



**Putting Students on a Pathway
to Academic and Social Success:**

Phase III Findings of the Citizen Schools Evaluation

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Putting Students on a Pathway to Academic and Social Success:

Phase III Findings of the Citizen Schools Evaluation

Summary

Evidence from three years of evaluation confirms that Citizen Schools has successfully attracted and retained educationally at-risk students and has put these students on a path to academic and social success. Analysis of outcomes of participants in their first year and the corresponding outcomes of matched nonparticipating students indicates positive impacts for participants based on short-term indicators of academic success, including school attendance, promotion rates, suspension rates, and seventh-grade MCAS scores on the English Language Arts test. Among first-year students who attended Citizen Schools regularly for a year, Citizen Schools also exerted a positive impact on mathematics and English grades.

For students who continued participating in Citizen Schools for a second or third year in the seventh or eighth grades, analysis revealed positive impacts. Citizen Schools had a positive impact on the mathematics grades of returning students in the seventh grade and on eighth-grade MCAS Mathematics scores, school attendance, and promotion rates.

Emerging evidence shows that former Citizen Schools participants are demonstrating gains in high school, indicating that Citizen Schools is succeeding in moving a group of low-income, educationally at-risk participants toward a trajectory of high school completion and advancement on to college. In this regard, evidence indicates that former Citizen Schools participants enroll in high-quality high schools at far higher rates than do the matched comparison students and achieve at higher academic levels in ninth grade.

Background

As stated in its theory of change, Citizen Schools believes that an intensive two- to three-year Citizen Schools experience in middle school—when combined with transition to a high-quality high school—will put most students on a path to academic and social success. These experiences will lead them to complete high school successfully, learn the New Basic Skills, complete college or intensive workforce training, and become lifelong civic and workforce leaders. To assess its progress in fulfilling this vision, Citizen Schools is sponsoring a longitudinal evaluation that describes the program participation, development of

psychosocial skills and well-being, school engagement, and academic achievement of program participants.

Beginning with Phase I in the 2001-02 school year and continuing with Phase II in 2002-03 and Phase III in 2003-04, the evaluation has analyzed data on 855 students who were enrolled in the Boston Public Schools (BPS) and participated in Citizen Schools' Boston program as sixth- or seventh-graders or as 8th Grade Academy participants at some point during 2001-02 through 2003-04. To measure the program's impact on participants, the evaluation used a quasi-experimental design that relied on a matched-comparison group of similar BPS students not enrolled in Citizen Schools. Information on the comparison group is limited to certain school-related experiences and demographic characteristics, and does not include information on their after-school experiences.

This report describes the characteristics of students who participated in Citizen Schools and compares them to BPS students in grades 6-8 and students in the matched comparison group. It also compares Citizen Schools participants with varying levels of exposure to the program. It reports on students' participation patterns and provides information on the program's progress in encouraging two to three years of participation among all participants. It describes students' experiences with Citizen Schools supports and opportunities, such as relationships with Citizen Schools peers and staff. For students who participated in the 8th Grade Academy, the report describes how they fared academically as eighth-graders and reports on two outcomes and a number of indicators, including English/Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics grades, in high school. For sixth- and seventh-grade participants, the evaluation presents findings on their school engagement and academic achievement following one and two years of participation in Citizen Schools. Additional information on the Citizen Schools program and on findings from the first two years of the evaluation can be found in the 2004 report of the evaluation.¹

The evaluation relies on data provided by BPS and three Boston-area charter schools to measure academic achievement, school attendance, and suspension from school. The completeness of data from these sources varies from one variable to the next. As a result, the number of students included in analysis does not remain constant across analyses. Findings based on a subset of the evaluation sample should be interpreted with caution.

¹ J. Espino, L. Fabiano, & L.M. Pearson. (2004, August 30). *Citizen Schools: Evidence from two student cohorts on the use of community resources to promote youth development*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates.

Who Participated in Citizen Schools?

To examine the extent to which Citizen Schools served students typical of the BPS population, we compared participants' characteristics to those of BPS students (see Exhibit 1). Overall, Citizen Schools participants displayed many characteristics associated with educational risk. Citizen Schools participants were more likely to be students of color than were BPS sixth- through eighth-grade students overall. In fact, 94 percent of participants were students of color, compared with 85 percent of BPS students overall, with African-Americans constituting 67 percent of Citizen Schools participants and 46 percent of BPS sixth- through eighth-graders. In contrast, among Citizen Schools participants, the percentages of students who were Hispanic or Asian were lower than they were among BPS students (24 percent versus 30 percent and 3 percent versus 9 percent, respectively).

Like BPS students in grades 6-8, participants were evenly divided between males and females. In contrast with BPS students in grades 6-8, however, Citizen Schools participants were more likely to qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) (90 percent of Citizen Schools participants, compared with 81 percent of BPS students).

In addition, participants had low levels of academic achievement prior to enrolling in Citizen Schools. Thirty-four percent of Citizen Schools participants were enrolled in the BPS Transition Program as sixth-graders, and only 3 percent were enrolled in the Advanced Work Class Program as sixth-graders.² Among BPS sixth-graders overall, 28 percent of students were in a transition program, and 9 percent were in Advanced Work Classes. Twenty-four percent of Citizen Schools participants were enrolled in the Special Education program, a slightly lower percentage than was true among BPS sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students overall (30 percent), and 5 percent were enrolled in the Bilingual Education program, compared with 6 percent of BPS students in grades 6-8. A significant number of participants scored in the bottom two (of four) performance levels on their fourth-grade MCAS ELA and Mathematics tests (89 percent and 92 percent, respectively). In comparison, BPS students who took the test as fourth-graders within the same timeframe as the Citizen Schools participants were somewhat less likely to score at the bottom performance levels (84 and 86 percent, respectively).³ In addition, Citizen Schools participants averaged about

² Low-achieving sixth-grade students are eligible to participate in the Transition Program, and high-achieving sixth-graders can participate in the Advanced Work Class Program.

³ Depending on the grade level of students when they began Citizen Schools, participants would have taken the Fourth-Grade MCAS ELA and Mathematics tests at some point between spring 1998 and spring 2002. For comparison purposes we weighted BPS data on fourth-graders' performance on the test between 1998 and 2002, with adjustments made to the BPS data so that it reflected the proportion of the Citizen Schools students taking the test in each of the possible years.

Exhibit 1
Demographics and Prior Achievement of Participants,
Matched Nonparticipants, and BPS Students in Grades 6-8

Characteristic	All Citizen Schools Participants	Matched Nonparticipants^a	BPS Students in Grades 6-8^b
Race/Ethnicity	<i>N</i> =855	<i>N</i> =855	<i>N</i> =14,183
African-American	67%	67%	46%***
Asian	3%	3%	9%***
Hispanic	24%	24%	30%***
Native American	<1%	<1%	<1%
White	6%	6%	14%***
Gender	<i>N</i> =855	<i>N</i> =855	<i>N</i> =14,183
Female	50%	50%	49%
Male	50%	50%	51%
Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility	<i>N</i> =770	<i>N</i> =750	<i>N</i> =12,113 ^c
Eligible for FRPL	90%	93%	81%***
Transition Program Status^d	<i>N</i> =585	<i>N</i> =603	<i>N</i> =4,332
Enrolled in transition program in sixth grade (for low-achieving students)	34%	30%	28%**
AWC Status^d	<i>N</i> =807	<i>N</i> =823	<i>N</i> =4,332
Enrolled in Advanced Work Class in sixth grade	3%	3%	9%***
Special Education Status	<i>N</i> =846	<i>N</i> =845	<i>N</i> =14,183
Special education student	24%	20%	30%***
Bilingual Education Status	<i>N</i> =846	<i>N</i> =845	<i>N</i> =14,183
Bilingual education student	5%	3%	6%
Fourth-Grade MCAS ELA	<i>N</i> =675	<i>N</i> =760	<i>Weighted N</i> =4,674 ^e
<i>Scaled Score</i>	225	225	227**
<i>Performance Level</i>			
Warning	31%	32%	31%
Needs Improvement	58%	57%	53%**
Proficient	10%	11%	15%
Advanced	0%	0%	1%
English Course Grade	<i>N</i> =728	<i>N</i> =706	Not Available
Average course grade in first marking period	2.07	2.01	
Fourth-Grade MCAS Mathematics	<i>N</i> =691	<i>N</i> =762	<i>Weighted N</i> =4,880 ^f
<i>Scaled Score</i>	221	221	224***
<i>Performance Level</i>			
Warning	50%	50%	45%***
Needs Improvement	42%	42%	41%
Proficient	7%	7%	11%
Advanced	1%	1%	3%
Mathematics Course Grade	<i>N</i> =691	<i>N</i> =699	Not Available
Average course grade in first marking period	1.92	1.87	
School Attendance	<i>N</i> =822	<i>N</i> =833	<i>N</i> =14,183
Average attendance rate in year prior ^g	93%	92%	93%
Suspension	<i>N</i> =822	<i>N</i> =833	<i>N</i> =57,742
Suspended in year prior ^g	7%	9%	8%

Statistical significance is indicated throughout this report as: *** = $p < .001$, ** = $p < .01$, * = $p < .05$

^a On several of the demographic and prior achievement characteristics, the availability of data was higher or lower for matched nonparticipants than it was for participants and as a result the Ns of the two groups vary slightly.

^b Unless otherwise noted, the numbers reported here for BPS students in grades 6-8 are based on the 2003-04 school year. The statistically significant differences noted here were identified using a two-tailed t-test or a difference of proportions test.

^c The numbers reported here for FRPL include data from 6-8 schools only. That is, data on BPS students in grades 6-8 who attended K-8, K-12, and any other school that served elementary or high school students as well as middle school students were not included here.

^d The numbers reported here are for students in their sixth-grade year.

^e Depending on the grade level of students when they began Citizen Schools, participants would have taken the Fourth-Grade MCAS ELA test at some point between spring 1998 and spring 2002. For comparison purposes we weighted BPS' data on fourth-graders' performance on the test between 1998 and 2002. Weighting was based on the proportion of the Citizen Schools students taking the test in each of the possible years, with 6 percent of participants taking it in spring 1998, 17 percent in spring 1999, 22 percent in spring 2000, 31 percent in spring 2001, and 24 percent in spring 2002.

^f Depending on the grade level of students when they began Citizen Schools, participants would have taken the Fourth-Grade MCAS Mathematics test at some point between spring 1998 and spring 2002. For comparison purposes we weighted BPS' data on fourth-graders' performance on the test between 1998 and 2002. Weighting was based on the proportion of the Citizen Schools students taking the test in each of the possible years, with 6 percent of participants taking it in spring 1998, 17 percent in spring 1999, 21 percent in spring 2000, 31 percent in spring 2001, and 25 percent in spring 2002.

^g Data on school attendance and suspension are from the year prior to a student's participation in the evaluation. That is, the evaluation reports attendance and suspension data from the fifth-grade year for students who were picked up by the evaluation during their sixth-grade year, data from the sixth-grade year for students who were picked up during their seventh-grade year, and data from the seventh-grade year for students who were picked up during their eighth-grade year. In some cases the year prior to when a student was picked up in the evaluation is consistent with the year prior to participation in Citizen Schools, while in other cases it is not.

a C in their English and mathematics courses (2.07 and 1.92, respectively) in the first marking period of the year they began Citizen Schools. Data on course grades were not available for BPS students in grades 6-8.

Prior school engagement levels among Citizen Schools participants were similar to those of BPS students. Participants and BPS students in grades 6-8 attended school at a rate of 93 percent. Participants were suspended at a rate of 7 percent, and BPS students, overall, were suspended at a rate of 8 percent.

An important step in assessing whether participation in the Citizen Schools program benefits participants is to compare participants to a group of students who are similar to them with respect to the individual-level characteristics that affect academic achievement and engagement. In addition, because the evaluation seeks to address the question of whether Citizen Schools has a differential effect on participants depending on their levels of participation

in the program, it is important to compare the characteristics of participants with high levels of exposure to the program to the characteristics of participants with low levels of exposure. For students in their first- or second-year of participation in Citizen Schools, the evaluation's definition of a high level of exposure is attendance at Citizen Schools for 60 percent or more of the days the program is offered in both the fall and spring semesters of that year. The definition of a low level of exposure is attendance at Citizen Schools for fewer than 60 percent of the days the program is offered in either or both of the fall and spring semesters of that year. For 8th Grade Academy participants, the evaluation's definition of a high level of exposure is participation in Citizen Schools for two or more years at a rate of 60 percent or more in each semester of those years. Any 8th Grade Academy participant who did not meet the criteria for high-level exposure is considered a low-exposure participant. Because the exposure-level measure for 8th Grade Academy participants includes an annual attendance variable as well as a length of enrollment variable, some "low-exposure" students may actually have high attendance while participating in 8th Grade Academy. Readers should note that, as a general matter, the more similar the groups are with respect to individual-level characteristics, the more likely it is that any differences observed on these measures are associated with participation in Citizen Schools, not students' personal characteristics.

