

Research Brief

THE IMPACT OF CITY CONNECTS ON SELECT STUDENT SUB-GROUPS

THE MARY E. WALSH CENTER FOR THRIVING CHILDREN

City Connects is an evidence-based approach to integrated student support that helps students—academically, socially, emotionally, and physically—by connecting each and every child to a tailored set of prevention, intervention, and enrichment services in the school and community. Research has shown that City Connects is associated with a wide range of positive outcomes for students, teachers, and taxpayers.¹ These findings are principally drawn from analyses of

City Connects' impacts on students who are at a higher risk of adverse academic and nonacademic outcomes.

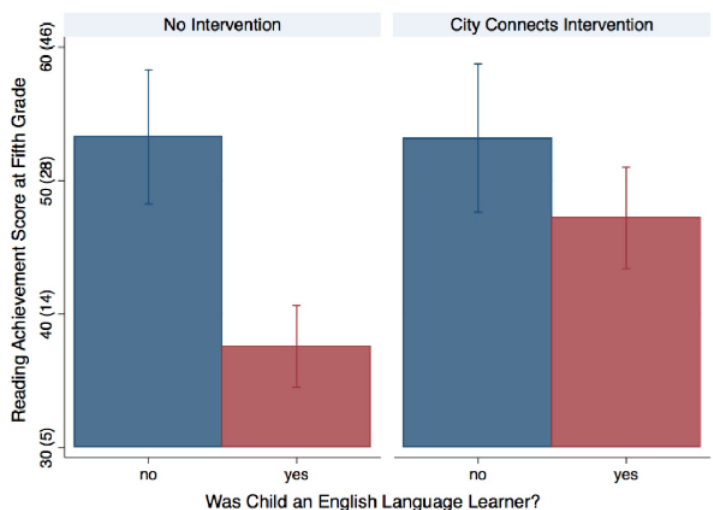
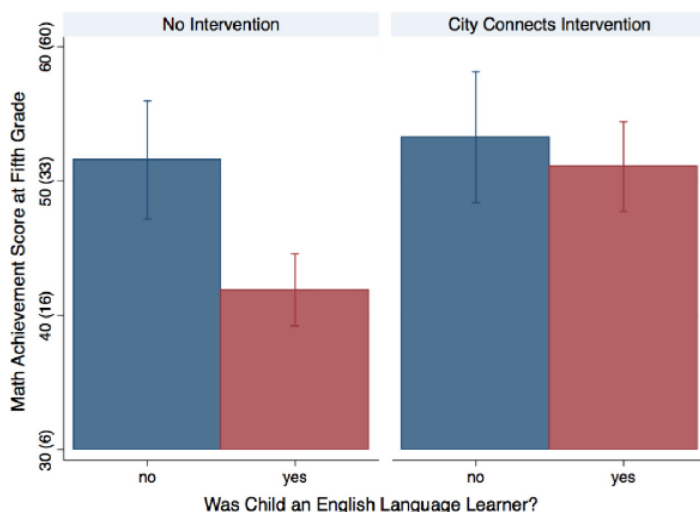
Now, a series of studies have explored the impacts of City Connects on important student sub-groups who are especially vulnerable to lower academic and life outcomes. The findings demonstrate significant positive impacts of City Connects for the following groups:

First-Generation, Immigrant, and English Language Learner Students

Improved student achievement: City Connects positively impacts student achievement and attainment, including reducing the gaps for first-generation immigrant children.^{2,3}

Narrowed academic gaps: City Connects has narrowed the achievement gap relative to other immigrant students. First-generation

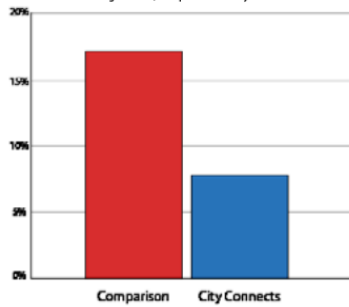
immigrant English language learners who experienced effective integrated student support performed better in both English and Math relative to their English-proficient immigrant peers.⁴ Immigrant students who experienced City Connects significantly outperformed immigrant students who never experienced the intervention on both reading and math achievement test scores.⁵



