

CUNY Preparatory Transitional High School Program (CUNY Prep) A Program of the City University of New York

PROGRAM REVIEW SUMMARY

This overview of the CUNY Preparatory Transitional High School Program (CUNY Prep) is based on a program review conducted by Westat/Metis staff for the evaluation of the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) initiatives. The data were collected between April and August 2008 through interviews with staff of the CEO, the Director and staff at CUNY Prep, and CUNY Central administrators. Additionally, the evaluators reviewed program documents, monthly data reports, and management reports through May 2008.

Sponsoring Agency: The City University of New York (CUNY)

Provider Agency: The City University of New York (CUNY)

Start Date: Day program – September 2003¹
Evening Program – September 2005

CEO Budget: Since January 2007, CEO has provided \$3.5 million annually to be used for both the day and evening programs. CEO funds have allowed the program to strengthen and build the evening program, enhance the college preparatory emphasis, and make improvements to the space.

Goal and Services: The goals of CUNY Prep are to re-engage individuals who have not completed their high school degree in academic experiences that will encourage them to be life-long learners, with the academic, personal, and social skills necessary for higher education, expanded life opportunities, and active participation in community and civic affairs. The program aims to assist out-of-school youth and adults in earning GEDs and, after they pass the exam, prepares them to enter college and stay in college, unlike typical GED programs that end upon completion of the GED.

Statement of Need: There are approximately 165,000 New Yorkers between 16 and 24 years of age who are not in school, working, or looking for work. Half of these disconnected youth have less than a high school diploma.²

Target Population: The program is intended to serve on an on-going basis approximately 200 day students ages 16 to 18 and 175 evening students ages 19 and older who have dropped out of high school and have not earned a GED. Additionally, they have to demonstrate an interest in achieving goals and commitment to participate in the program according to the rules.

Eligibility Criteria: In addition to the age requirements, day students must have reading skills at least at the 8th-grade level, and evening students must pass a social studies assessment to be eligible for the program.

¹ The CUNY Prep program predates the Center for Economic Opportunity. With lack of stable funding and a promising yet untested model, CEO began providing full funding for the program in January 2007. Early evaluation results are made possible because of five years of data documenting outcomes.

² Levitan, M., 2005. *Out of School, Out of Work...Out of Luck? New York City's Disconnected Youth*. New York: Community Service Society.

Targets/Outcomes: The program set as key targets that 75 percent of all students who take the GED exam will pass it, at least 50 percent of these students will enroll in college, and at least 50 percent of those enrolled will remain in college for at least two semesters. Table 1, based on data supplied by the program, shows the total number of students who took and passed the exam since 2003 in the day and evening programs, respectively. As the table shows, the CUNY Prep day program met the 75 percent GED pass rate target (based on number of students from the cohort who took the GED exam) across all program years. Overall, CUNY Prep pass rates have exceeded the nationwide GED pass rate average of 70 percent. As of June 2008, the evening program has an approximate 63 percent pass rate across the years.

Table 1. Number of CUNY Prep Students Attempting and Passing the GED Exam: Day and Evening Programs³

Program	# Students in Cohort	# Attempting GED Exam	% Attempting from Cohort	# Passing GED Exam	% Passing of Attempted
Day Program (2003-2008)	1,462	595	40.7%	454	76.3%
Evening Program (2005-2008)	693	271	39.1%	170	62.7%

Table 2 displays the number and percent of day program students who passed the GED and entered the CUNY system. As Table 2 shows, the 50-percent college enrollment target was met in 2 of the 5 years and is close to being met across the 5 years, which currently shows incomplete 2007-2008 data. In contrast, only 11.5 percent of students in the evening program (41 of the 356 students in evening cohorts C1-C4) have thus far entered the CUNY system.

Table 2. Number of CUNY Prep Students Who Passed the GED and Entered CUNY Colleges: Day Program

Cohorts ⁴	# Students who Passed GED	# Students Admitted to CUNY College	% of GED Passers
C1-C3 (2003-2004)	105	60	57.1%
C3A-C6 (2004-2005)	94	66	70.2%
C7-C9 (2005-2006)	101	36	35.6%
C10-C13 (2006-2007)	97	40	41.2%
C14-C17 (2007-2008)*	57	4	7.0%
Total	454	206	45.4%

*Note that 2007-2008 data are incomplete and are shown through March 2008.

³ Note that 2007-2008 data are incomplete: day program data only go through March 2008 and evening program data go through June 2008.

⁴ C=Cohort

Although the program is meeting GED pass rate outcomes and is meeting or close to meeting college enrollment outcomes, college retention outcomes are not currently on target. For example, only about a third of the CUNY Prep students from the day program who went on to enroll in CUNY colleges remained in the CUNY system for a third semester.

Selected Key Findings

Fidelity to the Program Model. Interviews with CUNY Prep administrators, teachers, and counselors indicate that the program has been implemented with fidelity, supplying resources and providing services as specified. The program is dynamic, and resources and activities are continuously being adjusted to meet the perceived needs of the students.

Characteristics of the Clients Served in Comparison to the Target Population. The clients served to date fit the characteristics of the target population. Most students come from the neighborhoods in the Bronx where the school is located. According to the director, approximately 95 percent of students so far have been eligible for free or reduced price school lunches, making them compatible with the low-income criteria set by CEO.

Service Delivery. Both day and evening programs provide supports to enable students to complete their GEDs and enter college, though the evening program has a more direct focus on meeting the requirements of the GED given the limited number of hours they attend classes. The school uses the Diploma Plus model, which is a national model that uses a competency-based approach to instruction. CUNY Prep emphasizes college preparation and readiness throughout students' tenure. After students apply to college and are accepted, CUNY Prep provides follow-up services to track students' progress and to provide support such as tutoring to ensure that they are successful.

Provider Capacity. The program appears to have the capacity to provide resources such as advisement and referrals for counseling and to maintain class sizes of 15-20 students for a student body of approximately 400 students. The CUNY Prep faculty, a key resource, is dedicated to the program's goals and to the students and provides them with personal attention. However, the students seem to need more counseling and emotional support than the program anticipated, and the program cannot meet this need with current resources. Other facilities and services seem to be available in sufficient quantities to meet basic student needs.

