

Evaluation of the Kalamazoo Promise as a Catalyst for Systemic Change

Michigan School Testing Conference

February 2009

Gary Miron

Jeffrey N. Jones

Allison J. Kelaher Young

Western Michigan University

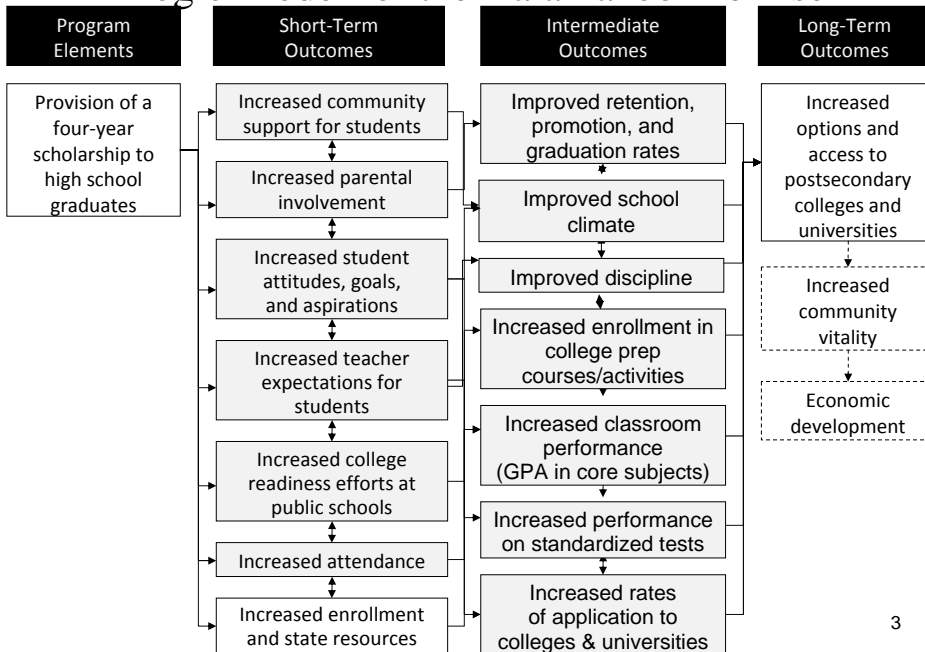
1

Goals and Objectives

- No stated goals or objectives [tabula rasa].
- Based on education reform theory and based on our past experience, we conceived the Promise as a means of inducing systemic change in the K-12 school system.
- Systemic initiatives are a new generation of efforts to reform schools, build synergy, and establish change by affecting multiple components or structures of the system at the same time.
- The Kalamazoo Promise resulted in a unified focus on improved academic performance and readiness for college.

2

Logic Model for the Kalamazoo Promise



3

Design & Data Collection Activities

- Our evaluation design is based on a theory driven evaluation approach.
- Data collection activities include:
 - High school student survey
 - Teacher survey
 - Key informant interviews
 - Review of available documents and materials
 - Secondary sources of school indicators, such as test data and enrollment figures (residual gains analysis)

4

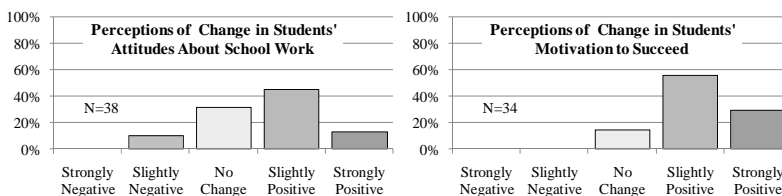
Short Term Outcomes – Community Response and Parental Involvement

- Expected sense of ownership.
- Teachers report more attendance at teacher-parent conferences.
- “More support from community organizations is provided to students and families.” Strong overall community response, but some of this “response” is written and spoken about, but not yet implemented.
- Much has been done by community groups, but all agree that much more still needs to be done to support students and families in poverty.

