

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City Year¹ is a national organization providing students in 29 cities with a program designed to help them stay in school, make positive behavioral changes, and get back on track to graduate. The City Year student intervention and support model placed teams of trained AmeriCorps volunteers² in schools to partner with a Dallas Independent School District (ISD) teacher for one school year and provide attendance coaching, academic interventions, and social-emotional learning (SEL) to students in Kindergarten through grade twelve.

AmeriCorps members focused on reducing early warning indicators that placed students at increased risk for dropping out of school including low attendance, behavior issues and/or failing English/Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics.

City Year Dallas deployed 74 AmeriCorps members across 10 Dallas ISD campuses (Table 1) for the 2019-20 school year. The number of AmeriCorps members assigned to a school ranged from six to eight based on school enrollment and need. In 2019-20, the program was supported by \$690,000 from the Dallas ISD, the same amount as in 2018-19 (Featherston, 2019).

Table 1: 2019-20 Number of City Year Members by Campus Receiving Services

Campus	n	%
Elementary School		
John Neely Bryan	6	8.1
Harrell Budd	6	8.1
Cedar Crest	8	10.8
Maple Lawn	8	10.8
William B. Miller	6	8.1
Elisha M. Pease	8	10.8
Middle School		
E. B. Comstock	8	10.8
O. W. Holmes	8	10.8
High School		
Franklin D. Roosevelt	8	10.8
H. Grady Spruce	8	10.8

Source: Member assignment received from City Year Dallas on 12/10/19.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

After the District transitioned to at-home learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic,³ City Year program activities evolved

to include academic support in virtual classrooms, remote tutoring support, contacting students directly to provide SEL support, and parent support.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of attendance, SEL, and academic support services provided to Dallas ISD students by City Year Dallas during the 2019-20 school year.⁴ This report would typically include analyses of academic achievement results on the spring 2020 *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)*. However, these assessments were canceled due to the state response to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics of students served by City Year Dallas?

Methodology

City Year Dallas provided the evaluator with a list of students in grades Kindergarten through grade twelve served during the 2019-20 school year. The evaluator matched these data with the district Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) demographic data file (dated October 31, 2019) and conducted frequency analyses to summarize participant characteristics.

Results

City Year coaching and support primarily focused on students in grades three through nine, but students in other grades were also served (Table 2). The largest proportion of served students were in grade four (18%). The percentage of students who were African American was larger for served students (52%) than for other students at the same campuses (36%). Conversely, a smaller proportion of served students were Hispanic (45%) than other students at the same campuses (62%). Lower proportions of students served by City Year staff members received specialized services (32% English learner; 7% special education) than other students at the same campuses (48% English learner; 14% special education).

¹ For more information about City Year, see <https://www.cityyear.org/>.

² For more information about AmeriCorps programs, see <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps>.

³ At-home learning began March 23, 2020 and continued through the remainder of the spring semester.

⁴ Portions of this report were adapted from Featherston (2019).

⁵ <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/correspondence/taa-letters/cancellation-of-staar-testing-for-the-remainder-of-the-school-year>

Table 2: 2019-20 City Year Student Characteristics

	Served Students (N = 1,268)		Other Campus Students (N = 4,659)	
	n	%	n	%
Grade				
One	10	0.8	339	7.3
Two	32	2.5	321	6.9
Three	202	15.9	170	3.6
Four	227	17.9	173	3.7
Five	199	15.7	245	5.3
Six	103	8.1	376	8.1
Seven	101	8.0	395	8.5
Eight	94	7.4	408	8.8
Nine	191	15.1	636	13.7
Ten	67	5.3	579	12.4
Eleven	28	2.2	542	11.6
Twelve	14	1.1	475	10.2
Race/Ethnicity				
Asian	0	0.0	4	0.1
African American	655	51.7	1,673	35.9
Hispanic	576	45.4	2,894	62.1
Native American	3	0.2	10	0.2
Two or More Races	19	1.5	31	0.7
White	15	1.2	47	1.0
Sex				
Female	634	50.0	2,149	46.1
Male	634	50.0	2,510	53.9
Special Student Populations				
English Learner	406	32.0	2,244	48.2
Special Education	94	7.4	643	13.8
Eco Dis	1,202	94.8	4,254	91.3

Source: Served students received from City Year on 04/13/20. District PEIMS demographic file dated 10/31/19.

Note: Eco Dis = economically disadvantaged. Totals may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding. Includes students enrolled on the 2019-20 PEIMS snapshot date.

How did the attendance rates of students served by City Year Dallas compare to the rates of other students at the same campuses?

