



Wisconsin
Evaluation
Collaborative

Academic and Career Planning Evaluation

for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction | 2019-20



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About the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative

The Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC) is housed at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. WEC's team of evaluators supports youth-serving organizations and initiatives through culturally responsive and rigorous program evaluation. Learn more at <http://www.wec.wceruw.org>.

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Academic and Career Planning 2019-20 Evaluation Report

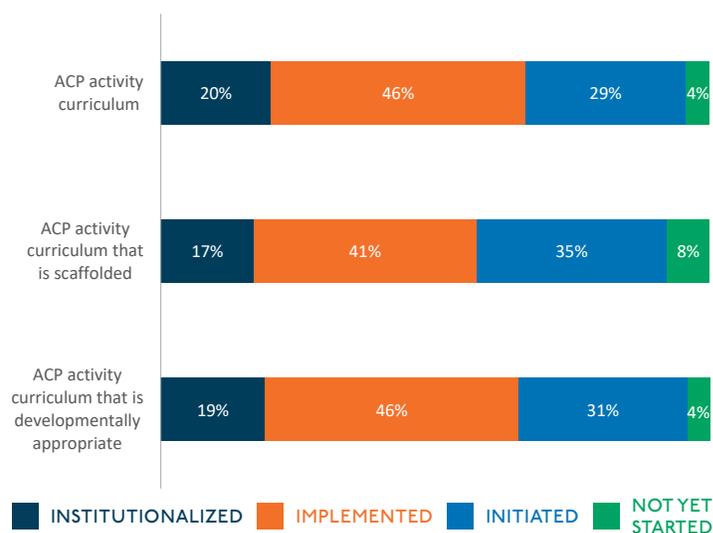
Academic & Career Planning is intended to equip students in grades 6-12 with the tools necessary to make informed, career-based choices about postsecondary education and training. It is part of DPI's overall vision for every student to graduate from high school college- and career-ready. As part of its longitudinal, mixed-methods evaluation of ACP, WEC fielded a school-level survey and began case studies in schools across the state to investigate the extent of implementation, varieties of ACP infrastructure and activities, and stakeholder perceptions. WEC also analyzed school and student outcomes data. Case studies were interrupted by the Covid-19 closure of schools, but will be continued in Fall 2020. Findings from case studies and additional school and student output data will be reported in an additional report expected in December 2020.

Implementation continues to grow, some are still initiating

While survey data show that implementation continues to grow, there are still districts and schools in the initial phases of planning and implementation. Particularly in terms of scope and sequence, some locations are still (re)assessing what current activities align to ACP, what additional elements are needed, and how and where they should be delivered and by whom. Some districts still rely

heavily or exclusively on Xello to serve as their scope and sequence for all of ACP. While districts continue to move towards an all-school culture of ACP, there are still those who view ACP as the responsibility of one or a few staff members, typically counselors and/or CTE instructors.

FIGURE I
Implementation of an Outlined ACP Activity Curriculum, 2019-20



Mixed-Methods Evaluation



Case Studies



School & Student Outputs



Student Outcome Data



School Level Survey

The Covid-19 interruption may have a silver lining in that it may cause many districts, both at initial and at more advanced stages of implementation, to tweak or rethink their delivery systems, scope and sequence, and other factors. Consequently, districts may have additional needs for building or rebuilding their programs, but opportunities for “late bloomers” to get going may exist as well.

Recommendation: Continue to support schools in the process of building an ACP culture and practices. Leverage the Covid-19 interruption as an opportunity to (re)start, assess, tweak, or even rebuild ACP programs so that they better serve students in the changed economic landscape.

Recommendation: Connected to the above recommendation, continue to message that Xello is not the sum total of ACP programming, but simultaneously leverage the advantages it provides for distance, online learning.

Job Shadowing continues to grow

The 5 Powerful Practices (Final Projects, Job Shadowing, Mock Interviews, Resume-Building, and One-on-One Conferencing/Advising) were first identified in the 2017-18 evaluation report and reinforced in the 2018-19 report. Among these, in this limited data set, Job Shadowing stood out as a particularly valuable activity, with schools either requiring job shadows or working to make them a requirement. While seen by both students (as evidenced in last year’s data) and school personnel as valuable, job shadow opportunities require planning, infrastructure, and coordination, both with employers and internally to match students to opportunities and track their participation.

Districts with well-established, required job shadowing programs report that consistent, ongoing communication efforts are paramount, and that staffing, funding, resources, and policy are required to make this a viable component.

Recommendation: Continue to develop and share information, resources, networking opportunities and other means for supporting interested districts in developing or expanding job shadowing and other types of work-based learning programs.

Some outcomes improve, but participation gaps exist

The second year of outcomes data continues to show increases in some short- and medium-term measures and decreases in others. While most effects were small, and quite possibly the result of statistical “noise”, there are some continuing trends from the first year’s analysis. These trends include an associated positive change in four-year high school completion rates and in high school attendance rate and an associated negative change in composite ACT score. There continue to be limitations to these findings; for example, the possibility of interference from other, co-occurring policy changes and other factors cannot be determined given the statewide roll-out of ACP. Consequently, outcome estimates should be interpreted with caution, and findings need to continue to be observed over time to better determine their meaning.

Course participation data continue to show gaps by various student subgroups and by region. As further data on career-based learning and dual enrollment become available, the evaluation will continue to track the status of these gaps. WEC is still in the process of conducting additional research on the nature of these gaps.

Recommendation: Avoid prematurely claiming positive effects in terms of outcomes of ACP implementation, but instead, continue to monitor the data longitudinally.

Recommendation: Continue to pursue additional research into the equitable implementation of ACP in terms of access and participation gaps.

Wisconsin Center for Education Research

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Section I

Introduction

Introduction

The following is the year-end report for the fifth annual (2019-20) Evaluation of Academic and Career Planning (ACP) conducted by the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC), part of the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

Purpose of the Evaluation

In February 2016, DPI engaged the services of researchers at WCER to provide formative feedback via an evaluation for two and a half years (March 2016 to August 2018) for the ACP pilot and statewide implementation process. This contract was subsequently extended for additional years. The partnership between DPI's ACP team and WCER stemmed from the ACP Needs Assessment conducted by WCER personnel on behalf of DPI in the spring of 2015, the results of which informed the planning of DPI's ACP pilot activities. The activities conducted during the initial phase of the evaluation focused on the ACP Pilot conducted in 25 Wisconsin school districts during the 2015-16 school year. Year 2 focused on further preparation for the statewide roll-out, and in Year 3 (2017-18) statewide implementation began. Year 4 continued to evaluate implementation, but also focused on identifying and describing Final Projects, one of the "Powerful Practices" identified in Year 3. In Year

5 we continued to monitor levels of implementation as well as looked at means for delivering ACP content and activities.

Specifically, in Year 5 of the evaluation, WEC built upon the mixed methods evaluation that took place in the initial years, conducting a statewide survey among school leaders to follow up on findings from the previous year, including progress made in implementation, challenges and successes, and perceptions about stakeholder awareness of and attitudes toward ACP. Additional data were collected for 2018-19 and analyzed on logic model outputs and outcomes to compare to baseline data for the longitudinal analysis that will continue in the future. A focus on specific infrastructural elements and student activities (outputs) was continued to understand how they are realized in various contexts, to measure their prevalence, and to eventually measure possible associations between outputs and outcomes at the school and student levels over time.

For the qualitative portion of the evaluation, WEC planned to focus on the various ways schools structured their ACP curriculum delivery, particularly dedicated time in the school schedule. While some schools deliver ACP content regularly in “homerooms” or “advisory periods” or other specific learning periods, other schools integrate content in a variety of content courses. Many schools use a hybrid model, delivering some content during a dedicated ACP time, and other activities in courses. Our focus was to consider different models in terms of identifying strengths, weaknesses, and potential best practices. However, just as the spring case studies began, schools across Wisconsin were impacted by the Covid-19 virus and resulting shut-down of face-to-face instruction. Consequently, only a few interviews with school leaders were able to be conducted, and although identified case study districts had been willing to participate in teacher, student, and other focus groups and interviews, the demands made on schools to switch to remote instruction were too overwhelming to allow for participation. Thus, the case study data contained in this report are extremely limited, but plans to resume these case studies during the Fall of 2020 are underway. A number of case study districts expressed their willingness to participate in the fall, and the focus on ACP delivery will continue, with added inquiry around how schools have been delivering (or have been unable to deliver) ACP content and instruction during the period of remote instruction. Consequently, we plan to report these findings in an addendum near the end of 2020. Year 5 was also to include further investigation into certain aspects of equity in the implementation of ACP, particularly certain “high-leverage” activities such as work-based learning, dual enrollment, and industry-recognized certifications. While some of these activities will be measured in the outputs data, the qualitative portion of this line of inquiry will now be the focus of Year 6 (2020-21) of the evaluation.

Evaluation Questions

The overarching evaluation questions for the Year 5 statewide evaluation are the following:

1. To what extent are school districts and schools implementing ACP infrastructure and activities?
2. What are the varieties of ACP infrastructure and activities across different school and district contexts?
3. What are stakeholder (administrators, school counselors, teachers, students, families) perceptions about ACP infrastructure and activities?
4. What, if any, changes have occurred in terms of student outcome data compared to baseline data?
5. What, if any, associations between ACP elements and outcomes can be measured at school or student levels?

The specific infrastructure elements and student activities of interest, referred to in Evaluation Questions 1-3, are the following:

Infrastructural elements:

1. An inclusive schoolwide culture with administrative engagement, prioritized goals, staff participation and which is student-focused.
2. Regular and ongoing informing of and engaging families in their students' ACP.
3. Regular and ongoing supportive and safe student relationships with adults.
4. Non-judgmental, informed, comprehensive education and career advising.
5. Equitable access to all ACP opportunities.
6. Regular, ongoing and dedicated time for ACP activities.
7. Outlined ACP activity curriculum that is scaffolded and developmentally appropriate (scope and sequence).
8. Career pathways.

Student activity components

1. Student participation in career-based learning activities.
2. Students taking dual credit, AP, and IB courses.
3. Students participating in Industry-Recognized Credentials (IRCs).
4. Students utilizing knowledge and skills gained through ACP activity participation to set, modify, and update personal, education and career goals.
5. Students choosing CTE and academic courses applicable to their ACP/career goals.

Methodology

To address the evaluation questions, WEC evaluators designed a study comprised of 3 major components:

1. School-level survey of ACP coordinators or principals
2. Mini case studies in 8 districts that identified interesting practices for delivering ACP in their survey responses
3. Outputs and outcomes data

School-Level Survey of ACP Coordinators

WEC evaluators developed and programmed a web-based survey in Qualtrics intended to gather information statewide from ACP coordinators of schools with any grades 6 through 12. For those schools for which we did not have contact information for an ACP coordinator, the survey was sent to the school principal. The purpose of the survey was to collect information related to ACP implementation during the third full year of statewide implementation. Specific areas of interest were ACP infrastructure and engagement, perceptions of ACP awareness and knowledge, and ACP component implementation. For the second year in a row we included items related to opportunity and funding limitations connected to certain ACP student activities, and the decision-making processes that districts/schools implemented to determine how to allocate resources and select students for participation in activities.

WEC opened the survey on November 20, 2019 and sent it to school leaders representing ACP schools in Wisconsin. The survey closed on January 22, 2020. The total number of respondents was 404, with 334 completing the full survey for a response rate of 37 percent and a completion rate of 83 percent. Key findings are included throughout this report. For the full survey report, please refer to [Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20 Report](#).

School Mini Case Studies

Using survey responses, web searches, and referrals, WEC researchers identified schools that reported scheduling dedicated ACP time, grading or granting credit for ACP time, and/or requiring certain ACP-related activities for graduation. After eliminating schools that had previously been studied or whose practices were otherwise well documented and communicated (via conferences, CESA meetings, webinars or other practices), 12 schools were identified as candidates for conducting case studies. These 12 schools varied by size (enrollment), school type (rural, town, or suburban) and geographic area of the state.¹ School leaders were contacted by email to invite them to participate in a telephone interview to probe deeper into their survey responses. Ultimately, 8 responded and expressed interest in participation, and 3 were interviewed with additional interviews and focus groups scheduled at the time of the pandemic-related closure of schools, preventing further data collection. Many of the previously scheduled data collection activities are expected to be conducted in Fall 2020. Of the three interviews that were conducted, one was with a principal, one with a counselor/career advisor, and one was a two-person interview with both a principal and a school counselor.

Case studies of the selected districts included a review of their survey findings to inform the customization of the general protocol for interviewing school leader(s) (typically the principal and/or the ACP coordinator; for the general school leader interview protocol, see Appendix A). These interviews, conducted over the telephone, generally lasted about 30 minutes, and were audio-recorded for note-taking purposes with the permission of the participants. Interviewees were promised confidentiality, and that audio-recordings would be used strictly to clean up notes and/or create transcriptions and then be deleted. Notes and transcriptions were analyzed and coded by theme to look for any patterns or phenomena of note among the limited data set.

¹ No urban schools were among those that were identified and/or were willing to participate in further study.

Outputs and Outcomes Data

To evaluate the implementation of certain ACP infrastructural and student activity components, WEC requested the following statewide administrative data:

- Outputs
 - » Student participation in career-based learning activities
 - » Student enrollment in dual enrollment and college level industry certification courses
 - » Student enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses
 - » Career Cruising activity completion
- Short-term outcomes
 - » Attendance rates
 - » Out-of-school suspension rates
- Intermediate outcomes
 - » ACT composite scores
 - » AP exam scores
 - » High school completion

WEC received the majority of these sources for all years 2014-15 through 2018-19. The majority of data also cover the entire state of Wisconsin. There were, however, restrictions on some of the requested output data. For student participation in career-based learning activities, student enrollment in dual-credit, and student enrollment in college level industry certification courses, the data source that provides these results, the Career and Technical Education Enrollment Reporting System (CTEERS) transitioned to a new data reporting system in 2018-19. Due to this transition, 2018-19 data for these items were not available at the time of this evaluation report. In addition to these sources, WEC also requested Career Cruising data on student activity completion. Due to the transition from Career Cruising to Xello in 2019-20, limitations on existing data associated with Career Cruising records did not allow for an accurate picture of all recommended Career Cruising activity completion. Thus, the evaluation did not examine Career Cruising activity completion

for 2018-19. A future report or addendum will examine participation in career-based learning, dual-credit courses, and industry certification courses when those data become available. Next year's evaluation will examine the extent of participation in Xello.

To understand how ACP is associated with the short- and intermediate-term outcomes noted above, the evaluation must identify a comparison group of non-ACP students and schools. As ACP was implemented statewide in 2017-18, there are no non-ACP students and schools in that year or the years following that could be used as a comparison. To account for this, the evaluation used a pre/post design to follow and compare the same schools both before and after exposure to ACP implementation. The treatment group was all schools in 2017-18 and 2018-19 (as ACP is statewide). For a comparison group, the evaluation used the all of the same schools throughout the state in the years prior to ACP implementation. To account for any long-term trends occurring throughout the state, the analysis used three prior years of baseline data on the intended outcomes (specifically 2014-15 through 2016-17). To conduct this outcomes analysis, WEC received data on these outcomes from 2014-15 through 2018-19. The evaluation then used multivariate regression models to estimate the associated impact of ACP on these outcomes while controlling for a variety of student- and school-level characteristics. The models compared each outcome in 2017-18 and 2018-19 to the previous three years of outcomes within each school. The student-level controls included gender, race/ethnicity, special education status, economic status (as measured by free or reduced price lunch eligibility), English learner (EL) status, and grade level (as appropriate for the outcome). The analysis included school-level controls for locale description, including indicator variables for city, suburb, town, and rural.

In addition to examining the overall change in these outcomes, the analysis also included a variety of subgroup analyses to explore associations between ACP implementation and different types of students and schools. The subgroup analyses at the student level included race/ethnicity, special education status, economic status, and EL status. The subgroup analyses at the school level included locale description and levels of ACP implementation. The evaluation identified levels of ACP implementation from the 2017-18 and 2018-19 ACP

implementation building-level level surveys.² Specifically, four different measures of ACP implementation were identified: infrastructural element implementation, equitable access implementation, dedicated ACP time implementation, and student activity component implementation. For each of these implementation metrics, the evaluation combined all relevant survey item responses into a single score with values ranging from 0 (not yet started) through 3 (institutionalized). Implementation scores near 1 indicate the initiated level, and scores near 2 indicate the implemented level. Since not all schools responded to the 2017-18 and 2018-19 surveys, only schools

with answers to these items on both surveys were included in this subgroup analysis.

For further information about the quantitative methodology, refer to Appendix B.

Alignment Between Evaluation Questions and Data Sources

Table I is a crosswalk of the various data collection methods with outputs and evaluation questions.

