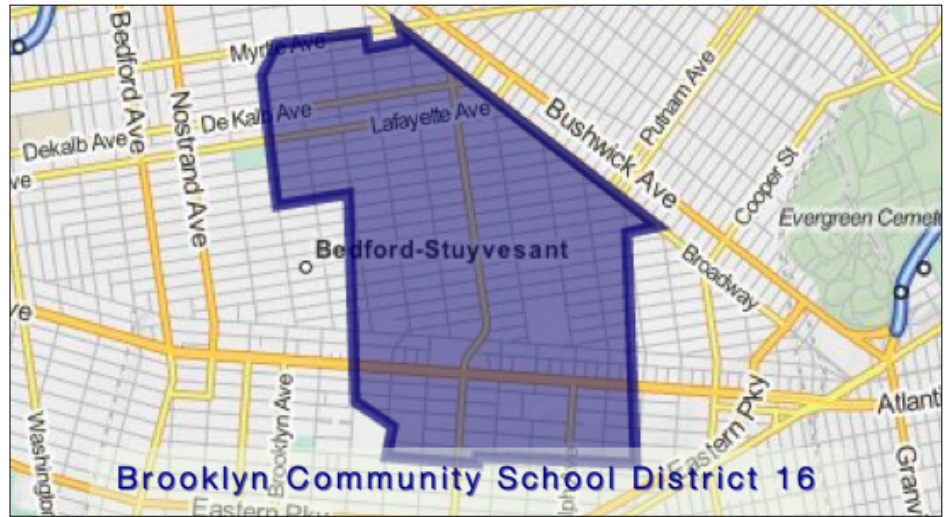


RAISING THE STAKES:

Investing in a Community School Model to Lift Student Achievement in Community School District 16





January 2013

ABOUT

The Brooklyn Movement Center

The Brooklyn Movement Center (BMC) is a direct-action, membership-led, community organizing group. The BMC builds the capacity of predominately of-color, working-class people living in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Crown Heights to identify community and policy issues of critical importance to them, establish a base of support with their neighbors and fellow stakeholders, and build effective social change campaigns around those issues. The BMC provides connective tissue between progressive policy ideas and direct neighborhood-based action as a way to infuse civic life in Central Brooklyn with regenerative powers.

The Black Male Donor Collaborative

The Black Male Donor Collaborative (BMDC) seeks to improve the academic achievement of Black Males through strategic philanthropy aimed at transforming the academic trajectory and educational resources for Black Boys initially in New York City, then nationally. The purpose of the Collaborative is to reduce the academic achievement gap and demonstrably raise the academic performance, graduation rates, and college and employment readiness of Black males. The Black Male Donor Collaborative is a core component of the Pipeline Crisis/Winning Strategies Initiative - an effort initiated by Sullivan and Cromwell, LLP and Goldman Sachs to reverse the rising rates of school dropouts, joblessness and incarceration among young black men, and to increase their representation in the pipeline to higher education and professional endeavors.

The Brooklyn Community Foundation

The Brooklyn Community Foundation is dedicated to improving lives and strengthening communities in New York City's largest borough through local giving, grantmaking, and community service. Established in 2009, with the support of generous donors, Brooklyn Community Foundation has awarded grants to hundreds of Brooklyn-serving nonprofits working in the areas of education and youth achievement, arts and culture, community development, human services, and the environment.



...[W]e still have relatively little understanding of which programs serving Black male children and youth in the city are successful in improving their educational outcomes, and if so, how they are doing it. This lack of research-based knowledge can lead to poorly informed policymaking and strategy implementation, in spite of the presence of promising and innovative programs that may exist in the city.

ASSESSING EFFECTIVE OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME (OST), NYU METROPOLITAN CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION^I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brooklyn's Community School District 16 (CSD16) is a chronically low-performing district that encompasses the eastern half of Bedford-Stuyvesant, a section of north-eastern Crown Heights, and a small portion of Brownsville. CSD16 consists of 26 traditional public schools with a total enrollment of 9,900 students. Eighty percent of CSD16 students are eligible for free and reduced lunch.^{II} CSD16 serves 11 public housing complexes.^{III}

In CSD16, 45% of girls and 34% percent of boys in grade three tested at or above grade level for English Language Arts in 2010-2011, as compared to 56% and 55% respectively for New York State overall. Similarly, 52% of girls and 49% of boys in CSD16 tested at or above grade level for math in grade three, as compared to 60% and 59% respectively for New York State overall. Of the CSD16 students who were in grade nine in 2006-2007, 50% received Regents diplomas in 2010-2011. CSD16 had a 44% graduation rate in a city where 59% is the average.^{IV}

The metric used to determine college and career readiness, however, is even more troubling. Students are considered college ready in New York when they score 75% or higher on their English Regents and 80% or higher on their Math Regents. **Of the four high schools located in CSD16 with 2011-2012 graduating classes, two had a 5% college readiness rate among graduates over a four year period, one had a 3% rate, and the remaining had a college readiness rate of 0.0%.**^V

In citing these statistics, this report makes the case that CSD16 has significant challenges that severely undermine the efforts of Black and Brown families to provide opportunities for their children to thrive educationally. At the same time, CSD16 has strengths. For example, there are strong nonprofit institutions and a civically engaged working- and middle-class, which offer opportunities for individual community-based donors, established foundations, and public sector agencies to team up with local stakeholders to improve the educational outcomes of students in CSD16.

As a response to both these challenges and opportunities, this report proposes a partnership between and among CSD16 school leadership, community stakeholders, and philanthropic partners that can serve as a replicable community school model. This proposed model would be funded by targeted investments in:

- a structured collaboration between selected CSD16 schools, their principals, and teachers
- a comprehensive menu of coordinated and effective out-of-school time programs
- parent organizing and engagement efforts
- school and student support services
- research, tracking, and evaluation systems to make sure these initiatives effectively meet the needs of CSD16 families and school leaders

This report was commissioned by two funding institutions, the Black Male Donor Collaborative (BMDC) and Brooklyn Community Foundation (BCF), which have for years had a keen interest in CSD16. This interest was spurred by the understanding, based largely on BMDC's and BCF's own research and grant making, that there is a substantial gap between the classroom and out-of-school needs of CSD16 families and the amount of resources currently available to CSD16 schools and families. In 2012, BCF and BMDC made a commitment to probe deeper and learn how they could begin to address this gap.

As a result, in the spring and summer of 2012, the Brooklyn Movement Center (BMC), at the request of BMDC and BCF, conducted research among parents, teachers, principals, and students at the 26 traditional public schools in CSD16, as well as among after-school and out-of-school time (ASOST) providers that serve the district. The purpose of the research was to raise the level of hope, awareness, and targeted funds in CSD16. The research was also designed to communicate CSD16's set of challenges and opportunities to the public sector, philanthropic leaders, and policy makers.

The process used to gain the data was as important as the research results. By building relationships and creating a working database of stakeholders, the Brooklyn Movement Center had begun the groundwork for the CSD16 initiative and any potential investments.

KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS



THEME I.

