



**Project ExcEL
(Excellence for English Learners)**

Year 2 Evaluation Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project ExcEL (Excellence for English Learners) is a new intervention developed to support the academic achievement and post-secondary success of students who are learning English as a new language (ELs). In New York State, students whose families speak a language other than English in their homes are eligible for English as a New Language (ENL) supports until they are able to demonstrate proficiency in the English language. Project ExcEL focuses on current ELs as well as students who have demonstrated proficiency but were classified in the past.

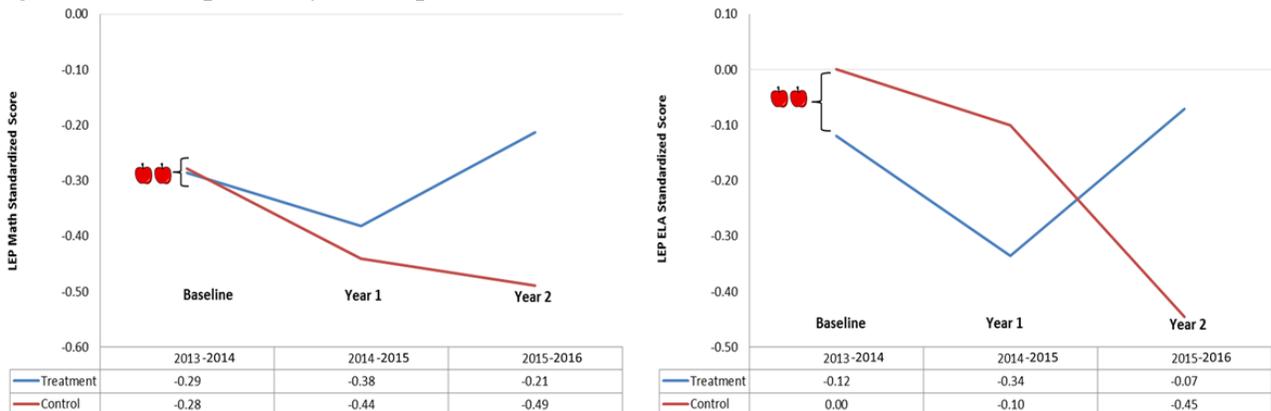
Project ExcEL intends to ensure that all ELs stay in school and graduate, and focuses on the middle and high school EL students. The core philosophy is one of enriched activities and wrap around supports focused on success, college/career readiness and high school completion. Individualized, personalized learning plans and a tiered system of interventions will be used to track and adjust student activities.

Project ExcEL is developing and implementing an enhanced, comprehensive design that will address the unique and urgent needs of low-incidence EL population school districts – districts that are struggling to provide a comprehensive, rigorous education for the newest members of their communities. The project employs a data-driven, tiered approach to instruction that builds on community partnerships to create personalized, expanded learning opportunities for students.

External evaluators are conducting ongoing impact and implementation studies to ascertain the potential outcomes of the project and gauge the fidelity of implementation of the project. The confirmatory evaluation questions include whether Project ExcEL increases EL student achievement in math and English Language Arts (ELA), and how the program was implemented across four schools.

This report covers exploratory impact findings and implementation study results from the third project year. For the impact findings, we looked at three years of data and conducted a series of descriptive statistics (statistical analyses will be conducted in the last year of the grant). We successfully matched and created a group of 16 comparison schools, and graphed the math and ELA scores. While there was a dip in the average test scores for the program schools in year 1, we saw an increase in the average test scores by year 2 for the program schools. See Figure ES-1.

Figure ES-1: Exploratory Descriptive Results



The project was implemented with fidelity in the second year of implementation, but there are concerns regarding personalized learning structures and environments (e.g., mentor/mentee programs, student advisories, personalized learning plans, student-led parent-teacher conferences, etc.) and the timelines for their implementation. Project findings and recommendations also include:

- The core work of year two focused on the implementation and support of New York State Department of Education Commissioner’s Regulations Part 154. Part 154 requires co-teaching involving ENL teachers and core content area teachers. The goals of Part 154 and Project ExcEL fit well together and have proven complimentary.
- All four project schools have core Project ExcEL Professional Learning Community teams in place. Each team features between 6 and 12 members that include core content area teachers, ENL teachers, guidance counselors, school administrators, school social workers, and additional student support staff. These teams meet regularly to examine student progress and implement tiered interventions. Teams also focus on embedded professional development and action research using student data to guide classroom pedagogy.
- Project staff, partners, and participants indicated that enhanced communications between community partners and teachers (regarding the outcomes of 1:1 student support efforts) would be beneficial to providing continuous and consistent wraparound supports to students.
- It is unclear, from implementation data collections, when some personalized learning structures or environments (e.g., student advisory programs, personalized learning plans, etc.) will be implemented at all of the four project schools to serve all ENL students. Planning for these supports and several pilot programs are ongoing.
- School and district staffing changes inevitably occur; as these take place, Project ExcEL developers have consistently maintained contact with new school and district leaders to ensure support and collaboration. These on-boarding efforts will continue to be valuable throughout the life of the project.



- Moving into year 3 of Project ExcEL, project attentions are continuing to focus on implementation of project components while also considering the impacts of components already in place and how best to further refine practices.

As the program schools initiate their third year of Project ExcEL (2016-2017 SY), we recommend continuing to ensure momentum for the project. This may require additional similar activities as in year 1, such as revisions to the needs assessment. Areas of continued focus includes co-teaching infrastructures and implementation; personalized learning plan infrastructures, processes, and implementation; and wraparound services for students and families beyond tutoring, such as the student field trips.

1 PROJECT EXCEL EVALUATION BACKGROUND

1.1 PROJECT EXCEL KEY COMPONENTS

The University of California at Los Angeles' Center X applied for and received funding for Project ExcEL (Excellence for English Learners) via an Investing in Innovation (i3) Development Grant in 2013. Project ExcEL is a school-wide initiative that features three key components:

- School climate and structures to support college and career readiness;
- Teacher and staff training and technical assistance; and
- Data-driven systematic coaching.

These complementary components are designed to improve the college readiness rates and overall student outcomes of ELs. The college readiness rates of ELs are low when compared to the general population. ELs also lag behind academically resulting in significant achievement gaps. To better support EL students and their families, as they prepare to graduate from high school and enter college, Project ExcEL is developing a school-wide initiative.

School climate and structures to support college and career readiness

Each school participating in Project ExcEL has school coaches who help to provide leadership and guidance on creating a school-wide college-ready culture. Potential topics of the coaching sessions include co-teaching, personalized learning structures or environments, scheduling for teacher development and planning time, and parent engagement and reducing achievement gaps with additional wraparound student and family supports from both the school and community partners. Project ExcEL developers have assembled a partnership consisting of community organizations positioned to provide additional supports, such as tutoring, financial aid and college application assistance, and parent/family supports and training. These partners are focused on providing wrap-around supports to EL students and their families to further ensure that these students are college-ready.

Teacher and staff training and technical assistance

Project ExcEL provides teachers and other school staff with specific training, including topics such as classroom instructional support and intervention (i.e., Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol [SIOP], and Response to Intervention [RtI]). These trainings have been tailored to teaching and meeting the learning needs of EL students.

Data-driven systematic coaching

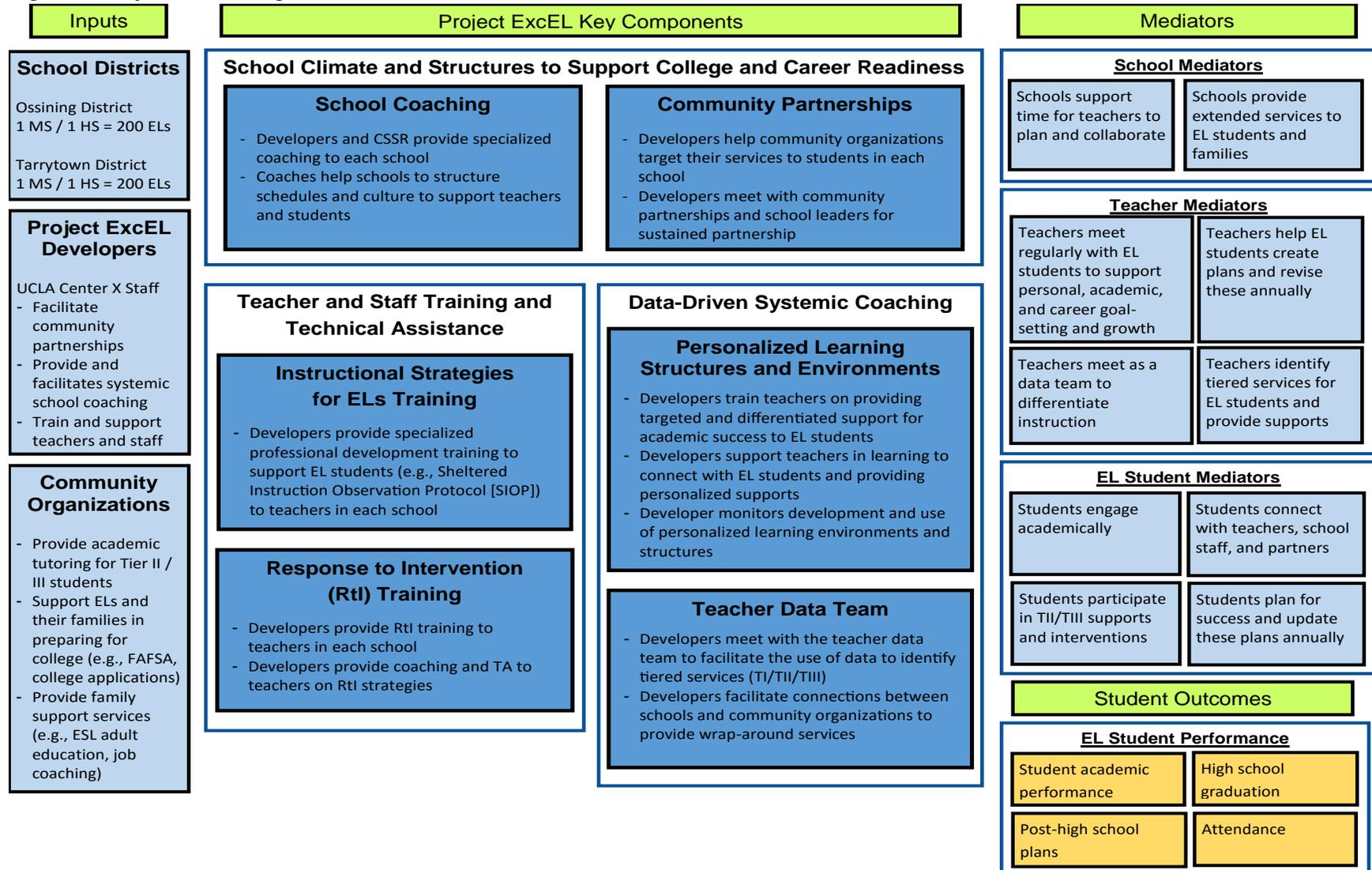
Project ExcEL works with teachers and school staff grouped in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to review EL student data and provide more direct one-on-one supports to EL students and collaborative planning for co-teaching. PLCs meet regularly to discuss each student and identify areas of additional support needed.

1.2 PROJECT EXCEL LOGIC MODEL

The evaluation team worked with the developer and the evaluation technical assistance provider to refine and further develop the project logic model contained in the grant application. The resulting logic model codifies the project and is available in Figure 1 below.

- Project *Inputs* are listed in the left column of the logic model and include resources, staff, and partners necessary to implement the project.
- The center column features the *Project ExcEL Key Components* or core features of Project ExcEL. Key components are the ideas and concepts at the heart of ExcEL that are intended to affect educational practice at the school level. Each key component was used to develop fidelity of implementation indicators and definitions of these indicators (see Appendix A).
- The right column, *Mediators*, lists the conduits or pathways that practices are expected to follow to ultimately manifest as *Student Outcomes*. The evaluation team used the student outcomes to discern which data would prove relevant to estimating the impact of Project ExcEL over the life of the project.

Figure 1: Project ExcEL Logic Model



1.3 EVALUATION OVERVIEW

Impact Study

Project ExcEL is a school-level intervention focused on teacher training and development, school cultural changes, and teacher data teams. These key components are hypothesized to directly impact students who are learning English as a new language (ELs) as they prepare for college and indirectly impact all students in the schools. Four schools (2 middle schools and 2 high schools from two Westchester County, New York school districts) are implementing the intervention (treatment group).

The impact study features a quasi-experimental design (QED), wherein we will statistically match schools to be comparison group schools (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002) (see Appendix A for details). Therefore, we have four treatment schools, with a carefully matched comparison group of 16 schools (Becker, 2002; Dehejia & Wahba, 2002; Rosebaum, 1984). We compare the school outcomes of the four treatment schools to the 16 comparison schools on the following outcomes:

1. Math achievement for EL students in the schools,
2. Reading/ English achievement for EL students in the schools,
3. Overall school attendance.

To estimate the impacts, we first identified the comparison schools through propensity score matching techniques (See Appendix B for details). Then we conducted baseline equivalence testing to ensure that the treatment and comparison schools are similar on key outcomes one-year prior to the intervention. Our analytic approach is a short interrupted time series with a comparison group (C-ITS) design (Bloom, 2003).

For this report, we present interim descriptive findings of three points across the study sample: Baseline, Year 1 Project ExcEL, and Year 2 Project ExcEL. Forthcoming reports will include Year 3 and Year 4 Project ExcEL time points.

Implementation Study

Plus Alpha worked with the project developer to design an implementation study that allows the flexibility needed for a development grant while ensuring that fidelity to the key project components is defined and assessed across the treatment group (Nelson et al, 2012). Measuring Project ExcEL fidelity began with refining the project logic model provided in the original grantee application. This logic model was then used to guide the implementation study design. The logic model aligns with the management plan created by the developer and approved by the US Department of Education (ED) Program Officer. Each key component consists of indicators of implementation, as can be seen in Appendix A in the Fidelity Matrices for each key component. We have provided the operational definition for each indicator as well. Protocols have been created (see Appendix C); each protocol item aligns with an indicator of

implementation and therefore a key component. Each protocol item is designed to be scored either yes or no (0 or 1). Scores roll up to the school level and to the full sample. We will use the Fidelity Matrix to measure and assess fidelity for all components and indicators for each of the three years of implementation.

Implementation questions (IQ) guided the assessment of fidelity as follows:

- *IQ 1* Have the key components of Project ExcEL been implemented with fidelity?
- *IQ 2* How has implementation varied across the treatment schools in terms of the key project components:
 - School climate and structures to support college and career readiness,
 - Teacher and staff training and technical assistance, and
 - Data-driven systemic coaching.

To guide data gathering in response to the implementation questions, a series of aligning documents were created to map from the project logic model to the project management plan objectives, strategies, and actions. A fidelity matrix has been designed to measure fidelity based on tangible developer-dependent activities and roles and score fidelity at both the school and treatment group levels (see Appendix A: Evaluation Methodology). Instruments and protocols have been created to obtain data annually from relevant project participants (see Appendix C: Implementation Study Protocols). Fidelity scoring and content analysis will be used to measure the fidelity of implementation. Measuring fidelity is important, since it helps to better define and ascertain what implementing Project ExcEL with high fidelity entails.

In addition to the above evaluation efforts, year 1 feedback from the developer, program officer, coaches, and a community partner indicated that site visits to the project schools would help to connect the evaluation effort to the project and build relationships between the schools and the evaluation team. As such, a site visit was conducted in conjunction with the partner's meeting (during which, year 1 implementation findings were presented) in September 2015. The site visit brief is included in Appendix D. The site visit brief was provided to the developer in October 2015 and served as additional formative feedback bridging year 1 and year 2 as well as the evaluation and the implementation.

2 FINDINGS

2.1 IMPACT STUDY

The impact study features the full sample of four treatment schools (two middle and two high schools across two districts in New York) and 16 comparison schools (eight middle and eight high schools across New York) for a total of twenty schools. The confirmatory analyses compare math and ELA achievement for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, using school report

card data.¹ Our statistical analysis will be conducted in Year 5 of the grant, measuring the four-year impact of Project ExcEL.

This interim report features descriptive statistics of the four treatment schools, compared to the 16 comparison schools, for three time points:

- Baseline. The 2013-2014 school year, one year prior to implementing Project ExcEL.
- Year 1. The 2014-2015 school year, the first year that the four treatment schools were implementing Project ExcEL.
- Year 2. The 2015-2016 school year, the second year that the four treatment schools were implementing Project ExcEL.

To ensure that the 16 comparison schools are similar, we conducted a series of analyses to ensure that we are comparing like to like, or “apples to apples”. Similar schools are those schools in New York that are comparable demographically (i.e. percent LEP), academically (i.e. math and ELA performance of LEP students), and behavior (i.e. overall school attendance).²

In the following figures (2, 3, and 4), we provide line graphs for the baseline, Year 1, and Year 2 of the treatment and comparison schools. The “apples to apples” graphic denotes that the two groups were statistically similar at baseline. All outcomes for the confirmatory impact analyses met WWC Evidence Standards for baseline equivalence; meaning, that we are indeed comparing “apples to apples” between the treatment and comparison schools.

¹ School report card data is obtained through the New York State Department of Education, <https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php>

² According to the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards (version 3.0), baseline equivalence is met if the effect size of key outcomes is less than .25 (i.e. comparing “apples to apples”). Baseline equivalence is not met if key outcomes are over .25 (i.e. comparing “apples to oranges”).

Figure 2 shows the results from the descriptive statistics of math achievement for LEP students. As the figure shows, at baseline, the treatment and comparison schools had similar math scores for LEP students, within the .25 threshold. From baseline, we see some positive movement in Year 2 of Project ExcEL.

Figure 2: LEP Math Achievement

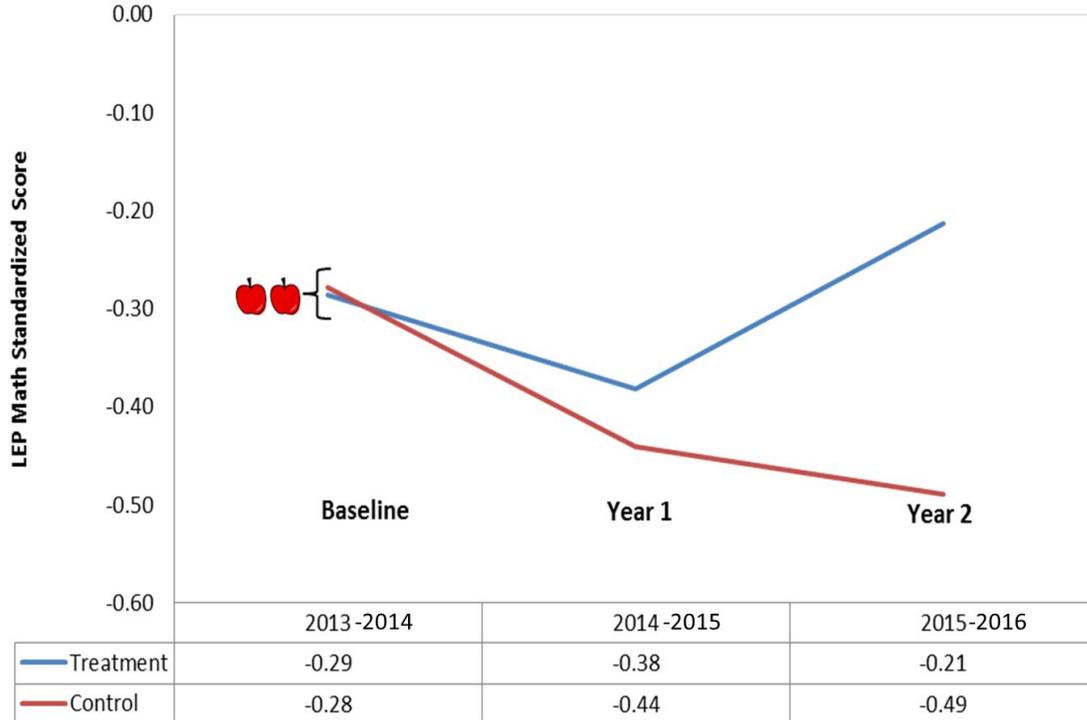


Figure 3 shows the results from the descriptive statistics of English Language Arts (ELA) achievement for LEP students. As the figure shows, at baseline, the treatment and comparison schools had similar ELA scores for LEP students, within the .25 threshold. From baseline, we see some positive movement in Year 2 of Project ExcEL.

