
INVESTIGATION OF CREDIT-ACCELERATING AND COMPETENCY-BASED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS FOR ADOLESCENT-AGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

PREPARED BY

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School-Based Initiative for Adolescent Parents and Their Young Children*

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I. BACKGROUND

This report profiles six highly regarded models of in-school, competency based academic programs that offer credit-accelerating opportunities in the core subject areas — math, English, social studies and the sciences. The six models differ on a number of key dimensions, including number of students served, scale, cost, management system and curriculum content.

The report is divided into three sections — Background, Model Profiles, and Sources and Contacts.

The Center for Assessment and Policy Development (CAPD) has been studying potential solutions to the barriers in creating well-implemented comprehensive school-based programs for adolescent parents and their children. One of the challenges of implementing a quality approach is to locate the available educational services that are both flexible and equal to the best educational offerings in the school system. CAPD was seeking to uncover exemplary, competency-based education (CBE) models with the potential to accelerate credit acquisition. The following questions helped guide the investigation:

- ***Are these competency-based systems used to grant credit in the core academic subjects? If so, which courses?***
- ***How is credit acceleration assigned? What about partial credit?***

- ***Who is the target population? High school; middle school at-risk students?***
- ***Are these programs, or schools, single site examples? Are they multiple sites within a district?***
- ***How are the systems managed? Are they computer driven?***
- ***What do the systems cost to obtain? To operate?***
- ***Are these programs available for purchase? Is there training and technical assistance?***

The search covered: a number of electronic search systems (ERIC, etc.); calls to national and regional networks like Academy for Educational Development (AED); Education Development Corporation (EDC); the National Governor's Association (NGA); the Council of Chief State School Officers; the National Association of Secondary School Principals; Bay State Skills Corporation; and inquiries with the US Office of Education and several state offices of education (see Sources and Contacts section). More than a dozen program contacts were interviewed. Throughout the process, numerous references came up of exemplary models of integrated vocational and academic programs. These were disregarded, as were programs that focused primarily on out-of-school youth. One exception was Diploma Plus in Los Angeles that uses a competency-based system in both school-based and adult-oriented initiatives throughout their school system.

I. Background (continued)

The following six models were profiled as most worthy of adoption:

- High School Redirection — NYC and seven replication sites;
- Diploma Plus — the Los Angeles Unified School District;
- The Franklin Learning Center — Philadelphia, PA;
- The Richarte School — Georgetown, TX;
- Learning Enterprise High School — Milwaukee, WI
- The Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP); and
- The Learning Education Alternative Program (LEAP) Center — Brenham, TX, Invest Learning Systems.

All the profiles were assembled from phone interviews and background source materials. One site — Franklin Learning Center in Philadelphia — was visited.

There is considerable variation among the programs and models profiled in this report:

- High School Redirection in NYC is a second-chance dropout recovery program that serves 500 students a year. Redirection targets students who are highly at-risk and uses an innovative point system as the vehicle for accelerating credit accumulation.
- Diploma Plus in Los Angeles is a district-wide initiative with program centers at community schools throughout the district. There's even Diploma Plus staff within the District's Adult and Occupational Education Division. Diploma Plus serves 60,000-70,000 learners a year.

- The Franklin Learning Center (FLC) is part of the regular Philadelphia Public School system, but uses a self-paced, mastery approach as an alternative to the traditional seat-time focus in use throughout the district. FLC offers a four-year sequence of competency-based education to a self-selecting cross section of the student population.
- The Richarte School in Georgetown, TX occupies about 5,000 square feet and accommodates 120 learners each year.
- Learning Enterprise in Milwaukee uses the Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP) model as the basis for a core course of competency-based learning. CCP allows learners to accelerate credit accumulation; however, it is only one component of an overall program that includes traditional course work as well.
- Finally, the LEAP Center in Brenham, TX, uses a computer-based competency system throughout its alternative school, and offers students the option of receiving a regular diploma or a GED.

