to ensure that interviewees would feel free to offer candid observations without risking potential embarrassment to the institutions.)

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Table 1

Schools Participating in the Study

City	High School	Academy Experience (Years) <3	3-8	>8	Academy Programs Examined	All-Academy?‡
Miami	Miami Beach			x	1 of 4	Fall 2001
Oakland	Fremont		x		2 of 6	No*
	Castlemont		x		3 of 5	No*
Philadelphia	Lincoln			x	2 of 4	Fall 2001
St. Louis	Roosevelt	x			2 of 4	No*
San Jose	Oak Grove	x			2 of 9	Yes
Seattle	Ballard	x			1 of 2	No

‡All-Academy schools have elected to enroll each student in an Academy program.
*School plans to adopt the all-Academy model, but timetable not set.

Two of the seven schools — Lincoln High School, in Philadelphia, and MBHS, in Miami — were selected specifically because they had stable, longstanding histories of operating Academy programs, and both have elected to become "all-Academy" schools in the fall of 2001. This means that all students attending those schools will participate in an Academy program. The decision by a school to go "wall-to-wall," as will be seen, has consequences for (and is affected by) the issues of curriculum and testing that are the main focus of this study.

Of the remaining five schools, two were in the early stages of Academy development. Ballard High School, in Seattle, had just three programs, one of those in existence less than a year. In San Jose, Oak Grove High School had adopted a school-wide "pathway" strategy, with each of the career-related pathways having some of the characteristics of an Academy, but only

[2]An additional school was also visited to guide development of research questions and protocols.

having two fully developed Academy programs. The remaining three had somewhat longer experience with Academy programs and were moving toward "all-Academy" status.[3]

All of the schools are located in urban areas and have economically and racially heterogeneous student populations. All were also in some state of organizational transition, resulting largely from the introduction of new Academies or from the impending decisions to move to an "all-Academy" set-up.[4]

The similarities and differences among the schools notwithstanding, there are three key characteristics define the Career Academy model:

1. A "small learning community" established within a high school consists of students attending most classes together and teachers working as a team to provide an integrated and coherent educational experience. The objective is to have students identify closely with their curriculum, remain in contact with teachers over a longer period of time, and, as a consequence, increase the likelihood that their education will be personalized in ways that large high schools often do not permit.

2. A college preparatory curriculum with a distinct career theme mixes both career-related courses and academic courses that meet graduation requirements. The curriculum's career theme is not intended to be a traditional vocational program but is meant, instead, to provide a tangible context for learning, and a framework for integrating course material from such apparently unconnected topics as math and English. High quality standards are maintained to assure that Academy students who complete the program are prepared to enter college or other post-secondary settings.

3. Partnerships with employers, communities and higher education help bring an Academy's locally selected theme to life for students through active contacts with partners in industry and other relevant institutions. Academies establish relationships with employers relevant to their career theme. Relationships an Academy cultivates with employers relevant to its career theme may lead to industry instructors, internships, informational visits to area firms, and sometimes to part-time employment (paid and unpaid) for students. At the same time, students are made familiar with educational requirements for success in that career area, and encouraged to continue learning beyond high school.

With their blend of one-on-one attention, stimulating curriculum, tangible employer (and community) connections, and high standards, Academies are expected to boost the motivation of students who participate. In turn, the students would be expected to attend school more regularly, work harder, achieve better grades, graduate, and be more likely to go on to college.

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[3]This last group of schools was operating in near-crisis conditions, which themselves affected the viability of existing Academies and raised questions about their likely success in becoming "wall-to-wall" Academy schools

[4]In two of the study schools, a new approach to ninth grade also was being adopted, a "Success Academy" based on a model developed by the Center for Research on Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR). This change entails segregating ninth-graders from the larger student body and immersing them in small learning communities. This change, too, added to the organizational flux the schools were experiencing.

Though open to all high school students, Academies have been viewed as an especially useful option for students who are academically at risk. By providing a more coherent and personalized instructional setting oriented around careers and work, but nonetheless holding to rigorous academic standards, Academies can appeal to young people disengaged from traditional education. They can also provide a viable pathway through secondary school and increase access to post-secondary education with career-related employment.

In undertaking this study, it should be stressed, the integrity of individual Academy programs and their success in embodying these three characteristics were not directly examined. Nonetheless, as will be made clear, some findings regarding course selection and rostering do have a bearing on how robustly the Academy model was implemented in the study schools. In particular, several points of concern around the issues of cohort rostering and modifications to the content of required graduation courses will be discussed later.

II. Curriculum and Course Taking

Are Academy students, involved in a program with its own curriculum, might be at greater risk of failing to complete required course requirements for high school graduation or college entrance?

This risk could manifest itself in any of several ways. The curriculum developed in an Academy could simply fail to include some required courses. Academy programs are built around courses connected to their career theme, and those career-focused Academy courses would simply displace courses required for graduation. A second cause of concern is that Academy courses might not be countable toward meeting college entry requirements. A third reason might be that completing the Academy curriculum could leave too little time for required coursework to be completed or present rostering conflicts that would prevent students from completing curriculum requirements.

Site visits at Academy schools lead to these initial observations. First, while it is useful to think of Academy programs as distinct and in some ways separate from the rest of a school's teaching and other activities, in practice Academy programs and courses are regarded administratively in much the same way as other courses. In all of the schools visited, student progress toward completion of graduation-required courses was a basic and pervasive concern. In all cases, the curriculum was consciously designed to span both the thematic aims of the Academy and the school district requirements for graduation.