Figure 3: LEP ELA Achievement

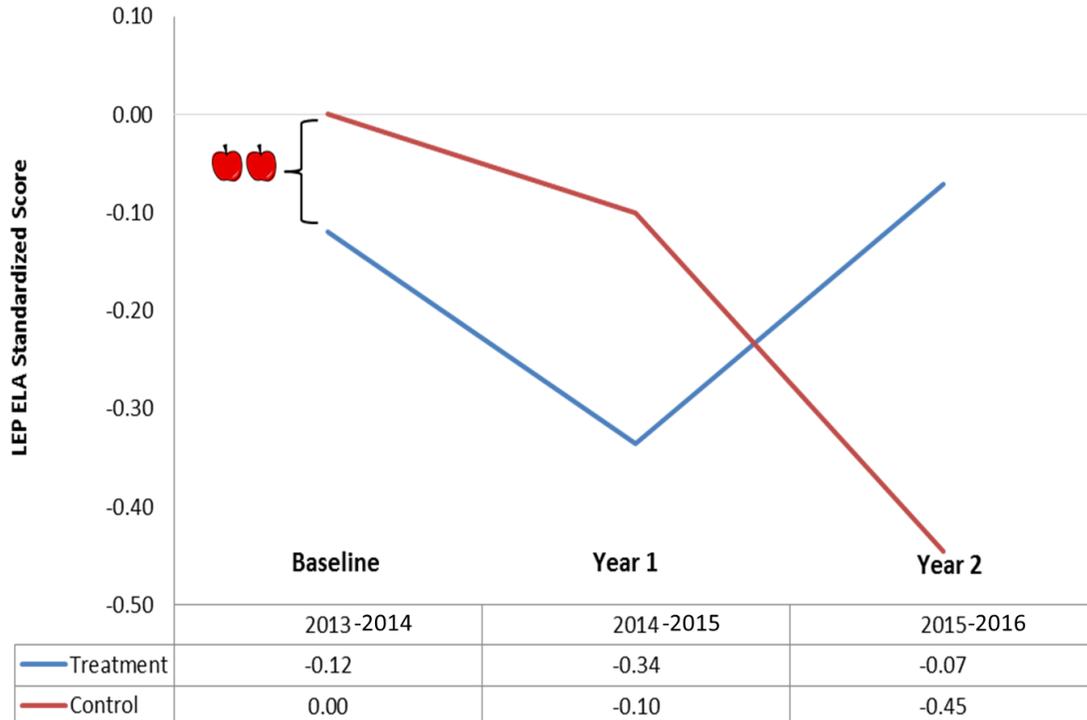
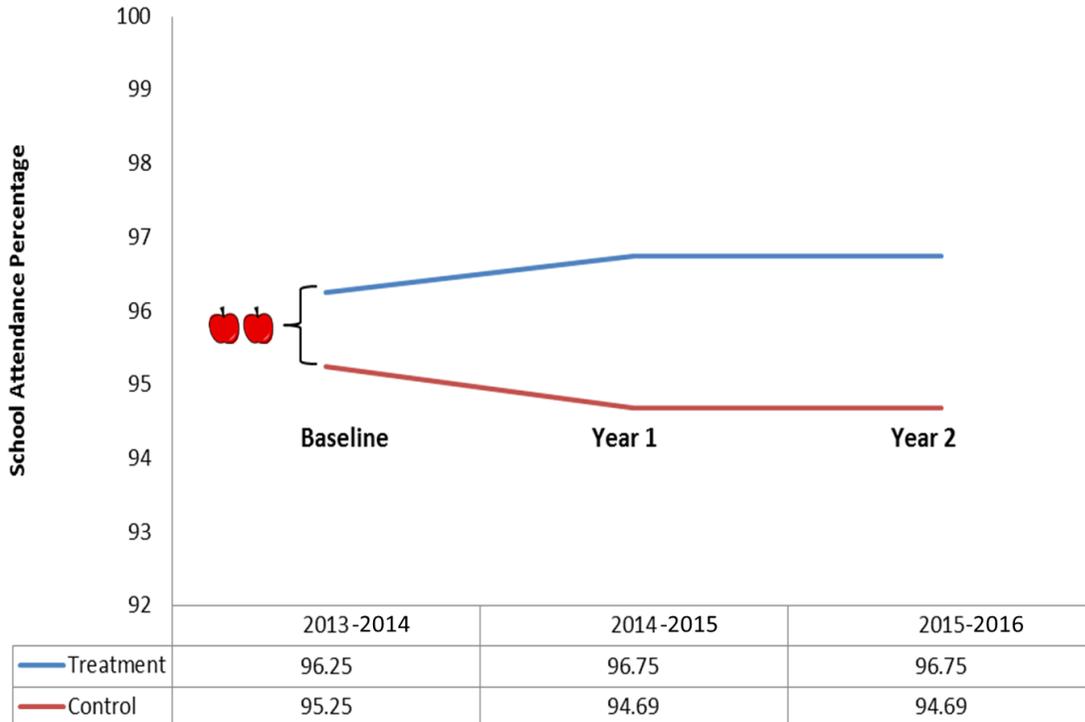


Figure 4 shows the results from the descriptive statistics of school attendance. School attendance is measured for all students; the school report card data does not differentiate or separate attendance for LEP students. As a measure of the whole school, not just for LEP students, we see that at baseline, the treatment and comparison schools had similar attendance rates for all students, within the .25 threshold. From baseline, we see attendance remaining high at the 95-96% level across all schools in the sample.

Figure 4: School attendance



2.2 DESCRIPTIVE EXPLORATORY FINDINGS BY MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS

This section shows the descriptive statistics of the exploratory analyses, where we look at the middle and high school data separately. Given the small sample size, two treatment schools and eight comparison schools, it is important to note that these results are intended merely to provide data to help schools generate hypotheses and explore additional questions to improve the program and school.

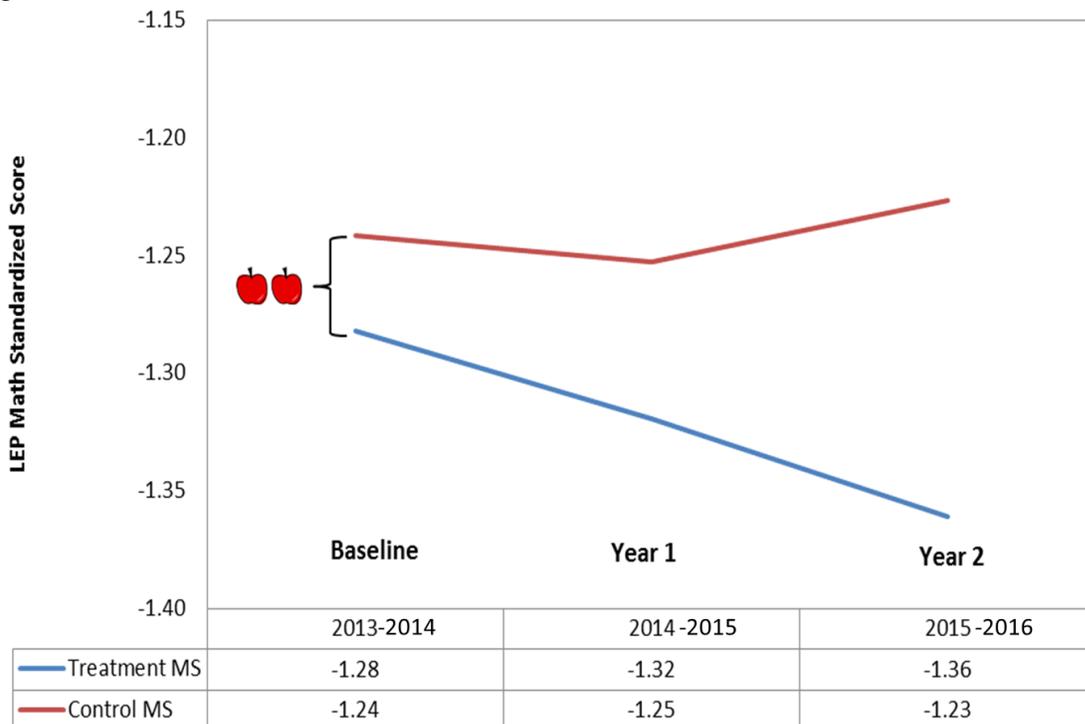
In conducting baseline equivalence to ensure that we are comparing “apples to apples”, some outcomes did not meet the What Works Clearinghouse threshold of .25 or lower. For key outcomes, particularly for high schools, we found that the effect size at baseline was over .25, suggesting that the treatment and comparison schools are different from the start. In such cases, we are comparing “apples to oranges”. This is denoted in the figures below, where the symbol for baseline equivalence is the “apples to apples” graphic, and the symbol for not meeting baseline equivalence is “apples to oranges”.

For the middle school exploratory analysis, all outcomes met the baseline equivalence criteria. Unfortunately, for the high school exploratory analysis, we were not able to meet baseline equivalence on ELA (Regents English exam) for LEP students, and two- and four-year college plans for the general education students.³ We were able to meet baseline equivalence for math (Regents Algebra exam) for LEP students, and Regents diploma for the general education students.⁴

Descriptive Results for the Middle School Sample

In middle school, we have math scores for LEP students, ELA scores for LEP students, and school attendance rates for all students. Figure 5 shows the descriptive results for math for LEP students. As the “apple to apple” graphic denotes, we were able to establish baseline equivalence, meaning that the eight comparison schools across New York were similar to the two treatment middle schools. Currently, we are seeing a downward trend in math for the treatment schools, while we see an upward trend in the comparison schools.

Figure 5: Middle School LEP Math Achievement



³ School report card data does not disaggregate 2- and 4-year college plans by LEP sub-groups.

⁴ School report card data does not disaggregate Regents diploma by LEP sub-groups.

Figure 6 shows the descriptive results for ELA for LEP students. As the “apple to apple” graphic denotes, we were able to establish baseline equivalence, meaning that the eight comparison schools across New York were similar to the two treatment middle schools. Currently, we are seeing a downward trend in ELA for both the treatment schools and comparison schools.

Figure 6: Middle School LEP ELA Achievement

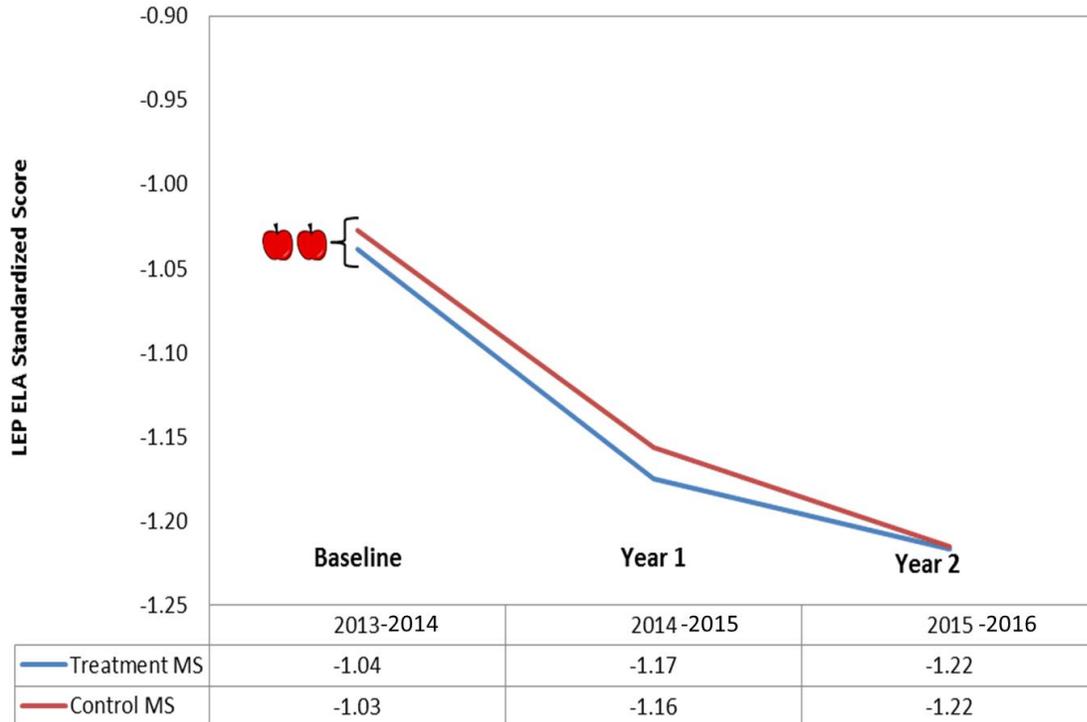
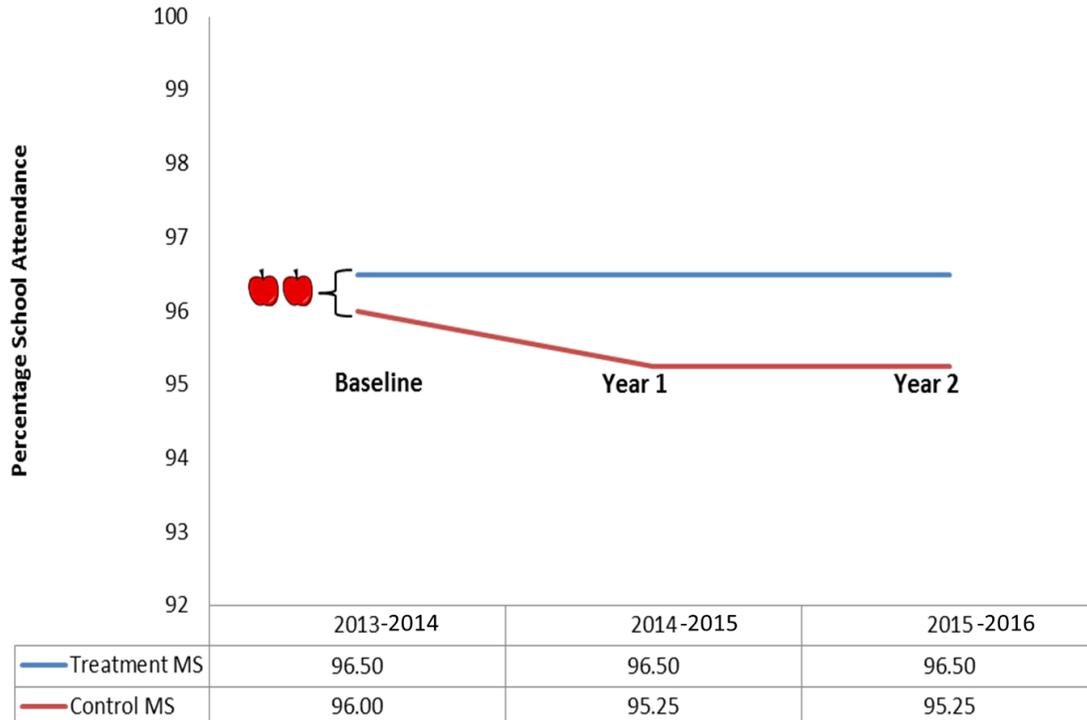


Figure 7 shows the descriptive results for attendance for LEP students. As the “apple to apple” graphic denotes, we were able to establish baseline equivalence, meaning that the eight comparison schools across New York were similar to the two treatment middle schools. Currently, attendance remains steady at 95-96% for all middle schools in the sample.

Figure 7: Middle School Attendance



Descriptive Results for the High School Sample

In high school, we have math scores for LEP students, ELA scores for LEP students, school attendance rates for all students, as well as college readiness measures such as:

- 2-Year College Plans
- 4-Year College Plans
- Regents Diploma
- Advanced Regents Diploma

Figure 8 shows the descriptive results for math for LEP students. As the “apple to apple” graphic denotes, we were able to establish baseline equivalence, meaning that the eight comparison schools across New York were similar to the two treatment high schools. Currently, we are seeing a downward trend in math for the comparison schools, while we see an upward trend in the treatment schools.

Figure 8: High School LEP Math Achievement

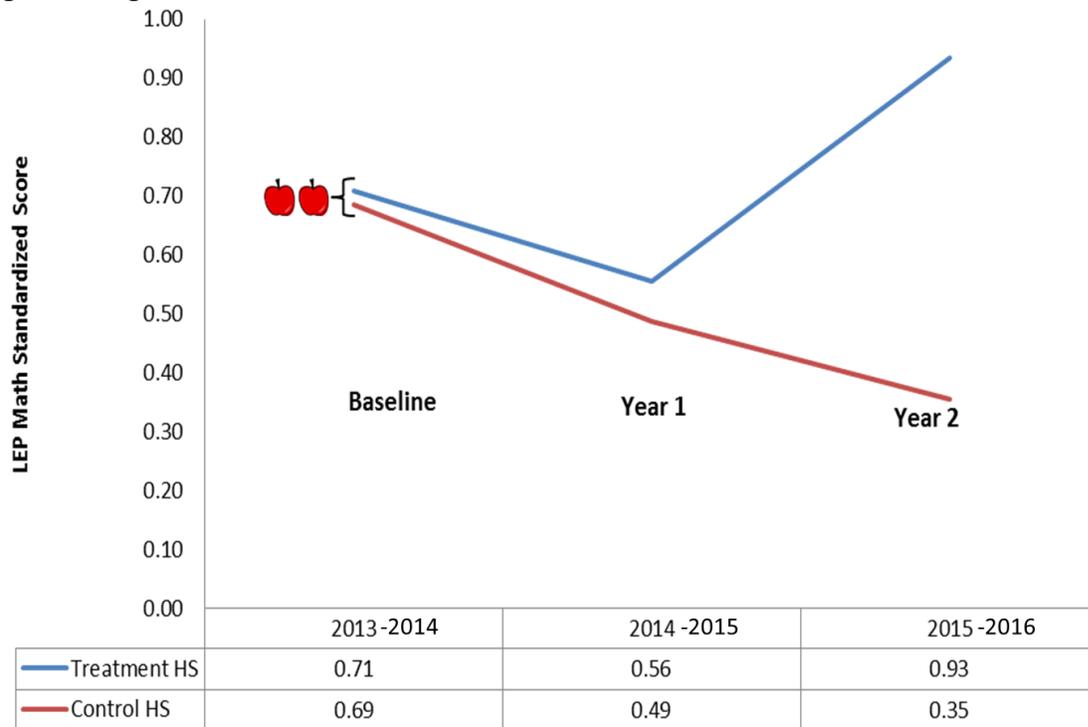


Figure 9 shows the descriptive results for math for LEP students. As the “apple to orange” graphic denotes, we were unable to establish baseline equivalence. This means that one year prior to Project ExcEL, the eight comparison schools across New York were substantially different (above the .25 threshold) from the two treatment high schools. Currently, we are seeing a downward trend in ELA for the comparison schools, while we see an upward trend in the treatment schools.

Figure 9: High School LEP ELA Achievement

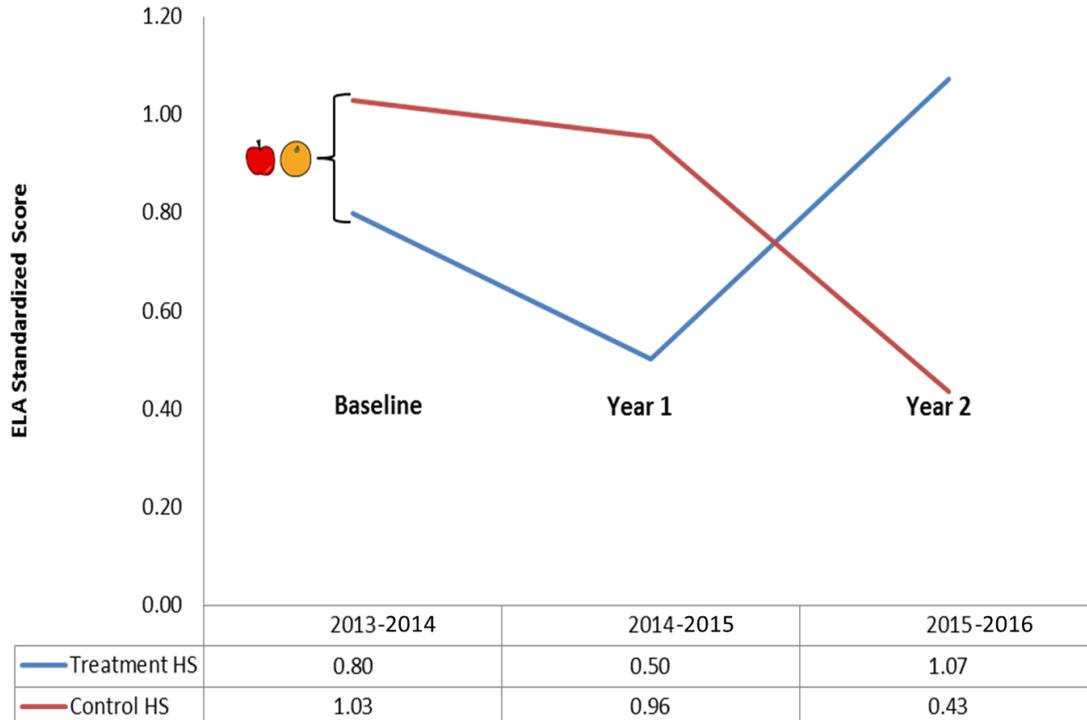


Figure 10 shows the descriptive results for school attendance. As the “apple to apple” graphic denotes, we were able to establish baseline equivalence, meaning that the eight comparison schools across New York were similar to the two treatment high schools. School attendance hovers between 94-97% across both the treatment and comparison schools.

