The Expanded Success Initiative
Challenges and Progress in the Pursuit of College and Career Readiness for Black and Latino Young Men
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Executive Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2012, New York City launched the Expanded Success Initiative (ESI) in an effort to improve educational opportunities and increase college and career readiness among Black and Latino male students. At the time, ESI was one of the largest investments ever dedicated to boosting the educational outcomes of Black and Latino males. It inspired many of the components of President Obama’s national My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) initiative and has served as a model for other MBK communities across the country.

ESI was motivated by large disparities in college readiness rates between Black and Latino males and other groups of students. When ESI began, only about 1 in 10 Black and Latino male students was graduating “college ready,” based on New York State’s measure. Educators, policymakers and advocates were concerned that while rising numbers of Black and Latino males were graduating from NYC high schools, very few of them seemed well prepared to attend and thrive in college.

The Research Alliance’s analysis in Moving the Needle: Exploring Key Levers to Boost College Readiness Among Black and Latino Males in New York City showed how low college readiness rates could be traced back to earlier educational disparities. Compared to their peers, Black and Latino male students had lower average test scores and attendance rates in elementary and middle school, were more likely to be over-age for their grade, and were less likely to be “on-track” after their 9th grade year (a critical antecedent to graduating college ready). Moreover, our work documented a variety of underlying opportunity gaps facing Black and Latino males. Specifically, we explored how poverty, gender expectations, language barriers, and discriminatory school practices (particularly around school discipline, special education services, and access to higher-level courses) may be shaping the educational experiences and outcomes of young men of color.

Acknowledging these opportunity gaps, ESI was designed to target various aspects of the high school experience for Black and Latino young men. While ESI’s primary goal was to improve college readiness, funders and district leaders were also focused on decreasing suspensions among Black males in particular, confronting teacher biases, elevating student voices, and nurturing professional communities of educators who were committed to better serving young men of color. As we discuss in greater depth below, the NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE) saw ESI as a “research and development” initiative, in which they encouraged participating high schools to
experiment with and hone strategies for their Black and Latino male students. Ultimately, the NYCDOE hoped lessons learned in ESI would help improve opportunities and outcomes for these students districtwide.

To that end, ESI provided a mix of funding, professional development, and ongoing support to 40 public high schools with relatively strong graduation rates for Black and Latino males, but college enrollments rates that were only on par with the rest of the City. ESI schools were charged with creating and expanding services and supports for male students of color in three broad domains—academics, youth development, and college-focused school culture—which the NYCDOE theorized as important for increasing college readiness. ESI also placed a heavy emphasis on the principles of culturally relevant education (CRE) as a cross-cutting approach undergirding all three domains. (See the textbox on the next page for more about ESI’s core domains.)

Over the last five years, the Research Alliance has published a series of reports from our ongoing study of ESI. This report is the culminating product in the series, synthesizing findings across all four years of the initiative, and the first to report comprehensive impact findings. The report draws on several rich sources of data, including nearly 500 interviews and focus groups with ESI school leaders, teachers, and students; annual questionnaires and rubrics to assess programming in ESI schools; a survey administered to over 5,000 students each year in both ESI schools and a set of matched comparison schools; and administrative records (e.g., attendance, suspensions, credit accumulation, high school graduation, and college enrollment) for students in ESI and comparison schools.

As the document of record evaluating an important, large-scale initiative, this report sets out to answer a number of key questions about ESI’s implementation and impact. Specifically, we examine ESI through the lens of the initiative’s theory of action (see Figure ES-1 below) by assessing: 1) the district-level “inputs” of the initiative, including funding, professional development, and the creation of cross-school learning communities; 2) school “actions,” including developing and expanding programs, supports, and services within ESI’s three core domains; 3) student and teacher participation in ESI-related activities; 4) ESI’s influence on school culture and relationships; and 5) its impact on students’ perceptions of their schools, their high school experiences, and other student outcomes, including graduation and college enrollment. Our findings in each of these areas provide valuable insights for future initiatives aimed at Black and Latino young men, here in NYC and in other cities across the country.
The Expanded Success Initiative’s Core Domains

ESI schools were charged with creating and expanding services and supports for male students of color in three core domains—academics, youth development, and college-focused school culture. ESI also placed a heavy emphasis on culturally relevant education, which was seen as a cross-cutting principle undergirding the initiative and infused into all three domains.