Generating School-Community Collaboration and K-12 Pipeline

FINDINGS

We found:

1. The Department of Education's restructuring of the school system, which focuses on individual schools rather than a coordinated network of local schools, has weakened the connective tissue between schools and their neighborhood institutions. Citing a weak superintendent structure, the use of city-wide school support networks, and competition for high-achieving students, CSD16 principals when surveyed said that they are often pitted against other school principals in the district and that they often compete with one another for scarce resources. They maintain that the Department of Education (DOE) does not foster collaboration among schools in the district. Perhaps most importantly, there are few informal or formal structures that facilitate coordination and mutual support between schools in the district.
2. Despite this school culture of non-collaboration, as well as the popular depiction of Bedford-Stuyvesant as a chronically impoverished neighborhood in need of charity, CSD16 is a remarkably resilient area with a strong sense of community pride and identity, as well as a robust civic infrastructure that can form the foundation for an independent collaboration between schools, community-based organizations, and philanthropic institutions. The CSD16 area has an impressive array of neighborhood assets and social capital—e.g., landmark designations, active homeowner associations, burgeoning commercial strips, regular and well-attended community events, decades-old cultural institutions—upon which successful community initiatives can be built.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Thus, we recommend that BCF, BMDC, and their philanthropic partners:

- a. Design a multi-year demonstration project in CSD16, with a cohort of nine schools, focused on supporting robust school-community collaborations and a viable K - 12 pipeline. This cohort will include three primary schools, three middle schools, and three high schools that will work both laterally in cooperation with one another as well as up and down from K - 12.
- b. Create an intra-CSD16 network and support group for principals that includes compelling incentives for collaboration.
- c. Create criteria and a process for schools to participate in the project cohort.
- d. Contract with a consultant or Central Brooklyn-based organization that will coordinate, monitor, and assess the coordination of the project.
- e. Put together an advisory group of educators and community stakeholders that will include stakeholders as full partners and advise the coordination and evaluation of the project.



THEME II.

Providing the Resources Necessary to Deepen After-School and Out-of-School-Time Programming and Capacity

FINDINGS

We found:

1. CSD16 principals say that they are often overwhelmed by the high needs of their school population and that current ASOST resources are over-matched by this need.
2. While there is, at initial glance, a seemingly broad range of educational support services and ASOST programs in CSD16, there are very few comprehensive after-school options in schools. For example, NYU's Metropolitan Center for Urban Education (Metropolitan Center) and Columbia University's Center for Research on Fathers, Children and Family Wellbeing (Center for Research on Fathers) found "one-quarter of all programs in Harlem (24%-25.7%) are comprehensive service delivery models, which combine at least three different service delivery strategies, whereas about 10% fewer programs offer comprehensive models in Central Brooklyn."^{vi} Stakeholders maintain that there is no consistency in quality and offerings between and among ASOST programs in CSD16 schools.
3. Mentoring, tutoring services, sports and recreation, arts and culture, mental health services, and general after-school programming were singled out by school stakeholders as necessary supports for their students.
4. Given a range of choices of educational services, CSD16 stakeholders believe tutoring will have the greatest impact on student achievement.
5. ASOST providers overwhelmingly cited the need for more mental health services for children in CSD16.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Thus, we recommend that BCF, BMDC, and their philanthropic partners:

- a. Identify and secure the services of a high quality group of after-school and out-of-school-time providers who will work closely together to offer the following to members of the school cohort:
 - Affordable and comprehensive after-school programming
 - Mental health services
 - School tutoring and test preparation
 - Student mentoring
 - Sports and recreation
 - Arts and culture
 - Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) enrichment
 - Programming specific to Black boys



THEME III.

Re-Tooling CSD16 After-School/Out-of-School Time Infrastructure

FINDINGS

We found:

1. According to the Metropolitan Center/Center for Research on Fathers, there is no reliable evaluation system for CSD16 ASOST programs; there is no independent way or capacity to determine which programs in CSD16—or in New York City for that matter—are viable and effective.
2. There is no precise data basing, tracking, or coordination of ASOST programs for CSD16 students; there are few mechanisms for matching school and student ASOST needs with current programs.
3. ASOST providers reported that after-school programming in CSD16 is generally more effective for younger children; the inadequacies of ASOST programs grow more pronounced as students become older and their social, emotional, and physical needs become more complex. A Metropolitan Center/Center for Research on Fathers study supports this finding^{vii}, reporting that in Central Harlem there is an increasing number of programs available for children as they become older, while there is an opposite trend in Central Brooklyn, where the number of programs decreases from middle school to high school.
4. CSD16 principals report being unsuccessful in fundraising for more ASOST support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that BCF, BMDC, and their philanthropic partners establish the capacity to:

- a. Create and maintain a searchable database of ASOST providers.
- b. Conduct an on-going and thorough qualitative assessment of education service and after-school providers in CSD16 using tools such as the New York State Afterschool Network's Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool, or the Assessment of Effective Out-of-School Time (OST) Programs Serving Black Male Youth developed by the Metropolitan Center; these assessments should be added to the database of ASOST providers.
- c. Assess and reinforce the ability of ASOST providers to effectively stimulate learning and growth among children of diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly Black boys and girls in CSD16.
- d. Provide fundraising technical assistance to CSD16 principals based on their need to raise more foundation dollars for additional programming.



THEME IV.

Supporting Parent Engagement and Organizing

FINDINGS

We found:

1. CSD16 parents, given a range of choices, believe “know your rights” trainings will help them become better advocates for their children.
2. CSD16 parents report having weak relationships, or no relationships at all, with their PTA leaders and school parent coordinators.
3. CSD16 parent associations struggle to engage parents and integrate them into the leadership of their schools.
4. ASOST organizations assert that parents do not function as full partners in the roll out and development of their programming.
5. There is no effective marketing and explaining of ASOST programming to CSD16 parents; families do not have a system for learning about, navigating, and choosing programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that BCF, BMDC, and their philanthropic partners:

- a. Contract with a local organizing body that can train and organize parents throughout the district in ways that will help them know and assert their rights and insights as parents, understand what is happening inside the school and classroom, and navigate and take full advantage of ASOST programs.

INTRODUCTION

The Brooklyn Movement Center (BMC) was founded in 2010 and staffed in 2011 with a mission to make the people of Central Brooklyn a significant role player in the building of a progressive agenda and the realignment of power in New York City.

At the same time BMC was forming, both Black Male Donor Collaborative (BMDC) and Brooklyn Community Foundation (BCF) were concentrating many of their education-based philanthropic efforts and research on Community School District 16 (CSD16) in Brooklyn. Both had conducted research on CSD16 and both had long recognized the opportunity to invest in and have a significant impact on a notoriously under-resourced area, with BMDC having a specific mandate to raise achievement levels among Black boys.

In the summer of 2011, BMDC and BCF approached BMC with the idea of helping them develop a comprehensive investment strategy in CSD16. Not only was BMC a community organizing group that had already identified public education as its first organizing issue area, but its staff and board represented a team that had deep roots in the Central Brooklyn area and demonstrated considerable writing, policy analysis, and journalism skills. The Brooklyn Movement Center was poised to gather information and conduct research in a grassroots participatory way, while establishing and nurturing long-term working relationships with local stakeholders and institutions.

BMC proposed a scope of work that would engage public school students, parents, teachers, principals, and education service providers in a structured conversation about what kind of investments would make a measurable impact on student achievement in CSD16. This engagement would include a variety of approaches including surveys, focus groups, and interviews. In addition, this research would use as a starting point research that the Black Male Donor Collaborative, NYU's Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, Columbia University's Center for Research on Fathers, Children and Family Wellbeing, and the Schott Foundation had already done on student achievement and after-school resources in the United States, New York City, and Central Brooklyn.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

The work represented in this report was researched and written to help address the following questions:

- Can coordinated investment from the philanthropic sector help raise achievement levels in CSD16?
- Are there currently local partnerships the philanthropic community should support to build a successful community-school model?
- What is the capacity of community-level institutions and academic enrichment programs to provide quality educational supports and services in CSD16?
- Who and where are the school-based and out-of-school stakeholders and significant actors in each school in CSD16, and what is the quality of their engagement?
- What level of coordination currently exists among stakeholders and the schools themselves?
- What do stakeholders consider to be the most pressing in-class and out-of-class issues and what supports do they feel would be most effective?