Figure 10: High School Attendance

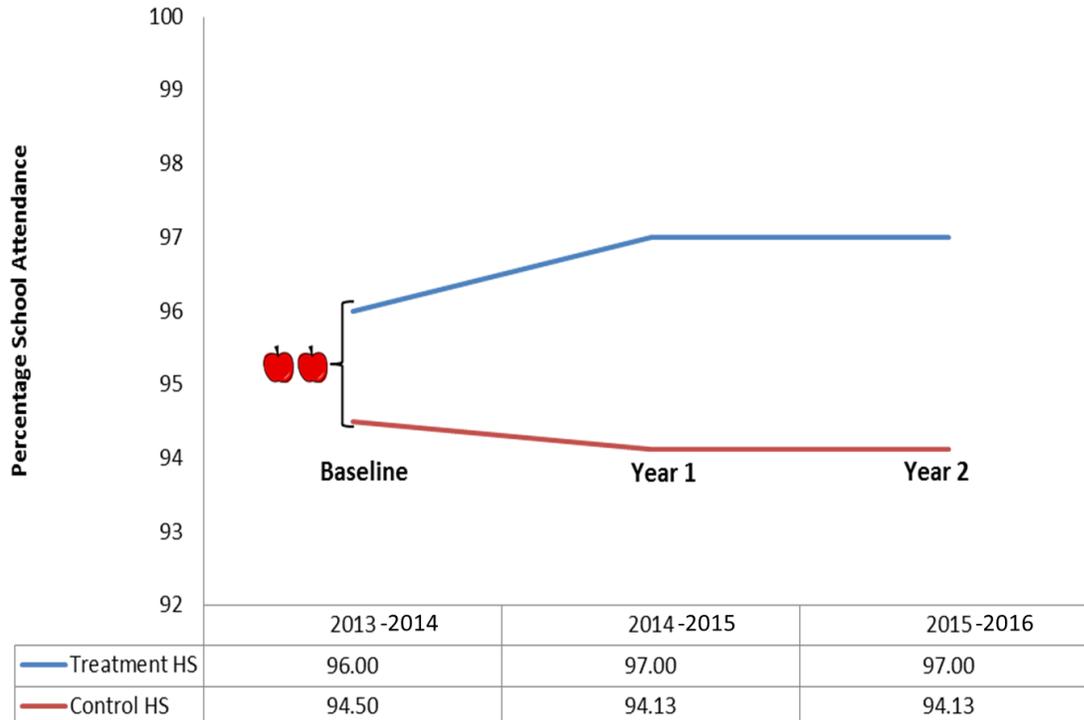


Figure 11 shows the descriptive results for 2-year college plans. As with school attendance, the school report card data only reports all students, general education students, and special education students; school report card data does not disaggregate to LEP students. Therefore, the data is focused on measuring the outcome of all students. As the “apple to orange” graphic denotes, we were unable to establish baseline equivalence. This means that one year prior to Project ExcEL, the eight comparison schools across New York were substantially different (above the .25 threshold) from the two treatment high schools. Currently, we are seeing no changes in the percent of students who indicated that they are planning to go to a two-year college, which hovers between 34-43%.

Figure 11: Two-Year College Plans

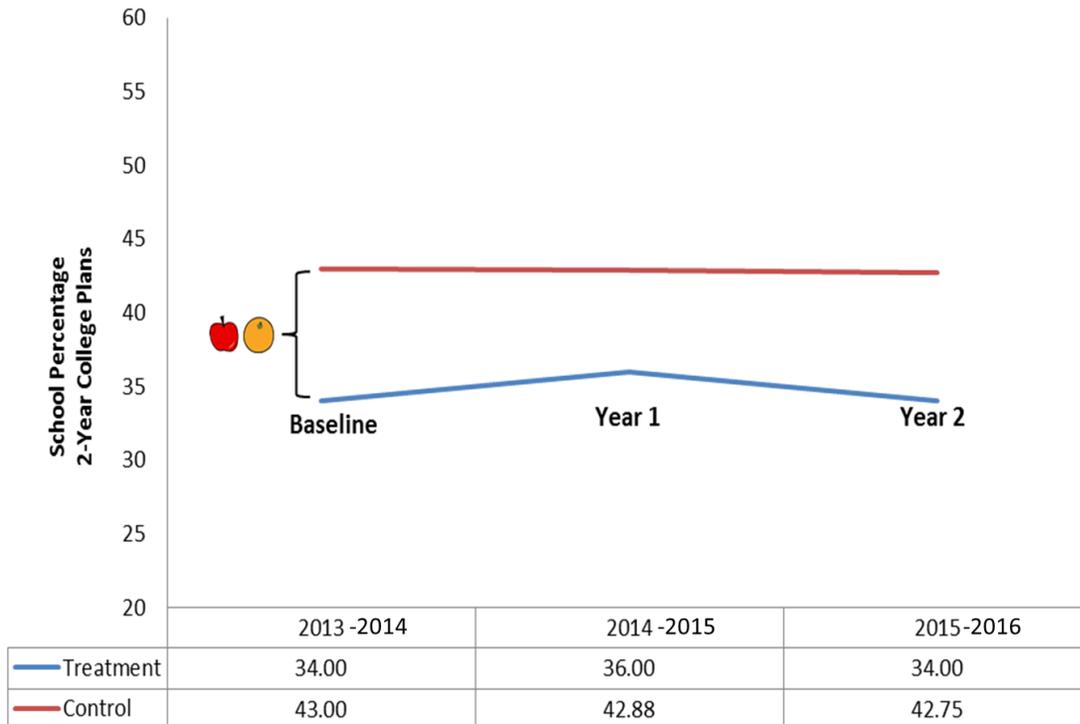


Figure 12 shows the descriptive results for 4-year college plans. As with school attendance, the school report card data only reports all students, general education students, and special education students; school report card data does not disaggregate to LEP students. Therefore, the data is focused on measuring the outcome of all students. As the “apple to orange” graphic denotes, we were unable to establish baseline equivalence. This means that one year prior to Project ExcEL, the eight comparison schools across New York were substantially different (above the .25 threshold) from the two treatment high schools. Currently, we are seeing no changes in the percent of students who indicated that they are planning to go to a four-year college, which hovers between 41-57%.

Figure 12: Four-Year College Plans

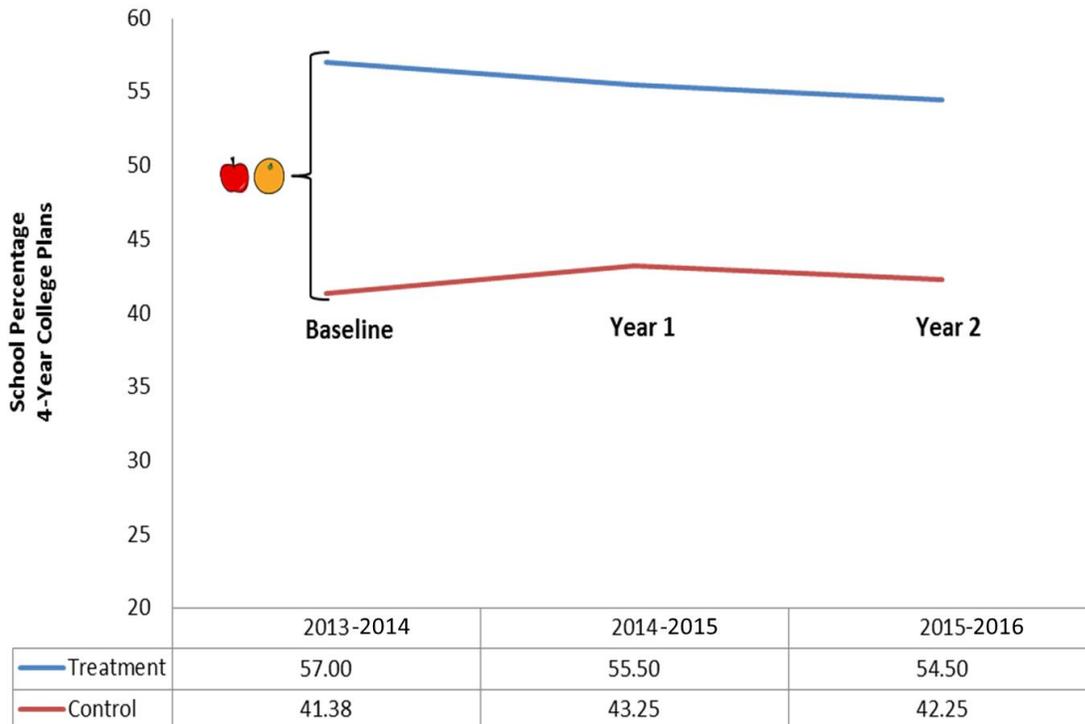


Figure 13 shows the descriptive results for the Regents diploma. As the “apple to apple” graphic denotes, we were able to establish baseline equivalence, meaning that the eight comparison schools across New York were similar to the two treatment high schools. High school graduation rates hover between 93-94% across both the treatment and comparison schools.

Figure 13: Regents Diploma

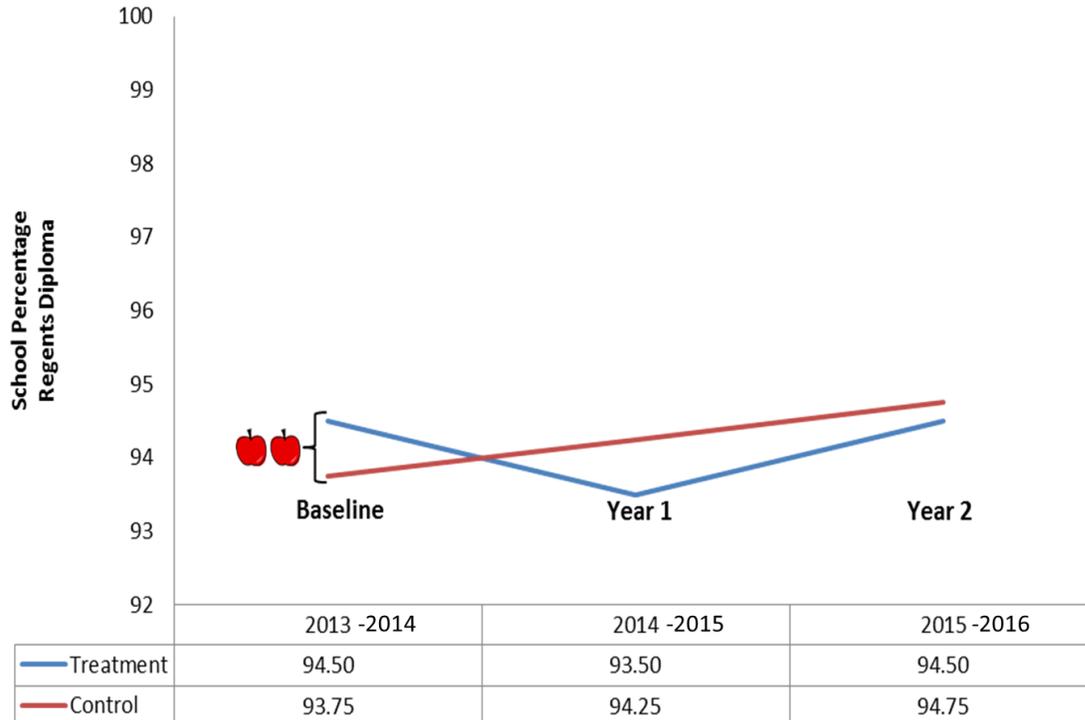
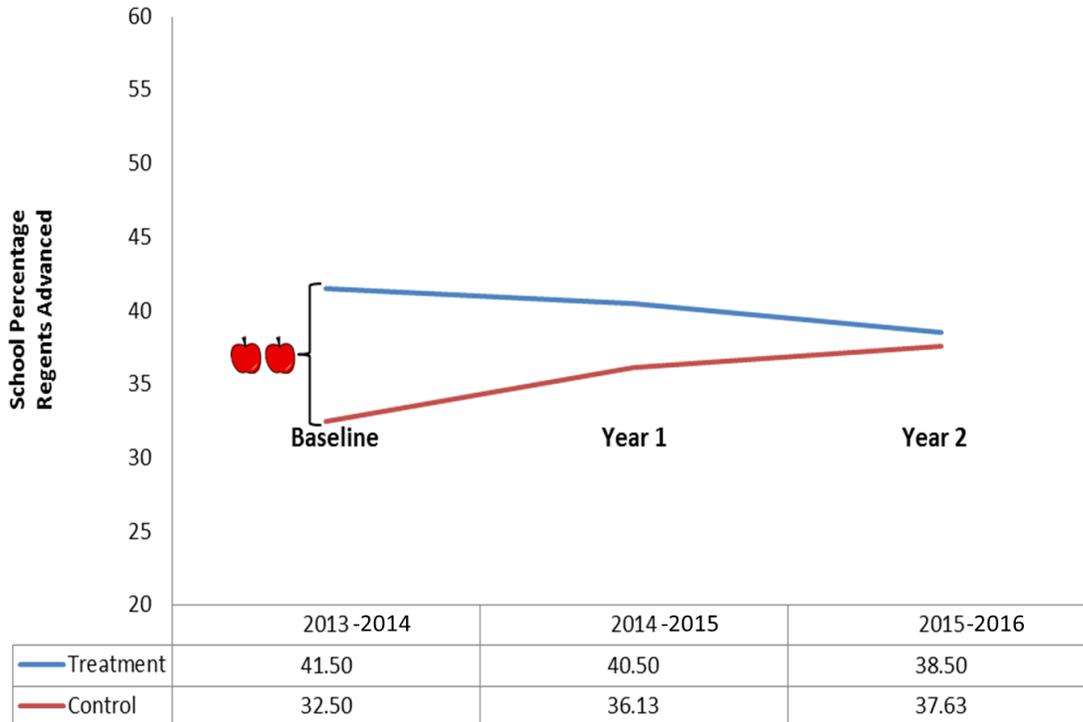


Figure 14 shows the descriptive results for the Advanced Regents diploma. As the “apple to apple” graphic denotes, we were able to establish baseline equivalence, meaning that the eight comparison schools across New York were similar to the two treatment high schools. High school graduation rates hover between 32-41% across both the treatment and comparison schools.

Figure 14: Advanced Regents Diploma



2.3 IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

Based on the data collected, as outlined in Appendix A, Project ExcEL has been implemented with fidelity at the sample level and at each school. Fidelity indicators are based on developer-dependent roles and responsibilities, so a finding of implemented with fidelity indicates that the developer has implemented strategies and activities as outlined in the annual project management plan for project year two.

Figure 15: Project ExcEL Year 2 Fidelity

Key Components on Logic Model	Definitions		Findings	
			2015-16 School Year	
	Definition of high implementation	Definition of “implementation with fidelity” at program level	Score as defined in the fidelity matrix (based on data collection during school yr)	“Implementation with fidelity” for year (calculated based on score in definition)
School climate and structures to support college and career readiness	Evidence of operational definitions as defined in the fidelity matrix	A score of 4	4	Yes
Teacher and staff training and technical assistance	Evidence of operational definition as defined in the fidelity matrix	A score of 1	1	Yes
Data-driven systemic coaching	Evidence of operational definitions as defined in the fidelity matrix	A score of 1	1	Yes
Fidelity scores available for reporting (Month, Project Year)			August, 2016	

In addition to the fidelity of implementation findings above, data collection activities also garnered significant information regarding implementation details from each school, each partner, each school coach, and the developer. Based on these data collection activities, the evaluation team was able to discern the core Project ExcEL structures (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Core Project ExcEL Structures



Based on the school administrator/project team school lead, coach, and developer interviews, an online Summer Institute survey was administered by the developer in June and July of 2015 at the individual school team member level. The questionnaire asked about each team member's preferred topics for the Summer Institute. Responses indicated that attendees wanted time to work with their school team, learn additional co-teaching strategies for ENL and mainstream teachers, learn more about Part 154 regulations⁵, time to share successful practices with fellow project participants, and time to collaborate with teachers from other project schools. There were 17 responses to the Project ExcEL 2015 Summer Institute Registration survey, and 50 school and district staff and partners attended the summer training.

In year 2, school coaching began at the project schools in August of 2015 and continued through July of 2016. Initially, topics identified as part of the Summer Institute Training provided the substance of the coaching sessions. The coaches (both UCLA and CSSR staff) worked with the project school teams in over 70 coaching sessions that occurred at least monthly throughout the remainder of project year. Concomitantly, the community partnership and management team meetings were taking place quarterly.

⁵ The New York State Department of Education Commissioner's Regulations Part 154 require co-teaching involving ENL teachers and core content area teachers.

The community partner and management team meetings serve as quarterly project update and planning sessions. During the community partner meetings, resources and supports needed by the project schools are discussed, and the group collaboratively works to meet these needs while also connecting Project ExcEL to events, resources, and the needs of the broader community beyond the school campuses.

3 CONCLUSIONS

3.1 IMPACT STUDY

In year 1, we focused on creating a comparison group that met the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards criteria for the full sample of four treatment and 16 comparison schools across the state. In year 2, we conducted a series of descriptive statistics to map and graph the school outcome data. We will not be conducting statistical analysis of the impact data until year 5 of the grant period.

Currently, we see a common trend in the descriptive results. We see that in the treatment schools, we had dip in school outcomes in the first year of Project ExcEL. In the second year, we are seeing an upward trend, where the four treatment schools have increased both math and ELA achievement (per state assessment).

3.2 IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

Schools

Based on the school administrator/project team school lead, coach, and developer interviews and the school coaching activity form, it is evident that the schools are all in roughly similar states of project implementation.

- All four schools have project teams composed of 6-12 members per team. Teams typically include core content area teachers, ENL teachers, guidance counselors (in some cases, bilingual counselors), school administrators, school social workers, and additional student support staff. On average, teams have 40 students assigned to their teachers. These students include ENL students at all levels of proficiency.
- All four schools have Project ExcEL teams meeting on a regular basis. However, there is variation among the schools in terms of the frequency and duration of team meetings. Two schools' project teams met every other week, and two schools' teams met once per month. The duration of each individual Project ExcEL school team meeting runs from 60 to 120 minutes, depending on the school and the task(s) up for discussion by the team and the coach(es). Most school team meetings take place after school, with stipends funded by grant monies. One school's project team is also meeting ad hoc during common planning time—in addition to the after school sessions.

- All four schools participated in the year 2 Summer Institute training conducted by UCLA staff.
- All four schools have leveraged resources from community partners, and all four schools have participated in project-related activities.
- Representatives from both districts and all four schools have participated in the quarterly management team meetings. A leadership change occurred at one school district and one school during year 2. School staff noted that the developer’s outreach to new leadership has been valued and received well.
- School administrators indicated that project team members are sharing ExcEL instructional strategies, lesson plans, and pedagogical methods with other school staff. Several schools have organized faculty meetings specifically to share co-teaching and tiering support strategies.
- Coaches and school leaders praised the efforts of teachers involved in co-teaching at all the project schools. Co-teaching often represents a major shift in terms of how planning for and conducting teaching occurs in the classroom. Teachers have made significant strides in implementing co-teaching in earnest.
- School leaders and community partners indicated that student field trips (i.e., college, career, and community-related visits and sessions) had been successful and highly beneficial to students.
- School staff indicated that the new tutoring arrangements are an improvement over last year’s and that community partners (Latino U and RSHM Life Center specifically) have been more directly involved in team meetings at the schools.
- School staff stated that Project ExcEL—as embodied specifically by wraparound services for students and their families, co-teaching, and data-driven tiering of support services at school—is becoming integrated into both the processes of their schools and the culture of the schools’ faculty.
- While schools indicated that they have been planning for and even piloting personalized learning structures and personalized learning plan/student-led conferencing in some cases, they are not yet ready for broader school implementations at this time. Prior, similar programmatic changes were met with resistance due to implementations that lacked broad application and a lack of teacher preparedness in terms of providing student counseling services.
- Schools noted that they are increasing their services to parents, including bi-lingual offerings and services designed to assist parents of ENL students specifically. Parent Universities, workshops, and informational sessions are offered throughout the year. Attendance at these events is reportedly growing as well.
- School and project staff have presented at national (ASCD in New Orleans and the annual i3 Project Director’s Meeting) and state conferences (NYS TESOL, NYS ABE) to disseminate lessons learned from Project ExcEL.

- Ossining High School staff reported that 19 of 21 ENL students taking the Integrated Algebra regents passed this school year. One year prior, 13 ENL students took the same exam and 6 passed. Across all students 58% of students taking the exam passed. School staff attribute this improvement to: the bilingual integrated algebra course of study (offered in Spanish/English), the Assessment and LEarning in Knowledge Spaces⁶ (ALEKS) internet-based learning supplement provided to students, a strong teacher who shared his own struggles as a student with his students, and a Saturday Regents Review course voluntarily provided by the same teacher and supported by ExcEL funding. As a result, a bilingual trigonometry course will be offered at Ossining High School--for the first time--in the fall of 2016.