Agency Management. CUNY Central recognizes the importance and visibility of CUNY Prep and provides close oversight for CUNY Prep through staff members from Academic Affairs. In addition, the Chancellor is fully aware of the program and its significance.

Early Outcomes. A total of 1,462 students have been admitted to the day program since 2003. Of those, 40.7 percent have attempted the GED exam. Of those who have attempted the GED, 76.3 percent have successfully passed by March 2008. A total of 693 students have been admitted to the evening program since 2005. The GED exam was attempted by 39.1 percent and approximately 62.7 percent of these have successfully passed as of June 2008. Slightly less than half the day students who have completed the GED (45.4%) were reported to have entered college by March 2008, in contrast to only 11.5 percent of evening students, excluding from the base those who first enrolled in the program during 2007-2008. Approximately one-third of CUNY Prep students who enter the CUNY system are retained for at least two semesters.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As implemented, the CUNY Prep program is in alignment with the CEO mission and with key CEO criteria, including that a poverty-level population be served. Staff are energetic and dedicated to achieving the goals of the program. Following are programmatic recommendations.

Focus on Evening Program Improvements. Since the evening program, while still fairly new, is so far behind the day program with respect to achieving its goals, special attention should be paid to investigating the impediments to student success and making programmatic changes as needed. In addition, more data and better alignment with day program data structures should be followed so that progress may be better tracked over the years.

Focus instructional improvement on mathematics. Students tend to score lowest on the mathematics sections of the GED and are likely entering the program with weaker math than literacy skills. In order for students to be successful in college, it is essential to improve their math skills, which may require revamping the math programming to align with student needs.

Consider providing on-site counseling. On-site counseling by a mental health professional might be a valuable resource. Currently students are referred to off-site sources for mental health needs.

Continue to renovate facilities. During the summer of 2008, the school's cafeteria and adjoining space underwent a major renovation, the intent of which was not only to modernize the facilities but also to make it resemble a student center on a college campus. Although these changes have improved the space and facilities are generally adequate to meet most basic needs, faculty felt that additional enhancements (such as child care, dance studio, laboratory facilities, athletics, more computers, and a travel program) would better allow them to serve the students.

CUNY Preparatory Transitional High School Program (CUNY Prep)

A Program of the City University of New York

PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT

1. Introduction

The Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) has funded approximately 40 initiatives across some 20 sponsoring agencies aimed at reducing the number of working poor, young adults, and children living in poverty in New York City. CEO is committed to evaluating its programs and policies and is developing a specific evaluation plan for each of its initiatives. For example, several major new initiatives will implement random assignment evaluations or other rigorous designs. Some programs are slated to receive implementation and outcome evaluations, while others may be evaluated using readily available administrative data. This differentiated approach reflects the varied scale of the CEO interventions, data and evaluation opportunities, and finite program and evaluation resources. Westat and Metis Associates are evaluating many of these programs on behalf of CEO. The purposes of the evaluations are to collect and report data on the implementation, progress, and outcomes of the programs in the CEO initiative to inform policy and program decision-making within CEO and the agencies that sponsor the programs.

The first phase of the Westat/Metis evaluation is to conduct a systematic review of selected CEO programs. The program reviews involve Westat/Metis staff reviewing program documents, obtaining available implementation and outcome data, interviewing program administrators, and, where appropriate, going on-site to observe program activities and interview direct service staff and participants. The results are used to assess the program design and implementation, develop a logic model to represent the underlying theory of each program, determine the extent to which the program meets key CEO criteria, examine the measurement and information systems for the program, and provide options for next steps. This Program Review Report provides an overview and assessment of the program on several dimensions, including its goals, fidelity to the program model, target population and clients served thus far, program services, and agency management.

The CUNY Preparatory Transitional High School Program (CUNY Prep) was established in 2003 to assist New York City students who dropped out of high school to complete their GEDs and prepare them to enter college. The program was conceived by two CUNY administrators and was initiated as a collaborative effort with the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and the New York City Department of Education (DOE) under the direction of the founding principal/director. CUNY Prep was designed to approach the educational needs of out-of-school young people in a new way: instead of providing short-term and academically undemanding programs, students were to be encouraged to participate full-time with an in-depth focus on humanities, math, writing, and science. CUNY Prep was originally funded through DYCD's federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) money. In 2005-2006, DYCD was faced with an overall reduction in WIA funding and had to reduce its support of CUNY Prep. The school was able to secure funds from the City Council and the Mayor's Office to maintain operations through January 2007, at which point they moved to full funding from CEO. Since then, CEO funding has provided stability to the program and allowed them to make multiple improvements in programming. Because the program predates CEO, early evaluation results are made possible with the analysis of historical data.

Information and data for this Program Review Report are based on interviews conducted by Westat and Metis staff between April and August 2008 with staff of the CEO, the director and staff at CUNY Prep, and CUNY Central administrators. Additionally, the evaluators reviewed program documents, monthly data reports, and management reports through June 2008.