THE CASE FOR INVESTING IN COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT 16

CSD16 consists of 26 traditional public schools: fifteen elementary, six middle schools, and five secondary schools. In addition, there are six charter schools.^{viii} CSD16 encompasses the eastern half of Bedford-Stuyvesant and a small section of northeastern Crown Heights. Making up the heart of what is commonly known as Central Brooklyn, CSD16 is situated within one of the largest Black neighborhoods in the nation.

CSD16 is high need. It is a socially isolated and economically challenged district that is consistently low performing.

According to recent Census figures, Bedford-Stuyvesant, which is where the vast majority of CSD16 families live, has a median income of \$33,654 for a family of four and 21.3% percent of the population have a Bachelor's degree or higher. In Bedford-Stuyvesant 33% of the residents live in poverty, 48% of the children under the age of 18 live under the poverty line, and 20% of the area's young people between the ages of 16 and 24 are not in school and are not working.^{ix} The district serves 11 public housing projects, yet has only one public library (neighboring Community School District 13 has five).^x

These statistics tell only part of the story. Bedford-Stuyvesant is an increasingly racially and economically diverse area. In particular, CSD16 encompasses the historically landmarked section of Stuyvesant Heights, a largely middle-class enclave. At the same time, the area is becoming more diverse. An August 2011 New York Times article using 2010 Census numbers observed that Bedford-Stuyvesant is in the midst of a dramatic demographic shift, reporting that "overall, the neighborhood is now barely 60 percent black—down from 75 percent a decade ago." Bedford-Stuyvesant is now 10% white and 20% Latino.

However, CSD16 has been virtually immune to these changes as white and middle class families alike have largely opted out of sending their children to CSD16 schools. In CSD16, 84% of the district's students are Black, 14% are Latino, and only 1% are white. Furthermore, a full 80% of the students are eligible for free and reduced school lunch.^{xi}

CSD16's racial and economic segregation is accompanied by low academic performance. CSD16 ranks 611 out of 697 school districts in New York State^{xii} based on average reading and math test scores. Only 45% of girls and 34% of boys in CSD16 in grade three tested at or above grade level for English Language Arts, as compared to 56% and

55% respectively for New York State overall. Similarly, 52% of girls and 49% of boys in CSD16 tested at or above grade level for Math in grade three, as compared to 60% and 59% respectively for New York State overall.^{xiii} Middle schools in CSD16 fair no better. The Schott Foundation's 2012 report "A Rotting Apple: Education Redlining in New York City," measures New York school districts using its Opportunity to Learn index. Schott calculates the Opportunity to Learn index "by sorting all New York City middle schools by their results on the New York State Grade Eight English Language Arts assessment. The schools are then divided into four groups by student scores, highest to lowest. The groups contain equal numbers of students. The percentage of students in the highest group in each Community School District tells the opportunity that a student in that group has of studying in one of that district's schools that rank among the city's top quartile of schools." The Schott Foundation study concluded that CSD16 students rated zero in their opportunity to learn in a high performing middle school because none of the middle schools in CSD16 are in the top quartile of middle schools in New York City.^{xvi}

By the time students reach the end of their public school career as high schoolers in CSD16, the school system has failed them. Only 50% of the students in the district who were in grade nine in 2006-2007 received Regents diplomas in 2010-11. According to a Community School District 16 External District Curriculum Audit Report, CSD16 had a 44% graduation rate in a city where 59% is the average.

Perhaps most striking is how few CSD16 students are considered "ready" to compete in post-secondary school education and life, according to the College and Career Readiness measurement used by the DOE in its overall high school progress reporting system. The DOE metric factors in the percentage of students who have completed certain courses, demonstrated a certain level of proficiency in English and Math, and have enrolled in postsecondary education. It includes an index that tracks students over a four-year period. Students are considered college ready if they graduate with a Regents diploma and have scored at least 75% and 80% on the English and Math Regents respectively, or have scored comparably on the SAT, ACT, or CUNY Assessment Tests.

Through the 2011-2012 school year, CSD16 had four high schools with graduating classes. In the high school with the highest college and career readiness figures, 5.1% of the graduating class were considered college and career ready on the four-year index. The next highest rate was 5%. The largest high school in the district had a college and career rate of 3%. In the fourth and remaining school, 0.0% of the students were deemed college and career ready.

To put this in context, CSD16 had the lowest average College and Career Readiness score in the entire New York City school system, according to a Schott Foundation analysis provided for this report. If a District 16 student makes it to a CUNY School – half of CSD16 students don’t graduate in 4 years – chances are overwhelming that he or she will have to take remedial classes upon entering. In the case of the school with the 0.0% college readiness percentage, the score reveals that, statistically speaking, not one student in that school, after 13 years of formal schooling, was deemed prepared to attain a higher education or functionally enter the workforce.^{xvii}

Perhaps most importantly, CSD16 is under-equipped to address these needs. The Schott Foundation’s Redlining Report concludes that CSD16 has “fewer resources in terms of highly educated teachers with their comparatively higher salary and benefit levels...than most New York City Community School Districts.”^{xviii}

The kind of programming that is required to address these needs is less evident than in other demographically comparable areas. For instance, the Metropolitan Center/Center for Research on Fathers reported that “there are 3.26 times more programs available to serve Black male students in Central Harlem than in Central Brooklyn. With the exception of after-school programming, there are fewer programming options in every other service category in Central Brooklyn than in Central Harlem, most notably in terms of weekend programming and comprehensive programming.”^{xix}

Despite its considerable socio-economic challenges, CSD16 is primed for working relationships with philanthropic partners. CSD16 has a strong civic infrastructure and political culture that has a long history of working closely with philanthropic leaders.

The voter registration rate for citizens age 18 and above is almost 30% higher in Bedford-Stuyvesant than the borough of Brooklyn as a whole.^{xx} Bedford-Stuyvesant and Crown Heights are home to some of the city’s oldest African-American/Caribbean communities, including Weeksville, which was established in 1838 and is a part of CSD16’s catchment area. Bedford-Stuyvesant, like Southeast Queens and Harlem, has a highly civically engaged working and middle-class, and organizations with deep reservoirs of social capital. Events like Community Board 3 meetings, the Bedford Stuyvesant and Crown Heights house tours, the Lewis Avenue merchant association’s annual Halloween Walk, the Weeksville Heritage Center’s concert series, Bedford-Stuyvesant’s week long Bed-Stuy Alive! festival, and the KIDflix Film Fest of Bed-Stuy are

not only attended by thousands over the course of the year, but inspire deep engagement from volunteers, residents, the small business community, and local not-for-profits. It is no accident that the nation’s first community development corporation, Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, comes out of this community.

There is currently a local conversation in Bedford-Stuyvesant around improving the educational terrain that is particularly promising. For instance, a prominent education advocacy organization organized an education summit held at Boys and Girls High School in September 2012 that attracted hundreds of parents and dozens of self-identified community leaders. A recent tour of CSD16 schools, in which more than 20 philanthropies and Central Brooklyn activists participated, served to connect several community-based organizations around the idea of collaborating to change academic and social outcomes for CSD16 students.

Unfortunately, there is little opportunity to bring focus to this wealth of social capital in a coordinated way that will directly impact CSD16 schools and students. Furthermore, the emerging conversation around CSD16 has little financial support or financial commitments that will help enable local stakeholders to take sustained action.

Relative to other community school districts in New York, CSD16 represents a small, more manageable area in which to focus investments and collaborative efforts.

