



Academic Youth Development

Promising Findings and District Snapshots

Educators report that the greatest barrier to the success of their students—and, consequently, the single most problematic aspect of their jobs—is lack of student motivation and engagement. For students, adolescence and the transition to high school are part of a defining, and often difficult, developmental period. Faced with increased academic pressures and unfamiliar social circumstances, far too many adolescents experience decreases in grade point average, attendance, motivation, and sense of belonging. Schools that have implemented the Academic Youth Development (AYD) programs are reporting significant and enduring progress in addressing these challenges.

Developed by Agile Mind and the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas in collaboration with leading psychologists, AYD translates the latest research on student motivation, persistence, social and emotional learning, and understanding of intelligence into practical strategies that can transform how students transition to and succeed in high school. Social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies, defined most authoritatively by CASEL, define the categories of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that contribute to students' academic and personal success. AYD helps educators and learners understand, develop, and extend these skills, through explicit instruction and application in academic situations. Since its inception AYD has been implemented in more than 500 schools in 13 states.

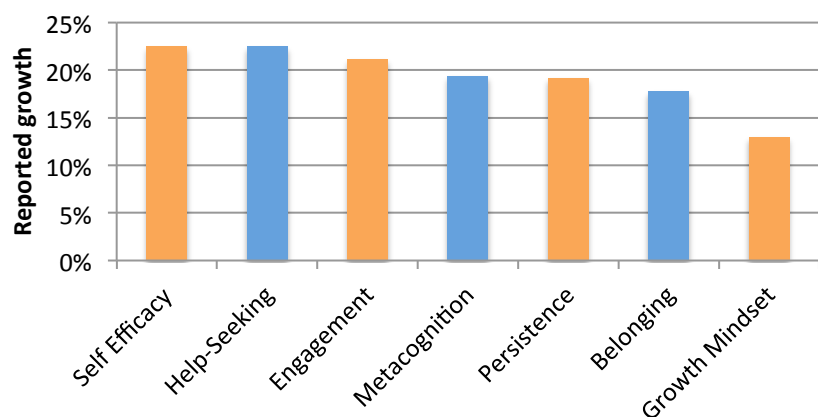
Independent research demonstrates that AYD:

- Creates beneficial changes in how students understand intelligence and their own ability to achieve
- Improves learning cultures in classrooms and schools
- Increases teachers' understanding of the roles that motivation and self management play in student achievement

Most significantly, the program has led to considerable gains in student achievement in schools and districts nationwide, while increasing teacher effectiveness and satisfaction.

We offer here findings and statements from some of our partner school districts, as well as summaries of results of Dana Center studies, as evidence of the promise of AYD for students and teachers.

**WA College-Ready Math Initiative, 2016:
Progress in AYD Students' Beliefs & Behaviors**



Measured learning factors

Data from surveys of 556 students at end of intervention year

With AYD, students are experiencing greater success in mathematics while simultaneously increasing their level of confidence and their belief in the impact of their own effort.

- Math Curriculum Specialist, Paramount School District, California

The graph on page 1 reports the outcomes of students who participated in a state-sponsored initiative in Washington during the 2015-2016 academic year. School districts joined a College-Ready Math Initiative (CRMI) to help underserved students graduate from high school with strong math capabilities and skills and thereby to avoid remediation in college. As part of that initiative, middle and high schools in Bellingham, Bremerton, Granite Falls, Manson, Oroville, Pasco, and Toppenish began implementing School-Year Academic Youth Development (SY-AYD) for hundreds of students—to develop their learning mindsets, transform their attitudes and beliefs about their own abilities, and instill problem-solving skills to better prepare them for the increased rigor of STEM and college preparatory courses.

In a study jointly conducted by the Institute for Measurement, Methodology, Analysis, and Policy at Texas Tech University (IMMAP) and the Dana Center, researchers surveyed participating students at the end of the academic year to examine 7 factors related to the learning mindsets and strategies that contribute to academic success and college readiness:

- **Self-efficacy:** students' beliefs about their capacity to succeed in a particular situation
- **Help-seeking:** the process of seeking help from others in pursuit of one's goals
- **Engagement:** the extent to which students participate, ask questions, and are willing to share ideas in class
- **Metacognition:** the extent to which students plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning, adjusting strategies when necessary
- **Persistence:** the degree to which students think they have the skills to achieve their goal and work hard
- **Belonging:** students' sense of their acceptance, value, and role as a legitimate group member
- **Growth mindset:** the belief that intelligence can change with effective effort

As the graph illustrates, survey results indicated significant and enduring gains on all measures.