As shown in Exhibit 1, compared with the evaluation's group of matched nonparticipants, Citizen Schools participants had the same demographic and educational characteristics.⁴ In addition, as shown in Exhibits 2 and 3, the characteristics of Citizen Schools participants did not vary by level of exposure to the program. That is, the evaluation did not find any statistically significant differences between the two groups of participants.

⁴ Seventy-five percent of students who were in Phases I and II of the evaluation (N=486) were assigned the same nonparticipant match in Phase III as in Phase II. The remaining 122 students (25 percent) were assigned a new match for various reasons. Fifty-seven percent of this group were assigned a new match because another nonparticipating student was a better fit than the match selected in Phase II, while 43 percent were assigned a new match because the Phase II nonparticipating student did not have BPS data for the 2003-04 school year. To reduce the amount of potential bias caused by the replacement of matches, the evaluation is currently considering ways to refine the matching process so that student matches remain consistent over time.

Exhibit 2
Demographics and Prior Achievement of
8th Grade Academy Participants, Overall and by Program Exposure

Characteristic	All	Level of Exposure	
		High Exposure	Low Exposure
Race/Ethnicity	<i>N=251</i>	<i>N=105</i>	<i>N=146</i>
African American	77%	74%	80%
Asian	2%	3%	1%
Hispanic	16%	16%	16%
Native American	0%	0%	1%
White	4%	7%	3%
Gender	<i>N=251</i>	<i>N=105</i>	<i>N=146</i>
Female	51%	52%	49%
Male	49%	48%	51%
Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility	<i>N=211</i>	<i>N=88</i>	<i>N=123</i>
Eligible for FRPL	87%	89%	85%
Transition Program Status	<i>N=199</i>	<i>N=85</i>	<i>N=114</i>
Enrolled in transition program in sixth grade	47%	48%	47%
AWC Status	<i>N=221</i>	<i>N=100</i>	<i>N=121</i>
Enrolled in AWC in sixth grade	3%	2%	3%
Special Education Status	<i>N=249</i>	<i>N=104</i>	<i>N=145</i>
Enrolled in special education	24%	23%	25%
Bilingual Education Program Status	<i>N=249</i>	<i>N=104</i>	<i>N=145</i>
Enrolled in bilingual education	2%	3%	2%
Fourth-Grade MCAS ELA	<i>N=189</i>	<i>N=87</i>	<i>N=102</i>
<i>Mean Scaled Score</i>	222	222	222
<i>Performance Level</i>			
Warning/Failing	35%	38%	32%
Needs Improvement	64%	61%	67%
Proficient	1%	1%	1%
Advanced	0%	0%	0%
English Course Grade	<i>N=209</i>	<i>N=93</i>	<i>N=116</i>
Average course grade in first marking period	2.03	2.05	2.02
Fourth-Grade MCAS Mathematics	<i>N=191</i>	<i>N=88</i>	<i>N=103</i>
<i>Mean Scaled Score</i>	220	219	221
<i>Performance Level</i>			
Warning/Failing	47%	52%	42%
Needs Improvement	46%	41%	51%
Proficient	7%	7%	7%
Advanced	1%	0%	1%
Mathematics Course Grade	<i>N=210</i>	<i>N=92</i>	<i>N=118</i>
Average course grade in first marking period	1.74	1.92	1.60
School Attendance	<i>N=243</i>	<i>N=102</i>	<i>N=141</i>
Average attendance rate in year prior	93%	94%	92%
Suspension	<i>N=243</i>	<i>N=102</i>	<i>N=141</i>
Suspended in year prior	9%	5%	12%

Exhibit 3
Demographics and Prior Achievement of Sixth- and Seventh-Grade Participants, by Year of Participation and by Program Exposure

Characteristic	First Year			Second Year		
	All	High Exposure	Low Exposure	All	High Exposure	Low Exposure
Race/Ethnicity	<i>N</i> =797	<i>N</i> =469	<i>N</i> =328	<i>N</i> =144	<i>N</i> =82	<i>N</i> =62
African American	66%	65%	67%	65%	68%	60%
Asian	3%	3%	2%	4%	4%	5%
Hispanic	24%	24%	25%	25%	21%	31%
Native American	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%
White	6%	7%	6%	5%	6%	3%
Gender	<i>N</i> =797	<i>N</i> =469	<i>N</i> =328	<i>N</i> =144	<i>N</i> =82	<i>N</i> =62
Female	50%	51%	50%	54%	56%	52%
Male	50%	49%	50%	46%	44%	48%
Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility	<i>N</i> =724	<i>N</i> =429	<i>N</i> =295	<i>N</i> =130	<i>N</i> =74	<i>N</i> =56
Eligible for FRPL	90%	88%	93%	88%	84%	93%
Transition Program Status	<i>N</i> =351	<i>N</i> =224	<i>N</i> =127	<i>N</i> =90	<i>N</i> =45	<i>N</i> =45
Enrolled in transition program in sixth grade	29%	28%	30%	33%	29%	38%
AWC Status	<i>N</i> =558	<i>N</i> =349	<i>N</i> =209	<i>N</i> =90	<i>N</i> =45	<i>N</i> =45
Enrolled in AWC in sixth grade	2%	2%	2%	1%	0%	2%
Special Education Status	<i>N</i> =789	<i>N</i> =464	<i>N</i> =325	<i>N</i> =144	<i>N</i> =82	<i>N</i> =62
Enrolled in special education	25%	23%	27%	28%	29%	26%
Bilingual Education Program Status	<i>N</i> =789	<i>N</i> =464	<i>N</i> =325	<i>N</i> =144	<i>N</i> =82	<i>N</i> =62
Enrolled in bilingual education	5%	5%	4%	7%	4%	11%
Fourth-Grade MCAS ELA	<i>N</i> =635	<i>N</i> =385	<i>N</i> =250	<i>N</i> =120	<i>N</i> =69	<i>N</i> =51
<i>Mean Scaled Score</i>	225	226	224	224	224	223
<i>Performance Level</i>						
Warning/Failing	32%	29%	36%	33%	30%	37%
Needs Improvement	57%	58%	56%	61%	65%	55%
Proficient	11%	12%	9%	6%	4%	8%
Advanced	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
English Course Grade	<i>N</i> =677	<i>N</i> =405	<i>N</i> =272	<i>N</i> =129	<i>N</i> =78	<i>N</i> =51
Average course grade in first marking period	2.05	2.19	1.89	2.09	2.07	2.12
Fourth-Grade MCAS Math	<i>N</i> =650	<i>N</i> =393	<i>N</i> =257	<i>N</i> =122	<i>N</i> =72	<i>N</i> =50
<i>Mean Scaled Score</i>	221	222	221	221	221	220
<i>Performance Level</i>						
Warning/Failing	51%	51%	53%	52%	50%	54%
Needs Improvement	41%	41%	41%	40%	42%	38%
Proficient	7%	7%	5%	8%	8%	8%
Advanced	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Mathematics Course Grade	<i>N</i> =639	<i>N</i> =388	<i>N</i> =251	<i>N</i> =127	<i>N</i> =77	<i>N</i> =50
Average course grade in first marking period	1.92	2.00	1.80	2.08	2.13	2.01
School Attendance	<i>N</i> =768	<i>N</i> =450	<i>N</i> =318	<i>N</i> =142	<i>N</i> =80	<i>N</i> =62
Average attendance rate in year prior	93%	94%	92%	94%	95%	93%
Suspension	<i>N</i> =768	<i>N</i> =450	<i>N</i> =318	<i>N</i> =142	<i>N</i> =80	<i>N</i> =62
Suspended in year prior	7%	5%	9%	6%	5%	7%

What Were Students' Patterns of Participation?

The discussion below provides information on Citizen Schools' progress in reaching its goal of encouraging two to three years of Citizen Schools participation by all participants:

- The majority of the 855 students (76 percent) in this evaluation began Citizen Schools in sixth grade (see Exhibit 4). Seventeen percent of students began during their seventh-grade year; 4 percent began in one of Citizen Schools summer programs; and 1 percent began in the 8th Grade Academy. For 2 percent of students, program start-dates were not available.

Exhibit 4
Distribution of Students by Grade in Which They Began Participating in Citizen Schools

Initial Participation	Percent of Students (<i>N=855</i>)
Sixth Grade	76
Seventh Grade	17
8th Grade Academy	1
Summer semester	4
Data not available	2

- Thirty percent of students (or 253 out of 855) were eligible to participate in Citizen Schools in all three years that the program was offered (i.e., they began the program as sixth-graders and could have participated through 8th Grade Academy by the end of the 2003-04 school year). Seventy students (28 percent) participated over the entire three-year period, while 40 percent of students (or 102 out of 253) participated in the sixth-grade year only, 20 percent (or 50 out of 253) participated in the sixth-grade and 8th Grade Academy years only, and 12 percent (or 31 out of 253) participated in the sixth- and seventh-grade years only.
- Among the 253 students who were eligible to participate in Citizen Schools for three years but attended for only two, participating in the sixth-grade and 8th Grade Academy years was a more common combination than was participating in the sixth- and seventh-grade years. With students' participation in after-school programs in general tending to decrease in the middle- and high-school grades,

this is a noteworthy finding. It appears that students and/or their parents were more interested in a second year of participation when it would be spent in the 8th Grade Academy. Two plausible explanations for this are that (1) Citizen Schools focused much of its energy on encouraging students to return for the 8th Grade Academy year, because of the importance the program places on this component of the program, than it did on getting students to return for the seventh-grade year, and (2) Citizen Schools has been more successful in differentiating the 8th Grade Academy year from the sixth- and seventh-grade years than it has been in differentiating the sixth- and seventh-grade years from each other.

- Looking at all of the students in the evaluation, and not just the 253 who were eligible to complete three years of the program, the percentages of students attending Citizen Schools for 60 percent or more of the days the program was offered within both the fall and spring semesters of that year were as follows: 59 percent among sixth- and seventh-grade participants (N=797) during their first year of participation; 57 percent among seventh-grade participants (N=144) during their second year of participation; and 75 percent among 8th Grade Academy students (N=251) regardless of whether 8th Grade Academy was their first, second, or third year of participation (see Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5
Students Attending Citizen Schools at a Rate of 60 Percent or More in Both the Fall and Spring Semesters, by Year of Participation

Year of Participation in Citizen Schools	Percent of Students
First Year (N=797)	59
Second Year (N=144)	57
8th Grade Academy Year (N=251)	75

What Were Students' Experiences with Citizen Schools Supports and Opportunities?

As shown in Exhibit 6, student survey responses at each grade level served by Citizen Schools suggest that students felt a strong connection to the program. In addition, students generally felt positive about their relationships with Citizen Schools staff and the other student participants. Most students reported having fairly frequent opportunities to lead, and most reported that they participated in activities that required active learning on a fairly regular basis.

Looking at the data broken out by grade, the evaluation found that students' ratings of Citizen Schools supports and opportunities were similar for those participating in sixth grade and those participating in seventh grade. Students participating in the 8th Grade Academy, however, scored approximately 4 percent lower on each support and opportunity measure.

Despite their lower ratings on measures of supports and opportunities, 8th Grade Academy participants responded positively on the whole, with the only exception being that they reported fairly infrequent opportunities to take on leadership roles in the program. Such opportunities might have consisted of leading parts of Citizen Schools activities, nominating students for awards, or providing input or suggestions to staff on ways to improve the program. Possible explanations for the differences between 8th Grade Academy and other participants may include: (1) the majority of 8th Grade Academy students participated in Citizen Schools for more than one year and may therefore have had higher expectations about what they wanted to get out of an after-school program and/or they may have been more critical if they felt that supports and opportunities had not changed much across their years of participation, (2) because of its focus on high school preparation, 8th Grade Academy participants may have had (or may perceive that they had) fewer opportunities to socialize with peers and lead activities, and (3) because of their age, 8th Grade Academy participants may have been somewhat less likely than younger participants to provide socially desirable answers.

Exhibit 6
Student Experiences with Citizen Schools
Supports and Opportunities, by Grade^a

Scale	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
Program Connection Scale	<i>(N = 316)</i>	<i>(N = 80)</i>	<i>(N = 196)</i>
Mean	2.94	3.01	2.84
SD	.76	.69	.66
Minimum score; maximum score on a scale of 1-4	1.00; 4.00	1.00; 4.00	1.00; 4.00
Relationships with Staff Scale	<i>(N = 306)</i>	<i>(N = 82)</i>	<i>(N = 196)</i>
Mean	3.11	3.13	2.95
SD	.57	.62	.54
Minimum score; maximum score on a scale of 1-4	1.56; 4.00	1.00; 4.00	1.22; 4.00
Peer Support Index	<i>(N = 312)</i>	<i>(N = 79)</i>	<i>(N = 198)</i>
Mean	2.80	2.77	2.64
SD	.75	.79	.68
Minimum score; maximum score on a scale of 1-4	1.00; 4.00	1.00; 4.00	1.00; 4.00
Leadership Opportunities Index	<i>(N = 312)</i>	<i>(N = 80)</i>	<i>(N = 199)</i>
Mean	1.97	2.05	1.83
SD	.56	.53	.54
Minimum score; maximum score on a scale of 1-3	1.00; 3.00	1.00; 3.00	1.00; 3.00
Active Learning Opportunities Index	<i>(N = 255)</i>	<i>(N = 67)</i>	<i>(N = 157)</i>
Mean	3.00	2.99	2.81
SD	.51	.52	.52
Minimum score; maximum score on a scale of 1-4	1.67; 3.94	1.72; 4.00	1.44; 3.89

^a. The purpose of this analysis was to describe students' perceptions of the supports and opportunities provided by Citizen Schools at each of the grade levels served by the program. If a student participated in Citizen Schools for more than one year, say for example, the seventh- and eighth-grade year and that student completed a survey in both years, the response she provided as a seventh-grader was included in the number reported above for seventh-graders and the response she provided as an eighth-grader was included in the number reported above for eighth-graders.

