

Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation

This initiative expands the Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation, a portfolio of schools and programs that focus on increasing the graduation rates and college readiness of overage and under-credited high school students.

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Start Date</i>	<i>Number Served per year</i>	<i>CEO Budget (City FY 08)</i>	<i>Total Budget (City FY 08)</i>
The Department of Education	September 2007	TBD ¹	\$11,403,766	\$11,403,766

Problem Statement

There are nearly 138,000 young adults between the ages of 16 and 21 in New York City who have dropped out of school or are significantly off-track for graduation. Without graduating or obtaining a GED, these youth face a difficult future. ²

Research and Evidence

An over-age, under-credited student is at least two years off-track relative to expected age and credit accumulation toward earning a diploma. Nearly all high school dropouts in New York City have a history of being overage and under-credited (44 credits are needed to graduate in New York State). Of the 138,000 youth that are over-age and under-credited, 70,000 of them are in school, and 68,000 have already dropped out. ³

Profiling the Target Population

Approximately half (48%) of all incoming freshmen become overage and under-credited during high school. Even well-prepared students graduate at lower rates once becoming over-age and under-credited. Those with at least a high Level 2 ELA score graduate at a 37% rate once becoming overage and under-credited compared with 82% for the general student population of NYC. ⁴

Overage and under-credited students fall behind early, and once they become off-track, they leave the system rapidly. Eighty-four percent of students who are 16 years old with fewer than 8 credits end up leaving the system. Only 19% of over-age and under-credited students ultimately receive a high school diploma or GED if they stay in high school; 6% of these graduates receive a Regents diploma, while 20% receive a GED. ⁵

The majority of overage, under-credited students have completed less than one-quarter of credits required for graduation.

Identifying Effective Options

Transfer schools are small, academically rigorous, diploma-granting schools for students who have been enrolled in a NYC public high school for at least one year and are under-credited.

According to the Department of Education, these schools have significantly improved the graduation rates of overage under-credited students. Students graduate from Transfer High Schools at an average rate of 56% — compared with 19% if they remain in comprehensive high schools. The graduation rate for overage, under-credited students at the highest performing Transfer School is 69%. These schools effectively re-engage students, nearly doubling attendance rates and credit accumulation. The attendance rate for students enrolled in Transfer Schools as of June 2005 was 78%, compared with a rate of 40% prior to Transfer School enrollment. Credits earned per year increased from 4.9 before Transfer School enrollment to 8.9 at Transfer Schools. Transfer Schools produce positive outcomes for students at all reading levels, with the greatest improvement in performance for the most challenged students. For students with a Level 1 ELA score in 8th grade, the graduation rate increased from 10% to 36% in Transfer Schools; for high Level 2 readers, from 25% to 51%.⁶

Recent outcomes for Learning to Work (LTW) programs are also encouraging. The DOE reports that 3,438 students have completed credentials at LTW programs since September 2005.⁷

Program Description

The Office to Multiple Pathways to Graduation (OMPG) initiative expands the availability of educational resources for youth at risk of dropping out of high school. There are four main components to the OMPG project: Learning to Work, Transfer High Schools, Access GED Programs, and Young Adults Borough Centers.⁸

Learning to Work is a workforce preparation component for transfer schools, Young Adult Borough Centers and select GED programs. Partner community based organizations have staff onsite at participating programs and schools. Students engage in intensive employability skills development workshops, subsidized internships, college and career counseling, and job placement. The program also includes attendance outreach, individual and group counseling, academic tutoring, and youth development supports. Learning to Work is integrated with the other components of the OMPG project, and is located at 39 sites.⁹

Transfer High Schools are small schools for overage and under-credited 16 and 17 year-olds working toward a high-school diploma. Transfer high schools are characterized by a personalized learning environment, rigorous academic standards, student-centered pedagogy, support for students to meet instructional and developmental goals, and a focus on connections to college. There are currently 30 transfer schools in New York City, serving approximately 9,550 students. Fifteen of these schools offer Learning to Work services.

Access GED Programs are new full-time GED programs that are based on current research on best practices for young adults. The programs include age and culturally appropriate curriculum, contextualized learning experiences, and Learning to Work supports such as partnerships, student support services, and pathways to post-secondary training and employment. OMPG also offers part-time Learning to Work GED programs that also include research-based curriculum, support services, and connections to further education or employment.

Young Adult Borough Centers (YABCs) are full-time evening academic programs that operate in existing schools. YABCs offer personalized course offerings and programming so that students can concentrate on the credit portfolio they need for graduation. YABCs are open to students seventeen-and-a-half and older who have been in high school for at least four years, are currently enrolled, and have attained a minimum of 17 credits. Each YABC site is operated through a collaborative partnership between the Department of Education and a community based organization, which provides services to students, including youth development support, career and college counseling, and assistance with job placement.

Students attend YABCs through a shared instructional model and receive a diploma from their high school of origin upon completion of their credits and Regents exams. Twenty-two YABCs are open for the 2007-08 school year.¹⁰ Fourteen of these programs offer a Learning to Work component.

Target Population

Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation serves overage and under-credited youth between the ages of 16 and 21 citywide. Transfer High Schools require students to have been enrolled in high school for at least one year before transferring. Young Adult Borough Centers require students to be between the ages of 17.5 and 21.

Expected Outcomes

- Improve high-school graduation rates and GED attainment among over-age, under-credited youth.

¹ As of September 2007, the Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation (OMPG) expansion has opened or enhanced 15 transfer schools (representing 3,130 seats), 20 Young Adult Borough Centers (5,000 seats), 3 new Access GED programs (600 seats). Note: the number of seats represents capacity, not enrollment. The expansion of OMPG portfolio of schools and programs is expected to continue in 2008.

² NYC Department of Education, Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation. "Multiple Pathways Research and Development: Summary Findings and Strategic Solutions for Overage Under-Credited Youth." No Date. See Office of Multiple Pathways website, available at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/DYD/OMP/default.htm>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ New York City Department of Education. *Learning to Work Initiatives: Engaging Overage and Under-Credited Students in Earning Academic Credentials Leading to Post-Secondary and Vocational Opportunities, Annual Report, Year Two: 2006-2007*. July 31, 2007.

⁸ Information for each of these programs comes from the Department of Education's website, <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/DYD/OMP/default.htm>

⁹ See note 2.

¹⁰ See the Office of Multiple Pathways Website for a list of Young Adult Borough Centers, available at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/DYD/OMP/YouthAdultBoroughCenters/default.htm>.