5

Short Term Outcome – Student Goals and Aspirations

- Students and KPS employees report that student now have more positive attitudes toward school work, higher aspirations, and increased levels of motivation.



6

Short Term Outcome – Student Goals and Aspirations

- **Constructing goals in context:**
 - I have always like pulled to go to college, but like I want to go even more now that I have the opportunity to use the Promise. (Female student, 14)
 - More people are interested seeing that this will be easier for them to go now. (Male student, 15)
- **Actions toward goal attainment:**
 - “...now that they have promise, now they work harder and are more successful.” (Female student, 14)
 - “I saw more people dedicated in school...more than it was before.” (Female student, 17)

7

Short Term Outcome – Student Goals and Aspirations

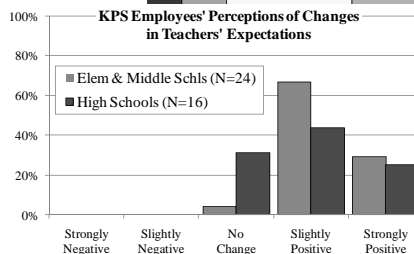
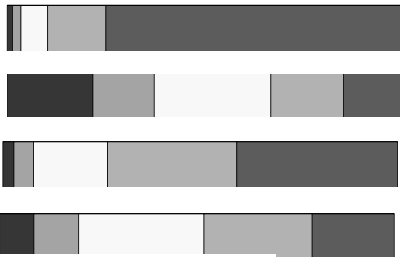
- **Educator perceptions:**
 - Affective and behavioral change
 - Goals and volitional strategies
 - A new educational landscape
 - Career goals

8

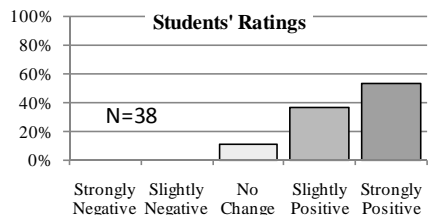
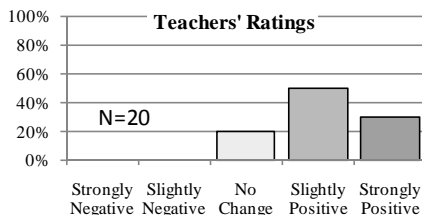
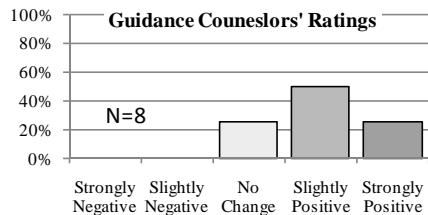
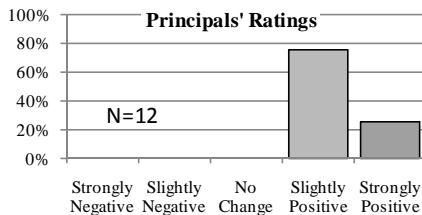
Short Term Outcomes – Increased Student Aspirations and Teacher Expectations

2007 High School Survey

- “Going to college is important to my future.”
- “I work harder in school now because I know that the Promise will pay for college.”
- “My teachers have high expectations of me in class.”
- “Teachers expect more from students.”



Short Term Outcomes- Teacher Expectations



Short Term Outcomes- Teacher Expectations

- Changes in expectations:
 - “It told us people have faith in the system.”
 - “It gave us hope to pass on to students.”
- Communicating expectations:
 - “It’s about getting them through college, not just to college.”
- Impact of expectations:
 - “Now there’s greater morale...I feel much more empowered.”
 - “Like they’re a lot more strict on stuff now.” (9th grade student)

11

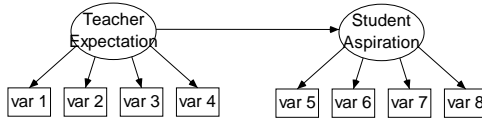
Short Term Outcomes- Teacher Expectations