Community Partners

Insights into the community partners were provided by the school administrator/project team school lead, coach, and developer interviews and the community partnership form. Based on the data collected using these protocols, it is clear that there is great variation between community partner engagement.

- Resources provided by partners have included services (informational sessions, clinics, and trainings to students, parents, and teachers), materials and tangible resources (shirts and posters for motivational purposes and meeting spaces), and extended learning opportunities (i.e., scheduled tutoring sessions, mentoring, camps, and institutes serving students, parents, and school staff). RSHM Life Center has also conducted recreational and cultural field trips designed to provide experiences that are often out of the ordinary for EL students.
- The tutoring program was transferred from one community partner to another in year 2. School staff stated that this has been beneficial; nearly 300 tutoring sessions have occurred and these have included students from both districts. A pilot college coach program was also offered by Latino U and was well received.
- FAFSA, college application, and DACA information sessions have proven useful to students and their families.
- The timeliness of community partner supports has improved as communications between the partners and schools have improved. One specific example involved rumors in the community that Immigrations and Customs Enforcement officers were moving through the community and detaining individuals. This rumor destabilized the learning environment because students were afraid that their family members would be arrested or deported during the school day. RSHM Life Center responded quickly with legal expertise and information for the students that ultimately allayed student fears.

⁶ The ALEKS website is available here: <https://www.aleks.com/>

School Coaches

Data regarding school coaching activities was gathered using the school administrator/project team school lead, coach, and developer interviews and the school coaching activity form.

- A total of six school coaches (including the developer) worked with the project schools in year 2. These coaches facilitated the coaching sessions as part of school team meetings. Coaches included staff from UCLA's Center X (4) and CSSR (2).
- School coaches far exceeded the requisite number of coaching sessions (a minimum of five sessions) provided to each project school. Coaches conducted 70 coaching sessions at the project schools.
- Coaching sessions were attended by school administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, community partners, and district leaders. Coaching sessions occurred before, during, or after school as needed and requested by school project teams.
- School coaches often work with schools in pairs—two coaches regularly attend each coaching session. Coaching sessions were also provided to district staff during project school year one.
- A wide range of coaching session topics were addressed based on the needs of the school teams and the needs-sensing of the coaches. These topics all focused on EL student needs and included: teacher instructional practice, student college and career readiness, tiering services based on student needs, school scheduling, conducting effective team meetings, personalized learning structures or environments, debriefing professional development, and using SIOP.
- Coaches noted that attention given to improving attendance at school project team meetings has helped to build the strength and focus of the teaming efforts.
- With the focus on co-teaching in year 2—in response to changing state regulations—coaches were asked to conduct classroom observations and provide feedback to the school project teams. This feedback was well received and appreciated by the schools.
- Coaches indicated that student support tiering was occurring primarily at one school in year 1. All four project schools are tiering student supports in Year 2.

Project ExcEL Developer

The Project ExcEL developer's roles, responsibilities, and leadership were addressed in every data collection protocol, including the community partnership forms, the community partner interviews, the developer interview, the school administrator/project team school lead interviews, the school coach interviews, the school coaching activity forms, the miscellaneous event protocol, and the quarterly management team activity form and program officer updates.

- The development team (which includes the project leader and coaches) received praise from all school and project staff interviewed. Specific positive feedback addressed the

connectedness of the project components and partners—a direct result of the developer’s efforts to ensure communications and collaboration.

- The developer’s efforts to on-board new district and school leaders and new school-level team members was also noted by school staff. School staff also stated that the Project ExcEL newsletter is a regular, welcome update on the project as a whole.
- Web-based dissemination efforts coordinated by the developer involving coaching staff and community partners has included a project blog for sharing project news and lesson plans and Facebook and Twitter accounts to share project news and events.
- The development leader noted that year 2 involved a more hands-off approach towards the school team meeting structures. This provided an opportunity for organic structures and roles to develop, but a stronger guiding hand is planned for year 3 based on the enhanced efficiency and efficacy required of the team meeting times as measured by project impacts.
- The developer noted that the project is nearing the midpoint of the grant funding. Project impacts and effectiveness will become greater foci moving forward. Each school team, the community partners, and the project leadership team all need to begin thinking about how the project is measured internally in terms of impact and effectiveness and what strategies are working, which ones aren’t, and where improvement needs to be realized. The development team recognizes that project effectiveness and demonstrable impacts are core components of sustainability. Without student impacts and evidence of these, building an evidence base for use in demonstrating the value of sustaining critical project components becomes difficult if not impossible.
- As a result of developer, Program Officer, coach, and community partner feedback in year 1, the external evaluators conducted a school site visit at the beginning of year 2. A brief was provided to the developer and is provided here in Appendix D.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 IMPACT STUDY

The state assessment data is showing an upward trend for the treatment schools, particularly in math and ELA in year 2. However, because there was a dip in year 1, the outcomes of year 2 are similar to baseline (the year prior to Project ExcEL). This means that year 3 onward is critical to keep the positive momentum. By year 2, the schools are performing at a rate similar as the baseline year (the year prior to Project ExcEL). To see positive impacts of Project ExcEL, schools must keep the positive trend, particularly on math and ELA.

4.2 IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

During data collection activities, a wide range of recommendations was collected from project participants and staff. As such, the bulk of the following recommendations are derived from this feedback.

Schools

School administrators / project team school leaders, coaches, and the developer, all provided relevant, useful, project feedback that may prove useful moving into project school year 3.

- According to school administrators, vocal, public, sustained support for the project from district leaders is crucial to the success of the project.
- School leaders indicated that cross-school and cross-district sharing of strategies and methods have been valuable ExcEL activities. In response, the summer 2015 training session provided additional time for sharing.
- School personalized learning structures (e.g., student advisories, personalized learning plans, student-led conferences, etc.) were reported to be in early stages by multiple project participants working at multiple schools. As core project components, the growth and expansion of these programs is critical.
- Expanded communications between the community partners, tutoring staff, and school staff have been requested by both the community partners and school staff to ensure continuity of support.
- School staff noted that the issue of teacher training for high-quality, successful, sustained personalized learning structures underlies some of the school-level concerns regarding establishing these project components.
- End of year needs assessments may need to be conducted by and in partnership with CSSR. The initial project needs assessment activities (including student shadowing) helped to focus and reinforce the importance of Project ExcEL. Ensuring momentum for the project may require additional similar activities.
- School staff indicated that they would like more training on using more varied forms of student data. Specifically, the focus in project school year two has been on co-teaching between core and ENL teachers; insights into student needs based on more varied data types (e.g., student grades, report card data, etc.) would be also helpful⁷.
- School staff indicated that a journal template or a meeting notes form would help to record meeting notes and also act as a feedback mechanism and would aid reflection on the project.
- School staff and coaches indicated that Part 154 and the expansion of co-teaching will require further supports in this area. As in year 1 and year 2, Project ExcEL's intent and methods are complementary to this and may continue to include efforts in support of Part 154 in terms of best practices and professional development.
- School staff stated that personalized learning structures and environments (e.g., advisories, personalized learning plans, student-led conferences, etc.) may all need to be focused through a lens of student and parent engagement.

⁷ The year 3 Summer Institute, offered August 24-26, 2016, included training on Dynamic Language Learning Progressions (DLLP) [<http://www.dllp.org/>] in response to this identified need.

Community Partners

- All community partners have had a representative at community partnership meetings throughout year one. All community partners have been involved in the project in year 2, though there has been great variation in the level of engagement of partners.
- Community partners interviewed look forward to continued engagement and expansion of their support for Project ExcEL. These same partners would like to be more directly engaged with the schools on a regular basis. Additional work needs to be done on defining the roles for partners not yet fully engaged in the project. A timeline of future project activities would help to connect partners in support of complementary efforts.
- Community partners would like to see greater connections between academic-focused school staff and non-academic supports and vice versa.
- School and community partner staff members both indicated that the roles and levels of involvement of community partners and schools have been highly variable. Some schools tap into certain resources more than others, and some community partners engage in Project ExcEL more deeply than others. While this may simply be an issue of needs being met organically, it may prove useful to both be clear about partner roles and what's available to schools and partners and to explicate the expectations of community partners and schools as Project ExcEL team members. Transparency may ultimately clarify and benefit the team members to clear the way for further engagement.
- School staff requested basic feedback loops between school and non-school services. Specifically, services provided in 1:1 (student-to-tutor, student-to-mentor, etc.) or small group settings should result in feedback to the relevant ExcEL school team working with the student. School staff can use this feedback to provide additional supports or scaffolding that can encourage, strengthen, and reinforce efforts with students.
- Community partners mirrored the desires of school staff—both want to more deeply engage one another to better connect efforts to support ENL students and their families. Working through the details of such a system of communication will require patience and an understanding of Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and potentially Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations, as well as New York State regulations (if applicable). This may prove a topic of interest to both school and community partners to immediately address these contextual factors at the beginning of the design of feedback and record-keeping structures and systems.
- A community partner stated that a catalog of community partner offerings would help the partners aid both the project's and other partner's objectives, allowing collaborators to identify and create mutually beneficial solutions. The need for a "catalog" is therefore more of an indicator of a need for a regularly updated list of resources and services available from partners than for a physical, traditional, static catalog.

School Coaches

- School and partner staff members indicated that the strong support, coordination, and accountability efforts of the developer and the coaches have been a core part of Project ExcEL. Continuity in these efforts appears critical to the project.
- Coaches would like to continue to conduct informal classroom visits to see how strategies presented during summer training coaching sessions are working for teachers in their classrooms. This mirrors feedback from school staff who indicated that the coach and peer observations and cross-classroom feedback have been particularly helpful to improving practice.
- Project staff stated that a more formal process of feedback and planning may be needed to strengthen and hone school coaching and the Summer Institute as the project moves forward. This data would also be useful to the evaluator.
- During interviews with coaches and school staff, the issue of roles and responsibilities arose; specifically, the roles of CSSR and the UCLA team and how these may be similar or different. This may prove a useful distinction or it may merely be an issue of interest only because the larger project team has not been privy to planning and discussions of roles. In either case, transparency and clarification of these roles may benefit the project as it moves forward.
- Coaches indicated that implementing personalized learning structures and environments (e.g., student-led conferences, personalized learning plans, advisories, etc.) may require that these activities be focused through the lens of parent/family and student engagement. Similarly, schools may need to label these project components using slightly different terms to avoid extant negative connotations rooted in prior less-successful implementations.
- School staff indicated that coaches may need to help teams measure the effectiveness of specific pieces of the project. Specifically, as more project components come online, practice needs to continue to be refined and improved.
- Coaches noted that teachers want student led conferencing across the schools more than advisories. Advisories present a set of challenges structurally that may not be easily overcome. Student-led conferences can begin to bring out student voice and engage parents. This may snowball, opening lines of communication and building accountability, which may ultimately lead to deeper implementation of other project components.
- School staff requested additional work with coaches on discovering and using new and revisited data points (e.g., student/teacher attendance at school and events, grading, etc.) to better understand current and future student support needs.

Project ExcEL Developer

- The developer stated that there will be a push by project staff going forward to ensure that school team meetings become more efficient. A standard format might include an hour to an hour and a half long blocked out for the meeting, 20 minutes for tiering and revisiting tiered

student data, 30 minutes for Professional Development (e.g., a book study, action research, etc.), and team member led and facilitated. This plan should build buy-in, engagement, accountability, and ownership of the project—thereby resulting in deeper implementation to support students.

- School staff stated that, during school ExcEL team time, they would like to spend more time with a guest speaker or presenter, experts invited in, working with outside resources, visiting a program that’s working well, or conducting a professional study group around an article or study. School staff stated that they have exhausted local expertise and would like outsider points of view regarding issues relevant to supporting ENL students. Specific topics of interest include: strategies to work with integrated classes (e.g., grading ENL students vs. others); additional wraparound services (e.g., being both aware of and effective at tapping into these services).
- The developer noted that Project ExcEL is moving into the third full year of implementation. Thus, a shift in focus commensurate with this point in the project needs to occur among team members; project attentions and efforts must continue to focus on implementation but must now also consider what is working, how do we know this, and how can we improve it? These questions also reflect the research component of i3 funding.
- Some teachers feel that they are teaching each other instead of receiving more exposure to experts in the field as they expected from Project ExcEL. This concern highlights a potential misunderstanding on the part of school staff involving Project ExcEL and may signal the need for continuous reminders regarding project goals and intent. Project ExcEL, as funded, was not designed to offer a plethora of professional development; instead, Project ExcEL is a collaborative research project that provides targeted professional development and an opportunity for refining and researching these support mechanisms and school improvements—both internally (by and for the project school and developer teams) and externally (in terms of the external evaluation that plugs into the nationwide i3 evaluation).
- Leadership transitions, both those that have occurred heretofore and those sure to occur over the life of the project, may be aided by demonstrable student, teacher, school leader, and parent buy-in. Project artifacts and records can help to remind participants of project strides and rally support in times of need. The communications-related requests from participants, by both staff and partners, can serve this dual purpose while meeting the collaborative needs of project participants.
- The external evaluator’s role continues to be a concern of school staff, coaches, and community partners. At the same time, the collaborative research component of the project, as a requirement of i3 funding, has not engaged the school teams heretofore. Development team members, district and school staff, and community partners all need to be involved in measuring the impacts of specific project components and practices. Thus, “identifying and documenting best practices that can be shared and taken to scale based on demonstrated

success”⁸ will require the engagement and involvement of project participants to extend the study, research, and evaluation of the project beyond the scope of the external evaluator role.

- Coaches and the external evaluator both noted that five year grants often benefit from the scaffolding provided by specific timelines for components and activities to ensure targets that align with goals and to renew interest in the project. New professional learning commensurate with these new practices can often bring renewed energy and focus to a project. This observation also aligns with developer concerns regarding a third-year transition focusing on the impact(s) of implementing specific project components.

⁸ Investing in Innovation (i3) core component: <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Impact Study Methodology

Project ExcEL is a school-wide intervention designed to train teachers and counselors, facilitate teacher data teams, and provide school coaches. The intent of the project is to improve school supports and instruction to ultimately improve EL student outcomes. Because of the school-wide nature of the intervention, all teachers, counselors, and principals will eventually receive the treatment, and, in turn, all EL students will receive improved instruction and supports over the life of the project. Hence, the unit of intervention is the school.

The evaluation is a quasi-experimental design (QED), where the unit of analysis is the school-level. All data are collected from annual school report cards, where key outcomes include three domains: 1) achievement (math and ELA school performance), 2) behavior (attendance), and 3) college readiness (high school diploma, post-secondary plans). The developer identified the treatment schools (N = 4), and the evaluation team selected the comparison schools. There are no confounds. The treatment and comparison schools are from multiple districts, with multiple schools within the treatment and comparison conditions. Characteristics of the treatment and comparison schools are similar, except for the use of Project ExcEL in the treatment condition. Time is not a confound since all pre- and post-test data are collected from school report cards from the same years for the treatment and comparison schools.

As indicated in Exhibit 1, school level data will be obtained for the years 2007 through 2018. School assessment scores, as well as school demographic information, are all publicly available through the school report cards as part of the New York State Education Department's (NYSED's) annual public reporting. In our review of the data, we have discerned that we will be able to obtain data from as early as the 1998-1999 school year. This data is consistent, in terms of reporting key school demographic information and assessment scores, starting in the 2006-2007 school year. Therefore, our pre-intervention data will begin in 2006-2007. Exhibit 1 indicates the years that are pre-treatment and treatment years for the treatment schools.

Given the multiple years of school-level data, starting with the 2006-2007 school year through the 2017-2018 school year (12 years of data), our analytic approach is a short interrupted time series with a comparison group (C-ITS) design (Bloom, 2003). We will have seven years of baseline data, and up to four years of post-intervention data.

Investing in Innovation (i3) grants are awarded by calendar years. This project started in the calendar year of 2014 and goes through December 2018. Year 1 implementation is the 2014-2015 school year. We expect to be able to download administrative school-level data from New

York State Department of Education up to the 2017-2018 school year (Year 4 of the grant), by August 2018. If the 2017-2018 data is not available by August 2018, we will use three years of post-intervention data (up to 2016-2017 school year).

Exhibit 1: Treatment Years and Pre-treatment Years for Student Outcomes of Treatment and Comparison Schools

Type of School (Treatment or Comparison)	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	Number of Schools
Treatment	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	T	T	T	T	4
Comparison	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	c	c	c	c	16
Total													20

All achievement scores come from New York State Department of Education assessments administered in the spring of each school year.

“x”: indicates a pre-treatment year when a school outcome score will be obtained.

“T”: For Treatment schools.

“c”: For Comparison schools.

Treatment Schools: Identification, Selection, and Assignment

The developer identified the treatment schools and recruited the schools during the proposal phase. In the proposal, there were three districts as part of the treatment—Ossining Union Free School District, Tarrytown Union Free School District, and White Plains Public Schools. The developer has had long-standing partnerships with these districts and the superintendent from each district for many years. Upon award, White Plains school district withdrew from the project prior to the start of the study with the approval of the US Department of Education. Therefore, across two school districts (Ossining and Tarrytown), there are four schools in the treatment condition. Both districts, as is the case in many of the districts in Westchester County, have one middle school and one high school. Therefore, the four treatment schools include the sole middle school and high school in their respective districts.

Comparison Schools: Identification, Selection, and Assignment

Across two districts in Westchester County, the developers are working with two middle (grades 6-8) schools and two high (grades 9-12) schools. The evaluators identified comparison schools for this study by conducting propensity score matching to identify schools and by conducting baseline equivalence testing to ensure the schools are similar in observed characteristics to the treatment schools prior to the intervention.

The comparison schools serve as “business as usual” conditions. The comparison schools will not have Project ExcEL in their schools during the duration of the study. There will be variation across the comparison schools in curriculum and instruction, professional development, and college-readiness efforts targeted at EL students. However, under the NYSED, curriculum and instruction across the state follow the New York State Learning Standards. To graduate from

high school, all New York students must have a minimum of 22 specific high school credits and pass five Regents examinations.

Our identification process included a series of methods and analyses to ensure baseline equivalence, see Appendix B for details. We identified and selected 16 comparison schools, or a balance of 1:4 treatment to comparison schools (eight middle school comparison schools, and eight high school comparison schools). To identify and select the 16 comparison schools, we first identified the matching variables across two domains—achievement and behavior. Second, we conducted propensity score matching for each domain separately (i.e. two separate PSM), and propensity score matching for all domains/outcomes (i.e. one PSM). For the propensity score matching for each domain, we selected different samples of comparison schools for the achievement domain and another sample of comparison schools for the behavior domain. For the propensity score matching for all domains/outcomes, we selected one set of comparison schools. Third, we calculated effect sizes for the baseline equivalence tests for the achievement and behavior domains, and all the domains/outcomes. Because our confirmatory impact analyses are for all four treatment schools, our primary goal was to ensure baseline equivalence, at a minimum, of the confirmatory analytic sample of twenty schools (4 treatment and 16 comparison schools).⁹ We compared baseline equivalence across the three sets: 1) Achievement domain, 2) Behavior domain, and 3) All domains. We chose the comparison schools from all the domains because it met the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards for baseline equivalence, and it was efficient to have a single comparison group of schools (rather than two separate samples per domain).

Impact Study Data Sources

We collect all administrative (secondary) school-level data from school report cards, as published by the NYSED each summer. We download school report cards from the NYSED website annually (see: <https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php>). NYSED makes this data publicly available via Access databases. We download and convert the Access databases into a SAS database for analysis.

Because of the longitudinal nature of the administrative data, we are able to obtain school-level data from the treatment and comparison schools from the 2006-2007 school year, obtaining eight years of data prior to Project ExcEL.

⁹ We conduct separate analyses to select comparison schools for middle and high schools separately and conduct baseline equivalence testing. Our sample was small, with two middle schools matched with eight comparison middle schools and two high schools matched with eight comparison high schools. Due to the small sample size, we were unable to achieve baseline equivalence that meets WWC standards for schools disaggregated by grade level.

Outcome Domain 1: Achievement

For middle school students, the achievement measure is the state math and reading assessments administered each spring. For high school students, the math achievement measure is the Regents Integrated Algebra exam administered each spring, and the reading achievement measure is the Regents Comprehensive English exam administered each spring. These state-wide assessments are not over-aligned with the intervention. The school scores will be the average scaled scores for the school and the average scaled scores for all EL students in the school (denoted as Limited English Proficient in the school report card data). These measures are consistently collected using the same procedures and rules in both treatment and comparison conditions.