Those requirements, with some variation, are similar in all the study schools and in the school districts, in general. Table 2 displays the current standards for key graduation subjects.[5] These were starting-points for Academy curriculum in all the study schools, with courses in English, math, social and natural science constituting the core graduation requirements for all students.

[5]Other requirements, not shown in the table, included courses in physical education, fine arts, and elective courses.

Table 2

Credits Required for Graduation from High Schools, by Study Site

	English	Mathematics	Social Science	Science	Foreign Language	Total Credits
Miami	4	3	3	3	0	24
Oakland	4	3	3	3	1	23
Philadelphia	4	3	3	3	0	21.5
St. Louis	4	4	3	4	0	22
San Jose	4	2	3	2	1	21
Seattle	4	2	3	2	0	20

In practice, the Academy curriculum is comprised of a combination of core courses and specially designed electives. The electives provide the Academy program's thematic element. Drawn from curricula in Miami and Philadelphia, Table 3 illustrates what an Academy sequence might look like in a given year.

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Table 3

Examples of Academy Course Rosters from Two Programs

Miami Beach High School Academy of Travel and Tourism Sample 11th Grade Roster	**Lincoln High School (Philadelphia)** Horticulture Academy Sample 11th Grade Roster
Language Arts[a]	English[a]
Algebra II[a]	Social Science[a]
American History[a]	Algebra 2 or Geometry[a]
Environmental Science[a]	Chemistry[a]
Travel and Tourism II[b]	Floriculture[b]
Foreign Language[c]	Floriculture or Foreign Language[b]
	Health/Physical Education[b]

[a]Required for graduation
[b]Required for Academy
[c]Elective

As the Table illustrates, the Academy curriculum is a mix that straddles both courses required for graduation and elective courses that are taken as part of the Academy's thematic program. Further courses may be either elective or (in the case of physical/health education in Philadelphia) additional requirements.[6]

In practice, however, there were variations among the schools examined in how effectively the course mix was managed. Schools with more experience operating in the

[6]Here, too, variation is possible. For example, a student who completed the required number of health/PE courses may choose to take additional ones, which then would be regarded as electives.

Academy framework appear to have functioned more smoothly, though surprisingly, all of the schools experienced some common challenges. A closer examination of how the course selection and course-taking process played out in these settings provides some useful insights — especially for schools in the early stages of launching Academy programs. Three factors bear examination:

- The kinds and sources of guidance students receive;
- The mix of elective and required courses in Academy programs;
- The effectiveness of information systems — including student rostering systems and forms.

A. Kinds and Sources of Guidance

Schools that adopt the Career Academy model have generally found it necessary to modify their counseling system, one of the longest established school processes, and with it the role of its guidance counselors. Historically, school guidance counselors have been both information sources and decision-makers where student course-taking was concerned. In many schools — including several examined in this study — counselors were responsible for overseeing students' course selection, and approving rosters for the upcoming year.

Unlike in traditional school settings where counselors were customarily responsible for scheduling, scheduling in Academy schools was negotiated between the counselor and the Academy coordinator. Counselors typically worked with a group of students who were more or less randomly assigned, often by alphabetical order of students' last name. Under this arrangement, counselors monitored completion of courses required for graduation, but given the typically heavy caseload they carried — counselors might have 200 or more students assigned to them — they were often able to serve as little more than schedulers, or arbiters for disciplinary problems.

In addition, counselors may not necessarily have been aware of the course requirements for a given Academy program — or even be informed that a student was in an Academy. The Career Academy model introduced a new wrinkle: The rosters of Academy students would have to be tracked to assure both compliance with graduation requirements and appropriate progression through the Academy curriculum. A portion of this latter responsibility would fall to the Academy coordinator, usually a teacher who would be accountable for overall management of the Academy program.

Formally or informally, the coordinator determines that Academy students are tracking through the course sequence appropriately, ensuring that students complete courses needed to graduate. In fulfilling their mission as college preparatory programs, however, Academies were obligated to do more than simply ensure that students comply with graduation requirements. Academy coordinators had an interest in seeing to it that students who had the aptitude for college work also completed college-entry requirements. However, this task was complicated by the fact that students were required to complete additional coursework to enter state universities. (The added requirements for the study sites are summarized in Table 4.)

Table 4

State University Courses Not Included in High School Graduation Requirements

Study Site	Additional State Requirements
Miami	Foreign Language
Oakland	Mathematics
Philadelphia	Foreign Language
St. Louis	Foreign Language
San Jose	Mathematics
Seattle	Mathematics, Foreign Language

Monitoring course progress among Academy students thus became a somewhat intricate undertaking, requiring knowledge of both normal high school requirements and the additional courses needed to apply to state universities. How Academy coordinators and school guidance counselors dealt with these somewhat overlapping (and potentially conflicting) roles determined, in part, the clarity of the guidance students received.

The two schools with the oldest Academy programs modified the traditional approach in distinct and effective ways. In one of the schools, it was the Academy coordinator, not the guidance counselors, who was responsible for ensuring that students complete both graduation and Academy requirements. The coordinator was in a better position to track the progress of students were making in both Academy-program courses and in required courses, and they had the systems and forms to facilitate that monitoring task. For their part, guidance counselors focused on students' post-secondary career and continuing education plans.