**Academics**

Strategies to increase academic rigor and expectations and to expand access to advanced coursework. Examples include:

- Increasing opportunities for students to take AP classes or other more rigorous courses
- Raising academic standards or benchmarks
- Providing academic supports, such as tutoring

**Youth Development**

Strategies that address students’ socio-emotional needs. Examples include:

- Mentoring programs
- Single-gender student advisory classes
- Student-led justice panels
- Enrichment opportunities (trips, sports, clubs)
- Restorative approaches to discipline

**College-Focused School Culture**

Strategies to create a school-wide culture that emphasizes preparing Black and Latino young men for college and careers. Examples include:

- Shifting the school mission to be explicitly focused on college
- Communicating with students and parents about the steps to get to college starting in the 9th grade
- Offering college trips and other college-focused supports as early as 9th grade

**Culturally Relevant Education (CRE)**

CRE attempts to engage and empower students by incorporating their cultural backgrounds and focusing on issues that are relevant to their lives. Examples include:

- Encouraging teachers to confront biases about Black and Latino males
- Representing and affirming students’ racial and cultural identities in curriculum and instruction
- Modifying curriculum with an eye toward addressing issues that matter to students
Figure ES-1: The Expanded Success Initiative Theory of Action

**Problem**
- Opportunity gaps leading to a range of disparities in educational outcomes, especially low college readiness among Black and Latino young men.

**Initiative Priorities**
- Improving college and career readiness
- Decreasing suspensions
- Confronting teacher biases
- Creating professional communities for educators committed to better serving young men of color

**Inputs**
- Funding: $250,000 went to each ESI school over the first three years of the four-year initiative
- Autonomy: Schools were encouraged to develop programming that fit their community’s needs
- Professional Development: PD included CRE, restorative justice, subject-specific trainings, etc.

**Learning Community**
- Regular meetings of 40 ESI liaisons (one per school) provide support from central ESI team and opportunities to share promising practices

**School Actions**
- Expand programming, services, and supports for students in three core domains that were undergirded by CRE:
  - College-Ready Educational Culture
  - Youth Development
  - Academic

**School Culture and Relationships**
- Reduce educators’ biases against Black and Latino male students
- Emphasize early and ongoing support for college goals
- Develop culturally relevant curriculum and instruction
- Reduce use of suspensions
- Improve relationships between students, and relationships between students and staff

**Perceptions of School and Self**
- Sense of fair treatment
- Perception of race/gender/cultural climate
- Sense of belonging in school
- Critical thinking
- Academic self-concept

**Students’ High School Experiences and Outcomes**

**College Enrollment**

**Antecedents to College**
- Attendance
- On-track status and credits earned for graduation
- NYS Aspirational Performance Measure (APM)
- Graduation with Regents Diploma

**Future Planning**
- Conversations with adults about college and career
- Applying for financial aid
- Applying to college
- SAT-taking
Major Findings About ESI’s Implementation and Impact

Inputs: How Was ESI Designed and Supported at the District Level?

- ESI involved buy-in from many stakeholders and a significant investment of resources. The NYCDOE cultivated buy-in and support for ESI from City Hall, the Open Society Foundation (OSF), and numerous City agencies and community organizations. OSF, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and other donors provided $24 million to support ESI’s central administration and provide funding directly to schools ($250,000 over three years for each participating school). Both the size of this investment and the effort required to create partnerships among multiple stakeholders represented a notable alignment of resources around the goal of improving outcomes for Black and Latino young men.