We will z-score the achievement data. We will convert each school's achievement data by grade and by school year, utilizing the standard deviation for the students in that grade, in that given school year. The standard deviation will reflect the state-wide student population.¹⁰ For example, a z-score will be calculated for 6th grade EL students for each school in the 2006-2007 school year, using the LEP population mean and LEP population standard deviation provided in the technical report of the 2006-2007 school year, denoted in the formula below:

$$Z = \frac{x - \mu}{\sigma}$$

Where:

x is the school-level mean from the annual school report cards. For example, this will be the school-level average of 6th grade EL student mean score.

μ is the mean of the population taken from the annual technical report. For example, this will be the population 6th grade EL student mean score.

σ is the standard deviation of the population taken from the annual technical report. For example, this will be the population 6th grade EL student standard deviation.

To create a middle school score, we will first create z-scores for the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades for each given year and for each school in the analytic sample. We will then create a single score by averaging across the z-scores for each grade. As such, each school will have grade-specific z-scores, as well as an average z-score across grades (i.e. school average) for each year of data. While we assume that the number of students within each grade is comparable, we will create a weighted average if the number of students within each grade level varies greatly (i.e., > 25%).

¹⁰ The state-wide student population standard deviation is made publicly available through annual technical reports. The standard deviations are reported by content/assessment by grade. Technical reports are available here: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/reports/>

For the high school score, students take the Regents Integrated Algebra assessment and the Regents Comprehensive English assessment. Students do not take the same Algebra or reading assessment every year (e.g. 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades) but rather once during their high school experience. Therefore, we will create a z-score of the math and reading outcomes to reflect the high school scores of all EL students who took the test that school year.

To create an overall math achievement outcome, we will create an average score from the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade z-scores and from the Regents Integrated Algebra z-scores. Similarly, to create an overall reading achievement outcome, we will create an average score from the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade z-scores and from the Regents Comprehensive English z-scores.

To estimate the impact of Project ExcEL across education levels, middle and high schools will be analyzed together using the averaged z-scores as the outcome. The math and reading outcomes will be on a common metric for all grades and are interpreted as performance relative to the reference population of the LEP students in the state of New York in any given year.

Outcome Domain 2: Behavior

The behavior domain represents student attendance for the confirmatory sample (i.e. middle and high schools). For high schools, the behavior domain also includes college-readiness behaviors such as high school graduation (Regents diploma, Regents advanced diploma) and post-secondary plans (2-year and 4-year college plans).

For middle and high schools, attendance will be the school attendance rate. Through the school report cards, we are only able to obtain the attendance rate of the whole school. School report card data reports attendance for the whole school (all students), the general education students, and special education students. The school report card data does not report attendance by subgroups, such as Limited English Proficient (LEP), like the achievement data. Therefore, we will use the attendance rate of the whole school. Attendance rates are not over-aligned with the intervention. These measures are consistently collected using the same procedures and rules in both conditions.

As part of the NYSED reporting requirements, high schools are required to report their annual graduation rates and students' post-graduation plans¹¹. In schools, guidance counselors ask high school graduating seniors about their post-high school plans to:

- Attend a 4-year college/university (in-state or out-of-state);
- Attend a 2-year college (in-state or out-of-state);
- Attend other post-secondary institutions (in-state or out-of-state);

¹¹ The NYSED guide for schools on reporting the annual graduation and post-graduation plans are available here: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/level2reports/SIRS_308-Annual_Graduation_and_PostGraduationPlans.pdf

- Enlist in the military;
- Enroll in adult services;
- Pursue employment.

As part of the annual reporting by the NYSED, the school report card includes: 1) the percent of all high school graduates who plan to enroll in a four-year college in NYS, 2) the percent of all high school graduates who plan to enroll in a four-year college out-of-state, 3) the percent of all high school graduates who plan to enroll in a two-year college in NYS, and 4) the percent of all high school graduates who plan to enroll in a two-year college out-of-state. The evaluators will create a variable for the percent of all high school graduates who plan to attend a four-year college and a variable for the percent of all high school graduates who plan to attend a two-year college for each school in our analytic sample. Like school attendance, the school report cards do not report college plans by subgroups, such as LEPs. Post-secondary plans are not over-aligned with the intervention. These measures are consistently collected using the same procedures and rules in both conditions and are standard educational measures in the state of New York.

In New York, the high school diploma is called a Regents Diploma. Students can earn a Regents Diploma or a Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation. Students earning Advanced Designation diplomas have passed a larger number of New York State assessments, thereby meeting a higher academic standard, ostensibly indicating preparedness for post-secondary education opportunities. Specifically, students who earn a Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation are students who should not need remediation in a post-secondary institution. The school report card includes the percent of students who earned both types of diplomas. The school report card data reports the diplomas earned by the whole school population and not by subgroups such as LEPs. Therefore, the outcome will represent the percent of all students who earned a diploma for each school. The Regents diplomas have the same definition and requirements across all schools in New York state. These variables are not over-aligned with the intervention. These measures are consistently collected using the same procedures and rules in both conditions.

We will also obtain from the school report cards the percent of LEP students in the school to use as a covariate. Given that Project ExcEL focuses on students who are learning English as a new language (ENLs), we believe that this is an important covariate to include in the model.

Impact Study Data Analysis

We have two confirmatory research questions:

- 1) The impact of Project ExcEL on math achievement for middle and high schools offered Project ExcEL for 4 years as compared to middle and high schools in the business as usual condition, and

- 2) The impact of Project ExcEL on ELA achievement for middle and high schools offered Project ExcEL for 4 years as compared to middle and high schools in the business as usual condition.

As mentioned earlier, if we are not able to obtain the 2017-2018 data by August 2018, we will not have four years of post-intervention data. In this case, we will have three years of post-intervention data, where the confirmatory analysis will be the impact of three years of Project ExcEL.

Confirmatory Impact Analysis

The table below shows the confirmatory contrasts for the achievement domain. The confirmatory contrast will be used to estimate the impact on school math and reading performance for middle and high schools offered Project ExcEL for three years as compared to middle and high schools in the business as usual condition.

Exploratory or Confirmatory	Grade level / Outcome	Contrasts	Analysis
Confirmatory	Middle/ High school: 6-12 th grade math (state math and Regents Integrated Algebra)	ELL school average in treatment schools (4 schools) versus comparison schools (16 schools)	C-ITS with comparison group design
Confirmatory	Middle/ High school: 6-12 th grade ELA (state ELA and Regents Comprehensive English)	ELL school average in treatment schools (4 schools) versus comparison schools (16 schools)	C-ITS with comparison group design

For the confirmatory analysis, we met baseline equivalence with the treatment and comparison schools using school-level data from the 2013-2014 school year (one-year prior to the intervention).

Exploratory Analysis

Other analyses are exploratory, meaning, the analyses are meant to explore and hypothesize about the program and school improvement. The table below shows the exploratory contrasts for the behavior domain that includes the full analytic sample (middle and high schools). The school report card only reports school-wide attendance rates and does not report out attendance rates for subgroups such as LEP students. The contrasts in this domain are all exploratory and focus on estimating the impact on school attendance rates for middle and high schools with Project ExcEL for three years as compared to middle and high schools in the business as usual condition.

Exploratory or Confirmatory	Grade level / Outcome	Contrasts	Analysis
Exploratory	Middle/ High school: Attendance rate	Whole school average in treatment schools (4 schools) versus comparison schools (16 schools)	C-ITS with comparison group design

For the exploratory analysis, we met baseline equivalence with the treatment and comparison schools using school-level data from the 2013-2014 school year (one-year prior to the intervention).

Additional Exploratory Descriptive Analysis

Further exploratory analyses include grade specific analyses. However, this greatly reduces the sample size to two middle or high schools in the treatment group, and eight middle or high schools in the comparison group. Therefore, these analyses are descriptive and exploratory in nature that could be helpful for hypothesis-generating and planning for next steps.

For the middle school sample, we will explore differences in LEP math and ELA school performance and school attendance of all students. For the middle school outcomes, we met baseline equivalence with the treatment and comparison schools using school-level data from the 2013-2014 school year (one-year prior to the intervention)..

For the high school sample, we explore differences in LEP math and ELA school performance and school attendance of all students. In addition, high schools also offer college-going behavior outcomes, such as high school diploma and college-going plans. Like school attendance, school report card data does not disaggregate college plans or diploma by important subgroups such as LEP. The report only disaggregates by all students, general education students, and special education students. Like school attendance, the rates of high school graduation and college plans are for all students in schools. We met baseline equivalence for LEP math, school attendance, Regents diploma, and Regents Advanced diploma using school-level data from the 2013-2014 school year (one-year prior to the intervention). We did not meet baseline equivalence for LEP ELA, 2-year college plans, and 4-year college plans.

Implementation Study

Plus Alpha worked with the project developer to design an implementation study that allows the flexibility needed for a development grant while ensuring that fidelity to the key project components is defined and assessed across the treatment group (Nelson et al, 2012). Measuring Project ExcEL fidelity began with refining the project logic model provided in the original grantee application. The evaluation team worked closely with the intervention developer and the evaluation technical assistance provider to develop the logic model on page 5. This logic model was then used to guide the implementation study design.

The logic model aligns with the management plan created by the developer and approved by the USED Program Officer. Each key component consists of indicators of implementation, as can be seen in the Fidelity Matrices for each key component. We have provided the operational definition for each indicator as well. Protocols have been created (see Appendix C); each protocol item aligns with an indicator of implementation and therefore a key component. Each



protocol item is designed to be scored either yes or no (0 or 1). Scores roll up to the school level and to the full sample. We will use the Fidelity Matrix to measure and assess fidelity for all components and indicators for each of the three years of implementation.

Exhibit 2: Fidelity Matrix Key Component 1. School climate and structures to support college and career readiness

Indicator	Operational Definition	Data Sources	School Fidelity	Full Sample Fidelity
School coach conducts needs assessment	School coach conducts one needs assessment at each school	Evaluator interview with school coach using check list protocol School Coaching Form created by the evaluator completed by school coaches after each session Review of the Program Officer monthly/bi-monthly update provided by the developer	0 = Annual needs assessment not conducted 1 = Annual needs assessment conducted	0 = Less than 100% of schools meet school- level threshold 1 = 100% of schools meet school-level threshold
School coach provides coaching sessions to the school	Five (5) coaching sessions are provided at each school per year	Evaluator interview with school coach using checklist protocol School Coaching Form created by the evaluator completed by school coaches after each session Review of the Program Officer monthly/bi-monthly update provided by the developer	0 = <3 planned coaching sessions provided to the school 1 = ≥3 planned coaching sessions provided to the school	0 = Less than 100% of schools meet school- level threshold 1 = 100% of schools meet school-level threshold
Community partnership meetings	Developer meets quarterly with the community partnership with district and school representatives present	Evaluator interview with community partner organizations using check list protocol Meeting Form created by the evaluator and completed by partnering organizations and competed after each meeting Review of the Program Officer monthly/bi-monthly update provided by the developer	0 = A school representative does not attend each quarterly community partnership meeting 1 = A school representative attends each quarterly community partnership meeting	0 = Less than 100% of schools meet school- level threshold 1 = 100% of schools meet school-level threshold
Community partnership service	Developer coordinates community	Evaluator interview with community partner organizations using check list protocol	0 = Developer does not coordinate community partnership services at each school (less than 100% of the	0 = Less than 100% of schools meet school- level

Indicator	Operational Definition	Data Sources	School Fidelity	Full Sample Fidelity
coordination	partnership services each semester at each school	Meeting Form created by the evaluator and completed by partnering organizations and completed after each meeting Review of the Program Officer monthly/bi-monthly update provided by the developer	checklist items confirmed during interview) 1 = Developer coordinates community partnership services at each school (100% of the checklist items confirmed during interview)	threshold 1 = 100% of schools meet school-level threshold
Key Component Fidelity Range				0-4
Key Component Fidelity Threshold				4

Exhibit 3: Fidelity Matrix Key Component 2. Teacher and staff training and technical assistance

Indicator	Operational Definition	Data Sources	School Fidelity	Full Sample Fidelity
Developers provide training on best instructional practice for ELs to school-based teams	Twenty (20) hours of instructional practice training are provided to each school-based team per year	Evaluator interview with developer and professional development provider using checklist protocol Professional development attendance lists collected from the developer Professional development debrief form created by the evaluator completed by the developer after each PD session Review of the Program Officer monthly/bi-monthly update provided by the developer	0 = <15 hours of instructional practice training are provided to each school per year 1 = ≥16 hours of instructional practice training are provided to each school per year	0 = Less than 100% of schools meet school-level threshold 1 = 100% of schools meet school-level threshold
Key Component Fidelity Range				0-1
Key Component Fidelity Threshold				1

Exhibit 4: Fidelity Matrix Key Component 3. Data-driven systematic coaching

Indicator	Operational Definition	Data Sources	School Fidelity	Full Sample Fidelity
<p>School based teams receive training on establishing Professional Learning Communities focused on student data.</p>	<p>Five (5) teacher training sessions on Professional Learning Communities are provided at each school</p>	<p>Evaluator interview with developer using check list protocol</p> <p>Team meeting attendance lists collected from the developer</p> <p>Team meeting debrief form created by the evaluator completed by the developer after each PD session.</p> <p>Review of the Program Officer monthly/bi-monthly update provided by the developer</p>	<p>0 = <3 planned trainings conducted at each school</p> <p>1 = ≥3 planned trainings conducted at each school</p>	<p>0 = Less than 100% of schools meet school-level threshold</p> <p>1 = 100% of schools meet school-level threshold</p>
			<p>Key Component Fidelity Range</p>	<p>0-1</p>
			<p>Key Component Fidelity Threshold</p>	<p>1</p>

Implementation questions (IQ) guided the assessment of fidelity as follows:

- *IQ 1* Have the key components of Project ExcEL been implemented with fidelity?
- *IQ 2* How has implementation varied across the treatment schools in terms of the key project components:
 - School climate and structures to support college and career readiness,
 - Teacher and staff training and technical assistance, and
 - Data-driven systemic coaching.

To guide data gathering in response to the implementation questions, a series of aligning documents were created to map from the project logic model to the project management plan objectives, strategies, and actions. A fidelity matrix and fidelity indicators were designed and aligned with the management plan as well. For the purposes of this development grant implementation study, only the project activities within the control of the developer were measured, in order to better define and ascertain what implementing Project ExcEL with high fidelity entails.

The implementation study began with the development of protocols aligned with the project management plan, logic model, and evaluation plan. A community partnership form was designed to be completed by a community partner member following each community partnership meeting. The community partner interview protocol was developed, and interviews have been conducted in year 1 and year 2 with the same participants to ensure consistency. The developer interview protocol was developed and an interview was conducted in year 1 and in year 2. A school administrator/ team leader interview protocol was created and interviews have been conducted with the same participants in year 1 and year 2. A school coach interview protocol was created, and interviews have been conducted with the same participants in year 1 and year 2 insofar as possible; some coaches have changed over the duration of the project. The school coaching activity form was designed to record school coach activities and impressions of on-going school coaching throughout the project school year, as completed by school coaches. Seventy (70) school coaching forms were completed in project year 2. The miscellaneous event protocol was designed to be used by evaluation team members attending non-recurring, unplanned, or unscheduled project activities. The final protocol, the quarterly management team activity form, was designed to collect information on the quarterly project ExcEL management team meetings, but this form ended up collecting information nearly identical to the monthly/bi-monthly Program Officer updates provided by the developer. Thus, these forms (completed in full in year 1 and partially in year 2) are considered and synthesized together with the monthly/bi-monthly reports.

Project protocols align with the Project Management Plan submitted annually to the Department of Education. The Project ExcEL management plan focuses on four core objectives also found in

the logic model and the implementation study fidelity matrix. Each objective is further composed of strategies, and each strategy is composed of activities. For example, “Objective 1. Improve the capacity of educators to effectively educate ELs within a framework of tiered interventions” is supported by four distinct strategies as outlined in the plan, (e.g., “Strategy #1.1: Participants on school-based teams participate in training and coaching focused on best instructional practices for ELs and effectively incorporate these practices into classroom instruction (instructional practices training)”. Strategy 1 is then comprised of eight activities (e.g., “Activity 1.1.1 Identify participating schools and educator teams). Following this overarching objective, strategy, and activity structure, each study protocol question or item maps back the management plan. The following exhibits detail the alignment of the protocols and the management plan objectives (Exhibit 5-7).

Exhibit 5: Management Plan Objective 1 Instrument / Protocol Alignment

Objective 1. Improve the capacity of educators to effectively educate ELs within a framework of tiered interventions.

Instrument / Protocol	Strategy #1.1: Participants on school-based teams participate in training and coaching focused on best instructional practices for ELs and effectively incorporate these practices into classroom instruction (instructional practices training)	Strategy #1.2: Participants on school-based teams participate in training and coaching focused on using data to personalize instruction and intervention (tiered intervention training)	Strategy #1.3: School based teams meet 4 times per year for coaching and data team discussion in order to ensure student progress is regularly monitored and data is used to provide students with appropriate supports and interventions (data team meetings)	Strategy #1.4: School based teams participate in a year-end data fair designed to promote the sharing of best practices and lessons learned (dissemination)
Community Partnership Form				
Community Partner Interview				
Developer Interview	✓	✓	✓	✓
School Admin. / Team Leader Interview	✓	✓	✓	✓
School Coach Interview	✓	✓	✓	✓
School Coaching Activity Form	✓	✓	✓	✓
Miscellaneous Event Protocol	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quarterly Management Team Activity Form Program Officer monthly/bi-monthly update provided by the developer				

Exhibit 6: Management Plan Objective 2 Instrument / Protocol Alignment

Objective 2. Structural elements of each school will ensure EL students are part of a smaller learning community with a common team of teachers and personalization supports.

Instrument / Protocol	Strategy #2.1: School based teams are formed that include core content area teachers, ESL, guidance, social worker and administrative support. Each team works with a common set of EL students assigned to their team. Teams are inclusive of mainstream and special needs students, and are the same teams identified for professional development under Obj. #1.	Strategy #2.2: School-based teams meet together and focus on student progress during regularly scheduled common planning time.	Strategy #2.3: A regular time and process for individualized student advising (career, academic and personal) is structured and implemented.	Strategy #2.4: A process for Personal Learning Plan (PLP) development and regular use by EL students is developed and implemented. A critical feature of this PLP will be the incorporation of student-led conferencing. The use of digital portfolios will be explored as an adjunct use of technology.
Community Partnership Form				
Community Partner Interview				
Developer Interview	✓	✓	✓	✓
School Admin. / Team Leader Interview	✓	✓	✓	✓
School Coach Interview	✓	✓	✓	✓
School Coaching Activity Form	✓	✓	✓	✓
Miscellaneous Event Protocol	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quarterly Management Team Activity Form Program Officer monthly/bi-monthly update provided by the developer				

Exhibit 7: Management Plan Objectives 3 and 4 Instrument / Protocol Alignment

	Objective 3. An interagency, inter-district team will be formed to leverage and share resources and provide support for at-risk EL students and their families.		Objective 4. An objective evaluation process will be integrated into project activities to document and improve process and outcome.
Instrument / Protocol	Strategy #3.1: An inter-agency, inter-district team will be formed (Project ExcEL Team) to leverage resources and provide wrap around supports for at-risk EL students and their families.	Strategy #3.2: Interagency partners will host community meetings to engage families (topics may include: immigration law, assistance with FAFSA, college applications, etc.).	Strategy #4.1: An outside, objective evaluator is engaged in partnership with program staff, providing on-going data collection and feedback. Outside evaluator will share findings with the core management team. Core management team will be charged with further disseminating information to entire project members and outside organizations.
Community Partnership Form	✓	✓	✓
Community Partner Interview	✓	✓	✓
Developer Interview	✓	✓	✓
School Admin. / Team Leader Interview	✓	✓	✓
School Coach Interview			✓
School Coaching Activity Form	✓	✓	✓
Miscellaneous Event Protocol	✓	✓	✓
Quarterly Management Team Activity Form			
Program Officer monthly/bi-monthly update provided by the developer	✓		✓



Exhibit 8 below shows the key components of the fidelity study cross-walked (i.e., aligned) with the fidelity indicators and definitions and the PARC-developed evaluation protocols.

Exhibit 8: Implementation Fidelity Matrix Key Components Instrument / Protocol Alignment

	Component 1: School climate and structures to support college and career readiness				Component 2. Teacher and staff training and technical assistance	Component 3. Data-driven systematic coaching
Fidelity Indicators	School coach conducts needs assessment	School coach provides coaching sessions to the school	Community partnership meetings	Community partnership service coordination	Developers provide training on best instructional practice for ELs to school-based teams	School based teams receive training on establishing Professional Learning Communities focused on student data
Fidelity Definitions	School coach conducts one needs assessment at each school	Five (5) coaching sessions are provided at each school per year	Developer meets quarterly with the community partnership with district and school representatives present	Developer coordinates community partnership services each semester at each school	Twenty (20) hours of instructional practice training are provided to each school-based team per year	Five (5) teacher training sessions on Professional Learning Communities are provided at each school
Instruments / Protocols						
Community Partnership Form			✓	✓		
Community Partner Interview			✓	✓		
Developer Interview	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
School Admin. / Team Leader Interview	✓	✓			✓	✓
School Coach Interview	✓	✓				
School Coaching Activity Form	✓	✓			✓	✓
Miscellaneous Event Protocol	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quarterly Management Team Activity Form / Program Officer update			✓	✓		

Implementation Study Data Analysis

We administer the community partner interview check list protocol once per school year, and the check list sum is tallied. The community partnership activity form is completed during each community partnership activity during each of three implementation years and the resulting data has been analyzed for content. We administer the developer interview check list protocol once per school year, and the check list sum is tallied. The school coaching form is completed following each school coaching session during each of three implementation years, and the resulting data is analyzed for content. We administer the school coach interview check list protocol once per school year, and the check list sum is tallied. The school meeting form is completed during each school team meeting session during each of three implementation years, and resulting data is analyzed for content.