Table I: Data Collection Methods
by Outputs Examined and Related Evaluation Questions

OUTPUTS EXAMINED	SURVEY		CASE STUDIES		
	SCHOOL LEADER SURVEY	SCHOOL LEADER INTERVIEWS-LIMITED	DOCUMENT ANALYSIS	OUTPUT DATA COLLECTION	OUTCOME DATA COLLECTION
School-wide culture	✓	✓			
Family engagement	✓	✓	✓		
Student relationships	✓	✓			
Career advising	✓	✓	✓		
Equitable access	✓	✓		✓	
Dedicated ACP time	✓	✓	✓		
ACP curriculum	✓	✓	✓		
Career-based learning	✓	✓	✓		
Dual credit AP IB	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Education and career goals	✓	✓	✓		
Applicable course taking	✓	✓	✓		
Evaluation Question(s) Addressed	1, 2, 3	2, 3	2	1, 5	1, 4, 5

² Refer to the Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results and Academic and Career Planning 2018-19 Evaluation Survey Results reports for further details.

Limitations

There are limitations to the extent to which findings in this evaluation can be generalized. The response rate for the school survey is by no means a census; it may be that those respondents engaging less intensively in ACP activities did not choose to report their work. Generalizability is not typically a goal of case studies and other qualitative inquiries of limited scope, but rather, resulting data are used to help build theory, to probe deeper into phenomena of interest, to identify future research questions, and to inform future investigative strategies. In this evaluation year, the primary goal of the case studies was to document and describe various practices of ACP delivery. Consequently, findings from interviews should be viewed as context-specific. At the same time, findings present ideas for future phases of evaluation, while providing authentic descriptions and perceptions of ACP work in the field by those actors experiencing the phenomena in question. More importantly, the case study data collection was cut short in mid-March by the Stay-at-Home order and subsequent remote instruction due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, the majority of case study data collection has been postponed until Fall of 2020. Thus, perspectives reported in the interviews that were conducted and reported are so minimal that any patterns identified are tentative, and will be borne out, or replaced, by findings when the full data collection effort is completed.

All output measures provided in this report are contingent upon available data. Additionally, results on these output measures should only be used for comparison to ACP implementation and should not be used for purposes that are more general. It is likely that results presented on these measures differ slightly from those publicly reported by DPI due to differences in data availability and calculation practices. For all purposes other than ACP evaluation use, publicly reported data from DPI should take priority in standing.

While the outcome analysis provides the most rigorous possible evaluation given the statewide implementation of ACP and available data, there are several limitations. The primary limitation is that identification of ACP impact solely relies on changes between the 2014-15 through 2016-17 school years and the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. It is possible that the implementation of other programs and policies aligned with the start of ACP during 2017-18. Thus, the estimated impact of ACP may also include these program or policy changes. The second limitation occurs from prior implementation of ACP practices. As many schools likely implemented several ACP infrastructural and student activity components prior to official implementation in 2017-18, the estimated impacts are likely downward biased (toward zero) from using these prior years as a comparison. Due to these limitations, the results presented in this report should not be considered causal. For further information on limitations associated with the outcomes analysis, refer to Appendix B.

Section 2

Findings

Findings

In this section, we present data and findings in three different categories. ACP Implementation examines the results of the evaluation pertaining to Evaluation Questions 1 and 2 and some limited stakeholder perceptions pertaining to Evaluation Question 3. ACP Outcomes examines the results of the evaluation pertaining to Evaluation Questions 4 and 5. With the continuation of the case studies in Fall 2020, findings related to Stakeholder Perceptions are expected to be greatly amplified.

ACP Implementation

This section of the findings covers Evaluation Question 1 (To what extent are school districts and schools implementing ACP infrastructure and activities?) and Evaluation Question 2 (What are the varieties of ACP infrastructure and activities across different school and district contexts?). The findings under these two questions focus on the extent to which ACP is being implemented in the state and on variations of the infrastructural elements and, to a small extent, student activities as reported by case study districts. Also in this section, limited data is reported pertaining to Question 3 (stakeholders' perceptions about infrastructural elements and student activities).

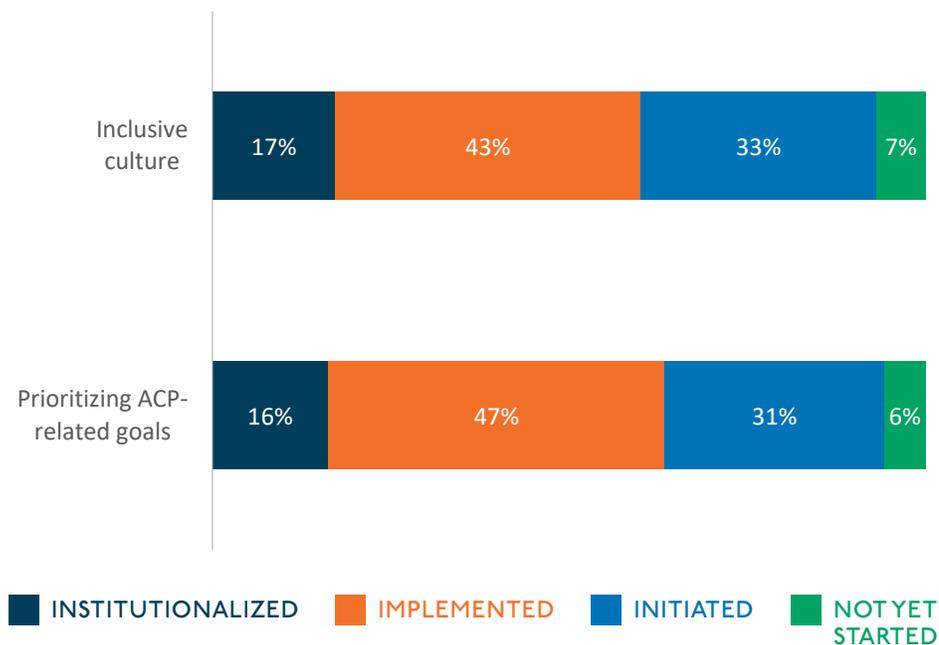
Infrastructural elements

An inclusive school wide culture with administrative engagement, prioritized goals, staff participation and which is student-focused.

The leaders from the three districts that were interviewed all reported having or striving for a school wide culture of ACP, and given that each school was implementing at least part of their ACP curriculum in homeroom or advisory periods, all-staff involvement was a necessity. Each leader interviewed described their own involvement and was knowledgeable about many of the aspects of their program. Staff buy-in was listed as having been an issue to some extent in early years of the program, and all reported that it increased as years passed, particularly when teachers could recognize the benefits to students of a strong ACP program. Sufficient time for teacher collaboration was identified as an issue in the less institutionalized schools, and the district that had been delivering ACP and career services for 8 years, with a significant and institutionalized professional learning component directed at ACP, noted that teachers could always benefit from more. One district reported that many teachers participated in career Professional Learning Communities.

Figure 1: Inclusive Culture & Goals

Implementation Level for 2019-20

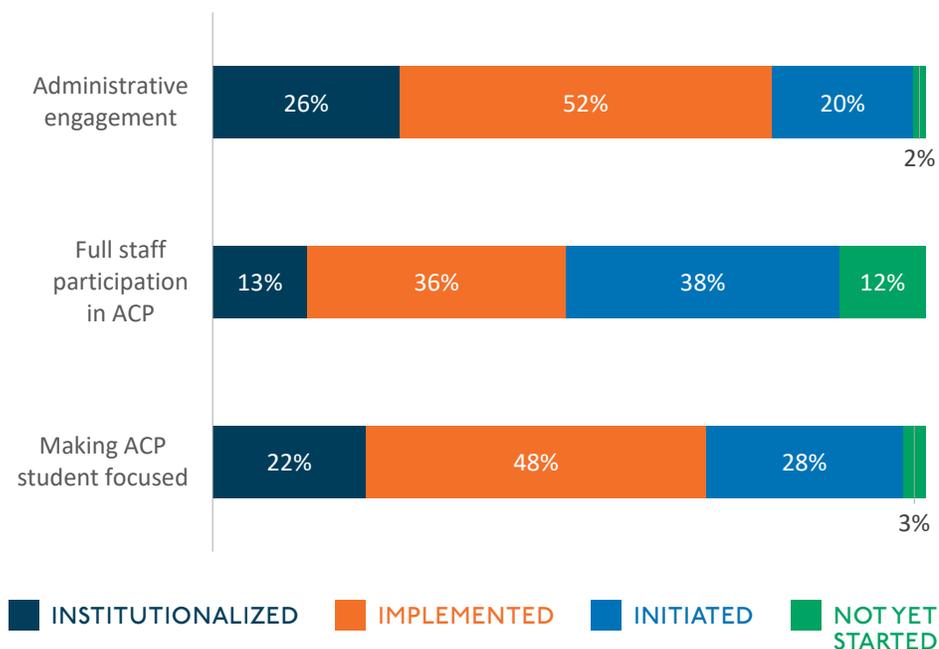


Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

School-level survey results also provide some insight into the levels of ACP infrastructure implementation during 2019-20. Several of the items on this survey examined the level of inclusive school wide culture. All of these items inquired as to the level of implementation in a respondent's school with response options ranging from "institutionalized" to "not yet started." Figure 1 and Figure 2 show the results from these items. As these figures illustrate, the majority of respondents indicated that they either institutionalized or implemented prioritization of ACP goals, inclusive culture, making ACP student-focused, and administrative engagement. One area that respondents thought had less implementation was full staff participation in ACP, with 36 percent indicating this element was at the implemented stage and 13 percent indicating it was institutionalized.

Figure 2: Staff Engagement & Student Focus

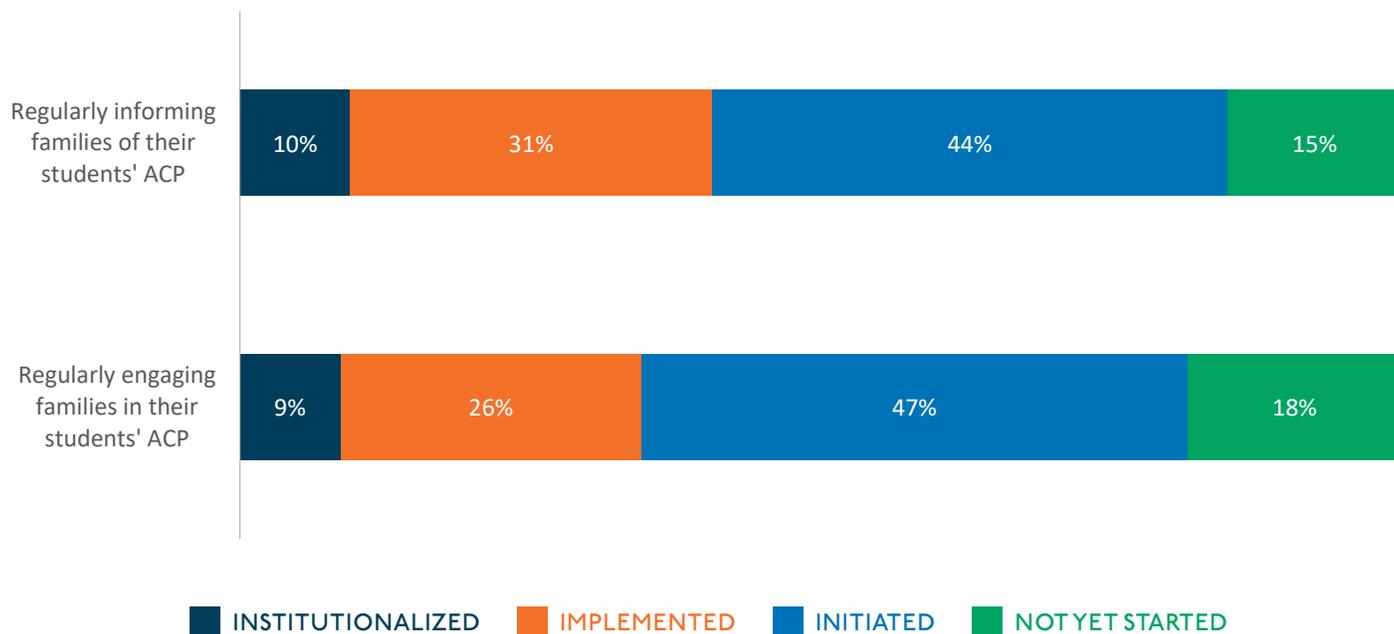
Implementation Level for 2019-20



Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

Figure 3: Family Engagement

Implementation Level for 2019-20



Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

Regular and ongoing informing of and engaging families in their students' ACP.

Family engagement and communication efforts varied among the three case study districts interviewed. Programs that were more institutionalized had more family engagement and support than those that had more recently begun programming.

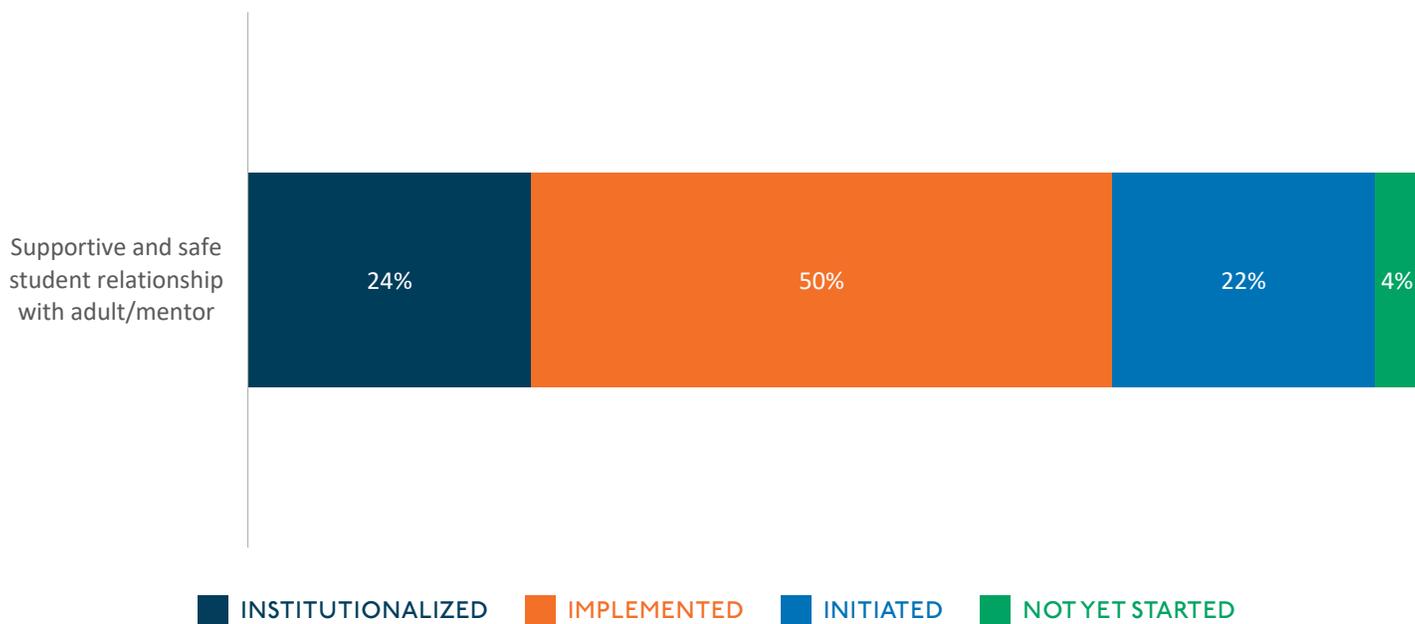
Figure 3 shows the results from the school-level survey of staff related to family engagement. Nearly half of respondents indicated that these ACP elements were initiated, with a slightly higher percentage of respondents indicating that *informing* families was implemented than *engaging* families.

Regular and ongoing supportive and safe student relationships with adults.

Interviewees reported improved student-adult relationships at each of the three case study districts/ schools. One smaller school noted that their scope and sequence moved towards very personalized and individualized ACP one-on-one discussions by the students' senior year.

Similar to what was reported by these case study districts, respondents to the school-level survey generally indicated implementation of supportive and safe student relationships with adults in the school. As Figure 4 shows, nearly three-quarters of respondents thought their school had either institutionalized or implemented this ACP element.