Black and Latino Students

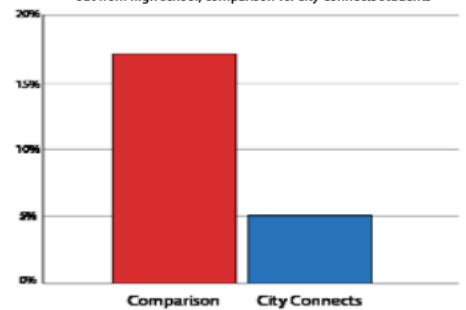
Reduced drop out: The high school drop out rate is cut in half for Black and Latino boys who received City Connects in elementary school starting in kindergarten or first-grade.⁶

Figure 3. Cumulative percentage of Black male students who drop out from high school, comparison vs. City Connects students



Proportions adjusted for demographic student characteristics. SOURCE: District withdrawal code data, 2005-2012. Comparison N=2132; City Connects N=154 – Updated Spring 2017

Figure 4. Cumulative percentage of Latino male students who drop out from high school, comparison vs. City Connects students



Proportions adjusted for demographic student characteristics. SOURCE: District withdrawal code data, 2005-2012. Comparison N=2195; City Connects N=173 – Updated Spring 2017

Students receiving special education services

Reduction in overall placement rates: A preliminary study shows that having City Connects in an elementary school is associated with a significant reduction in special education placement rates following four years of

implementation.⁷

Reduction in placement rates of Black boys: Much of that reduction is driven by declines in Black male students being assigned to special education.⁸

References

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- ² Walsh, M.E., Madaus, G.F., Raczek, A.E., Foley, C., An, C., Lee-StJohn, T.J., & Beaton, A. (2014). A new model for student support in high-poverty urban elementary schools: Effects on elementary and middle school academic outcomes. *American Education Research Journal*, 51(4), 704-737.
- ³ Dearing, E., Walsh, M.E., Sibley, E., Lee-StJohn, T., Foley, C., & Raczek, A.E. (2016). Can Community and School-Based Supports Improve the Achievement of First-Generation Immigrant Children Attending High-Poverty Schools?, *Child Development*, 87: 883–897.
- ⁴ Dearing, E., Walsh, M.E., Sibley, E., Lee-StJohn, T., Foley, C., & Raczek, A.E. (2016). Can Community and School-Based Supports Improve the Achievement of First-Generation Immigrant Children Attending High-Poverty Schools?, *Child Development*, 87: 883–897.
- ⁵ Dearing, E., Walsh, M.E., Sibley, E., Lee-StJohn, T., Foley, C., & Raczek, A.E. (2016). Can Community and School-Based Supports Improve the Achievement of First-Generation Immigrant Children Attending High-Poverty Schools?, *Child Development*, 87: 883–897. Lawson, J. L., O'Dwyer, L. M., Dearing, E., Raczek, A. E., Foley, C., Khanani, N., Walsh, M. E., & Leigh, Y. R. (2024). Estimating the Impact of Integrated Student Support on Elementary School Achievement: A Natural Experiment. *AERA Open*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584241292072>
- ⁶ Walsh, M. E., Lee-StJohn, T., Raczek, A.E., Vuilleumier, C., Foley, C., Theodorakakis, M. (2017). Reducing High School Dropout Through Elementary School Student Support: An Analysis Including Important Student Subgroups. Boston College Center for Thriving Children. Retrieved from: [https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/schools/lsoe/sites/coss/pdfs-for-ctc/CTC%20Policy%20Brief%20-%20Drop-out%20-%205.1.17%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/schools/lsoe/sites/coss/pdfs-for-ctc/CTC%20Policy%20Brief%20-%20Drop-out%20-%205.1.17%20(1).pdf)
- ⁷ Khanani, N. (2022). Does providing teachers with more resources and support change special education placement rates? Evidence from an integrated student support intervention. Paper presentation at the annual conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Washington, DC, United States.
- ⁸ Khanani, N. (2022). Does providing teachers with more resources and support change special education placement rates? Evidence from an integrated student support intervention. Paper presentation at the annual conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Washington, DC, United States.

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