How Did Students Perform on Academic Measures During and Following the 8th Grade Academy?

For sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade participants, the evaluation assessed several early indicators of Citizen Schools' effectiveness. These are: school engagement (attendance, suspension rate, promotion to the next grade); classroom performance (grades in mathematics and English); and standardized test performance (MCAS ELA and Mathematics).

In addition, for 8th Grade Academy participants the evaluation assesses two outcomes – enrollment in a college-track high school and promotion to tenth grade on time. This section provides results on the indicators of success for 8th Grade Academy participants as well as the results to date on the two outcomes the evaluation is tracking.

Performance of 8th Grade Academy Participants on Indicators of Academic Success During the Eighth-Grade Year

As eighth-graders, 8th Grade Academy participants attended school more often, were more likely to be promoted, and earned higher scores on the Eighth-Grade MCAS Mathematics test than had they not participated in Citizen Schools (see Exhibit 7). However, performance on the three other indicators (suspension rates and English and mathematics grades) did not differ significantly.

Exhibit 7
Summary of Differences Between 8th Grade Academy Participants and Matched Nonparticipants in Eighth Grade

Indicator	All		High Exposure		Low Exposure	
	N	Difference Between Participant and Matched Nonparticipant	N	Difference Between Participant and Matched Nonparticipant	N	Difference Between Participant and Matched Nonparticipant
School attendance	238	4**	97	5**	141	4
School suspension	238	-1	97	1	141	-2
Promotion to next grade	234	4**	99	8**	135	1
English course grade	168	.14	77	.07	91	.20
Mathematics course grade	171	.02	78	.14	93	-.10
MCAS Mathematics	213	2**	93	3*	120	2*

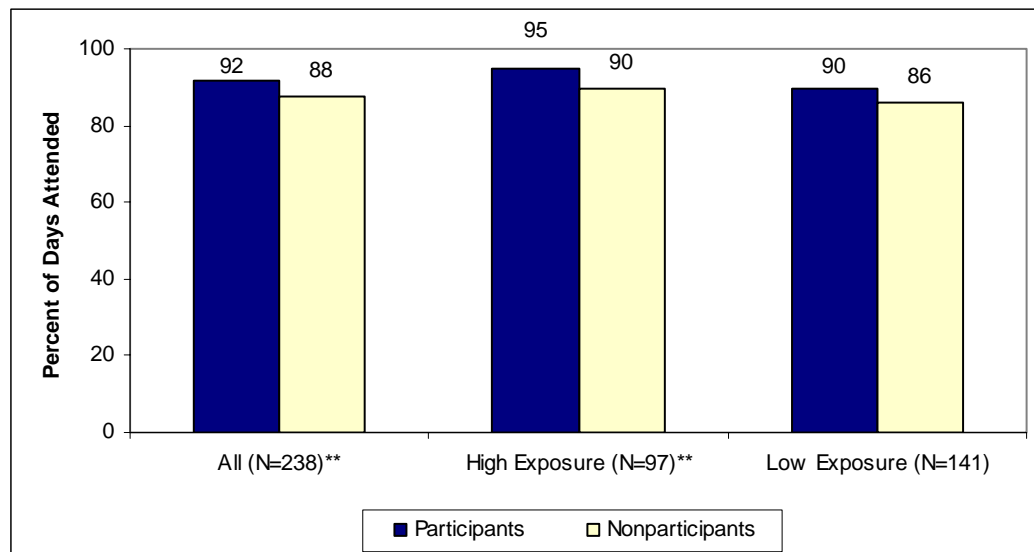
NOTE: Due to rounding, differences reported may not sum to differences obtained when subtracting nonparticipants' scores from participants' scores.

Specifically, looking at 8th Grade Academy participants in their eighth-grade year, the evaluation found the following:

- **School attendance.** 8th Grade Academy participants overall attended school 92 percent of the time, while their matched nonparticipants attended school 88 percent of the time. Students who participated at high levels of exposure attended school 95 percent of the time, while their matched nonparticipants attended for 90 percent of the time. The attendance rate of students with

low levels of exposure was statistically the same as that of students in the matched nonparticipant group (see Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8 Eighth-Grade School Attendance Rate of 8th Grade Academy Participants, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants



- **Promotion to ninth grade.** 8th Grade Academy participants overall were promoted to ninth grade at a higher rate than were their matched nonparticipants (98 percent versus 94 percent). All of the participants in the high-exposure group were promoted to ninth grade, compared with 92 percent of their matched nonparticipants. Promotion rates did not differ between low-exposure participants and their matched comparison students (see Exhibit 9).
- **School suspension.** Regardless of their level of exposure, 8th Grade Academy participants were suspended at the same rate as their matched nonparticipants (see Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 9
Eighth- to Ninth-Grade Promotion Rate of 8th Grade Academy
Participants, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

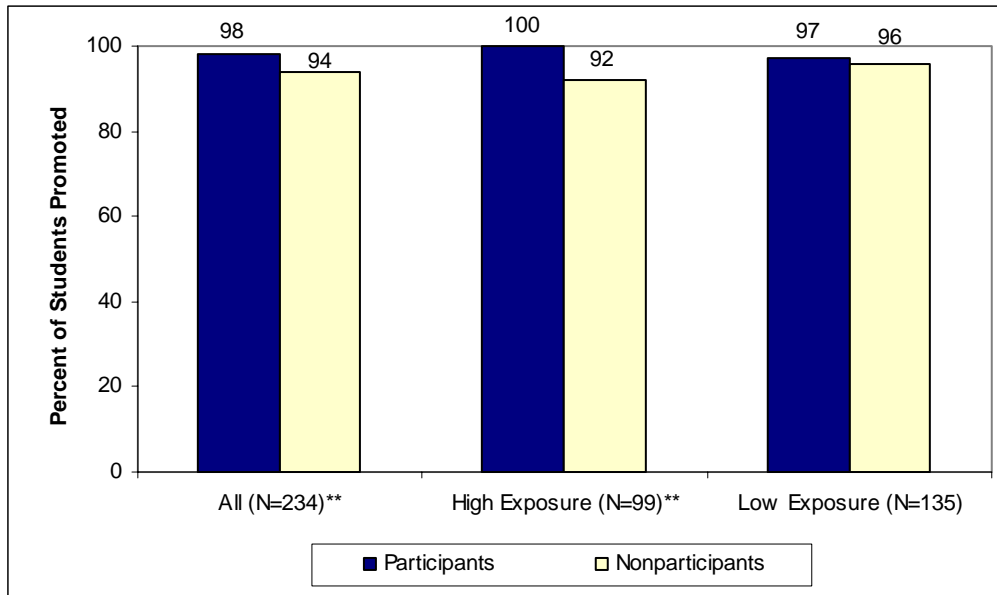
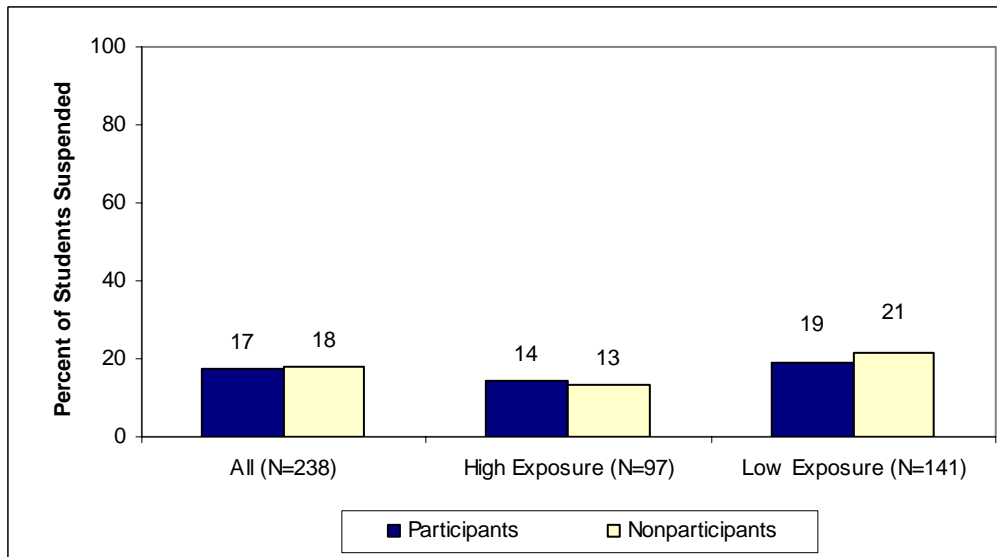


Exhibit 10
Eighth-Grade Suspension Rate of 8th Grade Academy
Participants, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants



- English and mathematics course grades.** 8th Grade Academy participants earned a grade of 1.91 in their English courses and a grade of 1.77 in their mathematics courses in the third marking

period and the evaluation found no statistically significant differences between participants and the matched comparison group on these measures (see Exhibits 11 and 12). The average grade in both groups suggests that both sets of students are likely to struggle with the academic demands of high school, unless they receive fairly high levels of academic support.

Exhibit 11
Eighth-Grade Average English Grade of 8th Grade Academy Participants in Third Marking Period, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

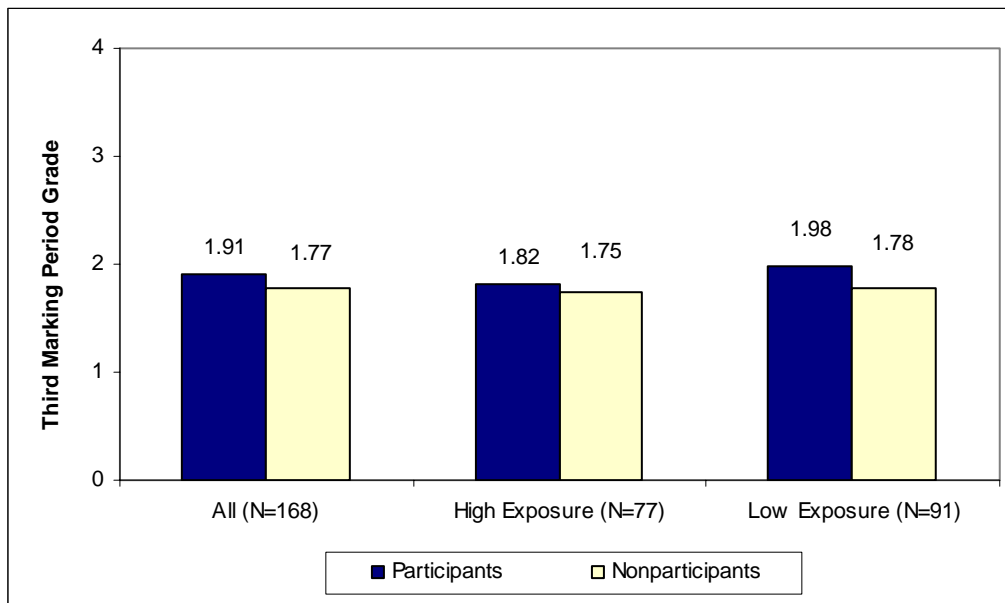
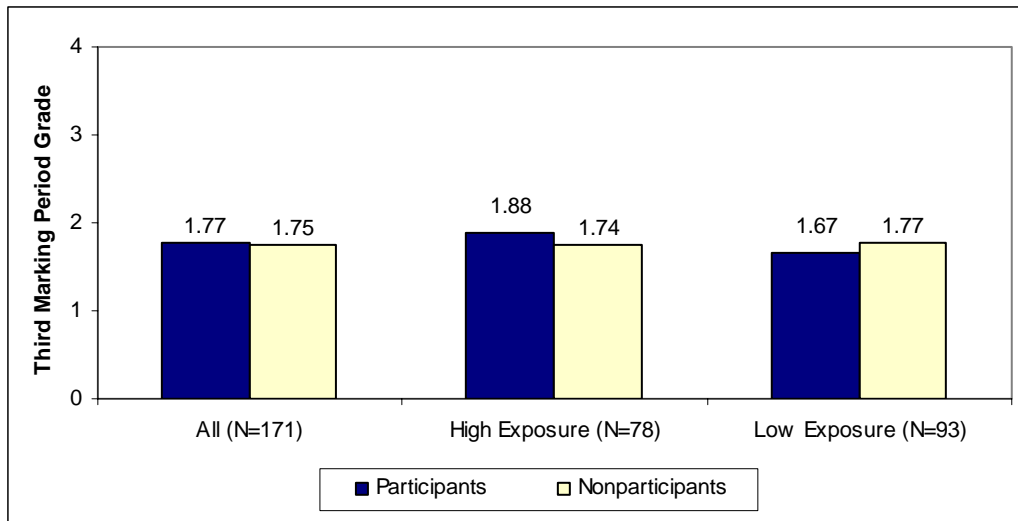


Exhibit 12
Eighth-Grade Average Mathematics Grade of 8th Grade Academy Participants
in Third Marking Period, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants



- **MCAS Mathematics Test.** At all levels of exposure, 8th Grade Academy participants earned slightly higher scaled scores than nonparticipants on the Eighth-Grade MCAS Mathematics test. However, like their matched nonparticipants, they performed at very low levels, with over half scoring at the failing level, indicating low levels of mastery of eighth-grade mathematics (see Exhibits 13 and 14).