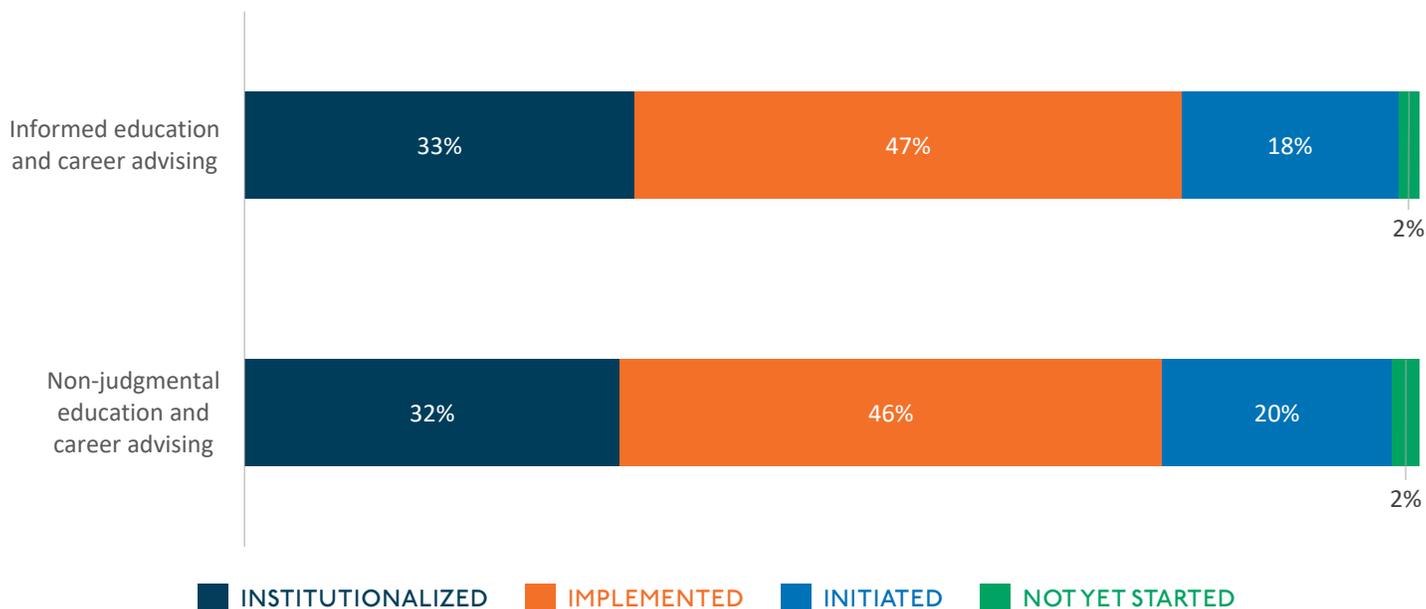
Figure 4: Supportive and Safe Adult Relationships
Implementation Level for 2019-20



Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

Figure 5: Education & Career Advising

Implementation Level for 2019-20



Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

Non-judgmental, informed, comprehensive education and career advising.

Advising practices in the three case study schools varied in their delivery and intensity. While all three districts had dedicated ACP time for all students, the activities ranged from a nearly exclusive focus on Xello activities to a well-developed scope and sequence that prioritized career exploration “hands-on” activities paired with a required CTE academy for all career paths, multiple required job shadows, and seniors’ final career plan presentations. Consequently, the infrastructure for such a well-developed program demanded and prioritized staffing for comprehensive career advising.

Results from the school-level survey of staff continue to show high levels of implementation of this ACP infrastructural element in 2019-20 as seen in Figure 5. Approximately 80 percent of respondents answered that they institutionalized or implemented informed education and career advising at their school and a similar proportion of respondents indicated likewise for non-judgmental education and career advising.

Equitable access to all ACP opportunities.

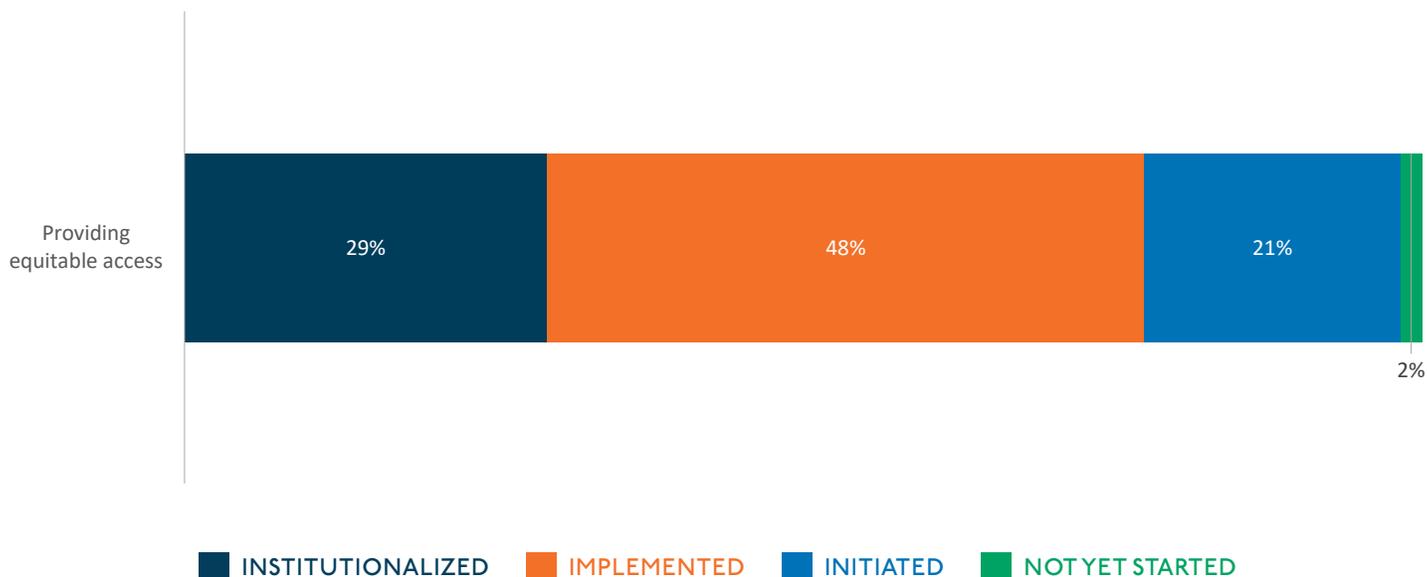
DPI defines educational equity as “every student [having] access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income.” When asked about the equitable delivery of ACP services to students, interviewees from the three case study districts believed that equity was being addressed by making opportunities not only accessible to all, but by requiring a variety of activities so that no students would be left out. In addition to dedicated ACP time, districts required participation from all students in such practices as a three-year CTE Academy, which paired coursework, dual credit, job shadows and other activities with students’ career interests. Two of the districts required a Careers course in high school, two required a personal finance course, and one both, as well as a middle school business education course. ACP-related content and activities were addressed in all of these required courses.

However, it is important to distinguish between equity in terms of access, that is, who is theoretically able to participate, and equity in actual participation rates and in terms of whether the right opportunities are occurring at the right time for all students. A wide variety of factors can create barriers to participation among students who are theoretically eligible, and even in the case of requirements, the activities undertaken to satisfy graduation requirements may not be best suited to each student’s individual needs. Consequently, more in-depth focus on these issues is planned for the coming year’s evaluation.

Throughout the state, many schools also indicated via the survey that they provided equitable access to all ACP opportunities. Figure 6 shows the results from the school-level survey of staff on an item related to this ACP element. As shown, nearly 80 percent of respondents thought their school either institutionalized or implemented this practice.

Figure 6: Equitable Access to Opportunities

Implementation Level for 2019-20



Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

As always, self-reported data should be recognized as such, particularly in terms of sensitive topics like equity. While including all students in ACP work, and honoring all post-graduation plans, are important, there is still the potential for these activities, practices, and policies to be implemented inequitably. More in-depth examination of participation, barriers, and means to address barriers is planned for Spring 2021.

Student participation results in the sections below will also highlight the extent of equitable access to ACP by providing breakdowns of participation by student subgroups where available. These subgroups include differences by race/ethnicity, economic status, EL status, and special education status where they exist. To examine the extent of equitable access by region, these later sections will also examine participation by CESA.

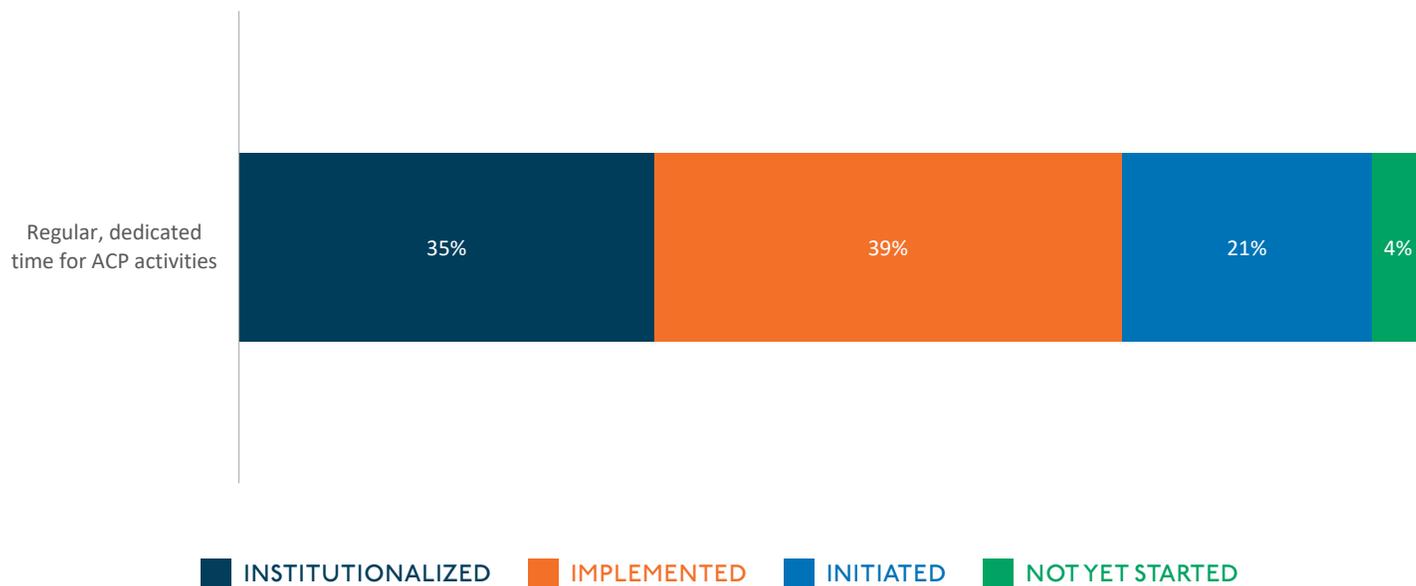
Regular, ongoing and dedicated time for ACP activities.

Each of the case study districts reported building in dedicated time for regular, ongoing ACP activities both in high schools and middle schools. In addition to homerooms or advisory periods, additional required courses (careers, personal finance, etc.) increased the focus on ACP. Dosage of ACP in homeroom or advisory ranged from a one hour per month (in a district that also requires a careers course) to half an hour per week to 2-3 fifty-minute periods per month. However, homeroom/advisory ACP dosage alone does not tell the whole story as it is the entire scope and sequence, delivered across both “ACP time” and content courses, that determines the depth of a program.

In addition to the frequency and content of dedicated ACP times, the make-up and timing of advisory periods/homerooms may be important. In two of the schools, homerooms were single grade, and in the third, they were mixed grade. All used cohort systems so that students would be together for all the years of high school (and in one case, they came from middle school in these same groupings), with two schools assigning the same teacher to a cohort for all 4 high school years, and the remaining school rotating teachers across grades and groups each year. Benefits of a single teacher across all years included the opportunity to develop stronger, more informed relationships, but conversely, a variety of teachers may allow for different perspectives, styles, and other variables. Mixed-age homerooms allowed students to learn from and mentor each other, while single-grade homerooms could maintain more of a developmentally appropriate single set of activities. It is doubtful that any one approach is qualitatively “better” than others, but rather, the quality of the scope and sequence, the dedication and capacity of the adults, and the building of relationships are likely to be more consequential. Yet there is little doubt that the regular programming of ACP-related activities is necessary for high-quality implementation.

Figure 7: Time for ACP Activities

Implementation Level for 2019-20



Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

Figure 7 shows the extent of implementation of regular, ongoing, and dedicated time for ACP activities throughout the state from the school-level survey. As this figure displays, approximately three-quarters of respondents thought their school had institutionalized or implemented this element.

Table 2: Amount of ACP Time

by Grade for 2019-20

GRADE LEVEL	N	AVERAGE HOURS
Grade 6	86	24.0
Grade 7	103	25.5
Grade 8	117	27.3
Grade 9	146	23.0
Grade 10	149	23.6
Grade 11	150	24.0
Grade 12	144	26.3

Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

Results from the 2019-20 survey also provided further insight into both the frequency and characteristics of dedicated ACP time within schools. As seen from Table 2, students met for dedicated ACP approximately 25 hours per year with slightly higher averages in Grades 8 and 12. Respondents indicated that dedicated ACP time was typically required for all students and that students typically have the same ACP teacher all years, as seen from Table 3. For more information on dedicated ACP time frequency and organization please refer to the [Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20 Report](#).

Table 3: Characteristics of ACP Time

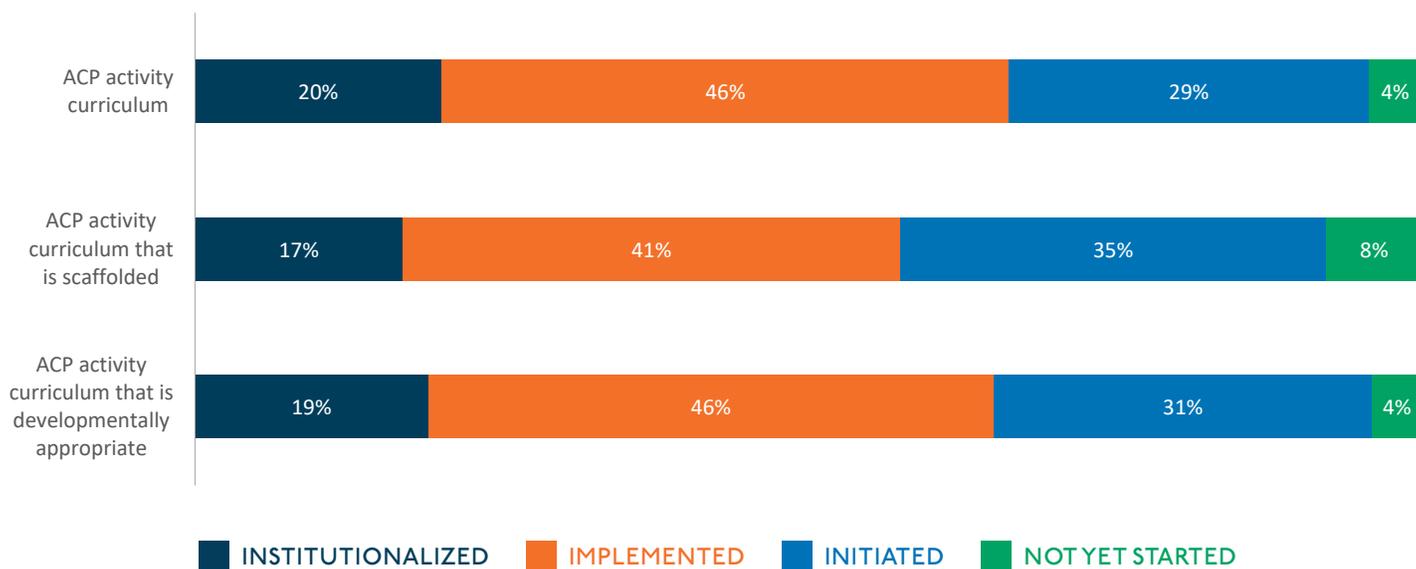
for 2019-20

CHARACTERISTIC	N	PERCENTAGE
ACP time required for all students, regardless of ability	227	90.3%
Students typically have the same ACP (advisory, homeroom) teacher all years of high school	227	70.9%
Students earn credit for ACP time	228	14.9%
Students earn a grade for ACP time	227	12.8%

Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

Figure 8: Outlined Activity Curriculum

Implementation Level for 2019-20



Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

Outlined ACP activity curriculum that is scaffolded and developmentally appropriate (scope and sequence).