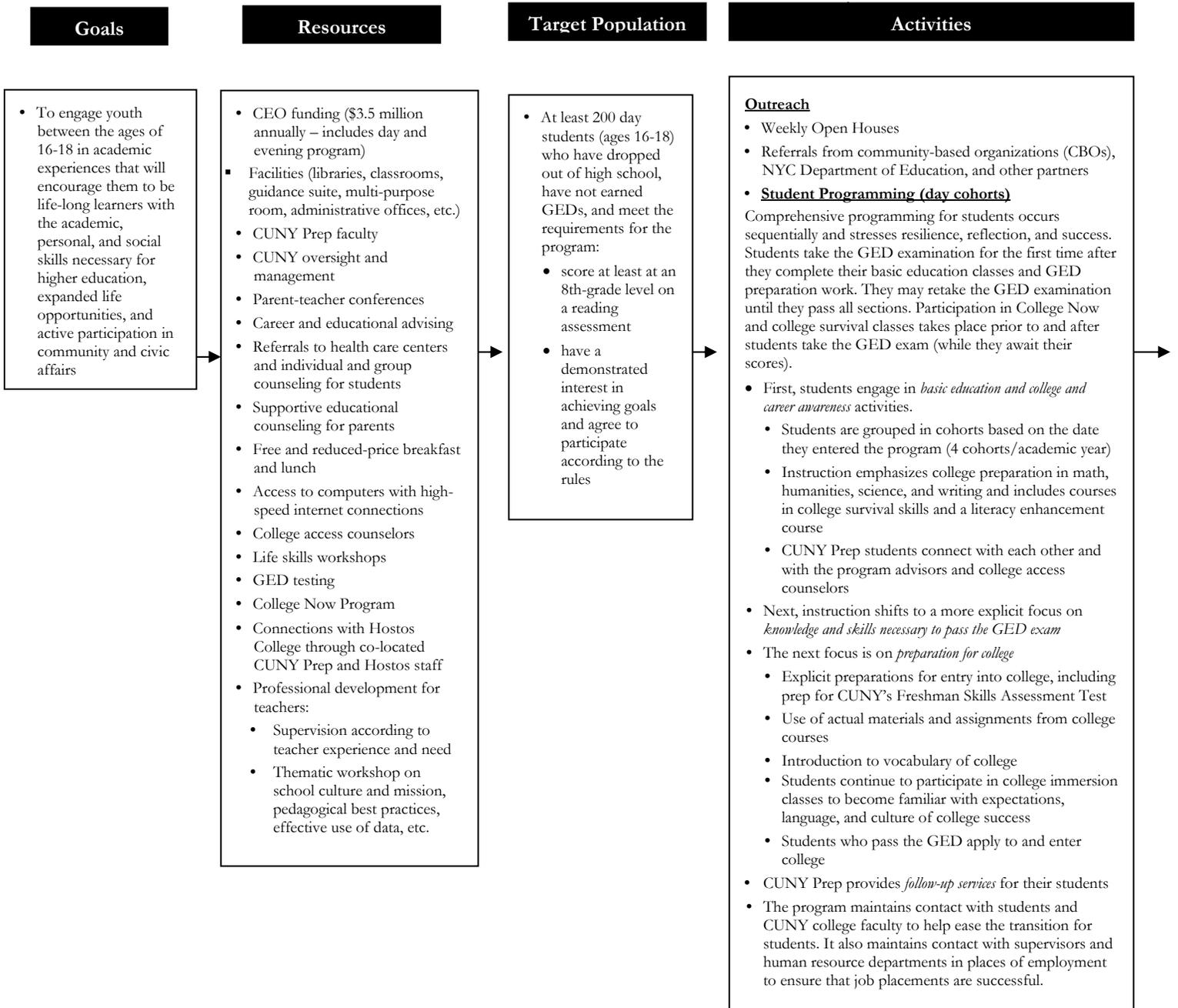
A key analytic tool in the program review is development of a logic model that serves as a visual representation of the underlying logic or theory of a program. The program logic model details the program's context, assumptions, and resources and their relationships to one another. By examining the program's internal logic and external context, the evaluation team and reader are able to determine if the program design is consistent with overall goals and capable of achieving its intended outcomes. Toward this end, this Program Review Report focuses on early outcomes and the challenges faced in achieving them.

2. Overview and Assessment of the Program

Program Goals. The goals of the program are to engage individuals who have not completed their high school degrees in academic experiences that will encourage them to be life-long learners with the academic, personal, and social skills necessary for higher education, expanded life opportunities, and active participation in community and civic affairs. The program emphasizes the values of resilience, reflection, and success. Specifically, the program aims to assist those who are not in school to earn their GEDs while preparing them to enter and stay in college, unlike typical GED programs that end when the GED is attained. Both the day and evening programs have an explicit college preparatory focus; however, students in the day program are exposed to more program-guided college experiences, while students in the evening program are more likely to self-direct their exposure to college experiences. In both cases, students are exposed to experiences that allow them to see college as a possible next step in their future.

The elements of the CUNY Prep program are displayed in two logic models, or theories of action—one for the day program and one for the evening program—on the following four pages. The logic models include the program's context, assumptions, and resources. Each activity is linked to the number of individuals targeted to participate in the different activities (outputs), as well as short- and long-term participant outcomes.

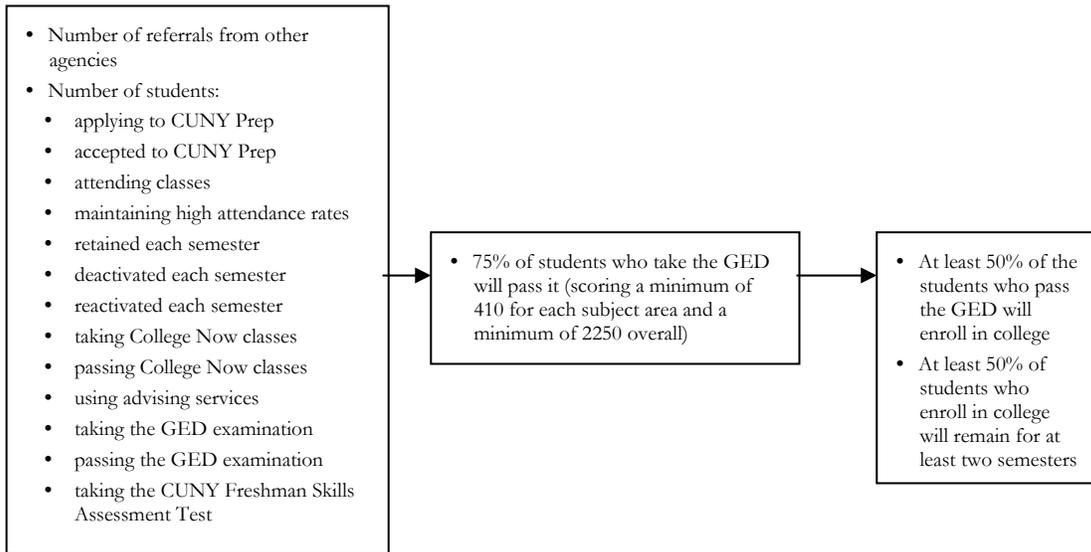
**The City University of New York Preparatory Transitional High School Program (CUNY Prep)
DAY PROGRAM
Logic Model**