Each school or program in the profile meets the threshold criteria set forth. First, all the schools are competency-based models in which the program tells the learner prior to instruction what skills or knowledge he/she will be asked to demonstrate after instruction; competencies, though stated as minimums, encourage instructional opportunities and activities that enable students to achieve maximum levels of performance; and curriculum, instruction and assessment are explicit, known, agreed upon, integrated, adaptive and data-based.

I. Background (continued)

Second, all of these schools or programs offer credit-accelerating opportunities. Typically, this is accomplished by accrediting prior learning at the point of initial assessment. It also occurs through an on going assessment and feedback process that is linked to specific learning objectives and keyed to an individual's personalized learning contract.

Several other common themes emerge from these profiles. All the programs reflect low student-adult instructional ratios, smaller class sizes, multiple methods of instruction and assessment, a learner-centered approach to teaching and learning (i.e., meaningful, shared roles in the decision-making process for students and staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility and ownership), carefully thought out recruitment, screening and selection systems, administrative staff as instructional learners, open-entry/open-exit scheduling, flexible rostering and a variety of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities.

Interestingly, there were no examples of competency-based systems at the middle school level, although some programs served younger adolescents.

The six programs that are profiled are highly-regarded competency-based, accelerated-credit models of high school instruction. Of the six, only two — Learning Enterprise in Milwaukee and LEAP in Brenham, TX — are built on potentially replicable systems. Learning Enterprise uses the CCP system and LEAP bases its instructional program on the INVEST computerized learning system. One other system, Los Angeles' Diploma Plus Program, has developed the infrastructure needed for model replication. It should be noted that even those programs that are replicable require alterations consistent with individual's locales, and local standards and practices. Everyone who was interviewed described a lengthy process of development, adaptation and/or refinement. Although programs may have derived from a turnkey system, each evolved in a hybrid model. Every director described a comprehensive revision process that involved key stakeholders from the school district, individual schools and community representatives.

II. MODEL PROFILES

High School Redirection — Brooklyn, New York

High School Redirection is a second-chance alternative school that has been operating in Brooklyn, New York since 1968. High School Redirection operates under the auspices of the NYC Board of Education and grants a regular high school degree. Approximately one-fourth of Redirection students are enrolled in the school's STAR program, an intensive reading improvement program in which students stay with the same teacher for five periods every day. The school's success in improving reading skills is remarkably high. The Department of Labor sponsored replication of High School Redirection in 1991. There are seven replication sites across the country — Cincinnati, Denver, Detroit, Los Angeles, Newark, Stockton and Wichita.

New York's High School Redirection serves approximately 500 students, virtually all of whom are either Black or Hispanic. The school is almost 50% male and 50% female. Almost 25% of the students, both male and female, are parents.

The basic philosophical underpinning of the school is one of respect. Each student is respected as a learner, and is given every opportunity to learn how to succeed. Students take on increasing levels of responsibility for themselves with the awareness that there is always a safety net available.

Students begin the process of admission by coming in on a specific day between September 1 and October 31, or January 15 and March 31. Students under 18 are required to appear with a parent or guardian. Counseling staff offer a group guidance curriculum that includes topics such as credit accumulation and personal responsibility. Students are tested for placement in both reading and math, unofficial transcripts are reviewed for class placements, and an individual needs assessment is conducted. Generally, students are self-referred, having heard of the program from friends or relatives.

The centerpiece of Redirection is the CSP group. CSP stands for Civil Service Preparation, a leftover from when Redirection was a manpower program. CSP is part counseling group, part family support and part academic class. The teacher to whom students are assigned in CSP at intake becomes the one with whom the student will spend his or her entire stay at Redirection.

Redirection is run by a principal and an assistant principal who perform multiple roles beyond the traditional administrative ones. High School Redirection is funded at the rate of 41.79 NYC Board of Education units. A unit is roughly equivalent to the cost of a single teacher's salary, less health benefits. Staff includes administrative, social worker and counselors, librarian, teachers, secretaries and paraprofessionals.

Redirection students in the New York program receive the same diploma by meeting the same requirements as any other students in any other school in the NYC system. Redirection offers both general level and regents level courses in the academic subjects.