Content analysis involved coding the open ended responses using extant codes based on Project ExcEL key components with developer feedback. Emergent codes were also used during the coding process to provide additional formative feedback to the developer. Two coders coded all qualitative data, and a third coder helped to reconcile any coding differences to reach 100% agreement in the application of codes.

See the fidelity matrices provided above in Exhibits 2-4. The School Fidelity and Full Sample Fidelity (right) columns and the Key Component Fidelity Range and Key Component Fidelity Threshold rows (bottom) detail the fidelity score calculation at the key component level. We calculate fidelity based on data collected using protocols that we developed (see Appendix C). Each protocol item aligns with an indicator, and each indicator aligns with a key component. For example, for Project ExcEL *Key Component 2 Teacher and staff training and technical assistance* to be implemented with fidelity at the school level, 16 or more hours of instructional practice training must be provided to the school each year. We conducted interviews with the developer, the school coaches, and the school administrators/team leaders using checklist protocols aligned with the management plan activities and professional development debrief forms created by the evaluator and completed by the developer after each professional development session. These protocols and procedures have been used to determine whether or not the key component fidelity threshold is reached each year.

APPENDIX B: DETAILED PROCESS FOR IDENTIFYING AND SELECTING COMPARISON SCHOOLS

Our identification process included a series of methods and analyses to ensure baseline equivalence between four treatment schools and 16 comparison schools. To select 16 comparison schools, we followed three steps: 1) Identify matching variables, 2) Conduct propensity score matching, and 3) Select a pool of comparison schools by conducting baseline equivalence testing to meet WWC standards. Because our confirmatory impact analyses are for all four treatment schools, our primary goal was to ensure baseline equivalence, at a minimum, of the confirmatory analytic sample.

Step 1: Identifying Matching Variables

Our matching variables included the outcomes in the achievement domain and the outcome in the behavior domain, in addition a key school characteristic, percent of LEP students. The following is our list of matching variables:

- Prior achievement in Math
- Prior achievement in ELA
- % LEP
- % Attendance

Step 2: Conducting Propensity Score Matching

We employed propensity score matching techniques (PSM) to identify a group of potential comparison schools. In this step, we conducted PSM on the following:

- Achievement Domain
- Behavior Domain
- All Domain/outcomes.

For each domain (i.e. Achievement, Behavior, All), we created propensity scores for each school in our sample (treatment and comparison). We selected 6-7 comparison schools per treatment school via distance matching. To obtain our four comparison schools per treatment school, we then used school outcomes such as achievement, attendance, and percent LEP to select the final group of comparison schools.

This step used three different samples of schools. We conducted PSM and identified comparison schools within Westchester county, within four contiguous counties surrounding Westchester county and New York City (Nassau, Putnam, Suffolk, and Rockland), and state-wide (all schools in the state of New York). In essence, we had the following set of comparison schools:

1. Achievement Domain Westchester County
2. Achievement Domain Surrounding Counties
3. Achievement Domain Whole State
4. Behavior Domain Westchester County
5. Behavior Domain Surrounding Counties

6. Behavior Domain Whole State
7. All Domain Westchester County
8. All Domain Surrounding Counties
9. All Domain Whole State

Step 3: Selecting a Pool of Comparison Schools

We tested for baseline equivalence on all nine samples of comparison schools to determine which group of comparison schools were the most like the four treatment schools. We used baseline equivalence standards outlined in the *What Works Clearinghouse Standards and Procedures Handbook Version 3*.

For the confirmatory analysis the target size for the analytic sample was 20 schools, wherein 4 will be treatment schools and 16 will be comparison schools (8 middle schools and 8 high schools). The baseline equivalence testing involved creating an effect size measure for each matching variable. For continuous variables, such as school performance in math and ELA, we calculated the effect size based on Hedges' *g*. For dichotomous variables, such as school attendance rate, we used the Cox's Index Ratio for Hedge's *g*. Our threshold for acceptable baseline equivalence, regardless of significance, was $ES = .25$ following the WWC standards¹².

In comparing the effect sizes across the nine samples, we ultimately chose the sample from the singular domain (All Domain), and whole state. Exhibit B.1 shows the descriptive results of the comparison and treatment schools. Exhibit B.2 shows the baseline equivalence results for the confirmatory analysis (four treatment and 16 comparison schools). Exhibit B.3 shows the baseline equivalence for the middle school sample (two treatment and eight comparison schools), which is part of the exploratory descriptive analysis. Exhibit B.4 shows the baseline equivalence for the high school sample two treatment and eight comparison schools), which is part of the exploratory descriptive analysis. Exhibit B.5 maps the 20 schools in the state of New York. Most of the schools are clustered around the Westchester county area, but there are a few comparison schools in other metro regions, such as Albany, Buffalo, and Rochester.

¹² http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/reference_resources/wwc_procedures_v3_0_standards_handbook.pdf



B 1: Baseline Descriptive Results

Individual School Performance and Demographic Characteristics

School Year 2013-2014 (Baseline Equivalence)									
School name	Enrollment	LEP	Math	ELA	Attendance	2-Year College Plans	4-Year College Plans	Regents	Regents Advanced
TREATMENT SCHOOLS									
SLEEPY HOLLOW MIDDLE SCHOOL	581	14	-1.23	-0.90	96				
ANNE M DORNER MIDDLE SCHOOL	912	7	-1.33	-1.18	97				
SLEEPY HOLLOW HIGH SCHOOL	874	15	0.87	0.84	95	37	54	94	44
OSSINING HIGH SCHOOL	1298	9	0.55	0.76	97	31	60	95	39
TREATMENT SCHOOLS AVERAGE		11.25	-0.29	-0.12	96.25	34.00	57.00	94.50	41.50
COMPARISON SCHOOLS									
DUNKIRK MIDDLE SCHOOL	472	13	-1.52	-1.23	96				
LAWRENCE ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL	762	8	-1.29	-1.19	96				
TURTLE HOOK MIDDLE SCHOOL	723	10	-1.29	-0.80	96				
IS 192 THE LINDEN	568	6	-0.95	-1.00	95				
SAXTON MIDDLE SCHOOL	742	7	-1.45	-1.11	96				
EAST MIDDLE SCHOOL	996	16	-1.03	-0.84	96				
SOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL	910	18	-1.19	-0.86	96				
FOX LANE MIDDLE SCHOOL	990	3	-1.22	-1.20	97				
WEBSTER-SCHROEDER HIGH SCHOOL	1442	1	1.13	1.92	96	35	53	93	52
WESTBURY HIGH SCHOOL	1262	21	-0.11	0.36	94	49	24	91	16
MANHATTAN BRIDGES HIGH SCHOOL	555	68	1.39	1.64	92	37	55	100	21
INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AT PROSPECT HEIGHTS	395	94	0.25	0.86	90	47	34	90	0

WALTER G O'CONNELL COPIAGUE HIGH SCHOOL	1509	12	0.94	1.67	96	51	32	93	33
COMSEWOGUE HIGH SCHOOL	1242	4	0.16	-0.35	96	48	43	95	48
PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL	2486	5	0.63	0.97	95	49	32	95	27
WESTHAMPTON BEACH SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	1025	3	1.09	1.14	97	28	58	93	63
COMPARISON SCHOOLS AVERAGE		18.06	-0.28	0.00	95.25	43.00	41.38	93.75	32.50

B 2: Baseline Equivalence Results- Confirmatory Sample

Confirmatory Baseline Equivalence Results (N = 20)

School Year 2013-2014 (Confirmatory Baseline Equivalence)								
Variable	Mean Comparison Before	Mean Comparison After	Mean Treatment	Cox Index	Standard Errors	95% CI Lower Limit	95% CI Upper Limit	p-values
LEP %	13.17	18.06	11.25	-0.11	0.27	-0.63	0.41	0.68
MATH	0.00	-0.28	-0.29	-0.01	0.63	-1.25	1.23	0.99
ELA	0.00	0.00	-0.12	-0.10	0.63	-1.34	1.14	0.88
Attendance Rate	89.12	95.25	96.25	0.14	0.44	-0.72	0.99	0.76

B 3: Baseline Equivalence Results: Middle School Exploratory Sample

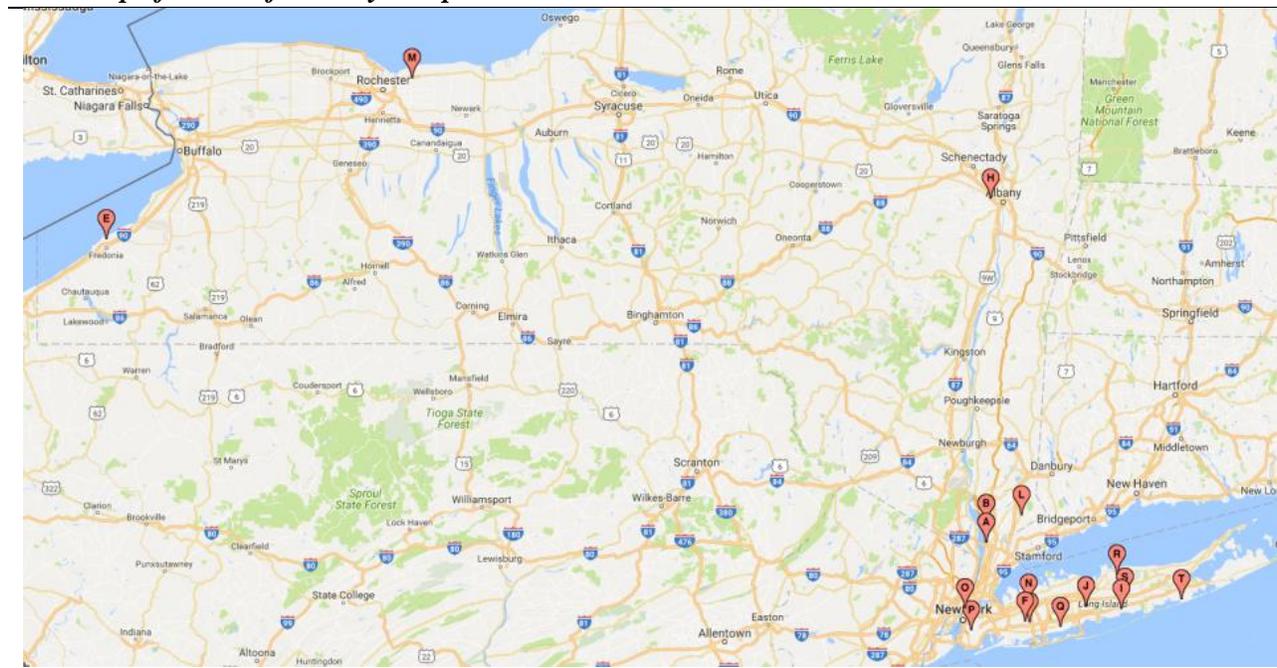
Exploratory Baseline Equivalence Results for Middle School Sample (N = 10)

School Year 2013-2014 (Exploratory Baseline Equivalence)								
Variable	Mean Comparison Before	Mean Comparison After	Mean Treatment	Cox Index	Standard Errors	95% CI Lower Limit	95% CI Upper Limit	p-values
LEP %	14.89	10.13	10.50	-0.03	0.28	-0.59	0.52	0.91
MATH	-0.92	-1.24	-1.28	-0.20	1.00	-2.24	1.84	0.84
ELA	-0.91	-1.03	-1.04	-0.06	1.00	-2.09	1.98	0.96
Attendance Rate	93.06	96.00	96.50	0.09	0.46	-0.80	0.99	0.84

B 4: Baseline Equivalence Results: High School Exploratory Sample

Exploratory Baseline Equivalence Results for High School Sample (N = 10)								
School Year 2013-2014 (Exploratory Baseline Equivalence)								
Variable	Mean Comparison Before	Mean Comparison After	Mean Treatment	Cox Index	Standard Errors	95% CI Lower Limit	95% CI Upper Limit	p-values
LEP %	12.31	26.00	12.00	-0.14	0.26	-0.64	0.36	0.58
MATH	0.49	0.69	0.71	0.04	1.00	-2.00	2.08	0.97
ELA	0.52	1.03	0.80	-0.29	1.00	-2.34	1.75	0.77
Attendance Rate	87.14	94.50	96.00	0.16	0.42	-0.68	0.99	0.71
2-year college plans	34.42	43.00	34.00	-0.31	0.18	-0.66	0.05	0.09
4-year college plans	38.44	41.38	57.00	0.35	0.17	0.01	0.69	0.05
Regents diploma	90.78	93.75	94.50	-0.15	0.23	-0.61	0.30	0.51
Regents diploma with Advanced distinction	19.40	32.50	41.50	0.07	0.18	-0.28	0.43	0.69

B 5: Map of the Confirmatory Sample





APPENDIX C: IMPLEMENTATION STUDY PROTOCOLS

Community Partnership Activity Form

Project ExcEL Community Partnership Activity Form	1) <i>Location of Activity:</i> _____ _____	2) <i>Activity Host:</i> _____ _____
3) <i>Length of Activity:</i> _____	4) <i>Activity Date:</i> _____	5) <i>Activity Time:</i> _____
6) <i>When did this group last meet, or when did this activity last occur?</i> _____	7) <i>When will this group next meet, or when will this activity occur again?</i> _____	8) <i>This activity occurred:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> In person <input type="checkbox"/> By Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Via Webinar <input type="checkbox"/> As part of another event
9) <i>Activity Participants (Please list name, role, and affiliation):</i> _____ _____ _____		
10) <i>Activity Topic(s) (Please check all that apply and describe briefly below):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Tutoring <input type="checkbox"/> Adult English language instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting with college applications <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting with FAFSA completion <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting with immigration law <input type="checkbox"/> Career awareness <input type="checkbox"/> College awareness <input type="checkbox"/> Field trip <input type="checkbox"/> Job shadowing <input type="checkbox"/> Life skills training <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring _____ _____ _____		
11) <i>Briefly outline the community partnership activity. Please list activities, topics, and approximate time spent on each. Feel free to share an agenda, notes, minutes, or supporting materials:</i> _____ _____ _____		
12) <i>Activity Goal(s):</i> _____ _____ _____		
13) <i>Activity Outcome(s):</i> _____ _____ _____		
14) <i>Question(s) / Concern(s):</i> _____ _____ _____		
15) <i>Rate the effectiveness of the Activity (group consensus):</i> _____ 1 = Little or no learning/effectiveness _____ 2 = Partial learning or effectiveness _____ 3 = Adequate group learning or effectiveness		



Community Partner Interview Check List Protocol

Introduction and Purpose

Plus Alpha Research & Consulting, LLC (Plus Alpha) is completing this interview as part of the implementation study of UCLA’s Center X i3 development grant in support of Project ExcEL. Your responses will help us understand: whether or not the key components of Project ExcEL have been implemented with fidelity and how the implementation has varied across the treatment schools in terms of the key project components, such as school climate and structures to support college and career readiness, teacher and staff training and technical assistance, and data-driven systemic coaching. Your participation is voluntary. You can stop the interview at any time. You will not be individually identified in resulting reports. Project ExcEL evaluation activities have been reviewed and approved by UCLA’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). For additional IRB information, please contact Laureen Avery, avery@gseis.ucla.edu. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes.

Participants

Project ExcEL community partners selected by the development team.

Method

Interviews are being conducted either in person as part of other project meetings or over the phone. Plus Alpha staff will take notes during the interview and will not audio record the interview. Analysts will synthesize notes from each interview and include the findings in project reports. The protocol below will be completed by the interviewer during the interview.

Please feel free to provide supporting documents or related resources to Adam Hall: ahall@plusalpharesearch.com

Plus Alpha Staff Member(s) Conducting the Interview:

Date of the interview:

This interview was conducted: In person (list location/event): _____ or Over the phone

Start Time: _____ *End Time:* _____

Interview Participant(s) (affiliation, role):

Project Fidelity¹³ Measures

Indicator:	Definition:	Interviewee Involvement and Support(s):
Community partnership meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> Developer meets quarterly with the community partnership with district and school representatives present	<input type="checkbox"/> Academic tutoring <input type="checkbox"/> Adult English language instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting with college applications <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting with FAFSA completion

¹³ Taken from the *Study Design Summary* submitted to the US Department of Education as part of the national evaluation of the i3 program. These measures are part of project *Component 1. School climate and structures to support college and career readiness.*

Indicator:	Definition:	Interviewee Involvement and Support(s):
Community partnership service coordination	<input type="checkbox"/> Developer coordinates community partnership services each semester at each school	<input type="checkbox"/> Assisting with immigration law <input type="checkbox"/> Career awareness <input type="checkbox"/> College awareness <input type="checkbox"/> Field trip(s) (list purpose and location below) <input type="checkbox"/> Job shadowing <input type="checkbox"/> Life skills training <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting (list type and purpose below) <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring (for whom, how) <input type="checkbox"/> Observing a classroom <input type="checkbox"/> Observing a presentation

Discussion Notes:

Project Activities¹⁴

Strategy #3.1: An inter-agency, inter-district team will be formed (Project ExcEL Team) to leverage resources and provide wrap around supports for at-risk EL students and their families.

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.1.1</i> Catalog of available resources and supports developed	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.1.2</i> Project ExcEL team is formed and meets quarterly to purposefully match students with services	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.1.3</i> EL students identified as at-risk are offered identified services (i.e., tutoring, summer boot camps, family ESL classes)	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.1.4</i> Participation and outcomes for all services are monitored	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.1.5</i> Evaluate effectiveness of community support programs	

Strategy #3.2: Interagency partners will host community meetings to engage families (topics may include: immigration law, assistance with FAFSA, college applications, etc.).

¹⁴ Taken from the annual *Project Management Plan* submitted to the i3 grant funder, the US Department of Education.



Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.2.1</i> Catalog of available topics, dates and sites developed	

Additional Discussion Points and Notes:

Thank you for your time and your efforts on Project ExcEL. If you have any project-related questions, please do not hesitate to contact Laureen Avery: avery@gseis.ucla.edu or 203-365-8914. If you have any evaluation-related questions, please do not hesitate to contact Adam Hall: ahall@plusalpharesearch.com or 803-924-2300.



Developer Interview Check List Protocol

Introduction and Purpose

Plus Alpha Research & Consulting, LLC (Plus Alpha) is completing this interview as part of the implementation study of UCLA’s Center X i3 development grant in support of Project ExcEL. Your responses will help us understand: whether or not the key components of Project ExcEL have been implemented with fidelity and how the implementation has varied across the treatment schools in terms of the key project components, such as school climate and structures to support college and career readiness, teacher and staff training and technical assistance, and data-driven systemic coaching. Your participation is voluntary. You can stop the interview at any time. You will not be individually identified in resulting reports. Project ExcEL evaluation activities have been reviewed and approved by UCLA’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). For additional IRB information, please contact Laureen Avery, avery@gseis.ucla.edu. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes.

Participants

Project ExcEL project development staff.

Method

Interviews are being conducted either in person as part of other project meetings or over the phone. Plus Alpha staff will take notes during the interview and will not audio record the interview. Analysts will synthesize notes from each interview and include the findings in project reports. The protocol below will be completed by the interviewer during the interview.

Please feel free to provide supporting documents or related resources to Adam Hall: ahall@plusalpharesearch.com

Plus Alpha Staff Member(s) Conducting the Interview:

Date of the interview:

This interview was conducted: In person (list location/event): _____ or Over the phone

Start Time: _____ *End Time:* _____

Interview Participant(s) (affiliation, role):

Project Fidelity¹⁵ Measures

Indicator:	Definition:	Notes:
Developers provide training on best instructional practice for ELs to school-based teams ¹⁶ .	<input type="checkbox"/> Twenty (20) hours of instructional practice training are provided to each school-based team per year	

¹⁵ Taken from the *Study Design Summary* submitted to the US Department of Education as part of the national evaluation of the i3 program.

¹⁶ This measure is part of *Component 2. Teacher and staff training and technical assistance*.