Outputs

Short-/Mid-term Outcomes

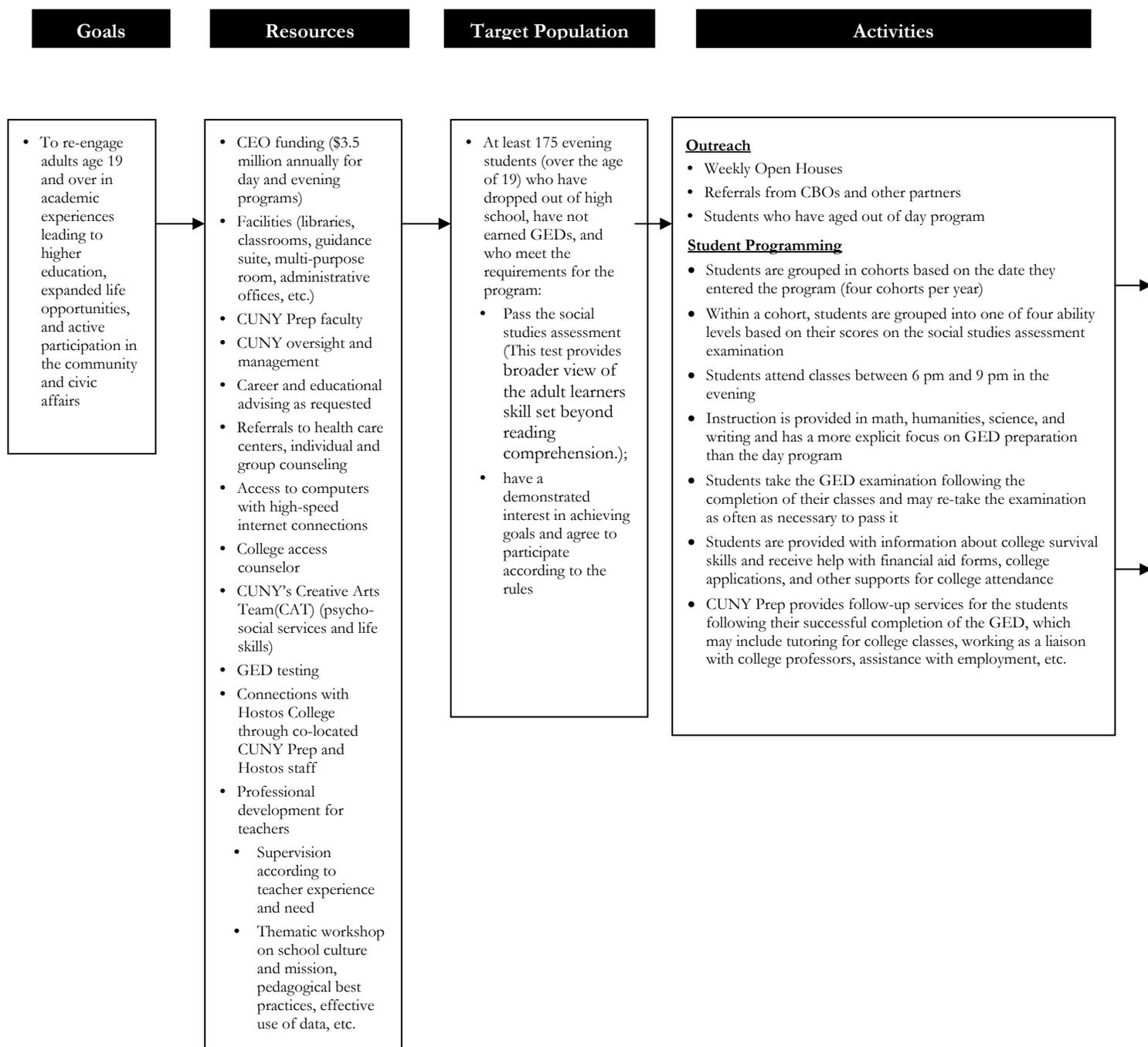
Long-term Outcomes



Context

- There are approximately 165,000 New Yorkers between 16 and 24 years of age who are not in school, working, or looking for work..
- Half of these disconnected youth have less than a high school diploma.
- Recent statistics released by the state DOE show that only 56% of New York City high school students graduated in 4 years, which is more than 20 percentage points lower than the graduation rate for the rest of the state (See NYC DOE Graduation Rates Class of 2007, August 11, 2008).
- Individuals from low-income families graduate at even lower rates, ranging from 35-50% from high school and college (see <http://usny.nysed.gov/summit/summit/summitcall05.htm>).

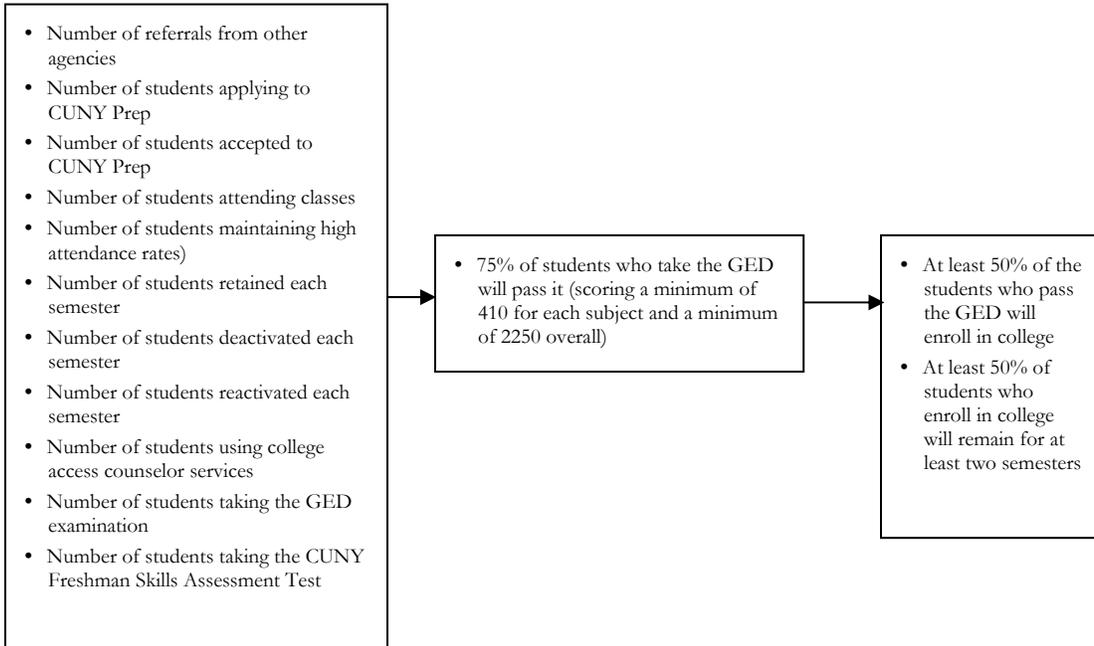
The City University of New York Preparatory Transitional High School Program (CUNY Prep) EVENING PROGRAM Logic Model



