Year 2 Evaluation

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Executive Summary

Get Focused, Stay Focused (GFSF) is a high school program designed to develop the skills and knowledge that lead to high school graduation, college readiness and completion, and successful entry into the workforce. To evaluate the program, 20 schools from throughout California were recruited to participate in a lottery in which half of the schools were randomly assigned to a treatment group that began the GFSF program in the fall of 2016 (Cohort 1) and the other half to a control group that began the program in the fall of 2017 (Cohort 2). The evaluation compares 9th grade students in the treatment schools who received the program during the 2016-17 school year with 9th grade students in the control schools who did not receive the program during the 2016-17 school year.

The ongoing evaluation is examining two aspects of the GFSF program: the implementation of the program in the 10 cohort 1 schools and the impact of the program on a range of student outcomes. The Year 1 evaluation report examined the implementation of the program in the first year and baseline comparisons between the two cohorts. This report examines the impact of the program on a range of student outcomes utilizing administrative data from 15 of the 20 evaluation schools for the 2016-17 school year. It also examines the implementation of the program in its second year.

We assessed the impact of the program on three aspects of student performance—attendance, behavior, and course performance—along with two composite "on-track" indicators found to be predictive of on-time, high school graduation. Overall, we found relatively small differences between cohort 1 and cohort 2 schools on a variety of student performance outcomes, suggesting that the GFSF program had little school-wide impact. But we should point out that generally, it is hard to have a school-wide impact based on a single program no matter how well designed and implemented. Even more comprehensive high school interventions have shown little impact of such outcomes, as we discuss further below.

As we found in the first evaluation report, the implementation of the GFSF program was uneven across the cohort 1 schools. One cohort 1 school did not continue the program in the second year. The limited survey data we collected suggest that all teachers did receive an instructional manual, which provides lesson suggestions and ways to ensure student buy-in to the program. Additionally, it appears all students did have access to their own consumable workbooks. Yet the survey data also suggest that not all teachers were able to complete all 16 lessons of the Module 1 curriculum in the time they had available.

Data from the online my10yearplan.com site revealed uneven usage by staff and students. Three schools had no staff or students using the tool at all during the school year and only two schools had all teachers use the online site. In only two of the schools did teachers who were using the online site access that site at least once per week (given a typical 18-week semester). Student usage was also uneven. In only four schools did a majority of students access the site. And it appears very few students completed all 42 online activities. It should be pointed out that the data available are unable to fully identify the fidelity with which schools are implementing the GFSF program.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

Education, particularly postsecondary education and training, is the key to sustaining the US economy. According to the Center on Education and Workforce at Georgetown University, fully 63 percent of jobs in the US economy in the year 2018 will require at least some college (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2010, p. 13). Yet by 2018, the current postsecondary system will produce 3 million fewer graduates than demanded by the labor market (Ibid, p. 16). The problem is not that students are not enrolling in postsecondary education, but rather they are not finishing. Graduation rates from 4-year colleges average 59%, while graduation rates from 2-year colleges average only 31% (Kena et al., 2014, Indicator 41, Figures 2 and 4). In addition, even students who graduate may not be well-matched with available occupations or lack the requisite skills. As the Georgetown report notes: "The United States is unable to help people match educational preparation with their career ambitions—not because it cannot be done but because it simply is not being done"(Carnevale et al., 2010, p.1).

Improving both college completion and the matching of education with careers requires students to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to make better and more informed career choices and to successfully navigate the educational system in preparation for their chosen career. An increasing body of research finds that two types of skills are important (Farrington et al., 2012; Kautz & Heckman, 2014; National Research Council, 2012). The first involves cognitive skills, such as literacy, critical thinking, and problem solving. The second involves social-emotional skills, such as initiative, grit, self-regulation, and collaboration. Although schools have traditionally focused on developing students' cognitive skills by teaching traditional academic subjects, recent research finds that social-emotional skills are actually more important in predicting college and labor market success (C. K. Jackson, 2012; OECD, 2015).

Recent research finds that students graduating from high school are deficient in both types of skills. A new study from Achieve, the nonprofit education reform organization, found that 78 percent of college faculty and 62 percent of employers that were surveyed reported high

schools are not preparing students for the expectations they will face in college and at work (Achieve, 2016). Furthermore, almost half of high school graduates enrolled in college also report at least some gaps in their preparation. The skill areas identified by college instructors and employers as most deficient are critical thinking, writing, and work and study habits, while the skill area identified by college students as most deficient are work and study habits. College instructors also report that the chief reason first-year students struggle is lack of motivation or persistence.

California faces these same challenges. A new report from the Public Policy Institute estimates that by 2030, 38 percent of jobs in California will require at least a bachelor's degree while population and education trends suggest that only 33 percent of working-age adults will have bachelor's degrees—a shortfall of 1.1 million college graduates (J. Jackson & Johnson, 2018). And although almost half of California high school graduates meet the eligibility requirements of the California State University (CSU) system, more than a third of all freshman enrolled in the CSU system are now required to take remedial classes (Ibid.).

Get Focused…Stay Focused (GFSF)!™

GFSF is a high school program designed to develop the skills and knowledge that lead to high school graduation, college readiness and completion, and successful entry into the workforce. The program was developed through a public-private partnership between the publisher of the program curriculum and Santa Barbara City College (SBCC), winner of the 2013 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence for its work developing dual enrollment programs with local high schools. The program is currently used in over 300 high schools throughout California.

The program consists of three interrelated components:

1. All freshman students in a high school complete a semester or year-long, comprehensive guidance course that helps them identify their interests and life goals, discover a career aligned to those interests and goals, and develop an educational pathway to prepare for that career. Students can receive dual enrollment credit from their local community college for completing the course.

2. The freshman course culminates with the development of an online, skills-based, 10-year career and education plan that students update each year throughout high school and can be used by advisors for counseling and instructors for academic coaching.

3. During the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, students take a series of follow-up instructional modules that helps them expand their career and education options and learn the process for selecting and applying to post-secondary education and identifying the skills needed in the workforce.

Upon completion of the program, students identify and graduate with:

- A carefully-considered career path
- An *informed* major or program of study
- A post-secondary institution or training program that not only matches their career and life goals but is also affordable
- A unique Skills-based Education Plan that facilitates successful entry into a highly competitive workforce upon completion of their education.

Additional components of the program can be introduced in middle school and college.

There is both theoretical and empirical support to explain why features of this program are likely to improve student outcomes in the short-term (high school), middle-term (college), and long-term (labor market). One is a theoretical framework developed by the National Research Council (NRC) that identifies the role of engagement in promoting student success and three psychological variables—students' beliefs about their competence and control; their educational-related values and goals; and their social connections to peers and adults in schools—that mediate the effects of students' educational contexts (National Research Council, Committee on Increasing High School Students' Engagement and Motivation to Learn,, 2004). These psychological variables are similar to those in Dweck's theory of academic mindsets and Duckworth's notion of grit (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007; Dweck, 2007). Additional theoretical background comes from the recent framework of social-emotional skills developed by Farrington and her colleagues at the Consortium for Chicago School Research (Farrington et al., 2012). This framework, too, recognizes the importance of academic mindsets in fostering academic perseverance, social skills and learning strategies that lead to improved academic behaviors (such as positive classroom behavior) and school performance. Social

cognitive career theory identifies three components that may be affected by students' completing a career/education plan: personal goals, outcome expectations, and self-efficacy beliefs (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Finally, the program addresses a problem identified by Schneider and Stevenson, who found that although many American youth were ambitious, "often their ambitions are dreamlike and not realistically connected to specific educational and career paths" (Schneider & Stevenson, 1999, p. 4).

