



éxito

Keeping High-risk Youth on Track to Graduation through Out-of-school Time Supports

by Tracey Hartmann, Deborah Good, and Kimberly Edmunds

Éxito means *success* in Spanish, so it is a fitting name for a dropout prevention program. Set in a large neighborhood high school in a low-income, largely Latino section of Philadelphia, *Éxito* supports ninth- and tenth-grade students who are at risk of dropping out of school by providing them with afterschool programming and case management services. The program was designed and is implemented by

a large multiservice community agency, Congreso de Latinos Unidos¹ (Congreso), working in partnership with the school. Funding comes from Philadelphia's Department of Human Services and from private foundations.

When *Éxito* was launched in the 2008–09 school year, Congreso contracted a four-year longitudinal evaluation following the first cohort of program participants through high school graduation. The evaluation, now in its third year, has assessed student outcomes and studied program implementation. Results from the first two years suggest that *Éxito* shows promise for reducing the dropout rate among those it serves. The program has

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attracted teens with “early warning indicators” for dropping out of school. In addition, program participation has been associated with positive student outcomes. Participants had fewer school absences than a comparison group for both of the first two years of the program; in year 2, they were also more likely to pass major subjects than a comparison group. This article describes the *Éxito* program model, provides early evidence of its benefits, and shares promising practices as well as challenges identified by the evaluation.

Éxito in Context

Philadelphia, like many urban areas, faces a staggering dropout rate. Between 42 and 46 percent of students do not graduate from high school within six years (Neild & Balfanz, 2006). The dropout rate is highest among ninth graders, who encounter new social dynamics and greater academic expectations on entering high school (Neild, 2009; Newman, Lohman, Newman, Myers, & Smith, 2000). Philadelphia-based research has found the transition to high school to be most challenging in the city’s nonselective neighborhood high schools (Neild & Balfanz, 2006; Gold et al., 2010). Many of these schools are chronically underperforming, present significant climate problems, and offer insufficient resources and student supports. At these schools, 21 percent of students drop out each year (Neild & Balfanz, 2006).

Students drop out of school for many reasons, but research points to several school-based factors that are likely contributors. Students often enter low-income urban high schools academically unprepared because they attended under-resourced elementary and middle schools; they often experience failure in high school courses (Balfanz & Letgers, 2004). Many also attend large high schools, where they feel anonymous and have difficulty connecting to peers and teachers (Balfanz & Letgers, 2004). Low-resourced schools generally offer few extracurricular activities in which youth could develop peer connections. Consequently, many students do not develop a sense of belonging to, identification with, or engagement in school (Dynarski et al., 2008).

Many large urban high schools also experience cli-

mate problems that can create significant stress for students who may already experience distressing situations in their homes and neighborhoods as a result of poverty. Without adult guidance, adolescents may cope with this stress in ways that make sense to them in the short term—skipping school to avoid getting into a fight, for example—but are detrimental in the long term (Spencer, 1999).

While school reforms are needed to address the root causes of dropping out, research on out-of-school time (OST) programs like *Éxito* suggest that they also have a role to play in improving graduation rates. OST programs have been found to create educational resilience in educationally vulnerable youth (Peck, Roeser, Zarrett, & Eccles, 2008). They offer youth opportunities to encounter

caring adults who can help them cope with daily stresses (Spencer, 1999) and to develop positive peer relationships that can foster a sense of belonging (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003). In addition, OST programs can give students a chance to experience success so that they can develop a sense of competence (Kurtines et al., 2008). OST programs can also bolster students’ academic skills, particularly in math, if the academic assistance is of sufficient duration (Lauer et al., 2006). All of these experiences foster positive identity development, which enables youth to better navigate the transition to high school and adulthood (Kurtines et al., 2008; Spencer, 1999).

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Students who eventually drop out of high school, however, are often significantly behind before they reach ninth grade. These students need more individualized and intensive support than group-oriented OST programs typically provide. Strategies shown to have impact include monitoring attendance and behavior as well as providing adult advocates for individual youth (Dynarski et al., 2008; Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). Academic supports are also most effective if delivered one-to-one or in small groups (Lauer et al., 2006).