Outputs

Short-/Mid-term Outcomes

Long-term Outcomes



Context

- According to the 2000 census, there are more than 39 million adults in the United States who do not have a high school diploma.
- In 2007, only 1.6% of adults in the U.S. without a high school diploma took the GED, and of these, 62.5% passed the GED.
- Approximately 60% of adults who took the GED in 2007 in New York State passed it. (see *The 2007 GED Testing Program Statistical Report*, Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 2008).

Fidelity to the Program Model. Interviews with CUNY Prep administrators, teachers, and counselors indicate that the program is consistent with the model as represented in the logic models, supplying resources and providing services as specified. The program, however, is dynamic, and resources and activities are continuously being adjusted to meet the perceived needs of the students. The program was under development from 2003 until 2005, at which point it had improved the school curriculum, addressed issues of student discipline, and redesigned classrooms. In fall of 2004, as the program moved to a new facility in the Pelham Parkway section of the Bronx, certain enhancements were added, including a new student handbook that explicitly outlined the program's approach, a T1-powered computer and phone network, and four case managers¹ to provide additional student support. Refinements in program design continued from 2005-2007, including further developments to the curriculum, a requirement that students attend two consecutive cycles before attempting the GED exam, increased security at the school, the introduction of the College Now program,² and the strengthening of the college access and support systems. An evening program for students 19 years and older was initiated in 2005, first as a pilot and by 2007 as a fully functioning program.

Target Population and Clients Served. The program is intended to serve on an ongoing basis approximately 200 day students, ages 16 through 18, and 175 evening students, ages 19 and older,³ who dropped out of high school and did not receive their high school diploma. To be eligible for the program, day students must have reading skills at least at the 8th-grade level. Evening students must pass a social studies assessment,⁴ an exam deemed by the program staff to be more appropriate for older students than the reading skills test.

Students enter the program as part of a cohort of students and remain in the same cohort even if they withdraw and reenter the program at a later time.⁵ A new cohort is formed four times per year, in summer, fall, winter, and spring. Students admitted in the summer cohort include individuals who do not meet the traditional requirement of having an 8th-grade reading level. These students participate in an intensive literacy program over the summer (during which the program is operating at half staffing level) to bring their skills to the entry level requirement. Once the entry level requirements are met, the students continue in the program.

Cohort sizes have averaged over 80 in the day program and over 100 in the evening program. The academic year begins on July 1 and continues through June 30 of the following year. As of spring 2008, the day program had admitted its 17th cohort, and the evening program was serving its 7th cohort. Table 1 displays the numbers of students served in each academic year from 2003-2004 through the 2007-2008 academic year.

¹ Note that case managers later changed their roles to become college access counselors.

² College Now is a collaborative program of CUNY and the NYC DOE. It offers dual enrollment programs in 250 NYC public high schools and serves more than 30,000 students annually. College Now is not available to students in the evening program, as CUNY places age restrictions on program participation.

³ There is no age cap for those participating in the evening program.

⁴ The Social Studies predictor measures reading comprehension, graphic and visual literacy and some content knowledge. Using this assessment as opposed to a traditional reading exam e.g., ABLE or TABE, enables CUNY Prep administrators to obtain a greater knowledge of the adult learner skill set beyond reading comprehension. In addition, the adult program is intended to be a fast track program and we have found the social studies predictor to be a pretty reliable indicator of GED exam readiness when combined with the math scores.

⁵ Cohorts based on start dates are significant for reporting purposes. Students are not necessarily grouped by cohort for classes and take classes with various groups of current students.

Table 1. Number of New and Continuing CUNY Prep Students

Academic Year	Day Program			Evening Program				
	Cohort	#New Students	# Continuing Students	Total # Students	Cohort	# New Students	# Continuing Students	Total # Students
2003-2004	C1-C3*	358	0	358				
2004-2005	C3A**-C6	306	243	549				
2005-2006	C7-9	295	223	518	C1	119	0	119
2006-2007	C10-13	231	237	468	C2-C4	288	68	356
2007-2008	C14-17	272	145	417	C5-C7	286	152	438

*C=Cohort

**The "A" designation was given to the first summer cohort.

Sources: CUNY Prep 2007-08 Annual School Report, June 2008 (day program); student counts and outcomes data (evening program) were provided by CUNY Prep to the evaluators, August 2008.

Table 2 presents the characteristics of the CUNY Prep day students for 4 years of the program, from 2004-2005 through 2007-2008. From 70 to 80 percent of students are under age 18 when they enter the program, suggesting that most of them have been out of school for fewer than 2 years. Close to half are female. The majority of students have Hispanic backgrounds, but most speak English at home. A sizable percentage of students (particularly from 2005-2008) either did not supply information about their ethnicity, or placed it in an "other" category. The decline in the proportion of students reporting that they speak Spanish at home (from 35 percent in 2004-2005 to 4 percent in 2007-2008) may be due to a change in the wording of the question from "What language is spoken in the home?" to "What is the primary language spoken at home?"