Exhibit 13
Mean Scaled Score of 8th Grade Academy Participants on the Eighth-Grade MCAS Mathematics Test, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

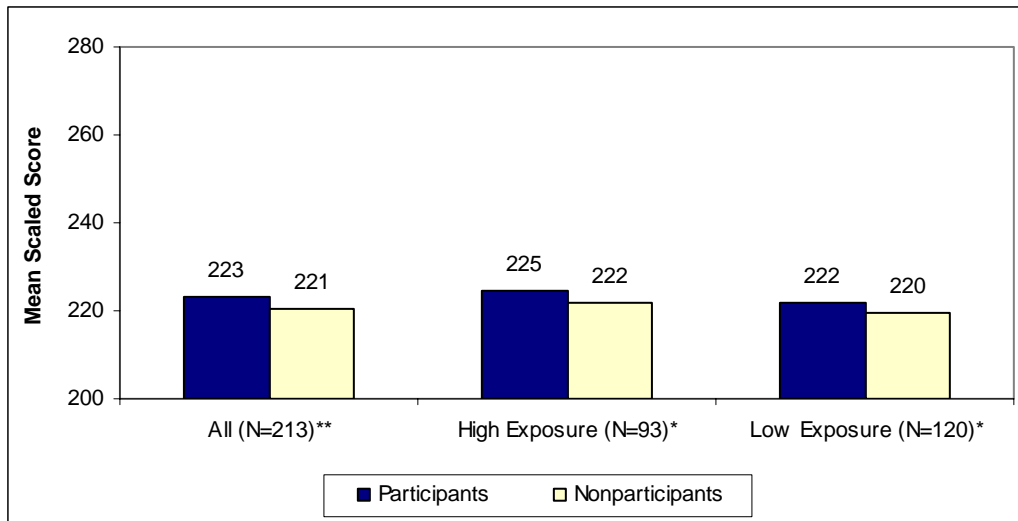


Exhibit 14
Percent of 8th Grade Academy Participants Scoring at the Failing Level on the Eighth-Grade MCAS Mathematics Test, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

Student Type	Overall (N=213)	High Exposure (N=93)	Low Exposure (N=120)
Participants	54	47	60
Nonparticipants	58	52	63

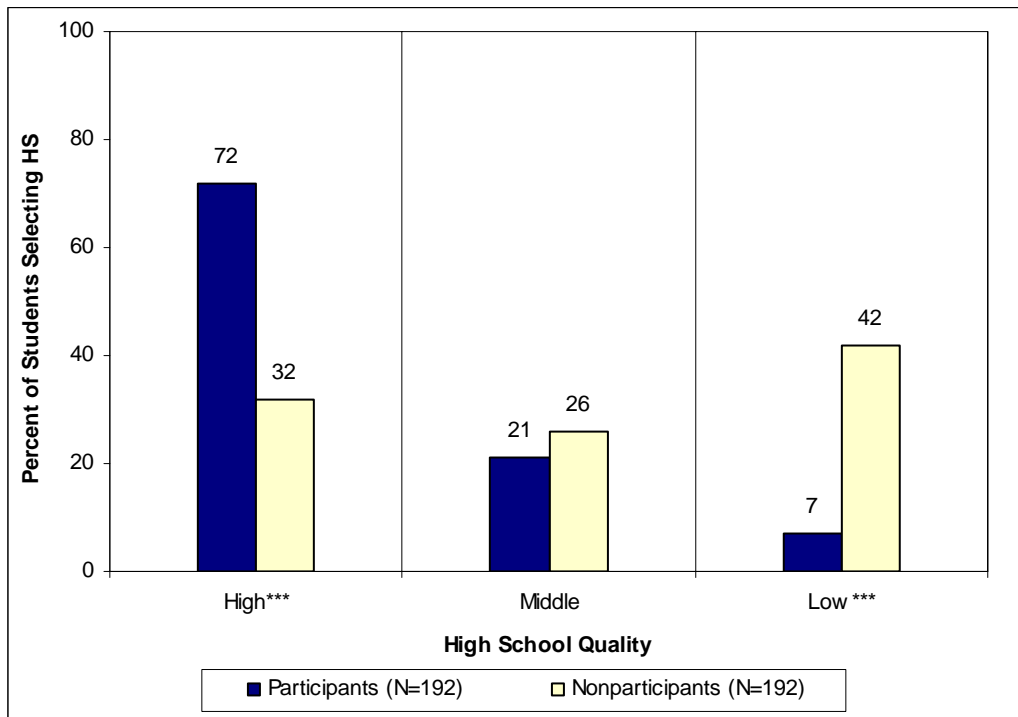
Performance of 8th Grade Academy Participants on Measures of High School Academic Success

The evaluation found positive results for former 8th Grade Academy participants with regard to the program’s two short-term outcomes—high school selection and on-time promotion to tenth grade.

Following their participation in 8th Grade Academy, students selected high-quality high schools at a rate higher than had they not participated in Citizen Schools (72 percent versus 32 percent for their matched comparisons)

(see Exhibits 15-17).⁵ In addition, students overall and those who participated in the 8th Grade Academy at high levels of exposure (i.e., participants with two or more years of participation at a rate of 60 percent in all semesters) were promoted to the tenth grade on schedule (i.e., they were promoted from eighth to ninth and then ninth to tenth within two years) at a rate higher than had they not participated in the program (86 percent for students overall, compared with 82 percent for their matched nonparticipants, and 89 percent for high-exposure students, compared with 80 percent for their matched nonparticipants) (see Exhibit 18). The difference in on-time promotion, however, was not statistically significant.

Exhibit 15
High Schools Selected by Former 8th Grade Academy Participants, Compared with Those Selected by Matched Nonparticipants, by High School Quality



⁵ Citizen Schools provided the evaluation with ratings—high, middle, and low—for the high schools attended by participants and their matched nonparticipants. According to these ratings, a high-quality high school was a school with a high level of educational culture, support, and achievement, as indicated by the qualitative and quantitative data available. These included MCAS passage rates, attendance rates, suspension rates, student achievement, promotion rates, drop-out rates, graduation rates, and college/career training enrollment. It also included resources available at the school, external partnerships, school themes, and courses offered (high-level and college preparation versus standard courses).

Exhibit 16
High Schools Selected by Former 8th Grade Academy Participants
with High Levels of Program Exposure,
Compared with Those Selected by Matched Nonparticipants

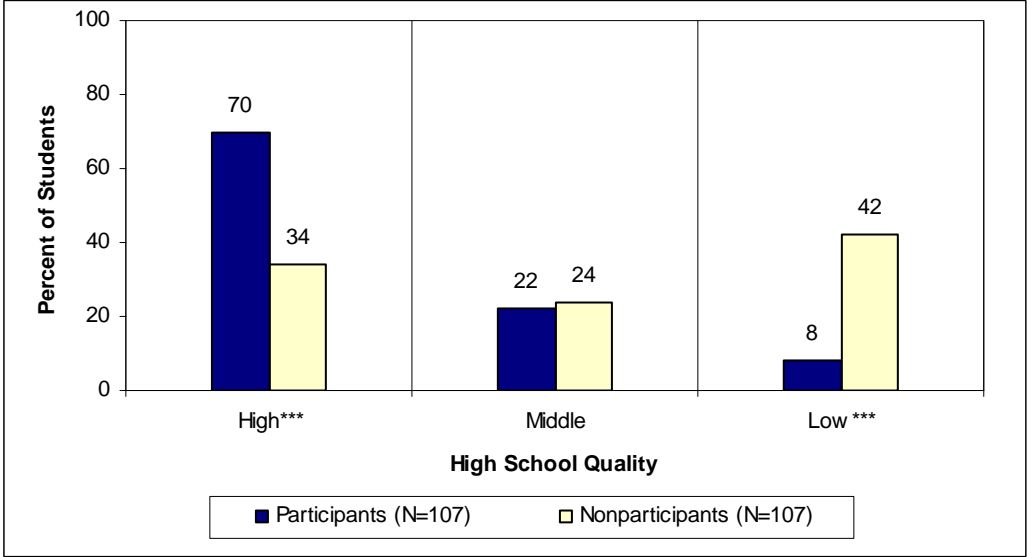


Exhibit 17
High Schools Selected by Former 8th Grade Academy Participants
with Low Levels of Program Exposure,
Compared with Those Selected by Matched Nonparticipants

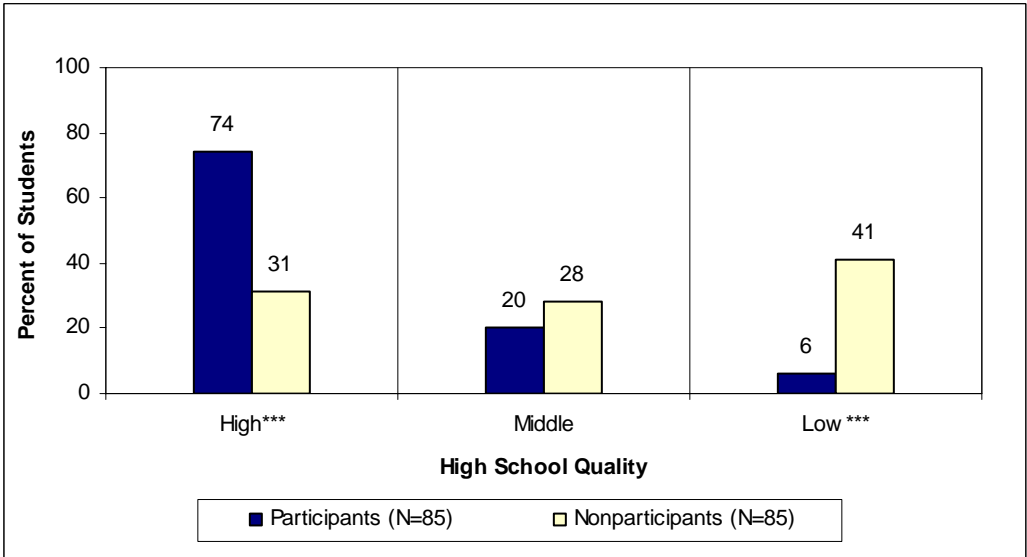
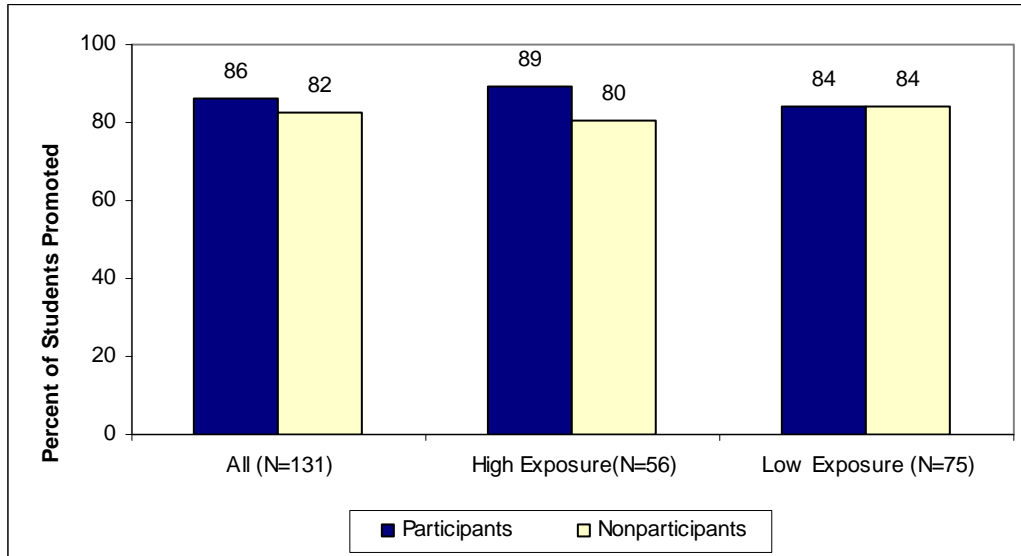


Exhibit 18
On-Time Promotion to the Tenth Grade for Former 8th Grade Academy Participants, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants



The evaluation found that former 8th Grade Academy participants overall outperformed their matched nonparticipants on two of the four academic indicators in the ninth-grade year: English and mathematics course grades (see Exhibit 19). On the remaining two indicators, attendance and suspension, participants with high levels of exposure attended school at a higher rate and were suspended less than had they not participated in Citizen Schools, although participants as a whole and those with low levels of exposure did not.