There is also some limited research showing that the development of career and education plans leads to short-term and medium-term benefits. One recent study found that students who developed a career/education plan in ninth grade were more engaged in school by their junior year (Plasman, 2018). Additional research indicates that career and education planning may encourage students to make stronger connections between high school work and later options in college and/or careers (Solberg et al., 2013). Students themselves tend to have high opinions of career/education plans and have identified plans as an important tool in helping to prepare for life after school (Witko, Bernes, Magnusson, & Bardick, 2006). A study by ACT (2008) found that a match between identified career aspirations and interests, and eventual career choice resulted in higher income later in life. Two recent studies that found students who enrolled in a defined program of study in the their first year of community college were more likely than other students to earn a credential or transfer within five years (Jenkins & Cho, 2012; Jenkins & Weiss, 2011). Other research has explored the positive effects of career guidance programs on academic achievement, school climate, and transition from high school to college or career (Hooley, Marriott, & Sampson Jr., 2011), but these full career guidance programs are much more comprehensive than the completion of a career/education plan.

This research was used to develop a Logic Model for the GFSF program that identifies the immediate outputs from the program activities and the proximate and distal student outcomes resulting from those outputs (see Appendix A). For example, the model posits that the program will increase students' interest in the future and the knowledge about how to achieve the future they want, which, in turn, should improve students' self-efficacy and motivation. According to the NRC model of engagement and the work of Dweck and Duckworth, these beliefs and attitudes should improve student engagement and school success. Based on the CCSR framework they should also help develop several key social-emotional skills, such as perseverance and learning strategies. And according to the work of Schneider and Stevenson, the

knowledge about careers and educational pathways should help students both to develop their ambitions and to reach them, including entering into defined programs of study in their first year of college.

Despite the strong theoretical underpinnings, empirical research, and strong testimony from many school officials about the lasting impacts of the program on students, the GFSF program has never been subjected to any rigorous evaluation. Thus, it is unknown exactly how effective the program is in improving students' near-term and long-term outcomes. Fortunately, the GFSF program staff realized the importance of carrying out a rigorous, experimental evaluation.

Evaluation

Researchers at UC Santa Barbara worked with the staff of GFSF to design an evaluation of the program. The evaluation employs random assignment at the school level and is thus known as a cluster randomized controlled trial. It meets the highest What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) rating of *Meets WWC Group Design Standards without Reservations* (U.S. Department of Education, 2014, p. 9). Twenty schools from throughout California were recruited to participate in the evaluation. Half of the schools were randomly assigned to treatment group that began the GFSF program in the fall of 2016 (Cohort 1) and the other half to a control group that began the program in the fall of 2017 (Cohort 2). The evaluation compares 9th grade students in the treatment schools who received the program during the 2016-17 school year with 9th grade students in the control schools who did not receive the program during the 2016-17 school year. This experimental design makes it possible to assess the impact of the GFSF program by comparing the outcomes of students in Cohort 1 schools with the outcomes of students in Cohort 2 schools.

The evaluation was designed based on a logic model (see Appendix A) that identifies: (a) the program, school, and community resources used to implement the program, (b) the activities that those resources help provide, (c) the immediate outputs that resort from those activities, and the (d) short-term (grades 9-12), (e) medium term (post-secondary), and (f) long-term (labor market) student outcomes that ultimately result from the program.

Summary of Findings from the First Report

The first report of the evaluation (2017) examined the implementation of the program in the 9th grade for the 10 Cohort 1 schools during the 2016-17 school year and the student outputs and some short-term student outcomes. The report drew on a variety of data:

1. Surveys of course instructors and school staff at the end of their GFSF teaching assignment and the development of a fidelity of implementation scale based on those data;
2. Data collected from My10yearPlan.com, that students use to record their work from the 9th grade GFSF course.
3. A student survey administered to all 9th grade students in the beginning of the school year;
4. Interviews with a random sample of students and their parents from each of the 20 schools at the beginning of 9th grade and the end of 9th grade;
5. Administrative data collected from all 20 schools via Cal-PASS, including information on attendance, courses completed and failed, GPA, and suspensions.

Background Information on the 20 Evaluation Schools

The first part of the evaluation involved examining background information on the 20 evaluation schools, focusing on comparisons between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools. Although schools were randomly assigned to the treatment or control group, the relatively small sample cannot insure that the two groups of schools are equivalent in terms of student demographics or school performance. The current report updates these figures and tests for statistical differences.

Program Implementation

The next part of the evaluation focused on the implementation of the program in the 10 Cohort 1 schools. Implementation fidelity was calculated using two separate measures: a faculty and staff survey, and an examination of how many students successfully completed their online plan. The survey asked administrators, lead teachers, and course instructors to respond to various questions in an effort to understand how many of the required tasks they completed, and how many of the recommended tasks they completed. For administrators, there were four required tasks and five additional recommended tasks. Required tasks included such tasks as specifically choosing effective teachers, having an identified class, providing appropriate training, and staying involved and supportive. Lead teachers had two required tasks and seven additional

recommended tasks. Lead teacher requirements included helping encourage appropriate professional development, and encouraging the involvement of the administrator. Finally, course instructors had four required tasks and six additional recommended tasks. These required tasks included having students complete their ten-year plans, participating in professional development, identifying as an effective teacher, and using the appropriate course materials. Across the entirety of cohort 1 schools, there were 12 responses at the administrative level, 7 lead teachers, and 27 course instructors. Course instructors tended to display higher levels of implementation than lead teachers or administrators. The administrators represented eight of the ten schools, the lead teachers seven of the ten, and the course instructors also seven of the ten.

My10yearPlan.com

The culminating project throughout the 9th grade Career Choices course is the completion of an online 10-year plan through the online program My10yearPlan.com. This online plan is meant to be referenced and updated throughout high school and into postsecondary education. Considering the importance of this task, it is vital that students complete it. One question in the Implementation Fidelity Survey asked teachers whether they required students to complete the online plan in order to successfully pass the course. Twenty-two of the 25 (88%) responding teachers reported that they did have this requirement.

Data pulled from the My10yearPlan.com website revealed the number of students from each school who received an enrollment code for the program, the number who registered, the number who completed Chapter 1, the number who completed 80% of the work, and the number who successfully completed all activities of the online plan. Of note, across the ten cohort 1 schools, only 34% of students completed all the required My10yearPlan.com activities.

Baseline Data from Student and Parent Interviews

Interviews were conducted on a sample of students and parents. Several prominent themes stood out from the interviews. Doing well in school was important to everyone. Universally, there was an understanding that doing well in school allows one to go on to college, and going college opens up more opportunities to get a "good job." Although students recognized school was important in order to get into to college, they did not always see the "real world" value in class material, and desired more "practical" lessons, for example, how to pay taxes. Students also exhibited varying levels of understanding of the logistics of such places (e.g., two-year colleges versus four-year colleges). Most students were able to identify role

models who could help them with thinking about college and careers, for example, an older brother or cousin. Some students had very clear definitions of success and what they wanted to do as a future career (i.e. lawyer, marine biologist, doctor), while others were unsure.

