Campbell-Kibler Associates, Inc.

Youth Development Institute: Community Education Pathways to Success (CEPS)

Final Evaluation Report

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Community Education Pathways to Success (CEPS) is a citywide initiative, created by the New York City-based Youth Development Institute (YDI), to assist young people in completing their education, entering college, finding work, and contributing to their communities. CEPS and its partner community-based organizations (CBOs) target out-of-school youths, 16 to 24 years old with reading levels below 8th grade, who are interested in preparing for the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) and/or improving their skills. Over the four year project period, ten CBOs, in three Cohorts, participated in CEPS. Cohort 1 included three sites that entered CEPS in 2005/06, all of which participated for the full four years. Cohort 2 included three sites that entered CEPS in 2006/07. Two Cohort 2 sites participated in CEPS for three years while the third site left after two years. Cohort 3 included four sites that started CEPS in 2007/08. Three Cohort 3 sites participated in CEPS for two years, while the fourth site left after one year.[1]

The eight ongoing sites are[2]:

Citizens Advice Bureau
Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation
DREAMS (A project of Settlement Housing Fund)
East Side House Settlement
Federation Employment and Guidance Services, Inc
New Heights Neighborhood Center
New Settlement Apartments
Turning Point Educational Center,

The goals of CEPS are to:

- *Strengthen the capacity of community organizations to provide high quality and integrated youth development, support, and education services.*

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[1] In both of these sites (Sites H and J), the Ramp-Up curriculum and other aspects of the CEPS model were not a good fit with the sites' existing programs and Ramp-Up was only being minimally implemented. In both cases, YDI and site staff jointly decided that it would be better for the sites not to continue in CEPS.

[2] The names of the two sites that did not continue in the project are not listed here.

- *Enable returning youth to develop skills, attitudes, experiences, and credentials to achieve self-sufficiency and active involvement (in the classroom, the program, and the organization).*

The CEPS model has high quality instruction at its core. To date, CEPS' literacy instruction has been based on the America's Choice Ramp-Up curriculum, which has been implemented at all sites. Ramp-Up is a year-long curriculum tailored specifically to the needs of adolescents who have never known academic success. Instructors are provided with daily lesson plans, homework assignments, and ways to illustrate key concepts. The daily schedule focuses on rituals for entering the classroom, independent reading, daily word study, and read aloud/think aloud. Sites also use America's Choice's Mathematics Navigator, which is designed to provide students who are struggling with specific mathematics concepts and skills, instruction that addresses the root causes of common misconceptions. Unlike Ramp-Up, which is a curriculum, Math Navigator is a series of modules that are used to augment a math curriculum.

In support of the instruction, the CEPS model includes ongoing assessment of each student's progress using the Test of Adult Basic Skills (TABE). Many state and federal funding sources for adult literacy require the use of the TABE as an indicator of student progress. The TABE is a measure of student achievement and progress; it is not a diagnostic test. Sites have the option of supplementing the TABE with diagnostic tests.

The model assumes that there will be:

- a process for staff to learn from each other and to learn about the young people with whom they are working;
- a "primary person" approach in place, where each student has a specific person to whom they go for guidance, support, and referral;
- the collection and use of data for program improvement;[3]
- the combining of different program components into a "blended approach."

Infused throughout the CEPS model are the following youth development practices: high expectations for youth; opportunities for youth to contribute; continuity of relationships with youth; engaging activities for youth; caring and trusting relationships; and physical, emotional and psychological safety.

Each CEPS site received $35,000 annually in funding from YDI, as well as access to training and technical assistance. The bulk of the funding for the CEPS sites' pre-GED programs comes from the sites themselves.

I. The Evaluation

The third and final year of the evaluation of CEPS sought to answer the following questions:

[3] The original model included administrator consultation with youth and staff on decision-making; after the first year of CEPS there was less emphasis in this area.

- How and to what extent have youth development practices at participating CBO pre-GED programs changed and what practices appear to be institutionalized?
- How and to what extent have instructional and student support practices at participating CBO pre-GED programs changed and what practices appear to be institutionalized?
- How and to what extent have administrative practices at participating CBO pre-GED programs changed and what practices appear to be institutionalized?
- What is the impact of participating in CBO pre-GED programs on young people's:
    - Literacy skills;
    - Math skills;
    - Retention;
    - Continuing on in education, such as entry into a GED program;
    - GED attainment?
- What factors appear to be most closely tied to student retention and improvement?

For the 2008/09 year, data collection activities included:

- review of background information and reports from the remaining eight sites;
- observations at the eight sites;
- interviews with instructors, directors, counselors, trainers, and advocates at the eight sites;
- final interviews with the eight site directors;
- collection, review, and analysis of student data;
- development and testing of different hypotheses, with the assistance of site staff, as to why across sites, some students increased their scores dramatically and others either had minimal change or had scores that decreased.

During the 2006/07 and 2007/08 years, the data collection activities included:[4]

- review of background information and reports from sites from Cohorts 1, 2, and 3;
- fall 2006 student focus groups and spring 2007 surveys at two Cohort 1 and two Cohort 2 sites;
- fall and spring observations at Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 sites;
- spring observations at the Cohort 3 sites;
- multiple interviews with instructors, directors, counselors, trainers, and advocates at all CEPS sites;
- collection, review, and analysis of student data.

The 2006/07 evaluation report focused on changes in site implementation of the CEPS model and the 2007/08 report focused more on CEPS' impact on students.[5] This final report focuses on trends in student data and program implementation as well as on-site institutionalization of the CEPS model.

[4] During the 2006/07 year, two sites that were supported by the New York City Board of Education had additional procedures that needed to be completed before IRB (Institutional Review Board) permission could be granted to access students, instructors, and student data, other than those data already being reported to YDI. Permission was received in summer 2007, so some data were not available for the 2006/07 data collection.

[5] See the Appendix A for a copy of the second year evaluation report.

II. Results

Implementing the CEPS Model

While there was some variability across sites, the 2008/09 sites were implementing the components of the CEPS model.

The Curriculum

As indicated earlier, CEPS' literacy instruction has been based on America's Choice's Ramp-Up curriculum and its math instruction has been based in part on America's Choice's Mathematics Navigator. The eight 2008/09 CEPS sites all used Ramp-Up and were, for the most part, quite satisfied with it; although recently sites have been expressing the need to include more time for student writing. There is less satisfaction with Math Navigator. For the most part, sites used Math Navigator as a supplement to other curriculum materials and activities. Opinions about Math Navigator varied. One site felt that although their math curriculum was strong without Math Navigator, Math Navigator helped the math teacher rethink their approach to teaching math. A second site felt that Math Navigator "gives a foundation, skill set, better understanding of building skills." Staff at a third site felt that while Math Navigator helped students' understanding of math concepts, it didn't always fit in with the way math instruction was usually done.

Others had concerns about the perceived level of Math Navigator materials, feeling that it was "too structured" and the language sounded too formal "like it was little kids." One teacher addressed this potential issue in class, by offering students a "disclaimer" about the books, telling them: "It may look simple but it is easier to learn with easy numbers and [you] will understand the concepts." Another teacher acknowledged that the literacy level of the books was a flaw but felt that concerns about the low level were overblown explaining: "You can get over it and the kids get over it quickly. Concerns about book being babyish are overcome quickly."

Testing

As indicated earlier, the primary vehicle for CEPS student assessment is the Test of Adult Basic Skills (TABE).[6] Students take the TABE at the time of their entry into CEPS and again periodically as long as they are in CEPS. TABE test results are used to assess student progress and, in most sites, are used as one of the criteria to determine when students are ready to move to a GED program. Studies, by the TABE's publisher CTB/McGraw-Hill, found TABE scores to be correlated with GED and GED predictor scores.[7]

[6] TABE Scores are reported as grade equivalents (GE). In GE, the integer is the school grade level and the decimal is the month of the nine month school year. Thus, a 7.4 GE indicates an academic level approximating that of the fourth month of the 7th grade.

[7] *Test of Adult Basic Education Norms Book: Complete Battery and Survey*. CTB McGraw Hill, pp183-197.

Across sites, CEPS staff members have expressed concerns about the use of the TABE for CEP student assessment. As one site director explained, there was concern that the TABE "doesn't capture the true picture of [student] growth." To explore TABE's content validity[8] as a measure of CEPS student literacy gains, the evaluation team did an analysis of the degree of overlap between the content and skills covered by Ramp-Up and those covered by the TABE reading subtest.[9] The results of the analysis confirmed some CEPS staff concerns. Ramp-Up covers the skills and content areas tested in the TABE Reading Subtest, but 62% of the Ramp-Up objectives are not covered by the TABE Reading Subtest. Since Ramp-Up covers the areas included in the TABE, the TABE is a valid measure, but since Ramp-Up covers many areas not included in the TABE; it is an incomplete measure of what students should be learning under Ramp-Up.

Other CEPS Components

The CEPS model also includes a "primary person" approach; a process for staff to learn from each other and to learn about the young people; collection and use of data; and the bringing together of different program components into a "blended approach."

In 2008/09, all CEPS sites had some form of the primary person system in place and all had some formal ways to learn from each other and to communicate about students. While all sites had periodically scheduled formal case conferences that focused on students, some sites had weekly meetings while others met biweekly and others quarterly. These formal sessions were supplemented by reports on students at daily or weekly team and staff meetings and through informal staff conversations. Sites have become quite innovative in their student conferencing. For example, at one site, two to three team members now do the conferencing and the resulting report/summary is sent by e-mail to all team members who can then provide more input and ideas as needed. If something important is missed, then another meeting is scheduled.

Sites have been making progress in their use of program data but, with some exceptions, sites continued to make minimal use of data for program improvement. One exception is a site that started an inquiry team on-site to look at their data. This team was meeting weekly to look at attendance patterns and planned to do experiments to test the effectiveness of such strategies as incentives and phone calls. They plan to meet monthly to talk about the results of their experiments and to decide what interventions to implement. A second site has been tracking student attendance in terms of the course hours that students miss by being tardy and absent, and then making program decisions based on the data as well as using it with individual students. Unfortunately, other sites were using program data less in 2008/09 than previously. One of the reasons that some sites were using data less was because the provider of their database program[10] changed their policies and the sites could no longer receive free/low cost database support. This

[8] Validity means that a test is valid—that it measures that what it is supposed to measure. Content validity means that the test covers the appropriate subject matter.

[9] See Appendix B for more about the analysis and the results.

[10] The database provider was not YDI; nor was it associated with YDI.

change caused several sites to have to replace their existing database with more elementary systems.

Student Outcomes[11]

Student Demographics

In 2008/09, reflecting data from previous years, the majority of CEPS students were male and Latino, with an average age of 19.

Table 1: 2008/09 CEPS Student Demographics

	Women	Men	Total
African American	58	66	124/32%
Latino/a	112	119	231/59%
Other	13	23	36/ 9%
Total	183/47%	208/53%	391/100%

As was the case in previous years, the sex and race/ethnicity of CEPS students varied by site. For example, while on average 59% of CEPS students were Latino/a, the percentage of Latino/a students in individual sites ranged from 14% to 100%. There was less variation by sex. The percentage of male students by site ranged from a low of 42% to a high of 67%. There were no differences in terms of student age. Across sites, the average student age was around 19. Relatively few CEPS students were parents (56/14%); 22% (41) of the women and 7% (15) of the men were parents.

Only 5% (19) of the students were known to have an individual evaluation program, which is an indicator of special education status. This did not mean that only 5% of the students had special education needs; it means that in most sites, particularly those not affiliated with the New York City Board of Education, special education status was not known because this information was not available to the sites.

Student Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment continued to <u>not</u> be an issue for CEPS sites. While some sites continue to struggle with retention, four of the eight sites have retention rates of 70% or more. Retention rates are not tied to student sex but may, in some ways, be related to incentives.

There are so many out-of-school youth and so few available programs that, during the three years of the evaluation, student recruitment has never been in issue for CEPS. All sites have had as many students as they could serve, with some sites having waiting lists. Students have been

[11] Sites were provided opportunities to correct/update 2007/08 data which may lead to small differences from the data reported in the 2007/08 evaluation report.

known to travel significant distances to attend CEPS, including one student who traveled from Staten Island to Brooklyn to attend a CEPS program.

Previously, student retention was a problem and while it continues to be a challenge at some sites, in general it has become much less of an issue.[12] In 2007/08, the retention rate was 54% and in 2008/09, it increased to 63%. In 2007/08, three sites had retention rates below 50% while in 2008/09, only one site had a retention rate less than 50%. In 2008/09, six sites increased their retention rates and two decreased their retention rates. In 2007/08, their first year participating in CEPS, the Cohort 3 sites had an overall student retention rate of 35%. In 2008/09, the average retention rate for these sites increased to 47%.