Redirection uses a point system as a basis for meeting graduation requirements. NYC requires 40 credits for graduation from high school which Redirection has translated into 4,000 points. The point system gives a student points, translated into credit, for each day of satisfactory performance in class or completed assignments in extra credit. The school year is divided into four cycles or nine or ten weeks so that students can have four new starts each year instead of two. A student who attends 20 of 40 days in a typical cycle and completes all his/her assignments on days of attendance will receive 25 of 50 points on his/her report card. On the other hand, if a student wants to advance, each 50 point class per cycle can be doubled to 100 points by doing extra credit work in that class. A student with a seven academic course schedule could earn a total of 650 class points per cycle. This student could earn 2,600 points or 26 credits in one

II. Model Profiles — High School Redirection (continued)

academic year. Extra credit is work done over and above the regular class work, and outside of class time. The work may be in the form of an essay, outside readings, trips and trip reports, observations and extended research projects, etc.

Students may also participate in an independent study program and do outside, independent work under the supervision of an assigned teacher who is not their regular academic instructor. Students also earn credit points for those assignments. They also gain graduation credits for work. Night and summer school adhere to the regular credit accumulation rules.

The vast majority of Redirection graduates come in with some credits from a previous school and graduate within two years. Redirection reports an 85% graduation rate for students who participate in their program for young parents.

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A description of the Redirection Replication project including profiles and site contact information for each site are available at CAPD's office. The Academy for Educational Development (AED) was awarded a DOL contract to manage the implementation of the replication project. Much of the information on this program was obtained from a document entitled "Guide to High School Redirection."

II. MODEL PROFILES

The Diploma Plus Model — Los Angeles Unified School District, Division of Adult and Career Education

Diploma Plus (DP) is a nationally acclaimed, competency-based adult literacy and high school diploma program designed by educators, students and community groups to teach academic and life skills necessary for successful adult living. Students have the opportunity to improve basic reading, writing and math skills, earn an adult high school diploma, prepare for and receive the GED certificate, enhance academic skills for job training, and develop essential life skills.

Key features of the model include a personalized program of instruction and assessment based on students' abilities, interests and goals; open enrollment enabling entry into the program at any time during the school year; self-paced and performance-driven learning in individualized, one on-one format in learning centers that use materials especially designed for the target populations. All courses — Language Acquisition, Basic Education, high school subject areas and Employment Preparation — are competency-based. Students begin where initial diagnostics and assessment indicate, and progress at their own rate. Each class/program maintains specific "competencies" to be achieved, and tests provide each student with an opportunity to demonstrate performance. Seat time is not the critical determinant of performance. Successful completion of courses leads to one or more possible outcomes: high school diploma; GED certificate; training certificate; placement in apprenticeship programs; junior college or jobs.

The Diploma Plus program was developed more than a decade ago by the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) Division of Adult and Career Education. Presently, there is at least one Diploma Plus Learning Center in each of the District's community adult schools, regional occupational centers and job training centers. In 1995, the District served more

than 60,000 learners including adults 18 years and older, at-risk youth in the Alternative Education and Work Centers Program, high school students in the Greater Avenues to Independent Living (GAIN) Program, along with concurrently enrolled high school students and other students in special programs. Approximately 2,000 high school diplomas were issued in 1995 through this initiative.

While the Diploma Plus program is a project of the Division of Adult and Career Education, it operates cooperatively with the District's Office of Secondary Instruction to assure equivalent education in serving concurrently enrolled students.

Diploma Plus offers an array of rich professional development activities. Within the district, DP regional resource teachers serve all the various schools and programs that request assistance in setting up new learning centers, order and inventory materials, and train teachers and assistants. Selected teachers meet throughout the year to prioritize course revisions in content areas and draft new curriculum in areas like life skills and career preparation. Diploma Plus staff also work closely with the Curriculum Office of the District to design and field test new tests for specifically designated courses. Finally, regular in-service workshops are conducted for learning center instructors, academic chairpersons, academic teachers and community resource liaisons.