In general, students who had taken the GFSF class appeared more knowledgeable about what physical steps (how many years of school, for example) were needed to achieve their goal career. However, for those students who didn't know what they wanted, they found the work assigned to them in their GFSF class, such as writing down their goals, to be stressful. One student described it as "scary" to think about the future. Another student found that workbook exercises in which they were asked to make decisions about someone else's life as less helpful. However, this student already had a strong understanding of what to do in the future. Students who may not know what they want to do might find it useful to practice these decisions on someone else rather than themselves. Several students found the GFSF education on expenses and budgeting, as well as the resources for further exploring career options, as invaluable. Parents also wanted their children to continue their schooling through college. Parents varied in their own levels of education, from completing less than college to graduate degrees. In terms of barriers to future success, both students and parents primarily cited that students needed to work hard and apply themselves in school. Parents and students were also aware of the financial burden of further schooling.

Baseline Data from the Student Survey

In addition to administrative data obtained from the state, we also administered a survey to students in both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2. The survey asked students to respond to questions focusing on many different aspects of their lives, both in relation to school and home. A number of these questions focused around identifying specific factors relating to student dispositions, engagement, and 21st Century Skills. Additionally, students were asked about their plans after high school. They were asked about the highest education credential they expected to receive, as well as what type of job they expected to have ten years after completing high school.

In addition to asking students questions relating to various unobserved factors, they were also asked questions relating to their career and education expectations. A substantial majority of students (69.2%) expected to complete at least some level of postsecondary education. There was also a large group of students who did not yet know how much education they wanted to pursue.

Baseline Data from CALPASS

The final source of data was gathered from CalPASS. At the time, we were only able to collect data from 12 of the total 20 schools in the evaluation. The data covered the three school years, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, before the GFSF program was introduced. We focused on the following key areas: credit accumulation (total, A-G, and course failures), GPA (total and A-G), college readiness indicators (9th grade CSU on-track and 9th grade UC on-track), course failures, and on-track graduation indicators (credits completed at the end of 9th grade and number of failed academic courses). The college readiness indicators were created by identifying the percentage of 9th grade students who had successfully received A-G credits in the recommended courses. At the end of 9th grade, this entails completion of 1 full credit in English, 1 credit of Algebra, and 1 elective credit. In order to be deemed on track for CSU, students needed to maintain a 2.0 GPA across the three courses, while UC readiness required a 3.0 GPA. Based on this data, we are able to observe differences in trends between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 evaluation schools. Of note, however, is that by the 2015-16 school year approximately 35% of students in both cohorts were on track to meet CSU entrance requirements (minimum of 2.0 GPA across A-G courses and 15 A-G credits by graduation).

Summary

There are a number of takeaways from the report overall. First, it appears that the participating schools are fairly advantaged in regards to graduation rates as compared to the state as a whole. Second, Cohort 1 schools tend to exhibit slightly better results on a majority of our identified metrics in comparison to Cohort 2 schools. Finally, current A-G readiness measures indicate there is significant room for improvement across all schools.

While there were seemingly observable differences between the Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools on baseline measures, a majority of these measures were not statistically significant. Furthermore, we will utilize a statistical technique that takes into account performance prior to an intervention when making final conclusions. Under this difference-in-differences method, we will be able to determine both whether students in Cohort 1 experience growth on our identified measures compared to students in Cohort 2 as well as in comparison to how they would have been expected to perform without the intervention.

Overview of Current Report

This report examines additional school-reported, short-term outcomes for students in the 20 evaluation schools in the 2016-17 school year based on administrative data that were not available until this past year. This report also examines the implementation of the program in the 10th grade for the 10 Cohort 1 schools during the 2017-18 school year and the student outputs from the program.

Chapter 2

Study Design

This chapter describes the design of the study, including the random assignment of schools, the research questions addressed by the study, and the various measures and the research methods used to conduct the analysis.

The Random Assignment Design

Random assignment is the most rigorous research design to determine program effectiveness. It creates two equivalent groups: a treatment group that participates in the program and a control group that does not. As a result, any differences in student outcomes between the two groups can be attributed to the program itself. Randomization can be conducted at two levels: students and schools.

Student Randomization

In this design, schools implement the program as a pilot for a sample of 9th grade students, say in two to four classes. The school recruits twice as many students for the program as they can serve, and then randomly assigns half the students to the program class and the other students to an alternative class. The evaluation compares outcomes for both groups of students.

School Randomization

In this design, schools that wish to implement the program for all 9th graders enter a lottery. Half of the schools in the lottery are randomly selected to implement the GFSF program in 2016-17 (cohort 1) and the other half are randomly selected to implement the program in 2017-18 (cohort 2). The evaluation compares outcomes for 9th grade students in the first group of cohort 1 (GFSF) schools to 9th grade students in the second group of cohort 2 (control) schools, who will not have participated in the program in the first year of implementation.

Recruiting schools to participate in a random-designed study was both arduous and time consuming. The GFSF staff spent fully two years to recruit schools for the current evaluation study. Initially, both forms of randomization were offered to schools interested in adopting the program in the hopes that having two options would entice more schools to participate. But that did not turn out to be the case. Most schools who wanted to adopt the program did not want to exclude some 9th graders from participating. So after more than a year of effort, only one high

school agreed to pilot the program on a sample of 9th graders. And despite providing careful instructions on how to randomly the students into the program, students instead were invited to sign up and were selected based on the course fitting into their overall course schedule. Another limitation of student randomization option is that GFSF program is really designed as a school not just a class intervention, which argues for randomizing schools to the program.

The school randomization option was also problematic. Most schools that became interested in adopting the program were reluctant to enter a lottery in which half of the schools would have to wait a year before implementing the program. Similar to the first case, schools who were convinced of the value of the program did not want their students to have to wait a year before receiving the benefits of the program.

Despite these hurdles, the GFSF program staff were finally able to recruit 20 schools to participate in the evaluation study. This is a relatively small sample size to detect significant impacts of a school-level program, although we made adjustments in our statistical model to improve our estimates (see Appendix B). The participating schools were required to sign an Evaluation Participation Form that described the benefits and responsibilities of participating in the evaluation in which they agreed to be randomly assigned to either start the program in the Fall of 2016 (cohort 1 schools) or the Fall of 2017 (cohort 2 schools). They also agreed to complete interviews and report student outcomes as required for the evaluation, including providing administrative data via the Cal-PASSPlus organization (https://www.calpassplus.org/).

Characteristics of Schools

Randomly assigning schools to begin the GFSF program in 2016-17 or in 2017-18 should ensure that the two groups of schools are equivalent in demographics and other characteristics that could affect student outcomes. To verify this for the present evaluation, we compared the two groups of schools on a number of demographic characteristics in the 2016-17 school year (these data were not available for the year 1 report).

Overall there were no statistical differences in several demographic characteristics: race/ethnicity, socioeconomically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities (Table 1). Despite sizeable differences in the proportion of Hispanics and Asians between cohort 1 and cohort 2, the small sample size was unable to find that these differences were statistically significant. Both groups of schools in the evaluation study had somewhat

higher percentages of socioeconomically disadvantaged students than the state average, somewhat lower percentages of Hispanics and higher percentages of Asians, and lower percentages of English learners. It should be noted that the evaluation schools are all high schools, while the state averages include students enrolled in elementary, middle, and high schools.