In the other school, responsibility for course selection was shared between counselors and Academy coordinators. The counseling staff's student load was reorganized, with individual Counselors responsible for all the students in one Academy, rather than a portion of the alphabetized student list. This arrangement made it possible for counselors to work closely with the coordinator of their assigned Academy to help ensure that student rosters reflected progress both toward graduation and through the Academy curriculum.[7]

In both schools — indeed in all of the schools — informal coordination among teachers handling Academy-related subjects was an important tool for keeping track of students. However, the ideal arrangement, a cadre of teachers assigned to work solely in the Academy program was seldom to be found. Both because of a lack of common planning time and, as will be discussed in the following section, because of issues involved in rostering required courses, "Academy" teachers usually did not have an exclusive tie to the Academy program. While that informal connection made it possible for the teachers to be helpful in individual cases, it was too inconsistent to ensure that course taking by all Academy students would be carefully monitored.

[7]The need for this kind of cooperation has been noted in earlier examinations of Academy scheduling issues. Cf. "Scheduling Guide for Career Academies," Berkeley, CA: Career Academy Support Network, 1999.

In schools with more recently established Academies, the monitoring and rostering processes were more in flux. All of these schools used some combination of counselors and Academy coordinators in transitional settings that changed their operating styles as Academies were introduced or expanded. In only one of the schools, where the commitment to Academy programs was widely shared throughout the school, cooperative relationships among Academy coordinators and counselors were being developed.

In other cases, however, the changes were not proceeding smoothly. In one of the newest Academy schools, the principal viewed creation of Academy programs as one lever for bringing about overall school improvement and change, but this vision encountered resistance. Counselors were responsible for rostering, but they were reluctant to reorganize their workload to accommodate the expanding number of Academies in the school. They claimed to find it difficult to identify the Academy students and to ensure that their course selection met both graduation and Academy course requirements. In another school, chronic turnover among teaching staff and principals continued to handicap efforts to operate Academies after more than five years of experience with the program.

Additional complications arose when students failed courses — particularly required ones — or when they wished to take advanced placement (AP) or other electives and needed special roster help. Students failing courses might require provisional rosters since they might make up the failure in summer school. They might have to take courses out of sequence, or they might not be able to remain in an Academy at all. Similarly, students who wished to take AP courses, or otherwise tailor their rosters to suit their specific interests, further burdened the rostering process, by making it difficult to maintain the cohort-rostering so pivotal to the integrity of Career Academies.

B. Mix of Elective and Required Courses in Academy Curricula

The Academy curriculum consists of two types of courses: those required for graduation and electives. In the study schools, it was typically around the elective courses that the curricula were tailored to create Academy-specific content. Ideally, the traditional required courses — English, foreign language, mathematics, science, social science — would be modified somewhat to reflect the Academy theme.[8]

In the study schools, however, the modification of traditional courses was unevenly implemented. In the school with the longest-established Academy programs, the required subjects had hardly been tailored to Academy themes at all. The belief there was that the core subjects ought to be taught strictly on their own terms — "English is English," is how one respondent put it. In the other schools, the tailoring of core subjects was minimal and fragmentary.

Since the Academy content is mostly concentrated in electives, Academy students wanting added variety in their rosters have limited rostering choices. Their elective slots are mostly determined by the required Academy courses. Their main rostering alternatives therefore often center on the available "sections" of required courses.

[8]See Tables 2 and 3.

For example, after rostering Academy electives, a student following an Academy sequence who wishes to take an AP English course may have no choice but to take the only section of junior math that fits her schedule. As a result, she will likely miss taking the math section her Academy peers are rostered into. Similarly, a student who has failed a required English or math course is almost certain to take that course with an unrelated group of students, either in the summer or the following year.

Compounding the problem of limited course selection in the study schools was a shortage of teachers for science and math courses. Their scarcity limited the number of advanced courses, and sometimes even required courses, that were rostered. That, in turn, constrained Academy students' choices. If the only section of "elementary functions" conflicted with a required Academy course, the student would have little choice but to roster the Academy course, even if he or she were interested in the math course.

In general, students in the first year of an Academy sequence were more routinely "cohort-rostered," that is, grouped together in courses.[9] The feasibility of course-rostering for Academy students dwindled in the junior and senior years. Individual student preferences, limitations in course availability, and the need to repeat failed courses caused Academy students to be dispersed into whatever sections of required courses they could fit into their rosters. Only in the Academy-related electives were they likely to be brought together as a cohort.[10]

This gradual dispersion did not of itself increase the risk that students might fail to complete graduation requirements. It did mean that upper-level Academy students would be spread across several sections of a required course rather than being cohort-rostered. That made it harder (and less urgent) for Academies to try tailoring required courses to the Academy theme. Instead, the established departments — English, math, social science — regulated these courses, as they traditionally had. Their natural concern was to ensure that individual sections of these courses adhered to districtwide content standards.

In the study sites, therefore, individual sections of upper-level required courses tended to be generic and untailored. Consequently the Academy experience was limited in the amount of specialization and coherence it could achieve. Rather than affecting students' ability to complete graduation requirements, it seemed, the Academy curriculum was itself likely to be affected by the primacy of those requirements.

C. Effectiveness of Information Systems

The final factor affecting course-taking was the information systems in the schools. In all cases, a computerized rostering system of some sort was in use. However, the accessibility of those systems, their responsiveness to the demands posed by Academy rostering, and how

[9]Even in an Academy that started in the tenth grade, students might, because of previous course failures, be dispersed across both 9th and 10th grade English, math and social science. Only in Academy programs beginning in the 9th grade could consistent grouping be accomplished in the first year.

[10]A related issue was the need, at the building level, to maintain appropriate teacher-student ratios, consistent with the teaching complement at the school. Thus, in many cases, small courses for Academy-only students would be precluded because of the need to use available teacher resources efficiently and equitably.

effectively they were used by the involved parties significantly affected the rostering process—indeed, had a real effect on the degree of choice afforded to students.