Experts on dropout prevention also recommend that programs use research-based “early warning systems” to identify students who are at risk of dropping out. In 2006, Neild and Balfanz found that Philadelphia students who had either failed a major subject or were attending

school less than 80 percent of the time at the end of eighth grade had a 75 percent chance of dropping out once they reached high school. Additional research found that certain kinds of negative behavior were also associated with dropping out (Neild, 2009). These findings point to the importance of reaching ninth-grade students in neighborhood high schools who experienced one or more of these “early warning signs” in eighth grade.

However, students with these early warning characteristics are often the most challenging students for OST programs to serve, because they have already started to disengage from school. High school youth typically have more control of their own time than do younger children; they often opt out of OST services when faced with greater needs or competing interests (Arbreton, Bradshaw, Metz, & Sheldon, 2008). To make an impact on the dropout problem, then, *Éxito* needed to attract at-risk youth, keep them engaged, and provide individualized and intensive supports.

Éxito Program Model

In 2009–10, when *Éxito* was in its second year, elements of the program model were continuing to be refined. By the end of year 2, the model had settled into an approach based on existing research:

- Identify and recruit students showing early warning signs of dropping out
- Engage students in a project-based afterschool program
- Provide case management services to those in greatest need of support

Targeted Recruitment

Éxito’s design targeted four “early warning indicators” of later dropout—80 percent attendance or less in eighth grade, failure in math, failure in English, or two or more suspensions in eighth grade or early ninth grade. The program actively recruited students with one or more of these characteristics while remaining open to other students. In the second year, the program aimed to enroll 125 students, with 80 percent of enrollees displaying one or more early warning indicators.

Afterschool Project-based Learning

In year 2, *Éxito* interventions centered on an afterschool program that took place at the host school four days a week. In this program, students had the opportunity to socialize with peers and adults, receive homework help, and participate in project-based learning groups. The projects centered on art, music, and career-related themes in-

cluding Latin percussion, culinary arts, graphic arts, storytelling, robotics, and entrepreneurship. When students enrolled in *Éxito*, they selected one project that interested them and remained with that project group all year.

Case Management Services

Group activities were supplemented with case management supports for participants who had particularly serious mental health or behavioral challenges, such as truancy, or who were known to have serious family- or peer-related issues. At any given time, one-quarter to one-half of participants received these intensive supports. Two bilingual case managers carried caseloads of no more than 15 students at a time; they served 41 students over the course of the year. Case workers aimed to identify and remove barriers to students’ success through regular meetings with students and their families, goal-setting activities, and referrals to additional resources.

Evaluation Methods

The second-year evaluation of the program drew on the following sources of data:

- Interviews and focus groups with *Éxito* staff and students
- Observations of the program and of program-related meetings
- Enrollment and participation data collected by Congreso staff
- School records including data on student grades, attendance, and behavior

Evaluators compared *Éxito* student outcomes with those of students at the host school who were in the same grade and also had early warning indicators but did not attend the OST program. Logistic regression models tested whether *Éxito* students were more or less likely than other students to have an early warning indicator at the end of the school year. The regression analysis allowed us to assess the impact of the program while taking into account not only *whether* a student participated in *Éxito*, but also the student’s *level of participation* as measured by the number of days of attendance.

Promising Outcomes

In the first year, the evaluation found positive outcomes primarily for students who experienced both *Éxito* components—the afterschool program and the case management services. In the second year, positive outcomes were observed particularly for students in the afterschool program. The results for students who also received case management services in year 2 were more mixed.

Table 1. Regression Results for All Participants

	MODEL 1 Afterschool Dosage (All participants)		MODEL 2 Afterschool Dosage (Case management students omitted)		MODEL 3 Case management students only	
	Odds-Ratio	Sig.	Odds-Ratio	Sig.	Odds Ratio	Sig.
Failed math	.984	.043*	.976	.065	1.02	.978
Failed English	.992	.233	.970	.014*	2.96	.044*
Two or more suspensions	1.01	.301	.981	.276	3.56	.06†
Less than 80 percent attendance	.966	.003*	.970	.055†	.343	.087†
Promoted	1.01	.314	1.06	.040*	.80	.75

*p < .05 †p < .10

Table 1 shows the year 2 results. The odds ratios in the table indicate the likelihood that an Éxito student would have one of the early warning indicators at the end of the school year as compared to a similar student who didn't participate in the program. Odds ratios below zero indicate that an Éxito student was less likely than a similar student to have the early warning indicator while odds ratios above zero indicate that an Éxito student was more likely to have that outcome. The p-values indicate the level of confidence that differences are not simply the result of chance; p-values of less than .05 demonstrate a high confidence that the differences were real and generalizable. In the body of the table, statistically significant results are shown in boldface.