Table 2: Student Retention by Site by Year

	Individual Sites	2007/08 Students with Two TABE Literacy Scores	2008/09 Students with Two TABE Literacy Scores*	Number of Incentives Offered to 2008/09 Students
All Sites		208/54%	247/63%	5
Cohort 1		100/59%	127/74%	6.3
	Site C	30/47%	48/70%	4
	Site G	33/53%	41/80%	11
	Site I	37/88%	38/73%	5
Cohort 2		57/75%	50/71%	4
	Site B	18/78%	15/50%	2
	Site F	39/74%	35/88%	6
Cohort 3		51/35%	70/47%	3.7
	Site A	12/29%	25/56%	4
	Site D	20/33%	29/38%	3
	Site E	19/45%	16/57%	4

*Also included are 19 CEPS students who went on to GED programs and only took the TABE once during 2008/09.

In 2008/09, individual site retention rates ranged from a high of 88% to a low of 38%. The three sites with the lowest 2007/08 retention rates all improved their retention rates in 2008/09. As was found in 2007/08, retention rates were similar for women and men students. In 2007/08, women students were approximately 45% of both the students overall and of the retained students. In 2008/09, women students were approximately 47% of both students overall and of retained students.

It is difficult to determine the relationship between the use of incentives and retention. Sites offered between 2 and 11 different student incentives with an average of almost 5 different incentives offered per site. The sites with the largest numbers of incentives had the highest

[12] Retention was defined as the number and percent of students remaining in CEPS long enough to take the TABE literacy test more than once during the 2008/09 year. However, also included in the 2008/09 computation of retention rates were 19 CEPS students who only took the TABE once during 2008/09 but did move on to GED programs in 2008/09.

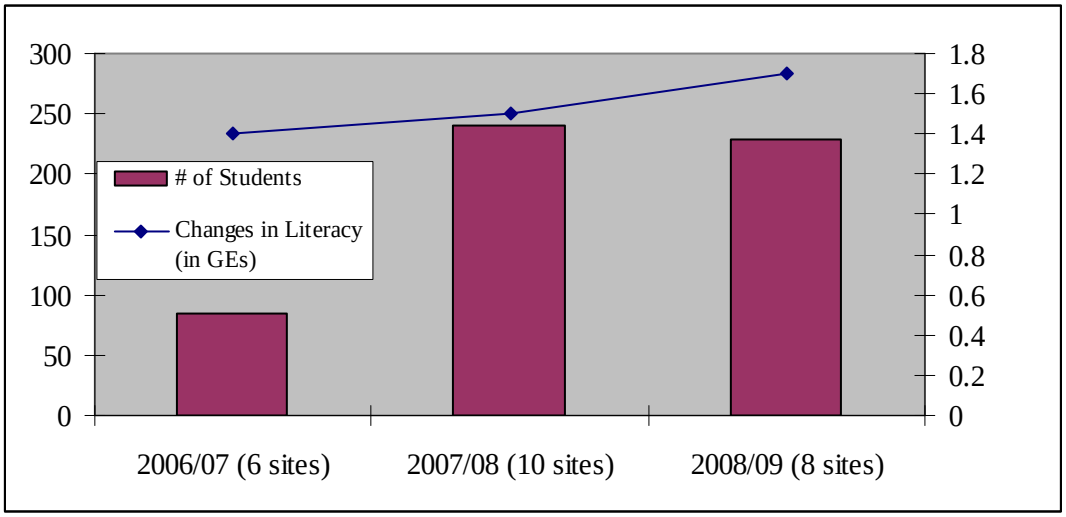
retention. Site F, which offered 6 different incentives had a retention rate of 88% while Site G, with a retention rate of 80%, offered 11 different incentives. However, other patterns weren't as clear. For example, student stipends and internships were offered by sites with both the highest and lowest retention rates. Metro cards were the incentive used most frequently (7/88%), followed by student of the month awards (6/75%), followed by stipends, employment opportunities tied to CEPS, and gift cards (5/62% each).

Literacy

Over time, CEPS student gains in literacy have been increasing.

Over time, there have been increases in the numbers of students staying in the program long enough to take the TABE more than once and, at the same time, increases in the average gains in literacy as measured by Grade Equivalents (GE).

Chart 1: Increases in Student Numbers and Literacy Gains (in GE) by Program Year



Over the three years of the evaluation, the number of students taking the TABE more than once in a program year increased from 85 students (at six sites) to 241 (at 10 sites)[13] to 228 students (at 8 sites). Over the same time period, the average gain in literacy increased from 1.4 GE to 1.5 GE to 1.7 GE in 2008/09. The gains have all been statistically significant and are increasingly large.[14] As was found in previous years, differences by sex were not statistically significant. Pre/post gains by individual site varied from the highest gains of more than two grade equivalents in Sites F and E to lower gains of 1.1 and 1.3 in Sites G and I.

[13] The 8 sites that continued on through 2007/08 enrollment of 208.

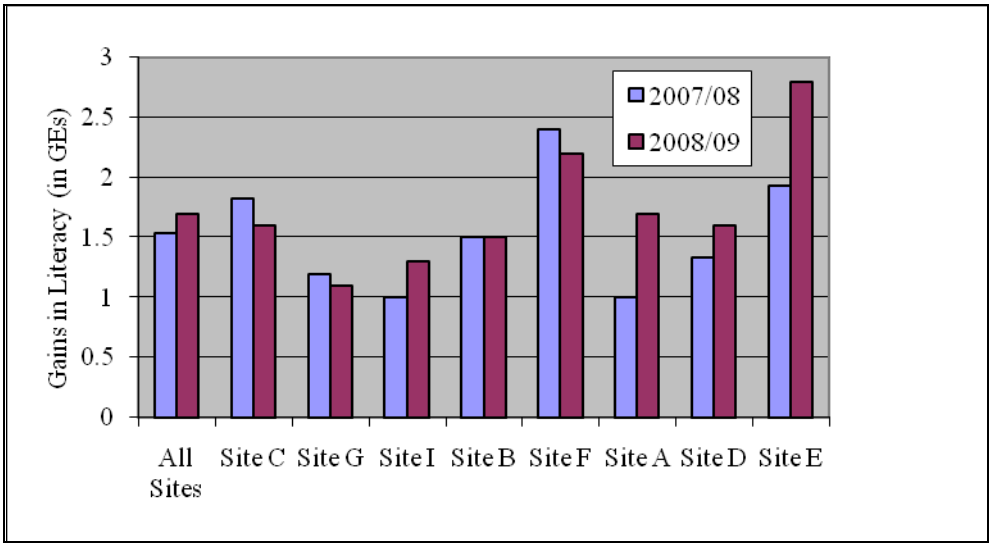
[14] F=156.5, p=.000, d=.96. A d (effect size) of 0.8 or higher is considered large.

Table 3: Changes in Literacy Scores by Site

	Individual Site	2008/09 Initial Literacy Score	2008/09 Most Recent Literacy Score	Change in 2008/09 Literacy Score
All Sites		6.0	7.7	1.7
Cohort 1		6.1	7.4	1.3
	Site C	5.9	7.5	1.6
	Site G	5.9	7.0	1.1
	Site I	6.7	8.0	1.3
Cohort 2		5.9	7.9	2.0
	Site B	4.7	6.2	1.5
	Site F	6.4	8.6	2.2
Cohort 3		6.0	7.9	1.9
	Site A	6.3	8.0	1.7
	Site D	6.5	8.1	1.6
	Site E	4.7	7.5	2.8

Literacy gains in Cohort 1 sites (C, G, I) and Cohort 2 sites (B, F) remained about the same between 2007/08 and 2008/09. However, Cohort 3 sites (A, D, E), all of whom were completing their second year in CEPS, increased the size of their literacy gains.

Chart 2: Student Literacy Gains by Site by Program Year



Efficiency

To make better judgments about program impact, it's important to consider multiple measures of program effectiveness.

Gains in literacy provide important evaluation information, but the size of these gains may be misleading unless these data are examined in a broader perspective that includes:

- the number of students served;
- the number and percent of students retained by the program;
- the amount of time it has taken students to achieve these gains.

While the importance of academic gains in assessing program success is clear; the importance of the other variables may be less clear. Since the goal of CEPS is to serve students, measures of student retention are key. A program can't serve a young person who has left. Low retention rates can be an indicator of weaknesses in the instructional program and/or in student supports.

High retention rates indicate strengths but those strengths may not be reflected in higher academic gains. Indeed, higher rates of retention may have a negative impact on average student gain. In general, the students who drop out of a program tend to be those who are not doing as well. The more successful students tend to remain with a program. Thus, when retention efforts become more effective, more students who aren't doing as well remain in the program. This can cause average gains in academic areas to be lower than they would have been if those less successful students were not retained.

Examining the amount of time it takes students to achieve their gains can be important in terms of meeting existing needs with limited resources. There are many more young people wanting to enter CEPS programs than can be accommodated. A program that shortens the amount of time it takes for students to make significant achievement gains and/or go on to GED programs will most likely have lower per student costs and will be able to serve more students without having most of the additional costs associated with program expansion.

Table 4: Changes in 2008/09 Literacy Scores with Other Indicators of Success by Site

Site		Total Number of Students	Percent of Students with Two Scores*	Total Days Between Pre and Most Recent TABE[15]	Initial Literacy Scores	Most Recent Literacy Scores	Change in Literacy Scores
All Sites		391	58%	129	6.0	7.7	1.7
Cohort 1		172	70%	139	6.1	7.4	1.3
	Site C	69	70%	117	5.9	7.5	1.6
	Site G	51	80%	149	5.9	7.0	1.1
	Site I	52	60%	159	6.7	8.0	1.3
Cohort 2		70	70%	103	5.9	7.9	2.0
	Site B	30	50%	124	4.7	6.2	1.5
	Site F	40	85%	93	6.4	8.6	2.2
Cohort 3		149	40%	131	6.0	7.9	1.9
	Site A	45	44%	125	6.3	8.0	1.7
	Site D	76	32%	172	6.5	8.1	1.6
	Site E	28	54%	72	4.7	7.5	2.8

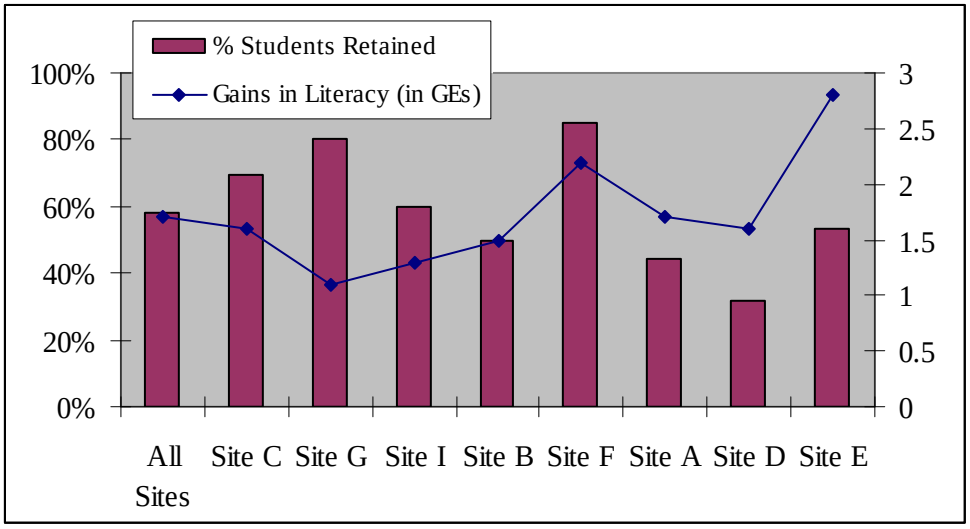
*Not included are the 192008/09 CEPS students who went on to GED programs and only took the TABE once.

Under a definition of success looking at increases in TABE scores alone, Sites C and D would be considered equally successful, since both sites had average increases in literacy of 1.6. However, on average, the time between their first and most recent TABE score for students in Site C was 117 days (including weekends and holidays), while for students in Site D it was 172 days. Additionally, while 70% of the Site C students had pre and follow up TABE scores, this was the case for only 32% of the Site D students. While sites C and D started with about the same number of students, the 48 students remained in Site C made approximately the same amount of progress as did the 29 retained Site D students, in a shorter period of time.

Chart 3 looks at literacy gains and retention rates. Some sites, like Site F, have both high retention rates and larger literacy gains while some other sites, like Site E, have larger gains in literacy and lower retention rates and yet other sites, like site G have higher percentages of retained students but relatively lower gains in literacy.