Unlike other districts, particularly those serving Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant, CSD16 covers a discreet and compact area that is mostly confined to one neighborhood. Although CSD16 crosses over Atlantic Avenue into North Crown Heights, the vast majority of CSD16’s 9,900 students, as well as 23 of its 26 schools, are in eastern Bedford-Stuyvesant. By contrast, neighboring District 13 encompasses not only western Bedford-Stuyvesant, but most of northern brownstone Brooklyn, including Clinton Hill, Fort Greene, Downtown Brooklyn, and Brooklyn Heights. District 13 has 42 schools and almost 23,000 students, and District 17 to the immediate south of CSD16 includes 44 schools and over 26,000 students.^{xxi}

Seeking to have an impact on any cluster of schools, not to mention an entire school district, is a daunting task. However, CSD16 offers an opportunity for philanthropic and community leaders alike to work with a relatively small amount of schools and students that share a common neighborhood and demographic identity and are in close geographic proximity to one another.

METHODOLOGY

The Brooklyn Movement Center used stakeholder engagement as its primary mode of research. Rather than simply mine statistics, we directly solicited the views of traditional public school stakeholders, principals, parents, teachers, and students. BMC did not research charter schools at this stage because they operate under a different set of constraints and conditions than traditional public schools, thus making it difficult to include traditional public schools and charters in the same research pool. It was felt, for instance, that charters generally had different access to funding and resources than traditional public schools.

The primary vehicle for this participatory research was surveys designed for four groups of school stakeholders: principals, parents, teachers, and students. In designing these surveys, BMC staff consulted members of its CSD16 Advisory team (see appendix), a focus group of teachers, and Sally Lee, the executive director of Teachers United.

Our goal was to survey every principal from each school as well as 10 parents and five teachers from each school. We also sought to survey five students from each of the five CSD16 high schools.

As a result we approached all 26 traditional public schools in CSD16, beginning with every principal. In reaching out to the principals, BMC was assisted by Ernest Logan, the president of the Council of Supervisors and Administrators (CSA). First, we invited principals, by email and phone, to a meeting and focus group. Then we introduced them to the project, administered a survey, and recorded their responses to open questions about what their greatest challenges were and what kind of support they needed in their schools. After they responded to the focus group questions, we asked for their individual help in surveying their school's teachers, parents, and in the case of the high schools, students.

During May, June, and September 2012, we reached out to the remaining principals by email and phone and attempted to arrange one-on-one meetings in which we administered the survey. We also, again, attempted to make arrangements to meet with teachers, parents, and high school students at their schools.

In many instances, principals introduced us to their parent coordinator or parent leaders and BMC followed up independently with these contacts. Typically, BMC was invited to conduct surveys at PTA meetings, parent events, or other meetings.

As a way of respecting each school as the principal's domain, BMC primarily relied on the principal to make contact with teachers. The exception was when BMC surveyed UFT representatives at a CSD16 meeting.

Out of 26 schools, we successfully interviewed and surveyed 23 principals, teachers from 15 different schools, parents from 15 different schools, and students from two of the five CSD16 high schools.

BMC participated in CSD16 Community Education Council (CEC) meetings. We also reached out to every PTA in the district in order to market a mini-grant designed to support their literacy and internal organizing efforts. Along the way, we established relationships with approximately 12 PTAs.

Simultaneously, the Brooklyn Movement Center compiled a database of the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) out-of-school-time programs that are physically located in Community Boards 3 and 8, and systematically sent emails and made phone calls to each one requesting an interview. We also reached out in similar fashion to organizations that are part of the Boys and Girls High School CARE Center, and organizations that were suggested by our stakeholders. We asked all of the principals we surveyed to name their OST partners and cross-referenced this with our base list.

Surveying the school stakeholders was only one small part of BMC's approach. BMC had to first build and then maintain trust with the broader community. This relationship building is not incidental, but central to the success of this project, other projects to come, and BMC's general plans to organize in CSD16 and the wider Central Brooklyn community.

Toward that end, during the 2012 calendar year, the Brooklyn Movement Center held one-on-one conversations with at least 300 local and city-wide organizations. In addition to general outreach and CSD16 related conversations, BMC forged a broad set of alliances and partnerships that are in line with and support our work. These relationships help position BMC at the center of progressive movements throughout the city and serve to create opportunities for local and city-wide collaboration, trust building, and our own membership-base expansion, which we see as integral to our parent organizing.

As mentioned earlier, the Brooklyn Movement Center also established an advisory board made up of project funders and education advocates which helped guide our research. This included representatives from the Brooklyn Community Foundation, Black Male Donor Collaborative, Children's Defense Fund New York, Metropolitan Center, Annenberg Institute for School Reform, and Alliance for Quality Education.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Research Participants

The greatest opportunities offered by this study also provided its greatest challenges. The breadth and quality of the research was largely determined by the willingness of stakeholders to participate. The main entry points to the research—principals and ASOST organizational executives—are almost by definition extremely busy and consumed by day-to-day operations. This not only made it challenging to secure their time and that of other stakeholders in the schools, but time spent interviewing them was often harried and frequently interrupted by the immediacies of running schools and (often low-resourced) programs.

These conditions were exacerbated by the fact that some of the schools approached for research are under extreme pressure from the DOE. In one case, a principal resigned in the middle of this research project.

Identifying all 26 traditional public schools in the district is easy, although it is important to note that this list can shift from year to year; however, a comprehensive list of ASOST programs—and this is one of the challenges this report attempts to address—is difficult to generate. Publicly funded programs can be readily identified, but many programs do not show up on any readily available list, have only volunteer staff, and/or are struggling to survive. Using the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) database, our first mapping of district ASOST providers yielded a list of 27 city-funded organizations in or around CSD16. The New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) publishes a list of organizations that have OST programs funded by New York City or New York State agencies. Of this list, only seven programs were listed as being funded through DYCD, suggesting enormous turnover in organizational shelf-life in CSD16 or in city-funding, and a badly outdated city database. As a result, arranging to sit down and interview authorized spokespersons from these organizations is worthy of its own separate project. In many instances, ASOST organizational telephone numbers were disconnected or simply went unanswered.

Lastly, the research team made it clear to the interviewees that, except for principals, the school stakeholders should not provide their names. Respondents were given as much privacy as they needed to fill out the surveys. However, some may have still felt inhibited to provide fully candid responses or may not have been fully forthcoming on issues if they felt unwilling to discuss these issues openly. For instance, parents were asked what kind of supports they may need, and may not have felt comfortable indicating GED classes, job counseling, or drug intervention.

Research Instruments and Assumptions

Because BMC primarily used surveys and interviews, most of the findings are qualitative and experience-based rather than based on empirical evidence. The surveys were designed and vetted with input from various stakeholders, but ultimately answers were circumscribed by the scope and wording of the questions.

Some questions on the survey provided choices that were not mutually exclusive. For instance, respondents were asked to choose between art and cultural activities and after-school activities, but one could easily include the other.

This study focused on the stated experiences of educational stakeholders and schools. It did not attempt to consider wide-ranging factors such as the full impact of the DOE bureaucracy, the policies that govern it, or the pervading assumptions and values inherent in the school system.

Lastly, “achievement” is largely measured using DOE standards and conventional definitions of success. These measurements of success rely heavily on standardized, high stakes testing results and similar measurements that some advocates assert are misguided standards, and perhaps tell an incomplete story of what success and failure look like for Black and Brown children.

FULL SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



THEME I.

School-Community Collaboration and K-12 Pipeline

There is little in the way of a CSD16 pipeline or functioning peer network that is institutionalized by the New York City DOE. Principals feel that they are forced to compete against, rather than collaborate with, other principals and schools within the district. Off the record, in personal interviews, principals lamented the lack of co-operation with their CSD16 peers and reported there was little incentive or opportunity to establish working partnerships with other school principals. Many reported not even knowing the names of many of their fellow CSD16 principals.