- ESI was characterized by strong centralized support. The ESI Central Team—the staff within the NYCDOE charged with leading and implementing ESI—created a robust infrastructure to support schools. This included coordinating the distribution of funding and building a network of external partners and collaborators. The team also provided individual guidance for schools during the planning phase of each year, ongoing professional development in culturally relevant education and other topics, and enrichment opportunities for male students of color. Finally, they created a professional learning community that met regularly in “ESI liaison meetings” to address cross-cutting issues that were relevant to all ESI schools.

- ESI encouraged school-level autonomy and experimentation. ESI provided participating schools with considerable flexibility to develop programming that complemented existing supports and was responsive to the needs and circumstances of their student body. Schools were instructed to provide activities in all three ESI domains and CRE, but these parameters left substantial room for each school to create what was essentially its own version of ESI. In keeping with the research and development approach to the initiative, the ESI Central Team encouraged school staff to try new strategies to support young men of color and to continue, modify or abandon these efforts based on their experience.

The absence of a single, standardized model for ESI had implications for the initiative’s implementation, as well as our evaluation. Because ESI looked
somewhat different in each school, it was difficult to design a standard way of measuring program quality. In interviews held in the final months of the initiative, members of the ESI Central Team speculated that ESI might have been more successful if there had been somewhat less flexibility and more accountability for implementing specific program elements. This was perhaps especially important in the context of other accountability pressures that schools were facing at the same time, including the introduction of Common Core standards and the launch of a new teacher evaluation system. The diversity of approaches across ESI schools also raised questions, from early on, about the kind of impacts we might see from the initiative. To what extent could such varied programs move the needle on any shared set of outcomes?

Actions: How Did Schools Implement ESI?

- Implementation was strong in the second year, but diminished somewhat in Years 3 and 4, as funding levels declined. Based on detailed annual questionnaires about training that schools participated in and programming they offered to students, we assessed each school’s alignment with the core tenets of ESI (e.g., Did they have programming across the three domains? Did they implement CRE? Did their programs target males of color? Did they participate in ESI professional development opportunities?). ESI was successful in getting schools to create or expand academic supports, youth development programs, college and career planning, and culturally relevant education. Most schools were able to implement activities that were at least moderately aligned with ESI’s theory of action, especially in the first two years of the initiative. However, as funding levels declined, so too did the alignment of programming activities with ESI’s core principles. Attendance at ESI liaison meetings and college- and career-focused programming saw the most notable declines during the last two years of the initiative.

- Implementation varied across schools, as did levels of participation among Black and Latino male students. Schools implemented a diverse array of programs within each of the domains, and levels of alignment with the tenets of ESI varied from school to school and year to year. There was also considerable variation in student participation rates. Based on our student survey, most Black and Latino young men in ESI schools participated in
activities within one of ESI’s three domains. And student participation generally increased from year to year, running somewhat counter to the finding that implementation levels declined over time. However, even in Year 4 (when participation was highest), only about half of the Black and Latino young men surveyed participated in activities in all three of ESI’s domains. Looking at measures of participation and data from our implementation rubric, we identified a group of nine schools that were consistently strong in both areas (i.e., well aligned with the ESI principles and average participation rates of 50 percent or higher across the four years of the initiative). At the other end of the specturm, seven schools had consistently low implementation alignment and average participation rates below 30 percent. The remaining 21 schools had alignment and participation rates that fell somewhere in the middle.

Outcomes: What Changes Did Educators and Students Attribute to ESI?

- **Educators and students reported meaningful changes to school culture and relationships as a result of the initiative.** Drawing on more than 500 interviews with school leaders, teachers, and students, conducted over the life of the initiative, we found that ESI led to important changes in the culture of participating schools. Three areas of school change stood out because of their prominence across schools and years of the initiative: 1) the development of a culturally relevant orientation to teaching and learning, 2) improved school relationships, and 3) a stronger schoolwide commitment to supporting students’ post-secondary goals. Notably, these reported changes reflect fundamental shifts in educators’ mindsets and beliefs about their students, rather than just the addition of new programming. Taken together, these findings suggest that ESI changed the culture of schools in ways that may particularly benefit traditionally marginalized students, including Black and Latino young men.