Increasingly, Diploma Plus serves students who are concurrently enrolled in one of LAUSD's secondary schools. Classes for "concurrent" students are open in most secondary schools to help address the problems of high dropout rates, late enrollees, remedial needs and special populations. The Alternative Education Work Center (AEWC) program serves high school age students (14- 19-years-old, typically) who have not

II. Model Profiles — The Diploma Plus Model (continued)

attended their school for 45 consecutive days or more. The curriculum for concurrent and AEWK classes is based on adult course outlines and open to enrollment of adult students at any time. Concurrent students in the learning center work from learning center contracts on an open-entry/open-exit basis. Self paced learning takes place in individualized instruction settings. And, in some centers, teacher-directed instructional opportunities exist. When all the course competencies have been met, credit is given. Concurrent students programmed into the learning center by referral from their secondary school return to their home high school with a credit slip. Adult education course credits are accepted on full face value by the Senior High School Division. Concurrent students are required to meet the District's minimum attendance standards and credit is awarded only upon completion of course contract and demonstrated competence.

IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATIONS

Each learning center is staffed with one teacher and one teacher assistant for 30 students. The instructor must be a certified LAUSD teacher with the appropriate credentials.

Diploma Plus Learning Centers operate as virtual turnkey systems. The District offers approved, new centers, an operator's manual and technical assistance that includes an overview of the model and background information; a list of start-up tasks; practical advice on organizing and implementing instruction; procedures for recruiting and taking in students and for assessing and evaluating student progress; course outlines; and an inventory of suggested materials.

COSTS

Typically, Diploma Plus programs are reimbursed the equivalent of the district's ADA allocation; for every 525 hours of instruction, ADA reimburses \$18,660.

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II. MODEL PROFILES

Franklin Learning Center High School — Philadelphia, PA

The Franklin Learning Center (FLC) is a senior high school in the Philadelphia School District. Located in the southeastern portion of the Fairmount neighborhood, FLC occupies the former William Penn High School constructed in 1908. While clean and orderly, the building is in desperate need of a facelift. Its presentation is not helped by the fact that the school is in the midst of a lead abatement clean-up project. The learning environment appears engaging and positive, not at all affected by the building's physical disrepair.

FLC is a magnet school and receives approximately 3,000 applications for admission annually. The applicant number has been increasing steadily over the past several years. Approximately 300 students are selected for admission each year. Students at FLC represent the general population of the District. The school draws from virtually every neighborhood in the city. FLC does not target or attract a special at-risk population from within the district. Staffing includes the principal, assistant principal, three academic deans, instructional staff and an Advisory Board made up of students, parents, community members and staff.

FLC uses a "competency-based" or "continuous progress" system of instruction that requires students to master subject matter through a self-paced, step-by-step approach. Extra-curricula activities and varsity sports are programmatic options for all students. FLC offers senior year internships, a work-study program and a required community service program.

FLC is a designated "experimental" school by the State Department of Education and the Philadelphia School District. This designation enables the school to translate its competency-based formula of mastery into Carnegie units for graduation. Students earn credit at a rate commensurate with their ability and demonstrated mastery, not in the number of hours of instructional, or seat time. For reference purposes,

ten FLC credits in a subject are equivalent to one year's work for one Carnegie unit. For example, a student who completes ten credits in Algebra at the "A" or "B" level has earned one Carnegie unit. To stay on track, students must earn approximately 55-60 FLC credits per year. Credit accumulation is flexible. Mastery level is 80%.

FLC's competency-based model is organized into five mini-schools: College Prep, Health Sciences, Technology, Computer and Business Applications, and Performing Arts. All coursework in every subject area is delivered through a self-paced, mastery approach to instruction.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Personalized (and student-centered) educational experiences for students through competency-based, individualized instruction, managed through the use of Learning Activity Packets (LAPS). LAPS serve as the management structure for instruction. Each LAP constitutes approximately 24 hours of coursework which is the equivalent of one FLC credit. FLC requires 228 credits to graduate distributed over nine subject areas. Instructional method is varied depending on the course content, the instructor's preference and student needs. Instruction is large group, small group, peer-to-peer and individualized.
- Mini-school organization which allows students to learn in smaller, more user-friendly settings.
- Advisory boards made up of community leaders, parents, business representatives and students; and affiliations with local institutions including Temple University, Community College of Philadelphia, Drexel University, the Veteran's Administration Hospital and Graduate Hospital.