Table 2.1
Comparison of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools, 2016-17

	State (%)	Cohort 1 Schools (N=10) (%)	Cohort 2 Schools (N=10) (%)	Difference (% points)	Significance
Race/ethnicity					
Asian	9.0	19.4	7.6	11.8	.224
Black	5.6	1.7	2.6	-0.9	.516
Hispanic	54.2	34.6	51.1	-16.5	.238
White	23.2	32.7	32.1	0.6	.965
Other	8.0	11.5	6.6	4.9	.423
Socioeconomically disadvantaged	59.8	63.0	67.9	-4.9	.568
English learner	21.4	9.0	13.4	-4.4	.325
Students with disabilities	10.9	9.9	10.2	-0.3	.858

NOTE: Statistical significance of the difference between GFSF and non-GFSF schools are based on t-tests assuming equal variances.

Data Sources

A number of data sources were used to conduct the evaluation over the first two years of the study.

Student Surveys

Grade 9 students in both cohort 1 and cohort 2 schools were surveyed at the beginning of the school year and at the beginning of the second semester for students taking the course in the second semester. The surveys collected information on various aspects of students' lives in school and at home. In total, we have collected over 2100 responses on this survey across the two cohorts. No student surveys were administrated in the second year (10^{th} grade) of the program in cohort 1 schools, nor were any 10^{th} grade students surveyed in cohort 2 schools.

Staff Surveys

Staff in cohort 1 schools were surveyed at the end of the first year of the program (2016-17) in order to ascertain the fidelity of program implement. Surveys were collected from nine of the 10 Cohort 1 schools, although only five schools had respondents from each of the three surveyed groups (administrators, lead teachers, and course instructors). School staff in cohort 1 schools were also surveyed at the end of the second year of the program (2017-18), although responses were obtained for only four schools (see Chapter 4 below).

Interviews

Interviews were conducted on a sample of students and parents to better understand student and parent experiences with the GFSF program, school motivation and achievement, and short and long terms goals relating to high school, college, and career plans. A sample of ten students and their parents participated in short (5-10 minute) video interviews with a researcher from the UCSB evaluation team. These pairs were selected from a list of students who responded "yes" to a survey question asking if they would be interested in participating in a follow-up interview with their parents. Participants were selected to get a sample from varied sociodemographic backgrounds and types of schools. Once selected, participants were contacted through an email address or phone number that they provided on the survey. All student-parent interviews were conducted through Zoom, a secure online video call application. Students and parents completed the interview at a place and time that was convenient and comfortable for them.

My10yearPlan.Com

Usage data were collected from the website that hosted on the online tool, My10yearPlan.com, over the course of the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years. This allowed us to monitor how many students opened their accounts and the number of chapters they completed from the 9th grade course and the 10th grade Module 1 lessons.

Administrative Data

In their evaluation application, participating schools pledged to provide data to Cal-PASSPlus, a non-profit agency that collects, reports, and shares administrative data from participating school districts and the three higher education systems in California (https://www.calpassplus.org/). Cal-PASS collects the same data that districts are required to submit to the state as part of the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System

(CALPADS). Some of the districts with evaluation schools have provided such data on a regular basis for a number of years prior to the study, while other participating districts had never participated in Cal-PASS. So a major hurdle in conducting the evaluation was getting evaluation schools to submit data to Cal-PASS, something that has consumed considerable time and is still ongoing. Currently, we have secured data on 15 or the 20 evaluation schools, with one cohort 2 school having quit the study.

Once the districts submitted the data to Cal-PASS, the Cal-PASS staff created a number of extract files that were used in the analysis:

Student files: Student demographic information (gender, race, English learner status), birthdate, and grade level.

Attendance files: Expected attendance days, number of days attended, number of days absent due to suspensions, expulsions, excused absences, unexcused absences for each school attended in 2016-17. These files were summed to the student level, yielding attendance for the entire school year regardless of the number of schools a student attended.

Course files: Course title, code, credits attempted, credits earned, a-g status (whether the course meets eligibility requirements for the University of California or the California State University), term, and final grades for each course the student took over the 2016-17 school year. These files were aggregated to the student level, yielding total credits attempted and earned, total academic credits (math, science, English, and social studies), total a-g credits, overall grade point average, a-g grade point average.

These files were then merged by using a unique student ID common to all the files, resulting in a single, student-level file for students who were enrolled in the 9th grade in 2016-17.

A school-level file was then created with an indicator variable that identified whether the school was a cohort 1 school (started the GFSF program in 2016-17) or cohort 2 school (eligible to start the GFSF program in 2017-18).

Table 2.2 shows the amount and sources of data collected for the evaluation. One of the cohort 1 schools refused to administer any student or staff surveys or use My10yearPlan.com because of privacy concerns. And five of the 20 schools—two cohort 1 and 3 cohort 2 schools—did not submit data to CalPASS.

Table 2.2
Inventory of Data Collected for Evaluation Schools, 2016-17

School	Cohort	Freshman Cohort[1]	Implementation Survey: Admin, Lead, CT[2]	Student My10yearPlan started/ completed	Student Surveys completed - FALL	Student Surveys completed - SPRING	Cal-PASS Data[3]
1	1	581	1,1,5	460/234	356		A C D S
2	1	20	1,1,1	16/1	13		A C D S
3	1	5	2,1,1	5/0	4		A C D S
4	1	249	1,1,1	251/90	148	102	A C D S
5	1	531		529/0			A C D S
6	1	30	1,0,0	30/0	30		No MOU
7	1	558	3,0,7	547/249	148	88	A C D S
8	1	552	0,1,6	533/87	203	57	A C D S
9	1	505	1,1,1	500/253	145	73	No MOU
10	1	13	1,1,1	42/23	12		A C D S
TOTAL		3044		2913/937	1059	320	
11	2	29			29		A C DS
12	2	148			131		A C D S
13	2	14			17		A C D S
14	2	540					A C D S
15	2	341					
16	2	269					A C D S
17	2	534			500		A C D S
18	2	604					A C D S
19	2	92			68		
20	2	7					No MOU
TOTAL		2578			1804		

[1]Data from Dataquest (https://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/).
[2]Admin=Administrator; Lead=Lead teacher; CT=Classroom teacher
[3]A=Attendance data; C=Course data; D=Discipline data; S=Student data.
NOTE: All data are for the 2016-17 school year.

Measures

A variety of measures were created to assess the implementation and impact of the GFSF program. Some of those were constructed and reported in the Year 1 report. Below we describe the measures used in the current report. Some of these measures are used to assess the impact of the GFSF program on 9th grade students' school performance in 2016-17, the first year of the program, based on administrative data that were not available in time for the Year 1 report. Other measures are used to assess the implementation and impact of the program in the second year of implementation of the program in 2017-18.

ABC Outcomes

A variety of high school programs are designed to improve students outcomes in a number of areas, including attendance, behavior, and course performance; sometimes referred to as ABC outcomes (e.g., Corrin, Sepanik, Rosen, & Shne, 2016). Similar measures were created to assess the effectiveness of the GFSF program (Table 2.3). In addition to single measures of attendance, behavior, and course performance, we created two composite, on-track indicators of 9th grade performance that other studies have found to be predictors of on-time, high school graduation (Allensworth & Easton, 2005, 2007; Corrin et al., 2016).