“Schools have been perceived as this ‘neutral zone’ where there’s no politics; we just focus on academics…. [But] there’s now a language that people can use to talk about these things… now there’s at least some comfort level with people using a word like racism where usually you can’t even say that word…”

– ESI Teacher
Outcomes: What Impact Did ESI Have on Students’ Experiences and Outcomes?

- **ESI increased student participation in a range of activities.** Our annual survey revealed that Black and Latino young men in ESI schools were consistently more likely than their counterparts in non-ESI comparison schools to participate in activities associated with ESI’s three domains and CRE. The largest and most consistent differences occurred in students’ participation in college and career preparation activities (e.g., college trips, college advising, and work-based learning) and in youth development activities (e.g., mentoring programs, youth groups, and student advisory programs). Black and Latino young men in ESI schools were actually more likely to participate in academic support activities (e.g., tutoring programs, Regents prep services, and AP or IB classes) than in college preparation or youth development activities, but the differences between ESI and non-ESI schools were generally smaller (i.e., academic activities were common for both groups). Finally, in keeping with the findings from our interviews and focus groups, Black and Latino young men in ESI schools were more likely than their counterparts in non-ESI schools to report being exposed to culturally relevant materials in their classes.

"I think that this program teaches you how to be compassionate for other people and to create something that you can’t get anywhere else...To have these guys [here] every day just made me want to come to school that much more because I got to be with my brothers in a sense. I got to [be with] my family." – ESI Student

- **ESI improved Black and Latino young men’s sense of fair treatment and sense of belonging.** Black and Latino young men in ESI schools were consistently more likely than similar students in non-ESI comparison schools to respond positively on measures of fair treatment and belonging in their schools, especially in 11th and 12th grade. This finding is particularly important, given past research showing that high schools are often alienating to young men of color (Ferguson, 2016; Ferguson, Noguera, & Martin, 2014; Gordon, D. M., Iwamoto, D., Ward, N., Potts, R., & Boyd, E. 2009). The difference between ESI and non-ESI schools emerged despite the fact that fewer than
half of the Black and Latino young men reported feeling positive about their sense of fair treatment and belonging, suggesting substantial room for improvement in this area for both ESI and comparison schools.

- **ESI increased students’ interaction with adults to discuss plans for their future.** Black and Latino young men in ESI schools were consistently more likely than their counterparts in non-ESI comparison schools to engage in discussions with adults in their lives about college and careers. ESI students were also more likely to take the SAT. Yet, ESI and comparison students applied for college, pursued financial aid options, or were accepted into college at similar rates. Students in both sets of schools applied to an average of about five colleges, and more than three quarters of both groups reported being accepted to at least one.

- **ESI had little or no impact on student attendance or suspension rates.** Despite evidence of improvements related to school culture and relationships, ESI had little or no systematic impact on Black and Latino male students’ attendance or suspension rates. ESI’s focus on school culture aimed, in part, at creating a positive school climate and minimizing the use of suspensions to address discipline problems. But this took place in the context of a larger district-wide effort to reduce school suspension rates. We found that both ESI and non-ESI schools experienced a slight drop in suspensions during the period of our study.

- **ESI had little or no impact on high school graduation, college readiness, or college enrollment rates.** Just over two thirds of the Black and Latino young men in both ESI and non-ESI schools graduated with a Regents diploma within four years of entering high school. However, less than 20 percent of these students met the New York State college readiness standard, suggesting that most of these high school graduates may require remediation if they enroll in college. About a quarter of Black and Latino male

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“As a faculty...we definitely understand the importance of promoting a college-going culture, which was not the case three years ago. As much as we wanted kids to go to college, we didn’t understand how little they knew about college. Now I think as a faculty we’re very clear. Our kids need more college talk to get them ready to go.”