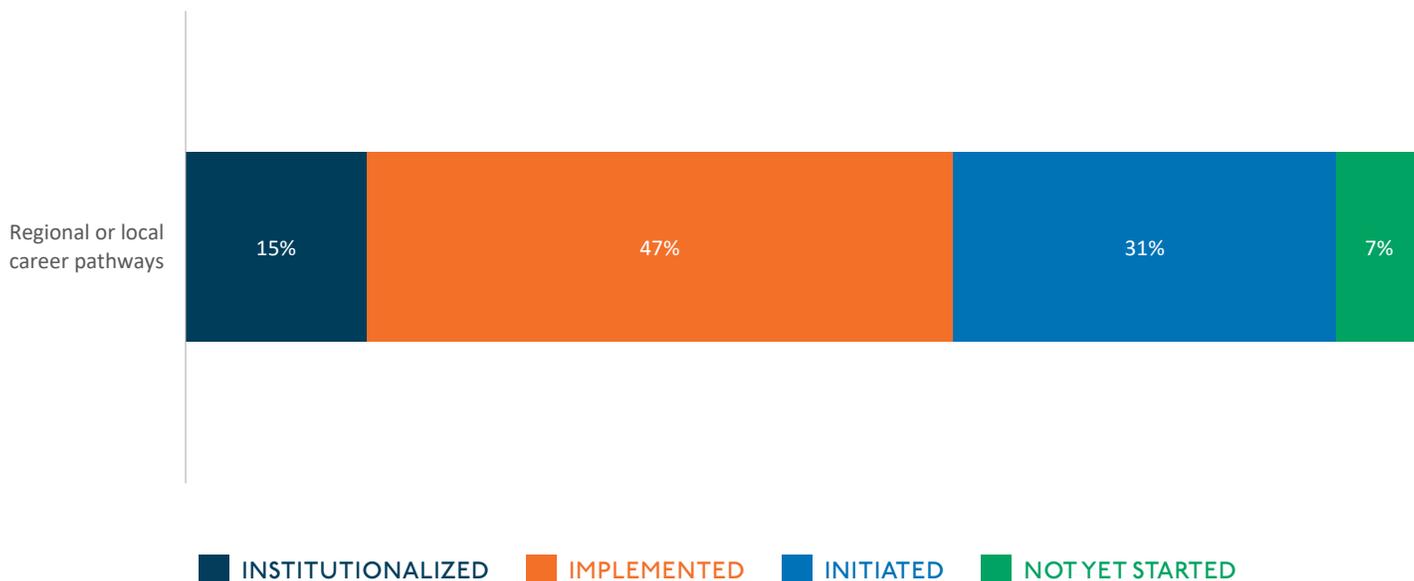
All case study districts had an ACP scope and sequence, and all reported means for regularly assessing and refining it. The district with the required CTE Academy delivered some of their ACP programming in 2-3 advisory periods per month, which were intended to be “fun, relationship-building time for students.” The Academy itself included 3 CTE courses across high school: a life and personal skills course in the sophomore year, a financial literacy and career planning course in the junior year, and a capstone project related to career plans in the senior year. Throughout high school, students participate in multiple job shadows, then at least one internship, all of which culminates in a final presentation to underclassmen in the senior year (for more information on capstone projects, see Worth, R., November 2019, [ACP Final Projects for Wisconsin Educators](#)). This district, which reports high levels of buy-in from students, teachers, and families, has been implementing this program for eight years. One CTE teacher is designated the CTE Director and receives an additional stipend for related duties, as the program

requires considerable coordination with the area technical college and approximately 2000 employers, and it is aligned with and integrated into the school’s mission and strategic plan. The other two districts had more recently begun implementing ACP, and were at various stages of determining which activities already were or could be implemented in content courses, what was best delivered in advisory, and how best to prepare teachers to deliver the content. This trajectory is both typical and necessary to grow an ACP program into the kind of established culture enjoyed in the first district described. Perhaps worth noting, one interviewee mentioned that their “administrator in charge of ACP” was “really gung-ho on Xello, because it is a state program, for compliance.” DPI may wish to address in communications this possible misinterpretation of the role of Xello and the notion of “compliance.”

Of the respondents to the school-level survey, approximately two-thirds provided information that their school had institutionalized or implemented an outlined ACP activity curriculum that was developmentally appropriate, as shown in Figure 8. Slightly fewer, 58 percent of respondents, thought they had institutionalized or implemented an ACP activity curriculum that was scaffolded.

Figure 9: Career Pathways

Implementation Level for 2018-19



Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

Career pathways.

Results from the school-level survey also showed the levels of implementation for informing students about regional or locally created career pathways, as seen in Figure 9. Over 60 percent of respondents indicated that they institutionalized or implemented this element, with most at the implemented level.

Student activity components

Student participation in career-based learning activities.

The case study districts all reported enthusiasm for work-based learning, particularly the value of job shadowing. As reported above, one district required several and the other two were working towards requiring them. Two districts reported that their CESAs were instrumental in supporting and growing their work-based learning programs, particularly Youth Apprenticeships. One interviewee, however, reported that students who wanted to do job shadows needed to seek the district coordinator out.

“Let’s say they want to do a job shadow, it’s up to those students to come and find me. 2000-some students, and I’m the person that does the job shadows, so it’s their responsibility to come seek me out basically.”

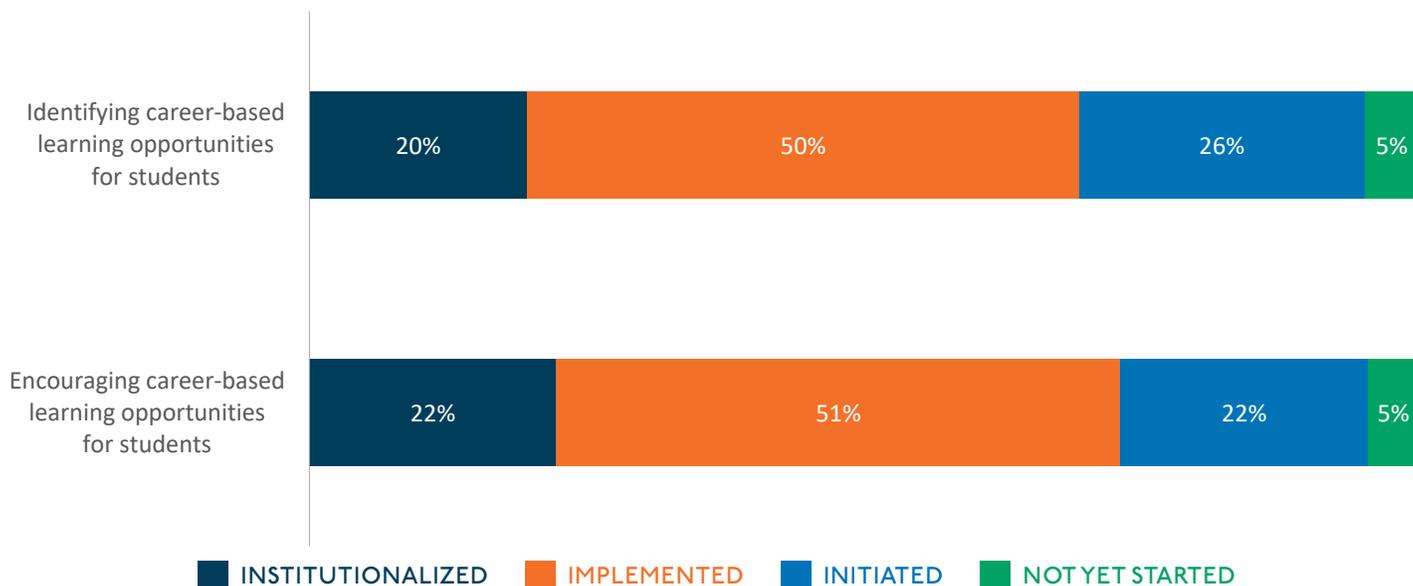
In addition to what is likely an overwhelming workload, this situation likely poses problems for equitable participation

in job shadowing, as awareness, self-efficacy, and other factors likely affect students’ abilities to reach out to the coordinator. In addition to a growing interest in job shadowing in schools, as work progresses in the state regarding career pathways, participation in all types of work-based learning will likely increase, and the lessons to be learned from schools who already prioritize these activities will be important to collect, exchange, and disseminate.

As with the infrastructural ACP elements above, the school-level survey also examined the level of implementation of several ACP student activity components. Two of the items on this survey asked about career-based learning activities, one related to the implementation of identifying these activities, and the other related to the implementation of encouraging these activities. Figure 10 shows the results from these items on the survey. As this figure shows, approximately 70 percent of respondents indicated that their school either institutionalized or implemented the practice of identifying work-based learning opportunities for students and slightly more, 73 percent, indicated that their school institutionalized or implemented the practice of encouraging work-based learning opportunities for students.

Figure 10: Career-Based Learning Opportunities

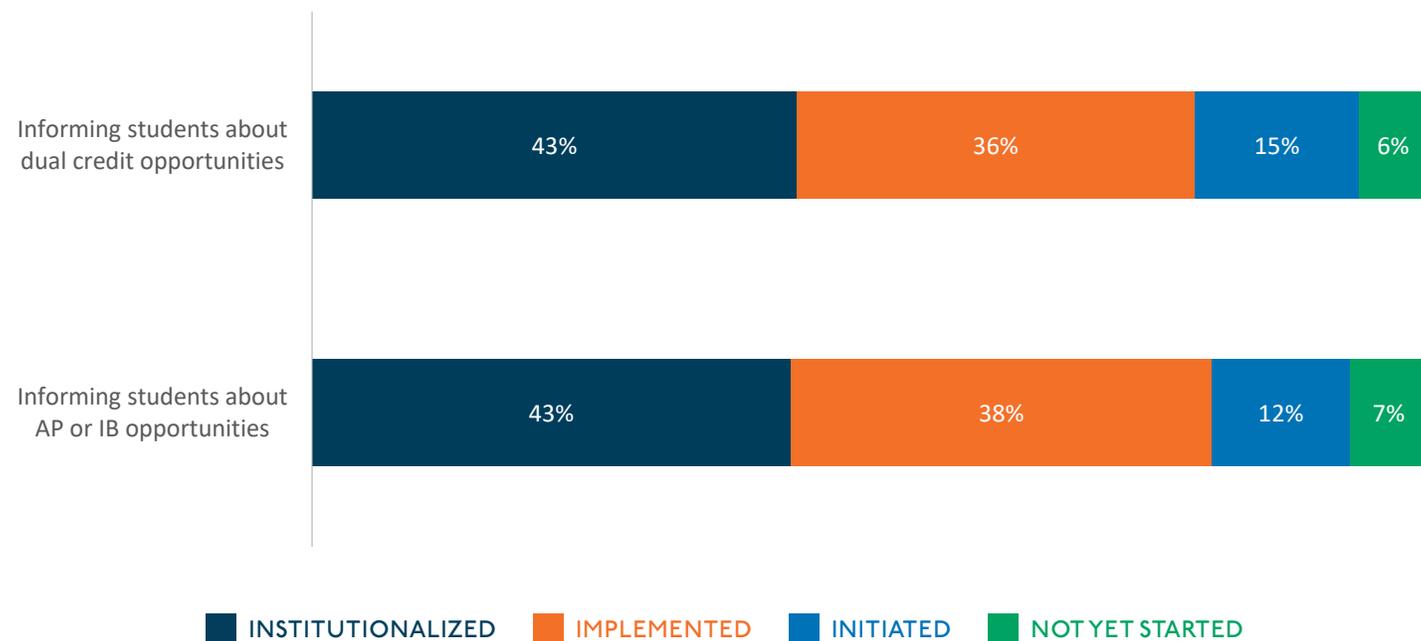
Implementation Level for 2019-20



Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

Figure II: Informing Students of Advanced Courses

Implementation Level for 2019-20



Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

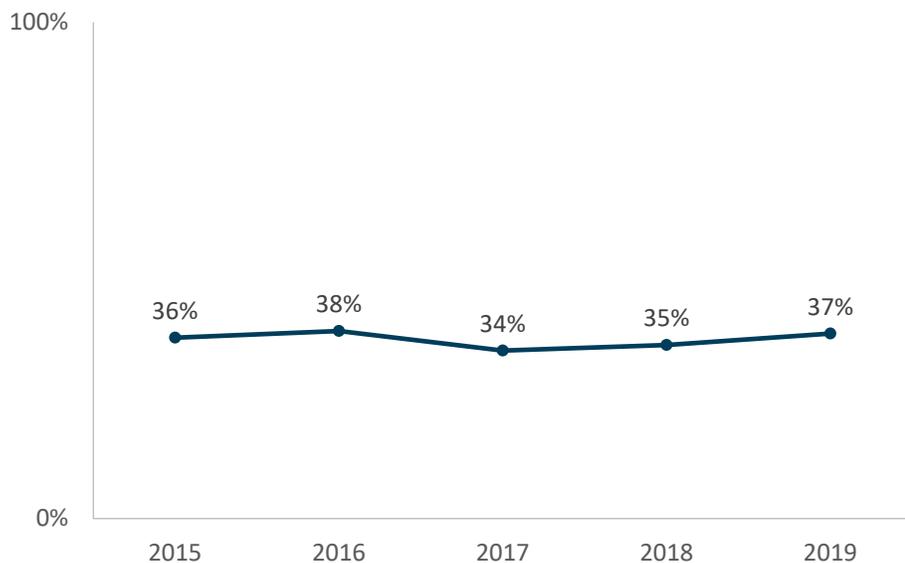
Due to a transition in DPI data systems, 2018-19 data on student participation in career-based learning activities were not available. For 2017-18 and prior data, please refer to the [Academic and Career Planning 2018-19 Evaluation Report](#).

Students taking dual credit, AP, and IB courses.

The case study district interviews to date did not address AP or IB course-taking; however, the district with the CTE Academy reported that they “offer(ed) more dual credit per capita than any other high school” and that one of their staff members “teaches more transcribed credit than any other teacher.” Further investigation of these activities is scheduled to take place in Fall 2020.

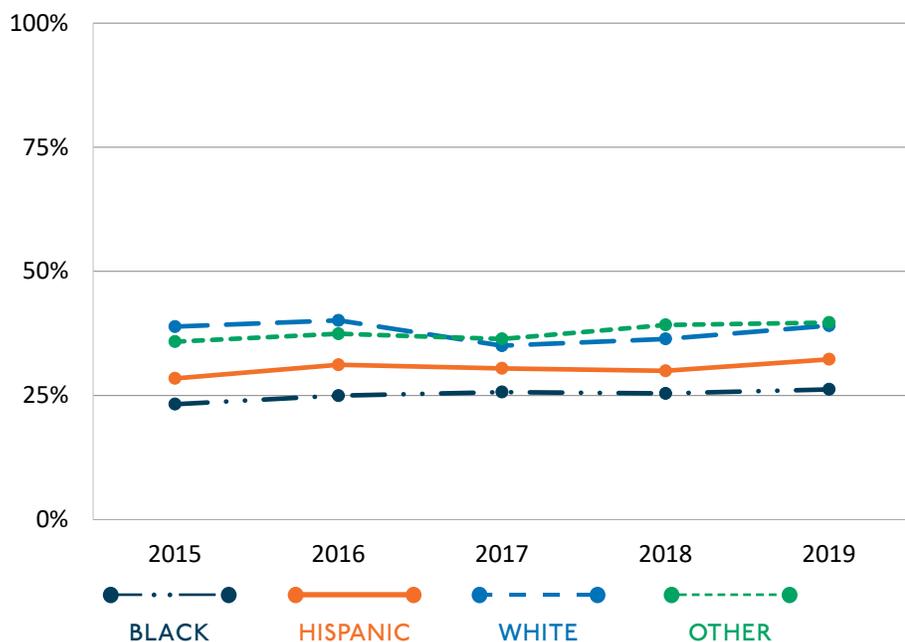
The school-level survey also asked respondents about their level of implementation regarding this ACP element. Figure II shows that approximately 80 percent of respondents institutionalized or implemented the practices of informing students about dual credit opportunities and AP or IB opportunities.

Figure 12: AP/IB Course Participation
for 11th & 12th graders for 2014-15 through 2018-19



Source: CWCS/Roster

Figure 13: AP/IB Participation by Race/Ethnicity
for 11th & 12th graders for 2014-15 through 2018-19



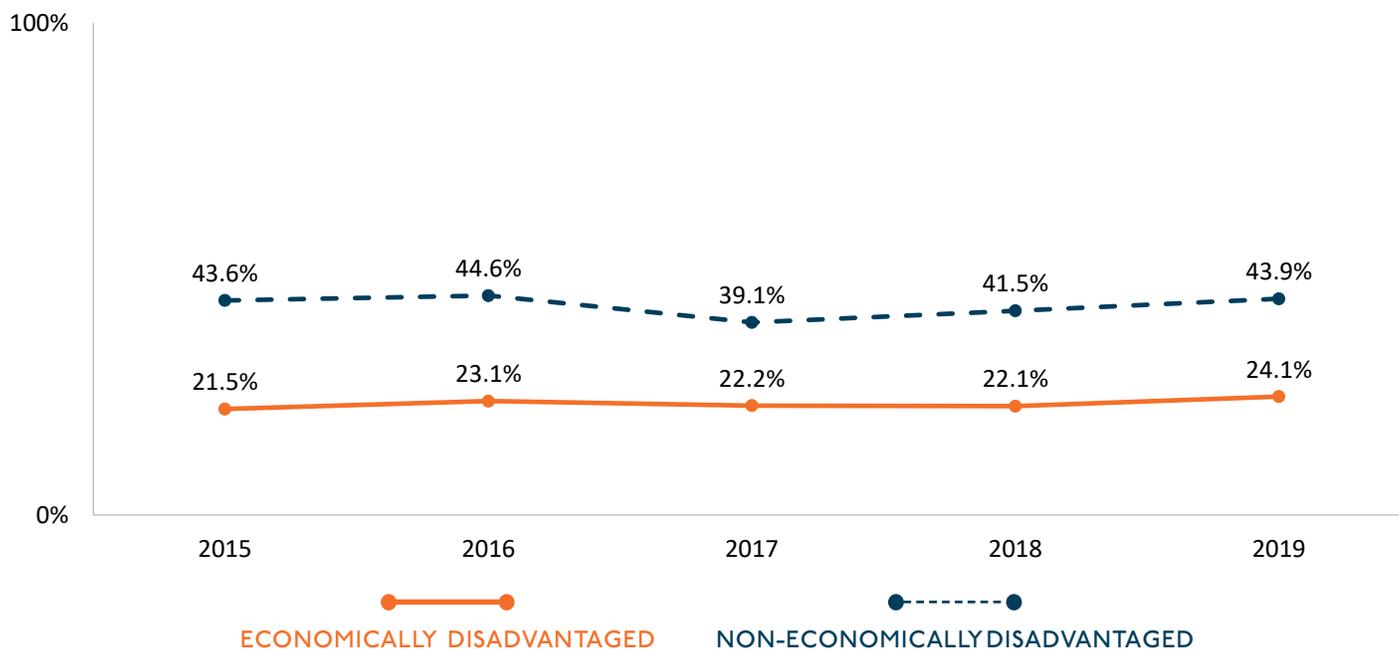
Source: CWCS/Roster

The source of student-level data on AP and IB course participation comes from DPI’s Coursework Completion System (CWCS) which covered 2014-15 and 2015-16, and Roster, which covered 2016-17 through 2018-19. Due to the change in data systems over the period of examination, the evaluation only included schools that reported data on AP and IB over all years. Figure 12 shows the statewide participation rate in AP/IB courses among students in Grades 11-12. The participation rate from 2014-15 through 2018-19 ranged from approximately 33 percent to 38 percent. While there was a slight decrease in participation from 2015-16 to 2016-17 (which may be due to changing data systems), there was a slight increase in participation from 2016-17 through the second year of ACP implementation in 2018-19.