The most effective system was found in one of the established Academy schools, where meeting the rostering needs of individual students was a major priority. Counselors and Academy coordinators were trained to use the system, had ready access to up-to-date information on student course completions and options, and could work flexibly to adapt schedules as needed.

Teachers and students reported that student choices and preferences could usually be met and that students could be encouraged to diversify their course selections with reasonable expectations of getting their choices. It was easier to keep Academy students grouped in required courses, though a fair amount of dispersion remained even in this favorable environment.

Information systems were in place at the other Academy program schools, but their effectiveness in meeting student rostering needs varied. Because the information systems had originally been designed to serve guidance counselors as the rostering "gatekeepers," it was typically, guidance counselors — not the Academy coordinators — who had better access to computerized student data. Student requests were difficult to accommodate, and it was commonly harder to tailor the rostering process to the needs of Academy students.[11] The least effective setting was in a school where rostering, though computerized, appeared to be beyond anyone's direct control. Neither Academy coordinators nor counselors felt they had much say in how individual students' rosters would turn out.

D. Course-Taking: Conclusions

The findings from the school visits provide no evidence that Academy curricula hinder students from completing courses required for graduation. To the contrary, all of the schools examined are intensively focused on ensuring that students meet course graduation requirements as their paramount concern. Adherence to Academy curriculum requirements, while not ignored, was clearly a secondary consideration.

It should not be concluded, however, that the administrative process works flawlessly. To the contrary, the overburdened counseling apparatus found in the study schools was likely to exhibit mechanical and superficial rostering choices that afforded little time for real guidance and counseling. Such individual attention counselors were able to give was more likely to be conferred on students who were more engaged rather than on those who were in greater need of assistance. Because they had more interaction with their Academy coordinator, Academy students in the schools examined for this study were more likely than the non-Academy students to receive guidance and careful advice about rostering choices.

There was no conflict concerning this issue between Academy program staff and other teaching or administrative staff in the schools. The opposite was found to be the case. Academy coordinators and teachers were every bit as anxious as the rest of the school to see their students graduate. They readily accepted the need to accommodate graduation requirements. Since, in

[11]In one school visited, the counseling staff was bluntly criticized by the principal for resisting efforts to align the counseling and rostering process with the newly established Academies.

fact, the Academy curricula had usually been designed around those requirements in the first place, ensuring compliance required no extraordinary steps.

Academy coordinators and teachers were every bit as anxious as the rest of the school to see their students graduate, and they readily accepted the need to accommodate graduation requirements. The preoccupation that students meet graduation requirements appeared to have an effect — and not necessarily a positive one — on the Academy programs. It appeared to increase the tendency for courses required of both Academy and non-Academy students to become more homogeneous. Academy students would be more inclined to register in core courses or, especially in the 11th and 12th grades, in courses that meet college-entrance requirements, even if that meant they would be taking those courses apart from their Academy peers.

This concern manifests itself especially in schools that are electing to go "All-Academy," that is, to be composed only of Academy programs. The logistical challenge of offering separate Academy-oriented core courses to six or seven separate Academy groups is considerable. As students reach the upper grades when their course-taking paths begin to diverge, the goal of maintaining any thematic coherence beyond the specified Academy elective courses appears unattainable, particularly in view of faculty limitations and the need to meet class-size requirements.

Schools more experienced with Academy programs were better able to respond to this problem. The two study schools with the longest-operating programs managed to develop processes that balanced Academy needs, graduation requirements, and individual student interests fairly effectively. Schools that were newly implementing Academies were still working through rostering issues. Though there appeared to be little risk that students would fail to take required courses, there was evidence that the goal of keeping Academy students together for required courses might be more limited.

III. High-Stakes Testing

The debate over whether performance standards can be used effectively to assess school quality is widespread and still unresolved. There continues to be concern over how such standards can be developed, whether national testing requirements are a useful or appropriate goal, how they affect local autonomy in framing curriculum, and how test results should be interpreted and used.

As that debate goes on, the use of student testing as a way of assessing school performance continues to grow. Some 40 states now have testing programs instituted to serve two key purposes. First, they are intended to gauge student attainment and competency in such essential areas as reading and literacy, computational and mathematics knowledge, the physical and social sciences. Secondly, and more controversially, the tests are used to assess school performance.[12] The test scores for an entire school district, or individual schools within a district, are now frequently published in newspapers on an annual basis, and have become the implicit standard for judging whether a school, or a public school system, is doing its job.

[12]Until recently norm-referenced tests, such as the Stanford Achievement Test, were used for this purpose. Recently, however, state-designed and required tests have begun to supplement or replace them.

At the secondary-school level, the new tests have been superimposed on schools whose students are already subject to high-stakes exams, like the PSAT, SAT, and ACT, which have long been a rite of passage for high school youth. But in an environment, now heavily dominated by this stress on high-stakes testing, two major questions arise as to how Academy students can be expected to perform: (1) Does the specialized thematic focus of Academies detract either from their performance on these tests or even from their interest in taking them? (2) Are Academy students as well prepared as students in traditional school settings to take the tests?

To answer these questions it is helpful, first, to look separately at the separate kinds of tests given to students. There are four basic kinds:

1. **Standardized (commonly norm-referenced) tests,** usually administered under the auspices of the local school district;

2. **Competency-based assessment tests,** usually developed by and administered through the requirements of the state, and including high school exit examinations in states that mandate them;[13]

3. **Traditional college entrance achievement tests (PSAT, SAT and ACT),** taken voluntarily by students; and

4. **Advanced Placement examinations,** which assess student competence in individual subjects.