— ESI Teacher
students in both sets of schools enrolled in a four-year college immediately following high school graduation. It should be noted that graduation and college enrollment rates for Black and Latino young men in both ESI and non-ESI schools were higher than citywide averages for this demographic, but were still substantially lower than rates Black and Latino females and White and Asian males.

Discussion

Our efforts to document, understand, and evaluate ESI may be especially relevant and useful for other districts engaged in similar efforts focused on young men of color. Both the accomplishments and limitations of ESI provide an opportunity for other similar initiatives around the country to think strategically about how they are designing and implementing such efforts. What can the ESI team, the district, and other districts committed to better serving Black and Latino males take away from the story of ESI? Which elements of the initiative were successful or distinctive and may be worth replicating or building on in other districts? And which aspects seem to have limited ESI’s ability to positively impact students on a number of key outcomes?

**ESI produced powerful changes in school culture and relationships.**

ESI accomplished important goals by taking root in a majority of participating schools, changing school culture and relationships in meaningful ways, and leaving behind a legacy that continues to influence policies and practices aimed at Black and Latino young men, both at the district level and within schools. These efforts include an ongoing series of “Critical and Courageous Conversations” around issues of racial equity in schools, large-scale school and student showcases focused on CRE and peer mentoring, and a recent push by NYC’s City Council to expand the Critically Conscious Educators Rising Series, which offers professional development on CRE to teachers.

Considering ongoing conversations about bias in schools, the historical disenfranchisement of Black and Latino students, and longstanding and persistent inequities in school outcomes, these are notable achievements. How was ESI able to accomplish this important set of goals?

- **Changing teachers’ mindsets to provide stronger support for vulnerable students.** ESI went to great lengths to create a more welcoming environment for Black and Latino male students rather than solely trying to
address a particular aspect of their academic performance. Indeed, we found that ESI shifted teacher mindsets and beliefs, improved in-school relationships, and positively influenced students’ sense of belonging and fair treatment in their schools. Though previous research suggests that addressing teacher bias and improving relationships between teachers and students can be important factors in improving student motivation and achievement (Dee & Penner, 2017; Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011; Wells et al. 2011), our study did not show a link to increased academic performance. At the same time, ESI’s ability to improve school culture and relationships is both notable and meaningful on its own, especially considering the historical marginalization of boys of color in schools (Fergus 2010, Noguera, 2008; Mincy, 2006; Howard, 2013; Noguera, & Martin, 2014; Toldson, 2008). Other districts may consider building on the strategies ESI used to achieve this goal as an important first step to addressing students’ needs and serving them as whole individuals.

- **Providing schools with ongoing support.** The ESI central team invested considerable time, effort, and resources in developing an infrastructure to support schools’ planning and implementation of ESI. Rather than simply providing money to schools, the Central Team provided ongoing support in the form of feedback on schools’ yearly plans, professional development opportunities, help forming external partnerships, and the creation of a professional learning community via monthly meetings for ESI liaisons. Past research illustrates the important role professional learning communities can play in school improvement (Broadie, K, 2013; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006; DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005). Consistent with this, the ESI educators we interviewed attributed many positive changes at their school to insight from these meetings and collaboration with other school leaders. Other districts should consider how they can offer schools effective, ongoing support to execute these types of initiatives.

**ESI did not improve academic performance or college readiness.**

ESI aspired not only to improve relationships and perceptions of the school environment, but also to raise college readiness rates (and other academic outcomes) among Black and Latino males. However, the changes we documented among schools, educators, and students were not, by themselves, enough to increase Black and Latino young men’s academic outcomes, college readiness, or college enrollment. What might account for the lack of impacts in this area, and
how might other districts focused on college readiness design and implement efforts that stand the best chance of yielding the desired results?

