

Impacts and Costs of High Quality Youth Development and College Access Programs

Prepared for the Washington State Legislature's College Bound Scholarship Program Workgroup

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Why do we care?

- Our mission: Improve the lives of low income children and families in Washington State
- Reduce the cycle of intergenerational poverty.
- Educational attainment (particularly a college credential) is a major lever that breaks that cycle.
- Washington State's low income and kids of color lag behind their peers in attaining college credentials.
- By 2018, nearly 70% of Washington's jobs will require some kind of college credential.
- And finally, we care about the whole child. Schools can not do it alone. We need to work together.

High Quality Youth Programs: Context

- Based on review of **over 200 youth programs** in Washington and Oregon
 - My summary comments on 'high quality' programs based on **7 programs**
- Covering period 2000-2011
- My analysis of individual program costs and impacts (and average costs/impacts) may differ from those who run programs

High Quality Youth Programs: Program Characteristics

- All have the same following general characteristics
 - Serve entirely or overwhelmingly:
 - low income students
 - students of color
 - students with average or below average academic records at time of program entry
 - Work with middle and/or high school age students; many provide some ongoing services in college years
 - Intentionally focus on success in school and college
 - Meet with students at least once a week; most more frequently than that
- However, they differ substantively in other respects:
 - Overall program design (what and how they work with students)
 - Program duration / grade of student at start of program

High Quality Youth Programs: Defining High Quality

- Defining Quality based on **program evaluation**:
 - High quality is defined in these 7 programs by **having proven student outcomes obtained through a rigorous (comparison group) program evaluation.**

- Other approaches to defining quality – **program characteristics**:
 - Key Research on this approach:
 - Durlak. The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social Emotional Learning. 2010.
 - Vandell. Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development. 2013.
 - New Assessments (eg. Weikert Center's YPQA) are becoming available to assess quality of program characteristics.
 - Washington State Quality Standards for Afterschool and Youth Development Programs

Whatever method is used, I would anecdotally say that **no more than 20% of youth programs are high quality.**

High Quality Youth Programs: Impacts

- Comprehensive Youth Development Approaches (6 programs)
 - (multi-year; wide range of supports)
 - In most cases, **100% High School graduation rates**
 - In most cases, **95-100% college admission rates**
 - Where evidence is available (2 cases), nearly 100% college completion rates

- College Access Approaches (1 program)
 - (one year; narrowly focused on college access)
 - **95% High School completion** in 5 years
 - **60% college attendance rate**
 - Of college attenders, program **participants complete college at 15%-40% higher** than similar students

High Quality Youth Programs: Costs

- Comprehensive Youth Development Approaches (6 programs)
 - Costs range from **\$3,500/student/year to \$10,000/student/year**. Rough average of \$7,000
 - Multi-year program designs mean full cost per HS completion can range from \$15K to \$70K
- College Access Approaches (1 program)
 - This particularly efficient program design costs **\$250/student/year**
 - One year program design means full cost for a HS completion is \$250.

We do not yet have enough data to talk meaningfully about cost/college completion, though many of the Comprehensive designs are seeing nearly 100% of their HS graduates complete college as well, meaning the cost for a college completion is embedded in the cost for the HS completion in those cases.

High Quality Youth Programs: Benefits

- WSIPP cost-benefits study: High School graduation
 - **Public benefit: \$150K** (over lifetime of the student)
 - Personal benefit to student: \$275K

- Presumably, costs such as **\$250/graduation would be well worth it** for the public revenue increases and costs savings; **even more expensive comprehensive youth programs costing \$30K/graduation could be well worth the cost**, especially for students who are least likely to graduate.

- These remarks based on High School graduation alone; not enough data available to speak on cost-benefits related to college completion.
 - However, our state is currently under producing college graduates relative to current and future projected employer needs (nearly 70% of WA jobs requiring a postsecondary credential, by 2018, per Georgetown Univ. study).

High Quality Youth Programs: Scaling Challenges

For Reference:

- 6 comprehensive designs: currently serving 1300 students; 1 college access design: currently serving 2000 students. These across two metro areas with about 200,000 high school students in them.

Challenges to scaling:

- **Matching.**
 - You end up serving students who would have graduated anyway; lack of effective targeting/program matching tools and data. Who needs the intervention at 5th grade? Who not until 12th?
- **Funding.**
 - On average, less than 10% of funding that supports these programs is public dollars. Most funding, in general, goes to the non-high quality programs.
- **Time.**
 - Scaling existing programs takes time. Some models may be at design capacity and not be able to scale. Changing non-high quality programs into high quality takes time and resources.
- **Unintended consequences.**
 - By only concentrating on a few programs at larger numbers, you may leave some communities and types of students who need help without specialized supports.

High Quality Youth Programs: Back of envelope estimates of costs and benefits, by segment

Rough Segmentation – by type of need:

- 40% of students do not need additional support; 30% need light supports to graduate & access college; 30% need heavier supports to graduate & access college (of these, some may need 7 years of support, some may need only years)

Cost to provide light supports to that segment, statewide: ~\$6Million

- Assumes 30% of 80K HS seniors at \$250/student

Is it worth it? Let's do the math. (Caveat: I'm not a statistician.)

- WSIPP cost-benefits of \$150K accrued to state, for a HS graduate (vs. Non-graduate)
- Let's assume that segmentation is no better than today, and program results no better than today, and 80% of those served would have graduated anyway.
- You still help ~5,000 students graduate who wouldn't have before, **accruing \$750Million in benefits** to the state, over the lifetimes of the students served. For each graduating class.
- Finding: it appears worth it, and we haven't even addressed the benefits to college completion.
- Higher cost programs? Still worth it, even at 20x cost and 3x length.

Thoughts on the College Bound Scholarship

- From the BERC Group study, we know that initial years of College Bound:
 - Increases HS graduation rates
 - Increases 1st year college persistence rates

- Combining CBS and College Access/Youth Development supports to maximize increased college attainment rates in Washington State
 - Funding is not the only barrier to success in college
 - Barriers to success for first time college students:
 - Financial aid/debt
 - Knowledge of how to navigate higher ed and make good initial choices
 - Support to persist when going gets hard
 - Self-concept as a college student

- The College Access program profiled here works in concert with CBS.

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Questions?

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