Analysis

The impact of the GFSF program was assessed using a series of two-level statistical models (HLM). This type of model is useful in assessing the influence of two types of factors on student outcomes: student-level factors such as race/ethnicity, gender, and academic background; and school-level factors such as student composition, size, and type of school. The particular school-level factor of interest in this evaluation is a factor indicating whether or not the school implemented the GFSF program for 9th graders in the 2016-17 school year (cohort 1 schools). That is, controlling for other student-level and school-level factors, do 9th grade students who attend GFSF schools have significantly better outcomes than 9th grade students who attended schools that did not implement the program. In addition to assessing the overall impact of the program, it is also possible to assess whether the impact varies between schools that implemented the program with high fidelity and schools that implemented the program with low fidelity (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallance, 2005). Finally, the models were used to assess the impact of the program on different subgroups of students, such as racial/ethnic

minorities, English Language Learners, and at-risk students. Appendix B provides a detailed description of the models.

Table 2.3
Description of ABC Outcome Measures, 2016-17

Measure	Description	Range	Mean
Attendance			
Attendance rate	Number of days attended/Number of days expected to attend	0-1	0.96
Chronic absence rate	Indicator of whether student attendance rate <=.90	0-1	0.11
Behavior			
Suspension rate	Indicator of whether student ever absent from school due to suspension	0-1	0.06
Course performance			
Total credits	Number of credits earned in the academic year. Five credits represents a one-semester course	0-90	48.7
Failed courses	Number of semester courses failed in the academic year	0-14	1.02
A-G credits	Number of A-G (college preparatory) credits earned		
GPA	Average grade received in high school coursework (A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D=1, F=0, and all other codes were set as non-GPA related grades). To calculate, a GPA_pts variable was generated to represent total number of points earned in GPA courses. Then, a GPA credits variable was generated to represent the total number of credits earned in courses that factored into students' GPAs. Finally, GPA points were divided by GPA credits to create a total GPA that is weighted by credits	0-4	2.89
A-G GPA	Calculated the same way as GPA for credits earned in A-G courses	0-4	2.62
Composite measures			
On-track indicator 1	Indicator of whether student earned five credits and failed no more than one course	0-1	0.76
On-track indicator 2	Indicator of whether student had an attendance rate of at least 95%, had no suspensions, and had no course failures	0-1	0.54

Note: Sample of students in evaluation schools (J=15 schools; N=4,284 students)

Chapter 3

First-Year Student Outcomes

The GFSF program provides students with a roadmap to their future beginning in the 9th grade. The 9th grade experience centers around a one-semester course in which students first assess their interests and desires (who am I?), then determine what career is most likely to satisfy those interests and desires (what do I want?), and finally develop an education and skills plan to get them there (how do I get there?). Although many students in our interviews viewed the course favorably and found the exercises in career and education planning useful, does the program result in any measurable impact on student's performance in school? In other words, does the GFSF program help students perform better in school such that they could improve their prospects for reaching their career and educational goals?

To address this question, we compared the performance of students in the eight schools that implemented the GFSF program in the 2016-17 school year with the performance of students in the seven schools that did not implement the program that year using the statistical models described earlier. The performance measures cover attendance, behavior, and course performance.

The results are shown in Table 3.1. For each outcome measure, we estimate the average performance of students in the cohort 1 (GFSF) schools compared with the average performance of students in the cohort 2 (comparison) schools. The difference in those two value represents the impact of the program. A positive impact indicates that students in the cohort 1 schools perform better than students in the cohort 2 schools; a negative impact indicates that students in the cohort 1 schools perform worse than students in the cohort 2 schools. Because the scales for each outcome measure can differ, we express each impact in a common metric known as an Effect Size (ES). The metric represents the impact expressed as a standard deviation of a normalized value with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of 1 (Cohen, 1988). Generally, a meaningful impact would have an ES of at least .2 or two-tenths of a normal standard deviation. Finally, we report the significance level or p-value, which represents the probability that the measured impact is NOT statistically significant. A significant impact would have a probably of an error or false claim of .1 or less.

Table 3.1
Estimated Impacts on Student Outcomes, 2016-17

Outcome	Estimated Outcomes for Students in Cohort 1 Schools (J=8)	Estimated Outcomes for Students in Cohort 2 Schools (J=7)	Estimated Impact	Effect Size	p-value for Estimated Impact
Attendance					
Attendance rate	95.4	95.2	0.2	0.03	0.667
Chronic absence rate	9.7	9.6	-0.1	0.00	0.929
Behavior			.		
Suspension rate	4.1	6.9	2.8	0.12	0.297
Course performance					
Total credits	50.6	46.2	4.4	0.20	0.621
Failed courses	1.03	0.94	-.09	0.05	0.745
A-G credits	24.1	29.3	-5.2	0.29	0.502
GPA	2.79	2.89	-0.10	0.11	0.324
A-G GPA	2.61	2.53	0.09	0.09	0.480
Composite measures					
On-track indicator 1	77.7	79.4	-2.3	0.05	0.628
On-track indicator 2	54.1	51.7	2.4	0.05	0.550

Notes: N=4284 students; J=15 schools. Estimated impact based on HLM model with student-level covariates, grand mean centered, and a single school-level covariate. Effect size is the estimated impact divided by the overall student-level standard deviation.

With regard to attendance, the GFSF program showed little impact. Students in both the cohort 1 and cohort 2 schools had similar attendance rates and chronic absence rates. So the estimated impact of the GFSF program was very small, as verified by the small effect size. And the impact did not approach being significant. We should note that attendance rates do not vary greatly among schools—most of the variation is between students, as one might expect. As a result, there is little variation among schools that may be impacted by any school-level intervention.

The impact of the GFSF program on suspension rates was somewhat larger. Students attending the GFSF schools had an estimated suspension rate of 4.1 percent, compared to a suspension rate of 6.9 percent for students in cohort 2 schools. But the impact was still rather small in terms of its ES and not statistically significant.

Impacts on course performance were mixed. Students attending GFSF schools earned 4.4 more credits than students in cohort schools. But they also had somewhat higher numbers of failed courses (1.03 vs. 0.94) and 5.2 fewer A-G credits (this is somewhat surprising in that the freshman class was given "G" status in nine of the 10 cohort 1 schools starting in 2016-17). They also had a slightly lower overall GPA (2.79 vs. 2.89), but a higher GPA in A-G courses (2.61 vs. 2.53). None of these differences were statistically significant.

Finally, we estimated the impact of the GFSF program on two indicators that measure how well students are on-track to successfully graduate from high school. Based on the first indicator, 77.7 percent of the students in cohort 1 schools were on-track to graduate, compared to 79.4 percent of the students in cohort 2 schools, a difference of 2.3 percentage points favoring the control schools. Based on the second indicator, 54.1 percent of the students in cohort 1 schools were on-track to graduate, compared to 51.7 percent of the students in cohort 2 schools, a differences of 2.4 percentage points favoring the GFSF schools. So the results from the first indicator suggests students in the cohort 1 schools are not doing as well as the students in the comparison schools, while the second indicator suggests cohort 1 students are doing better. Yet neither difference is statistically significant.