- Differences in teacher expectations:
 - Gender
 - Free/reduced lunch
 - Ethnicity
 - Parental education
 - Student employment
 - Student grades
 - Grade level
 - Promise awareness

12

Short Term Outcomes- Teacher Expectations

- Teacher expectations for student success and the other evaluation outcomes



- Student aspirations .56*
- Academic orientation .08*
- Behavior .01
- College prep .44*
- Peer relations .16*
- Teacher relations .47*

13

Short Term Outcome – Increased College Prep, Attendance, and Enrollment

- “College readiness” and new course in winter 2008.
- Of high school students, 35% agreed or strongly agreed that their attendance had improved since the Promise announcement.
- 1,211 new students added since the announcement of the Promise. This is equivalent to close to \$10 million dollars in state aid annually.
- 12.1% increase in enrollment since announcement of the Promise. 2008-09 head count increased another 2%.
- Millage has passed, schools are more full, and two new schools are being constructed.

14

Intermediate Outcomes – Improved Retention, Promotion, and Graduation Rates

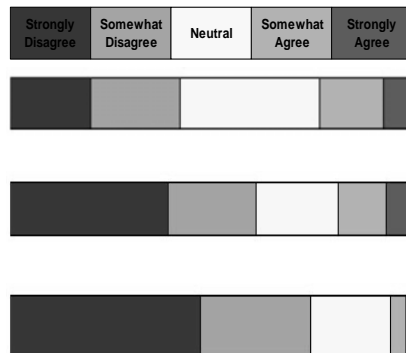
- High school enrollment up, especially among African American and Hispanic students.
- Graduation rate up 10% in 2007, up 30% for African Americans.
- In 2007, 50% more African-American males plan to use the Promise.
- Close to 80% of eligible students are using the Promise.

15

Intermediate Outcomes – Improved School Climate and Discipline

2008 High School Survey

- “School is a welcoming and friendly place.”
- “Students bully other students who get higher grades than they do.”
- “Students at this school are well-behaved even when the teachers are not watching them.”



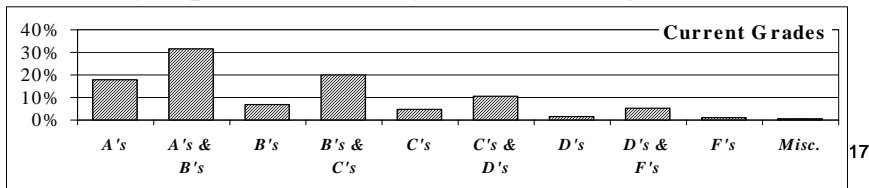
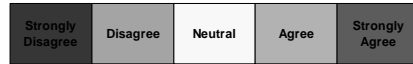
- More dynamic and noticeable change is occurring at elementary and middle schools. This should eventually affect high schools.

16

Intermediate Outcomes – Increased Enrollment in College Prep and Increased Classroom Performance

2007 High School Survey

- “I am enrolling in more college prep courses.”
- “Getting good grades is important to me.”
- “On my report cards this year, I *mostly* got:”



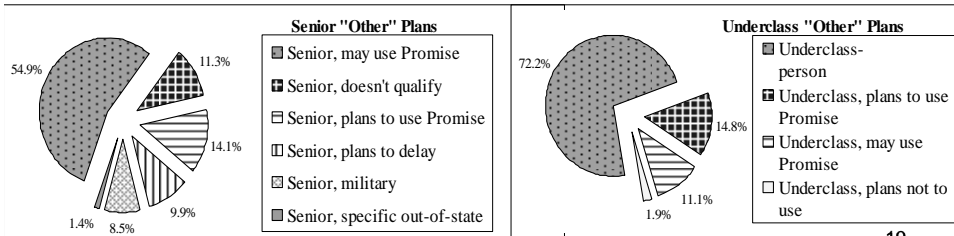
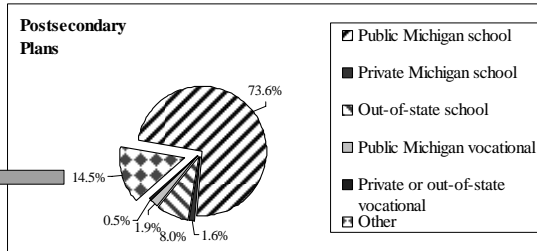
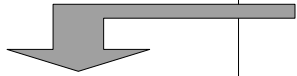
Intermediate Outcomes – Increased Test Scores