Methodology

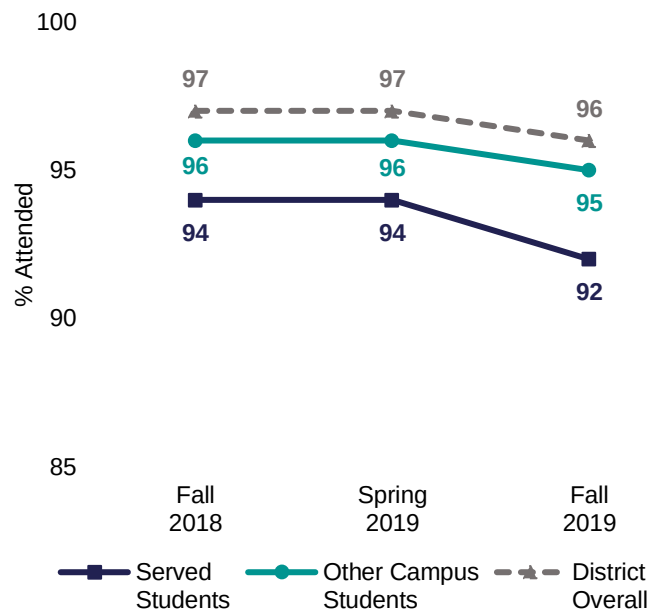
For grade-two through grade-twelve students enrolled in the Dallas ISD during fall 2019, the evaluator compared the average percentage of enrolled days attended by students served by City Year Dallas, other students at the same campus, and the district overall for each semester at the elementary school and secondary school levels.

Results

City Year provided attendance coaching to 235 elementary school students in grade two through grade five during fall 2019. On average, these students received 3.4 hours of coaching. In 2018-19, attendance rates were lower for served students (94% both semesters) than for other students at the same campuses (96% both semesters) and the district overall (97% both semesters; Figure 1). This pattern continued during fall 2019; but attendance across

groups decreased. The percentage of days attended by students receiving attendance coaching dropped by two percentage points compared to one percentage point for other students at the same campuses and the district overall.

Figure 1: Fall 2018 through Fall 2019 Elementary School Attendance Rates

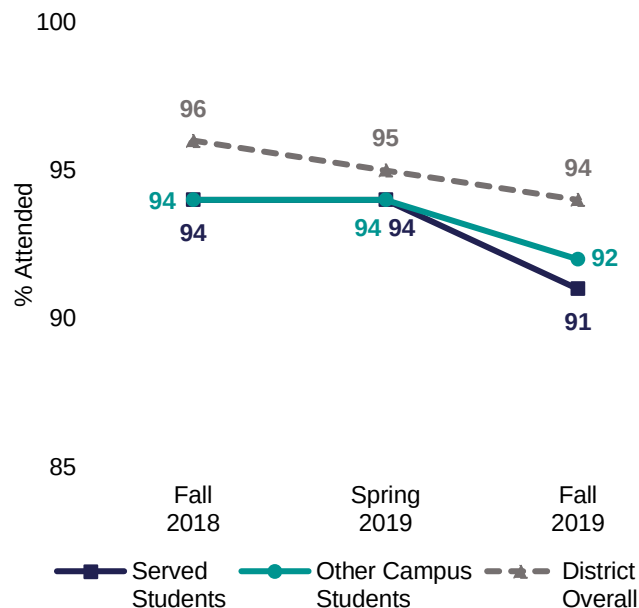


Source: Served students received from City Year on 04/13/20. District attendance files dated 06/04/19 (2018-19) and 01/24/20 (2019-20).

Note: Attendance support was provided during Fall 2019 based on attendance rates from the 2018-19 school year. These data include students in grade two through grade five who were enrolled in the Dallas ISD all three semesters.

At the secondary school level, City Year provided attendance coaching to 168 students in grade six through grade 12. These students received 2.6 hours of coaching, on average. Attendance remained consistent during the 2018-19 fall and spring semesters for served students (94%) and other students at the same campuses (94%; Figure 2). Overall district attendance decreased by one percentage point from fall to spring (96% to 95%) but was still higher than attendance at served campuses. During fall 2019, the percentage of days attended by students receiving attendance coaching dropped by three percentage points compared to two percentage points for other students at the same campuses. At the secondary level, in fall 2019 the district attendance rate (94%) was higher than that of other campus students (92%) and served students (91%).

Figure 2: Fall 2018 through Fall 2019 Secondary School Attendance Rates



Source: Served students received from City Year on 04/13/20. District attendance files dated 06/04/19 (2018-19) and 01/24/20 (2019-20).
Note: City Year attendance support was provided during Fall 2019 based on attendance rates from the 2018-19 school year. These data include students in grade six through grade 12 who were enrolled in the Dallas ISD all three semesters.

What were the SEL outcomes for students served by City Year?