Overall, we found relatively small differences between cohort 1 and cohort 2 schools on a variety of student performance outcomes, suggesting that the GFSF program had little school-wide impact in its first year of implementation. But, as we described earlier, the program is designed to have a long-term impact beyond high school. We should point out that generally, it is hard to have a school-wide impact based on a single program no matter how well designed and implemented. Moreover, like most multi-site interventions, the fidelity of program implementation varied widely among the 10 cohort 1 schools, as we pointed out in last year's evaluation report. We return to these topics in the last chapter of the report.

Chapter 4

Second-Year Implementation

The GFSF program model identifies a number of school responsibilities necessary to maintain a successful program and ensure full benefits from the program. This chapter focuses on the fidelity of implementation of Module 1 – the 10th grade follow-up to the Career Choices Freshman Course – as it examines how schools worked to meet the responsibilities identified by GFSF staff in the Performance Pledge. GFSF also provides a wide range of resources online, in print, and in person to schools on how to successfully implement the program schoolwide for all students. The GFSF parent company provides recognition to schools for successfully implementing the 9th grade program as it was designed. While this recognition does not exist for Module 1, the Performance Pledge does still identify school responsibilities for the activities.

The GFSF Performance Pledge

The Performance Pledge identifies specific tasks, as well as broader activities, schools should undertake prior to the start of the module, during the module, and at the end of the module. The first step is for the school to identify how the module will be taught to students. The module itself is not designed to be a standalone course, but rather to be integrated into an existing academic course. The 16 lessons are then taught either over consecutive days, or throughout the semester. Each lesson is meant to build on and help further focus students' 10-year plans created during the Career Choices Freshman Course.

Prior to the start of the course, schools need to order appropriate materials such that each student has his/her own consumable workbook. Ideally, teachers should be identified because of their enthusiasm and effectiveness toward teaching the module. Each of the teachers also needs to be trained to teach the course through one of the pre-approved professional development activities. Finally, each teacher should receive a manual on program instruction.

Throughout the year, the school should continue to provide training and support to module teachers as they need. Additionally, module teachers should be provided common planning time in order to improve course planning and evaluation of student progress. Students themselves should be required to complete activities online through the My10yearPlan.com website. This is the same planning website through which they completed their ten-year plans

during freshman year. They should continue to access their online plans throughout the module and update the plan as they complete additional activities or make alterations to their goals.

Upon completion of the course, students should complete the post-course evaluation surveys of the course. Teacher should also complete the online surveys about the course. Finally, the identified lead teacher should update any school data regarding student participation in the course.

Fidelity of Implementation

To assess whether schools were successfully following through with their responsibilities, we utilized two separate data sources: a faculty/staff survey, and my10yearplan.com data. First, we attempted to survey administrators, lead teachers, and course instructors at each of the participating evaluation schools. Unfortunately, due to the restrictions in our initial memorandum of understanding, we were not allowed to contact faculty and staff individually to request them to complete the survey. We had to rely on a single point of contact at each school to distribute surveys for us. This resulted in a very low response rate. The my10yearplan.com data is slightly more comprehensive, and it provides information both for teachers and students regarding the number of logins to the site and whether the activities were completed.

Faculty and Staff Surveys

Surveys were collected at the end of the spring semester in order to assure teachers had had sufficient time to complete all or most of the module activities. Topics covered by the survey included how the module was delivered to students, which students completed the module, student access to my10yearplan.com, and training prior to instruction. Across the ten treatment schools, data regarding follow-up Module 1 was only able to be collected from four of them. Additionally, responses were not collected from all of the module instructors at each of these four schools.

My10yearPlan.com Data

Through the GFSF program, students are meant to create a ten-year plan during their freshman Career Choices course. This is done through the website my10yearplan.com. During Module 1, they are meant to update their plans as they learn about new careers and as their goals may slightly change. Metadata is collected through the website indicating the number of logins

to the site and whether identified activities were completed. Module instructors are also meant to create an online profile so that they can monitor student progress. Data from my10yearplan.com was collected from six of the ten treatment schools. Three of the schools with no data did not require students to use the online planning tool. The fourth school chose not to offer Module 1 during the 2017-18 school year.

Results

As mentioned above, the lack of response on the faculty and staff survey regarding Module 1 meant the data retrieved from these surveys was only of limited utility in determining fidelity of implementation. However, there are some results that should be noted. Across the four schools responding to the survey, there were a total of six Module 1 instructor responses. Table 4.1 below presents the most telling results that may yet provide some insight into whether schools are implementing the GFSF program with high levels of fidelity.

Table 4.1
Responses to Staff Surveys

	Yes	No
Training received	4	2
Instructional guide received	6	0
Taught in existing course	6	0
Students module requirement	6	0
Completed all 16 lessons	4	2
My10yearPlan.com access required	6	0
Full staff access to student plans	4	2
Students had personal workbooks	6	0

There are a few points to highlight and further explain from the above numbers in order to gain a more complete picture of the implementation:

- Not all teachers received specific training prior to beginning instruction
- Not all teachers were able to complete the 16 Module 1 lessons
- Each of the teachers identified that the module lessons were integrated into an existing course; however, the sequencing of instruction differed. Two of the teachers identified that the module lessons were taught across consecutive days, while four of the teachers indicated that the lessons were spread across the full semester

- All students were required to participate in the module, and they are required to access the online plan
- While not necessary for high fidelity, it is interesting to note four of the teachers indicated that all school staff had access to students plans in order to use them as motivational tools

Further information can be garnered from the my10yearplan.com data. The following two tables present administrative data pulled from the online plan site. Table 4.2 presents data relating to teacher usage of the site, including: the number of teachers registered to use the online site at each school, the average number of times teachers at each school logged in to the site with the range of logins, and the number of teachers at each school who had at least one student login to the site. Table 4.3 presents data relating to student usage of the online site, including: the total number of students in Module 1 at each school, the number of students who logged in to the site, and the average number of online activities completed by students who logged in at least once. With regards to this final student-level data point, there are 42 total online activities that students are expected to complete across the 16 lessons from Module 1.

Table 4.2
Staff Use of My10yearPlan.Com

School	Number of Module 1 teachers	Number of teachers using my10yearplan.com	Average # of logins per teacher (Range)
1	14	6	5 (1-9)
2	1	1	6 (N/A)
3	No My10yearPlan.com usage reported		
4	3	2	34 (31-37)
5	No My10yearPlan.com usage reported		
6	No My10yearPlan.com usage reported		
7	3	3	44 (17-80)
8	8	6	14 (2-52)
9	Did not offer Module 1 in 2017-18		
10	2	0	0

Note that the average number of logins per teacher refers only to those teachers who had students using the online site. For example, at school 8, only 6 of the 8 teachers utilized the site.

