

Accelerating Academic Achievement through Standards-Aligned Expanded Learning

Across the country, districts are adopting new standards and academic benchmarks that raise the bar for student performance. Without substantial extra supports, disadvantaged students, who were frequently held to lower standards in the past, are at risk to fall further behind. Over the 5 years of this project Higher Achievement (HA), a year-round expanded learning program, will implement a CCSS-aligned, cost-effective expanded learning intervention in 19 schools and provide more than 650 hours/year of supplemental learning for 3 or 4 years to each of 1,920 disadvantaged 5th through 8th graders. Evidence from an experimental evaluation of the program (Herrera et. al, 2013) suggests this project will improve academic outcomes. The current project's random assignment evaluation will also investigate the degree to which the math and reading test scores of a sample of 860 HA scholars increase relative to the 860 control youth over their first two years of participation, but will also explore the longer term effects by examining the college enrollment and persistence of the 951 participants from HA's first experimental evaluation. [The intent-to-treat impact estimates will be calculated using regressions controlling for baseline test scores and school.]

The project advances the field by enabling HA to codify and disseminate its CCSS-aligned instructional best practices, curriculum resources, training and coaching modules to benefit thousands of more students across additional districts and other community-based organizations. The evaluation findings will help policy makers and practitioner understand the short- and longer-term benefits of these types of rigorous expanded learning programs.