This is reinforced by the DOE's emphasis on test prep, the competition for high test scoring students, and DOE's de-emphasis on intra-district relationship building through city-wide networks. What we did find encouraging, however, were pockets of self-initiated collaboration among schools. For instance, the principals of the Brownstone School and Brighter Choice, Nakia Haskins and Fabayo McIntosh, spoke eloquently at an October 4, 2012 CSD16 donor tour about referring students to one another, sharing resources, and maintaining an open line of communication with one another. Unfortunately, we found this to be the exception and not the rule.



THEME II.

Resources Necessary to Deepen After-School and Out-of-School-Time Programming and Capacity

There is no broad consensus on what is the most important school-based factor in raising achievement levels. There were some differences in how high school students, principals, parents, and teachers assessed what in-school factors determined the quality and success of the education provided in their respective schools. The students cited teacher training and classroom discipline as the most important factors, whereas principals and teachers cited quality of academic instruction and school leadership. Interestingly enough, a significant number of teachers ranked parent leadership as the most important factor, whereas not one principal similarly ranked parent leadership. Parents also indicated quality of academic instruction, but put a high value on school safety.

CSD16 stakeholders all believe that home environment is the greatest external factor in student achievement. Home environment ranked highest among all stakeholders as far as having the greatest impact on student success outside the school, particularly among teachers. Role models/lack of role models factored highly in student responses, as well as in parent surveys. Principals ranked special needs—mental/emotional, physical, or social support—much higher than anyone else.

CSD16 principals report feeling overwhelmed by the high needs of their school populations. In the focus group and in surveys, principals widely noted that their schools were often over matched by student needs and that ASOST programming was insufficient to meet the needs of their respective student populations. This was contrary to appearances. For instance, BMC found a seemingly broad range of educational support services and OST programs in CSD16. BMC initially identified 60 publicly and privately funded ASOST programs located in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Crown Heights. Nineteen out of 23 schools that we interviewed produced lists of organizations that provided after-school and OST services.

However, there is no discernible consistency in quality and offerings between and among ASOST programs in CSD16 schools. Moreover, very few ASOST represented comprehensive options that included a broad range of programs

like sports and recreation, music, arts and culture, mentoring programs, and tutoring in schools. This is confirmed by a report by the Metropolitan Center/Center for Research on Fathers which found around “one-quarter of all programs in Harlem (24%-25.7%) are comprehensive service delivery models, which combine at least three different service delivery strategies, whereas about 10% fewer programs offer comprehensive models in Central Brooklyn.” They also found that “there is a greater diversity of service delivery models in Harlem than in Central Brooklyn” and that “a large gap emerged between college preparation services available to youth in Central Harlem compared to Central Brooklyn.”^{xxii}

In a survey of parents, teachers, students, and principals, survey respondents were given a range of 14 different choices. While there was a diversity of opinion on what were the most important services, tutoring services, mentoring, sports and recreation, arts and culture, and general after-school programming stood out as being most needed by students in CSD16 schools. Of these, there was wide consensus among principals, parents, students, and teachers alike that tutoring and test prep is the most important support program/service that could be provided to students in schools. After-school activities and mentoring ranked high among principals, parents, and teachers, but not among students. Principals and teachers also ranked counseling/psychological supports and special needs fairly high. Among high school stakeholders, college prep ranked high, and among high school students, job training and sports activities also scored highly. According to BMC’s survey of ASOST programming currently in CSD16 schools, 65% of schools reported having arts focused programming, 50% indicated academic focused programs, and 35% percent reported physical education programming.

Among school leadership and professional service providers, mental services emerged as an acutely needed service for students in CSD16. Principals in particular, in surveys and in the principals’ focus group, emphasized the level of emotional and psychological challenges that students faced, and that teachers and other school professionals were often unable to adequately address these challenges. Also in BMC’s survey of ASOST providers, respondents overwhelmingly cited the need for more mental health services for children in CSD16.



THEME III.

CSD16 After-School/Out-of-School Time Infrastructure

Perennial threats of budget cuts in New York City’s DYCD OST funding threatens CSD16 funding on a long-term basis. *The New York Non Profit Press* reported in July 2012, “Of the \$150 million in funding agreed upon to restore early childhood and Out of School Time (OST) programs, only \$41 million will be ‘baselined.’ The remaining \$109 million for these programs—and millions more for other human services—are being provided using Council ‘discretionary’ funding which can only be allocated for a one-year period.” To dramatize this point, one prominent Central Brooklyn OST provider we interviewed closed three after-school programs last year due to cuts in OST funding.

Service providers reported that they need more capacity to provide after-school programs and educational services within CSD16. Many OST organizations the Brooklyn Movement Center interviewed cited difficulties in maintaining consistent levels of quality in their programs year-to-year, especially with recent cuts in DYCD OST funding. Our interviews with education service providers and after-school programs that serve, or are poised to serve, CSD16 revealed that many of these organizations are struggling to open their doors and to adequately meet the needs of the population they are serving. One program, for example, operates an after-school program at a CSD16 school that services the entire population of the school from 3-6 pm daily. Their model is to support students academically through homework help and culturally by providing a strong array of arts related programs. They have found that in years where the budget is ample (i.e. programs are funded well and in a timely manner), they are able to contract with outside specialists to bring in highly-trained staff to teach important skills. In the leaner years, they have had to rely on their own staff, many of whom lack the expertise, to teach certain aspects of the program. From year to year an after-school soccer or dance program may go from being run by a highly talented outside professional (group) to being taught by in-house staff who lack the specific training to keep quality consistent. In many cases entire portions of programming have been cut,

which makes it very difficult for these organizations to have long-term success with pockets of children throughout the district.

CSD16 principals need fundraising support. BMC asked CSD16 principals about their success in independently raising money for their OST programs. Half of the principals reported being unsuccessful in raising external funding for their schools’ programming needs. Another 17% indicated that they had not sought external funding at all.

There are few if any systems for systematically matching after-school programs and educational services with CSD16 needs. Not one ASOST provider or principal interviewed for this report was able to point to a precise databasing, tracking, or coordination of ASOST programs for CSD16 students. There are city, state, and federal databases, but they often do not include other providers who receive strictly private funding. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, BMC found the DYCD website to be sorely outdated.

There is no reliable evaluation system for CSD16 ASOST programs; there is no independent way or capacity to determine which programs in CSD16—or in New York City for that matter—are viable and effective. One of the most compelling findings of the Metropolitan Center’s research on OST programs in Harlem and Central Brooklyn was its unqualified assertion that very little is known about the quality and impact of existing ASOST programs in New York City. This finding was fully supported by the difficulty the Brooklyn Movement Center had in assessing CSD16’s ASOST inventory.

ASOST representatives observed that after-school programming in CSD16 is generally more effective for younger children. ASOST providers explained that the challenges for their programs grow more pronounced as students become older and their social, emotional and physical needs become more complex. This was corroborated by the Metropolitan Center’s study which found that in Central Harlem there is an increasing number of programs available for children as they become older, while on the other hand there is an opposite trend in Central Brooklyn, where the number of programs decrease from middle school to high school.

ASOST representatives observed that after-school programming in CSD16 focuses almost primarily on remediation. Some ASOST providers explained that the lack of academic programming for students who perform well made it difficult for the programming to reach beyond struggling students.



THEME IV.

Parent Engagement and Organizing

CSD16 parents want to know how to exert their power through advocacy. Among parents “Knowing Your Rights as a Parent” overwhelmingly ranked as the important training that would help them become better advocates for their children’s education.

CSD16 parents feel relatively unconnected to parent coordinators and PTA leaders. The vast majority of parents we surveyed reported having good to outstanding relationships with stakeholders in their school—teachers, the principal, and other parents—although there is no way to know if these relationships amount to productive working relationships or are simply passive social conveniences. However, a significant number of parents—almost 25%—reported having poor, very poor, or no relationship at all with their parent coordinators or PTA leaders.