The second-year evaluation found that:

- For each day of Éxito attended, participants were 1.6 percent less likely to fail math than similar students (Table 1, Model 1). Therefore, students who attended the average number of days (32) were 40.1 percent less likely to fail math than students in the comparison group.
- For each day of Éxito attended, students were 3.4 percent less likely have the attendance risk indicator than were similar students (Table 1, Model 1). Students who attended the average number of days were 67.4 percent less likely to have the attendance risk indicator.
- Students in the afterschool program but not receiving case management services (Table 1, Model 2) were 3 percent less likely than similar students to fail English for each day attended and 6 percent more likely to be promoted to the next grade for each day attended.

- Students receiving case management services were 66 percent less likely than similar students to have the attendance risk indicator at the end of the year (Table 1, Model 3). This finding replicates the positive finding for case management supports observed in year 1; the difference was large though not statistically significant.

On the less positive side, students receiving case management services were three times as likely as similar students to have failed English and 3.6 times as likely to have been suspended two or more times, respectively. One explanation is that the comparison group, students who demonstrated early warning indicators, may have had fewer issues than did students who were chosen for case management services because they had socio-emotional, peer, or family challenges in addition to early warning indicators. In addition, case managers reported that they experienced challenges in engaging about a third of the students referred to case management in year 2. These challenges, outlined later in this article, may have muted the impact case managers could have on students.

Éxito had higher average daily attendance in year 2 than in year 1, perhaps in part because of program modifications including many of the promising practices described in the next section. The program was also more successful in attracting students who demonstrated early warning indicators. The program enrolled 112 ninth and tenth graders, 70 percent of whom displayed early warning indicators, at the beginning of the 2009–10 school year. Students continued to enroll throughout the year;

participation peaked in May with 92 active participants. Participants attended, on average, twice a week.

Promising Practices

Data from the implementation study point to several promising practices that contributed to *Éxito*'s success in recruiting and supporting youth. Six of these are discussed below:

- School-based staff and program activities
- Open enrollment with targeted recruitment
- Supportive program climate
- Relevant, hands-on activities
- Opportunities for success
- Individualized support and monitoring

School-based staff and program activities

Éxito was set in the school building, using the cafeteria and classrooms for afterschool activities. Program staff members were given office space in the school, and, as a result, spent much of their day there. This arrangement required a strong school-program partnership, which *Éxito* staff worked hard to build and sustain. Mutual trust was initially facilitated in part by *Congreso*'s reputation and by personal relationships with school administrators; regular meetings with school administration and responsiveness to school staff's concerns helped to maintain that trust.

Being based in the school was a significant asset for *Éxito*. The program's easy accessibility may have contributed to higher levels of program attendance than might have been achieved if students had had to travel. Easy access to program activities has been found to help in recruiting teen participation (Arbreton et al., 2008; Kauh, 2010).

However, being based in the school is an asset only if the program does not feel too much like school (Lauer et al., 2006). After hearing student complaints in year 1, staff worked in year 2 to differentiate the program from the school day.

- The program began with a gathering period that gave students a chance to unwind.
- Group tutoring, a primary program component in year 1, was replaced with project-based learning and individual tutoring.
- Community providers, rather than school teachers, were hired to lead most of the project-based learning activities.

Subsequently, student perceptions of the program improved and the attendance rate doubled from an average of once a week in year 1 to an average of twice a week in year 2.

Equally important was the fact that staff spent time in the building during the school day. The program coordinator and assistant program coordinator walked the ninth- and tenth-grade hallways between classes, reminding and cajoling students to attend the program. They also frequented the cafeteria during ninth- and tenth-grade lunch periods, taking time to sit and talk with students. Their presence in the school also allowed them to develop relationships with guidance counselors, administrators, and teachers; these relationships ultimately facilitated participant referrals.

Open Enrollment with Targeted Recruitment

Éxito advertised open enrollment but adopted targeted recruitment strategies to ensure that most students served had early warning indicators. First, program staff obtained the names of students with one or more early warning indicators from teachers and guidance counselors. Then staff members contacted each student and his or her parents or guardians individually. As the program coordinator described it:

I would literally sit there in the mornings with [guidance counselors], and they would have a list of students and...bring them in one by one. And I would talk to them and engage them, see where they're going, get the parents on the phone.