- **Could stronger implementation have made a difference?** At the outset, the District and the ESI Central Team emphasized the importance of schools driving the improvement process by identifying gaps among students in their own schools and deciding how to use ESI resources to close those gaps. The rationale behind this strategy was that schools best know the needs of their students and how to enact change within their buildings. This decision also ensured a level of buy-in and engagement among schools that might not have existed with a more prescriptive approach. At the same time, this high level of autonomy meant there was wide variation among schools in terms of program design, dosage and quality, and there were no clear benchmarks for student participation. While we did not find evidence that the nine schools with stronger implementation and participation rates had a systematically larger impact on student experiences and outcomes, we recognize that there was room for improvement even among the strongest implementers. On average, fewer than half of the Black and Latino males in ESI schools reported having participated in activities in all three of the initiative’s domains. Schools may have needed to reach many more students, more consistently, to have an impact on outcomes like attendance, graduation rates, or college going. This aspect of the initiative should encourage policymakers to consider ways of both leveraging school-level expertise and providing more directive guidelines or standards for implementing high-quality programs, such as evidence-based rubrics for assessing and improving program quality and concrete goals around program dosage and student participation.

Our data also show that levels of implementation declined after Year 2, as the funding for ESI decreased. Future initiatives might benefit from clearer guidance about how to create policies and structures that can outlast initiative resources, including setting stricter parameters about using funding to build staff capacity in targeted areas rather than relying on costly external partners to implement new programs.

- **Was the intervention too diffuse and not focused enough on academic supports?** ESI’s focus on school culture meant that schools were supporting Black and Latino male students on a number of different fronts...
(some schools offered up to seven different ESI programs that changed from year to year). And, while ESI appeared to increase students’ exposure to activities in all three domains (and CRE), we found that the difference between ESI and comparison schools was smaller for activities in the academic domain (largely because of the high number of academic activities in the comparison schools). Broadly speaking, ESI did not seem to substantially change schools’ approach to teaching and learning, outside of the adoption of CRE. For example, most schools did not use ESI as an opportunity to fully revamp curriculum or improve teacher mastery in particular subjects. Previous research suggests that a diffuse set of interventions may not be as impactful as one that is more targeted (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2017; Boylan, 2009). Perhaps a clearer focus on supports tied directly to high school graduation, college readiness, and enrollment (e.g., supports focused on credit accumulation to remain on-track for graduation, SAT taking, college applications, and Regents passing) would have enhanced ESI’s ability to improve those outcomes. Indeed, improving students’ academic trajectories in the face of longstanding educational disparities will likely require a robust set of targeted supports to meet students’ academic needs.

It is also important to note that even though ESI students engaged in a range of positive activities, reported a stronger sense of fair treatment and belonging, and had more conversations with adults about college and careers than students in comparison schools, this was not enough to move the needle on college readiness or enrollment. These patterns suggest that we cannot assume, as ESI’s theory of action does, that greater participation in these activities, more college-focused support, and a greater sense of belonging in high school will promote college access and success—at least not on their own. While our study provides evidence that the early part of the ESI theory holds up, the route to improved college readiness is long and complex. There may be a number of mediating factors, both inside and outside of school, that the ESI theory of action overlooked.

ESI represented an unprecedented investment in the educational outcomes of males of color. It was thoughtfully designed, moderately well implemented (particularly in its early years), and positively impacted some important outcomes. While ESI did not increase college readiness and enrollment for Black and Latino male students, it was well suited to changing elements of school culture and students’ experiences in
school. If districts are interested in improving school culture for Black and Latino young men, an investment in the types of supports ESI provided makes sense. However, if districts want to focus on improving college readiness and enrollment rates, the evidence suggests there may be ways of improving upon this model, particularly by creating more targeted interventions that are closely aligned with the intended outcomes.

**Moving Forward**

Too often, education policies don’t outlive election cycles. And when results are mixed or slow to develop, policymakers and the public often lose interest and move on to the next big initiative. But we would argue that real change takes time. Past research indicates that whole-school models and programs often do not result in significant increases in student achievement and, when they do, may require more than four years to have an impact (Gottfredson, et al., 2010; Borman, Dynarski, et al., 2004). It is possible that some schools participating in ESI needed a few more years to strengthen their programs—and that a more mature version of ESI might have a larger impact on student outcomes. For this reason, the Research Alliance aspires to track outcomes for future cohorts of ESI students, as well as longer-term (college and employment) outcomes for the students who are the focus of this report.