Specifically, looking at former 8th Grade Academy participants in their ninth-grade year, the evaluation found the following:

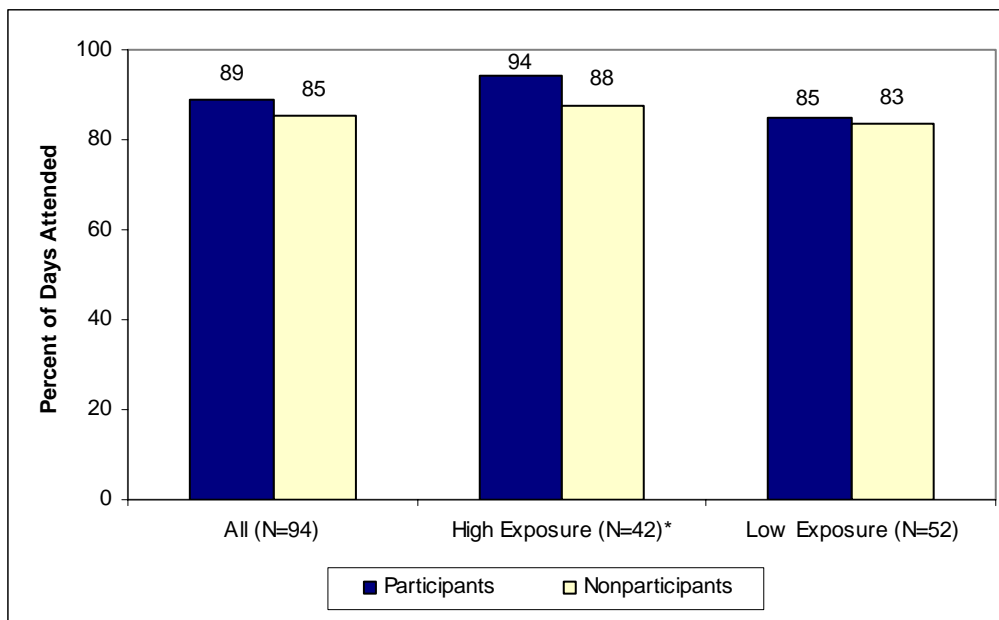
- **School attendance.** Former 8th Grade Academy participants overall, and those with low levels of program exposure, attended school at statistically the same rate as their matched nonparticipants (89 percent versus 85 percent and 85 versus 83 percent, respectively). Students with high levels of exposure, however, attended school at a higher rate than had they not participated (a rate of 94 percent among high-exposure participants, compared with a rate of 88 percent among matched nonparticipants) (see Exhibit 20).

Exhibit 19
Summary of Differences Between Former 8th Grade Academy
Participants and Matched Nonparticipants During Ninth Grade

Indicator	All		High Exposure		Low Exposure	
	N	Difference Between Participant and Matched Nonparticipant	N	Difference Between Participant and Matched Nonparticipant	N	Difference Between Participant and Matched Nonparticipant
School attendance	94	4	42	6*	52	2
School suspension	93	-6	51	-8*	42	-4
English course grade	58	.46*	25	.92**	33	.12
Mathematics course grade	48	.58*	20	.53	28	.61*

NOTE: Due to rounding, differences reported may not sum to differences obtained when subtracting nonparticipants' scores from participants' scores.

Exhibit 20
Ninth-Grade School Attendance Rate of Former 8th Grade Academy
Participants, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants



- School suspension.** 8th Grade Academy participants with high levels of exposure were suspended at a rate of 2 percent, compared with a rate of 10 percent among their matched nonparticipants. The evaluation found no statistically significant difference between participants and their matched nonparticipants overall or between

participants and their matched nonparticipants with low exposure (see Exhibit 21).

- **English course grades.** In their ninth-grade English courses, students who participated in the 8th Grade Academy earned, on average, a score of 2.20 in the third marking period, while their matched nonparticipants earned a 1.74. Former 8th Grade Academy participants with high levels of exposure earned a 2.51, compared with their matched nonparticipants' mean score of 1.59 (see Exhibit 22).

Exhibit 21
Ninth-Grade Suspension Rate of Former 8th Grade Academy
Participants, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

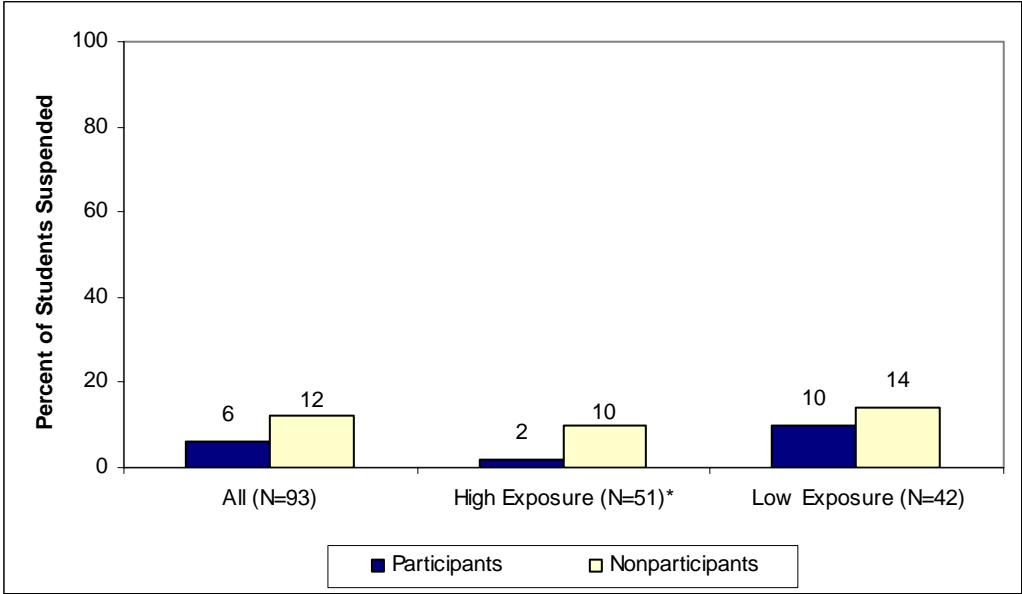
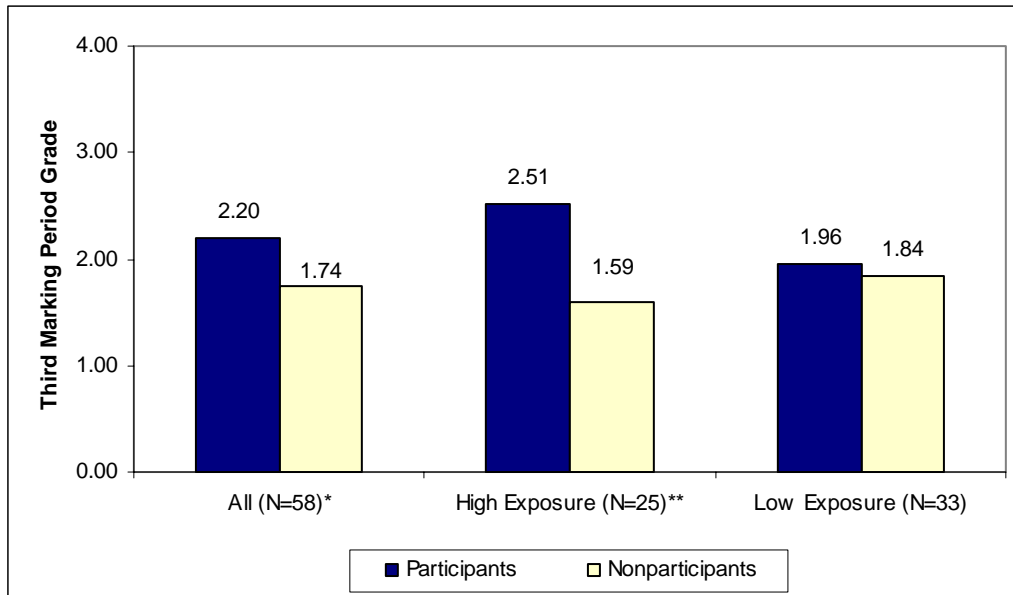


Exhibit 22
Ninth-Grade Average English Grade of Former 8th Grade Academy Participants
in Third Marking Period, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

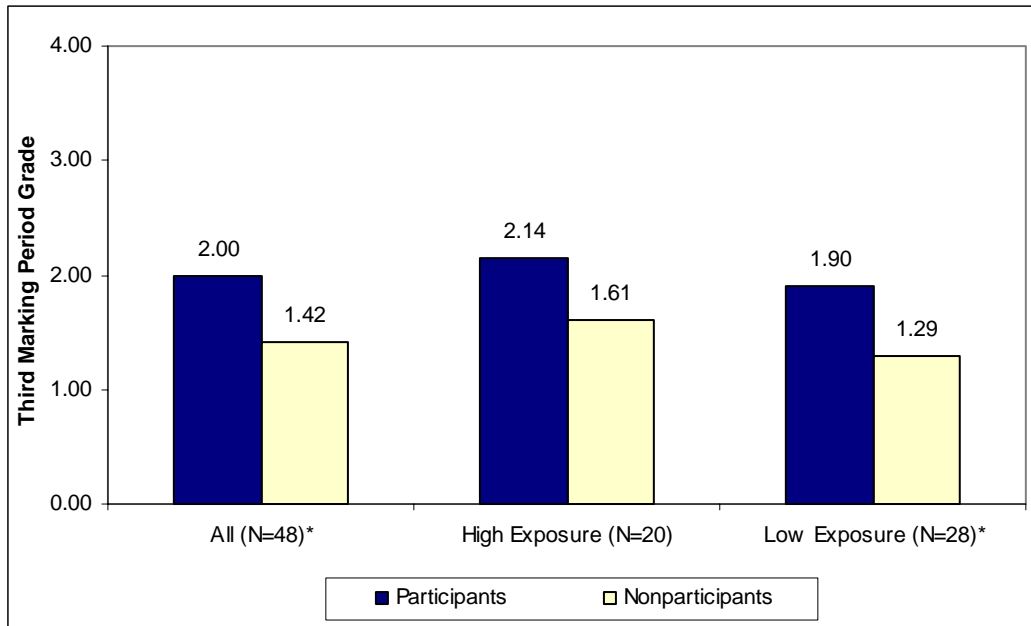


- Mathematics course grades.** In their ninth-grade mathematics courses, former 8th Grade Academy participants earned, on average, a score of 2.00 in the third marking period, while their matched nonparticipants earned a 1.42. In contrast with their performance on other measures, students who participated in the 8th Grade Academy at low levels of exposure performed higher than their matched nonparticipants on this measure (1.90 versus 1.29). The evaluation found no statistically significant difference between high-exposure participants and their matched nonparticipants, although the former group earned a 2.14 while the latter earned a 1.61 (see Exhibit 23).

While existing evaluation data do not allow us to determine, with certainty, the factors associated with academic gains in the ninth-grade year where course-grade gains were not statistically significant the preceding year, two hypotheses worth exploring in later phases of the evaluation are (1) by getting students who participated in the 8th Grade Academy to attend high schools with environments that not only promote high achievement but also provide support to students who are struggling, Citizen Schools has a positive, lagging effect on its participants and (2) the skill-building and other activities in which students engage as Citizen Schools participants accumulate over time and provide increasing benefit in the long term.

Exhibit 23

Ninth-Grade Average Mathematics Grade of Former 8th Grade Academy Participants in Third Marking Period, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants



As of the 2003-04 school year, only a small number of students who participated in the 8th Grade Academy were old enough to have been in the tenth grade. For this reason, we do not yet report on the progress of former 8th Grade Academy participants two years following their participation in Citizen Schools.

How Did Sixth- and Seventh-Grade Participants Perform on Indicators of Academic Success?

While it is too early in the evaluation to know how students who were in the sixth- or seventh-grade as of the 2003-04 school year will fare with respect to the short-term outcomes of high school selection and promotion on time to tenth grade and the other indicators of high school success, the evaluation assessed their progress toward reaching these goals by examining students' performance on a set of indicators during their first and second years of participation in Citizen Schools.

During their first year of participation in Citizen Schools, sixth- and seventh-grade program participants overall, regardless of their grade level, performed better than their matched nonparticipants on three of seven indicators (attendance, suspension rates, and grade promotion) (see Exhibit 24). In addition, during their first year of participation, seventh-grade participants overall and

those with high levels of exposure outperformed their matched comparisons on the MCAS ELA test. The evaluation did not find evidence that Citizen Schools had a positive effect for participants overall on the remaining three indicators (sixth-grade MCAS mathematics test, mathematics course grade, and English course grade). However, the results among participants with high levels of program exposure (i.e., participants who attended 60 percent or more of the days offered at their program in both semesters of that school year) were more positive, with this group outperforming their matched nonparticipants on six of seven indicators (attendance, suspension rates, mathematics course grade, Seventh-Grade MCAS ELA test, English course grade, and promotion). The evaluation did not find evidence of positive benefits for these participants on the seventh indicator (sixth-grade MCAS Mathematics test).