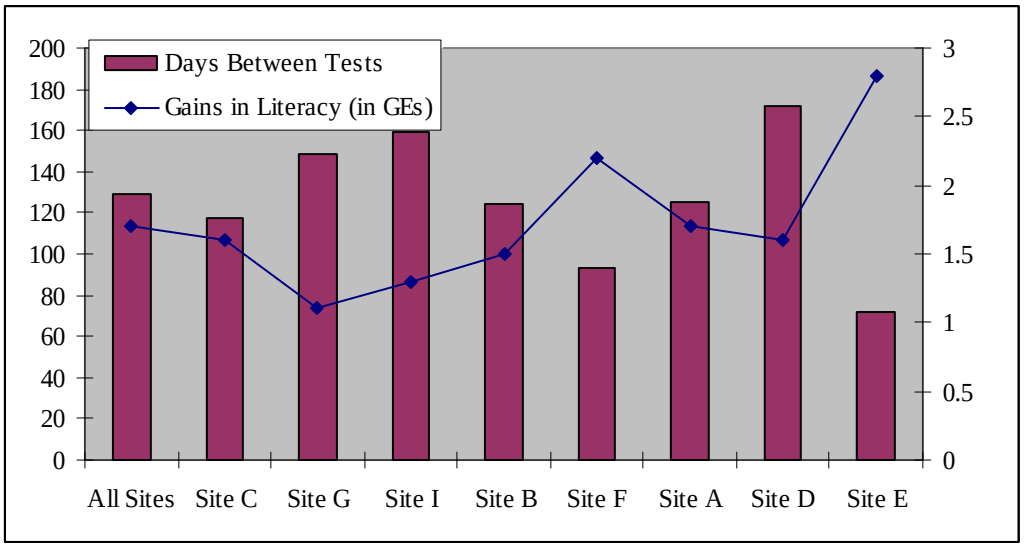
[15] Days, including weekdays and holidays, between students taking the TABE was used as an approximate indicator of time in the program.

Chart 3: Student Literacy Gains and Percent of Students Taking the TABE More Than Once



As indicated earlier, another way to put literacy gains in context is to look at the amount of time it took individual students to make those gains. In this case, **lower** numbers of days are related to higher efficiency. For example, as seen in Chart 4, sites F and E have large increases in literacy in a relatively short period of time.

Chart 4: Student Literacy Gains and the Number of Days between Students' Pre and Follow-Up Tests



Sites differed in terms of the numbers of literacy instructional hours offered each week. While on average they offered 8 hours of literacy instruction a week, individual sites offered anywhere from 5.5 to 11 hours of literacy instruction each week. The average number of hours of literacy instruction offered in 2008/09 was lower than in 2007/08 (8 vs. 11) and the range of hours offered was narrower for 2008/09 than it was for 2007/08 (5.5-11 vs. 4.5-24). Analysis found

there was not a statistically significant correlation between available instructional hours and student literacy gains.

Mathematics

Over time math gains have been increasing..

Over the evaluation period, the number of students with initial and follow-up TABE Composite Math scores increased from 67 students in six sites in 2006/07 to 194 students from eight sites in 2007/08 and 182 students in seven sites in 2008/09. During the first two years of the evaluation, the average math gain was .9 GE and in 2008/09 the average math gain increased to 1.2 GE (5.1 to 6.3).[16] As can be seen in Table 5, there were differences in student gain by site, with gains varying from .8 to 1.9.

Table 5: Changes in 2008/09 Composite Math Score

	Individual Site	2008/09 Initial Math Score	2008/09 Most Recent Math Score	Change in 2008/09 Math
All Sites		5.1	6.3	1.2
Cohort 1		5.0	6.0	1.0
	Site C	4.7	6.0	1.3
	Site G	5.1	6.0	.9
	Site I	5.1	6.1	1
Cohort 2		5.2	6.7	1.5
	Site B	4.6	5.4	.8
	Site F	5.4	7.3	1.9
Cohort 3		5.2	6.7	1.5
	Site A	5.5	6.9	1.4
	Site D*	NA	NA	NA
	Site E	4.7	6.3	1.6

* Site D did not provide Composite Math scores; they provided Math Computation and Applied Math scores.

Students in Site D did not have Composite Math scores. They did, however, have Math Computation and Applied Math scores.

Table 6: Changes in Site D Math Scores

	Initial Math Score	Most Recent Math Score	Change in Math Scores
Math Computation	5.2	6.3	1.1
Applied Math	6.4	7.0	.6

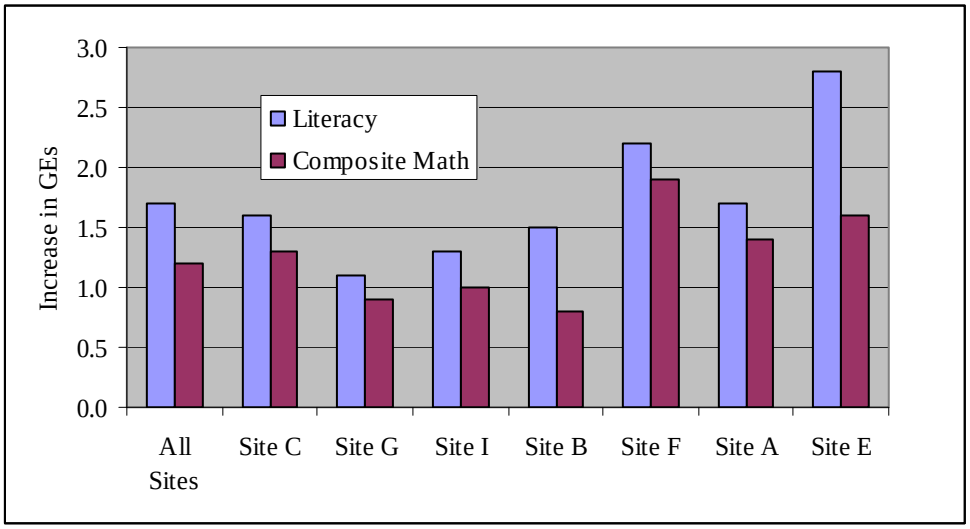
[16] t=9.66, p=.000, d=.74. A d (effect size) of 0.5 to 0.79 is considered of medium size.

Relative Differences in Literacy and Math Instruction and Gains

With occasional exceptions, literacy gains are larger than math gains.

Over the three years of the evaluation, gains in math achievement have been less than gains in literacy. In 2006/07, at four of the five sites with both literacy and math data, math gains were lower than literacy gains; in 2007/08, at seven of the eight sites where there was comparable math and literacy data, math gains were lower. As Chart 5 indicates, this pattern of sites having higher literacy than math gains continued for the 2008/09 year.

Chart 5: Student Gains in TABE Literacy and Composite Math Scores



One hundred and eighty-two students from seven of the eight sites had both initial and follow-up TABE Literacy scores and TABE: Composite Math scores.[17] Overall, these 182 students had significantly higher gains in Literacy than in Composite Math (1.6 vs. 1.2).[18] While the size of the gaps varied, at these seven sites, students' gains in literacy were greater than their gains in math. The gains in literacy reflect the full CEPS model, including site use of Ramp-Up. Since most sites were using Math Navigator as a supplement at best, gains in Composite Math scores reflect the CEPS model without a mandated math curriculum. As was the case with the literacy scores, there were no significant differences by sex in math gains.

The patterns for math instruction reflected those for literacy. While sites offered, on average, 5 hours of math instruction a week, individual sites offered from 4 to 7.5 hours of math instruction per week. The average number of hours of math instruction offered in 2008/09 was lower than that offered in 2007/08 (5 vs. 6.3). The range in the hours of math instruction offered by individual site in 2008/09 (4 to 7.5) was narrower than the range offered in 2007/08 (3 to16). There was not a significant correlation between the number of math instructional hours offered

[17] Site D did not provide Composite Math scores; they provided Math Computation and Applied Math scores.

[18] t=1.77, p=.04.

and student gains in mathematics. Over both years, sites spent more instructional hours on literacy than they did on math (2007/08 11 vs 6.3; 2008/09 8 vs 5).

Progress toward the GED

Between 2007/08 and 2008/09, the number of CEPS students going to GED programs increased by over 44%, with increases coming in all three cohorts. These increases are even more impressive since the 81 2007/08 students going on to GED programs included those who went into GED programs in both 2007/08 and 2008/09. Percentages of students going on to GED programs during the 2008/09 year ranged from a high of 55% to a low of 18%. The most dramatic increases were from site G (21% to 41%), site A (10% to 33%), and Site B (17% to 33%).

Table 7: Students Going on to GED Programs by Site by Year

	Individual Sites	2007/08 Students going on to GED Programs in 2007/08 and 2008/09*	2008/09 Students going on to GED Programs in 2008/09**
All Sites		81/21%	117/30%
Cohort 1		34/20%	49/29%
	Site C	10/16%	13/19%
	Site G	13/21%	21/41%
	Site I	11/26%	15/29%
Cohort 2		24/34%	32/46%
	Site B	4/17%	10/33%
	Site F	21/45%	22/55%
Cohort 3		22/15%	36/24%
	Site A	6/10%	15/33%
	Site D	6/15%	14/18%
	Site E	10/24%	7/25%

*Includes site corrections and additions to data for 2007/08 students.

**Included are the 19 CEPS students who went on to GED programs and only took the TABE once during 2008/09.

During the 2008/09 year, 29 (25%) of the 117 students who went on to GED programs also took the GED. During the 2007/08 and 2008/09 school years, 40% (32) of the 81 2007/08 students who entered GED programs took the GED.

Indicators of Success: Students Who Moved On to GED Programs and Those Who Did Not.

Comparisons were made between CEPS students who went on to GED programs and other CEPS students. Students who went on to GED programs came in with significantly higher TABE literacy scores and gained more during their time in CEPS than did other students who stayed in CEPS but did not go on to GED programs during 2008/09 (6.6 to 8.9 vs. 5.8 to 6.7).[19]

[19] f=44.14; p=.000.

The pattern was similar for Composite Math scores (5.4 to 7.0 vs. 4.8 to 5.8).[20] While there were no correlations between hours of weekly instruction and individual student TABE score gains, students who went on to GED programs had access to significantly more hours of weekly literacy instruction than did students who were still in CEPS (8.0 vs. 7.5),[21] although there were no differences in terms of their hours of math instruction (5.6 vs. 5.7). Demographically, there were no differences between students who went on to GED programs and other students in terms of age, sex, or race/ethnicity.

Stories of Student Success[22]

To provide a deeper understanding of CEPS and its impact on students, CEPS staff and instructors were asked to tell stories of student success. This year, stories about groups of students spoke of GED attainment and/or progress toward the GED.

> *Kids are little more focused, they've been able to see former CEPS students get their GED and they are now a little more enthusiastic. They have a direct link—CEPS students can get their GED.*

> *Successful students have the same story. In the beginning students had behavioral and academic issues and low self-esteem. Once they worked on whatever the issues they had, often academic and behavioral issues go hand in hand, they saw themselves doing better. Once they get a GED or move on from CEPS to a GED program; their personality does a 180.*

Other stories showed the difficulties students face and overcome.

> *Samantha at 25 is the oldest in the program. She has been out of school since 18, is a single mom and clinically depressed, believing she is not good enough for anything. The program worked with her to her change her mindset to "you can do it; you can do it." She ended up scoring high on the TABE, got 700 on the GED predictor and scored 2250 on GED but failed the math. She is proud of herself and is now doing math tutoring preparing to take the GED Math. Now she says about herself "I did it, I underestimated my skills—I didn't realize I knew so much."*

> *Manuel has been in CEPS longer than anyone (1.5 years). He came in at the first grade level in reading and math and we almost didn't take him because of the low scores but he was really adamant about being here. He quit for about 3 months and came back rededicated and scored at the 5^{th}/6^{th} grade level on a recent retake. He has seen others transition out but it's not getting him down. He shares the routines with new students and*

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[20] f=6.66; p=.01.

[21] t=2.18, p=.03.

[22] All student names have been changed.

calms students down. He's moving from never wanting to say anything to being the one who wants to volunteer and wants to go up to the board.

Kamile is 17, he wasn't attending school and came to a non-CEPS program at the site. Since he was having a hard time showing up for the other program; he didn't think he would be able to "hack" CEPS. In the program, he studied but it was sporadic; he didn't crash land but it was shaky flight. Several months later he wanted to try CEPS. Since he's been in CEPS, he's been outstanding, he was student of the week twice, and is now student of the month. He's been great.

Finally, stories spoke of the ways that the CEPS program helped to stop students from falling through the cracks.

George scored really low on the TABE and was put into lowest level basic ed class. He came every day but slipped through the cracks for a little while. We found out late in the game he can't read and write. He is 18, has just gotten by. He is now doing 1:1 work with one of the staff members and coming consistently. He still goes to class even though he can't follow much but he's steadily improving and reading on his own. We wouldn't have been discovered this if there wasn't such an interweb of staff.

Five CEPS graduates went on to other GED programs. Now that the site is starting a GED program based on the CEPS model, the five former students are asking to enter the program. They miss the support of the CEPS model.

Daren was arrested recently. CEPS site staff members went to the jail to see him. His mother was surprised that they came and happy that they cared. Daren came back to CEPS and is now starting an internship.