More importantly, addressing some of the underlying “opportunity gaps” highlighted in our research (i.e., *Moving the Needle*) and others (Fergus, 2010; Howard, 2013; Miranda, Mokhtar, et al., 2014; Noguera, 2008; Noguera, Hurtado, & Fergus, 2012) may require investment earlier in students’ lives and involving systems beyond schools. Schools and districts alone may be unable to sufficiently counter some of the root causes and longstanding history of educational inequity—disadvantages not simply driven by poverty.

We hope this report raises valuable questions and provides useful insights for districts around the country—and their partners—as they work to address the systemic inequalities faced by young men of color and other marginalized students. Creating more equitable school districts is a complex, multifaceted challenge that will require equally complex, multifaceted responses.
Executive Summary Notes

1 In this report, “college readiness” is based on the New York State Education Department’s Aspirational Performance Measure (APM), which is defined as earning a New York State Regents Diploma and receiving a score of 80 or higher on a Mathematics Regents examination and a score of 75 or higher on an English Regents examination. However, we recognize that college success depends on a variety of other skills and knowledge not necessarily reflected in this measure.

2 See https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/node/279811

3 In the years leading up to ESI, high school graduation rates for Black and Latino males increased by 14 percentage points—from 43 and 45 percent, respectively, among those who entered high school in 2002, to 57 and 59 percent, respectively, among those who entered in 2006. Yet, among the latter cohort (i.e., students scheduled to graduate in 2010), only 9 percent of Black males and approximately 11 percent of Latino males graduated “college ready,” based on the New York State APM.

4 The Research Alliance’s 9th grade “on-track” indicator defines students as on-track for graduating with a Regents diploma if, by the end of 9th grade, they have passed at least one Regents exam and accumulated at least 10 course credits (of the 44 required to graduate) (Kemple, Segeritz, & Stephenson, 2013).

5 CRE attempts to engage and empower students by incorporating their cultural backgrounds in classrooms and focusing on issues that are relevant to their lives (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Gay, 2000; Howard, 2006).

6 Depending on school enrollment, ESI funds represented 3 to 10 percent of each school’s annual budget. Schools received funding for the first three years of ESI’s four-year initiative. They were expected to develop programs that would be sustainable beyond the funding period. More than half of the ESI funding ($14 million) went to central infrastructure for the initiative and not to schools directly; those resources were largely allocated toward professional development sessions for ESI staff, large-scale events for students in ESI schools, and mini grants for individual schools pursuing more intensive PD.

7 See http://www.corestandards.org/


9 We made changes to our implementation rubric after the first year, preventing us from including Year 1 scores in our year-to-year comparisons.

10 These are changes that were consistently reported across years and across at least a quarter of ESI schools, and in some cases much more than that, though not all schools reported changes in all four areas during each year.

11 As discussed in more detail in the full report, our survey-based findings focus on the ESI schools whose accompanying comparison schools had survey data available. Sample sizes range from 18 to 28 ESI schools, depending on the grade level and school year of the survey administration.

12 In recent years, the NYC DOE has implemented a number of reforms focused on improving school safety and reducing suspensions. See, for example, http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/sclt/downloads/pdf/SCLT_Report_7-21-16.pdf

13 It is important to note that our analysis of college enrollment rates focuses on the first group of students who experienced ESI—those who were in 9th grade the year ESI began (college enrollment data for more recent cohorts of ESI students were not available at the time this report was written). Please see the full report for more details.

14 See http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/
Executive Summary References


The Research Alliance for New York City Schools conducts rigorous studies on topics that matter to the City’s public schools. We strive to advance equity and excellence in education by providing nonpartisan evidence about policies and practices that promote students’ development and academic success.