The evaluation also examined equitable participation in AP/IB course enrollment across student subgroups. Figure 13–Figure 16 show the participation rate by race/ethnicity, economic status, EL status, and special education status respectively. As seen from these figures, black students, Hispanic students, economically disadvantaged students, EL students, and special education students all had participation rates lower than their subgroups of comparison. As seen from Figure 15, however, the participation rate of EL students increased during the first and second years of statewide ACP implementation.

Figure 14: AP/IB Participation by Economic Status

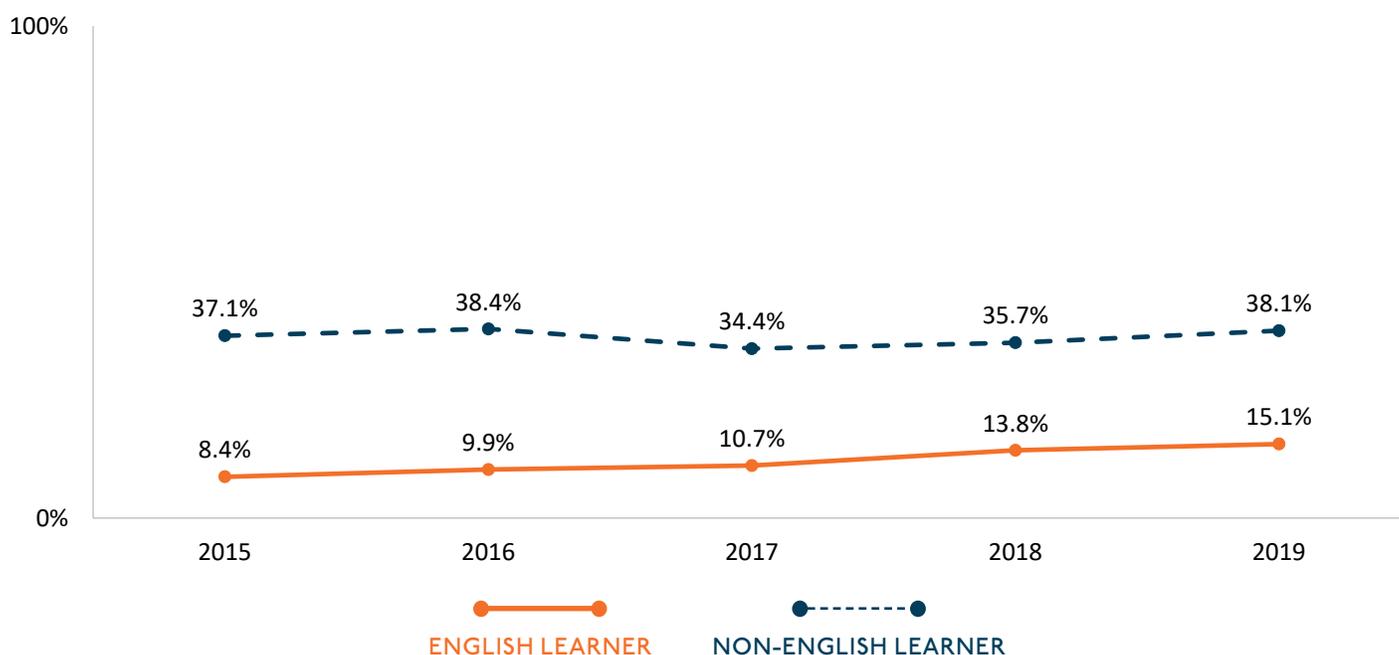
for 11th & 12th graders for 2014-15 through 2018-19



Source: CWCS/Roster

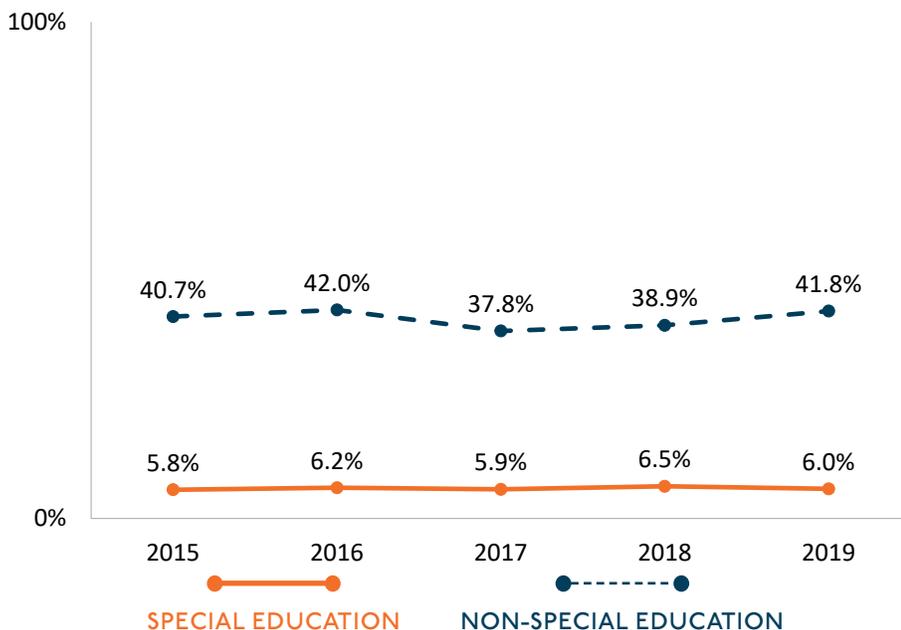
Figure 15: AP/IB Participation by EL Status

for 11th & 12th graders for 2014-15 through 2018-19



Source: CWCS/Roster

Figure 16: AP/IB Participation by Special Ed Status
for 11th & 12th graders for 2014-15 through 2018-19



Source: CWCS/Roster

Regional participation in AP/IB courses also varied as seen from Table 4. During the most recent year of implementation data in 2018-19, CESA 1 continued to have the highest participation rate and CESA 8 the lowest.

Due to a transition in DPI data systems, 2018-19 data on student participation in dual-credit courses were not available. For 2017-18 and prior data, please refer to the [Academic and Career Planning 2018-19 Evaluation Report](#).

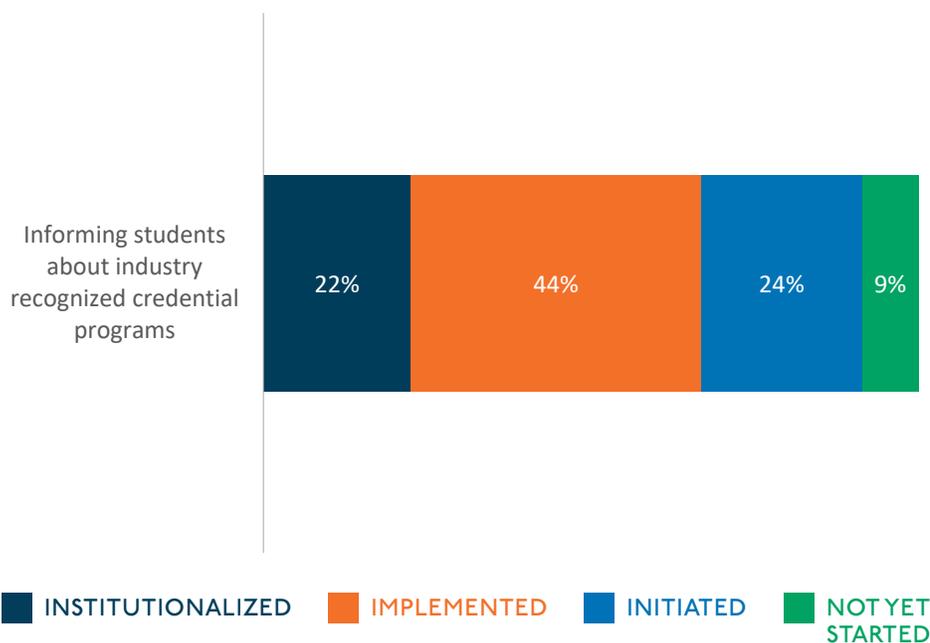
Table 4: AP/IB Participation by CESA
for 11th & 12th graders for 2014-15 through 2018-19

CESA	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1	44.4%	46.1%	43.7%	44.8%	46.3%
2	37.4%	39.8%	37.7%	38.0%	41.9%
3	28.0%	31.4%	23.1%	23.9%	30.6%
4	27.4%	26.6%	18.8%	26.3%	28.3%
5	31.8%	32.2%	21.7%	19.3%	26.0%
6	37.9%	37.9%	30.7%	33.1%	32.9%
7	31.3%	32.2%	30.8%	31.7%	34.4%
8	16.8%	15.8%	11.9%	10.0%	12.1%
9	31.9%	32.5%	28.6%	31.5%	35.0%
10	28.7%	30.8%	31.7%	29.6%	30.2%
11	32.2%	34.2%	25.8%	26.3%	25.9%
12	20.0%	18.7%	7.8%	18.3%	23.5%

Source: CWCS/Roster

Figure 17: Students Informed of IRC Classes

Implementation Level for 2019-20



Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

Students participating in Industry-Recognized Credentials (IRCs).

Results from the school-level survey also indicated the reported levels of implementation of informing students of college-level industry certification courses. As shown in Figure 17, nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated this element was at the institutionalized or implemented level.

Due to a transition in DPI data systems, 2018-19 data on student participation in industry certification courses were not available. For 2017-18 and prior data, please refer to the [Academic and Career Planning 2018-19 Evaluation Report](#).

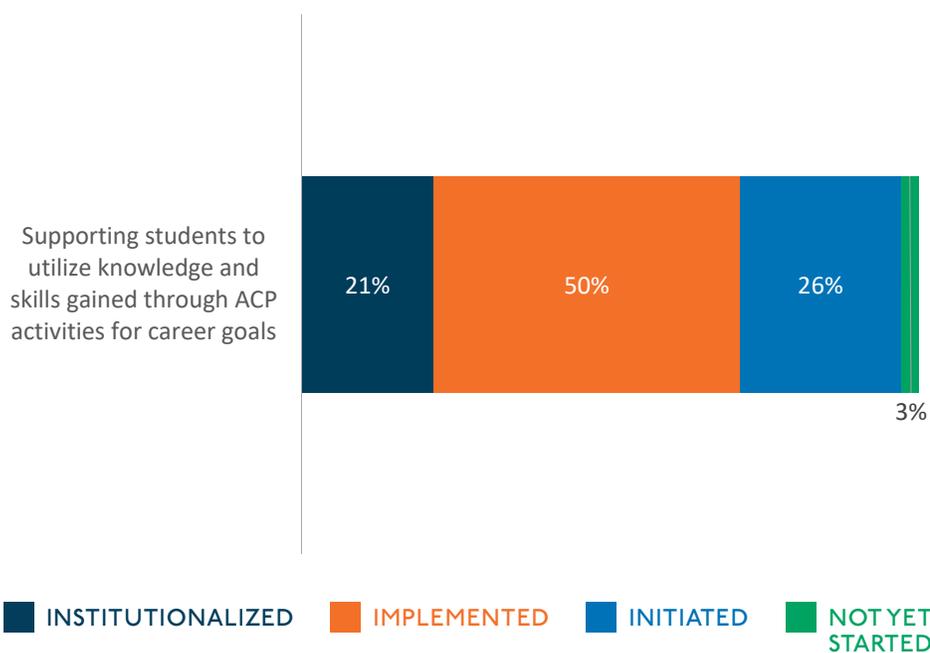
Students utilize knowledge and skills gained through ACP activity participation to set, modify, and update personal, education and career goals.

Although this evaluation has not yet conducted focus groups with students, which is a primary source of data for this question, the school leaders interviewed report that on the whole, students are setting goals and planning for their post-secondary futures more than in the past. One interviewee reported that their school has students do “interest inventories multiple times so that kids can see how interests change.”

Results from the school-level survey related to this ACP element, found in Figure 18, show that 71 percent of respondents thought their school implemented or institutionalized a process of supporting students to utilize knowledge and skills gained through ACP activities for career goals.

Figure 18: Support to Utilize Knowledge and Skills

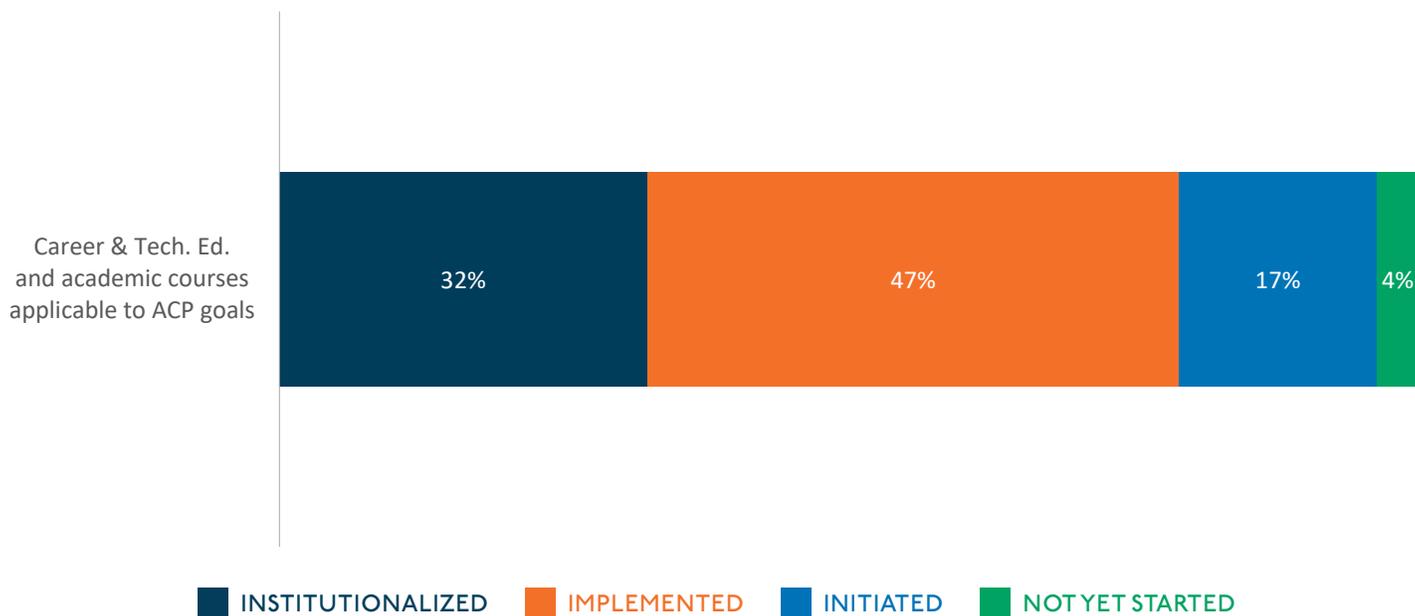
Implementation Level for 2019-20



Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

Figure 19: Choosing Courses Aligned to ACP Goals

Implementation Level for 2019-20



Source: Academic and Career Planning Survey 2019-20

Students choose CTE and academic courses applicable to their ACP/career goals.

Similar to the item above, student and teacher focus groups in the case studies will provide the most insight into this aspect.

Most respondents to the school-level survey also thought the students at their school chose CTE and academic courses applicable to their academic and career goals. Figure 19 shows the results from an item on the survey that asked about this ACP element. As seen in this figure, approximately 80 percent of respondents indicated that they institutionalized or implemented the practice of supporting students to choose CTE and academic courses applicable to their goals.