After meeting students, the program coordinator would follow up in the hallways and cafeteria, continuing to extend the invitation. A number of students told us that they needed multiple invitations before they decided to try the program. Once students started attending, program staff encouraged them to invite friends. Often these friends also displayed early warning indicators.

However, despite the success of these targeted recruitment efforts, an element of self-selection remained. One student focus group described program participants as the "good kids" in the school. To make sense of this claim, the evaluation took a deeper look at the characteristics of students entering the program. While the majority of students in the program had one or more early warning indicators prior to enrolling, only 8 percent had had been suspended two or more times. Apparently the majority of participants, though in danger of dropping out, were not the students who were frequently disrupting classes or getting involved in fights.

Supportive Program Climate

As with many successful OST programs (Deschenes et al., 2010), students and staff reported that the climate of

the program—particularly positive relationships among youth and between youth and staff—was what kept participants coming back. Four strategies in particular enabled Éxito to cultivate a supportive program climate:

- Gathering time
- Low youth-to-adult ratio and small groups
- Quality, caring staff
- Positive norm setting

Gathering Time

After school ended, Éxito students had 30–45 minutes in the school cafeteria to enjoy a snack and socialize with peers and staff. This component of the program is in keeping with current research suggesting that providing unstructured time helps OST programs to retain older youth (Arbreton et al., 2008). This strategy also gave students time to develop relationships with their peers and adult staff. In our observations, we noted that the staff used this time to check in with students and give them attention and support. Staff reported that this time was important because it gave students a chance to unload the stresses of the school day. One staff member explained:

I made sure we were all available right at 2:45, having those conversations. “What happened today? How was your day?” Because right after that point, they don’t talk. They don’t tell their parents what’s going on. So we are that source, right there after school, for them. They get to talk; they tell us everything. You have conversations that make them think: “Let’s look at this differently. You think if you didn’t speak to the teacher that way, it would have turned out differently?”

Students reported that staff were accessible if they needed to talk. One student commented, “If we have a problem, we can always go to them and talk to them. They’re always there to listen.”

Low Youth-to-Adult Ratio and Small Groups

A low student-to-adult ratio, averaging one adult to 10 students during gathering time and one adult to four students in project groups, allowed staff members to pay attention to each student individually. Students appreciated the ability to receive individual attention in their project groups. As one student stated, “They make sure they help you a lot. So I like it.” Within the project groups, instructors encouraged students to work together and fostered positive interactions among students. For example, the music instructor regularly asked more ex-

perienced students to teach newer students, and the storytelling project required students to share personal stories with one another. One music student said, “Everybody helps each other. If I’m not playing something right, we help each other; we practice. Everybody is like family.”

Quality, Caring Staff

The consensus in our conversations with youth was that Éxito staff members were both caring and trustworthy. A student articulated this sense of trust:

Say if I come in a bad mood, they’ll be, like, “What’s wrong?” And they’ll sit me down, and they’ll talk to me about it, and they’ll tell me, like, “Don’t worry about it”—and I can count on them. That’s what I’m trying to say, I can count on them.

Staff leveraged the trust they had earned to correct and guide students as they coped with the stresses of their lives. Many students with whom we spoke seemed to take the guidance of Éxito staff to heart. One student explained:

She tells you, “You’re not supposed to do that, you’re supposed to do this,” so she actually corrects you, and she gives you good advice. If you’re having a stressed day and she can see it, she will just ask you, “Are you okay?”

A couple of students also described the ways in which the guidance they received in the program helped them make better decisions in school. One student commented, “I got better grades since I got in this program...because [the program coordinator] always tried to talk me out of stupid stuff I do. She helps me...do the right thing.”

Positive Norm Setting

The low youth-to-adult ratio and the caring relationships staff had with youth enabled the program to establish positive social norms, which were maintained in the program with a minimum of rules and disciplinary actions. Evaluators observed few instances of misbehavior during program observations, though project instructors reported that, at times, youth were tired and distracted at the end of the school day. If a participant had a problem during program time, project instructors referred the student to Éxito’s primary staff, who roamed the school hallways providing back-up support to each project group. Éxito case managers were also informed if a student acted out during the program.