- The findings represent baseline results!
- Over the past five years, KPS aggregate results have been improving. At the same time, the rest of the state also has been improving at a similar pace.
- The elementary and middle schools are doing similarly or slightly worse than predicted.
- The two high schools are doing better than predicted.
- There are noticeable differences in results by school.
- In year after the Promise announcement, there was a small jump in results.

Intermediate Outcomes – Increased Application to College

2007 High school Survey

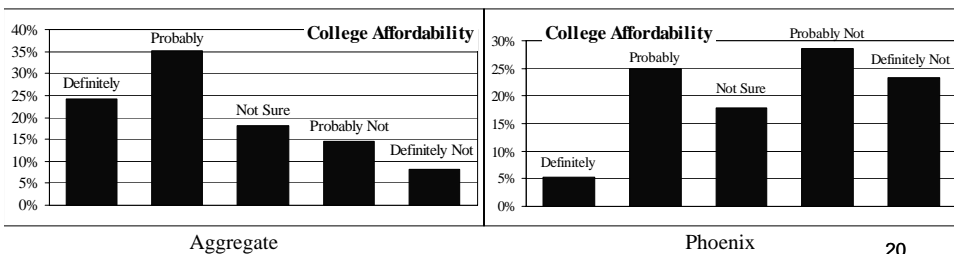
- Postsecondary plans (79.9%)



19

Long Term Outcome – Increased Access to Postsecondary Institutions

“Without the Kalamazoo Promise, do you think that you could afford to attend a public 4-year college using financial aid, scholarships, and your family’s resources?” (2007)

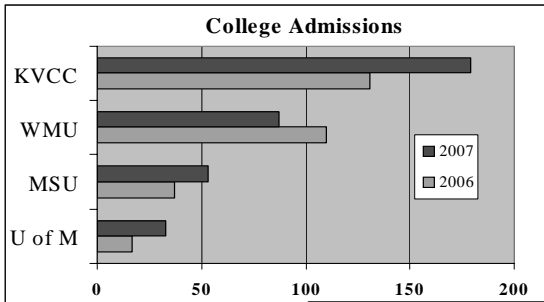


Aggregate

Phoenix

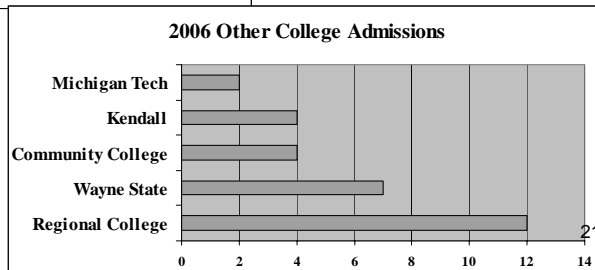
20

Access to Postsecondary Institutions continued



Class of 2006 had an 89% acceptance rate to postsecondary institutions.

Overall, 80% of eligible students are using the Promise.



Possible Unanticipated Outcomes

- Student stress about disappointing community
- Community burn-out
- Teacher exhaustion
- District overwhelmed by volunteers
- Results at high school level initially drop due to more students remaining in school who might otherwise have dropped out (i.e., as attainment rates increase, outcome indicators for the upper grades may worsen)

Future Directions

- School climate and concerns about bullying and behavioral issues at some schools
- Gap in information needs for some students

23

Project Resources and Web Sites

<http://www.kalamazoopromise.com>

<http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/promise>

- We will soon post additional working papers that examine changes in student aspirations and school climate.

24