Tying Site Activities to Outcomes

Sustaining Excellence after a Difficult Start

During their first year in CEPS, Site F's outcomes were not strong. Only 13 students took the TABE more than once and, on average, students did NOT increase their literacy scores, although there was a minimal increase in math scores (0.6 GE). During Site F's second year, student outcomes improved dramatically. The number of CEPS students taking more than one TABE tripled to 39. On average, these 39 students increased their literacy scores by 2.4 GE and their math scores by 0.9 GE. Almost half of the 2007/08 students went on to GED programs. This pattern of increase continued for a third year. The number of students taking the TABE more than once went up to 85%. Average student literacy score gains stayed high (2.2 GE) while increases in math more than doubled to 1.9 GE. And during 2008/09, 55% of Site F's CEPS students went on to GED programs.

In 2008/09, site F continued with the 2007/08 instructor, a former special education teacher who remained enthusiastic about being at CEPS and about using Ramp-Up. In 2008/09, he focused on doing more small-group work with students and on doing more work with individual students. To reduce student tardiness, he switched the times math and reading were taught and used math, particularly Algebra, as a hook to get students to get to the program on time. Difficulty in replacing a counselor meant that for much of the 2008/09 year, the CEPS project director had to do double duty. However, by spring 2009 a full-time primary person was hired. In addition, during 2008/09, case conferencing continued. Student data, particularly attendance data, were collected, analyzed, and used to counsel students. In 2007/08, a buddy system was set up for new students. In 2008/09, this was replaced by having students enter the CEPS program in cohorts. CEPS students also continued to be integrated into the young adult training program, where they received training and a stipend.

Site F's emphasis on having students go on to GED programs continued and included such activities as having students take the GED predictor tests and having staff go over the results with them. In addition, CEPS student group meeting times were used to have conversations about what transitioning to a GED program meant for the ones who were leaving and those who were not.

While Site F will be opening a GED program in 2009/10, they had no GED program in 2008/09. They did however provide services to former CEPS students who were in GED programs, including biweekly checks with the former CEPS students and monthly drop-ins at the GED sites to check on how the students were doing.

Focusing on Retention

The major increase between Site G's second and third years was in retention. Between 2006/07 and 2007/08 the number of students staying in the program long enough to take the TABE more than once increased from 8 to 33. In 2008/09, this number increased to 41 students for a retention rate of 80%. Between 2007/08 and 2008/09, the number of students going on to GED programs increased from 13 (21%) to 21 (41%).

Between 2006/07 and 2007/08, there were major decreases in the amount of academic gains. Literacy gains decreased from 2.3 GE to 1.2 GE and math gains declined from 2.2 GE to 0.4 GE. In 2008/09, the literacy increase stayed at about the same level while the size of the math gains more than doubled from 0.4 GE to 0.9GE.

Site G had a different instructor in 2008/09 than it had in spring 2008. Both instructors were committed to the students and the program. Ramp-Up rituals and routines were being implemented and there was a great deal of independent reading. The 2008/09 instructor put more emphasis on writing and geography than did the previous instructor, and also provided math tutoring. CEPS students continued to be taught in their own room, which was close to the students' "primary person," making close monitoring easier. In 2008/09, Site G continued their case conferencing and primary person systems. They also added an afternoon career development class and a "reality workshop" which covered such areas as health, hygiene,

nutrition, mental health, and abuse. As Site G CEPS students moved to GED classes, they stayed in the same building, kept the same primary person and had access to the same resources. When Site G students transition to a GED program, their primary person as well as their old and new teachers meet to smooth the transition.

Remaking a Program

Site A had a difficult first year. Of the 10 2007/08 sites, Site A had the lowest number and percentage of students taking the TABE more than once (12/29%), and its gains in literacy and math were among the lowest for all sites. During the 2007/08 year, only 2 Site A students went on to GED programs.[23] Reflecting Site F's path, Site A's second year was dramatically better. The number of students taking the TABE at least twice, doubled to 25 (56%) while the number of students going on to GED programs increased to 15 (33%). The average literacy gain increased as well, from 1.0 GE to 1.7 GE, and the average math gain increased from 0.5 GEs to 1.4 GE.

During its first year, Site A had to deal with several issues. They began with one instructor teaching both the GED class and the pre-GED CEPS class. This did not to work well. There were scheduling problems, with the instructor at times having to be in two places simultaneously, causing non-instructional staff to have to cover parts of the classes. In addition, the original instructor had a strong accent and was uncomfortable doing the Ramp-Up read aloud in part because the students made fun of him. In January 2008, a new instructor was hired for the CEPS class and continued on through the 2008/09 year. This instructor consistently implemented Ramp-Up and, in January 2009, reported being "100% more comfortable" with Ramp-Up and Math Navigator than during the previous year. While Site A had case conferencing and the primary person system in place for both years; during its first year, the staff member serving as the primary person for the CEPS students left and the students were "split up" among the remaining staff members. In its second year, Site A added a counselor who was able to respond more quickly to students in crises as well as being part of student assessment, intake, and orientation.

Moving from a Strong First Year to a Stronger Second Year

Even though 2007/08 was its first year in CEPS, Site E had one of the highest literacy gains (1.9 GEs), with almost half of their students (45%) taking the TABE Literacy test more than once. During its second year, although the absolute number of students taking the TABE more than once decreased (from 19 to 16) the retention rate increased to 57%. The average literacy increase in 2008/09 was an impressive 2.8 GE and the average increase in math scores was also impressive at 1.6 GE.

When Site E joined CEPS, they had "been shopping for a year for a curriculum for their program for out-of-school youth" and they felt they had found it in CEPS. Site E folded the CEPS model into programming throughout their site. Site E initially implemented the Ramp-Up literacy

[23] Four 2007/08 students went on to GED programs in 2008/9.

curriculum "tightly" but, after training, began to implement it with more flexibility. A new literacy instructor began in fall 2008 who was felt to have had a strong positive impact on instruction. During 2008/09, Site E's primary person system was more structured than before and staff felt it was working well. In spring 2009, Site E transitioned from informal discussions to quarterly structured student conferences supplemented with reviews and updates between meetings. Too in 2008/09, Site E changed their educational orientation to be more in-depth and to provide students with opportunities to meet with instructors, an advisor, and staff.

Institutionalizing the CEPS Model

The CEPS Model has been institutionalized in participating sites.

The eight sites all felt that they had institutionalized most, if not all, of the CEPS model, although one site hadn't yet figured out what they would be doing in terms of the primary person system. When asked what other pieces they might institutionalize, three sites pointed out that there was nothing else to institutionalize. In the words of one site: "We use the whole, entire model. We know that it works. We've seen it." Not only had all the sites institutionalized the CEPS model, six of the eight sites were implementing pieces of the CEPS model in other site programs and a seventh site planed to do so. Five sites were using the primary person model with non-CEPS programs and two expanded case conferencing to include non-CEPS students. Two sites were using the CEPS model (with more advanced curricular materials) with GED classes and a third was planning to do so in fall 2009. One other site explained that they won't be expanding the Ramp-Up rituals and routines to the higher level classes because the other teachers hadn't been trained in the concept and because it was felt the rituals and routines wouldn't work as well in upper level classes.

Math Navigator was the only component of CEPS that wasn't being institutionalized in most sites. Four sites had concerns about institutionalizing Math Navigator. One site only uses it as a tool to "assess the gaps that young people have" while a second site may use it if they can "tweak it to better make it fit into a class settings." Two other sites will not be using Math Navigator for a variety of reasons including (a) they felt the activities were at too a low a level, (b) the students did not like it, and (c) it demanded too much preparation from teachers.

As positive as the data are about CEPS institutionalization in participating sites, there are two major threats to CEPS institutionalization. At the end of the 2008/09 year, four CEPS program leaders left their agencies. Their reasons for leaving were diverse, including moving to different fields and going on to advance their education; but their exiting leaves a large void. While these sites all have plans to continue the CEPS model, this potential threat to institutionalization was best expressed by one of the departing program leaders who explained; "[CEPS] has become part of our DNA here; however, when I leave I don't know what will happen next." A second threat to ongoing institutionalization is funding. CBOs have significant funding challenges; indeed, because of reductions in funding, some sites have already had to shut down internships and lay off teachers.

III. Conclusions

CEPS' two major goals are:

1. to strengthen the capacity of community organizations to provide high quality and integrated youth development, support, and education services;
2. to enable returning youth to develop skills, attitudes, experiences, and credentials to achieve self-sufficiency and active involvement (in the classroom, the program, and the organization).

CEPS is achieving its first goal. It is clear that there is great value added to CBOs and their pre-GED programs in their first two years of participation in CEPS' extensive training and technical assistance. As would be expected, the first year implementing the CEPS model can be challenging for sites; however, by the end of their second year, sites become more effective and more efficient. While the value of the first two years of intensive participation is clear, it is less clear how much value is added during the third and fourth years of participation in the intensive training and technical assistance. For some sites, like Site F, that had a weak first year, a strong second year and an even stronger third year; the ongoing participation appeared to make a difference. For other sites, like Site I, third and fourth year participation did not lead to major changes in retention rates or the size of academic gains.

CEPS is achieving its second goal. CEPS has been effective in helping returning youth move toward self sufficiency. Even though students came into CEPS with 6th grade reading levels, during the 2008/09 year, 30% of them were able to move on to GED programs and 7.5% went from entering a pre-GED program to getting a GED in one academic year. And, in a little more than four months time, students achieved literacy gains of 1.7 grade equivalents and math gains of 1.2 grade equivalents. While students were developing skills and credentials, they were also developing habits of responsibility. Over 60% of students who came into CEPS stayed with it.

Other conclusions include:

CEPS has been institutionalized within all eight sites. With the exception of the math curriculum, CEPS' major components have already been institutionalized in all eight sites. Six of the eight sites have gone further with their institutionalization, implementing CEPS components, most frequently the primary person strategy, in other programs in their CBO.

Academically, CEPS is primarily a literacy program. In CEPS, much more attention is paid to literacy than to math. There is a common literacy curriculum, but not a common math curriculum. There is more instruction in literacy as well. On average, students had eight hours of literacy instruction a week but only five hours of math instruction. And as was the case in pervious years, students had significantly greater gains in literacy than in math. Even less attention is paid to social students and science. Five of the eight sites offer no science and three offer no social studies.

Recruitment is not a problem. Student recruitment has never been an issue for CEPS. The population in need of such programs, young people whose academic skills are too low to qualify for GED programs, continues to be far greater than can be served by CEPS.

As sites mature, retention becomes less of a problem. During their first year in CEPS, sites tend to have student retention challenges. As they implement CEPS student support components, including establishing formal ways of sharing information about students and a primary person system, retention rates improve.

CEPS continues to be equally effective with women and men students. While the percentage of men and women students varied greatly by program, there were no significant sex differences in retention. Nor were there sex differences in pre and follow-up literacy or math scores.

IV. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

The CEPS model be widely expanded. CEPS is an effective program. It improves students' skills and moves significant numbers of students on to GED programs. The eight participating sites have institutionalized the model and continue to implement it. The needs of out-of-school youth not eligible for GED programs are great and, as the waiting lists at the CEPS sites indicate, young people want to be a part of CEPS programs; once they enter CEPS, they tend to remain..

CEPS provide sites with recommendations for effective math curriculum. Currently, CEPS does not have a recommended math curriculum. Math Navigator is more of a supplement than a curriculum and it is not seen as appropriate by some of the sites. CEPS should review middle and middle/high school math curricula than have been found to be effective such as Connected Mathematics; Saxon Math: An Incremental Development; Prentice Hall: Tools for Success; and University of Chicago School Mathematics Project to determine if any of these curriculum might be appropriate for pre-GED students.

CEPS provide sites with recommendations for additional measures to use. For a variety of reasons, including the requirements of some funders, the TABE will continue to be the major academic measure used by CEPS sites. Since the areas covered by the TABE are included in Ramp-Up while most of Ramp-Up's objectives are not covered by TABE; the TABE is a valid but incomplete measure of CEPS student achievement. Having other measures available could allow sites to get a more complete look at student achievement.

CEPS consider adding a component to the overall model that focuses on student transition between CEPS and GED programs. Increasing numbers and percents of CEPS students are moving on to GED programs. Currently, sites have been developing their own strategies to assist students in their transition. Adding a transition component to the model has the potential to increase the effectiveness of transition efforts as well as to make them more consistent.

Campbell-Kibler Associates, Inc.

Appendix A: Youth Development Institute: Community Education Pathways to Success (CEPS)

2008 Evaluation Report

Patricia B. Campbell, PhD and Jennifer L. Weisman, PhD
September, 2008

Community Education Pathways to Success (CEPS), created by the New York City-based Youth Development Institute (YDI), is a citywide initiative to assist young people in completing their education, entering college, finding work, and contributing to their communities. Working with community-based organizations (CBOs), CEPS targets out-of-school youths, 16 to 24 years old, with reading levels below 8th grade, who are interested in preparing for the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) and/or improving their skills.