II. Model Profiles — Franklin Learning Center High School (continued)

- A comprehensive, state-certified child care facility that serves approximately 150 children of students, faculty and community people. The assistant principal, a director and 3.5 staff members administer the program which focuses on early childhood education (children from eight weeks to five years old), includes a full-day, full year infancy-through kindergarten program, and emphasizes parental involvement and parenting skills.

COMMENTS

There are several keys to success at FLC. Perhaps the most significant one is the school's student-centered approach to education. Students see the whole picture of educational progress. They know how many credits are needed to graduate; how many LAPS they must complete satisfactorily in each course, each month; and they know (almost weekly) their current status. Students can move ahead in areas of strength and interest, and they can review and repeat in areas of weakness and need. Every student has a leaning contract and every month the contract is reviewed and updated. Students know for instance that they must accumulate at least seven credits in each subject area each year if they're to stay on track to graduation. Falling behind is not indicative of a longer free-fall; but usually a warning signal of the need to buckle down. Students have as many opportunities as they need to measure up. It's largely up to them.

Behind the student-centered learning environment is a supportive group of adults — teachers, counselors, administrators — who monitor, prompt, advise and encourage. Teachers have more flexibility, and, perhaps, a greater sense of ownership and commitment. There's reason for conversation and communication between teachers and students — progress, goal-setting and instructional methodology.

Because the curriculum is self-paced and competency-based, students are constantly moving across courses, even on a weekly basis. A key function then is setting and adjusting student rosters. And, teachers must be able to accommodate roster changes.

FLC has four classrooms outfitted with Macintosh, IBM and Apple computers that offer basic instruction and laboratory opportunities. Some students are rostered to computer classes while others take advantage of the labs which are open during lunch periods. Students can also take computers home for special projects.

As sophisticated and comprehensive a model as FLC's model is, the instructional management system is a manual one, not computer managed. The school plans to develop a computer-based management system in the near-term.

According to the principal, FLC's model was developed more than 20 years ago based on models from Omaha and Minneapolis. Several members of the original team are still on staff; many refinements and adaptations have taken place over the years. During this time, FLC has accepted many visitors, but has never formally distributed or disseminated its model.

FLC must operate at the same per capita cost as all schools in the district.

Contact Information

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A description of the program is available at CAPD's offices.

II. MODEL PROFILES

The Richarte School — Georgetown Independent School District, Georgetown, Texas

The Richarte School is a small (5,000 square feet) public, alternative school for high school age students and operates as a satellite of the local community college. The school serves approximately sixty students daily; thirty in each of two daily, four-hour sessions. During the course of the year, Richarte serves approximately 120 students.

Richarte is a competency-based diploma granting school for at-risk students, 14-18 years-old, many of whom are adolescent parents. In addition to its diploma program, Richarte offers GED preparation and testing. The school also has a child development center.

Richarte has six full-time staff including the principal. Other staff include four subject area teachers (English, math, science and social studies), an instructional aide with a background in technology (who doubles as the school's assessor), a secretary and numerous community volunteers from the community. Per student cost of instruction is equivalent to the cost of a single special education student in Texas.

In addition to classroom space for each subject area teacher, the school has a small (12x20) testing room. The principal indicated that the key to the whole program is their testing program. Students move to the room for an assessment test whenever they and staff deem it appropriate. An example would be a student in Algebra 1 who is ready to take Chapter 1, test A. The instructional aide supervises and scores the procedure. The results are immediately transferred back to the teacher and shared in conference with the student. Mastery is set at 80%. Students also demonstrate competence in areas that link academic skills with real life community situations. The principal briefly described a community-based problem-solving simulation in science involving high counts of bacteria in local streams, and the interests and activities of different stakeholders in the community.