Exhibit 24

Summary of Differences Between Sixth- and Seventh-Grade Participants and Matched Nonparticipants During Participants' First Year

Indicator	All		High Exposure		Low Exposure	
	N	Difference Between Participant and Matched Nonparticipant	N	Difference Between Participant and Matched Nonparticipant	N	Difference Between Participant and Matched Nonparticipant
School attendance	776	3***	459	5***	317	-1
School suspension	776	-6***	459	-11***	317	0
Promotion to next grade	765	2*	456	4**	309	0
English course grade	539	.10	327	.27***	212	-.17
Seventh-grade MCAS ELA	123	2*	71	4**	52	1
Mathematics course grade	498	0	306	.17*	192	-.27
Sixth-grade MCAS Mathematics	571	0	352	0	219	0

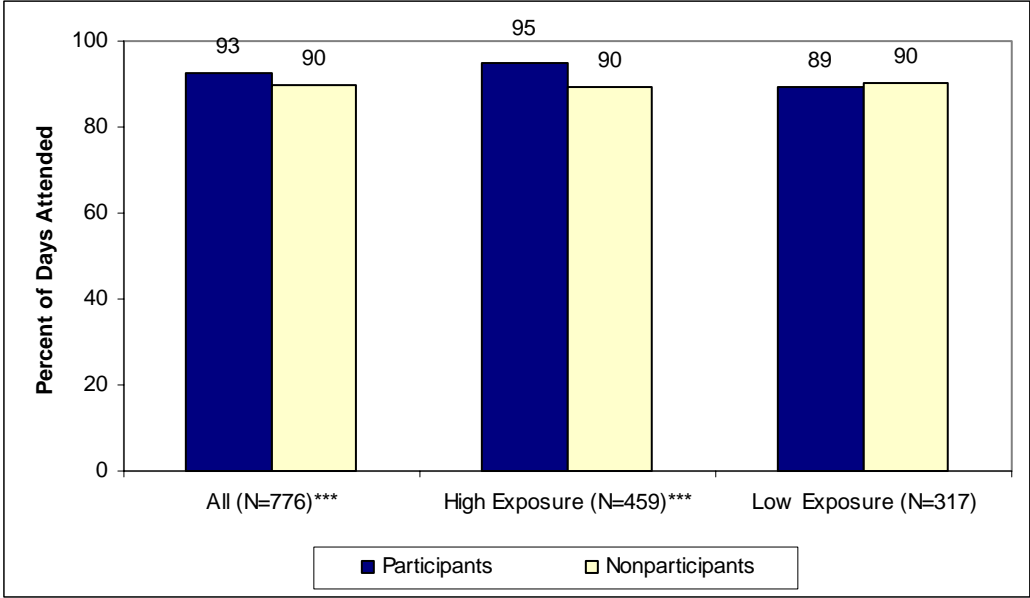
NOTE: Due to rounding, differences reported may not sum to differences obtained when subtracting nonparticipants' scores from participants' scores.

We present the results for sixth- and seventh-grade students *during their first year of participation* in greater detail in the bulleted text that follows.

- School attendance.** Overall, the attendance rate of Citizen Schools participants was 93 percent, compared with a rate of 90 percent among their matched nonparticipants. High-exposure students attended school at a rate of 95 percent, compared with their matched nonparticipants, who attended at a rate of 90 percent. This difference between participants and matched nonparticipants

amounted to nine additional days of school for participants. Students with low levels of exposure to Citizen Schools attended school at the same rate as students in the matched comparison group (see Exhibit 25).

Exhibit 25
School Attendance Rates of Sixth- and Seventh-Grade Participants
During Their First Year, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants



- **School suspension.** Ten percent of participants overall were suspended, compared with 16 percent of matched nonparticipants. Five percent of high-exposure participants were suspended, compared with 16 percent of their matched nonparticipants. Participants with low levels of exposure were suspended at the same rate as their matched comparison group (see Exhibit 26).
- **Promotion to the next grade.** Ninety-six percent of participants overall were promoted to the next grade, compared with 94 percent of nonparticipants. Ninety-eight percent of high-exposure students were promoted, compared with 94 percent of their matched nonparticipants. Low-exposure participants were promoted at the same rate as their matched nonparticipants (see Exhibit 27).

Exhibit 26
School Suspension Rate of Sixth- and Seventh-Grade Participants
During Their First Year, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

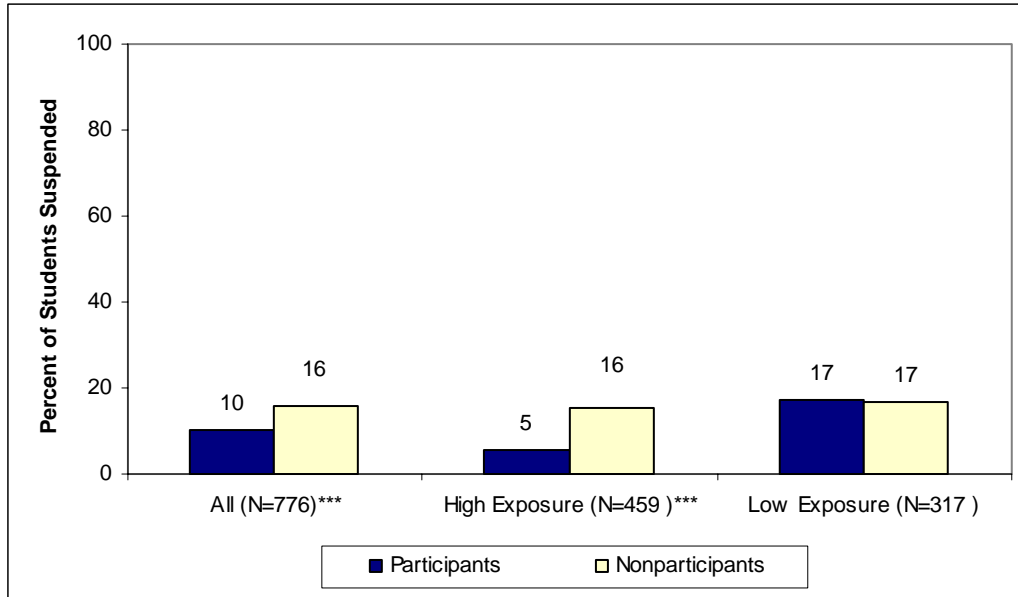
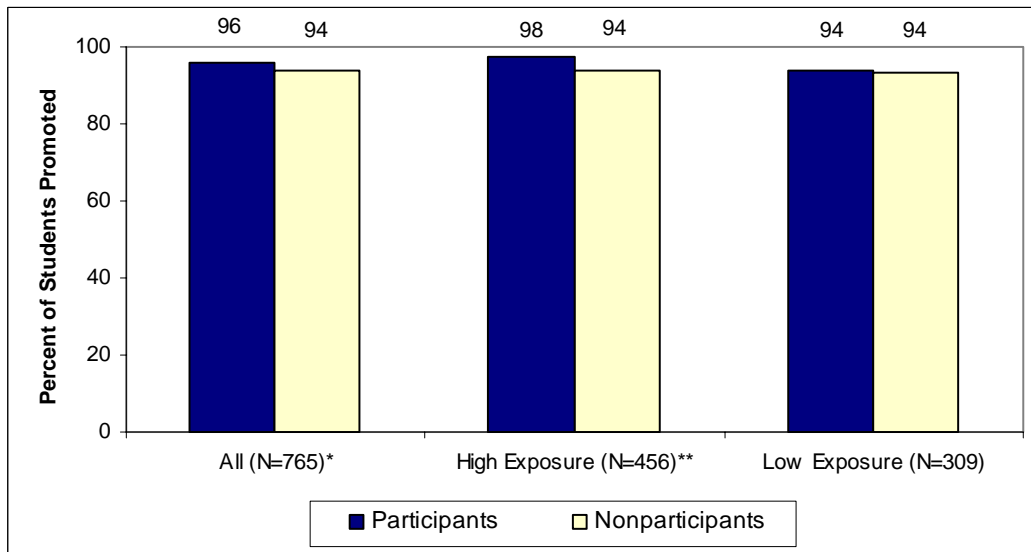


Exhibit 27
Promotion Rate of Sixth- and Seventh-Grade Participants
During Their First Year, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants



- ***Achievement in English.*** Participants overall and those students with low levels of exposure to Citizen Schools scored the same as

their matched nonparticipants in their English courses at the third marking period. Students with high levels of exposure, however, outperformed their matched nonparticipants on course grades by .27 percentage points on a four-point scale. On the seventh-grade MCAS English Language Arts exam, participants overall and those with high levels of exposure scored higher than their matched nonparticipants (2 and 4 scaled score points on an 80-point scale, respectively) (see Exhibits 28 and 29). While participants earned higher scaled scores than their matched nonparticipants, the two groups did not differ in terms of the percent of students scoring at the Failing level (see Exhibit 30).

Exhibit 28
Average Third Marking Period English Grade of Sixth- and Seventh-Grade Participants During Their First Year, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

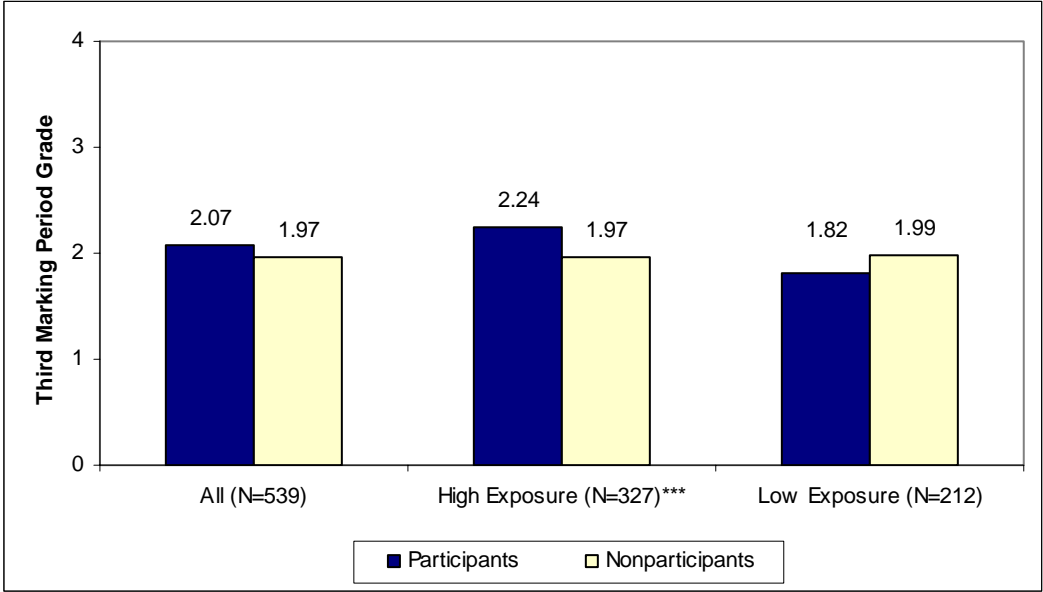


Exhibit 29
Mean Scaled Score on the Seventh-Grade MCAS ELA Test for Seventh-Grade Participants During First Year, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

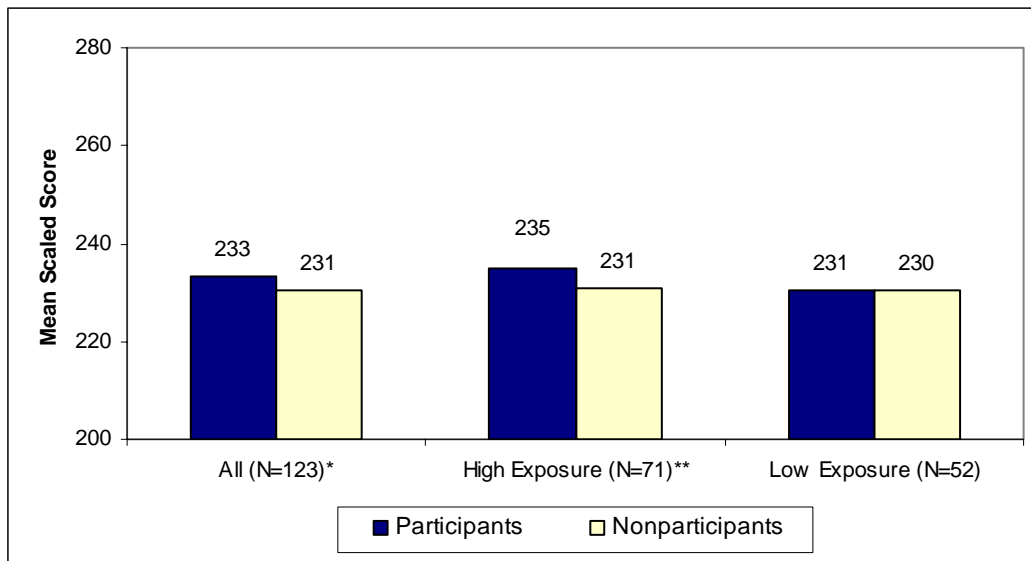


Exhibit 30
Percent of Participants Scoring at the Failing Level on the Seventh-Grade MCAS ELA Test During First Year, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

Student Type	Overall (N=123)	High Exposure (N=71)	Low Exposure (N=52)
Participants	16	14	19
Nonparticipants	13	15	10

- Achievement in mathematics.** While students with high levels of exposure to Citizen Schools earned slightly higher third-marking-period grades in their mathematics courses than did their matched counterparts, students overall and students with low levels of exposure did not. In addition, regardless of exposure levels, participants performed similarly to their matched nonparticipants on the sixth-grade MCAS Mathematics test, both in terms of scaled scores earned and the percent of students scoring at the Failing level (see Exhibits 31, 32, and 33).