The goals of CEPS are to:

- *strengthen the capacity of community organizations to provide high quality and integrated youth development, support, and education services.*
- *enable returning youth to develop skills, attitudes, experiences, and credentials to achieve self-sufficiency and active involvement (in the classroom, the program, and the organization).*

V. The Evaluation

This two year evaluation of CEPS sought to answer the following questions:

- How and to what extent do youth development practices at participating CBO pre-GED programs change?
- How and to what extent do instructional and student support practices at participating CBO pre-GED programs change?
- How and to what extent do administrative practices at participating CBO pre-GED programs change?
- How and to what extent are changes in CBO practices related to changes in participating student recruitment and retention?
- What is the impact of participating in CEPS pre-GED programs on young people's:
    - Literacy skills;
    - Math skills;
    - Time management skills as indicated by attendance and timeliness;

- Continuing on in education such as entry into a GED program;
- GED attainment?

The evaluation included the following data collection efforts.

For the 2006/2007 year:[24]

- review of background information and reports from three Cohort 1 and the three Cohort 2 sites;
- fall student focus groups at two Cohort 1 and two Cohort 2 sites;
- spring student surveys at two Cohort 1 and two Cohort 2 sites;
- fall and spring observations at two Cohort 1 and two Cohort 2 sites;
- fall and spring interviews with the instructors at two Cohort 1 and two Cohort 2 sites;
- fall, early, and late spring interviews with the three Cohort 1 and the three Cohort 2 CEPS directors;
- fall and spring interviews with CEPS counselors, trainers, and advocates at the three Cohort 1 and the three Cohort 2.

For the 2007/2008 year:

- review of background information and reports from the four Cohort 3 sites;
- fall and spring observations at the three Cohort 1 and the three Cohort 2 sites;
- fall and spring interviews with the instructors at the three Cohort 1 and the three Cohort 2 sites;
- fall and spring interviews with the three Cohort 1 and the three Cohort 2 site CEPS program directors;
- spring observations at the four Cohort 3 sites;
- spring interviews with the instructors and program directors at the four Cohort 3 sites.

The 2006/07 evaluation report focused on changes in site implementation of the CEPS model,[25] while this report focused more on CEPS' impact on students.

VI. Results

Implementing the CEPS Model

Currently there are ten New York City sites implementing CEPS, four in the Bronx and three each in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Three sites started during the 2005/06 year (Cohort 1), three during the 2006/07 year (Cohort 2), and four during the 2007/08 year (Cohort 3). Eight of the ten sites are planning to continue with CEPS. Two other sites, one from Cohort 2 and one from

[24] Two sites were supported by the New York City Board of Education and had additional procedures that needed to be completed before IRB (Institutional Review Board) permission could be granted to access students, instructors, and student data, other than those data already being reported to YDI. Permission was received in summer 2007, so some data were not available for the 2006/07 data collection.

[25] See the Appendix for a copy of the first year evaluation report.

Cohort 3, will not be continuing on with CEPS. At these sites, the Ramp-Up curriculum and other aspects of the CEPS model were not a good fit with the sites' existing programs and Ramp-Up was only being minimally implemented. In both cases, YDI and site staff jointly decided that it would be better for the sites not to continue in CEPS. Staff from the Cohort 2 site have asked to continue to attend CEPS trainings.

The Curriculum

The CEPS model has high-quality instruction at its core. CEPS' literacy instruction is based on the America's Choice Ramp-Up curriculum, which was being implemented in varying degrees at all ten sites. Ramp-Up is a year-long curriculum tailored specifically to the needs of adolescents who have never known academic success. Instructors are provided with daily lesson plans, homework assignments, and ways to illustrate key concepts. The daily schedule focuses on rituals for entering the classroom, independent reading, daily word study, and read aloud/think aloud exercises.

Since Ramp-Up was designed for an in-school population with a 180 day school year, some CEPS sites have had difficulty using it "as is" in an adult education setting and have been adapting it to meet their needs. Too there has been concern that Ramp-Up doesn't deal with students with learning disabilities, which it's felt many of the CEPS students have.

America's Choice also has a math curriculum, Mathematics Navigator, which gives students who are struggling with specific mathematics concepts and skills, instruction that addresses the root causes of common misconceptions. Two of the six Cohort 1 and 2 sites began to work with Math Navigator at the end of the 2006/07 year. This year, while all CEPS sites had math instruction, most were implementing the Math Navigator curriculum minimally or not at all.

Sites varied greatly in terms of the hours of instruction they offered. While, on average, sites offered 11.25 hours of literacy instruction per week, individual sites offered anywhere from 4.5 hours to 24 hours of literacy instruction. The range was smaller for math instruction, but still considerable. Math was offered from 3 to 16 hours a week, with an average of 6.3 hours of math instruction.

Testing

The primary vehicle for CEPS student assessment is the Test of Adult Basic Skills (TABE).[26] Students take the TABE at the time of their entry into the program and again periodically as long as they are in CEPS. TABE test results are used to assess student progress and, in most sites, used as one of the criteria to determine when students are ready to move to a GED program.

[26] TABE Scores are reported as grade equivalents (GE). In GE, the integer is the school grade level and the decimal is the month of the nine month school year. Thus, a 7.4 GE indicates an academic level approximating that of the fourth month of the 7th grade.

TABE scores have been found to be highly correlated with GED and GED predictor scores. The degree of overlap between the content and skills covered by the Ramp-Up and Math Navigator curriculum and those covered by the TABE math and literacy tests is not known.

Other Components

Other model components include:

1. a primary person approach, where each student has a specific person to whom they go for guidance, support, and referral;
2. a process for staff to learn from each other and to learn about the young people with whom they are working;
3. collection and use of data to:
    a. improve the program for individual students;
    b. improve the program in general;
    c. determine the need for counseling or referrals to social services.[27]

Different program components are expected to be combined into a "blended approach."

This year, all ten CEPS sites had some form of the primary person system in place, although there were variations. In some sites, the student was given a primary person upon entry to the program; in other sites one person served as a primary person for the entire cohort. In one site, one staff member was the primary person for the male students while another staff person played that role for the female students.

Sites also all had some formal ways to learn from each other and communicate about students. While all sites had periodically scheduled formal case conferences that focused on students, some sites had weekly meetings while others met biweekly and others quarterly. These formal sessions were supplemented by reports on students at daily or weekly team and staff meetings and through informal staff conversations.

With some exceptions, sites were making minimal use of data for program improvement; although more were using data for assessing and counseling students. Sites tended to collect attendance data in different ways, using different formats, and it is not clear how accurate attendance records were. For example, there were instances where students with multiple TABE scores taken months apart were listed as attending for only two or three days; while at the other extreme there were students listed as attending more days than have passed since they entered the program.

Infused throughout the CEPS model, and the CEPS sites, are the following youth development practices: high expectations for youth; opportunities for youth to contribute; continuity of

[27] During CEPS first year "administrator consultation with youth and staff on decision-making" was a fourth component; however there was less emphasis in this area after CEPS first year.

relationships with youth; engaging activities for youth; caring and trusting relationships; and physical, emotional, and psychological safety.

Each CEPS site received $35,000 annually in funding from YDI, as well as access to the training and technical assistance. The bulk of the funding for the CEPS sites pre-GED programs came from the sites themselves.

Student Recruitment and Retention[i]

During both years of the evaluation, recruitment was not an issue. During the evaluation's first year, five of the six sites had no problems with recruitment, while during the second year of the evaluation none of the ten sites have had any problems with recruitment. All sites had as many students as they could serve with some sites having waiting lists of up to 150 potential students.

While recruitment was not an issue, retention was to be a problem in some sites. Across the ten programs, 77% (342) of the students attended programs ten days or more. Fifty-four percent (241) of the students remained in CEPS long enough to take the TABE literacy test more than once (which is how retention is being defined for the evaluation).

Table 1: Students Retention by Site

Site	Total Number of Students	Students Attending 10 Days or More	Students with Two TABE Literacy Scores
All Sites	443	342/ 77%	241/ 54%
Site A*	41	31/ 76%	12/ 29%
Site B	23	23/100%	18/ 78%
Site C	64	44/ 69%	30/ 47%
Site D*	61	34/ 56%	20/ 33%
Site E*	42	20/ 48%	19/ 45%
Site F	53	40/ 75%	39/ 74%
Site G	62	60/ 97%	33/ 53%
Site H	20	18/ 90%	19/ 95%
Site I	42	37/ 88%	37/ 88%
Site J*	35	35/100%	14/ 40%

*Cohort 3 site, first year in CEPS

Individual site retention rates ranged from a high of 95% to a low of 29%. There were differences in retention rates by cohort. The four sites with the lowest rates of students taking the TABE more than once were all in their first year as a CEPS program (Cohort 3). Two of these four sites also had lower percentages of students attending for 10 days or less.

Retention did not appear to be related to the sex of the student. Women students were approximately 45% of both the students overall and the students who stayed in CEPS long enough to take the TABE literacy test more than once.

With one exception, there did not seem to be a relationship between incentives and retention rates. The exception was a job related incentive where some students, who were successfully participating in a site's CEPS program, were given opportunities to work for other site programs, like after-school programs. Three sites—I, H, and G—offered this incentive. Two of these sites, H and I, had the highest rates of retention. Sites H and I also provided internships and student stipends, but so did sites with the lowest retention rates. On average, sites had four different incentives with Metro cards being given at all 10 sites (although Site B gave Metro cards based on student need only); followed by gift cards and internships (six sites each); and stipends and student of the month awards (five sites each).

Building Site Capacity

A major goal of the CEPS program is to build the capacity of participating CBOs. This is happening. One indicator of increased site capacity was that between the second and third year, CEPS sites from Cohorts 1 and 2 almost doubled both the number of students they were serving and the number of students staying in the program, while keeping the same level of increase in literacy scores. During CEPS' second year (2006/07), 136 students were served by the three sites from Cohort 1 and the three sites from Cohort 2. Eighty-five of the 136 students (63%) took the TABE more than once. The literacy scores for these 85 students increased by 1.4 GEs, from 6.0 to 7.4. During the 07/08 year, these same six sites served 264 students, 176 (63%) of whom took the TABE more than once. The increase in mean literacy GEs for these students was 1.5, from 5.8 to 7.3.

In another indicator of the impact of building site capacity, the retention rate for the six sites of Cohorts 1 and 2 was significantly higher than that of the four sites of Cohort 3.[28] The overall retention rate for the six Cohort 1 and 2 sites was 63% (176 of 264), with Cohort 1 sites having a retention rate of 60% (100 of 168) and Cohort 2 sites having a retention rate of 79% (76 of 96). The four Cohort 3 sites had a retention rate of 36% (65 of 179).

There were not differences in the amount students gained in literacy and math by cohort. There were differences by cohort, in terms of the number and percent of CEPS students moving on to GED programs during the 2007/08 academic year. Fifteen percent (25) of the Cohort 1 students went on to GED programs, as did 32% (31) of the Cohort 2 students and 12% (22) of the Cohort 3 students.[29]

Student Outcomes

Student Demographics

For the 2007/08 year, the majority of CEPS students were male and Latino with an average age of 19.

[28] Chi square=39.6; p<.000.
[29] Chi square=18.6, p<.001.

Table 2: CEPS Student Demographics

	Women	Men	Total
African American	74/ 17%	84/ 19%	158/ 36%
Latino/a	109/ 25%	142/ 32%	251/ 57%
Other	12/ 3%	21/ 5%	33/ 7%
Total	194/ 45%	248/ 55%	442/100%*

* Sex was not indicated for one student

The sex and race/ethnicity of CEPS student varied greatly by site. While on average, 57% of CEPS students were Latino/a, the percentage in individual sites ranged from 10% to 98%. The percentage of male students varied greatly, by site, as well (from 42% to 100%). There were no differences in terms of student age. Across sites, the average student age was between 19 and 20.

Relatively few CEPS students were parents (65/15%), including 22% (43) of the women students and 9% of the men students (22). Even fewer students (36/8%) were known to have an individual evaluation program, which is an indicator of special education status. This did not mean that only 8% of the students had special education needs; it meant that in most sites, particularly those not affiliated with the New York City Board of Education, special education status was not known because this information was not available to the sites.

Literacy

During the 2006/07 year, the 85 students who had initial and follow-up TABE Literacy scores had an average gain of 1.4 GEs. During the 2007/08 year, the 241 students who had initial and follow-up TABE Literacy scores increased their scores by 1.5 GEs. While the number of students with initial and follow-up scores almost tripled, the gain remained about the same (in 2006/07 from 6.0 to 7.4; in 2007/08 from 5.8 to 7.3). These differences were significant and large.[30] There were also significant differences by site in terms of student gain.[31] There were no differences by sex. Women student scores increased from 5.7 to 7.3 while men student scores increased from 5.9 to 7.4.

[30] F=134, p=.000, d=.9. A d (effect size) of 0.8 or higher is considered large.
[31] F=1.95, p=.046.