Richarte gets students by self-referral. There are 6,000 students in the District and although the school is located very near the district's high school, Richarte has no formal recruitment and referral arrangement with the high school. Students apply on their own initiative. They complete an application and attach their transcript. Students must have the equivalent of a ninth-grade reading score on the Test of Adult Base Education (TABE). In addition to their test scores and application, candidates participate in the four-part appointment process. Among other things, this process is aimed at gauging students' level of responsibility, interest and initiative. Richarte takes in new students every nine weeks, in essence, back-filling when there are openings. There is always a waiting list. Richarte uses a ranking formula to ensure that they're serving an at-risk population. The formula is described as "total credits accrued divided by the number of semesters in school; the answer to which is then divided into the student's age. The higher the final number, the more at-risk the student; and, the more likely a candidate they become.

The instructional program — both the curriculum and its delivery — are experiential and integrated. The school used a committee made up of community members, school and district staff and professional volunteers to refine and improve all aspects of the school's learning environment. All students must learn at least two word processing applications. And, the school's entire curriculum delivery system is accessible in both print and computer mode.

Another key to the school's success is its ability to network other essential services. The school meets monthly with other community service providers and offers several essential services on-site. County health staff visit the school weekly and conduct health screens and check ups. Counselors from a local alcohol and substance abuse program hold group meetings weekly, and counsel students individually as

II. Model Profiles — The Richarte School (continued)

needed. The school also partners with the local Literacy Council. In exchange for evening access to the school's facilities, the Council reserves free instructional space for up to six Richarte students each evening. Students who need more time or have day-time scheduling conflicts can take advantage of the Council's four evenings per week schedule.

Students also engage in community service projects. The principal described one project in which the school has adopted two local churches and is involved in a number of church-based activities including helping to run the church food bank.

Richarte plans to establish a Professional Development Academy, in part, in response to myriad requests for information and assistance about its program. However, the school does not now have any formalized dissemination or technical assistance program.

Contact Information

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Principal

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II. MODEL PROFILES

Learning Enterprise High School — Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Learning Enterprise High School is one of the accredited alternative high schools in the Milwaukee Public School System. Enterprise, serving approximately 250 students in grades 9-12, has been in operation nine years. Enterprise uses a credit-accelerating, competency-based model, Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP), with a targeted group of its learners — 100 at-risk, 17-year-old students. This profile is based on a phone interview with the school's principal.

Enterprise's CCP system operates as a component of the school's general program which includes traditional course work in both academic and vocational programming. Students in the CCP program must be 17 years old and at-risk in at least three out of five categories — chronic truancy; below grade level performance in reading or math; behind in credit; teen parent status, or an adjudicated record. One hundred students, sophomore through senior status, are served yearly in this program which combines a daily, credit-bearing CCP class with a traditional caseload for the balance of the day.

In the current class, 25 of the 100 students are seniors; the remaining are underclassmen. The CCP class is offered five times a day; and each class accommodates 20 learners. The program utilizes one full-time instructor and one instructional assistant.

The CCP class offers instruction (and credit) in all the academic subjects with the exception of the Life Sciences. Credit is granted in the physical sciences, civics, world history, geography, integrated math,

algebra, consumer math and English. Students who achieve mastery of the course work in CCP class earn double the credit hours they receive in the traditional program. Enterprise negotiated the CCP credit schedule with Milwaukee Public Schools' Department of Instruction.

Principal Harrill-Patterson cited a 93% graduation rate for CCP participants in 1995. According to Harrill-Patterson, of those graduates, 78% went on to post-secondary education.

Enterprise's CCP turnkey program costs approximately \$65,000. This is a one-time fee that covers all instructional materials, hardware and software, and a computer-managed assessment system. Enterprise receives \$5,640 per pupil cost reimbursement from the MPS system which represents 80% of the system's per pupil expenditures.

Other features of the Enterprise High School model include an off-campus work component and a day-care facility.