OUTCOME FIGURES EXPLAINED

COMPONENTS

"Overall" Statewide Impact

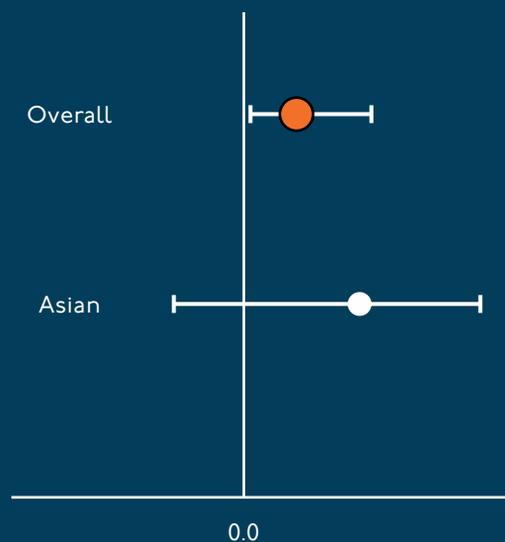
"Asian" Sub-group Impact

—| 95% Confidence Interval

● Statistically Significant Impact Estimate

○ Not Statistically Significant Impact Estimate

EXAMPLE



ACP Outcomes

This section of the findings examines Evaluation Question 4 (What, if any, changes have occurred in terms of student outcome data compared to baseline data?) and Evaluation Question 5 (What, if any, associations between ACP elements and outcomes can be measured at school or student levels?). To answer these questions, this report provides results overall, by student subgroup populations, and by levels of ACP implementation. The five short- and medium-term outcomes examined this year include attendance rate, out-of-school suspension rate (percentage of students with at least one out-of-school suspension), ACT composite score, four-year high school completion rate, and AP Exam scores. For each of these outcomes, this report includes a figure of the estimated change (or impact) associated with ACP in 2017-18 and 2018-19 (the first two years of statewide implementation) compared to previous baseline data from 2014-15 through 2016-17. Each of the graphic figures that follow in this section includes a small circle which indicates the estimated impact of ACP on the relevant outcome overall, for each student subgroup, for the location of the school, and for four measures of ACP implementation. Open circles indicate estimated impacts not statistically significant from zero and solid circles indicate estimated impacts statistically significant from zero. Since results are estimated with some level of error, the figures also include bars extending from each dot, which indicate the 95 percent confidence interval.

The four measures of ACP implementation include ACP infrastructural element implementation (Infrastructure); equitable access to all ACP opportunities (Equitable); regular, ongoing, and dedicated time for ACP activities (Dedicated ACP); and ACP student activity component implementation (Student Activities). These measures of implementation come from the 2017-18 and 2018-19 ACP surveys. Impacts presented throughout this section on these four measures show the estimated change in outcome for each level of increase in level of implementation (not yet started, initiated, implemented, and institutionalized). The inclusion of these metrics specifically examines Evaluation Question 5.

As a point of reference for the following outcome impacts, Table 5 provides the statewide average for each outcome for the baseline years (2014-15 through 2016-17).

Table 5: Baseline ACP Outcomes
for 2014-15 through 2016-17

OUTCOME	STATEWIDE AVERAGE
Attendance Rate Grades 6–8	95.26%
Attendance Rate Grades 9–12	93.62%
Out-of-School Suspension Rate Grades 6–8	5.48%
Out-of-School Suspension Rate Grades 9–12	5.07%
ACT Composite Score	19.94
Four-Year High School Completion Rate	90.15%
AP Calculus Score & Standardized Score	3.18 / 0.20
AP English Lang./Comp. Score & Standardized Score	3.00 / 0.17
AP English Lit./Comp. Score & Standardized Score	2.88 / 0.13
AP Psychology Score & Standardized Score	3.41 / 0.23
AP US History Score & Standardized Score	2.85 / 0.15

Note: Standardized score is based on the national distribution to allow for comparison across time.

Attendance

The first short-term outcome examined is attendance rate. The analysis conducted separate examinations of attendance rates at the middle school level (Grades 6–8) and at the high school level (Grades 9–12). Figure 20 shows the estimated change in student attendance associated with ACP for students in Grades 6–8. As seen, estimated impacts

are small and not statistically significant. Figure 21 shows the estimated change in student attendance associated with ACP for Grades 9–12. Unlike the earlier grades, there are statistically significant, albeit small, results associated with ACP overall and for white students and students in rural locations. The largest of these, the impact for rural students, is an increase in attendance rate of 0.46 percentage points, approximately equivalent to a little less than 1 more day of school.

Figure 20: Estimated ACP Impact on Student Attendance Grades 6–8 in Percentage Points by Statewide & Subgroups

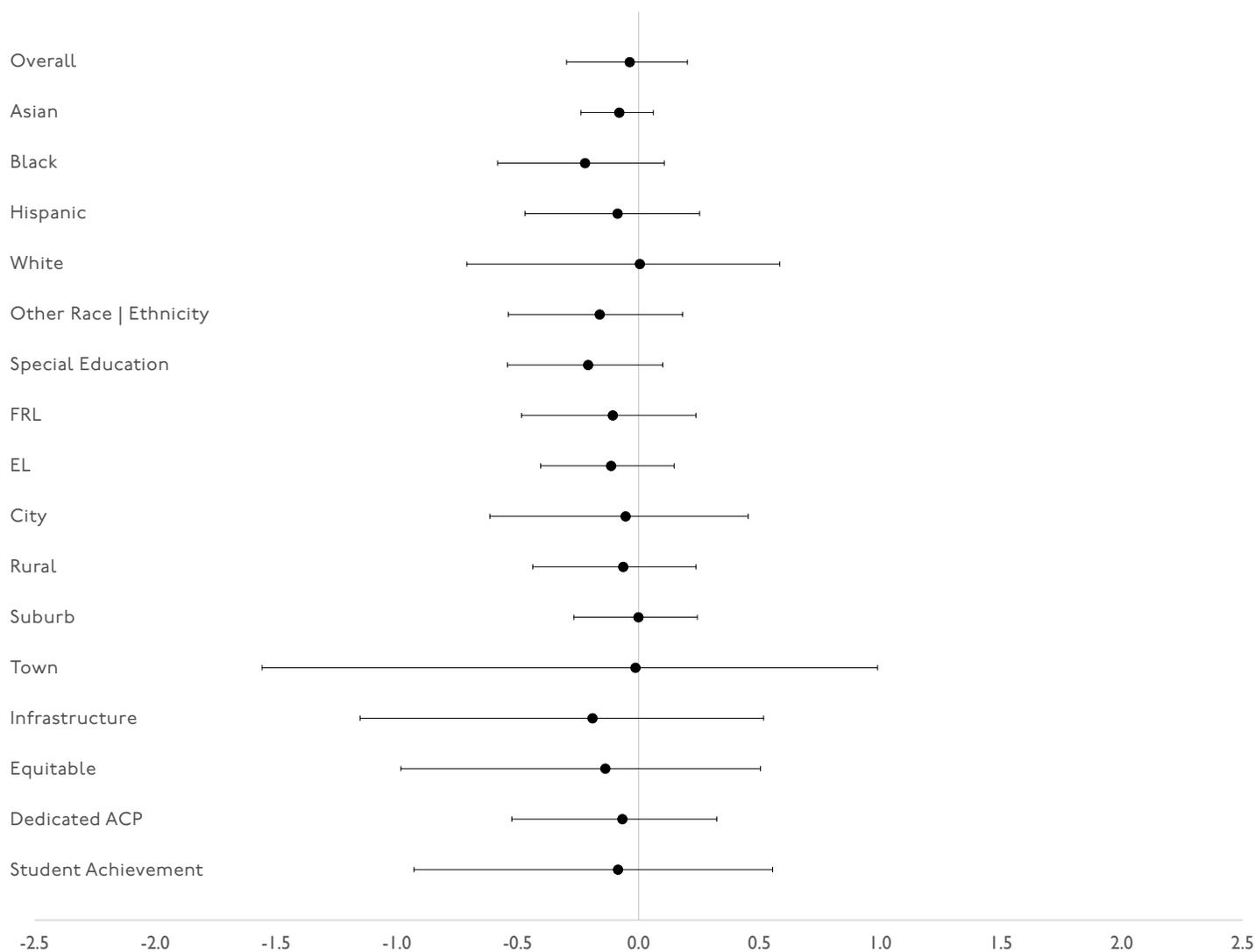
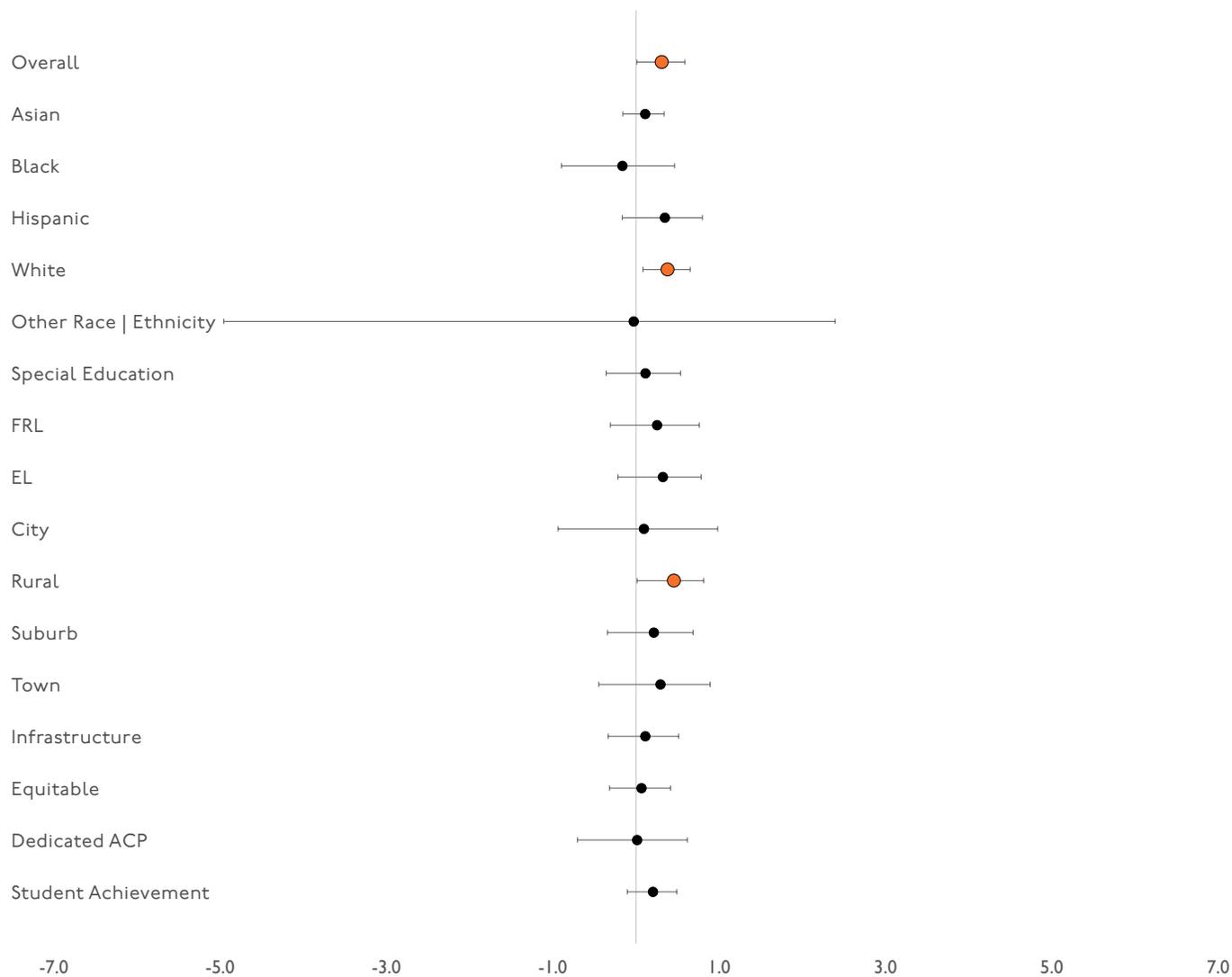


Figure 2I: Estimated ACP Impact on Student Attendance Grades 9-12
in Percentage Points by Statewide & Subgroups



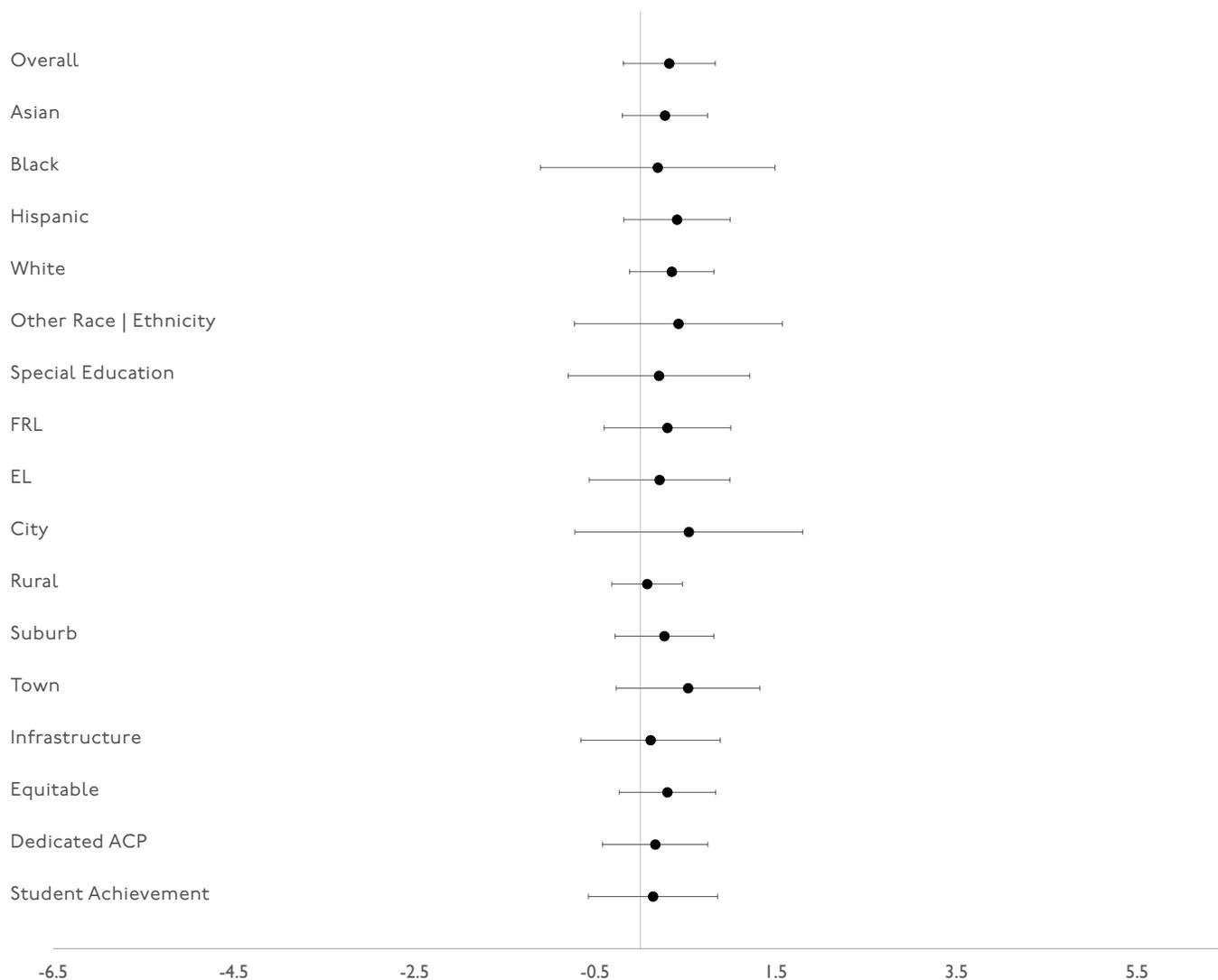
Note: Orange circles represent statistically significant results

Suspensions

The second short-term outcome examined in this evaluation is student behavior as measured by the out-of-school suspension rate. As with attendance rates, the evaluation examined both middle school grades and high school grades separately. Figure 22 shows the estimated change in the out-of-school suspension rate associated with ACP implementation in Grades 6–8 and Figure 23

