

Jefferson County Board of Education

Making Time for What Matters Most

DID MAKING TIME FOR WHAT MATTERS MOST IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, NARROW ACHIEVEMENT GAPS, STRENGTHEN STUDENTS' COLLEGE READINESS SKILLS, AND INCREASE COLLEGE ATTENDANCE?

Project Overview

THE INTERVENTION

THE PROBLEM: What Challenge Did the Program Try to Address?

Making Time for What Matters Most aims to improve student achievement, narrow achievement gaps, strengthen students' college readiness skills, and increase the percentages of students who graduate high school and go on to college.

THE PROJECT: What Strategies Did the Program Employ?

Jefferson County Public Schools¹, awarded an i3 development grant from 2010-2014, identified three goals for the program: (1) provide structures and supports to facilitate student mastery of academic material and successful completion for all core courses in one year or less; (2) provide a range of personalized supports to students to increase engagement in school and promote college readiness; and (3) improve teachers' pedagogical and student support practices to maximize the effectiveness of increased learning time. The program was evaluated through a process and outcome evaluation with no control group.

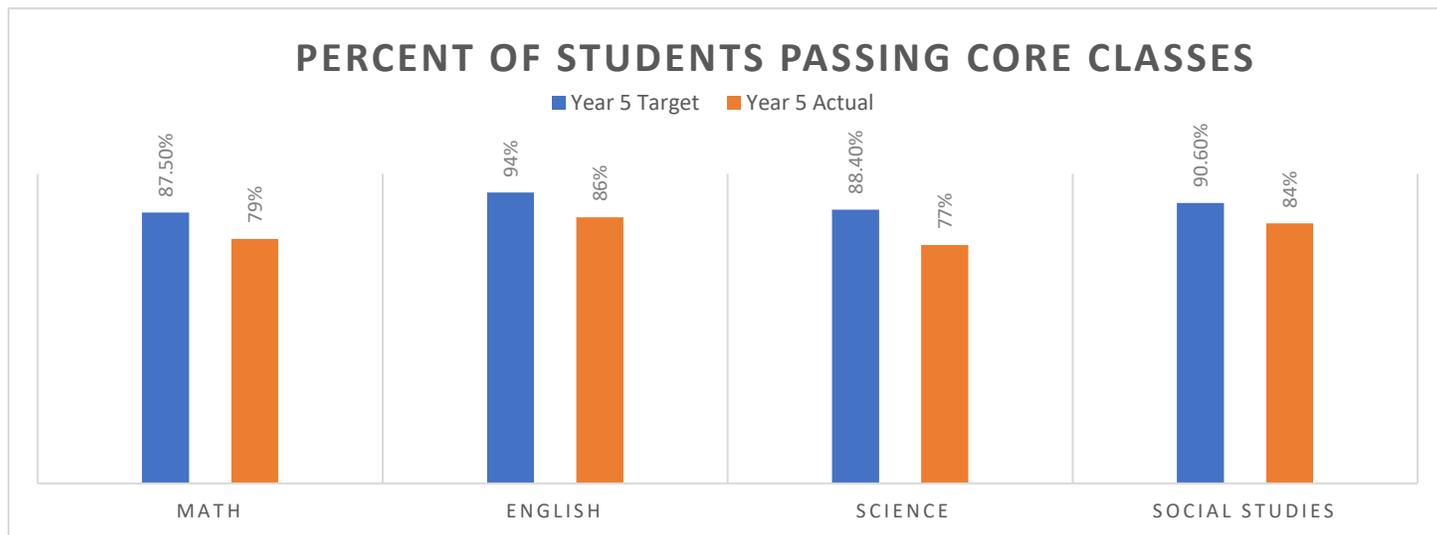
¹ Jefferson County Schools received an i3 development grant supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation program through Grant Number U396C100380. Development grants provide funding to support the development or testing of novel or substantially more effective practices that address widely shared education challenges. All i3 grantees are required to conduct rigorous evaluations of their projects. The quality of evidence required to demonstrate a project's effectiveness depends on a project's level of scale or grant type.