The first two are required of all students either at specified grades (e.g., seventh, ninth, eleventh), or, in some cases, administered annually. All students are encouraged to sit for college achievement tests; however, participation is voluntary. Advanced Placement tests are taken only by better-achieving students to demonstrate superior performance or knowledge in specific subject areas.

[13]Two of these tests involved hand grading. One had a writing component; the other was designed around a set of fairly complex problem items, whose solution required several steps and some explanation of the steps taken. Grading those parts was time-consuming, and it was often several months before the test results became available. The test format was also controversial in those sites.

The following table indicates the kinds of tests administered in the study sites.

Course Taking, Test Preparation, and Career Academy Programs

Table 5

Achievement and Proficiency Tests in the Study Sites

Site	State-Designed Achievement Test	Other Local Test	Minimum Score Needed to Graduate?
Philadelphia	Yes	SAT9	No
St. Louis	Yes	No	No
San Jose	Yes[a]	No	No
Oakland	Yes[a]	Yes[b]	Yes[c]
Seattle	Yes	Yes[c]	No[d]
Miami	Yes	No	Yes

[a]California uses the SAT9
[b]For ninth-graders only
[c]Local proficiency standards must be met for graduation
[d]Passing scores will be required by 2008.

In three of the study schools, the institution of a state test was a recent development within the past two years. In two other cases, the state test was just being introduced on a pilot basis. In one site students were required to attain a minimum score in order to graduate, and in Oakland minimum proficiency standards had to be achieved.

A. Testing and Schooling

Before examining the Academy context, a broader observation is warranted. In all of the study schools, the competency testing requirements were regarded as anything from a nuisance to a simplistic and misleading approach to measuring school performance. The frustration and negative opinions spread from principals to staff to students. Some of the specific reasons for this widespread dislike will be discussed below. A broader concern, though, is how much does the negative opinion about testing programs affect the dedication with which teachers administer them and students take them?

B. High Stakes for Whom?

Students interviewed for this study usually made a qualitative distinction between college-related testing (i.e., ACT, SAT and AP) and the state-promulgated competency tests. The former they correctly saw as high-stakes tests for them. As for the latter, students acknowledged that it was "important for my school" to have good test results, but with the exception of competency tests they had to pass in order to graduate, they did not perceive that their individual self-interest was directly involved. Not surprisingly, the college-related tests received a more intensive effort than the competency tests on the students' part. "I make sure I get through my SATs okay," said one student, who found it harder to "get up for those other tests." This view was consistent with several teachers' observation that, by spring (typically the season when state tests were administered), many of the upper-class students were already "tested out."

C. Mixed Messages About Testing

The orthodox message delivered by teachers to students was that doing well on the competency tests mattered because it affected the school's reputation. One teacher reported she told students, "It [the test results for the school overall] makes a difference in how much money the school gets." In interviews, however, teachers questioned the soundness and validity of the tests, and were highly critical of their use as a summary "bottom-line" measure of school performance. Given their consistently negative opinions, it seems unlikely that students would fail to note the contradictory messages being sent, which may well have contributed to their discounting the importance of these tests.

D. Duration and Disruption

The chief complaints heard both from staff and students were that testing periods last too long and that they are disruptive of school schedules. Typically, state competency tests might officially be given over a period of two weeks. However, counting time beforehand to organize the testing schedule and juggle teaching and proctoring assignments and adding time afterward to complete make-up tests, especially for students who had been absent,[14] the actual time spent testing could amount to a month.[15] During that period, staff and students agreed, regular schooling generally failed to happen.

Though the deadlines and schedule generally were promulgated with ample lead time, they were not always well thought out. In two schools, the competency testing was scheduled to occur in the same week as AP tests. Teachers reported that they encouraged their students to prepare for the AP tests and, if necessary, to skip the competency tests in order to complete AP testing. The result was that test results for these schools were biased by the absence of some of their highest-performing students. Policy at another study school (discussed further below) sharply curtailed extracurricular activity in the six weeks prior to the testing period so that students could participate in test preparation classes. This restriction had a materially negative effect on the Academy, whose curriculum required frequent visits to local Academy-related businesses. The visits had to be suspended during the pre-test period and other coursework reshuffled as a result.

These findings, anecdotal and based on a limited number of schools, nonetheless were strong and consistent. They suggest that, however valid a measure the tests are and whatever weight is attached to the results, the negative attitudes toward testing evident in schools reduce the importance of the tests in the eyes of students and teachers and may undercut efforts to encourage students to take them seriously.

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[14]In one school, the principal reported that truancy rates shot up appreciably during the testing period. So acute was the problem that the school had to institute a crash program to locate and test enough students so that its overall completion rate would be considered valid in computing test scores. In a school in another district visited for this study (though not one of the study schools), the entire testing program had to be repeated because insufficient numbers of students had taken the test.

[15]One month was the most frequent estimate voiced by students and staff at the study schools regarding the effective length of the testing period. In one school, though staff reported having lost six weeks of the previous academic year to test administration.

E. Preparing Students: Academy and Non-Academy

The institution of state tests was so recent in three of the study schools that no plans were in place to provide preparatory classes or other help for students. In two others schools, discussions had taken place about what kind of assistance to provide, but no concrete steps had been taken. The administration at a sixth school had determined that no additional help could be offered, apart from tutoring and homework help already available to the student body generally.

The schools examined for this study usually had an extensive history of offering themselves to linking students to preparatory courses to help ready the test takers for college placement exams. Some of the schools also offered tutoring and homework help programs, and after-school assistance programs were also offered. Administrators and teachers seemed daunted by the prospect of trying to add further preparatory help in response to the new tests, given the programs they already were involved with.