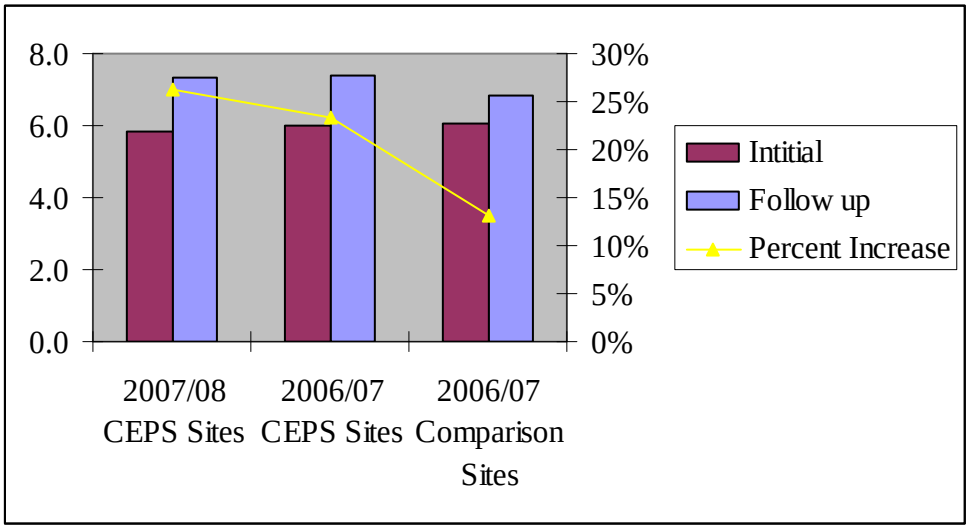
Table 3: Changes in Literacy Scores

Site	Initial Literacy Score	Most Recent Literacy Score	Change in Literacy Score
All Sites	5.8	7.3	1.5
Site A*	5.3	6.3	1.0
Site B	5.0	6.5	1.5
Site C	5.8	7.6	1.8
Site D*	6.0	7.3	1.3
Site E*	4.4	6.4	1.9
Site F	6.3	8.7	2.4
Site G	5.4	6.6	1.2
Site H	5.6	6.6	1.0
Site I	6.6	7.6	1.0
Site J*	6.5	8.0	1.5

*Cohort 3 site, first year in CEPS

To put the amount of change in perspective, changes in CEPS sites' TABE literacy scores were compared to changes in TABE literacy scores for students in five New York City pre-GED programs not associated with CEPS. The percent gain for 2007/08 CEPS sites was 26%; in 2006/07 it was 23.3%. These increases were significantly higher than the 13% increase of the comparison sites.[32]

Figure 1: Literacy Gains by CEPS and NonCEPS Pre-GED Sites



While the gains by CEPS students were impressive, gain scores alone are an incomplete measure of success. CEPS' success should be based on at least three variables—the number of students retained in the program, the gains that they make in the TABE, and the amount of time it takes them to make those gains.

[32] Similar analysis was not able to be done over TABE math scores since it wasn't clear which of the three TABE math scores were being used by the comparison sites.

When retention and gain scores are both used as indicators of success, it is important to note that higher rates of retention may have a negative impact on average student gain. In general, the students who drop out of a program are those who are not doing very well. More successful students tend to remain with a program. Thus when retention efforts become more effective, more students who aren't doing as well remain in the program. This can cause change scores to be lower than they would have been without those students. If, for example, only the top 20% of students are retained in a program, the program's average gain scores would be expected to be higher than if 80% or more of the students remained in the program.

Table 4: Changes in Literacy with Other Indicators of Success by Site

Site	Number of Students	Percent of Students with Two Scores	Total Days Between Pre and Most Recent TABE[33]#	Initial Literacy Score	Most Recent Literacy Scores	Change in Literacy Scores
All Sites	443	54%	131	5.8	7.3	1.5
Site A*	41	29%	122	5.3	6.3	1.0
Site B	23	78%	110	5.0	6.5	1.5
Site C	64	47%	136	5.8	7.6	1.8
Site D*	61	33%	156	6.0	7.3	1.3
Site E*	42	45%	110	4.4	6.4	1.9
Site F	53	74%	116	6.3	8.7	2.4
Site G	62	53%	118	5.4	6.6	1.2
Site H	20	95%	119	5.6	6.6	1.0
Site I	42	88%	119	6.6	7.6	1.0
Site J*	35	40%	313	6.5	8.0	1.5

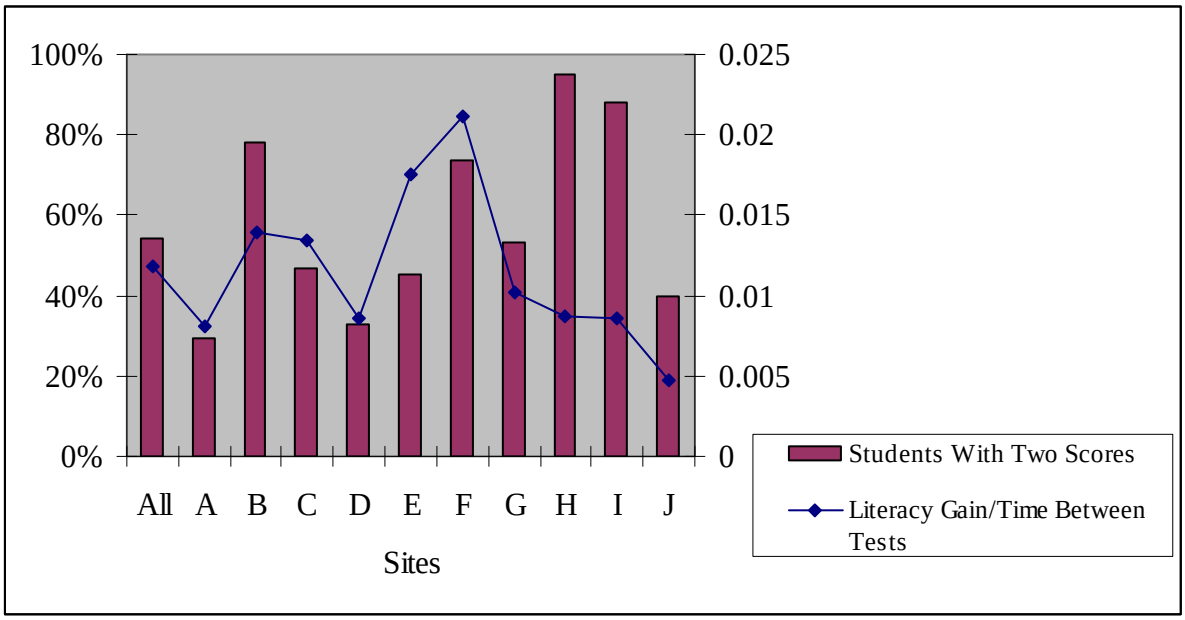
*Cohort 3 site, first year in CEPS
Includes weekends and holidays

Under a definition of success as increases in TABE scores alone, Sites B and J would be considered equally successful, since both sites had average increases in literacy of 1.5. However, on average, the time between their first and most recent TABE score for students in Site B was 110 days (including weekends and holidays), while for students in Site J it was 313 days. Additionally, while 78% of the Site B students had pre and follow up TABE scores, this was the case for only 40% of the Site J students.

In the following graph, the bar indicates retention, as measured by the percentage of students with two TABE scores. The line indicates efficiency and is computed by dividing a student's literacy gain by the days between the pre and most recent TABE scores. Higher efficiency means larger increases in scores over shorter periods of time.

[33] Days between students taking the TABE was used as an approximate indicator of time in the program.

Figure 2: Relative Literacy Performance by Site



Site

By this definition, Site F had the best overall success, while Sites A, D, and J (all first year sites) have had the least success. Site E, also a first year site, had high efficiency but relatively low retention while Site H had high retention but relatively low efficiency.

Mathematics

During the 2006/07 year, the 67 students who had initial and follow-up TABE scores in math had an average gain of 0.9 GEs. During the 2007/08 year, 194 students from eight sites had initial and follow-up TABE Composite Math scores. While the number of students with initial and follow-up scores almost tripled, the gain remained at 0.9 (2006/07 from 5.0 to 5.9; 2007/08 from 5.1 to 6.0). These differences were significant.[34] There were also significant differences in the degree to which students increased their scores by site.[35] As was the case with the literacy scores, there were no significant differences by sex. Women students increased from 5.3 to 6.0 while men students increased from 5.1 to 6.1.

[34] F=53.04, p=.000, d=.54. A d (effect size) of 0.5 to 0.79 is considered of medium size.
[35] F=2.36, p=.07.

Table 5: Changes in Composite Math Score with Other Indicators of Success by Site

Site	Number of Students	Percent of Students with Two Scores	Total Days Between Initial and Most Recent TABE*	Initial Composite Math Score	Most Recent Composite Math Score	Change in Composite Math Scores
Eight Sites	340	57%	130	5.1	6	0.9
Site A*	41	29%	131	5.2	5.7	0.5
Site B	23	83%	123	4.66	5.74	1.1
Site C	64	42%	110	5.2	6.9	1.7
Site F	53	62%	109	5.06	5.94	0.9
Site G	62	53%	116	5.1	5.5	0.4
Site H	20	95%	118	5.4	5.9	0.5
Site I	42	88%	119	4.9	5.9	1
Site J*	35	40%	313	6.2	7.3	1.1

*Cohort 3 site, first year in CEPS

As was the case with the literacy scores, math gain scores are an incomplete measure of success. Sites B, I, and J had approximately the same amount of gain, so if gain scores alone were the definition of success, they would be seen as equally successful; however, the percent of students with two math scores in Sites I and B was almost double that of Site J and the number of days between the initial and most recent TABEs was less than half.

Students in Sites D and E did not have Composite Math scores. They did, however, have Computation Math and Applied Math scores. These two sites had similar gains in Applied Math but dramatically different gains in Computation Math

Table 6: Changes in TABE Math: Computation Scores by Site

Site	Number of Students	Percent of Students with Two Scores	Initial Math: Computation Score	Most Recent Math: Computation Score	Change in Math: Computation Scores
Site D*	61	18%	4.8	7.7	2.9
Site E*	42	24%	4.8	5.3	0.5

*Cohort 3 site, first year in CEPS

Table 7: Changes in TABE Math: Applied Scores by Site

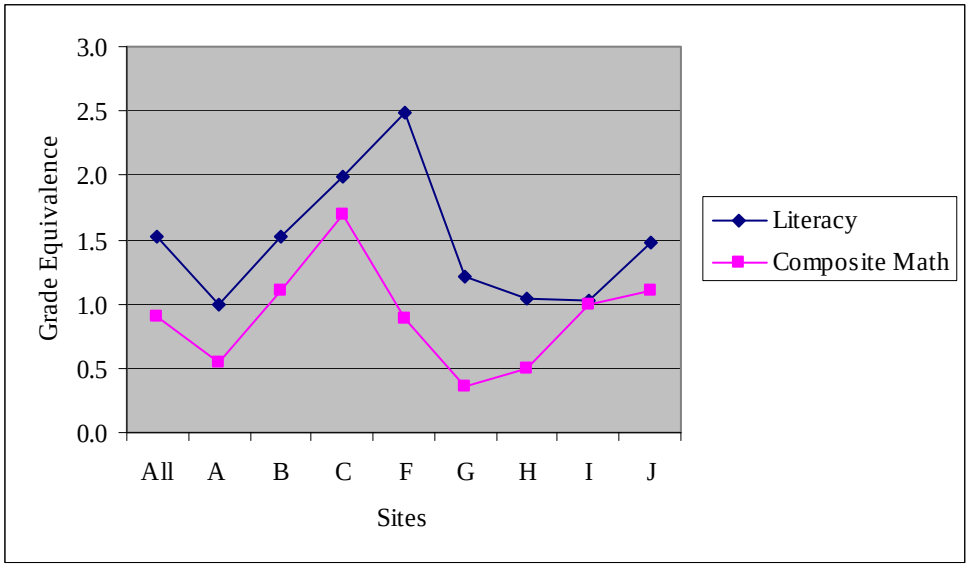
Site	Number of Students	Percent of Students with Two Scores	Initial Math: Applied Score	Most Recent TABE Math: Applied Score	Change in TABE Math: Applied Scores
Site D*	61	33%	5.2	5.8	0.6
Site E*	42	24%	4.9	5.5	0.6

*Cohort 3 site, first year in CEPS

Relative Changes in Literacy and Composite Math Scores

During the 2006/07 year, there was math and literacy data from five of the six sites. In all five sites there were increases in math achievement and in four of the five sites, those increases were less than the increases in literacy. As the following graph indicates, this pattern continued during the 2007/08 year.

Figure 3: Student Gains in TABE Literacy and Composite Math Scores



One hundred and ninety-two students from eight of the ten programs had both initial and follow-up TABE Literacy scores and TABE: Composite Math scores. Overall, students had significantly higher gains in Literacy than in Composite Math (1.5 vs. 0.9).[36]

In seven of the eight sites, students' gains in literacy were greater than their gains in math. In Site I, the gains were the same. The gains in literacy reflect the full CEPS model, including site use of Ramp-Up. Since most sites were using Math Navigator minimally or not at all, gains in Composite Math reflect the CEPS model without a mandated curriculum.