Exhibit 31

Average Third Marking Period Mathematics Grade of Sixth- and Seventh-Grade Participants During Their First Year, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

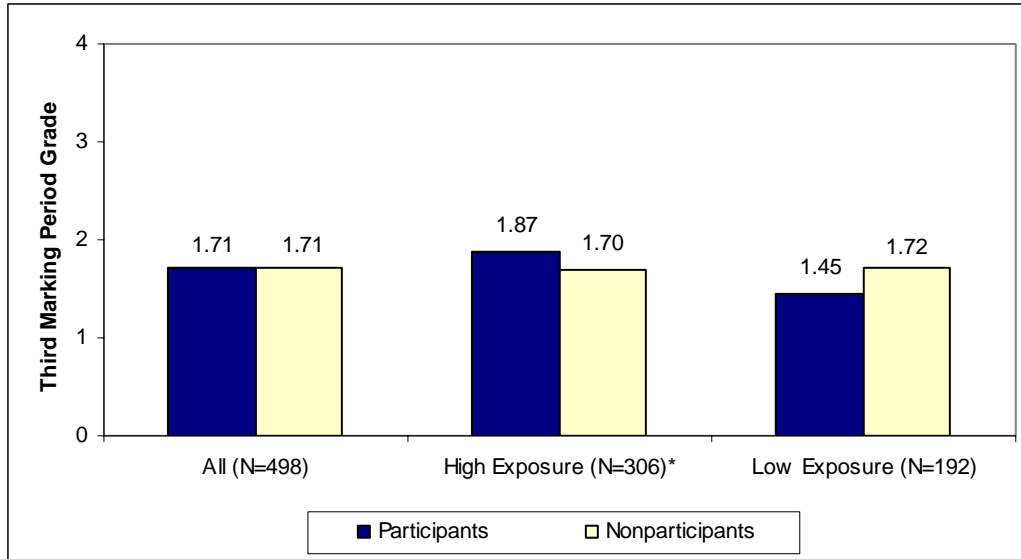


Exhibit 32

Mean Scaled Score on the Sixth-Grade MCAS Mathematics Test for Sixth-Grade Participants During First Year, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

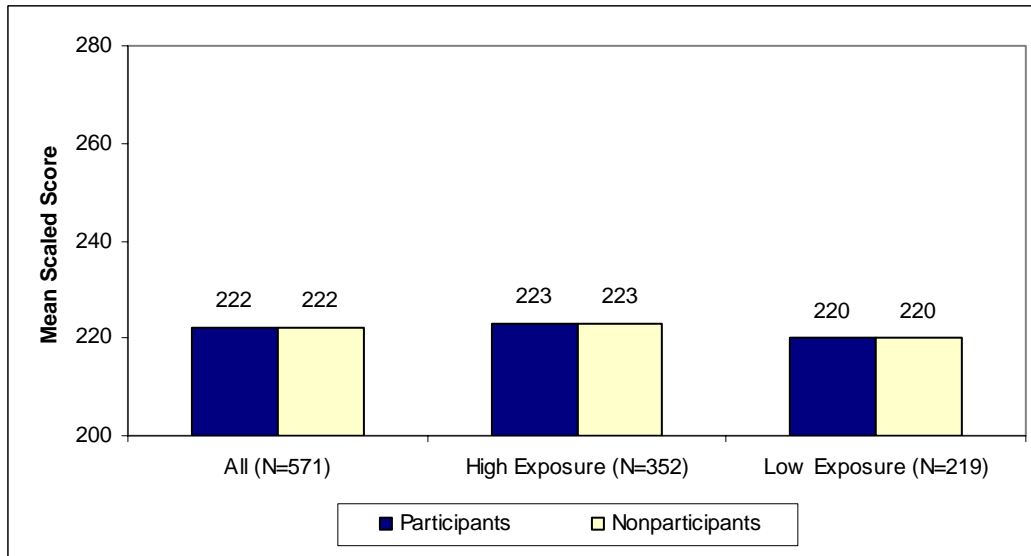


Exhibit 33

Percent of Participants Scoring at the Failing Level on the Sixth-Grade MCAS Mathematics Test During First Year, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

Student Type	Overall (N=571)	High Exposure (N=352)	Low Exposure (N=219)
Participants	60	56	65
Nonparticipants	58	55	63

During their second year of participation in Citizen Schools, seventh-grade program participants overall performed better than their matched nonparticipants on one of six indicators (mathematics course grade) (see Exhibit 34). In addition, seventh-grade participants with high levels of exposure attended school at a higher rate than did their matched nonparticipants. The evaluation did not find evidence during the second year of participation of a positive effect on seventh-grade participants overall for the remaining indicators (school suspension, promotion to the next grade, English course grade, and MCAS ELA).

Exhibit 34

Summary of Differences Between Seventh-Grade Participants and Their Matched Nonparticipants During Participants' Second Year

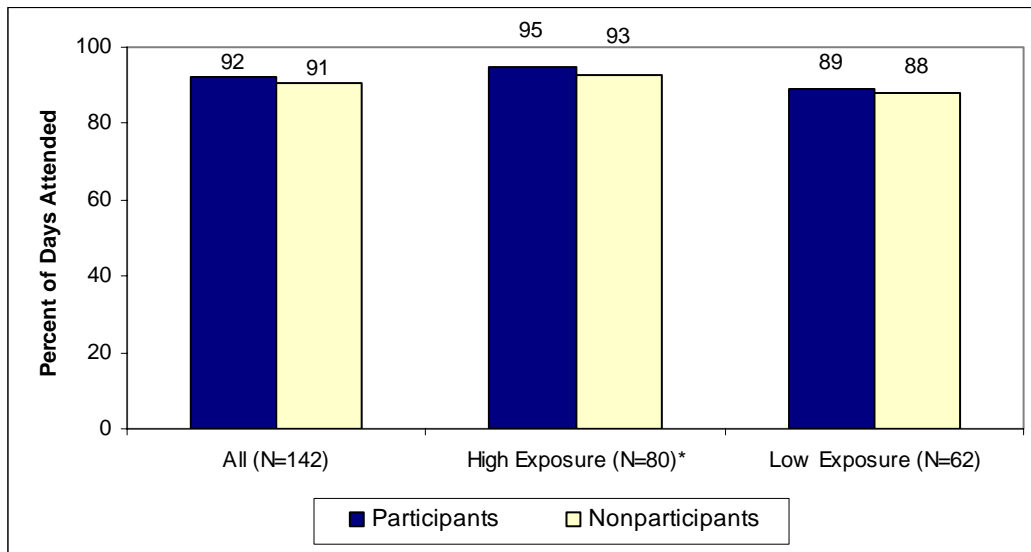
Indicator	All		High Exposure		Low Exposure	
	N	Difference Between Participant and Matched Nonparticipant	N	Difference Between Participant and Matched Nonparticipant	N	Difference Between Participant and Matched Nonparticipant
School attendance	142	1	80	2*	62	1
School suspension	142	-5	80	-5	62	-5
Promotion to next grade	143	2	81	0	62	3
English course grade	83	-.13	52	-.31	31	.17
Seventh-grade MCAS ELA	112	0	68	-1	44	3
Mathematics course grade	92	.43**	59	.46*	33	.37

NOTE: Due to rounding, differences reported may not sum to differences obtained when subtracting nonparticipants' scores from participants' scores.

We present the results for seventh-grade students *during their second year of participation* in greater detail in the bulleted text that follows.

- **School attendance.** During their second year of participation, the attendance rate of seventh-graders overall and those with low levels of exposure was statistically the same as it was among matched nonparticipants. However, high-exposure students attended school at a higher rate than had they not participated in Citizen Schools (95 percent, compared with 93 percent among matched nonparticipants) (see Exhibit 35).

Exhibit 35
School Attendance Rate of Seventh-Grade Participants
During Second Year, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants



- **School suspension and promotion to the next grade.** Regardless of their level of exposure, seventh-grade participants in their second year of participation were suspended and promoted at rates equal to those found among matched nonparticipants (see Exhibits 36 and 37).

Exhibit 36
School Suspension Rate of Seventh-Grade Participants
During Second Year, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

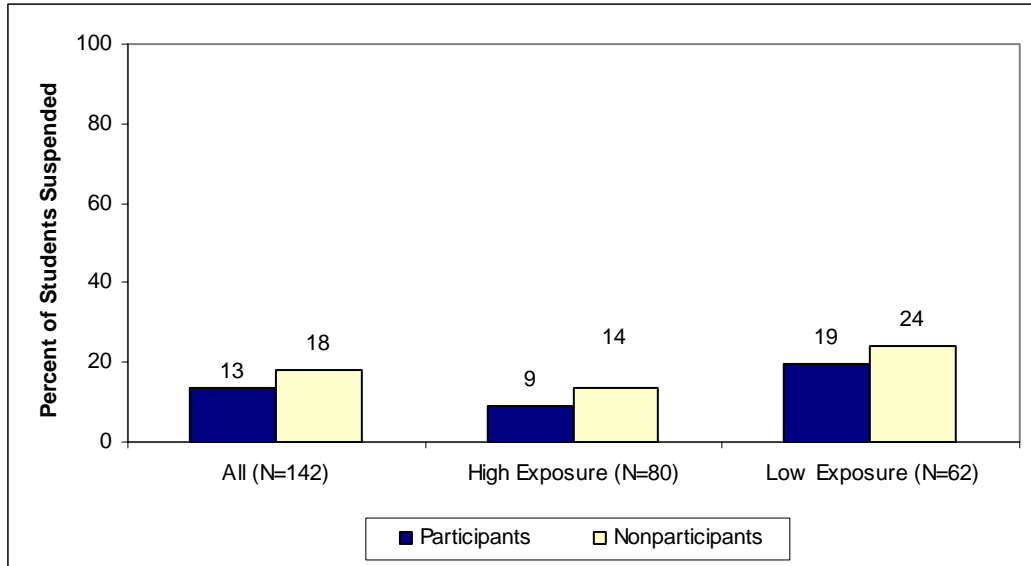
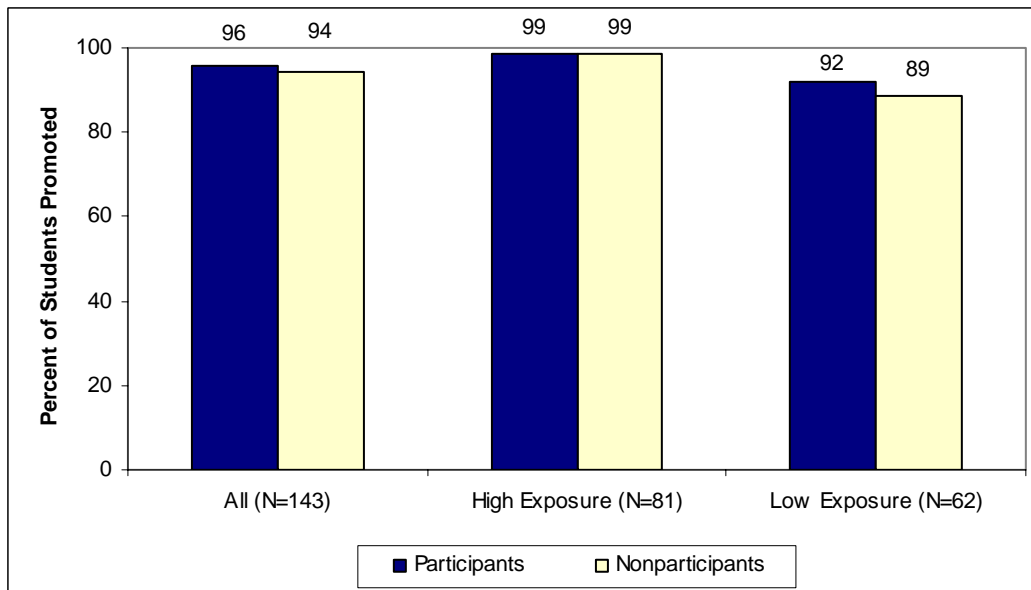


Exhibit 37
Promotion Rate of Seventh-Grade Participants During Second Year,
Compared with Matched Nonparticipants



- Achievement in English.** During their second year of participation, seventh-grade participants overall, as well as those at both high and low levels of exposure to Citizen Schools, scored the same as their matched nonparticipants in their English courses at the third marking period (see Exhibit 38). On the seventh-grade MCAS English Language Arts exam, participants and matched nonparticipants earned similar scaled scores, but participants were less likely to have scored at the “Failing” level on the test (see Exhibits 38 and 39).
- Achievement in mathematics.** Seventh-graders overall and those with high levels of exposure outperformed their matched nonparticipants in mathematics. In the third marking period, participants overall scored a 2.26, compared with a 1.83 among nonparticipants. Similarly, high-exposure participants scored a 2.28 while low exposure participants scored a 1.82 (see Exhibit 41).