These norms translated into positive peer relationships. Students described that they all “got along” in the program even when they didn’t get along during the school day. One student explained:

It's completely different, right? During school, you got a beef with that person, right? Then when you get in the kitchen [culinary arts project], you be like, [politely] "Pass me the salt?"...Because, you know, in school, you gotta fight to not look [weak]. But in the program it's like, you don't have to impress.

Several students reported that *Éxito* helped them to make new friends and become more social in school. One student reported:

I used to be shy, like, I wouldn't talk. And, as you can see, I'm talking a lot. So being around everybody, I'm more open, like I can express myself better than in the beginning.... It just helped me make more friends.

The positive social norms of the group were particularly significant for English language learners, who reported that they felt comfortable in program activities with English-speaking students and instructors because the many bilingual students in *Éxito* were willing to help them when they didn't understand something. Thus, for some youth, *Éxito* helped to establish the social ties that are critical to keeping students from disengaging from school.

Relevant, Hands-On Activities

Éxito's attendance grew in year 2 in part because students were interested in the program's project-based learning activities and found them meaningful. The themes for the six project groups were chosen partly based on student input. Project activities varied, of course, according to project needs, but they generally included hands-on instruction and several mini-projects that built to a final group project. Students reported that the project groups were both relevant and fun; student engagement in project activities appeared consistently high during our observations, as illustrated by this excerpt from field notes of an observation of the robotics group:

Each student has a robot, a kit, and sits at the table working independently on their laptop to program the robot. Some have music playing. The instructor says he needs a demonstration of three functions: up and back, bumper system check, and radar sensor. "Do you remember how to do that?" One of the robots needs a bumper sensor added to the front of it; [the instructor] works with a student to build this additional part, using a diagram, and add it to the robot. One student demonstrates with his robot which goes forward probably about 3 yards, turns around, and stops before returning. "Oh, I should have made it more seconds," he says, and goes back to his computer.

The instructor reported that all the students we observed on this day were in the school's special education program. He believed the robotics activities presented "a higher level" of intellectual challenge than the students experienced in their classes.

Students reported that the project topics tapped into their career interests and passions and, at least in some cases, their desire for self-sufficiency. One student explained of the culinary arts project, "[I'm learning] how to cook on my own.... Say if my mom is out, or she's working or something, I can just whip something up because I know how to cook." Another student commented:

I have two [projects]. I chose storytelling because I think it's better to let your story go than to keep it in.... Everybody has stories to tell and I have one. And I just love to write. And music is my thing. Every day when I come to school I have music on. I feel like my life is going to fall apart if I don't have music.

Across the various projects, students told us that they appreciated the hands-on nature of the activities. As one student said, "You're not sitting in classes doing work or writing or boring [stuff].... You're moving around, doing things, you know?"

Opportunities for Success

The project groups also provided opportunities for students to take risks—and experience success—in a supportive environment. For example, a student in the music group explained:

At first I didn't think I was going to do very well in drums because some music pieces were really complicated, and when I saw it being played it looked really hard, but when you break it down, it was actually really easy.

Another student had a similar experience in the graphic arts class:

I learned that if you try, you won't die. It's a little complicated drawing people in three dimensions. But if you try and put effort into it, it will turn out to look like people.

Once students learned the necessary skills, mini-projects leading up to a final group project gave them opportunities to demonstrate their skills and receive recognition. For example, the music group performed in the school. Music students described in a focus group the sense of accomplishment they experienced after their first performance:

P1: At first I was nervous, because you see all these people and you're thinking, "Oh my God, I'm going to mess up, I hope I don't mess up!" ... And then it's awesome, because then you look back at it and feel like, "I got this."

P2: Same thing for me; when we had the performance I was really nervous because it was the whole ninth-grade academy, and it was my academy and I see them every day. And I thought they would laugh and stuff. But afterwards I got good feedback, and they were saying it was really good. It made me feel happy.

These experiences of recognition were important, in part, because students were receiving positive feedback from their peers in the school. Students in other *Éxito* activities had similar experiences. Three students in a focus group articulated it this way:

P1: [Without *Éxito*] I probably wouldn't have been acknowledged.

P2: I wouldn't be noticed.

P3: Yeah, like, everybody in the school knows me now, because I've been in this program. Everybody.