Academy programs within the schools did not take special responsibility for preparing their students for the new overlay of state tests. In only one of the Academy programs examined in this study had special preparatory courses or sessions been developed to boost the performance of Academy students in state tests. The only help the others offered was to guide students toward resources that already existed.

There is ample evidence, though, that Academy staff were concerned not solely about test performance but also about the post-graduation outcomes of their students. Academy coordinators reported that they used their best skills of exhortation to encourage students to take and do well on tests, and they enlisted other Academy teachers provide encouragement, as well. In the established programs, where roles were better developed, coordinators professed that their personal relationship with students made a difference in the willingness of students to take the testing seriously.

In the newer programs, coordinators found it much more difficult to determine how much weight their powers of personal persuasion carried. However, coordinators and Academy teachers expressed consistently their desire to see students achieve. They provided them with ongoing encouragement to prepare for and take college entrance tests, helped adjust schedules so students could take AP or other useful electives (subject to the kinds of constraints discussed earlier regarding rostering), and generally stressed the value of post-secondary education for all their students.

Coordinators looked to the school administration or to the traditional academic departments as the appropriate source of preparatory help for tests. Since the tests stressed basics like English, math, and social science, it seemed natural that the established departments would provide added assistance. Since the schools as a whole, or individual departments, often did not conclude that added preparation was needed, the Academy programs implicitly followed suit.

That view of where supplemental test preparation help should originate was widely shared throughout the schools, with the exception of one school district alluded to above. It that instance, the school district developed a district-wide policy for preparing students to take state

assessment tests. Schools in that district were required to take a number of steps to boost student performance, which in addition to restricting extracurricular activities, included initiatives to:

- Revamp curricula to conform to the emphases in the state test;
- Design curricular tests so that, to the extent possible, they would mirror the format of the standardized test;
- Provide preparatory sessions for students in the weeks preceding test administration.[16]

In this school both Academy and non-Academy students received an intensive regimen of pre-test preparation, as well as a curriculum oriented to reflect the content areas of the state test.

Here, as in other study schools, there was no concern about the emphasis of the state tests impinging on or distorting the content of the Academy curricula.[17] Since the main Academy-specific material was covered in elective courses, rather than required subjects, Academy curricula would be little affected unless substantial changes in required subject content occurred.

F. High-Stakes Testing: Conclusions

The trend among states to gauge school performance through the use of standardized tests and hold faculty and administration accountable for results intensifies, even as the debate continues about the value of this approach. Certainly it has raised the stakes for students who must take this new overlay of performance test.

In the study schools, any effects of test taking on Academy programs (or vice versa) were overshadowed by the generally negative opinion that increased state testing regimens engendered within schools and by the disruptions to school operations those testing requirements produced. Teachers and students alike found these tests burdensome, students sometimes resisted taking them, and there was broadly expressed skepticism about their value and their validity.

Academies instituted no special programs to help prepare students to take and do well on these tests. The one exception to this resulted from sweeping district-wide policies that required specialized test preparation courses, changes to curriculum, and even specific teaching practices (for example, the formatting of tests) in order to better align the classroom experience with the format and content of the state test. Though Academy students benefited (as did other students in the school) from this effort, the Academy program suffered in other ways.

IV. Reflections and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to determine how Academy programs performed in the context two important current themes in public education: concern that students complete

[16]This state test had spawned a mini-boom in academic publishing. Two different private firms had developed practice and preparatory materials in support of the state test, which were being purchased and used by school districts across the state.

[17]The limitation on extracurricular activities in this school did, as noted previously, limit some of the private sector visiting and interviewing that is emphasized in the Academy curricula.

courses required for graduation and college entry, and the increasingly heavy emphasis on high stakes tests.

The findings presented here, though they are qualitatively derived and based on a limited number of study schools, suggest that, at least regarding these two issues, the organization and behavior of individual Academy programs cannot be considered in isolation. Rather they must be viewed in the context of how the schools as a whole (and, in one case, district) behave.

Academies are effective in ensuring that students complete required courses, but school systems and individual high schools already monitor course completion as a fundamental part of their operations. The ability of Academies to ensure course completion is largely determined by the schools in which they operate. They might improve on it marginally, but it would be unlikely for their performance to be weaker than that of their host school.

It is more commonly the case that the complexities of course scheduling affect Academy programs. The challenges of rostering 1,500 or more students in a high school into their required courses are considerable, and they are magnified by students who repeat courses, by those who elect to take individualized sequences of electives or required courses, and by limitations in the number and qualifications of faculty.

While most Academy programs are coherent and robust in the 9th and 10th grades, many lose their distinctiveness in the later high school years when it becomes increasingly difficult to keep intact the group identity of an Academy class as it advances into upper-year classes. Similarly, it becomes difficult to retain the Academy-specific elements of, say, an English or math course, when significant numbers of students taking that class may not belong to the Academy. Faced with the geometrically expanding roster demands imposed by more Academies, the challenges of varying the illustrative details (and to some degree the core content) of required courses will prove ever more difficult to meet.[18]

The challenges grow as schools adopt an "all-Academy" structure. To meet them will require careful attention to the organizational issues they raise. At the least, counseling staff must be deployed in a way that ensures that students in the distinct Academy strands are coherently rostered. Counselors and Academy coordinators will need to have carefully delineated roles when it comes to advising students so that the interrelated tasks of career guidance, course selection, and decisions regarding continuing education are handled smoothly.