Therefore, the average is for those six teachers, not all eight at the school. A few other key takeaways from the teacher data:

- Not all Module 1 teachers are using the online my10yearplan.com, and one school did not utilize the site at all
- In only two of the schools did teachers who were using the online site access that site at least once per week (given a typical 18-week semester)
- Only two schools had all teachers use the online site
- Of interest (not presented in the table) is that a number of teachers who did not have any students access the site, did themselves access the site multiple times throughout the semester of instruction

Table 4.3
Student Use of My10yearPlan.com

School	Total number of students	Number of students using my10yearplan.com	Avg. # of activities completed by student users
1	506	153	29
2	12	12	15
3		No My10yearPlan.com usage reported	
4	183	183	21
5		No My10yearPlan.com usage reported	
6		No My10yearPlan.com usage reported	
7	432	431	6
8	221	23	1
9		Did not offer Module 1 in 2017-18	
10	13	0	N/A

The student data relating to the online my10yearplan.com, when examined in conjunction with the teacher online site usage, suggests that students and teachers are not fully utilizing the site. From the student data, the following points are noteworthy:

- A majority of students in schools 2, 4, and 7 did at least access the site;
- Considering there were 42 total online activities, it appears very few students completed them all – based on available data, it is not possible to identify whether a student did successfully complete all 42 activities

Summary

When looking at each of the three pieces of implementation data, a few patterns – as well as inconsistencies – begin to emerge. A first piece to note is that from the my10yearplan.com data above, school 3 did not report any online site usage. However, school 3 was one of the schools that had a follow-up module teacher respond to the faculty/staff survey. This teacher reported that students were required to utilize my10yearplan.com as part of the module. This inconsistency is evident across other schools with survey respondents as well. Schools 1 and 4 also had Module 1 teachers indicate that all students were required to utilize the online site as part of the module. However, only very small percentages of students (14% at school 1 and 26% at school 4) at each of these schools accessed the site at least once. School 2 was the fourth school that had a teacher respond to the survey, and this teacher's response is supported by my10yearplan.com data indicating all students did access the site at least once.

There are a few promising indications from the survey, even though the number of responses was quite small. All teachers did receive an instructional manual, which provides lesson suggestions and ways to ensure student buy-in to the program. Additionally, it appears all students did have access to their own consumable workbooks. Students enter information into these workbooks that correspond to the 42 online activities. After completing the activities in the workbooks, students then enter the information online. This suggests that while students may not have been completing the online activities, there is a good chance they were at least completing the activities in their workbooks. However, from the survey data, it appears not all teachers were able to complete all 16 lessons in the time they had available.

The online my10yearplan.com site is meant to serve as a tool for students to continue to access as they progress through high school and into college or career. They are designed to be altered and updated as students gain more information about colleges and careers, or as their goals change. The online plans are also designed to be accessed by teachers and counselors and used as a motivation tool for students in high school and college. The data here indicate the online plans are potentially not being utilized in this manner. While this information does present some interesting conclusions, it is not possible to fully identify the fidelity with which schools are implementing the GFSF program. However, by accounting for various other school factors in the outcomes analyses, it will still be possible to determine the effectiveness of the program itself.

Chapter 5
Summary and Conclusions

Findings

This evaluation examined two aspects of the GFSF program: the implementation of the program and the impact of the program on a range of student outcomes. Last year we focused on the implementation of the program in its first year and some baseline comparisons between cohort 1 and cohort 2 schools. This year we were able to secure administrative data from 15 of the 20 evaluation schools for the 2016-17 school year that enabled us to examine the impact of GFSF program on a range of student outcomes in its first year of implementation. Then we examined how the GFSF program was implemented in its second year of operation.

We assessed the impact of the program on three aspects of student performance—attendance behavior, and course performance—along with two composite "on-track" indicators found to be predictive of on-time, high school graduation. Overall, we found relatively small differences between cohort 1 and cohort 2 schools on a variety of student performance outcomes, suggesting that the GFSF program had little school-wide impact. But we should point out that generally, it is hard to have a school-wide impact based on a single program no matter how well designed and implemented. Even more comprehensive high school interventions have shown little impact of such outcomes, as we discuss further below.

As we found in the first evaluation report, the implementation of the GFSF program was uneven across the cohort 1 schools. One cohort 1 school did not continue the program in the second year. The limited survey data we collected suggest that all teachers did receive an instructional manual, which provides lesson suggestions and ways to ensure student buy-in to the program. Additionally, it appears all students did have access to their own consumable workbooks. Yet the survey data also suggest that not all teachers were able to complete all 16 lessons of the Module 1 curriculum in the time they had available.

Data from the online my10yearplan.com site revealed uneven usage by staff and students. Three schools had no staff or students using the tool at all during the school year and only two schools had all teachers use the online site. In only two of the schools did teachers who were using the online site access that site at least once per week (given a typical 18-week semester). Student usage was also uneven. In only four schools did a majority of students in access the site.

And it appears very few students completed all 42 online activities. It should be pointed out that the data available are unable to fully identify the fidelity with which schools are implementing the GFSF program.

Why little measurable impact?

To illustrate the challenge of achieving a meaningful and statistically significant impact on student outcomes, consider a comprehensive school intervention model known as the Diplomas Now. This model was developed from three national organizations—Talent Development Secondary, City Year, and Communities in Schools—that each contributed to the development of the four components or pillars of the program: Pillar I reorganizes the school into small learning communities in which teachers work with the same group of students; Pillar II provides extensive professional development for teachers and curriculum aligned with college and career ready standards; Pillar III provides tiered student supported targets to the right students at the right time; and Pillar IV introduces new practices and structures and provides training and support to school staff to help them provide additional services to students and better engage parents, and community organizations.

A large scale, national evaluation of the Diplomas Now was funded with a $50 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education under its Investing in Innovation Initiative (i3) and undertaken by the MDRC and ICF International. The evaluation was carried out in 33 middle schools and 29 high schools from 11 large, urban school districts that started the program in either 2011-12 or 2012-13. The evaluation used a random design similar to the one used in the GFSF evaluation, in which 30 high schools were randomly assigned to either implement the Diplomas Now model or continue with their current practices. After one high school left the study, the high school sample consisted of 15 Diplomas Now schools and 14 comparison schools.

The evaluation looked at a similar set of ABC student outcomes as the GFSF evaluation, both individual outcomes and composite indicators. The evaluation found little impact on most student outcome measures: "Diplomas Now did not produce a significant impact on average attendance, discipline, and course passing rates in sixth and ninth grades compared with rates at schools that did not implement the model" (Corrin et al., 2016, p. iii). However, the program did

produce a positive and significant impact on one composite at-risk indicator, but not a more stringent indicator.

The evaluators speculated on why there was so little impact from such a comprehensive reform effort: "…it is possible that that these hypothesized "early" outcomes could take longer to be fully realized since changing school climate and student attitudes and behaviors is not generally a short-term endeavor" (Ibid., p. 55). They further speculate that "It is also possible that the model takes more than two years to fully develop the capability to cause positive change at schools…" (Ibid, p. 56).

The evaluation of the Diplomas Now program, which is a much larger and more comprehensive intervention model than the GFSF program, provides some useful insights into the difficulty in producing positive, meaningful, and significant impacts on important student outcomes, especially over a short period of time. The ultimate impact of the GFSF program is what happens to students once they leave high school and enter college or the workforce.

Next Steps

The evaluation of the GFSF is an ongoing project. We will continue to monitor and report back on the implementation of the program. Students in cohort 1 schools are now in the third year of the program and most should be enrolled in 11th grade and learning the material in Module 2. We plan to conduct staff surveys in the spring of 2019 to determine how much of the Module 2 curriculum was taught in the schools. We will also monitor how much students (and family members and school staff) access and update material in their My10yearPlan.com. Finally, we will continue to collect and analyze administrative data from CalPASS to evaluate the impact of the GFSF program on student attendance, behavior, and course performance.