Table 2. CUNY Prep Participant Characteristics (Day Students)

Category	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Entering Cohorts	306	295	231	272
Age Distribution*				
16	29.7%	43.1%	39.0%	33.8%
17	40.5%	37.3%	39.0%	48.2%
18	20.9%	14.9%	19.5%	16.9%
Female	49.3%	55.6%	50.2%	48.5%
Male	50.7%	44.4%	49.8%	51.5%
Race/Ethnicity				
Hispanic	55.2%	54.9%	54.5%	51.8%
African American	40.8%	29.8%	34.6%	28.3%
Other/unknown	4.0%	15.3%	10.9%	19.9%
Home Language				
English	60.1%	76.9%	89.2%	88.2%
Spanish	35.3%	20.3%	8.2%	4.0%
Other/unknown	3.6%	2.8%	2.6%	7.8%
Number of Students Served (all cohorts)	549	518	468	417

*Percentages do not add to 100 because some ages were not recorded.

Sources: CUNY Prep 2007-08 Annual School Report, June 2008 (2005-2008), CUNY Prep 2004-2006 Comprehensive School Report, June 2007 (2004-2005).

Students present several types of emotional and social challenges to faculty and staff. According to the director, most students come from backgrounds of poverty, and approximately 95 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price school breakfasts and lunches (which is compatible with the low-income criteria set by CEO for participation in the antipoverty programs). Some have been gang members, and several who had experienced mental health issues were referred to Jacoby Hospital for help. Others will be the first ones in their families to complete high school. The director reported that some students may actually be afraid of success and therefore are reluctant to finish their course work. Many have limited exposure to neighborhoods beyond their own and are unwilling to venture out into unfamiliar environments, including Manhattan and other areas of the city.

Outreach and Recruitment. The school accepts students four times a year, in numbers needed to maintain or exceed targeted minimum enrollment levels of 200 for the day program and 175 for the evening program. Since word-of-mouth about the program at first resulted in waiting lists, active recruitment was suspended for a time but has been reinstated. The New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS), the New York State Office of Family and Children Services, and other agencies refer clients to the program on a regular basis. An open house is held weekly to describe the program to interested would-be applicants. All eligible applicants so far have eventually been accepted into the program.

Program Services. Both day and evening programs provide supports to enable students to complete their GEDs and enter college. Students sign a contract agreeing to abide by the rules after being accepted into the program. Upon entry, they write a short autobiography that helps them articulate their histories and understand how they have arrived at the present. These autobiographies also give staff insight into how best to work with them. They must attend classes for two 3-month periods (cycles) before they are eligible to take the GED exam. Students are required to maintain high rates of attendance throughout their participation in the program. Although there is a formal attendance policy in which students must withdraw from the program after seven absences but can return at the start of the next cycle, program staff take individual student situations and circumstances into consideration and make decisions on a case-by-case basis.

CUNY Prep students begin with basic education and college awareness activities. The school uses the Diploma Plus Model, which is a national model that uses a competency-based approach in which promotion is based on indications of student performance.⁶ The academic program emphasizes math, humanities, science, and writing, and uses hands-on, student-centered, project-based instruction. Day classes last 70 minutes each and have a maximum of 15 to 20 students, while the evening program holds classes from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. 4 days a week.

CUNY Prep emphasizes college preparation and readiness throughout students’ tenure. Day students may take College Now courses prior to and after taking the GED examination, while they wait for their scores. College Now courses allow students to earn college credits while still completing their high school equivalency degree. Recent College Now courses that CUNY Prep day program students have taken, and their pass rates, are displayed in Table 3 below.

⁶ The Diploma Plus program has demonstrated positive impact on student achievement, graduation rates, and career preparation (see *Diploma Plus – Sampling of Outcome and Impact Data*, March 2008).

Table 3. College Now Course Enrollments and Pass Rates: Day Program

Course	Semester	Course Enrollment	Course Pass Rates (% of enrollment)
Introduction to Criminal Justice	January 2007	37	25 (67.6%)
Introduction to Criminal Justice	April 2007	35	18 (51.4%)
Sociology	April 2007	32	16 (50.0%)
Introduction to Criminal Justice	September 2007	24	15 (62.5%)
Government	September 2007	17	13 (76.5%)
Government	January 2008	31	25 (80.6%)
Introduction to Criminal Justice	April 2008	50	Not available

Source: CUNY Prep 2007-08 Annual School Report, June 2008.

Students in the day and evening programs continue to take college awareness and survival skills classes at CUNY Prep as they await their GED score results. These classes meet three times a week for 45 minutes and focus on helping students become socially and academically ready for college through team-building games and events, conflict resolution training, discussions of current events, and college field trips.

When students pass the GED, they prepare to take CUNY's Freshman Skills Assessment Test, required for entry into any of the colleges in the CUNY system. After students apply to college and are accepted, CUNY Prep provides follow-up services. The program maintains contact with CUNY college administrators and faculty to follow students' progress and to provide support such as tutoring to ensure that they are successful. Counselors focus most of their attention on students who attend Hostos College in the Bronx, due to connections they have established there with administrators and faculty (some CUNY Prep teachers also teach at Hostos). A CUNY Prep college access counselor is based at Hostos 2 days a week to help students with applications for college and financial aid and to assist them in interacting with the faculty.

The evening program is more directly focused from the beginning on preparing students to meet the requirements for the GED, since there are only 3 classroom hours available each evening as compared to 5 hours for the day program. Students are grouped into one of four achievement levels in each subject area (day students are not grouped by achievement). In theory, evening students can use most of the services provided to day students, except for free and subsidized meals, but they rarely have time to access them. Because they are older, evening students are expected to be more mature and receive less "hand holding" and individualized attention.

The director reviews progress each semester and fine tunes the program to address problems and improve the likelihood of meeting project goals. For example, the director began the 2007-2008 academic year by assessing what could be done to improve the college retention rate. A review of the literature⁷ suggested that students should not start college needing remediation, continuous

⁷ Documents included in the literature review were: Educational Policy Improvement Center, March 2007, *Toward a More Comprehensive Conception of College Readiness*; Lave, J. and Wenger, E., 1991, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, Cambridge: Cambridge

enrollment is important, and students should accumulate at least 24 credits a year. In addition, the literature suggested that young people learn best by studying a discipline as apprentices rather than through the traditional “chalk and talk” approach. The director told us that this literature review influenced the structure of the programming for the year 2007-2008.