Indicator:	Definition:	Notes:
School based teams receive training on establishing Professional Learning Communities focused on student data ¹⁷ .	<input type="checkbox"/> Five (5) teacher training sessions on Professional Learning Communities are provided at each school	

Discussion Notes:

*Project Activities*¹⁸

Strategy #1.1: Participants on school-based teams participate in training and coaching focused on best instructional practices for ELs and effectively incorporate these practices into classroom instruction (instructional practices training)

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.1</i> Identify participating schools and educator teams	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.2</i> Role out project at participating schools	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.3</i> Conduct a readiness assessment for educators to determine state of current knowledge and practice	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.4</i> Create a plan for training that includes content and logistics	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.5</i> Conduct training	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.6</i> Conduct site-based coaching 4 times per year	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.7</i> Evaluate usefulness and impact of summer training	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.8</i> Evaluate usefulness and impact of coaching	

¹⁷ This measure is part of *Component 3. Data-driven systematic coaching*.

¹⁸ Taken from the annual *Project Management Plan* submitted to the i3 grant funder, the US Department of Education.

*Project Activities*¹⁸

Strategy #1.2: Participants on school-based teams participate in training and coaching focused on using data to personalize instruction and intervention (tiered intervention training)

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.1</i> Conduct a readiness assessment for educators to determine state of current knowledge and practice (done in conjunction with Activity 1.1.3)	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.2</i> Create a plan for training that includes content and logistics	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.3</i> Conduct training	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.4</i> Conduct site-based data team meetings 4 times per year	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.5</i> Evaluate usefulness and impact of summer training	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.6</i> Evaluate usefulness and impact of data team meetings	

Strategy #1.3: School based teams meet 4 times per year for coaching and data team discussion in order to ensure student progress is regularly monitored and data is used to provide students with appropriate supports and interventions (data team meetings)

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.3.1</i> Create a schedule that allows site based teams to meet 4 times per year for at least 90 minutes per meeting	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.3.2</i> Create a protocol that allows site based teams to effectively and efficiently use student data to identify student progress and create appropriate interventions	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.3.3</i> Conduct site-based team meetings	

Strategy #1.4: School based teams participate in a year-end data fair designed to promote the sharing of best practices and lessons learned (dissemination)

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.1</i> Create a plan for a year end data fair that includes logistics that allows all teams to participate	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.2</i> Create a protocol that allows site based teams to share their lessons learned	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.3</i> Conduct the year end data fair	

*Project Activities*¹⁸

<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.4</i> Develop an electronic platform that will store and facilitate sharing of best practices, lessons and lessons learned	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.5</i> Populate electronic platform with materials developed by site-based teams	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.6</i> Create a strategy for widely sharing and promoting the use of the electronic platform materials	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.7</i> Disseminate lessons learned	

Strategy #2.1: School based teams are formed that include core content area teachers, ESL, guidance, social worker, and administrative support. Each team works with a common set of EL students assigned to their team. Teams are inclusive of mainstream and special needs students, and are the same teams identified for professional development under Objective #1.

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.1.1</i> Plan for a school readiness assessment	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.1.2</i> Conduct school readiness assessment	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.1.3</i> EL students are scheduled and assigned to teams	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.1.4</i> Evaluate the ability to create effective teams	

Strategy #2.2: School-based teams meet together and focus on student progress during regularly scheduled common planning time

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.2.1</i> Coaches meet with administrators, school leadership teams and others to review the schedule and revise as necessary.	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.2.2</i> Evaluate the implementation and impact of common planning time	

Strategy #2.3: A regular time and process for individualized student advising (career, academic and personal) is structured and implemented

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.3.1</i> Coaches meet with administrators, school leadership teams and others to develop needed structures and processes	



*Project Activities*¹⁸

<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.3.2</i> Evaluate the development of a student advisory model	
Strategy #2.4: A process for Personal Learning Plan (PLP) development and regular use by EL students is developed and implemented. A critical feature of this PLP will be the incorporation of student-led conferencing. The use of digital portfolios will be explored as an adjunct use of technology	
Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.4.1</i> Coaches meet with administrators, school leadership teams and others to develop needed structures and processes	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.4.2</i> Evaluate the development of a PLP model	
Strategy #3.1: An inter-agency, inter-district team will be formed (Project ExcEL Team) to leverage resources and provide wrap around supports for at-risk EL students and their families	
Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.1.1</i> Catalog of available resources and supports developed	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.1.2</i> Project ExcEL team is formed and meets quarterly to purposefully match students with services	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.1.3</i> EL students identified as at-risk are offered identified services (i.e., tutoring, summer boot camps, family ESL classes)	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.1.4</i> Participation and outcomes for all services are monitored	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.1.5</i> Evaluate effectiveness of community support programs	
Strategy #3.2: Interagency partners will host community meetings to engage families (topics may include: immigration law, assistance with FAFSA, college applications, etc.).	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.2.1</i> Catalog of available topics, dates, and sites developed.	

Additional Discussion Points and Notes:

Thank you for your time and your efforts on Project ExcEL. If you have any project-related questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lauren Avery: avery@gseis.ucla.edu or 203-365-8914. If you have any evaluation-related questions, please do not hesitate to contact Adam Hall: ahall@plusalpharesearch.com or 803-924-2300.



Project School Administrator or School Data Team Lead Check List Protocol

Introduction and Purpose

Plus Alpha Research & Consulting, LLC (Plus Alpha) is completing this interview as part of the implementation study of UCLA’s Center X i3 development grant in support of Project ExcEL. Your responses will help us understand: whether or not the key components of Project ExcEL have been implemented with fidelity and how the implementation has varied across the treatment schools in terms of the key project components, such as school climate and structures to support college and career readiness, teacher and staff training and technical assistance, and data-driven systemic coaching. Your participation is voluntary. You can stop the interview at any time. You will not be individually identified in resulting reports. Project ExcEL evaluation activities have been reviewed and approved by UCLA’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). For additional IRB information, please contact Laureen Avery, avery@gseis.ucla.edu. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes.

Participants

Project ExcEL school administrator or data team lead.

Method

Interviews are being conducted either in person as part of other project meetings or over the phone. Plus Alpha staff will take notes during the interview and will not audio record the interview. Analysts will synthesize notes from each interview and include the findings in project reports. The protocol below will be completed by the interviewer during the interview.

Please feel free to provide supporting documents or related resources to Adam Hall: ahall@plusalpharesearch.com

Plus Alpha Staff Member(s) Conducting the Interview:

Date of the interview:

This interview was conducted: In person (list location/event): _____ or Over the phone

Start Time: _____ ***End Time:*** _____

Interview Participant(s) (affiliation, role):

Project Fidelity¹⁹ Measures

Indicator:	Definition:	Notes:
School based teams receive training on establishing Professional Learning Communities focused on student	<input type="checkbox"/> Five (5) teacher training sessions on Professional Learning Communities are provided at each school	

¹⁹ Taken from the *Study Design Summary* submitted to the US Department of Education as part of the national evaluation of the i3 program. This measure is part of *Component 3. Data-driven systematic coaching.*



Indicator:	Definition:	Notes:
data.		

Discussion Notes:

*Project Activities*²⁰

Strategy #1.1: Participants on school-based teams participate in training and coaching focused on best instructional practices for ELs and effectively incorporate these practices into classroom instruction (instructional practices training)

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.1</i> Identify participating schools and educator teams	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.2</i> Role out project at participating schools	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.3</i> Conduct a readiness assessment for educators to determine state of current knowledge and practice	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.6</i> Conduct site-based coaching 4 times per year	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.7</i> Evaluate usefulness and impact of summer training	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.8</i> Evaluate usefulness and impact of coaching	

Strategy #1.2: Participants on school-based teams participate in training and coaching focused on using data to personalize instruction and intervention (tiered intervention training)

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.1</i> Conduct a readiness assessment for educators to determine state of current knowledge and practice (done in conjunction with Activity 1.1.3)	R
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.4</i> Conduct site-based data team meetings 4 times per year	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.5</i> Evaluate usefulness and impact of summer training	R
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.6</i> Evaluate usefulness and impact of data team meetings	

²⁰ Taken from the annual *Project Management Plan* submitted to the i3 grant funder, the US Department of Education.

*Project Activities*²⁰

Strategy #1.3: School based teams meet 4 times per year for coaching and data team discussion in order to ensure student progress is regularly monitored and data is used to provide students with appropriate supports and interventions (data team meetings)

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.3.1</i> Create a schedule that allows site based teams to meet 4 times per year for at least 90 minutes per meeting	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.3.2</i> Create a protocol that allows site based teams to effectively and efficiently use student data to identify student progress and create appropriate interventions	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.3.3</i> Conduct site-based team meetings	R

Strategy #1.4: School based teams participate in a year-end data fair designed to promote the sharing of best practices and lessons learned (dissemination)

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.1</i> Create a plan for a year end data fair that includes logistics that allows all teams to participate	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.2</i> Create a protocol that allows site based teams to share their lessons learned	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.3</i> Conduct the year end data fair	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.4</i> Develop an electronic platform that will store and facilitate sharing of best practices, lessons and lessons learned	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.5</i> Populate electronic platform with materials developed by site-based teams	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.6</i> Create a strategy for widely sharing and promoting the use of the electronic platform materials	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.7</i> Disseminate lessons learned	

Strategy #2.1: School based teams are formed that include core content area teachers, ESL, guidance, social worker, and administrative support. Each team works with a common set of EL students assigned to their team. Teams are inclusive of mainstream and special needs students, and are the same teams identified for professional development under Objective #1.

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.1.1</i> Plan for a school readiness assessment	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.1.2</i> Conduct school readiness assessment	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.1.3</i> EL students are scheduled and assigned to teams	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.1.4</i> Evaluate the ability to create effective teams	

Strategy #2.2: School-based teams meet together and focus on student progress during regularly scheduled common planning time

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.2.1</i> Coaches meet with administrators, school leadership teams and others to review the schedule and revise as necessary.	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.2.2</i> Evaluate the implementation and impact of common planning time	

Strategy #2.3: A regular time and process for individualized student advising (career, academic and personal) is structured and implemented

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.3.1</i> Coaches meet with administrators, school leadership teams and others to develop needed structures and processes	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.3.2</i> Evaluate the development of a student advisory model	

Strategy #2.4: A process for Personal Learning Plan (PLP) development and regular use by EL students is developed and implemented. A critical feature of this PLP will be the incorporation of student-led conferencing. The use of digital portfolios will be explored as an adjunct use of technology

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.4.1</i> Coaches meet with administrators, school leadership teams and others to develop needed structures and processes	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.4.2</i> Evaluate the development of a PLP model	

Strategy #3.1: An inter-agency, inter-district team will be formed (Project ExcEL Team) to leverage resources and provide wrap around supports for at-risk EL students and their families

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.1.1</i> Catalog of available resources and supports developed	



*Project Activities*²⁰

<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.1.2</i> Project ExcEL team is formed and meets quarterly to purposefully match students with services	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.1.3</i> EL students identified as at-risk are offered identified services (i.e., tutoring, summer boot camps, family ESL classes)	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.1.4</i> Participation and outcomes for all services are monitored	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.1.5</i> Evaluate effectiveness of community support programs	
Strategy #3.2: Interagency partners will host community meetings to engage families (topics may include: immigration law, assistance with FAFSA, college applications, etc.).	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 3.2.1</i> Catalog of available topics, dates, and sites developed.	

Additional Discussion Points and Notes:

Thank you for your time and your efforts on Project ExcEL. If you have any project-related questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lauren Avery: avery@gseis.ucla.edu or 203-365-8914. If you have any evaluation-related questions, please do not hesitate to contact Adam Hall: ahall@plusalpharesearch.com or 803-924-2300.



School Coach Interview Check List Protocol

Introduction and Purpose

Plus Alpha Research & Consulting, LLC (Plus Alpha) is completing this interview as part of the implementation study of UCLA’s Center X i3 development grant in support of Project ExcEL. Your responses will help us understand: whether or not the key components of Project ExcEL have been implemented with fidelity and how the implementation has varied across the treatment schools in terms of the key project components, such as school climate and structures to support college and career readiness, teacher and staff training and technical assistance, and data-driven systemic coaching. Your participation is voluntary. You can stop the interview at any time. You will not be individually identified in resulting reports. Project ExcEL evaluation activities have been reviewed and approved by UCLA’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). For additional IRB information, please contact Laureen Avery, avery@gseis.ucla.edu. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes.

Participants

Project ExcEL school coaching staff.

Method

Interviews are being conducted either in person as part of other project meetings or over the phone. Plus Alpha staff will take notes during the interview and will not audio record the interview. Analysts will synthesize notes from each interview and include the findings in project reports. The protocol below will be completed by the interviewer during the interview.

Please feel free to provide supporting documents or related resources to Adam Hall: ahall@plusalpharesearch.com

Plus Alpha Staff Member(s) Conducting the Interview:

Date of the interview:

This interview was conducted: In person (list location/event): _____ or Over the phone

Start Time: _____ *End Time:* _____

Interview Participant(s) (affiliation, role):

Project Fidelity²¹ Measures

Indicator:	Definition:	Notes:
School coach conducts needs assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> School coach conducts one needs assessment at each school	

²¹Taken from the *Study Design Summary* submitted to the US Department of Education as part of the national evaluation of the i3 program. These measures are part of project *Component 1. School climate and structures to support college and career readiness.*



Indicator:	Definition:	Notes:
School coach provides coaching sessions to the school	<input type="checkbox"/> Five (5) coaching sessions are provided at each school per year	

Discussion Notes:

*Project Activities*²²

Strategy #1.1: Participants on school-based teams participate in training and coaching focused on best instructional practices for ELs and effectively incorporate these practices into classroom instruction (instructional practices training)

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.1</i> Identify participating schools and educator teams	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.2</i> Role out project at participating schools	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.3</i> Conduct a readiness assessment for educators to determine state of current knowledge and practice	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.4</i> Create a plan for training that includes content and logistics	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.5</i> Conduct training	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.6</i> Conduct site-based coaching 4 times per year	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.7</i> Evaluate usefulness and impact of summer training	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.1.8</i> Evaluate usefulness and impact of coaching	

Strategy #1.2: Participants on school-based teams participate in training and coaching focused on using data to personalize instruction and intervention (tiered intervention training)

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.1</i> Conduct a readiness assessment for educators to determine state of current knowledge and practice (done in conjunction with Activity 1.1.3)	

²² Taken from the annual *Project Management Plan* submitted to the i3 grant funder, the US Department of Education.

*Project Activities*²²

<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.2</i> Create a plan for training that includes content and logistics	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.3</i> Conduct training	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.4</i> Conduct site-based data team meetings 4 times per year	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.5</i> Evaluate usefulness and impact of summer training	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.2.6</i> Evaluate usefulness and impact of data team meetings	

Strategy #1.3: School based teams meet 4 times per year for coaching and data team discussion in order to ensure student progress is regularly monitored and data is used to provide students with appropriate supports and interventions (data team meetings)

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.3.1</i> Create a schedule that allows site based teams to meet 4 times per year for at least 90 minutes per meeting	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.3.2</i> Create a protocol that allows site based teams to effectively and efficiently use student data to identify student progress and create appropriate interventions	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.3.3</i> Conduct site-based team meetings	

Strategy #1.4: School based teams participate in a year-end data fair designed to promote the sharing of best practices and lessons learned (dissemination)

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.1</i> Create a plan for a year end data fair that includes logistics that allows all teams to participate	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.2</i> Create a protocol that allows site based teams to share their lessons learned	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.3</i> Conduct the year end data fair	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.4</i> Develop an electronic platform that will store and facilitate sharing of best practices, lessons and lessons learned	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.5</i> Populate electronic platform with materials developed by site-based teams	

*Project Activities*²²

<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.6</i> Create a strategy for widely sharing and promoting the use of the electronic platform materials	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 1.4.7</i> Disseminate lessons learned	

Strategy #2.1: School based teams are formed that include core content area teachers, ESL, guidance, social worker, and administrative support. Each team works with a common set of EL students assigned to their team. Teams are inclusive of mainstream and special needs students, and are the same teams identified for professional development under Objective #1.

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.1.1</i> Plan for a school readiness assessment	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.1.2</i> Conduct school readiness assessment	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.1.3</i> EL students are scheduled and assigned to teams	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.1.4</i> Evaluate the ability to create effective teams	

Strategy #2.2: School-based teams meet together and focus on student progress during regularly scheduled common planning time

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.2.1</i> Coaches meet with administrators, school leadership teams and others to review the schedule and revise as necessary.	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.2.2</i> Evaluate the implementation and impact of common planning time	

Strategy #2.3: A regular time and process for individualized student advising (career, academic and personal) is structured and implemented

Activities:	Discussion Notes:
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.3.1</i> Coaches meet with administrators, school leadership teams and others to develop needed structures and processes	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.3.2</i> Evaluate the development of a student advisory model	

Strategy #2.4: A process for Personal Learning Plan (PLP) development and regular use by EL students is developed and implemented. A critical feature of this PLP will be the incorporation of student-led conferencing. The use of digital portfolios will be explored as an adjunct use of technology

Activities:	Discussion Notes:



*Project Activities*²²

<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.4.1</i> Coaches meet with administrators, school leadership teams and others to develop needed structures and processes	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Activity 2.4.2</i> Evaluate the development of a PLP model	

Additional Discussion Points and Notes:

Thank you for your time and your efforts on Project ExcEL. If you have any project-related questions, please do not hesitate to contact Laureen Avery: avery@gseis.ucla.edu or 203-365-8914. If you have any evaluation-related questions, please do not hesitate to contact Adam Hall: ahall@plusalpharesearch.com or 803-924-2300.



School Coaching Activity Form

Project ExcEL School Coaching Form		1) School: _____	2) Length of Coaching Session: _____
3) Coach: _____		4) Coach's Affiliation: _____	5) Date: _____
6) Participants in Coaching Session (list staff member names and roles): _____ _____			
7) Coaching Topic(s) (check all that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> Advising for Success: <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Student Focus <input type="checkbox"/> Small Group Focus <input type="checkbox"/> Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) <input type="checkbox"/> Response to Intervention (RtI) <input type="checkbox"/> School schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting EL students <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Data Team <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe): _____		8) Coaching Session Frequency (with this specific individual or group): <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Each Semester <input type="checkbox"/> Annually <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe): _____ _____ 9) When did your last coaching session with this individual or group occur? _____ _____	10) This coaching session occurred (check all that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> In person / face-to-face <input type="checkbox"/> Over the phone / via conference call <input type="checkbox"/> Virtually—via a webinars, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> In conjunction with another event (i.e. a conference, another meeting, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe): _____ 11) When is your next coaching session scheduled to occur with this individual or group? _____
12) Briefly outline the coaching session (list activities, topics, and approximate time spent on each): _____ _____ _____			
13) Coaching Session Goal(s): _____ _____			
14) Coaching Session Outcome(s): _____ _____			
15) Question(s) / Concern(s): _____ _____			
16) Rate the effectiveness of the coaching session (group consensus): _____ 1 = Little or no learning/effectiveness _____ 2 = Partial learning or effectiveness _____ 3 = Adequate group learning or effectiveness			



Miscellaneous Project Event Protocol

This protocol is a catch all for activities and events not already covered by other project protocols or data collection efforts. As such, this protocol **should not** be used to record the proceedings of a Community Partnership Activity (this data is collected by the developer using the Community Partnership Activity form), School Coaching, (this data is collected by the coaches using the School Coaching form), School (Team) Meetings (this data is collected by the school team using the Scholl Meeting form), or a Quarterly Project Partnership Activity (this data is collected by partners using the Quarterly Activity Summary Report). This protocol **should be** used to record school observations, impromptu conversations, impromptu project events, etc.

Please attach or include supporting documents or related resources when sending this completed protocol back to Adam Hall: ahall@plusalpharesearch.com

Role of the person completing this form:

- Evaluation Team Member
- Development Team Member
- Other role, briefly describe:

Date of the activity:

How did you attend this event? In person, By phone, Via Webinar, As part of another event

Location of the Activity, briefly describe:

Start Time: ***End Time:***

Event Frequency: Recurring Event or One-Time Event

Activity Participants (Please list name, role, and affiliation):

Activity Topic(s) (Please check all that apply and describe briefly below):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Tutoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Adult English language instruction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting with college applications | <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting with FAFSA completion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting with immigration law | <input type="checkbox"/> Career awareness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> Field trip |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job shadowing | <input type="checkbox"/> Life skills training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Observing a classroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Observing a presentation |

Activity Description (a brief paragraph):

Activity Goals and Outcomes (if applicable):



Quarterly Management Team Activity Form

[redundant with the Program Officer updates and superseded as such in year 2]

School or Partner Name:

Date	Activity	Summary Sheet Attached?	Value/Action
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	\$ <input type="checkbox"/> Paid <input type="checkbox"/> To be invoiced <input type="checkbox"/> In Kind
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	\$ <input type="checkbox"/> Paid <input type="checkbox"/> To be invoiced <input type="checkbox"/> In Kind
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	\$ <input type="checkbox"/> Paid <input type="checkbox"/> To be invoiced <input type="checkbox"/> In Kind
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	\$ <input type="checkbox"/> Paid <input type="checkbox"/> To be invoiced <input type="checkbox"/> In Kind
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	\$ <input type="checkbox"/> Paid <input type="checkbox"/> To be invoiced <input type="checkbox"/> In Kind
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	\$ <input type="checkbox"/> Paid <input type="checkbox"/> To be invoiced <input type="checkbox"/> In Kind
<p><i>Briefly summarize the activities for the period covered and why you believe they were successful:</i> _____</p> <p>_____</p>			
<p><i>Briefly summarize any challenges or barriers you encountered, including suggestions for mitigation:</i> _____</p> <p>_____</p>			
<p><i>Other comments or suggestions:</i> _____</p> <p>_____</p>			

Thank you for your time and your efforts on Project ExcEL. If you have any project-related questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lauren Avery: avery@gseis.ucla.edu or 203-365-8914. If you have any evaluation-related questions, please do not hesitate to contact Adam Hall: ahall@plusalpharesearch.com or 803-924-2300.