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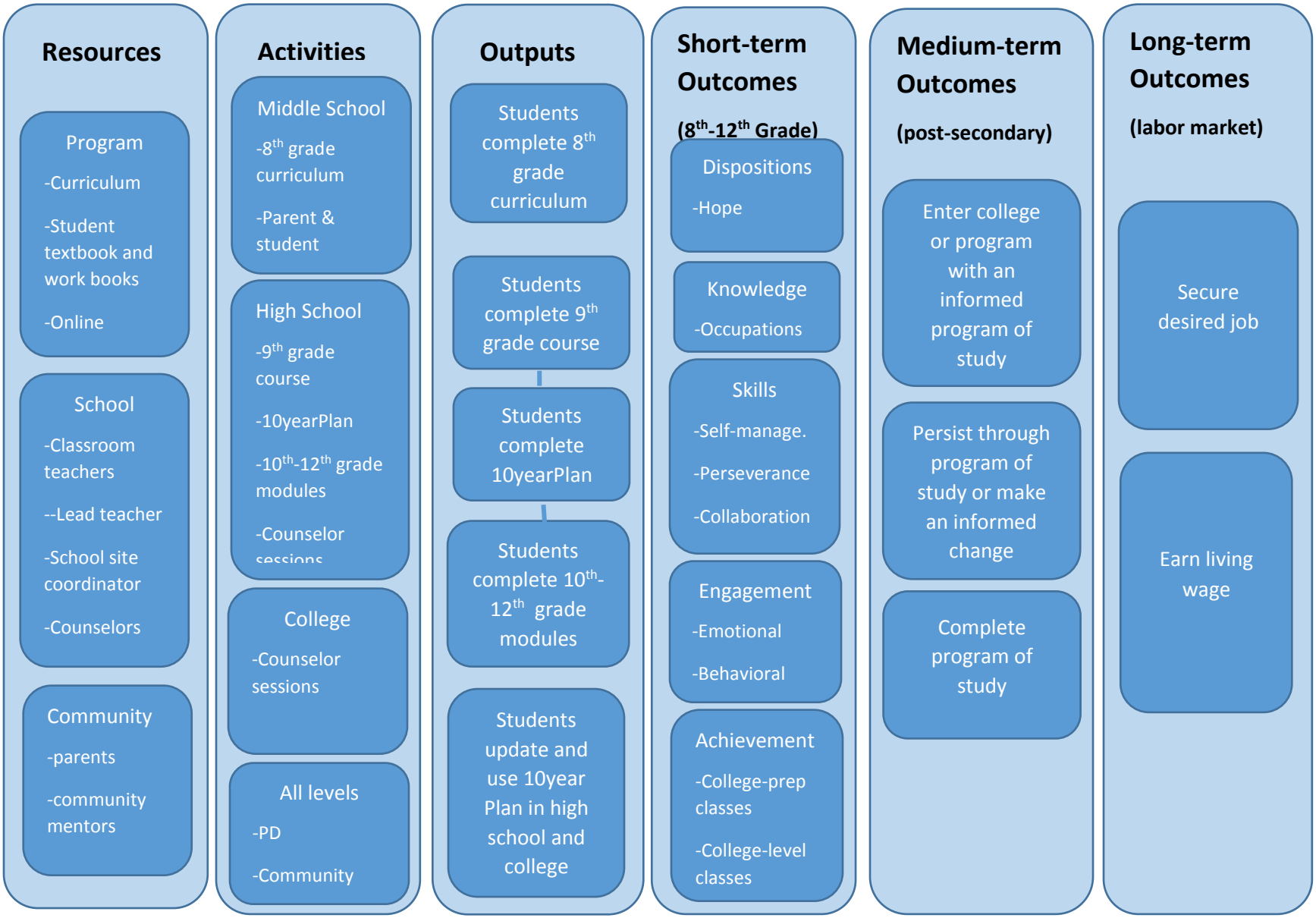
Appendix A

Get Focused, Stay Focused Logic Model


Resources
Program
-Curriculum
-Student textbook and work books
-Online
School
-Classroom teachers
--Lead teacher
-School site coordinator
-Counselors
Community
-parents
-community mentors
Activities
Middle School
-8th grade curriculum
-Parent & student
High School
-9th grade course
-10yearPlan
-10th-12th grade modules
-Counselor sessions
College
-Counselor sessions
All levels
-PD
-Community
Outputs
Students complete 8th grade curriculum
Students complete 9th grade course
Students complete 10yearPlan
Students complete 10th-12th grade modules
Students update and use 10year Plan in high school and college
Short-term Outcomes
(8th-12th Grade)
Dispositions
-Hope
Knowledge
-Occupations
Skills
-Self-manage.
-Perseverance
-Collaboration
Engagement
-Emotional
-Behavioral
Achievement
-College-prep classes
-College-level classes
Medium-term Outcomes
(post-secondary)
Enter college or program with an informed program of study
Persist through program of study or make an informed change
Complete program of study
Long-term Outcomes
(labor market)
Secure desired job
Earn living wage

Appendix B

Statistical Models

Impact will be assessed based on data from the 20 schools participating in the project (10 treatment and 10 control) analyzed at the school level for all 9th grade students (likely 250 students per school). The following Hierarchical Linear Model (HLM) model will be used to estimate the difference in mean outcomes between treatment and control schools:

Level-1 model: $Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} X_{ij} + r_{ij}$

Level-2 model: $\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} T_j + \gamma_{02} S_{0j} + u_{0j}$

where Y_{ij} is the outcome for student *i* from school *j*; X_{ij} is a vector of student-level covariates (grand-mean centered so the outcome measure is an estimate for a student with average values on all the covariates), T_j equals 1 for students from cohort 1 (GFSF) schools and 0 for students from cohort 2 schools; S_{0j} is a school-level covariate for school j; u_{0j} is a random error for school j (which is assumed to be independently and identically distributed across schools; and is a random error for student *i* from school *j* (which is assumed to be independently and identically distributed across students within schools).

The coefficient, γ_{00}, represents the mean outcome for students in cohort 1 schools and the coefficient, γ_{01}, represents the mean impact of students in GFSF after controlling for a school covariate for students from the prior academic year. The strategy of controlling for the performance of past students in the school has been shown to greatly improve the precision of school-randomized studies (Bloom, Richburg-Hayes, & Rebeck Black, 2007). Specifically, the Minimum Detectable Effect Size (MDES) for this study based on sample of 20 schools and school-mean values for the outcome variable lagged on year is estimated to be .16 (Ibid, p. 50).

Unfortunately, we were unable to obtain outcome measures from the prior year (2015-16). Attendance measures were first collected in 2016-17, so no previous measures were available. Instead, we used school truancy rates, in which a truant is a student "who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year or tardy or absent for more than a 30 minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof" (see: https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dataquest.asp). In the case of behavior measures and course performance, data were also unavailable for all of the schools in our sample, so we used similar, but different school-level covariates. In the case of

behavior, we used school-level suspension rates, and in the case of course performance we used the percentage of 12th grade students who met the UC/CSU eligibility requirements (Ibid.).