Contact Information

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Background information, cost data and evaluation studies of the CCP model are available from CAPD.

II. MODEL PROFILES

The Comprehensive Competencies Program — Alexandria, VA

The Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP) is widely used in alternative programs for at-risk and out-of-school youth to accelerate learning. The CCP covers competencies ranging from beginning level reading and math through high school subjects, plus “functional” or life skills like consumer economics, health, work readiness, career search and personal development. CCP has an “Employment Essentials” course that gets at SCANS skills (e.g., using technology, understanding systems, communication skills, etc.). The academic subjects at the high school level include geometry, algebra, writing, American and British literature, history and science. There are four new courses for school-to-work and similar programs — Reading at Work, Writing at Work, Computing at Work and Performing at Work.

CCP is available in both print and computer-based modes. The system includes books, videos and lessons on computer. Each month new multimedia CD-ROM educational materials are mapped into the CCP lessons inventory. CCP recommends one computer for every three or four learners instead of 1:1. There’s a Windows-based management system that automates testing, record-keeping, reports and progress, and that lets users reference in any additional educational materials they like (print, video, computer). The computer management system allows for immediate feedback with unit tests after each sequence of lessons, and level tests after each sequence of units.

Because CCP is self-paced, CCP sites can enroll students on an open entry/open-exit basis. The use of initial diagnostic testing provides for the development of individualized study plans for each student. The system is competency-based, with clearly stated learning

goals, using skill mastery as the criterion for moving forward. Students progress through a series of lessons, spending as much or as little time as is necessary for them to grasp the concepts or content. A score of 80% demonstrates mastery.

The original CCP was in the early 1980s with Ford Foundation and Mott Foundation support by the non-profit Remediation and Training Institute (RTI). RTI has updated the curriculum and the computer systems extensively over the past few years. RTI is still a non-profit organization interested in how CCP fits into various program contexts. CCP is currently marketed and distributed by United States Basics Skills Investment Corporation (US Basics). There are numerous examples of CCP in school to-work, JTPA, prisons, youth development centers, community colleges, workplaces, regular public schools, housing developments, alternative high schools, sports and recreation centers, etc. CCP was evaluated by Northeastern University’s Center for Labor Market Studies for the Ford Foundation and in an evaluation of its use in the Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP), by the DOL.

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Background of the initiative, cost and implementation reports and student results are available at CAPD’s offices.

II. MODEL PROFILES

The LEAP Center — Brenham, Texas

The Learning Education Alternative Program (LEAP) Center is an accredited alternative school serving 120-150 high school-age students on an annual basis. LEAP is located in Brenham, Texas, a small, rural community situated halfway between Austin and Houston. It has a school population of about 4,000.

The LEAP Center uses a competency-based, computer-managed system as the curricular framework for its three programmatic options — Choice High School, GED School and LEAP. LEAP's computer-based instructional system uses Invest Learning Systems, formerly called Jostens, as the curriculum foundation for its core subject area instruction, assessment and management activities. In fact, LEAP is a pilot site for the Invest System's use as a framework for credit acceleration instruction.

Choice offers students (approximately 25 per year apply, interview, and then either select or are selected) a fully accredited and competency based academic curriculum leading to a regular high school diploma. The school has correlated all the key objectives from the state's comprehensive bank of "Essential Elements" with the Invest curriculum and management information system that it uses as the framework for six-week, credit-bearing cycles of instruction. Kathy Gaines, the program director who was interviewed by phone for this report, indicated that the Choice program is largely about "changing the pacing" of instruction. Choice uses a "mastery-based" rather than "clock hours" approach to accreditation. Students must attain a 705 mastery level to receive course credit. In addition to the Invest Systems, over the year, staff incorporate numerous other instructional strategies and material including project based extensions, materials from trade books, home-grown curriculum packets and audio-visual aids.