THE MAKING TIME FOR WHAT MATTERS MOST MODEL

- **STUDENT MASTERY OF ACADEMIC MATERIAL.** Students take five 70-minute courses a day, for each of three 12-week semesters. They also receive assistance selecting courses to meet their needs and ability level. Counselors have developed processes in their schools for making student placement decisions, including visiting middle schools to work with incoming freshmen. To place upperclassmen, the counselors use a variety of resources, including classroom grades, assessment data, and students' abilities and interests.
- **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOL AND COLLEGE READINESS.** Schools create College Access Time (CAT) advisory periods for students, designed to focus on college readiness. All project schools hired a College Access Resource Teacher (CART) to design and plan the CAT advisory periods, to improve students' understanding and interest in attending college.
- **TEACHER PEDAGOGICAL AND STUDENT SUPPORT PRACTICES.** Ensuring that content-based and cross-disciplinary professional learning communities (PLCs) meet regularly during the school year. School administrators and teachers work to develop and maintain these PLCs.

Summary of Results

DID MAKING TIME FOR WHAT MATTERS MOST IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, STRENGTHEN COLLEGE READINESS SKILLS, AND INCREASE COLLEGE ATTENDANCE?



MAKING TIME FOR WHAT MATTERS MOST STUDENTS PERFORMED WELL ON SEVERAL MEASURES. However, this study did not contain a control group, so it is difficult to put these achievements in context. Generally, test scores and survey results improved, but they did not meet targets defined by Jefferson County before the project began. The following are some of the main results highlighted in the study of the program:

- **CORE COURSE PASS RATES.** Overall, approximately 82% of students in the program passed their core courses. Across subject areas, the pass rates were higher in English (86%) and social studies (84%) than in math (79%) and science (77%).
- **COLLEGE READINESS.** Based on their ACT and ACT PLAN scores, the majority of students in the program were not college ready by the end of the treatment, and none of their schools reached project targets.
- **TRANSITION TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.** There was an overall increase in the percentage of students enrolling in a postsecondary institution between 2013 and 2014 (38% to 45%, respectively), but the schools did not reach their target goal of 55%.
- **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES.** Teachers in the program tended to have higher levels of agreement on survey items regarding teachers supporting one another, collaborating and working together. They also reported high levels of self-efficacy. Teachers in the program were less likely, however, to agree on survey items about resources and time.

Please see Appendices B and C for information about the evaluation's design and the quality of the evidence, respectively.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Study participants attributed the Making Time for What Matters Most program's limited success to a few program features:

- **FIVE-PERIOD SCHEDULES.** Schools in the program followed a five-period structure, with three trimesters, instead of a traditional seven-period, two-semester schedule. Counselors saw the benefits of this approach because it allows time for struggling students to make up credits. But they also noted disadvantages, such as fewer class choices and the opportunity for some students to game the system by retaking courses instead of mastering them on the first try.
- **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT.** Some CARTs mentioned that student apathy was an issue, which was compounded by the fact that most schools did not have 100% of teachers buy into the new process to engage students. Evaluators felt this could be mitigated by allowing CARTs to visit other schools and districts, to learn how their programs are run, and by providing more time for teacher training.
- **PLC MEETINGS.** On average, content-based PLCs met weekly across the project schools while the cross-disciplinary PLCs met less frequently. Schools also constantly struggled with lack of time and money to continue and support the PLCs.