In addition to measuring effects on students, researchers assessed how teaching the program impacted teachers' beliefs and teaching practices. Three key aspects related to student success were measured:

- **Growth mindset**
- **Teacher practices that promote student persistence and self-regulation**
- **Teacher efficacy**

Survey results indicated significant increases on all 3 measures for participating educators.

These increases indicate that participation in the professional development that is core to Academic Youth Development and teaching the program to students resulted in powerful, positive changes in teachers' beliefs in their students' capacity for learning, as well as on their teaching.

I love the whole program. The language, the idea that your mind is agile. I think it's probably the most effective professional development I've had since I've been a teacher. That's how powerful I think this is, and I truly believe in it. We drill effort. And we praise it. The point of the class is to give your effort and to grow your brain and to become smarter. That's my teaching philosophy now.

- Algebra I Teacher, Pennsylvania

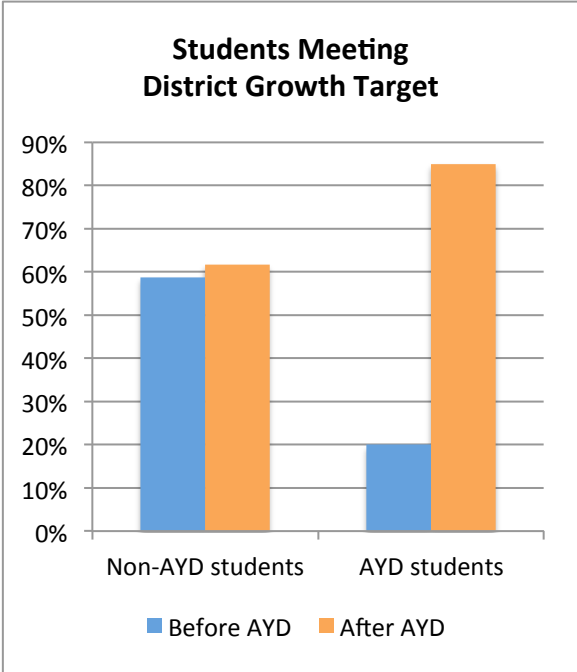
IMPROVED ACHIEVEMENT IN MATHEMATICS

Districts report that enacting AYD leads to significant gains in student achievement in mathematics, particularly for low-income and minority students.

MAP Benchmark Assessments: More AYD students than nonparticipants met district growth targets.

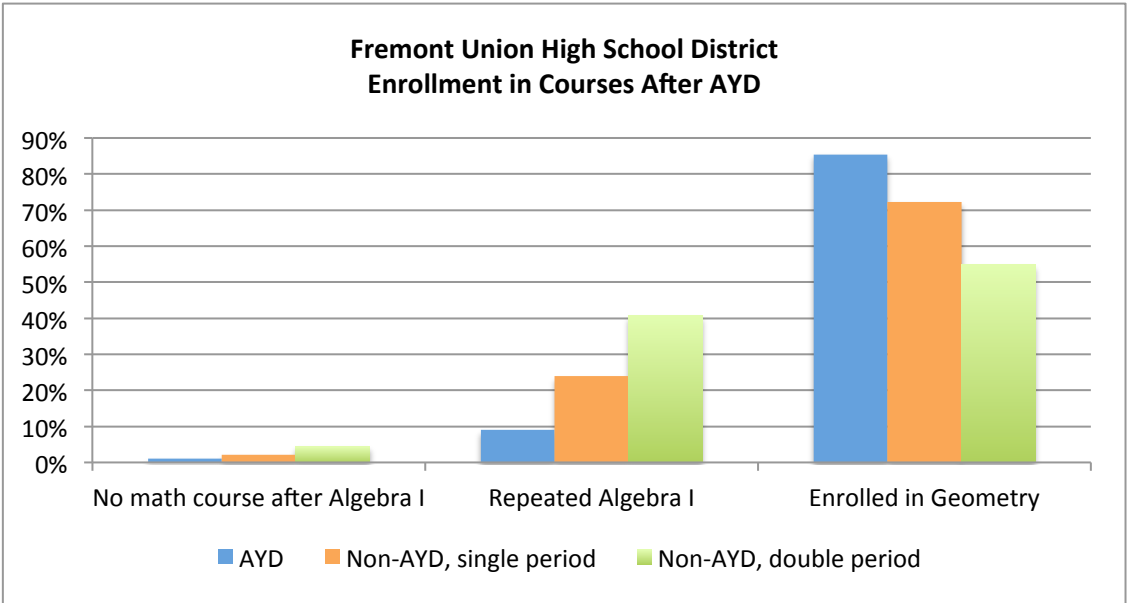
Evanston, IL. In Evanston—a diverse mixed-income suburb of Chicago—Summer-Start AYD was enacted for rising 8th graders who had struggled in mathematics. In the school year before AYD was implemented, scaled scores for those students had increased by only 1 point on the Measures of Adequate Progress (MAP) test, and just 20% met district growth targets. After AYD, students achieved a 12-point increase, and fully 85% met growth targets, while non-AYD students recorded a 6-point increase.