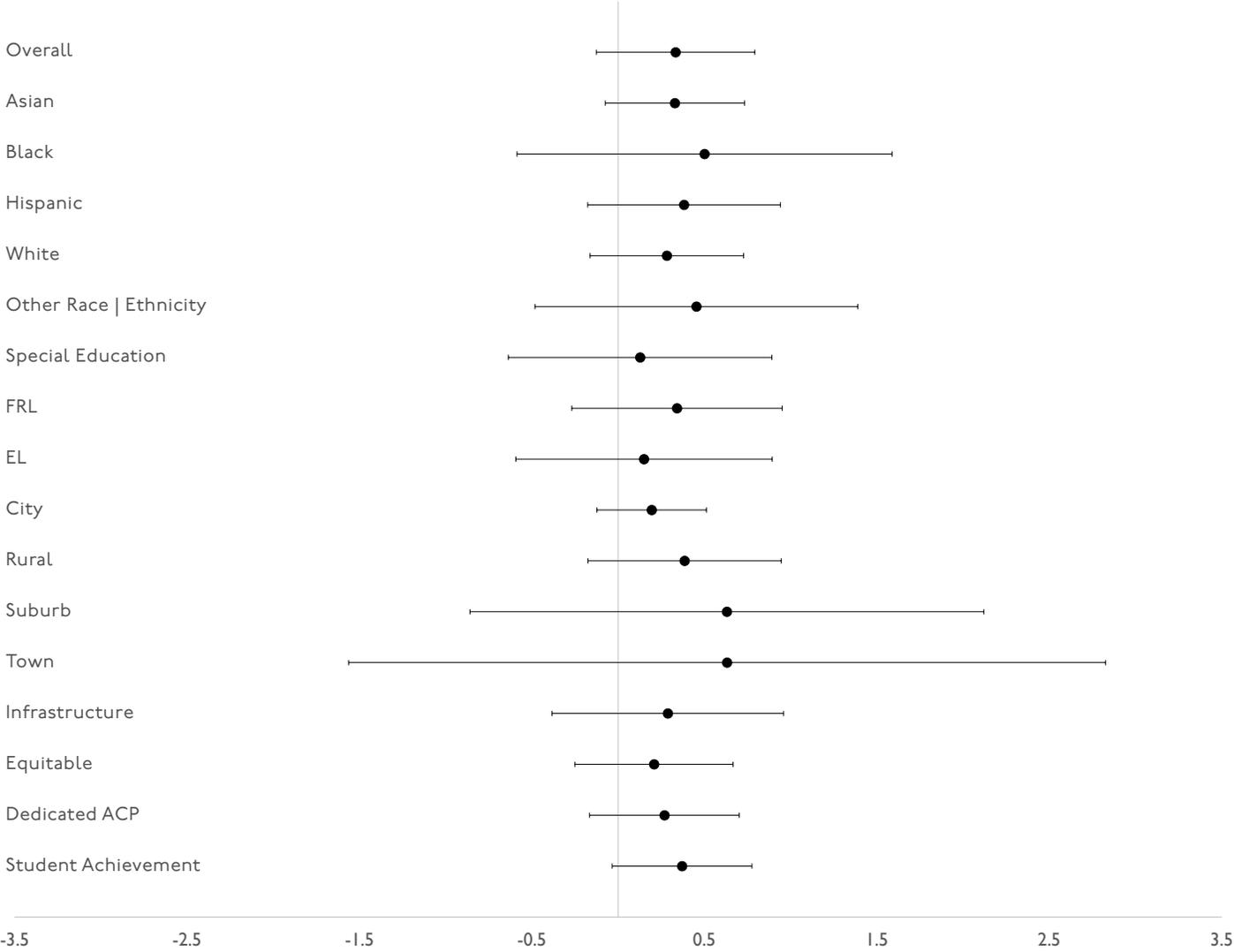
shows the same information for Grades 9–12. Unlike attendance, where a positive number impact is associated with an improvement, with out-of-school suspensions, a positive number impact is associated with an increase in suspensions, or reduction in student behavior. While most results are small and positive (indicating a higher rate of out-of-school suspensions), none of the results are statistically significant from zero.

Figure 22: Estimated ACP Impact on Suspensions Grades 6-8
in Percentage Points by Statewide & Subgroups



Note: Estimating only out-of-school suspensions.

Figure 23: Estimated ACP Impact on Suspensions Grades 9-12
in Percentage Points by Statewide & Subgroups



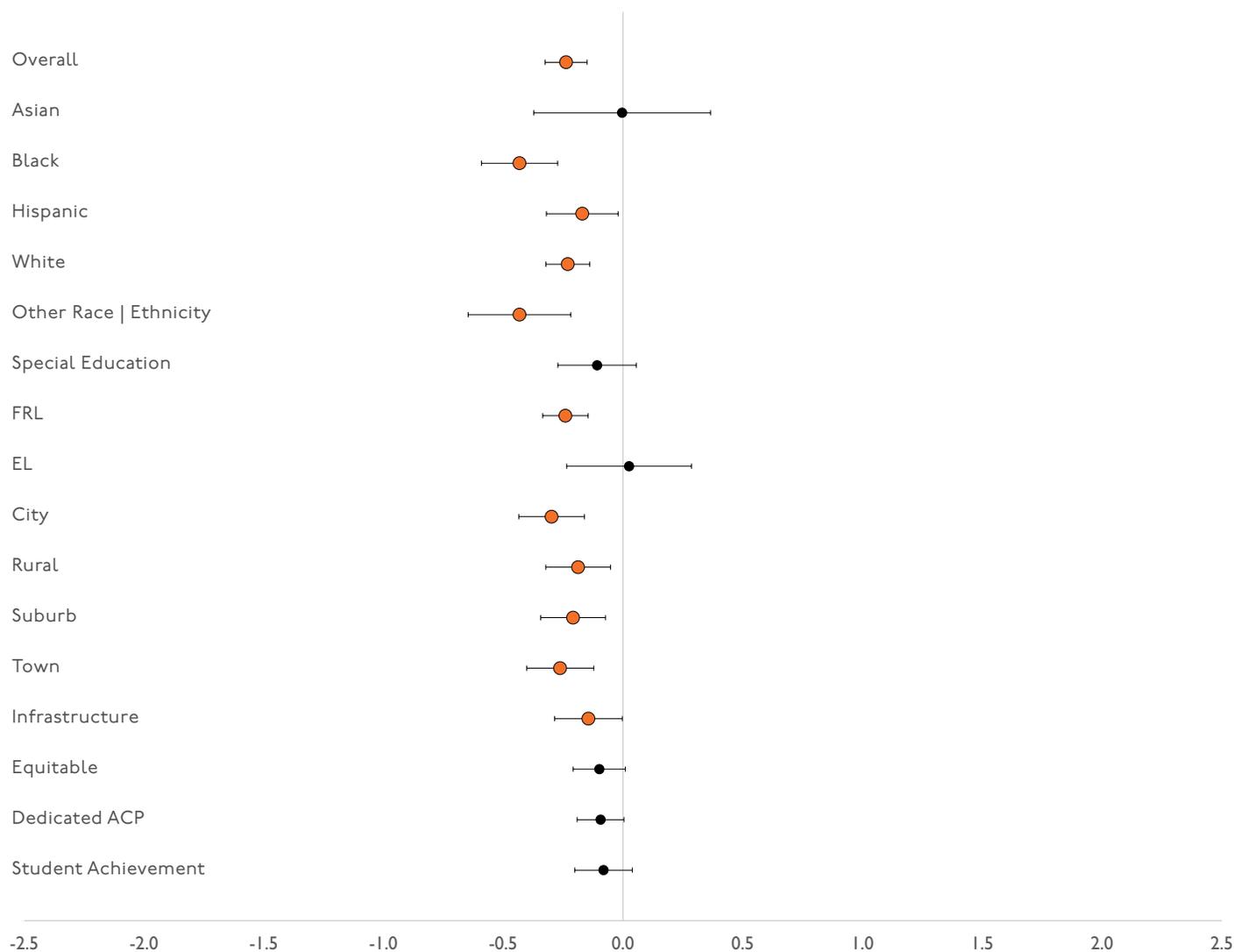
Note: Estimating only out-of-school suspensions.

ACT Performance

Moving to intermediate-term outcomes, Figure 24 shows the estimated change associated with ACP on average ACT composite score. As seen from this figure, there were small, but statistically significant, decreases in average composite score associated with ACP overall, and with ACP for black students, Hispanic students, white students,

other race/ethnicity students, economically disadvantaged students, students in all four location types, and related to the infrastructure implementation metric. While these results are negative, they are also small, with the largest estimated impacts being less than a half of a point on the composite scale. These results are likely only significant due to the statistical precision associated with the large, statewide sample size used in the analysis.

Figure 24: Estimated ACP Impact on Average ACT Score in Composite Score by Statewide & Subgroups for 2019-20



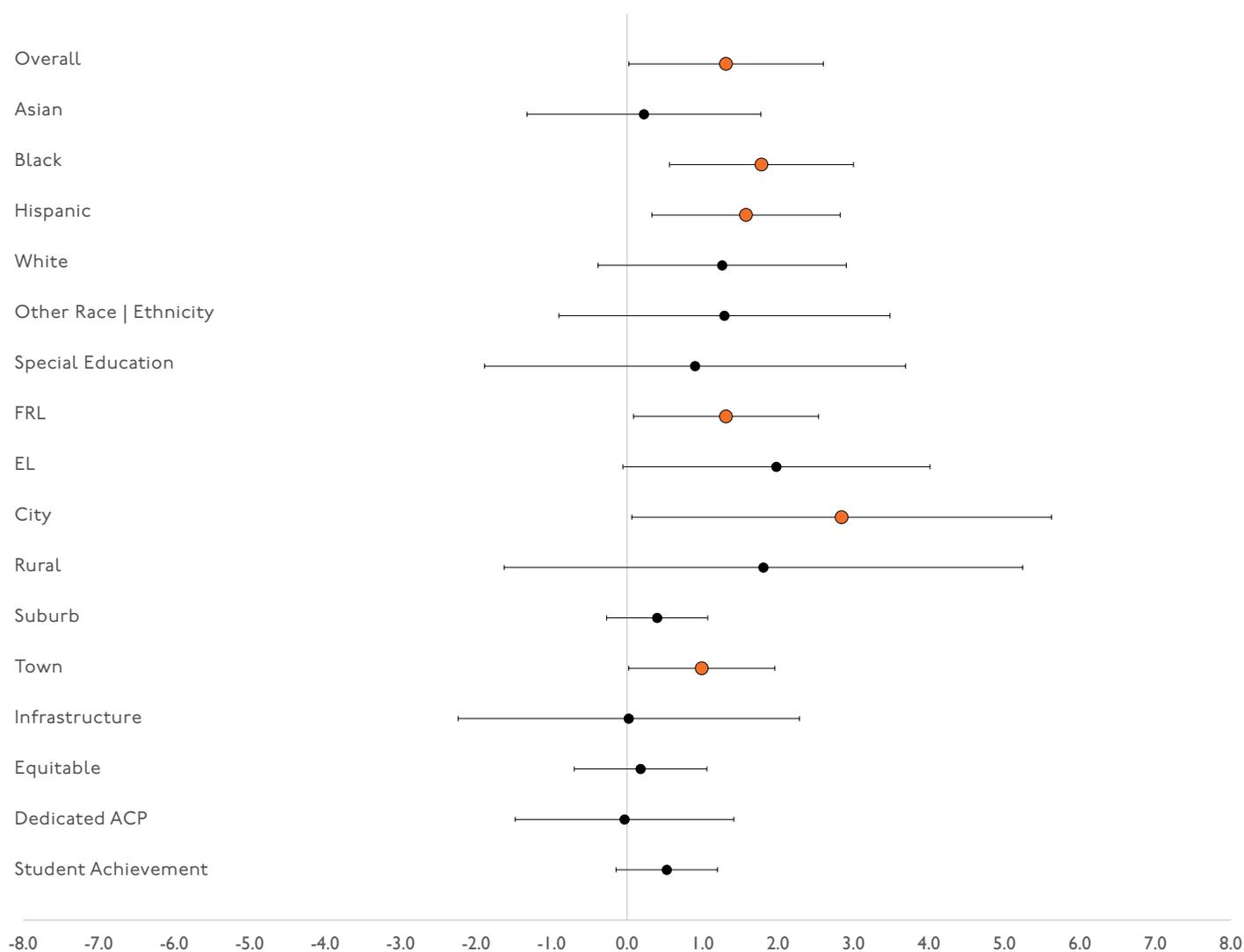
Note: Orange Circles represent statistically significant Results.

High School Completion

The next intermediate-term outcome examined in this evaluation is four-year high school completion rate. Figure 25 shows the estimated change in high school completion rate associated with ACP overall and by subgroup. As indicated, there are statistically significant increases in

the high school completion rate associated with ACP overall and with ACP for black students, Hispanic students, economically disadvantaged students, students in cities, and students in towns. The overall estimated impact is an increase of approximately 1.3 percentage points, with slightly higher impacts for black students (1.8 percentage points), Hispanic students (1.6 percentage points), and students in cities (2.8 percentage points).

Figure 25: Estimated ACP Impact on 4-Year High School Completion in Percentage Points by Statewide & Subgroups for 2019-20



Note: Orange circles represent statistically significant results.

AP Exam Performance

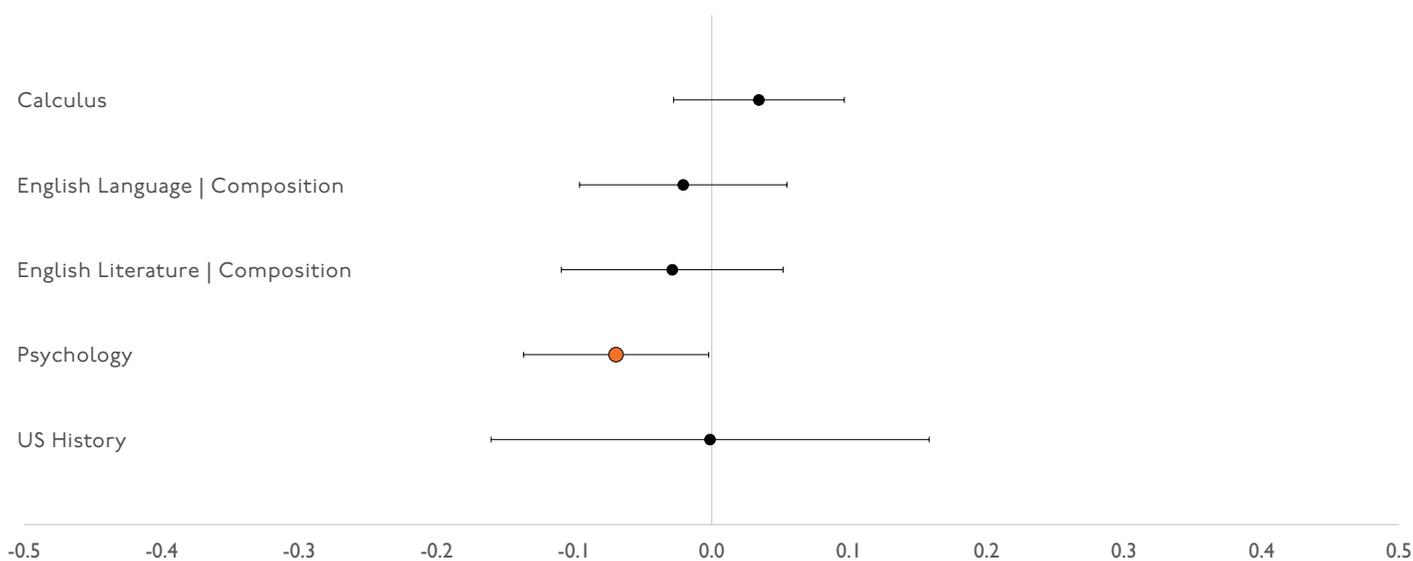
The final intermediate-term outcome examined in this year's evaluation is AP exam performance. This outcome specifically examines the results on the five most popular AP exams: Calculus (both AB and BC), English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, Psychology, and United States History. Since the national distribution of AP exams fluctuates over time, the analysis controlled for this fluctuation by standardizing each student's score based on the national distribution for each year in the analysis. Figure 26 shows the estimated change in standardized score on AP exams associated with ACP for each of the five subjects examined. As displayed in this figure, all estimated impacts were small with only the Psychology score being statistically significant. This

estimated impact is a decrease in an AP Psychology score of 0.07 on the standardized scale or approximately one-tenth of a point on the 1-5 AP scale.

An additional limitation for the interpretation of results from the AP score analysis is the pool of students that take AP exams. One of the intended outputs for ACP implementation is increased enrollment in AP courses. As Figure 12 shows in the previous section, AP/IB participation increased from 2016-17 to 2018-19 by approximately 3.4 percentage points. When these students who may not have previously been inclined to take AP courses start to enroll, it is likely they would have lower average scores on the AP exam as compared to students who would have enrolled in an AP course regardless of ACP. Due to this limitation, there may be downward bias in the estimate of this outcome.

Figure 26: Estimated ACP Impact on AP Exam Scores

in Standardized Score by Exam Subject for 2019-20



Note: Orange circles represent statistically significant results.

Section 3

Summary

Key Findings



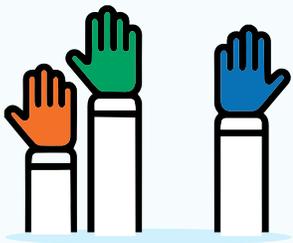
1.

Implementation continues to grow across the state; some schools are still in the initiating phase.



2.