APPENDIX D: 2015 SITE VISIT BRIEF



Educational Improvement through Research

Project ExcEL (Excellence for English Learners)

2015 Site Visit Brief

October 2015

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2015 SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Project ExcEL (Excellence for English Learners) is a new intervention developed to support the academic achievement and post-secondary success of students who are learning English as a new language (ENLs). UCLA Center X, Northeast Region is developing and implementing an enhanced, comprehensive design that will address the unique and urgent needs of low-incidence ENL population school districts (i.e., districts that are struggling to provide a comprehensive, rigorous education for the newest members of their communities). The developers have designed the intervention to impact, via direct inclusion in the treatment group and bleed-over to the broader school community, all middle and high school students within the project schools who do not speak English as their first language.

Plus Alpha Research and Consulting serves as the Project ExcEL external evaluator. Our staff members are conducting ongoing impact and implementation studies to ascertain the potential outcomes of the project and gauge the fidelity of implementation of the project. We attended the September 29, 2015 Community Partners Meeting at the Ossining Schools District Office. During the meeting, project community partners provided an update on their Project ExcEL efforts and Plus Alpha staff presented on School Year 1 evaluation report findings.

Following the Community Partners' Meeting, Plus Alpha staff visited all four project schools on September 30, 2015. While visiting the schools, Plus Alpha staff met with school leaders and teachers and students as feasible. Since the site visits were scheduled during the school day, the visits were informal and primarily served to further acquaint the evaluators with the schools. Each visit was between 30 minutes and an hour long. Staff took notes during the sessions; these have been compiled and cleaned to ensure clarity. Since these sessions typically involved a relatively small number of school staff, it is important to note that the findings and recommendations herein are solely attributable to the external evaluation team.

Project participant feedback provided during the site visits has been included below, by school. It is important to note that project participants gave feedback in an informal, open discussion setting. Comments are provided herein to serve as formative feedback designed to improve Project ExcEL going forward.

Each visit session began with the following general conversation starters:

- What is Project ExcEL?
- How has Project ExcEL been going?
- What would you change about Project ExcEL?
- How has Project ExcEL affected you?

1.1 PROJECT SCHOOL TEAM FEEDBACK

We met with two ENL teachers and the school principal.

- The project team stated that the first project year focused on eighth graders. The team determined that they wanted these students to be successful in school, to master content, to ensure accessibility, and then succeed in graduate school.
- Project components and the project focus changed during the first year. The foci of the second year became academic language and vocabulary, but there was no set purpose in the first year. Teachers who were part of the team met with the developer to discern foci.
- Team members noted that year one was confusing in terms of focus. It was a year of discovery of purpose and focus. The process involved focusing on the assistance provided by the UCLA team to the school. As part of these efforts, the principal looked at all the students to determine those who were struggling and where the school could have the most impact.
- In the first year (last year), Project ExcEL efforts were adversely affected by weather. Project activities picked up again in April, 2015.
- The focus this year (School Year 2) has been on academic vocabulary and investigative learning. The Frayer Model is in use to build vocabulary, so there's a focus on synonyms and antonyms. Teachers use visuals related to vocabulary, a definition, and then connects the word for students via context. This focus on vocabulary grew from a recognition that many of the ENL students could have answered questions on assessments if they had understood the language. Students are also doing Read 180 this year (year 2).
- The school's ENL team meets every other day. ENL leadership at the school has been consistent and established within the district for many years. ENL services are consistent from elementary through high school and focus on foreign and dual-language programs.
- The specific needs of middle grades students are particularly relevant to ExcEL. Middle school sees a shift to content area focus in preparation for high school and beyond. The school team is hopeful that the co-teaching model will help.
- Co-teaching is offered in the eighth grade ENL/English Language Arts (ELA) classes with half the class made up of native English speakers and half the class made up of non-English speakers. Last year, (by December 2014) it was hard to tell which students were ENL.
- School leaders noted that the biggest hurdle to co-teaching involves personalities. Working together and communicating well are difficult, especially since there will be no common planning time for co-teachers. Similarly, the biggest hurdle to Project ExcEL is that there is no specific planning time for the project team at the school. School leads stated that a stipend for planning time would be helpful.
- Another barrier to common planning time for Project ExcEL team members is that ENL teachers teach across grade levels and content areas. Therefore, ENL teachers and general

teachers don't have similar schedules. Creating time for planning for an ENL teacher and three content teachers is difficult. Each grade has two co-teaching teams, each team has an ENL teacher; this is part of the transition from a push in model to a co-teaching model.

- The school's ENL team is separate from the Project ExcEL team; though there is overlap, the teams are separate entities.
- The ExcEL team involves all of the co-teachers, school administrators, department co-chairs, CSSR coaches, and Lauren Avery. Project ExcEL team meetings occur once a month. The main Project ExcEL group is also made up of sub-groups that allow team members to focus on topics of interest and role-alike work as needed.
- The ENL department co-chair cross communicates with the high school, so middle school students can become familiar with the high school experience ahead of their transition to high school.
- The school is now offering eighth grade native Spanish speaking students an ELA course that begins with curriculum offered in Spanish and then transitions into English. The school calls this approach 'native Spanish speaker language arts'.
- Since Project ExcEL began and conversations about the needs of ENL students have developed, ENL students are now taking electives for the first time (e.g., music and art). ENL teachers are thrilled that their students can be integrated into these classes. Changes to the Regents exams have helped to make these electives open to ENL students as well.

1.2 STUDENT FEEDBACK

We met with six eighth grade students who are new to the project this year.

- The students reported that they have different teachers this year but the same ENL teacher. When asked about differences between this year and last year, students mentioned that they have small group lessons and Read 180.
- Students stated that they like the middle school much better because their teachers know them well. Students are connecting with their teachers on a personal level. The students mentioned an activity that they did with their teachers regarding their names, where they come from, what they mean, and why.
- Students are still getting to know some teachers. One student stated that some teachers, "think you're lazy if you talk about your day".
- Students mentioned vocabulary work that focuses on words and their definitions.
- Students stated that teachers do reach out to their parents via phone calls—not just when students are 'bad'.
- Students reported liking math because there is no grammar involved. Students also stated that they like science because it's hard (challenging) and includes hands-on labs and experiments.

They also like the fact that they get to “research stuff” and that science involves more technology, which they enjoy.

- Students mentioned that they had participated in a programming or coding project wherein they developed a game like Flappy Bird²³. They also mentioned that they had participated in one career day.
- Regarding access to counselors, students said that they meet with their counselor once per year, with the same counselor, over several years—for grades six, seven, and eight.
- As the interview wrapped up, students started asking about college and graduate school. They stated that they were not aware of any college and career readiness activities (beyond the career day) and that they did not talk about college or career with their guidance counselors.

Recommendations:

- Based on student comments, the school may need to continue to expand elective offerings available to ENL students as feasible.
- The school may want to expand ELA in Spanish as a transitional strategy for students learning English. This curriculum may also benefit other project schools; further dissemination efforts both locally and more broadly may be needed.
- Sleepy Hollow Middle and Sleepy Hollow High administrators and teachers need to collaborate more fully to better support student transitions from middle to high school. The ENL co-chair’s efforts may serve as an early example to build on.

2 TARRYTOWN SCHOOLS - SLEEPY HOLLOW HIGH SCHOOL

2.1 PROJECT SCHOOL TEAM FEEDBACK

We met with the school principal, the ENL director, a school psychologist, a social studies teacher, and an ENL teacher.

- The conversation began with the school administrator stating the Project ExcEL was not requested by the schools. Project ExcEL began under the auspices of the prior superintendent and the ExcEL developer. This superintendent has left the district, but ExcEL is still being implemented. The administrator also stated that the best grants usually start due to an identified need and that this wasn’t the case with ExcEL, so moving forward took some adjusting.

²³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flappy_Bird

- School leadership stated that, early on, the project developer insisted that the school start with 9th grade and move forward, but the school chooses to focus primarily on “new arrivals” and helping them meet NYSED regulations.
- The administrator stated that the school does not do broad-based programs (implying that Project ExcEL is a broad-based program) but rather “niche programs”. The administrator stated that it is cumbersome and tension-filled to implement something in this [broad-based] way. If offered the chance to start Project ExcEL in a different way, the school administrator would rather have focused on pre-identified needs.
- According to school leadership, Project ExcEL and the school are now focused on who, where, and why kids fall down. Prior to the project, the school had a 7-year plan, and they want to keep doing their plan. Project ExcEL was not part of the 7-year plan.
- When it comes to serving ENL spectrum students, school staff stated that they focus efforts on struggling ENL students. This includes providing resources, having student advisors in place, identifying and assisting students, bridging the gap between school and home, and identifying subsets or groups of students within the ENL student population to receive specific supports. These student groups are capped at ten students each group to ensure low student-teacher ratios.
- Teachers noted that Social Studies presents a real challenge to ENL students, especially the Global class, wherein student ages can range from 14-19. Behavior issues often arise as a result of the age disparity.
- The school created an American Citizenship course to support future academic work; topics covered in this course include skills and relationships.
- The school psychologist noted that the school: offers social and emotional supports, home outreach efforts, discussions to address student classifications, and a focus on bringing kids up to graduation. The school psychologist also participates in the monthly Project ExcEL meetings.
- The school has an ENL center that pin-points students in need of assistance, monitors student attendance, and reaches out to parents in order to educate parents. The school has developed a system to reach out to parents every day that students don’t attend school. School staff noted that parents may not have taken this as seriously as they might have due to the fact that these notifications began at the end of last school year.
- School staff felt that the school had a lot in place prior to ExcEL but that ExcEL has established a larger team presence and a regular meeting schedule. Staff stated that co-teaching was already in place prior to Project ExcEL or Part 154.
- The team members noted that the gatekeeper Regents exams in NY have recently changed, allowing more flexibility for ENL students to take electives.
- The school recognizes that seeing the impact of efforts often takes time, but the school has achieved national recognition heretofore.

- School leaders expressed frustrations with Project ExcEL, since they feel forced to do it even though they already feel that they have made strides serving ENL students. A staff member stated that they've "drunk the cool-aid on co-teaching".
- School leadership said that CSSR project staff took a lot of the school's time to learn about the school. The school feels that their needs are in career development and post-high school transitions, and they are waiting to see if CSSR will meet their needs in this area.
- The school noted that work is still needed on curriculum, in the form of native Spanish ELA instruction. School leadership would like to provide more time for the team to work on these issues. The school meets as a faculty, and the whole faculty is interested in this curricula. The school follows a division leadership model (i.e., departments) wherein the school meets at all levels and prioritize change. Department chairs meet once a month. The faculty meets once a month. The principal stated that, "folks just do it".
- School staff members engage in on-going, regular conversations regarding students and student needs and work to find solutions for individual students. One teacher stated that the faculty, "Go above and beyond to help our students". Teachers also reported working closely with guidance counselors. The school reported having a very stable faculty.
- The team reported that the school has an advisory program structured into communities. Community meetings occur approximately monthly. Clubs and activities are offered by grade level, in homeroom and are geared to unite students, address bullying, discuss test taking, etc. Every student has a homeroom. They meet by community for four years with two teachers assigned to each group. These groups meet two times a month. This program has been in place for 8-10 years.
- When asked what needs the school community perceived that might be met by Project ExcEL, the school administrator stated that the school needs more technology. The school is currently using Google docs, Chromebooks, and Blackboard Engage, but parents need access to parent portals and training to use and access these.

2.2 STUDENT FEEDBACK

We met with two 10th grade students.

- The students said the ENL teacher helped them a lot, "she understands us and our problems". The ENL center also helps the students with their homework.
- After school, both students help care for family.
- One student's favorite subject is art because of the teacher. While the teacher doesn't speak Spanish and didn't have a Spanish speaking teaching assistant, the teacher still made efforts to communicate. The student likes to draw and wants to be an architect.
- The other student likes math and science and wants to be a doctor. This student also indicated that the teaching assistant in classes assists by translating.

- The students stated that the best part of class is making new friends with non-Spanish speakers.
- Both students indicated that their least favorite thing about school is Regents testing. The students stated that they feel pressured to study and do well on the tests.
- Both students stated that math class is difficult. Equations are tough to understand because the teacher doesn't speak Spanish.
- Both students said that their first day of school was the hardest, but they did have help from non-teaching, Spanish speaking staff and fellow students who also speak Spanish.
- When asked about whether they had started discussing plans after high school, one student replied that they have “not [been] talking about after school planning and life since we're only in 10th grade”. The same student said wants to “plan for life and go to college to have a good job”.

The teacher present during the session shared the following information before and during the session:

- The school gives every new ENL family a parent orientation.
- One student stated that the guidance counselor is “always busy and never in her office”. The teacher told the students that they could “sign up on the [guidance counselor's] door for a time to meet”, but the students indicated that they had not done this.
- The teacher indicated that the guidance counselor meets with students once in class, then individually. A bilingual counselor is assigned to students until they are English speakers.
- Help with homework is available afterschool in the ENL center at the school.

Recommendations:

- As a development grantee focused on innovation, Project ExcEL offers an opportunity for the district and the school to further strengthen existing ENL student support structures—in line with NYSED Part 154²⁴ regulatory guidance and the growth in the number of ENL students attending district schools. Ergo, the lack of support for the project at the school level (which is also the unit of implementation and measurement for the evaluation) may need to be addressed through conversations and planning involving the developer, district leadership, and school leaders.
- Project developers and partners may need to redouble efforts around career development and post-high school transitions to ensure immediate relevance to school leadership and address an issue identified by the school as a priority.
- Based on team feedback, the Global (Social Studies) class and the age disparities present therein may be presenting challenges in terms of student behavior. The school's approach to

²⁴ <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling/bilinged/faq.html>

this class—how it is structured and populated with students—may need to be revisited to ensure that the class does not lead to expanding student behavior and classroom management issues. Having such a wide range of students, in terms of ages (14-19), in one classroom can exacerbate extant issues.

- Conversations may need to occur to better communicate to ENL students the availability of and supports provided by the school guidance counselors.
- The developer and the project team may need to develop a plan for communicating and disseminating information on college readiness with ENL students, including Project ExcEL activities such as an upcoming Saturday workshop from Latino U.
- Sleepy Hollow High and Sleepy Hollow Middle administrators and teachers need to collaborate more fully—to better support student transitions from middle to high school. The ENL co-chair’s efforts may serve as an early example to expand upon.
- Another issue that Project ExcEL partners may be able to assist with is technology training for ENL parents to aid access to and usage of school supports, programs, and information available online.

3 OSSINING SCHOOLS – ANNE M. DORNER MIDDLE SCHOOL

3.1 PROJECT SCHOOL TEAM FEEDBACK

We met with the principal, an assistant principal, a science teacher, a dual language ELA and Social Studies teacher, three ENL teachers, a Spanish teacher, and a technology teacher.

- In year 1, the school focused on work that extended the school day and the week (i.e., afterschool and Saturday programs) and outreach programs (i.e., family focused supports). Moving forward with year 2, the school plans to focus on practices within the classroom.
- The team considers the interest of newly involved team members as a testament to the success and positivity of the team’s work heretofore. The team continues to work to, “give general education teachers concrete ideas about what we can do”.
- The shadowing experience in year 1 was important, because teachers had the opportunity to witness the inherent loneliness of an ENL student’s school day experience.
- School staff stated that the professional learning community (PLC) at AMD Middle is different from others because of the dedication of teachers. One staff member stated that their PLC is “not a book club”. Specifically, “If my colleagues were not committed to what impacts each student on a daily basis this [PLC/project team] would not work. Without that complete dedication and passion it would not happen...I believe this work is making impacts in a way we have not seen in 20 years. This might be due to the awareness of what strategies work—not just an assumption that students are okay. We need to be aware and meet the needs of every single child at their entry point in the lesson. We need in some way, some

shape, to communicate with and reach each student. This group [PLC/project team] is the core group, but the whole faculty is becoming more receptive”.

- The principal stated, “I’m renewed and inspired by this group [of teachers]. We discuss strategies that work, rather than assumptions...[we move] beyond awareness to strategies”.
- One teacher stated that roles within the team were very equal last year: “We all worked together and planned. As we moved along, we refined roles and drew on individual skills. We ran pilot techniques in the classroom. Teachers went out and did homework and came back to the group to discuss how they worked”. This teacher also noted that the team has put together presentations and presented at conferences and to the school board in support of ExcEL and supports for ENL students.
- Another teacher, also involved in year one, noted how the team works together to address challenges, “We may break off and do things individually but everything comes back to the PLC team”.
- A new team member (a teacher new to the school) is, “...very excited about the project because it helps [to create a] bridge [for ENL students], and [it] helps the students engage [by offering] innovative ways to engage students, tutoring after school, different strategies to try in the classroom. The environment of AMD Middle is different because teachers and staff interact to form a real community”.
- Another teacher (new to the team for year 2), volunteered for the PLC this year after learning more at a staff development meeting last year.
- One teacher, who came to the US as an ENL student, joined the team to help with ENL parent outreach.
- Teachers stated that the constructive conversations and SIOP strategies have really helped in the classroom.

Recommendations:

- Based on project team feedback, the continued, vocal support of the whole school administrative team is crucial to the continued success of Project ExcEL and the student support efforts of the team.
- As Project ExcEL moves forward, the project/PLC team may find it useful to develop a plan for disseminating and perhaps even training and mentoring their colleagues and peers at the school and perhaps more broadly.

4 OSSINING SCHOOLS - OSSINING HIGH SCHOOL

4.1 PROJECT SCHOOL TEAM FEEDBACK

We met with seven teachers, including general education and ENL, a guidance counselor, and the ENL director of both Ossining High and AMD Middle.

- At the beginning of the project, a meeting was convened at the school to introduce the project. Staff volunteered to be on the team. Early project foci included co-teaching and classroom level strategies targeting ENL student needs.
- The team targets supports for students who are at a lower level and ensures that they are in classes that are most helpful to them. Decisions made regarding student placement are based on the level of student comprehension and knowledge and depend upon conversations involving the team.
- Year one also focused on re-vamping ENL student supports in the schools (AMD Middle and Ossining High) more broadly to help the whole child going forward. For instance, the team has worked to provide extra field trips and visits for ENL students (i.e., college visits and inviting visitors to the school) to give them experiences that they may not have had before.
- The team stated that a major challenge in year one was the situation with the tutors. There were none. That problem is supposed to have been resolved for this year.
- Teachers noted that they enjoyed the two day workshops in the summer preceding each school year (2014 and 2015). The initial focus in year one, on language and constructive conversations, was not entirely applicable for the school staff and students. However, they stated that, “this past summer was great and built upon the successes of last year”.
- Team leaders, “want to meet the providers [community partners] and hold them accountable and see what’s available”. While the team was aware of available community partner-provided resources, they have not received those resources heretofore. They felt that there has been “no good way to match up with and bridge needs and supports” heretofore.
- The school is co-teaching this year and will continue focusing on tiering and RtI and ensuring that outside supports from project community partners are more involved.
- Teachers stated that the project-provided professional development is always helpful (i.e., TASC and SIFE programs).
- A teacher new to the school and the team stated that, with the growing ELL population and the co-teaching model, “Project ExcEL couldn’t have come at a better time”.

Recommendations:

- The team would like to improve both the timeliness and the personalization of services available from and provided by community partners. The example provided involved a student whose family spent a large sum of money for legal services related to immigration;

the team would have liked to have known more about community partners who provide this type of support.

- One teacher noted that more professional development geared toward better supporting ENL students in science would be helpful. ENL students interviewed at Sleepy Hollow Middle and Sleepy Hollow High both stated that they enjoyed science immensely due to the hands-on nature of science classes. Cross-teacher sharing in like content areas, between Ossining High and Sleepy Hollow High science teachers in particular, might prove beneficial and welcome.
- The Ossining team also noted that additional classroom-level professional development (e.g., workshops) would be helpful; teachers would like more classroom strategies to support ENL students. AMD Middle’s SIOP training and experiences might prove beneficial to Ossining High teachers as well.

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