Being "known" and "noticed" in a large anonymous urban high school is no small accomplishment. Through *Éxito*, students were known for something that was both positive and respected by their peers.

Individualized Support and Monitoring

For some participants, *Éxito* group activities were supplemented with intensive, individualized support. During the second year, 41 students were referred to case management. The supports were structured: case managers were to meet with students, at home and at school, a minimum of four times a month for several months. However, services were also tailored to the unique needs of individual students and their families. Case managers conducted initial assessments with students and families to determine their needs and identify underlying causes of the student's difficulties. They worked with participants to set and work toward goals. Depending on the issues, case managers could connect students and family members with resources within or beyond *Congreso* to address health, employment, housing, or educational needs.

Case managers adopted a strengths perspective in working with students. This stance includes valuing their

relationships with students, affirming students' strengths, conveying that growth and change are possible, and encouraging students to set their own goals (Arnold, Walsh, Oldham, & Rapp, 2007). In interviews, students talked about a variety of personal and academic goals they had identified with the help of their case managers. The rapport the case managers built with students emerged as a clear asset that probably worked to counteract the stigma afterschool staff reported that some students associated with case managers. Students regularly used the word *friend* to describe their case manager, saying, for example, "I don't speak with her like any other adult. I speak to her like a friend."

Case managers also monitored student progress in school, focusing particularly on attendance. They regularly checked school data on students' absences and class cuts; then they followed up with students who were missing school. Students said that this monitoring helped to increase their motivation. As one student said:

[My case manager] was always on me about that and always with me. And that's what I like most about the program.... They motivated me.... And she's always been there to help me and push me to go to school and was always there watching over me.

Another student stated, "I just need somebody to push me to do those things. So I guess the program supported me because... I just needed somebody to push me to do things."

Program Challenges

Though *Éxito* has shown promise in a number of areas, naturally the program faced challenges in implementing its dropout prevention model. Two notable challenges had to do with participant engagement with case managers and with building literacy and numeracy skills.

Engaging Hard-to-Reach Students in Case Management

Not all students were open to receiving case management. Case managers reported that some students were wary of the process or found it intrusive. For example, one student wanted to terminate services after his case manager shared his class-cutting record with his parents. A third of the case management students refused or lost interest in case management services before achieving their goals, although they remained in the afterschool program. These difficult-to-engage students may help to explain why case management students had higher rates of suspension and of failing English than did comparison

students (Table 1, page 23). As a group, case management students likely had higher incidence of emotional and behavioral challenges than the comparison students. This finding also suggests that students with behavioral challenges were more difficult to engage than students with attendance issues.

Providing Academic Support

Project-based learning activities and optional homework help benefitted many participants and improved the likelihood that they would pass their courses. Participants showed enthusiasm for the support they received, which included support from staff and peer tutors and access to laptops for Internet research. However, Éxito still faces challenges in directly affecting students' literacy and numeracy skills without losing their interest and engagement. Program staff noted that some students who needed help were not requesting it. For example, students who cut classes did not know they had homework. Also, project-based learning and homework help supports were not intensive enough to begin to address remedial issues. With only a quarter of eleventh-grade students in the school scoring at grade level on the state's standardized assessment in 2009–10, Éxito is continuing to develop the role it can play in improving students' academic competencies. In year 3, Éxito is drawing on college tutors and more online academic resources, including SAT prep software, to bolster students' academic skills.

Engaging and Supporting At-risk Students

Éxito played an important role in supporting many academically vulnerable students in their underperforming neighborhood high school. Though school reform efforts focused on improving the root causes of high dropout rates are essential to effect widespread improvement, this effort, led by a community-based organization (CBO), has shown promise in its impact on the trajectory of students with early signs of disengagement from school.

A comprehensive model like Éxito requires the resources that a large multi-service CBO like Congreso can bring to the table. Though other school-CBO partnerships may not have the range of resources necessary to implement the full Éxito model, they may be able to adopt some or all of the model's key components as outlined in this article. The early evaluation results from Éxito suggest that CBOs can play an important role in keeping struggling students in large urban high schools on track to graduate.

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Notes

¹ Congreso de Latinos Unidos, the 14th largest Hispanic nonprofit in the nation, has nearly 35 years of experience in meeting the myriad socio-economic challenges faced by its surrounding community, through education, employment, and health and social services. For information, go to www.congreso.net.