[36] t=7.86, p<.000.

Progress Toward the GED

During the 2007/08 academic year, 78 (18%) CEPS students went on to GED programs. This included 18% of all CEPS students and 35% of CEPS students who stayed in CEPS long enough to take pre and follow up TABE literacy tests. Twenty-one of these 78 students had already taken the GED, 13 of whom received their GED. As Table 8 indicates, there were significant differences by site.[37]

Table 8: Number and Percent of CEPS Students Going To GED Programs

Site	Number going on to GED Programs	Percent going on to GED Programs
All Sites	78	18%
Site A*	2	5%
Site B	4	17%
Site C	3	5%
Site D*	6	10%
Site E*	8	19%
Site F	24	45%
Site G	12	19%
Site H	3	15%
Site I	10	24%
Site J*	6	17%

*Cohort 3 site, first year in CEPS

Site F had a dramatically higher rate of students going on to GED programs (24/45%), followed by Site I (10/23%). Sites A and C had the lowest percentage of students going on to GED programs (Site A: 2/5%; Site C: 3/5%).

Stories of Student Success

While numbers and comparisons are key to assessing program success, there are a variety of other successes that can be better captured by student stories. Many of the stories, like the one below, spoke about students leaving the program, then coming back and succeeding.

> *Jamal was here for two years. The first year he had difficulties coming to the program, he dropped out but then came back. He was in Ramp-Up in 3 months and then promoted to a GED program. He got his GED in March with a 490 in reading and 510 in math.*

Other stories showed the difficulties students face and their determination:

[37]Chi square=43.87, p=.0000.

Jose gives this aura that he is very bright, but he is very behind. He has been diagnosed as emotionally disturbed by the Department of Education. He's almost violent at times. We've had to customize the program for him. He has fewer outbursts now. He is working in the building and we are trying to get him to think about working someplace else. It's still a struggle. He's coming on a regular basis; he feels he doesn't belong in the class, but he keeps coming.

James is reading. He finished his first book. He had it for 3-4 weeks and was reading it outside class. James works from 3:00 to midnight every night and helps support his family. It's hard for him to get here in morning; he's been working really hard and coming to class in addition to his job and having pressure to work overtime to pay bills. When he comes and he finishes his book that's a success.

Some stories spoke of personal growth:

Last term's class there was a student who didn't speak a lot—we would talk a little one-on-one but it was very hard for him to talk in class. To see him get up and read a report for a book talk was good. He was someone who broke down a little barrier….

And still others showed how small actions can reflect large changes in behavior:

Maria kept insisting she couldn't do math. When a woman from Math Navigator came to observe and help, Maria was able to explain answers, after saying "I can't do it."

Kiesha referred a book to another student—she remembered the author and described the book.

Tying Site Activities To Outcomes

Remaking a Program

During their first year in CEPS, Site F's outcomes were not strong. Only 13 students took the TABE more than once and, on average, students did NOT increase their literacy scores, although there was a minimal increase in math scores; by 0.6 GEs. During Site F's second year, student outcomes improved dramatically. The number of CEPS students taking more than one TABE tripled to 39. These 39 students increased their literacy scores by 2.4 GEs and their math scores by 0.9 GEs. And almost half of the students (24/45%) went on to GED programs.

These improvements were tied to Site F's efforts to more fully implement the CEPS model. Initially, Site F's primary person system had different staff members working with different students. This was seen as confusing and not as consistent as it could be. Starting in January 2008, the system was revised to make one person the primary person for all students. That person's other job responsibilities were reduced so that they had time to well support their students. The new primary person set up a buddy system, so each new student had a buddy to

take them through the process. In addition, Site F switched to the new streamlined YDI template for case conferencing and in general feel that it has improved their case conferencing.

While Site F used student surveys to get student feedback both years, during this past year they set up a suggestion box where students (and others) could drop in their concerns. During the 2007/08 year, there was also increased attention to data. Along with looking at the TABE scores, the program director was looking at the monthly group and individual student attendance data. In one-on-one meetings with students, staff went over their data with each student and developed strategies to improve student participation and achievement.

In Site F, there was an emphasis on going on to the GED, including having students take the GED predictor tests and going over the results with them. There were changes in the incentives as well. CEPS students became integrated into the young adult training program, where they received training and a stipend. In addition, 90% of the CEPS students were going through the site's life skills program

Equally or perhaps more importantly, there was a major change in instruction. The 2006/07 instructor was replaced with a former special education teacher who was enthusiastic about being at CEPS and about using the Ramp-Up model. As the instructor explained:

> [Ramp-Up] is a program that in the beginning I thought was too structured. When I went to the workshops, I learned I don't have to do it exactly as it is. I read the book and am breaking it down into what works for my students… It is good to have [something that shows] what you should do today. I use it as a basis; I can put things in, take things out. Some are good, some I don't need to worry about.

To the instructor "the most important thing is that the kids are reading. They have to read the book in class and have to do reports on it. Some kids have read 3-4 books this year."

Increasing Numbers; Decreasing Gains

The major change between Site G's second and third years was in retention. In 2006/07, only eight students stayed in the program long enough to take the TABE more than once. In 2007/08 the number of students taking the TABE more than once increased four fold to 32. Indeed, more 2007/08 students went on to GED programs than 2006/07 students stayed in the program long enough to take the TABE more than once (12 vs 8). Between 2006/07 and 2007/08, there were however decreases in the size of gains. In literacy, the gains decreased from 2.3 GEs to 1.2 GEs, while in math, the increases declined from 2.2 GEs to 0.4 GEs.

The major change in Site G was in instruction. During 2006/07 and 2007/08 the program had three different instructors, the most recent coming this past winter. Observations saw major differences between the Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 instructors. During the fall observation, the instructor appeared to be disinterested in the students and Ramp-Up rituals and routines were not being implemented and there was no independent reading. The spring observation found a new

instructor who was committed to the students and the program. Ramp-Up rituals and routines were being implemented and there was a great deal of independent reading. Along with a change in the instructor came a change in classrooms. The new classroom was for CEPS classes only, allowing student work to be displayed and providing a space where the CEPS instructor could meet with students outside of class time for tutoring or other assistance. The new classroom was also closer to the students' "primary person," making closer monitoring easier.

In addition, Site G changed to the streamlined model of case conferencing introduced by CEPS and increased the number of case conferences to three a month. More resources were added to the program including work support, a financial literacy component, and Friday book talks where students come in for donuts and coffee to lead discussions of books they are reading.

Surviving a Difficult First Year

Site A had a difficult first year. It had the lowest number and percent of students taking the TABE more than once (12/29%). Too, their gains in literacy and math were among the lowest for the 10 sites. Only 2 of their students (5%) went on to GED programs.

During its first year, Site A had to deal with several issues. They began with one instructor teaching both the GED class and the pre-GED CEPS class. This did not appear to work well. There were scheduling problems, with the instructor at times having to be in two places at the same time, causing non-instructional staff to cover parts of the classes. In addition, the original instructor had a strong accent and was uncomfortable doing the Ramp-Up read aloud in part because the students made fun of him. In January 2008, a new instructor was hired for the CEPS class and, in the words of the director, the "transition was something students welcomed." The current instructor followed the Ramp-Up Navigator model very closely, utilizing all aspects of the Ramp-Up literacy curriculum, including the recommended format and structure.

Site A had a primary person system; however, while originally one person served as the primary person for all of the CEPS students; after she left, the students were "split up" among the remaining staff members. Site A did do case conferencing, meeting every week or two.

Making Math Work

Between its second and third year, about the same numbers of Site C students took the TABE literacy test more than once (from 28 to 30). Their increases in literacy scores stayed at a strong level (from 1.7 GEs to 1.8 GEs). In math, almost 70% more students took the TABE math test more than once (from 16 to 27) and their gains in math scores increased dramatically (from 0.6 GEs to 1.7 GEs). Site C's gain was almost twice that of CEPS' as whole.

During the past two years, Site C's literacy instructor remained the same, as did site use of the primary person system and case conferencing. The major change was in math instruction. A new math instructor was hired for the 2007/08 year, one with strong math skills who was very experienced in working with out-of-school youth. This instructor had serious problems with

Math Navigator and mostly used their own curriculum. The instructor felt that Math Navigator was:

> *…not designed for older youth who have dropped out of school; it's designed for students who most attend school. It is so sequential—a regular program has the luxury of being sequential. We don't have that. Between one class and to another—we have about 60% different students. Math Navigator was written for much younger kids. Handing students a curriculum written for 12 year old, is something that I don't want to do. So much of what I do as a teacher is to empower them as a learner.*

Instead, the instructor read what was supposed to be covered and developed their own activities and materials. The instructor explained "There is a lot of instability in the program. My first responsibility is to create stability and I can do that a lot easier when it is my own stuff."

Hitting the Literacy Road Running

Even though 2007/08 was its first year in CEPS, Site E had one of the highest literacy gains (1.9 GEs), with almost half of their students taking the TABE Literacy test more than once and 19% going on to GED programs. They were not as strong in math, with minimal gains (0.5 GEs in Applied Math; 0.6 GEs in Computation Math) and with less than a quarter of the students taking the TABE math tests more than once.

Site E had "been shopping for a year for a curriculum for their program for out-of school youth." They felt they had found it in CEPS and folded the CEPS model into their existing program. Site E reported initially implementing the Ramp-Up literacy curriculum "tightly" but then, after training, began to implement it with more flexibility. They did not begin implementing Math Navigator until spring, 2008. Site E felt that their primary person system was working well with each student assigned an advisor when they entered CEPS. This advisor was informed if there were problems in the classroom with a student and the advisor met with the student "immediately after class or next time they come in." This spring, Site E was transitioning from "informal discussions" to quarterly "structured student conferences" supplemented with some review between meetings and some updates during weekly staff meetings. Site E was pleased enough with these processes that they are planning to have education and social science services work together across all site programs.

Site Directors Perceptions of CEPS' Impact on Their Programs

Cohort 1 and 2 CEPS site directors were asked about the impact of CEPS on their programs. Two of sites spoke about CEPS giving them, and their programs, a structure they could follow:

> *All the technical assistance sessions have really been instrumental in helping me think to the next level. At the program level, CEPS has given us a program structure to start with and work from…[CEPS] has given us a place to anchor our programs.*
>
> Cohort 1 Site

[CEPS] has given us a structure especially around supportive services, paying individual attention to a student and finding out their needs. CEPS makes it manageable. Especially the second year, with CEPS we have a purpose a plan, a structure. That has been the biggest difference in second year. It has given us a vision; I'm not sure if we are completely there—but I can see it.

Cohort 2 Site

A second Cohort 2 site director reported CEPS led them to "redesign" their program.

Our experience has been that it has led us to enriching the program and expanding it. The blended approach came natural to us. Now we are doing it with a certain set of skills; before we were doing it with a heart now we are doing it with skills.

A Cohort 1 site director said CEPS had "a critical impact" on their existing social support approach. "CEPS trainings and discussions around idea of primary person and caring adults…encouraged us to seek funds to fund primary person program." The final Cohort 1 site director felt that CEPS and Ramp-Up targeting of the issues changed their agency. "The agency is now about being pro-active."

A Cohort 2 site director spoke about the many ways CEPS made them a better program:

We didn't have the right pieces last year. The literacy piece was a challenge we had to get our hands around; it was a big transition in a positive way. [CEPS] allowed us to use the youth development, which we are good at. We focused on the engagement of the students and what we need to make them more cohesive as a group. CEPS challenged us to be better. Otherwise [the program] would have just been a classroom experience and that isn't realistic with these students.

VII. Conclusions

CEPS' two major goals are to strengthen the capacity of community organizations to provide high quality and integrated youth development, support, and education services and to enable returning youth to develop skills, attitudes, experiences, and credentials to achieve self-sufficiency and active involvement (in the classroom, the program, and the organization).

Their first goal was clearly being achieved. Working with CEPS allowed sites to expand and improve their services. Cohort 1 and 2 sites have been increasing the number of students they serve and improving their implementation of the major components of the CEPS model.

During their first year, Cohort 3 sites were implementing the model, working through the "kinks" while serving students. Eight of the ten sites were planning to continue their CEPS programs. At the other two sites, YDI and site staff, jointly decided that since their sites were not following the CEPS instructional model, it was not appropriate for them to continue.

It is more difficult to assess the degree to which the second goal of self sufficiency was being achieved. While regular attendance continued to be a challenge; the majority of students remained actively involved in the program; improving their skills. Too, while for most students, the improvement over their several months in the program was not enough for them to successfully enter GED programs, it did move them a considerable distance forward. In a little more than four months, students, on average, made a gain of 1.5 GEs in literacy and 0.9 GEs in math. And as instructors reported- students were enjoying reading; a major step forward.

