



**ESTABLISHING A FOUNDATION FOR PROGRESS
TOWARD HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION**

**Findings from Phase V of
the Citizen Schools Evaluation**

Executive Summary

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Citizen Schools is premised on the expectation that an intensive after-school experience in grades 6, 7, and 8 will help propel students toward long-term academic and social success. To accomplish this mission, Citizen Schools provides after-school programs of educational enrichment, career exposure, and high school and college preparation to students in these grades. Citizen Schools' progress toward advancing the academic success of educationally at-risk middle-school students and supporting positive life trajectories for these youth is being assessed through a multi-phase evaluation. This report presents findings from the fifth phase of the longitudinal evaluation of the middle and high school experiences of Citizen School participants in Boston.

Findings from the first four years of the evaluation indicate that Citizen Schools attracts and retains educationally at-risk students who report a strong sense of connection to the program and positive relationships with adults and peers in the program. Early findings demonstrated gains among Citizen Schools participants relative to a matched comparison group on most academic measures during middle school. In the fourth phase of the evaluation, participation in Citizen Schools during the middle-school years was found to be associated with increased levels of student engagement and achievement in high school. In particular, former Citizen Schools 8th Grade Academy participants at all levels of program exposure enrolled in high-quality high schools at about twice the rate of matched nonparticipants.

In the fifth phase, the analysis of the evaluation's "on-track" to graduation indicator, created to predict whether students are likely to graduate from high school on time, found that former 8th Grade Academy participants were more likely than matched nonparticipants to be on-track to graduate from high school on time.

Other indicators of student progress in high school, such as on-time promotion to the tenth grade and ninth- and tenth-grade course grades, were consistent with the positive results of the on-track indicator. Participants with high levels of program exposure were more likely than matched nonparticipants to have been promoted to tenth grade on time. Participants also significantly outperformed matched nonparticipants in ninth-grade English courses and tenth-grade math courses. A higher percentage of ninth-grade participants passed third marking-period English and a higher percentage of tenth-grade participants passed third marking-period math than did matched nonparticipants. In tenth grade, participants were more likely to pass the English/Language Arts MCAS and to score at proficient or advanced levels than were matched nonparticipants.

As in the fourth phase of the evaluation, no significant difference was found between the overall suspension rate of participants and nonparticipants in tenth grade. This pattern appears to continue in eleventh grade, where no difference in suspension rates was found. On the other hand, the attendance rate of former participants continues to be higher than that of matched nonparticipants in tenth and eleventh grades, and former participants selected high-quality high schools at a higher rate than did matched nonparticipants.

Former 8th Grade Academy Participants' Performance on Early High School Success Measures, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

Indicator	Ninth Grade			Tenth Grade		
	All	High Exposure	Low Exposure	All	High Exposure	Low Exposure
Selection of a high-quality high school	✓***	✓***	✓***	N/A	N/A	N/A
Attendance	✓***	✓***	✓*	✓**	✓**	✓*
Suspension	✓	✓**	✓		✓	
Pass English course in third marking period	✓**	✓**	✓			
Pass math course in third marking period	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓*	✓
Pass English/Language Arts tenth-grade MCAS	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓*	✓*	✓
Pass math tenth-grade MCAS	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✓
On-time promotion to tenth grade	✓	✓*	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A
On-track to graduation	✓*	✓**	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A

- ✓ Finding is in the right direction, although not statistically significant
- ✓* Participants outperformed matched nonparticipants, $p < .05$
- ✓** Participants outperformed matched nonparticipants, $p < .01$
- ✓*** Participants outperformed matched nonparticipants, $p < .001$
- N/A Measure not appropriate for this grade level

Exhibit reads: In ninth grade, former 8th Grade Academy participants selected high-quality high schools at a significantly higher rate than matched nonparticipants. The difference was statistically significant at the $p < .001$ level.

In its next phase, the evaluation will track former 8th Grade Academy participants through twelfth grade to confirm whether former participants continue to achieve positive academic and social outcomes and successfully complete high school at a rate similar to the rate predicted in this report.

The full report is available at:

<http://www.citizenschools.org/uploads/Citizen%20Schools%20PSA%20Phase%20V%20report.pdf>