A stable and dedicated cadre of school faculty, who can work flexibly across the requirements of different Academies while remaining faithful to their core subjects, would help mitigate the problems, even if much of the work they do in that regard is informal. Regrettably, the experience of the study schools where faculty turnover and reassignment are common

[18]A related problem is that a school's population of students may not sort tidily into a finite number of Academies. In two of the study sites, there was some reference to a generic "liberal arts" academy—a catchall place for students who expressed no interest in the other academy programs.

suggests that such stability is rare. In only two of the schools did Academies have a relatively stable core of faculty, and both did demonstrate the benefit of such an arrangement.[19]

The coherence of Academies, whether in "wall-to-wall" settings or not, may also be affected if alignment of curricula with test contents assumes priority importance. The risk is twofold. First and most obviously, required courses may be reconfigured in ways that make it difficult to adapt them to the Academy theme and activities. In the one site examined for this study where alignment was a priority, the possibility of teachers adopting a pure "teach to the test" stance was raised. It is too early to predict how that will play out, but the risk seems real.

A more subtle effect may be that the salience of the Academy approach is largely washed out by concern over test content. The best Academies undoubtedly are effective in providing educational experiences that show well in standardized test scores. However it may look more expedient to prepare students by "aligning curriculum with test standards," rather than by supporting variant educational experiences lacking formal congruence with the state test format or emphases.

As public education moves through its current preoccupation with core courses and test results, Academy programs, especially those just now getting started, will face numerous challenges. While they cannot all be anticipated, this study would suggest several steps for Academy programs, and their supporters, to consider.

- **Increased attention should be given to building and maintaining a coherent and stable educational experience for students in each Academy.**

A responsive arrangement of counseling staff, along with flexible and adaptive rostering procedures, is essential. Special attention must be given to ensure that students complete required courses seems unnecessary. Since schools are already organized to maintain that emphasis, Academies need only work to see to it that the basic systems do not permit students to fall through the cracks.

The ideal arrangement, cohort-rostered courses taught by a dedicated faculty, should be sought where possible, though the prevailing emphasis on standardized test results and required courses may work against its achievement. Short of that, more consistent attention to cross-subject projects may be one of the most effective techniques available for achieving a coherent curriculum. The interdisciplinary projects can embody the aims of both Academy and traditional subjects, and they can be implemented successfully even where faculty connection to the Academy is informal.

These conclusions suggest that the expansion of Academy programs should proceed deliberately. Each new program a school adds will require time to work through the institution's existing administrative arrangements and will present problems requiring attention and effort to resolve. While it may be laudable to seek school change through Academy programs, the programs must not be too casually installed at the risk of ending up with Academies in name

[19]Only one of the study schools had common planning time for Academy faculty. One other (a long-established program) had established routines for keeping faculty in touch regarding individual students, as necessary. Otherwise, coordination among Academy faculty was casual and limited.

only. These would devolve into a sequence of minor electives, instead of developing the distinctiveness and integrated substance that mark the best Academy programs.

- **Academy programs should explore more ways to demonstrate the unique attainments of their students.**

The current emphasis on testing and accountability increases the risk that educational perspective will become too narrow. Academy students should be expected to meet educational attainment and academic quality standards without placing paramount importance on test scores as an end in themselves.

Academy programs should push for more varied measures to judge the attainments of its students. Whether through portfolio assessments, special projects, community (and especially industry) recognition or other academic awards, Academies need to find ways to illustrate the kinds of special achievements they are geared to produce and to demonstrate that their approach to education can meet both testing standards and other measures of personal growth and achievement.

- **Academies should find ways to ensure that their students succeed in the standardized testing environment.**

To date, both schools and Academies (as regards sites examined for this study) have been generally slow to respond to state-mandated testing and the accountability perspectives it reflects. Academy programs face challenges enough simply launching themselves and developing their own distinctive identities. Significant additional efforts required to help students respond to a new layer of tests may overtax their limited staff resources.

It appears likely, however, that the primacy of performance testing will remain a reality for the foreseeable future. To prove their value in that environment, Academies will have to extend themselves to devise innovative methods consistent with their distinctive educational approach and provide their students with the preparation they need to make a credible showing on proficiency tests of all kinds.

Course Taking, Test Preparation, and Career Academy Programs

Exhibit 1

Overview of Research Framework for Course-Taking Study

Topic	Key Issues
Requirements	▫ State/local graduation requirements ▫ Promulgation by local school district ▫ Academy requirements — add-ons
Sequencing	▫ State/local requirements ▫ Promulgation by local school district ▫ Academy requirements — how they may interact with existing school district standards ▫ Special circumstances — course failure, desire for special courses, limited course availability, etc.
Communication	▫ How teachers, counselors and Academy coordinators are informed about overall course-taking requirements ▫ How counselors are informed about Academy requirements ▫ How students are informed about course-taking requirements
Guidance	▫ What information and advice students are given ▫ When information and advice are given
Monitoring and Enforcement	▫ School staff responsibilities for approval of course selection among Academy students ▫ How roster conflicts or irregularities are addressed ▫ How appropriateness and correctness of course-taking are tracked
Grades	▫ Actual student performance in school work ▫ How school performance may affect sequencing and course-taking
Accreditation	▫ Course development standards and formal recognition of Academy courses within school district ▫ Approval process for Academy courses

Exhibit 2

Overview of Research Framework for High-Stakes Test Study

Topic	Key Issues
Types of Tests	▫ Required for graduation (state/local achievement tests) ▫ General Proficiency (e.g., Stanford) ▫ College-related (e.g., state school requirements, SAT, ACT)
Timing	▫ Frequency of testing ▫ Sequencing of testing ▫ Coordination of test activities
Test Preparation Activities	▫ Formal preparation activities ▫ Staff responsibilities for test preparation ▫ School-wide versus Academy preparatory activities ▫ Availability of outside assistance ▫ Specialized instruction/tutoring
Communication and Guidance	▫ Extent of guidance and information regarding testing requirements ▫ Career and post-secondary guidance ▫ Extent of information about test-taking assistance

Recent Publications on MDRC Projects

Note: For works not published by MDRC, the publisher's name is shown in parentheses. With a few exceptions, this list includes reports published by MDRC since 1999. A complete publications list is available from MDRC and on its Web site (www.mdrc.org), from which copies of MDRC's publications can also be downloaded.