Outputs and Outcomes. The program set as a key target that 75 percent of all students who take the GED will pass it, at least 50 percent of those passing the exam will enroll in college, and at least 50 percent of those enrolled will remain in college for at least two semesters. Passing scores on the GED are 410 for each subject with a minimum overall score of 2250, although CUNY Prep aims for its students to pass with minimum scores of 450 on each subtest.

Tables 4 and 5 display the numbers of students taking the GED and passing it for the day and evening programs, respectively. As the table shows, CUNY Prep met the 75 percent GED pass rate target in 4 of the 5 program years, as well as across all years in the day program. Overall, CUNY Prep pass rates have exceeded the New York State GED pass rate of 60 percent in 2007.⁸ The evening program met its target in 1 of the program years and has an approximately 63 percent pass rate across the years as of June 2008. Data on the number of evening students who attempted and passed the GED appear in Table 5.

University Press; and Grubb, N., January 1998, *From Black Box to Pandora's Box: Evaluating Remedial/ Developmental Education*, Paper presented at the Conference of Replacing Remediation in Higher Education, Palo Alto, CA, Stanford University.

⁸ The 2007 GED Testing Program Statistical Report: Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 2008.

**Table 4. Number of CUNY Prep Students Attempting and Passing the GED Exam:
Day Program⁹**

Cohorts	# Students in Cohort	# Attempting GED Exam	% Attempting from Cohort	# Passing GED Exam	% Passing of Attempted
C1-C3 (2003-2004)	358	152	42.4%	105	69.1%
C3A-C6 (2004-2005)	306	131	42.8%	94	71.8%
C7-9 (2005-2006)	295	119	40.3%	101	84.9%
C10-13 (2006-2007)	231	119	51.5%	97	81.5%
C14-17 (2007-2008)*	272	74	27.2%	57	79.2%
Total	1,462	595	40.7%	454	76.3%

*Note that 2007-2008 data are incomplete and are shown through March 2008. June 2008 data were not available to the evaluators at the writing of this report.

Sources: CUNY Prep 2007-08 Annual School Report, June 2008 (2006-2008), CUNY Prep Student Counts and Outcomes, January 2008 (2003-2006).

**Table 5. Number of CUNY Prep Students Attempting and Passing the GED Exam:
Evening Program**

Cohorts	# Students in Cohort	# Attempting GED Exam	% Attempting from Cohort	# Passing GED Exam	% Passing of Attempted
C1 (2005-2006)	119	29	24.4%	22	75.9%
C2-C4 (2006-2007)	288	117	40.6%	80	68.4%
C5-C7 (2007-2008)*	286	125	43.7%	68	54.4%
Total	693	271	39.1%	170	62.7%

*Note that 2007-2008 data are shown through June 2008.

Source: Data provided by CUNY Prep to evaluators, August 2008.

Table 6 displays students' average best scores on the GED examination. Each subject test score is on a scale of 1-800 with 410 as the passing score. These data are calculated using students' highest scores from each subtest and may include multiple test dates for individuals. Data are shown for day students only; data for evening students are not available at this time. On average, students tended to score highest on the reading portion and lowest on the math portion of the exam.

⁹ Data are displayed by cohort, not by the time period in which the GED was passed. For this reason, data from prior years are periodically updated.

Table 6. Average Best GED Subtest Scores by Cohort: Day Program^{10,11}

Cohorts	Number of Test Scores	Average Best Writing Scores	Average Best Reading Scores	Average Best Social Studies Scores	Average Best Science Scores	Average Best Math Scores
C1-C3 (2003-2004)	142	473	535	507	490	463
C3A-C6 (2004-2005)	120	470	519	497	485	466
C7-9 (2005-2006)	95	480	508	494	505	486
C10-13 (2006-2007)	64	512	529	498	494	467
C14-17 (2007-2008)	56	504	545	511	507	484

*Note that 2007-2008 data are incomplete and are shown through March 2008.

Sources: CUNY Prep 2007-08 Annual School Report, June 2008 (2006-2008), CUNY Prep Student Counts and Outcomes, January 2008 (2003-2006).

The program set as a goal that at least 50 percent of students who pass the GED will enroll in college, and at least 50 percent of these will remain in college for at least two semesters. Table 7 displays the number and percent of students who passed the GED and entered a CUNY college in each academic year. Numbers for students attending colleges outside the CUNY system are not available. For the day program, as Table 7 shows, the 50-percent college enrollment target was met in 2 of the 5 years and is close to being met across the 5 years (note that 2007-2008 data are not yet complete). In contrast, as of winter 2008 only 11.5 percent (41 of the 356 students in evening cohorts C1-C4) have thus far entered the CUNY system.¹²

Table 7. Number of CUNY Prep Students Who Passed the GED and Entered CUNY Colleges: Day Program

Cohorts	# Students who Passed GED	# Students Admitted to CUNY College	% of GED Passers
C1-C3 (2003-2004)	105	60	57.1%
C3A-C6 (2004-2005)	94	66	70.2%
C7-9 (2005-2006)	101	36	35.6%
C10-13 (2006-2007)	97	40	41.2%
C14-17 (2007-2008)*	57	4	7.0%
Total	454	206	45.4%

*Note that 2007-2008 data are incomplete and are shown through March 2008.

Source: CUNY Prep 2007-08 Annual School Report, June 2008.

The program set as a goal that at least 50 percent of students who enter college will remain for at least two semesters. Table 8 displays the re-enrollment rates for day program students in CUNY colleges. As the table shows, only approximately one-third of students remain in the CUNY system after two semesters (cells with turquoise shading). The director is aware of this trend and, as described above, beginning in 2007 significantly increased support to students in the college transition. This was accomplished by strengthening the academic program to reduce remediation at

¹⁰ CUNY Prep receives GED pass/fail data from the state for their students. The school receives score information directly from students when they provide it. The data displayed in the table represent approximately 70% of the total scores for their students..

¹¹ Data are displayed by cohort, not by the time period in which the GED was passed. For this reason, data from prior years are periodically updated.