All of our first year freshmen are in School Year AYD. Our Algebra I failure rate for this first nine week period was the lowest it's ever been since I've been here.
 - Principal, Port Isabel, Texas



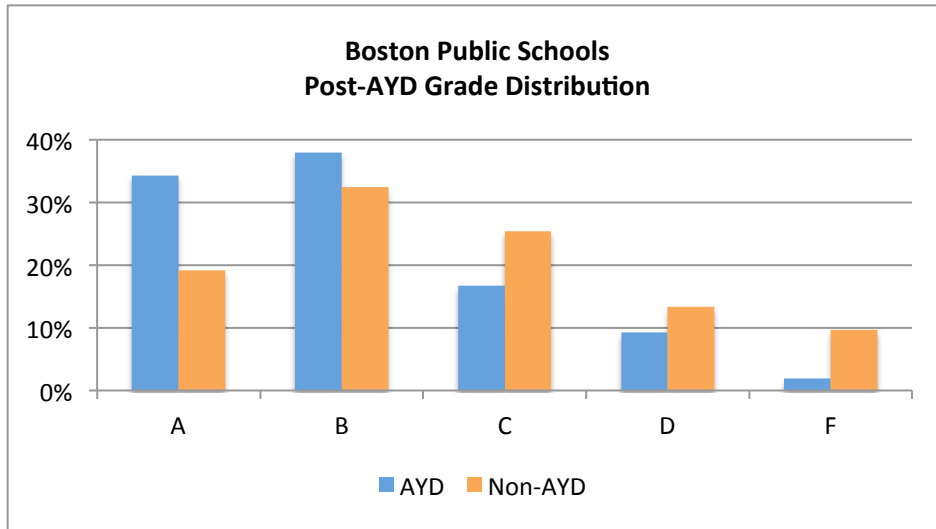
Progress in Course Placement: Fewer AYD students repeated Algebra I, and more enrolled in Geometry, compared with non-AYD students.

Cupertino, CA. Evaluators in Fremont Union High School District examined the academic records of students one year after Summer-Start AYD enactment. They found that 85% of AYD students were able to go on to enroll in Geometry, compared with 72% of non-AYD students enrolled in single period Algebra I and just 55% of those enrolled in double-period Algebra I. Fewer than 10% of AYD students repeated Algebra I in their sophomore year compared with 24% of non-AYD students in single period Algebra I and 41% in double-period Algebra I.



Course Grades: AYD students improved their Algebra I grade.

Boston, MA. Evaluators at Boston Public Schools gathered data to measure AYD and non-AYD student achievement in Algebra I after the AYD summer experience. During the first marking period, twice as many AYD students as non-AYD students earned an A in Algebra, and the failing rate among AYD students was one fifth that of non-AYD students.



This program has made an enormous difference in school life for both our teachers and our adolescent students. AYD has changed the way teachers talk to students, students talk to teachers, and students talk to students.

- Deputy Superintendent, Chicago, Illinois