Exhibit 38

Average Third Marking Period English Grade of Seventh-Grade Participants During Second Year, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

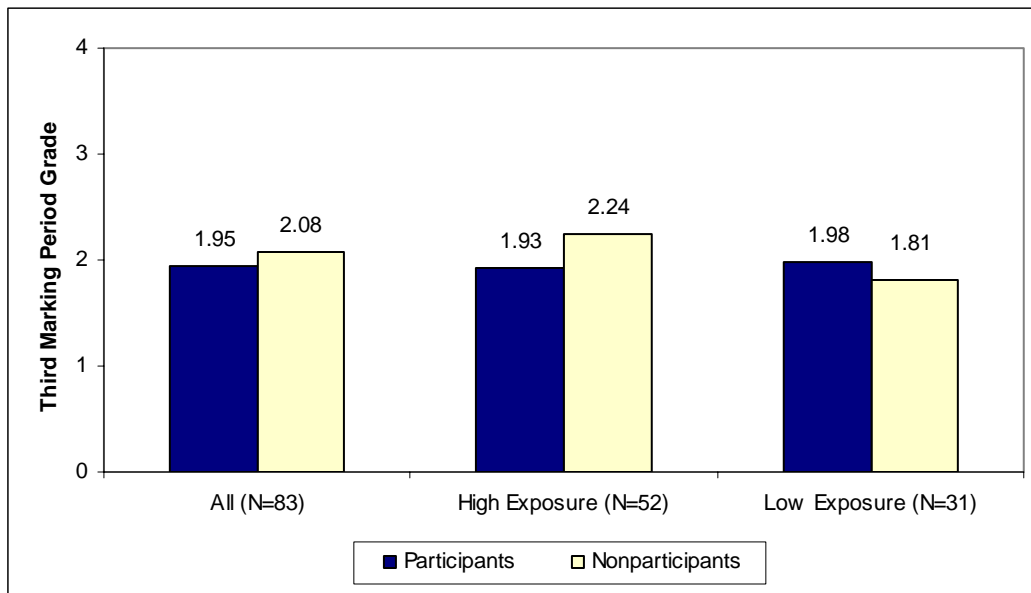


Exhibit 39
Mean Scaled Score on the Seventh-Grade MCAS ELA Test for Seventh-Grade Participants During Second Year, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

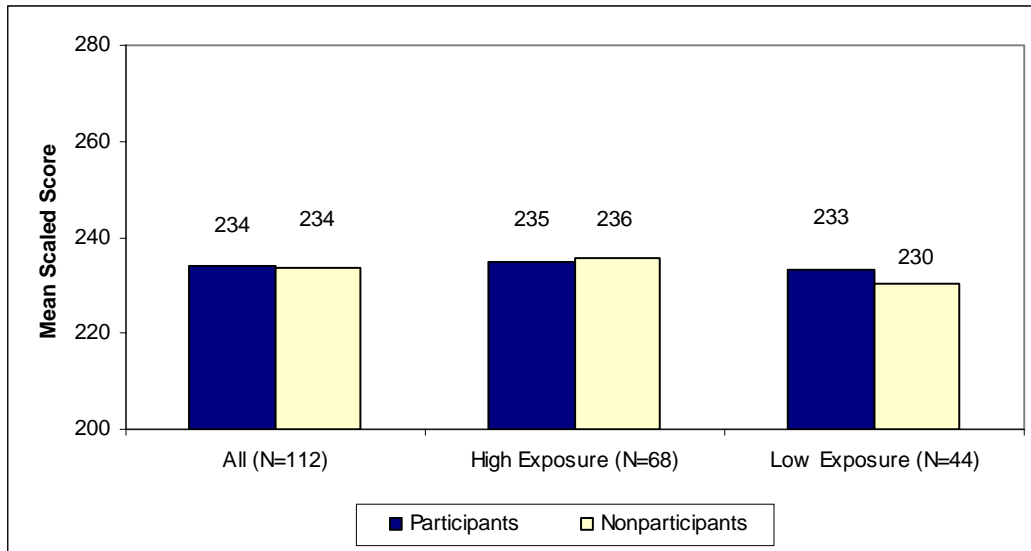
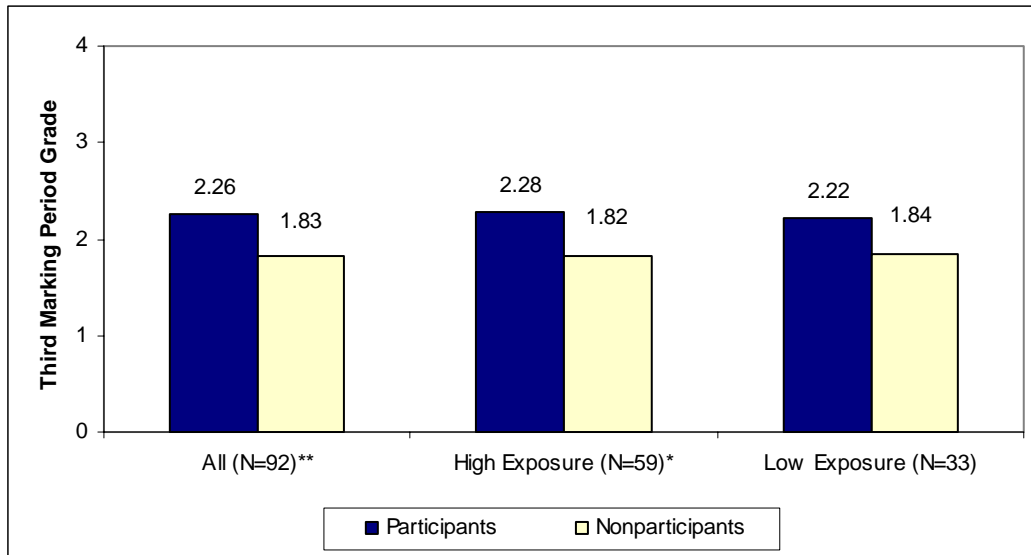


Exhibit 40
Percent of Participants Scoring at the Failing Level on the Seventh-Grade MCAS ELA Test During Second Year, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

Student Type	Overall** (N=112)	High Exposure* (N=68)	Low Exposure* (N=44)
Participants	8	7	9
Nonparticipants	17	15	20

Exhibit 41
Average Third Marking Period Mathematics Grade of Seventh-Grade Participants During Second Year, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants



In contrast to students who participated in Citizen Schools as seventh-graders during their first year of program participation, those seventh-graders in their second year of participation did not outperform their matched nonparticipants on as many measures. This finding is surprising given that the evaluation has found greater benefits for sixth- and seventh-grade students with high within-year levels of exposure and for 8th Grade Academy participants with higher levels of exposure across years—evidence to suggest that more is better. It seems, instead, that there was a diminishing return for students who participated in both a sixth- and seventh-grade year of Citizen Schools. One possible explanation for the diminished effect among seventh-grade second-year participants may be that they experienced a very similar program in their second year as the one they experienced in their first year and were therefore not as engaged in program activities as they were as sixth-graders and/or were not as engaged as those seventh-grade students who were participating for the first time. If this is true, greater differentiation in the program model between the sixth- and seventh-grade years may result in greater benefits for seventh-graders in their second year of participation.

What Can We Conclude After the First Three Years of the Evaluation?

Evidence from the first three years of the evaluation shows that Citizen Schools has been successful in attracting and retaining educationally at-risk students and in putting these students on a path toward academic and social success. Participants reported they felt a strong sense of connection to the program, and they said they experienced positive relationships with adults and peers and had opportunities to take on leadership roles. In addition, the evaluation found that, for most short-term indicators of academic success, Citizen Schools had a positive impact on students (see Exhibit 42). In particular, based on data from three cohorts of first-year participants, Citizen Schools had a positive impact on school attendance and promotion rates, reduction of suspension rates, and seventh-grade MCAS scores on the English Language Arts test. Among the majority of first-year students who attended regularly for one year (60 percent of program days), Citizen Schools also had a positive impact on mathematics and English grades. No impact was found on the seventh indicator of success, the sixth-grade MCAS Mathematics test.

For students who continued participating in Citizen Schools for a second or third year in the seventh or the eighth grades, analysis also revealed evidence of positive impact. However, for this group of repeat participants, more indicators show results that are similar for participants and matched nonparticipants. Citizen Schools had a positive impact on the mathematics grades of returning students in the seventh grade and a positive impact on eighth-grade MCAS Mathematics scores, school attendance, and promotion rates for eighth-graders.

Emerging evidence at the mid-point of this evaluation shows that former Citizen Schools participants are demonstrating gains in high school following their participation and that Citizen Schools is succeeding in moving a group of low-income and educationally at-risk participants toward a trajectory of successful high school completion and advancement on to college. In particular, former Citizen Schools participants enrolled in high-quality high schools at far higher rates than the matched comparison group (72 percent to 32 percent) and achieved at higher academic levels in ninth grade (half a grade level higher in mathematics and English grades). Although academic performance in ninth grade has not yet been adopted by Citizen Schools as a formal outcome measure, it may be appropriate to establish it as an outcome for future evaluation phases.

Additionally, while former Citizen Schools participants attended high schools with high standards (based on data collected by Citizen Schools), former Citizen Schools participants were promoted to tenth grade on time at rates (86 percent, compared to 82 percent for matched nonparticipants) that suggest positive results but that do not meet levels of statistical significance. In general, the results demonstrated by students in the early years of high school should be

interpreted with caution, given the small number of students for whom data were available.

Exhibit 42
Citizen Schools Participants' Performance on Measures
of Academic Success, Compared with Matched Nonparticipants

Measures	8 th Grade Academy Participants/Former Participants		Sixth- and Seventh-grade Participants	
	Participants During the Eighth-grade Year	Former Participants During the Ninth-grade Year	During the First Year of Participation	During the Second Year of Participation
Outcome				
Selection of a high-quality high school	N/A	●	N/A	N/A
On-time promotion to tenth grade	N/A		N/A	N/A
Indicator				
Attendance	●	▲	●	▲
Suspension		▲	●	
Promotion to next grade	●		●	
English course grade		●	▲	
MCAS ELA	N/A	N/A	●	
Mathematics course grade		●	▲	●
MCAS Mathematics	●	N/A		N/A

N/A means that the indicator was not applicable to the grade level.

- Participants overall outperformed their matched nonparticipants at a statistically significant level.
- ▲ Participants with high levels of exposure outperformed their matched nonparticipants at a statistically significant level, but participants overall did not outperform their matched nonparticipants at a statistically significant level.

Citizen Schools recognizes that, even with the improvements made to date, students who participated in the program continued to achieve at low academic levels and to need additional academic support both during and after their participation in Citizen Schools in order to stay on a path toward academic and social success. To provide such support, Citizen Schools refined its program model for the 2005-06 school year. The refined model places a stronger focus on helping students with their homework and teaching them school navigation skills. According to Citizen Schools, the refined model increases the length of program time dedicated to homework, ensures that efforts during homework time are well planned and well implemented, and creates connections between teachers and team leaders and between team leaders and families. In addition,

apprenticeships—hands-on learning activities led by community volunteers called Citizen Teachers—are now offered twice a week. By increasing the amount of time spent on apprenticeships, which are widely liked by participants, Citizen Schools hopes to retain students for longer periods of time and thereby increase program-exposure levels. Citizen Schools has also asked Citizen Teachers to increase the amount and quality of skill-building activities aimed at developing students’ written and verbal communication skills, their ability to work as team members, and their use of technology. Citizen Schools is also focusing on providing support to students who complete the program by creating crews of alumni in high schools, hosting alumni activities with a focus on achieving academic success, and staying in touch with alumni to see how they are progressing both academically and in terms of their psychosocial well-being. Through this latter activity, Citizen Schools intends to connect alumni to resources that can provide assistance, as needed.

Citizen Schools also recognizes the importance of differentiating the program model for each grade level, based on findings that indicate diminished returns for students participating in the program in both sixth and seventh grades. Beginning in the 2005-06 academic year, Citizen Schools has taken steps to boost sixth- to seventh-grade retention through a new “7GO” orientation program and additional leadership opportunities for returning students.

The program refinements described above are well aligned with the student needs identified by the evaluation, which suggests that they are promising strategies for keeping students on a path toward success. As the evaluation tracks students into and through high school, it will shed light on the extent to which these additional supports translate into continuing academic and social gains for students.