CSD16 parent associations struggle to engage parents and integrate them into the leadership of their schools. The Brooklyn Movement Center attempted to contact every PTA in the district with varying degrees of success as a way of marketing a PTA support mini-grant offered by the Brooklyn Community Foundation. While all but two schools reported having PTA presidents, most of the PTAs we spoke to said that they were actively looking for more effective ways to engage parents. This is not unique to CSD16. Recent data released by the DOE revealed parent participation throughout New York City during the 2011-2012 academic year to be at record lows. The Wall Street Journal reported that “there was significantly less participation in workshops, phone calls and parent-teacher conferences in 2011-12 than in the previous year...Many of the routine interactions between educators and parents have dropped by more than 50% since the 2008-09 school year, the statistics showed...The number of parents who attended parent-coordinator workshops fell from 459,000 in the 2009-10 school year to 267,000 last year, the data said.”^{XXIII}

ASOST providers reported in their interviews with the Brooklyn Movement Center that the parents of the program participants largely do not function as full partners in the roll out and development of their programming, and that the programs have few means with which to adequately market their services. As a result, providers report finding it difficult to fully explain and market ASOST programming to CSD16 parents. Families do not have a system for learning about, navigating, and choosing programs.

CHART 1

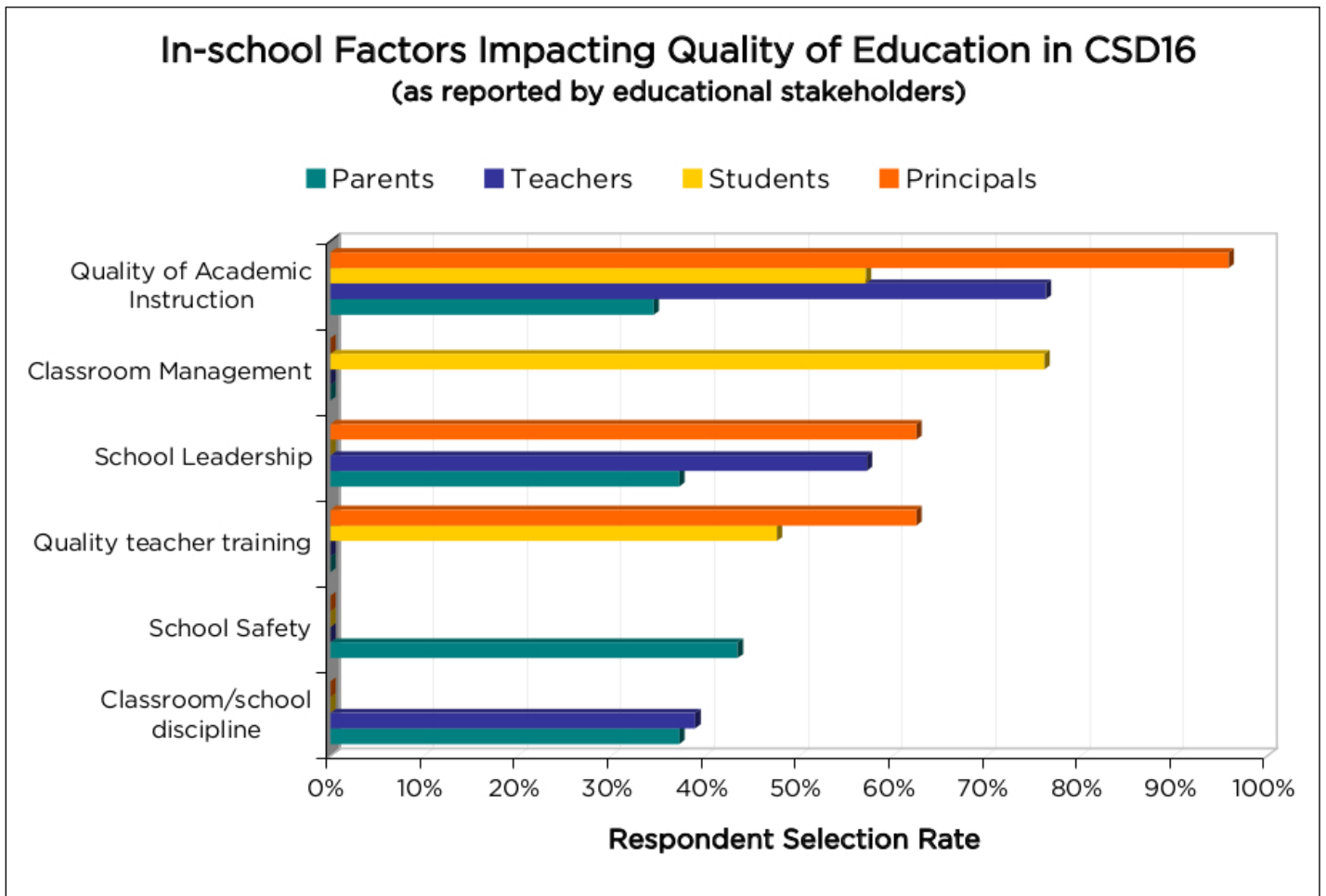


CHART 2

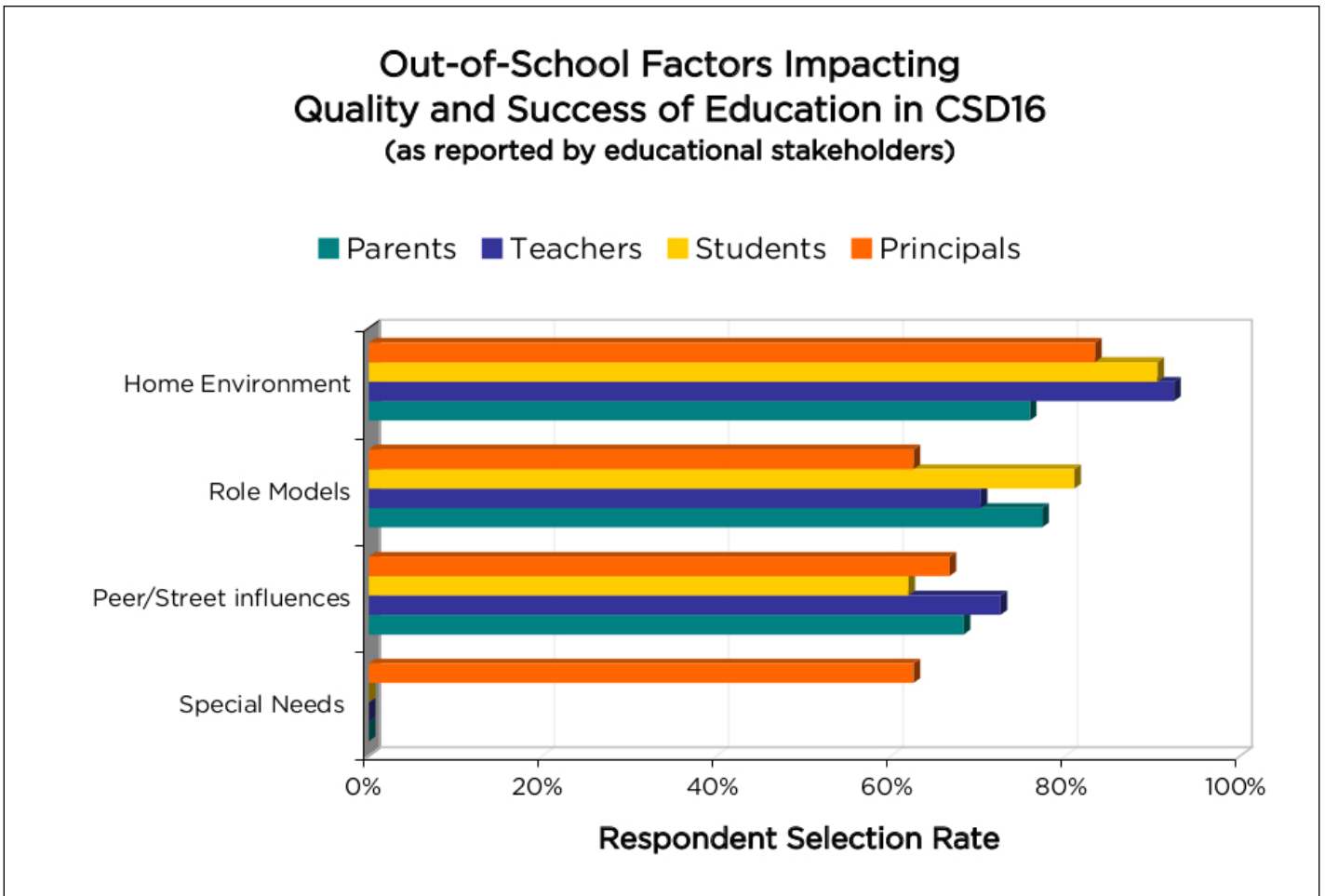


CHART 3

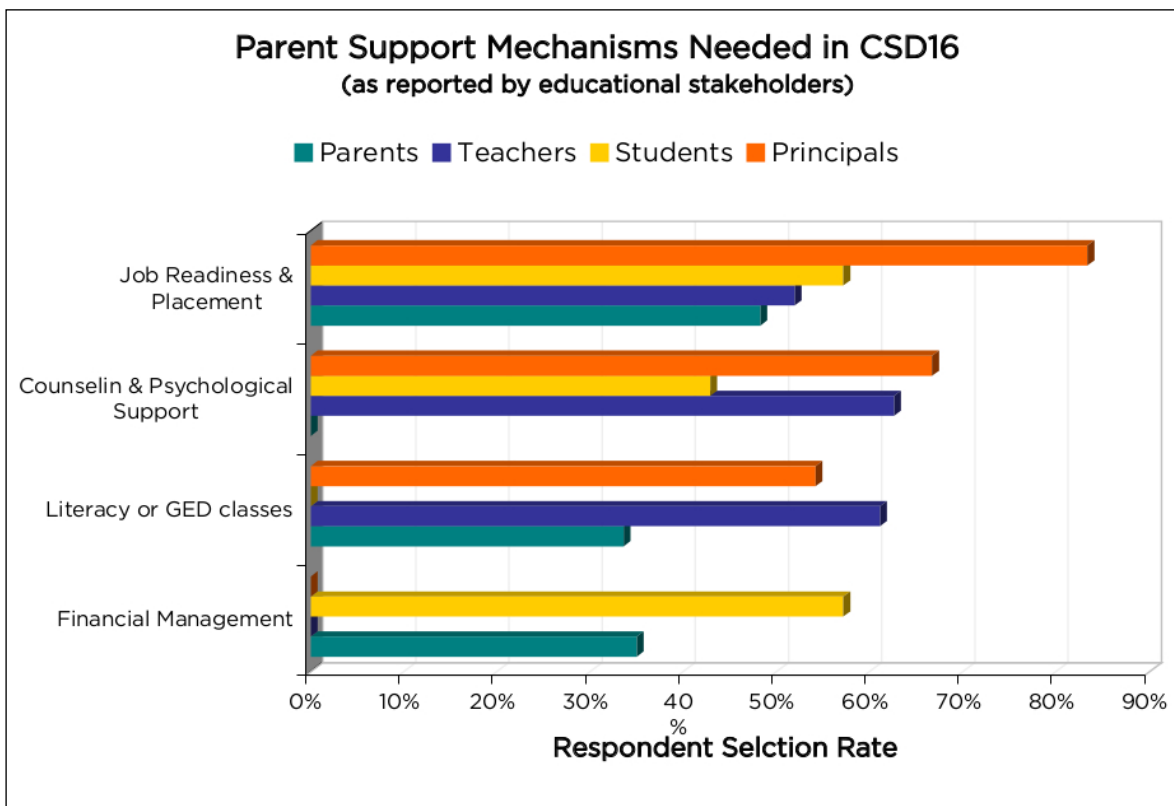


CHART 4

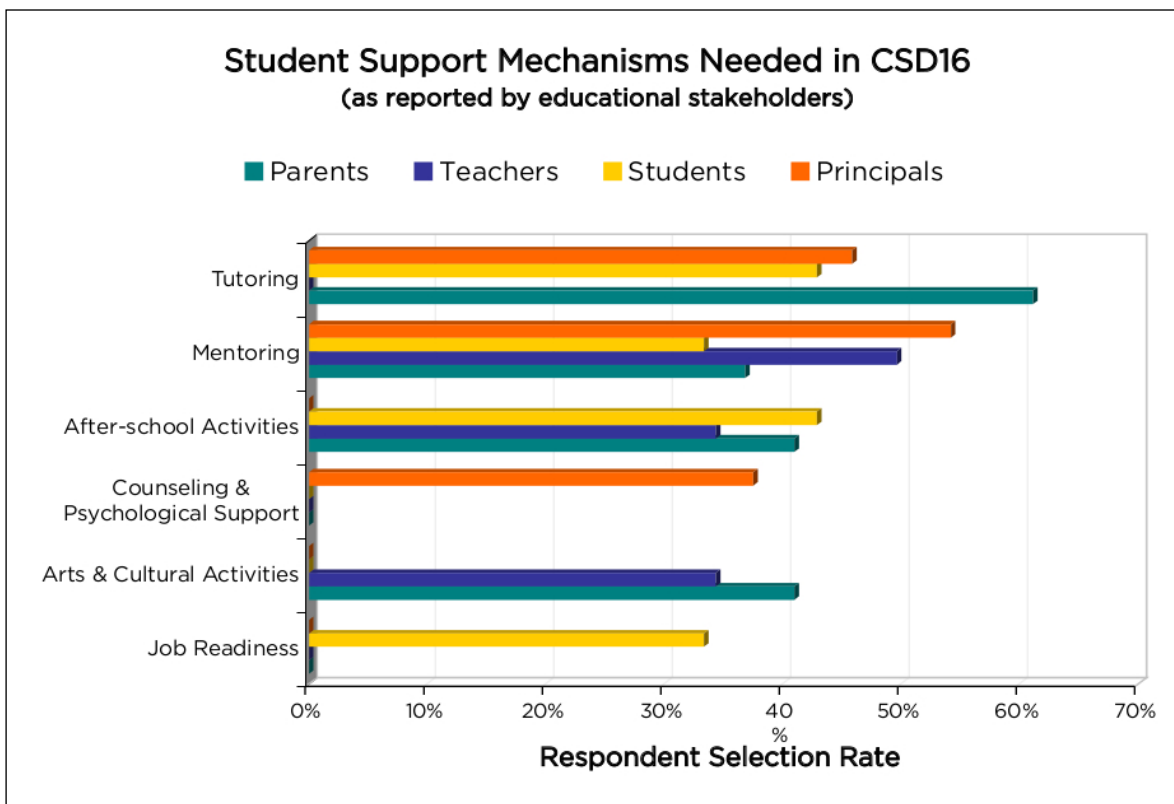
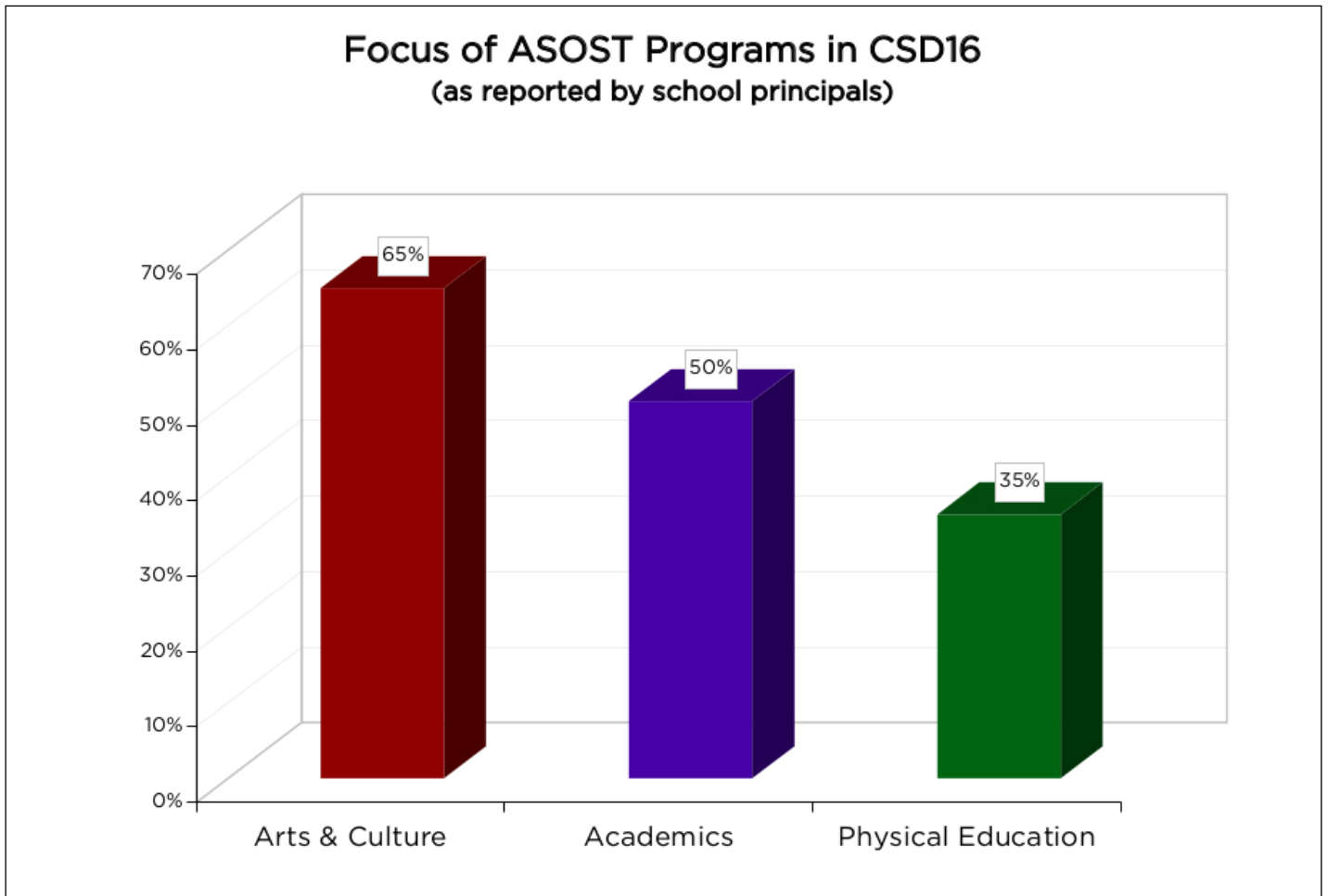


CHART 5



FULL RECOMMENDATIONS

I. INVEST IN AND DEVELOP A CSD16 SUPPORT MODEL

Create a multi-year demonstration project in CSD16 that structurally promotes and incentivizes collaboration.

Secure a commitment over four years to invest in a cohort of nine schools in CSD16: three elementary schools, three middle schools, and three high schools. Each school member of the cohort will participate in a K - 12 pipeline of student achievement, as well as laterally with peer schools to form active learning collaboratives. This commitment should include philanthropic, private sector, and public dollars.