Additional conclusions include:

Across sites, the CEPS model was achieving student outcomes. During the 2007/08 academic year, CEPS student retention rates, as defined as remaining in the program long enough to take the TABE more than once, averaged over 50%, with literacy gains averaging 1.5 GEs and Composite Math gains averaging 0.9 GEs. Eighteen percent of CEPS students moved to GED programs. In addition, students in CEPS sites both in 2006/07 and 2007/08 increased their TABE literacy scores significantly more than did students in nonCEPS pre-GED programs.

The support CEPS staff provided, combined with previous experience implementing the model, allowed sites to effectively scale-up their efforts. Between CEPS' second and third year, existing CEPS sites almost doubled both the number of students they were serving and the number of students staying in the program while keeping the same level of increase in literacy scores. Cohort 1 and 2 sites had retention rates significantly higher than those of the newer Cohort 3 sites. There were not significant differences in increases in literacy and math skills.

Students continued to have significantly greater gains in literacy than in math. In nine of the ten sites, students had great increases in literacy than in math. Math continued to be less emphasized than literacy in CEPS, with sites spending on average about half the instructional time on math as they did on literacy.

Recruitment continued not to be a problem. While there continued to be attendance/ retention issues, they varied greatly by site, with experienced sites having better retention. Recruitment was not a problem. The population in need of such programs continues to be far greater than can be served by CEPS. Finding students for the programs was not a problem.

CEPS seemed to be equally effective with women and men students. While the percentage of men and women students varied greatly by program, there were no sex differences in numbers of students taking the TABE more than once. Neither were there sex differences in pre and follow-up literacy or math scores.

VIII. Recommendations

It is recommended that if the CEPS model can be sustained by CBOs, CEPS should be widely expanded. The needs of out-of-school youth not eligible for GED programs are great and, as the waiting lists at the CEPS sites indicate, young people want to be a part of CEPS programs.

It is recommended that in order to more fully assess the CEPS model or indeed any model for out of school youth, outcome variables to determine program success should go beyond increases in TABE scores. CEPS success should be defined by, at least three variables—the number and percent of students retained in the program, the gains that they make in the TABE, and the amount of time it takes them to make those gains.

It is recommended that CEPS staff and sites work together to:

- develop reasonable expectations of success in terms of percent of students retained, percent or absolute increase in scores, and time to achieve gains;
- develop guidelines for the approximate number of weekly instructional hours in literacy and math needed.

It is recommended that two-way directional mapping be made between the content and skills covered by Ramp-Up and Math Navigator and the content and skills tested by the TABE. The goal would be to develop the degree of overlap between the Ramp-Up and Math Navigator curricula and the TABE test. If the TABE test covers areas not included in Ramp-Up or Math Navigator, CEPS needs to integrate the teaching of these areas within CEPS. If Ramp-Up and Math Navigator cover areas not included in the TABE, then decisions need to be made as to what is important to teach and what the appropriate balance is between teaching TABE content and skills and those from Ramp-Up and Math Navigator. Regardless of the results of this mapping, more attention should be paid to the role of math instruction in CEPS.

It is recommended that to reduce possible problems during their first year, sites new to CEPS begin their training prior to their implementation of the model.

It is recommended that a decision must be made about the importance of collecting accurate data on student attendance and on instructional hours. If these data are required by funders or used by programs, then a standard way to define and collect attendance and instructional hours makes sense. If not, it may not be worth the site time and resources necessary to do this data collection well.

Appendix B: TABE/Ramp-Up Alignment

As part of the CEPS evaluation process, the degree of commonality between the literacy curriculum and the literacy assessment was explored. CEPS' literacy curriculum is Ramp-Up, a curriculum developed by America's Choice. Ramp-Up Literacy has two courses (Ramp-Up Literacy and Ramp-Up to Advanced Literacy), each of which contains three units. The Reading Subtest of the TABE (Tests of Adult Basic Education) 9&10 is used to assess to student literacy skills. Students start by taking a locator test and based on these results take one of four levels of the TABE (E, M, D, or A).

To explore the appropriateness or content validity[38] of TABE Reading Subtest as a measure of Ramp-Up's impact on student achievement, Ramp-Up's course goals were compared to the objectives of the TABE Reading Subtest and the objectives of the TABE Reading Subtest were compared to the Ramp-Up course goals.[39]

The results of this process found that while Ramp-Up covers the skills and content areas tested in the TABE Reading Subtest, 62% of the Ramp-Up objectives are not covered by the TABE Reading Subtest. Since Ramp-Up covers the areas included in the TABE, the TABE is a valid measure; but since Ramp-Up covers many areas not included in the TABE, it is an incomplete measure of what students should be learning under Ramp-Up. A more detailed discussion of the process and results is provided below.

Summary of TABE Reading Subtest Objectives

The TABE Reading Subtest has the following five official category objectives: Interpret graphic information; Words in context; Recall information; Construct meaning; and Evaluate/extend meaning (TABE 9&10 Technical Report, 2004). Based on the description of the Reading Subtest in the TABE technical manual, the evaluation team added a sixth objective: "Find and use information in reference and consumer sources, including stimuli such as advertisements and Web pages."

Although they are not included in the TABE 9&10 Technical Report, other online resources list sub-skills for each of the five official Reading objectives on the TABE. For example, "Words in context" is comprised of three sub-skills: same meaning, opposite meaning, and appropriate word. However, not all sub-skills are covered in all of the levels. For example, in the Evaluate/extend meaning objective, genre is covered only in the higher levels (A and D) while fact/opinion is covered in all four levels. Because of this variation, as well as the lack of official

[38] Validity means that a test is valid—that it measures that what it is supposed to measure. Content validity means that the test covers the appropriate subject matter.
[39] The mapping was done with the objectives of the TABE Reading Subtest and not individual test items.

information about the sub-skills in the Technical Report, Ramp-Up course goals were mapped onto the broader objectives, rather than the sub-skills.

Summary of Ramp-Up Literacy Course Goals

Based on the Ramp-Up Literacy Teacher Guide Series: Getting Started, there are a total of 281 course goals for the three units in Literacy I and three the units in Advanced Literacy I. However, because there are course goals listed for each unit, many are repeated up to six times, using either identical or similar language. For practical purposes, there are approximately 90 Ramp-Up literacy course goals and this was the number used for the following analysis.

Ramp-Up Literacy Course Goals Covered by TABE Reading Subtest

The mapping of Ramp-Up's course goals to the objectives of the TABE Reading Subtest showed that only 38% (34) of Ramp-Ups course goals are covered in some way by the TABE. Table 1 includes the Ramp-Up course goals not covered by the TABE.

Table 1: Ramp-Up Course Goals Not Covered by TABE Reading Subtest

Adjust reading strategies to fulfill a particular purpose
Adjusting reading rate according to purpose and type of text
Choose appropriate books for independent reading
Clarify and expand on comments when asked to do so
Complete a picture book mimic incorporating elements of the author's craft
Complete one mystery novel at the appropriate reading level
Connect their growth in reading comprehension to their science classes
Contribute to the class word bank
Create and use a rubric for evaluating a written interview
Create and use a rubric for evaluating persuasive essays
Create and use a rubric for evaluating reports
Create and use a rubric for evaluating summaries
Create and use rubric for evaluating literary letters
Create and use rubric for evaluating personal narrative
Create and use rubric for evaluating picture book mimic
Demonstrate active listening behaviors during daily read-aloud
Demonstrate knowledge of the rituals and routines of the course
Differentiate between the features of novels and memoirs
Display poise and confidence when speaking and making presentations
Explain how some words contain meaningful elements (affixes and roots), and use these elements to understand word meanings
Explain how some words contain meaningful elements (root words, prefixes), and use these elements to understand word meanings
Explain the difference between primary and secondary sources in historical texts

Express positive expectations for increased competence in reading and writing
Express positive expectations for their own reading competence
Identify details of historical context in fictional texts
Identify meaningful elements in words such as affixes and roots
Incorporate content specific vocabulary
Keep a daily log of independent reading
Monitor their own comprehension and use appropriate strategies to repair comprehension when it breaks down
Participate actively in the routines and rituals of the course
Participate productively in small-group discussions
Present the information using textual and visual media
Present themselves as positive role models in the cross-age tutoring setting for younger readers
Presenting book talks and reading to younger children in cross-age tutoring
Read a picture book fluently to classmates and to younger children
Read one informational scientific book
Read outside class at least one hour per week
Recognize correct definitions of targeted words
Recognize correct usage of targeted words
Select an example of an endangered species to research
Select words to learn from independent reading texts
Set and monitor individual goals for reading improvement
Set and monitor individual reading and writing goals
Use adversative conjunctives to comprehend persuasive texts (for example, however, nevertheless, on the other hand, etc.)
Use appropriate specialized vocabulary
Use appropriate turn-taking behaviors, solicit and respect the comments of classmates, and respond appropriately to questions and comment
Use appropriate volume, rate of speaking, and eye contact in presenting book talks
Use causal conjunctives to comprehend informational texts (such as therefore, so, because of, as a result, etc.)
Use specialized vocabulary in presentation of topic study
Use temporal conjunctives to comprehend narrative texts (such as then, next, previously, finally, etc.)
Write a report on a recent historical event and include an interview with an adult who has a perspective on the event
Write a short memoir to use in a cross-age tutoring meeting
Write a short personal narrative
Write a short report on a topic related to the unit theme
Write an annotated bibliography of completed books
Write three literary letters (responses to literature)

One reason for the low level of matching between the Ramp-Up course goals and the TABE Reading Subtest may be the nature of some of the Ramp-Up course goals. As shown in Table 1, 22 of the 90 course goals are very specific to the curriculum and focus on class rituals, expected classroom behavior, and other goals that cannot be assessed through a standardized test. Examples of these types of course goals included: Use the rituals and routines of the course to direct their actions; Express positive expectations for their own reading competence; and Demonstrate active listening behaviors during daily read-aloud. When these ritual and behavior goals were removed from the analysis and only Ramp-Ups skill and content goals were included; the TABE covered 50% of the Ramp-Up skills and knowledge goals.

The original analysis was done over the TABE Reading Subtest, which was the literacy test used by all CEPS sites. The TABE has four other literacy-related subtests (Language, Vocabulary, Language Mechanics, and Spelling). If all five TABE literacy-related subtests are included in the mapping analysis, the percentage of all Ramp-Up literacy course goals covered by the TABE increases from 34/38% to 42/47%.

TABE Objectives Covered by Ramp-Up Literacy

All six Reading objectives on the TABE are covered either fully or partially in the Ramp-Up curriculum. The details regarding the level of coverage of the TABE Reading objectives is provided in Table 2. As noted earlier, the TABE Reading sub-skills were not included in the technical manual; the only available information about the sub-skills was the one to three word titles. For example, "apply passage elements." As a result, it was sometimes difficult to assess whether they were covered by Ramp-Up.

Table 2: TABE Reading Objectives Covered by Ramp-Up

	TABE Reading Objective	**TABE Reading Sub-skills Covered**	**TABE Reading Sub-skills Not Covered**
Fully Covered	*Words in Context*	Same Meaning	
		Opposite Meaning	
		Appropriate Word	
	Construct Meaning	Character Aspects	
		Main Idea	
		Summary/Paraphrase	
		Cause/Effect	
		Compare/Contrast	
		Conclusion	
		Supporting Evidence	
	Recall Information	Details	
		Sequence	
		Stated Concepts	
Partially Covered	*Interpret Graphic Information*	Maps	Consumer Materials
		Graphs	Forms

		Reference Sources	Signs
		Index	
		Dictionary Usage	
	Evaluate/Extend Meaning	Fact/Opinion	Apply Passage Elements
		Predict Outcomes	Effect/Intention
		Generalizations	Author Purpose
			Style Technique
	Find and use information in reference and consumer sources, including stimuli such as advertisements and Web pages	N/A (Not an official TABE Reading objective)	N/A (Not an official TABE Reading objective)

As noted in Table 2, all six of the objectives on the TABE Reading Subtest were covered by Ramp-Up. However, some objectives were covered more frequently by the curriculum. As demonstrated in Table 3, Construct meaning and Evaluate/extend meaning were covered the most frequently. Additionally, some Ramp-Up course goals were considered to be matched with more than one TABE reading objective. For example, the Ramp-Up course goal "Demonstrate use of reading strategies that help them make sense of informational and historical texts including inference, prediction, cause/effect, summary and determining importance" covers both Construct meaning and Evaluate/extend meaning.

Table 3: Number of Ramp-Up Course Goals Covering Different TABE Reading Objectives

TABE Reading Subtest Objectives	**Number of Ramp-Up Course Goals Covering Objective**
Construct Meaning	15
Evaluate/Extend Meaning	10
Words in Context	4
Recall Information	3
Interpret Graphic Information	3
Use Information in Reference and Consumer Sources	2