For More Information

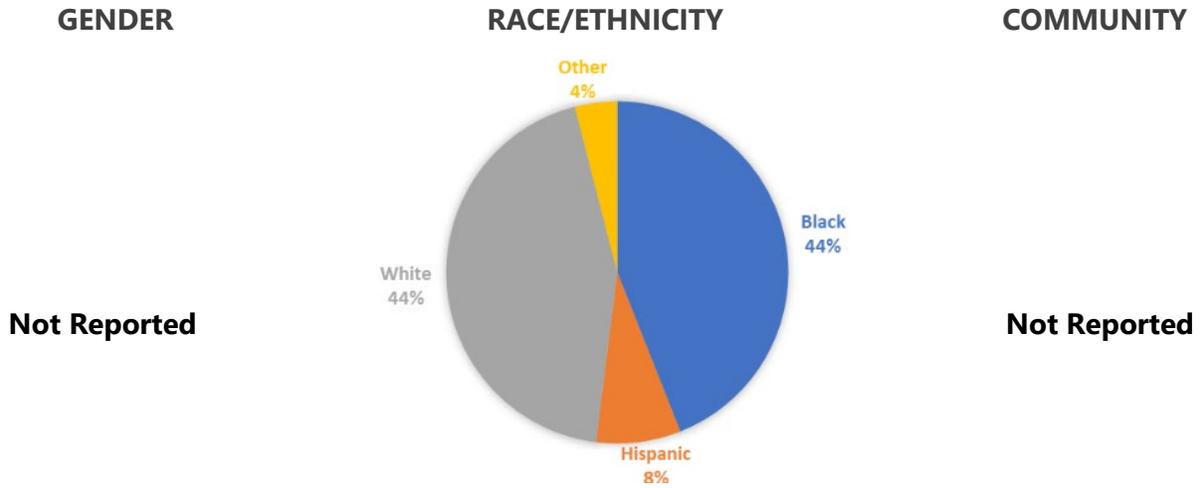
Evaluation Reports

[Final Evaluation Report \(ERIC\)](#) (McRel International, September 2015)²

² The information and data for this result summary was collected from the most recent reports as of 02/10/2020: McREL International (September 2015). *Making Time for What Matters Most - i3 Development Project: Year 5 Evaluation Report*. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED562043>

Appendix A: Students Served by the Project³

GRADE(S)													
PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12



HIGH-NEED STUDENTSⁱ

Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	English Learner	Students with Disabilities
71%	Not Reported/Not Applicable	Not Reported/Not Applicable

³ These data reflect the entire student population served by the intervention, not just the evaluation sample used in the impact study.

Appendix B: Impact Evaluation Methodology⁴

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Design:	Process and outcome evaluation (no control group)
Approach:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A mixed-methods approach with process and outcome components▪ The evaluation incorporates data from a variety of collection strategies such as surveys, interviews, and reviews of extant documents and student education data.▪ The data collection procedures continued, with modifications, in the second, third, fourth, and fifth years of the project (2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015).
Study Length:	Five years

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Study Setting:	Six public high schools in Jefferson County, KY
Final Sample Size:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 5,754 high school students
Student Characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Free/Reduced Priced Lunch: 71%▪ Black: 44%▪ Hispanic: 8%▪ Other Race/Ethnicity: 4%
Data Sources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Teacher surveys▪ Interviews with principals, CARTs, and school counselors▪ Student progress records▪ Implementation and demographic data
Key Measures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 10th grade ACT PLAN and 11th grade ACT scores▪ StudentTracker data▪ The Jefferson County Public Schools Comprehensive School Survey▪ 2015 Student Survey data

⁴ These data reflect only the evaluation sample in the impact study, not the entire population served.

Appendix C: Quality of the Evidence

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW⁵

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 02/10/2020	N/A

EVIDENCE FOR ESSA REVIEW⁶

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 02/10/2020	N/A

NATIONAL CENTER ON INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS REVIEW⁷

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 02/10/2020	N/A

⁵ <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW>

⁶ <https://www.evidenceforessa.org/>

⁷ <https://intensiveintervention.org/>

Investing in Innovation (i3) Grantee Results Summary

Development, 2010-2014

The [*Investing in Innovation Fund \(i3\)*](#), established under section 14007 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, is a Federal discretionary grant program at the U.S. Department of Education within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE). i3 grants help schools and local education agencies work in partnership with the private sector and the philanthropic community to develop and expand innovative practices that improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, and/or increase college enrollment and completion rates for high-need students.

This summary was prepared by the Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Program Dissemination Project. The project is conducted by the [*Manhattan Strategy Group*](#), in partnership with [*Westat*](#) and [*EdScale*](#), with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, [*Office of Elementary and Secondary Education*](#), under Contract No. ED-ESE-15-A-0012/0004. The evaluation results presented herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

ⁱ “High-need student” refers to a student at risk of academic failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students who are living in poverty, attend high-minority schools, are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, in foster care, have been incarcerated, have disabilities, or who are English learners. For more information see: [*Applications for New Awards; Investing in Innovation Fund-Development Grants, 81 FR 24070 \(April 25, 2016\)*](#).