¹² Data by cohort are not available.

the college level, building a college access counseling unit, and providing more support and presence on-site (particularly at the Hostos campus).

Table 8. Re-enrollment of CUNY Prep Students in CUNY Colleges: Day Program¹³

Cohort	Re-enrollment of Original Cohort													
	Spring 2005		Fall 2005		Spring 2006		Fall 2006		Spring 2007		Fall 2007		Spring 2008	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fall 2004 (n=18)	11	61.1	7	38.9	4	22.2	3	16.7	4	22.2	4	22.2	5	27.8
Spring 2005 (n=5)			0	0.0	1	20.0	1	20.0	0	0.0	1	20.0	1	20.0
Fall 2005 (n=51)					33	64.7	19	37.3	12	23.5	13	25.5	10	19.6
Spring 2006 (n=27)							10	37.0	8	29.6	6	22.2	5	18.5
Fall 2006 (n=40)									21	52.5	13	32.5	12	30.0
Spring 2007 (n=33)											13	39.4	9	27.3
Fall 2007 (n=42)													25	59.5

Source: CUNY Prep 2007-08 Annual School Report, June 2008.

Provider Capacity. The program has been receiving approximately \$3.5 million in funding from the CEO each year, beginning in January 2007. According to CUNY administrators and the school’s director, the assurance of stable funds from CEO over multiple years has allowed them to focus on improving the programming in multiple ways. In particular, it has allowed them to better focus on college preparatory work, as WIA funding had more of a workforce development focus, which was not fully aligned with the philosophy and goals of the program. Additionally, the CEO funding has allowed them to strengthen and stabilize the evening program, which had been launched on a pilot basis prior to the receipt of CEO funds. Moreover, the money has allowed them to improve their space. For example, they are currently working on a remodeling of the cafeteria so that it resembles a student center, which will be used for both day and evening students. As the director notes, this will be more consistent with the college focus of the program, as college campuses have student centers that often serve as student hubs.

The program has made multiple improvements in their facilities over the years, making the current space adequate to meet the needs of the program but not luxurious. Located on a busy street in the Pelham Parkway section of the Bronx—White Plains Road—the program has 10 small classrooms over a store front, a library, a guidance suite, a multi-purpose room, and administrative offices.

¹³ The semesters shown on the left column of the table indicate CUNY semester start dates and do not indicate CUNY Prep cohorts.

Students have access to high-speed computers. Other available resources, which vary according to whether students are enrolled in the day or in the evening program, include: a cafeteria serving free or subsidized breakfasts and lunches; career and educational advisement; college access retention services (CARS); a newly formed counseling department to help students stay in college; referrals to health care providers and providers of individual and group counseling; and life skills workshops. Enrichment programs such as trips to the theater are also available. Teachers receive professional development, including thematic workshops on topics such as pedagogical best practices.

Based on our observations, the program seems to have the capacity to provide the resources, including advisement and referrals for counseling, and to maintain class sizes of 14 to 20 students for a student body of approximately 400 students. The students seem to need more counseling and emotional support than the program anticipated, and the program does not have the resources to meet this need. Other facilities and services seem to be available in sufficient quantities to meet basic student needs.

The CUNY Prep faculty, a key resource, is particularly impressive in its dedication to the program's goals and to the students. Faculty members say they know the names of all students and provide them with personal attention. As mentioned, teachers use the Diploma Plus model in their instruction, which requires a hands-on, interactive approach. Teachers explain that CUNY Prep students often have not been successful with traditional teaching approaches and they find greater success with active, project-based learning and other inquiry-based approaches. For example, in a forensics science class, students work together to examine a staged crime scene and solve the case using microscopes, centrifuges, and fingerprinting devices. In a humanities class, they organize moot courts and re-enact Supreme Court cases. Math classes include field trips to stores and banks to calculate sales tax, interest, and making percentage conversions.

Agency Management. CUNY recognizes the importance and visibility of CUNY Prep and provides close oversight for the school through three staff members in the Office of Academic Affairs. One of the three staff members is directly involved in day-to-day activities at the school. This person meets with the CUNY Prep director and other staff members and informs them of issues that may need to be addressed. A second staff member is informed and involved in all aspects of school functioning, including, for example, academic matters, student and staff issues, and building accommodations (renovations). The third staff member monitors broader issues related to the school's direction and philosophy and the school's visibility within CUNY and the community. In addition, there is a high level of support for the program and its goals from the Chancellor of the CUNY system.

Conclusions

As implemented, the CUNY Prep program is in alignment with the CEO mission and with key CEO criteria, including that a poverty-level population be served. Staff are energetic and dedicated to achieving the goals of the program. Data so far indicate that the day program is meeting its goal of having 75 percent GED pass rates of those students taking the exam. For the day program, it is also meeting or almost meeting the goal of having 50 percent of students who pass the GED enter college. College retention rates have been approximately 30 percent across the years. The program is currently emphasizing college retention and has restructured its programming to better meet this goal. Evening students so far are well behind the day students with respect to continuing on to college afterwards.

3. Programmatic Recommendations

- **Focus on evening program improvements.** Since the evening program, although still fairly new, is behind the day program with respect to achieving its goals, special attention should be paid to investigating the impediments to student success and making programmatic changes as needed. In addition, more data and better alignment with day program data structures should be followed so that progress may be better tracked over the years.
- **Focus instructional improvement on mathematics.** Students tend to score lowest on the mathematics sections of the GED and are likely entering the program with weaker math than literacy skills. In order for students to be successful in college, it is essential to improve their math skills, which may require revamping the math programming to align with student needs.
- **Consider providing on-site counseling.** On-site counseling by a mental health professional might be a valuable resource. Currently students are referred to off-site sources for mental health needs.
- **Continue to renovate facilities.** During the summer of 2008 the school's cafeteria and adjoining space underwent a major renovation, the intent of which was not only to modernize the facilities but also to make it resemble a student center on a college campus. Although these changes have improved the space and facilities are generally adequate to meet most basic needs, faculty felt that additional enhancements (such as child care, dance studio, laboratory facilities, athletics, more computers, and a travel program) would better allow them to serve the students.