Methodology

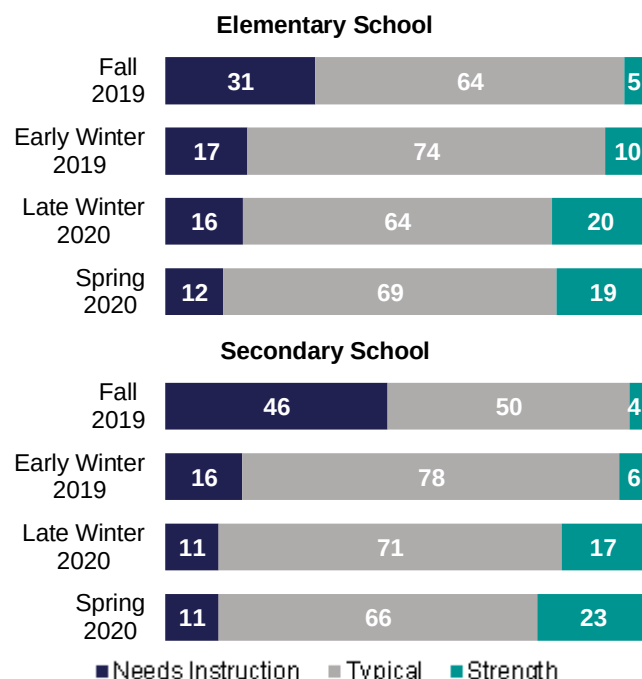
The evaluator received four ratings⁶ on the *Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA)* for served students from City Year Dallas on April 13, 2020. The *DESSA* is a measure of SEL that places student ratings into one of three social-emotional categories: needs instruction (students scoring 40 or below), typical (students scoring 41-59), and strength (students scoring 60 and above; Lebuffe, Shapiro, & Naglieri, 2009). For students with *DESSA* ratings at each timepoint, the evaluator conducted crosstab analyses to determine the percentage of students at each social-emotional category across timepoints by campus level (elementary school and secondary school).

Results

City Year provided social-emotional learning support to 527 elementary students and 384 secondary students during the 2019-20 school year. On average, elementary students received 3.6 hours of support and secondary students received 2.1 hours of support. At the elementary level, 31 percent of supported students received ratings of needs instruction after the first *DESSA* administration; after the fourth *DESSA* administration, 12 percent received the needs instruction rating (Figure 3). Similarly, the percentage

of SEL-supported secondary students receiving a needs instruction rating decreased from 46 percent after the first administration to 11 percent after the fourth administration.

Figure 3: 2019-20 Percentage of *DESSA* Ratings by Category and Campus Level for Students Served by City Year Dallas by Administration Period



Source: *DESSA* ratings received from City Year Dallas on 04/13/20.
Note: Students must have received a rating during all rating periods for inclusion in analyses. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

What other services were provided by City Year during the 2019-20 school year?

In addition to attendance coaching and SEL support, City Year provided literacy coaching, mathematics coaching, afterschool enrichment, and afterschool homework help to elementary and secondary students (Table 3). City Year staff members worked with district elementary school teachers to provide 255 students with literacy support (mean hours = 13.1) and 237 students with mathematics support (mean hours = 14.7). At the secondary level, City Year staff members provided 208 students with literacy support (mean hours = 9.4) and 129 students with mathematics support (mean hours = 10.9). Typically, these services are examined in relation to *STAAR* scores; however, those data were unavailable in 2019-20.

⁶ Rating periods were fall 2019, early winter 2019, late winter 2020, and spring 2020.

Table 3: 2019-20 Number of Students Served and Average Hours of Support by Intervention

Intervention	N	Mean Hours Received
Elementary School		
Attendance Coaching	235	3.4
SEL Support	527	3.6
Literacy Support	255	13.1
Mathematics Support	237	14.7
Afterschool Enrichment	178	5.0
Afterschool Homework	145	3.1
Secondary School		
Attendance Coaching	168	2.6
SEL Support	384	2.1
Literacy Support	208	9.4
Mathematics Support	129	10.9
Afterschool Enrichment	115	1.9
Afterschool Homework	53	1.9

Source: Served students received from City Year on 04/13/20.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to provide SEL support to district students. The percentages of elementary school and secondary school students initially rated as needs instruction on the DESSA decreased by 19 percentage points and 35 percentage points, respectively, during the 2019-20 school year. This directly indicated SEL growth among served students.

Consider increasing the amount of attendance coaching delivered to individual students. The percentages of days attended dropped more from the previous school year for students receiving attendance coaching than for other students at the same campuses. An increase in time spent coaching attendance may lessen decreases in attendance for these students.

REFERENCES

- Featherston, L. (2019). 2018-19 Evaluation of The City Year Program. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.
- LeBuffe, P., Shapiro, V., & Naglieri, J. (2009). *Devereux student strengths assessment*. Lewisville, NC: Kaplan.

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