Choice enrolls sophomores through seniors and is open-entry/open-exit. Each semester is divided into three six-week cycles and student progress is monitored and managed using individual student flow charts and monthly calendars as part of an overall organizational and time management system. Each student's work is self-paced. They may take two, three, six or more weeks to complete and master the materials in a six-week course cycle. Students must complete at least one six-week cycle to receive any credit. In this model, students' prior knowledge is acknowledged, and rewarded. In a traditional school setting, missing homework and erratic attendance are often significant factors in determining school performance.

Choice's academic program takes place in the morning; afternoons are for work, a co-op program or other special activities.

LEAP's two other program offerings are its GED program and the Educational Alternatives Program (LEAP). The GED program is for students aged 17 (or turning 17). Approximately 55 students enroll in this component, which is offered during the school day and uses some of the same staff as the Choice program. The school also offers a night GED program for adults in the community.

The third program, Alternative Eligibility Program (AEP), is the newest component, having been in existence for just three years now. There are typically about 15-20 students at any given time in this component. AEP targets 6th to 12th graders who are considered by the district to have "serious and persistent behavior problems." The three program offerings share staff and curriculum; however, students do not mix for instructional delivery.

II. Model Profiles — The LEAP Center (continued)

The LEAP school has a student-to-adult ratio in the range of 15:1. There are 18 staff across the three programs; only the AEP staff are full-time. According to the director, the cost per student is slightly higher than the regular high school's per capita expenditure.

The LEAP school is one of 30 (out of 80 applicants) chosen to participate in Texas' alternative schools' accountability study.

Contact Information

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Director

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409-277-6537*

A full description of these programs is available from CAPD.

III. SOURCES AND CONTACTS

**Academy for Educational Development —
Washington and New York**

Bryna Shore Fraser and Sandi Weinbaum

Bay State Skills Corporation — Boston

Ephraim Weisstein, Education Director

**Los Angeles Unified School District — Office of
Instruction, Senior High Division and the Division
of Adult and Career Education**

EEWC, Ruth Beaglehole, 213-732-0153

Evans School, Susan Masters

District Office, Molly Milner, 213-625-6653

Pregnancy and Parenting Teen Program,

Linda Ward Russell

WAVE, Inc.

USDOE

Jim Parker, 202-205-5499

University of Southern Florida

Bill Blank, Professor of Education, 813 974-0314

Franklin Learning Center, Philadelphia

Natalie Knable, 215-684-5916

Brandeis University,

Alan Melchior

Education Development Corporation

Joyce Malin-Smith

Girls, Inc.

Lynne Tsuda, National Office

Pat Loombs, Alameda County

Texas Education Agency

Kathy Irwin, 512-463-9292

Carolyn Kline, 512-463-9294

Deborah Nance, Accelerated Instruction, 512-463-9716

Sue Kaulfus (adolescent Parenting)

The Richarte School, Georgetown, Texas

Jennifer Read

**Mary Grimes Education Center, Carrilton-Farmers'
Branch School,**

Frank Taylor

**Invest (formerly Jostens Learning), Simon and
Schuster**

Hugh Conway and Kay Gore

American Council on Education, GED

Allida Joyce

Ft. Pierce, Florida

Clauda Van Patten, 407-468-5880

High School Redirection

AED and Mathematica

Milwaukee Public Schools, Learning Enterprise HS

Kathy Harrill Paterson, 414-461-9500

Alternative Schools

Germin Burgos

Chicago Alternative Schools

Jack Weist

CCP

Robert Taggeart, RTI

Forrest Chisman, US BASICS

Barbara Dunn,

TRAC/USA Shopping Mall Learning Centers

III. Sources and Contacts (continued)

Francis Tuttle Vocational School, OKC, Dropout Recovery

Carla High, 405-720-4380

Kimberly Thomas, 405-720-4148

7 months in operation

Boston System

ABCD University School

Greater Egleston Community High School

El Centro De Cardinale

Southwestern Education Publishing and Center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD); applied academics model

ASU — AEIS The Arizona Educational Informational System

The University of Wisconsin System Competency-Based Admission Pilot Project CBA

Larry Rubin, Office of Academic Affairs, 608-262-6717

Youth Progress (Girls Inc.) And Youth at Its Best