Education Reform

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This study examines the implementation and impacts on achievement of the Accelerated Schools model, a whole-school reform targeted at at-risk students.

Evaluating the Accelerated Schools Approach: A Look at Early Implementation and Impacts on Student Achievement in Eight Elementary Schools. 2001. Howard Bloom, Sandra Ham, Laura Melton, Julienne O'Brien.

Project GRAD

This evaluation examines Project GRAD, an education initiative targeted at urban schools and combining a number of proven or promising reforms.

Building the Foundation for Improved Student Performance: The Pre-Curricular Phase of Project GRAD Newark. 2000. Sandra Ham, Fred Doolittle, Glee Ivory Holton.

Career Academies

The largest and most comprehensive evaluation of a school-to-work initiative, this study examines 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.

Career Academies: Building Career Awareness and Work-Based Learning Activities Through Employer Partnerships. 1999. James Kemple, Susan Poglinco, Jason Snipes.

Career Academies: Impacts on Students' Engagement and Performance in High School. 2000. James Kemple, Jason Snipes.

School-to-Work Project

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

Home-Grown Lessons: Innovative Programs Linking School and Work (Jossey-Bass Publishers). 1995. Edward Pauly, Hilary Kopp, Joshua Haimson.

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

Project Transition

A demonstration program that tested a combination of school-based strategies to facilitate students' transition from middle school to high school.

Project Transition: Testing an Intervention to Help High School Freshmen Succeed. 1999. Janet Quint, Cynthia Miller, Jennifer Pastor, Rachel Cytron.

Equity 2000

Equity 2000 is a nationwide initiative sponsored by the College Board to improve low-income students' access to college. The MDRC paper examines the implementation of Equity 2000 in Milwaukee Public Schools.

Getting to the Right Algebra: The Equity 2000 Initiative in Milwaukee Public Schools. 1999. Sandra Ham, Erica Walker.

Education for Adults and Families

LILAA Initiative

This study of the Literacy in Libraries Across America (LILAA) initiative explores the efforts of five adult literacy programs in public libraries to improve learner persistence.

So I Made Up My Mind: Introducing a Study of Adult Learner Persistence in Library Literacy Programs. 2000. John T. Comings, Sondra Cuban.

"I Did It for Myself": Studying Efforts to Increase Adult Learner Persistence in Library Literacy Programs. 2001. John Comings, Sondra Cuban, Johannes Bos, Catherine Taylor.

Toyota Families in Schools

A discussion of the factors that determine whether an impact analysis of a social program is feasible and warranted, using an evaluation of a new family literacy initiative as a case study.

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An exploration of strategies for increasing low-wage workers' access to and completion of community college programs.

Opening Doors: Expanding Educational Opportunities for Low-Income Workers. 2001. Susan Golonka, Lisa Matus-Grossman.

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Next Generation Project

A collaboration among researchers at MDRC and several other leading research institutions focused on studying the effects of welfare, antipoverty, and employment policies on children and families.

How Welfare and Work Policies Affect Children: A Synthesis of Research. 2001. Pamela Morris, Aletha Huston, Greg Duncan, Danielle Crosby, Johannes Bos.

How Welfare and Work Policies Affect Employment and Income: A Synthesis of Research. 2001. Dan Bloom, Charles Michalopoulos.

Minnesota Family Investment Program

An evaluation of Minnesota's pilot welfare reform initiative, which aims to encourage work, alleviate poverty, and reduce welfare dependence.

Reforming Welfare and Rewarding Work: Final Report on the Minnesota Family Investment Program. Volume 2: Effects on Children. 2000. Lisa Gennetian, Cynthia Miller.

Reforming Welfare and Rewarding Work: A Summary of the Final Report on the Minnesota Family Investment Program. 2000. Virginia Knox, Cynthia Miller, Lisa Gennetian.

Canada's Self-Sufficiency Project

A test of the effectiveness of a temporary earnings supplement on the employment and welfare receipt of public assistance recipients.

The Self-Sufficiency Project at 36 Months: Effects on Children of a Program That Increased Parental Employment and Income (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, Ottawa, Canada). 2000. Pamela Morris, Charles Michalopoulos.

National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies

Conceived and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), with support from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), this is the largest-scale evaluation ever conducted of different strategies for moving people from welfare to employment.

Do Mandatory Welfare-to-Work Programs Affect the Well-Being of Children? A Synthesis of Child Research Conducted as Part of the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (HHS/ED). 2000. Gayle Hamilton.

Teen Parents on Welfare

Teenage Parent Programs: A Synthesis of the Long-Term Effects of the New Chance Demonstration, Ohio's Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP) Program, and the Teenage Parent Demonstration (TPD). 1998. Robert Granger, Rachel Cytron.

Ohio's LEAP Program

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.

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.

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 Mothers in Poverty: Results of the New Chance Observational Study. 1998. Martha Zaslow, Carolyn Eldred, editors.

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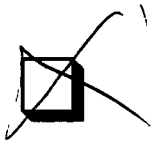

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