Job Shadowing continues to grow in implementation and enthusiasm.



3.

Outputs data show evidence of gaps in participation.



4.

Some outcomes, such as high school graduation rates, appear to show a potential positive increase.

Key Findings and Recommendations

In this section, we detail some initial key findings of this year's evaluation, as interpreted by WEC evaluators. The findings are accompanied, where appropriate, by recommendations. However, without the benefit of the full case study data set, these findings and recommendations are limited and tentative. Findings and Recommendations will be more substantial in the addendum to be released near the end of 2020.

Key Finding #1: Implementation continues to grow across the state; some schools are still in the initiating phase

While survey data show that implementation continues to grow, there are still districts and schools in the initial phases of planning and implementation. Particularly in terms of scope and sequence, some locations are still (re)assessing what current activities align to ACP, what additional elements are needed, and how and where they should be delivered and by whom. Some districts still rely heavily or exclusively on Xello to serve as their scope and sequence for all of ACP. While districts continue to move towards an all-school culture of ACP, there are still those who view ACP as the responsibility of one or a few staff members, typically counselors and/or CTE instructors.

Moreover, the Covid-19 interruption may have a silver lining in that it may cause many districts, both at initial and at more advanced stages of implementation, to tweak or rethink their delivery systems, scope and sequence, and other factors. Consequently, districts may have additional needs for building or rebuilding their programs, but opportunities for "late bloomers" to get going may exist as well.

Recommendation: Continue to support schools in the process of building an ACP culture and practices. Leverage the Covid-19 interruption as an opportunity to (re)start, assess, tweak, or even rebuild ACP programs so that they better serve students in the changed economic landscape.

Recommendation: Connected to the above recommendation, continue to message that Xello is not the sum total of ACP programming, but simultaneously leverage the advantages it provides for distance, online learning.

Key Finding #2: Job Shadowing continues to grow in implementation and enthusiasm

The 5 Powerful Practices were first identified in the 2017-18 evaluation report (Final Projects, Job Shadowing, Mock Interviews, Resume-Building, and One-on-One Conferencing/Advising) and reinforced in the 2018-19 report. Among these, in this limited data set, Job Shadowing stood out as a particularly valuable activity, with schools either requiring job shadows or working to make them a requirement. While seen by both students (as evidenced in last year's data) and school personnel as valuable, job shadow opportunities require a considerable level of planning, infrastructure, and coordination, both externally (arranging with employers) and internally (matching students to opportunities and tracking their participation and other elements). Districts with well-established, required job shadowing programs report that consistent, ongoing communication efforts are paramount, and that staffing, funding, resources, and policy review/establishment are required to make this a viable component.

Recommendation: Continue to develop and share information, resources, networking opportunities and other means for supporting interested districts in developing or expanding job shadowing and other types of work-based learning programs.

Key Finding #3: Outputs data show evidence of gaps in participation

Course participation data continue to show gaps not only by various student subgroups but also by region. As further data on career-based learning and dual enrollment become available, the evaluation will continue to track the status of these gaps. WEC is still in the process of conducting additional research on the nature of these gaps.

Recommendation: Continue to pursue additional research into the equitable implementation of ACP in terms of access and participation gaps.

Key Finding #4: Some outcomes, such as high school graduation rates, appear to show a potential positive increase

The second year of outcomes data continues to show increases in some short- and medium-term measures and decreases in others. While most effects were small, and quite possibly the result of statistical “noise” given the limitations associated with the analysis, there are some continuing trends from the first year’s analysis. These trends include an associated positive change in four-year high school completion rates and in high school attendance rate and an associated negative change in composite ACT score. There continue to be limitations to these findings; for example, the possibility of interference from other, co-occurring policy changes and other factors cannot be determined given the statewide roll-out of ACP. Consequently, these outcome estimates should be interpreted with caution. These findings need to continue to be observed over time to better determine their meaning.

Recommendation: DPI is advised not to prematurely claim positive effects in terms of outcomes of ACP implementation, but instead, monitor the data longitudinally.

Next Steps

In Fall 2020, WEC plans to continue the case studies from this year, following up with the selected case study districts to expand our data collection. We will address these same evaluation questions, which are intended to draw connections between the infrastructural elements, student activities, and output and outcome data, but also collect feedback on what schools did to address ACP during the Covid-19 switch to remote learning in Spring 2020, and what changes they may make to their ACP programming going forward.

For the sixth year of the evaluation (2020-21), WEC will conduct case studies that focus on issues of equity in relation to certain high-leverage ACP-related activities, such as dual enrollment/credit, work-based learning, AP/IB courses, and IRCs. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, we will examine participation gaps, both in-school and between-school in certain larger, multi-high school districts, and conduct focus groups and interviews with students, particularly those associated with disproportionately lower participation rates, to identify barriers to participation and potential means to address those barriers. Similarly, we plan to engage teachers, administrators and family members on these same questions. Plans are already being made to collaborate with two or more large districts in Wisconsin to pilot this type of investigation, with the hope that it can expand to more large districts in future years.

Section 4

Appendices

Appendix A: Case Study School Leaders Interview Protocol

2019-20 ACP Evaluation

Case Study Districts

Introductory Principal / School Counselor/ACP Coordinator Interview Protocol – pre-visit

Purpose:

- Flesh out findings from survey to understand what they do for ACP.
- Confirm/Find out more about ACP delivery
- Introduce the idea of a visit, next steps for setting one up.

Customizing the Protocol for your particular interviewees:

This is a protocol that will need to be highly customized for each interviewee. To do so,

- review the survey data for this school/district (box)
- do an updated websearch

In all of these, look for areas to explore and probe into more deeply. Be as aware of their ACP program as possible.

Then, using the topic guidelines below, create a customized protocol according to your background research to be able to get an accurate picture of

- what they are doing,
- how it came about,
- who's involved (and who's not)
- successes and challenges,
- Dedicated ACP delivery
- Ideas about equity in ACP
- Any other INNOVATIVE PRACTICES.

In all cases, *look for artifacts both online and during the interview*, ask the respondent what they'd be willing to share and arrange to have them send it to you. (Follow-up with a thank-you email including a reminder that they'd send you X, Y, Z).

Protocol to be customized:

Introduction:

We are supporting the Department of Public Instruction with their statewide evaluation of Academic and Career Planning. We are currently following up with individuals who indicated on the fall survey that they would be willing to talk more about their district's ACP practices. We will not share any identifying information, including your name or your district's name, with DPI or in our reports. Information will be used to help the state Department of Public Instruction better help school districts with their ACP activities. Do you have any questions?

1. Can you please begin by describing your role to me.
2. Who leads the ACP efforts in your district? (*Committee, just counselors, one person?*)
3. What grade levels participate in ACP activities? (*only HS students? MS students?*)
4. Who developed the scope & sequence?
5. How is ACP material integrated into core content courses?
6. What content is covered in dedicated ACP time?
7. How is the ACP content that is implemented in advisory periods developed?
 - a. How are the activities/content shared with teachers not involved in developing the content?
 - b. Do teachers have time to collaborate and discuss how they will implement?
8. When did your school start having dedicated ACP time?
 - a. How did your school decide to have dedicated ACP time?
9. How are students assigned to advisories/ dedicated ACP time? How did you arrive at that?
10. Are all teachers assigned an advisory? How are all staff involved in ACP?
 - a. What kind of professional learning did teachers participate in? What kind of additional professional learning would be beneficial?
11. See survey for graded and/or required components and confirm.
 - a. What is required/graded and why?
 - b. How long have you been requiring that?
 - c. How are students encouraged to take these classes?
 - d. Challenges with requirements?
 - e. What has been the response from students, staff, families?
12. What would you say are your district's biggest ACP successes and challenges?
13. How do you define equity in your school?
 - a. How does ACP fit within that definition?
 - b. In defining equitable access to ACP opportunities and activities, what kind of barriers to participation did you encounter, and how did you address them?
14. Interested in site visits where we could do some interviews and focus groups? Remind about private report and can include some questions of interest to the schools as well.

Appendix B: Technical Methodology

This appendix provides detailed information on the ACP output and outcome measure calculations and demographic subgroups utilized in this report. WEC requested statewide, student-level data from DPI for the school years 2014-15 through 2018-19 related to student demographics and ACP measures of outputs and outcomes. Data sets received from DPI included:

- Student attributes file with information on student demographics, school, and grade level
- Attendance file with information on student absences
- Discipline file with information on out-of-school suspension occurrences
- High school completion file
- ACT results file
- Coursework Completion System file with information on courses taken and AP and IB courses (2014-15 and 2015-16)
- Roster file with information on courses taken and AP and IB courses (2016-17 through 2018-19)
- AP exam results file with information on tests taken and test scores

Data sets provided also included district and school information for students.

The following sections of this appendix detail the subgroups used for analysis, specific data preparation methods needed for certain data sets, the output measures used to measure infrastructural elements and student activity components, and the outcomes analysis.

Subgroups of analysis

For all measures, this report breaks down results by school year, grade level (where applicable), race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability status, English proficiency status, and locale description. For all reported statistics, the information on grade level, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged status, disability status, and English proficiency status came from the student attributes file. DPI defines economically disadvantaged as eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and disability as participation in special education. Locale description information is a designation based on school location that specifies whether a school is in a city, suburb, town, or rural setting. These codes are tied to specific schools and not students. In the majority of cases, these codes came from publicly available files on DPI's website. When a school was missing a locale description code, this evaluation used the code most associated with that school's district.

Data Preparation

Several data sets provided for use in the evaluation required additional preparation before analysis could occur. Reasons for this additional preparation included, but were not limited to missing values, possible errors, and duplicate records. Certain schools within the attendance file provided information with values outside what is reasonable. Thus, we removed a school when all its students had an attendance rate strictly less than 90 percent.

Output measures

This report examined one output measure deriving from the data sets described above based on available data in 2018-19: AP or IB course enrollment. AP and IB course enrollment used data from the Coursework Completion System and the newer replacement system, Roster. These files contained course level information including an indicator for whether or not a course was an AP or IB course. The metric for AP and IB used in this evaluation is the percentage of students taking at least one AP or IB course. Students who were in more than one school are represented once only when we report the statistics at the state level and for subgroups other than locale description. When we computed the statistics for different locale descriptions, if a student was in two different schools and if those schools had two different values for locale description, the student entered in the computation of the statistics for both locale descriptions. Potentially a student could enter the computation of a statistic in a given year up to four times if the students went to at least four different schools and if all four schools belonged to a different locale description category. If all the schools attended have the same value for the locale description, the student entered the computation only once. Since DPI changed systems during the period of examination (2014-15 through 2018-19), the evaluation only included records from schools that appeared in all years of data to allow for stability in the measure across data systems. Finally, the evaluation excluded students missing demographic information.

Outcomes Analysis

Short-term outcome measures include attendance rate and out-of-school suspension rate. Intermediate-term outcome measures include ACT composite scores,

four-year high school completion rate, and AP exam performance. AP exam performance included scores on the five most popular AP exams: Calculus (both AB and BC), English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, Psychology, and United States History. To understand how ACP is associated with these short and intermediate-term outcomes, the evaluation used an interrupted time series methodology. This type of analysis uses the same schools prior to ACP implementation as a comparison group to determine the effect of ACP once it is implemented statewide in 2017-18 and beyond. This methodology is ideal since there are no non-ACP students and schools in the year of implementation that could be used as a comparison. This analytic method uses a pre/post design to follow and compare the same schools both before and after exposure to ACP implementation. The treatment group was all schools in 2017-18 and after (as ACP is statewide). For a comparison group, the evaluation used the all of the same schools throughout the state in the years prior to ACP implementation. To account for any long term trends occurring throughout the state, the analysis used three prior years of baseline data on the intended outcomes (specifically 2014-15 through 2016-17). The evaluation then used multivariate regression models to estimate the associated impact of ACP on these outcomes while controlling for a variety of student- and school-level characteristics.

The general model specification for the outcomes analysis was:

$$Y_{igsy} = \gamma ACP_y + \beta X_{iy} + \pi Location_{sy} + \theta T_y + \delta_{gs} + \varepsilon_{igsy}$$

In this specification:

- Y_{igsy} is the outcome of interest for student i in grade g , school s , and year y .
- ACP_y is a binary indicator for if the year is during ACP implementation (2017-18 and after).
- X_{iy} is a vector of student-level covariates including gender, race/ethnicity, special education status, economically disadvantaged status, and English learner status.
- $Location_{sy}$ is a vector of indicators for the

locale description of a school including city, suburb, town, and rural.

- T_y is a continuous time trend.
- δ_{gs} are grade and school fixed effects to control for any unobserved effects that vary by grade and school.

Because of the multi-level nature of the specification, this multivariate regression also clustered the standard errors at the school level.

To account for possible impacts of ACP for various types of students and schools, the evaluation also used differential effects models. These models included an interaction term between the treatment (ACP_y) and the indicator representing the subgroup of interest. These subgroups included race/ethnicity, special education, economically disadvantaged, English learner, and each of the four locale descriptions.

In addition to examining the subgroup change in these outcomes, the analysis also explored associations for levels of ACP implementation. The evaluation identified levels of ACP implementation from the 2017-18 and 2018-19 ACP surveys.³ Specifically, four different measures of ACP implementation were identified: infrastructural element implementation, equitable access implementation, dedicated ACP time implementation, and student activity component implementation. For each of these implementation metrics, the evaluation combined all relevant survey item responses into a single score with values ranging from 0 (not yet started) through 3 (institutionalized). Implementation scores near 1 indicate the initiated level, and scores near 2 indicate the implemented level. Since not all schools responded to the surveys, only schools with answers to these items on both surveys were included in this subgroup analysis. For these models, the specification included an interaction between treatment and implementation level.

Further specific variations on the model specification above for each applicable outcome follow.

For the attendance outcome, the evaluation first accounted for the non-linearity of the measure by converting

attendance rates into the standard normal distribution using a probit transformation. To provide meaningful results, the evaluation then used an inverse transformation of the raw impact estimates before reporting. Since attendance appears differently at the middle school grade levels (6-8) and the high school grade levels (9-12), the evaluation also separated the analysis to examine each separately.

For the suspensions outcome and the high school completion outcome, for each student, the outcome is binary (1 if the student had at least one out-of-school suspension, 0 otherwise; 1 if the student completed high school within four years, 0 otherwise). As a result, a linear regression is no longer feasible and the evaluation used a logit regression. The form of the logit regression is:

$$\ln \left[\frac{\Pr(Y_{igsy})}{(1 - \Pr(Y_{igsy}))} \right] = \gamma ACP_y + \beta X_{iy} + \pi Location_{sy} + \delta T_y + \delta_{gs} + \varepsilon_{igsy}$$

For the AP exam score outcome, the analysis controlled for the fluctuation in the national distribution of scores by standardizing each student's score based on the national distribution for each year in the analysis.

To assess the robustness of findings, the evaluation tested two alternative specifications. The first alternative specification allowed for each school within the analysis to have their own specific time trend. This specification provided interaction terms for the continuous time trend with each school fixed effect. This evaluation tested this model to account for any variation in the overall trend in the outcomes across the state between schools. The second alternative specification dual clustered the standard errors at both the student and school levels. The evaluation tested this model to account for students appearing multiple times within the same analysis. Both alternative specifications produced similar results to the main specification presented above.

³ Refer to the *Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results* and *Academic and Career Planning 2018-19 Evaluation Survey Results* reports for further details.

Multiple Comparisons Correction

Since this evaluation report includes the results from multiple estimates of the impact of ACP for several outcomes and subgroups, there is an increased likelihood for false positive results that would be statistically significant due to random chance rather than actual program impact. For example, a 0.05 significance level implies that 5 percent of statistically significant estimates are produced by random chance. The Benjamini-Hochberg procedure corrects for these multiple comparisons by accounting for the total number of statistical tests as well as the strength of the estimates, as measured by p-values.⁴ In this report the evaluation adapts this procedure to provide corrected confidence intervals for each of the results presented in the report. The formula⁵ used for this correction is:

$$CI_c = \gamma \pm t_{\alpha/2, df} \left(\gamma \left/ t_{(pN_r/R_r)/2, df} \right. \right)$$

where:

- CI_c is the corrected confidence interval.
- γ is the estimate of impact.
- $t_{\alpha/2, df}$ is the t-score on the t-distribution table associated with an alpha of α (in this case 0.05) and df degrees of freedom.
- $t_{(pN_r/R_r)/2, df}$ is the t-score on the t-distribution table associated with an alpha of pN_r/R_r and df degrees of freedom.
- p is the p-value of the estimate derived from the model.
- N_r is the total number of results across all models.
- R_r is the numeric rank of results across all models, for example the result with the lowest p-value has a rank of 1.

4 Benjamini, Y. & Hochberg, Y. (1995). Controlling the false discovery rate: A practical and powerful approach to multiple testing. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series B (Methodological)*, 57(1), 289-300.

5 For the suspensions outcome and high school completion outcome, the formula uses z-score and the standard normal distribution instead of the t-score and t-distribution.

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Supporting PreK-12