Create an intra-district network and support group for CSD16 principals. This network will allow principals to get to know each other, provide trainings, foster a spirit of collaboration, and facilitate peer-to-peer support.

Create criteria for schools to participate in project cohort. These criteria should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- Principals' responsiveness to project goals and donor efforts.
- Ranking in the middle among their peers in the district in terms of the level of resources they receive or have access to.
- Willingness to create strong working relationships both laterally with peer schools and vertically with pipeline schools.

Put together an advisory group of educators and community stakeholders that will help guide the coordination of the project.

Coordinate, monitor, and assess the coordination of the project. Establish management infrastructure that is accountable to the advisory group and conducts routine evaluations.

2. ASSESS, MONITOR, INCUBATE, AND ENABLE CULTURALLY COMPETENT AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES IN CSD16

Contract with a consultant or organization that will conduct an assessment of education service and after-school provider capacity and services in CSD16 using the tools developed by the Assessment of Effective Out-of-School Time (OST) Programs Serving Black Male Youth developed by the Metropolitan Center; maintain a publicly accessible, regularly updated, and comprehensive database, web directory, and web map of all providers doing business in CSD16; and make recommendations on how foundations, the private sector, and public monies can improve education services and after-school in CSD16.

Contract with education and after-school service providers who will work closely together to offer the following to members of the school cohort:

- Affordable and comprehensive after-school services
- Mental health services
- School tutoring and test preparation
- Student mentoring
- Science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) enrichment
- Sports and recreation
- Arts and culture
- Black male-specific programming

Identify a CSD16 development consultant who can help raise funds for project schools so that they can eventually pay for these support services on their own.

Assess and reinforce cultural competency in CSD16 among education service providers and after-school providers.

FULL RECOMMENDATIONS (CONTINUED)

3. INVEST IN BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF PARENT ORGANIZING IN CSD16

Identify a local organizing body that can:

- Build relationships and partnerships with local and city-wide parent leadership trainers and organizers.
- Develop a leadership training curriculum and conduct a leadership training series among parents in the cohort schools that empowers them to become more knowledgeable, active, and effective advocates for their children.
- Connect the parents to broader efforts to improve school outcomes in CSD16 and New York City.
- Integrate parents into the advisory group and leadership of the project.

CONCLUSION

In the debate around education, it is difficult for ordinary citizens to imagine moving the needle on positive change in the public education system. There are so many system-wide factors that ultimately shape educational outcomes, and so many people inside the schools who are responsible for making schools work. This is not to mention what happens outside the walls of the school and within the home, which is the single greatest influence on a child's life and education. Of course, we should not forget the agency of the child to take advantage of available resources and overcome obstacles

Ultimately, philanthropists and people working outside the public educational system have little control over what happens inside our community schools. What we do have is the power to invest in building a nurturing environment around the child and school, in association with other willing partners.

This report should serve as a blueprint on how to begin that work.

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- › Brighter Choice Community School
- › The Brooklyn Academy of Global Finance
- › Brooklyn Brownstone School
- › Brooklyn High School for Law and Technology
- › C.S. 021 Crispus Attucks
- › Frederick Douglass Academy IV Secondary School
- › Gotham Professional Arts Academy
- › Granville T. Woods Middle School 584
- › J.H.S. 057 Whitelaw Reid
- › M.S. 035 Stephen Decatur
- › M.S. 267 Math, Science & Technology
- › P.S. 005 Dr. Ronald McNair
- › P.S. 025 Eubie Blake School
- › P.S. 026 Jesse Owens
- › P.S. 028 The Warren Prep Academy
- › P.S. 040 George W. Carver
- › P.S. 081 Thaddeus Stevens
- › P.S. 243K The Weeksville School
- › P.S. 262 El Hajj Malik El Shabazz Elementary School
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