



Report of the Impact of CAAP on Philadelphia High Schools, 2009-2010

The EducationWorks (EW) Classroom Academic Assistance Program (CAAP) placed AmeriCorps Members in 16 Philadelphia high schools and served almost 3500 high school students. Under the direction of classroom teachers, EducationWorks AmeriCorps members supported 9th grade students in Corrective Reading, Corrective Math, English, and Algebra classes. Members worked with students to bring them up to grade level through one-on-one tutoring, small group support, and general class work assistance. In addition to in-class assistance the EW CAAP members created book clubs at their high schools, mentored students, and recruited students to participate in other activities, such as a mural painting project. Finally, they served as guides to students as they developed support networks within the school and community.

In 2009-10, CAAP operated in the following schools:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| -John Bartram High School | -Abraham Lincoln High School |
| -Thomas Edison High School | -Olney East High School |
| -Ben Franklin High School | -Olney West High School |
| -Samuel Fels High School | -Roxborough High School |
| -Frankford High School | -South Philadelphia High School |
| -Horace Furness High School | -Strawberry Mansion High School |
| -Germantown High School | -University City High School |
| -Simon Gratz High School | -George Washington High School |

Summary of Findings

During the 2009-10 school year, report card grades, student surveys and teacher surveys were collected by EducationWorks to measure the effects of CAAP. Based on the triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative data, the CAAP members offered teachers and students a great deal of support both inside and outside of the classroom. Of the students who had a CAAP member in their Corrective Reading or Corrective Mathematics course, **80%** passed their respective Corrective courses. Additionally, over **two-thirds** of students who had Corrective Reading went on to pass their English I course.

Despite coming from some of the poorest performing high schools in the district, the majority of students who worked with CAAP members in their class reported trying to do their best in classes (**96%**) and reported caring about the grades they received in school (**95%**). Students were given individualized attention and help on the classroom assignments, projects, and homework. Over **90%** of students felt comfortable asking their CAAP member questions and over **90%** sought assistance from the CAAP members on either a classroom assignment or on their homework.

With the assistance of EW CAAP members, teachers were able to better manage their class and complete their lessons with fewer student disruptions. They described their CAAP members as “*very compatible to the classrooms, [providing] the students with a great learning environment, [bringing] a different point of view to topics, [and] [keeping the teacher] organized and focused.*” Additionally, teachers attributed almost all of the positive changes they saw in student behavior and student academic achievement to the work of CAAP members.

Overall, CAAP was an invaluable opportunity and benefit for teachers, students, and the CAAP members, as many CAAP members are ultimately interested in pursuing teaching as a full-time career.

Outcome Results

Data, including report card grades, student and teacher feedback, were collected from the CAAP high schools. Below, results from the various sources of data are presented.

Report Card Grades

Report card grades were collected by CAAP members from their respective school offices.¹ Corrective Reading and Corrective Mathematics grades were analyzed, as well as English 1 and Algebra 1 grades.

We were able to collect usable report card data for 1474 high school students. Of those that were in either Corrective Reading or Corrective Mathematics, 80% passed their respective course. Of those youth that passed their Corrective Reading or Corrective Mathematics course, 65% also passed their respective English I or Algebra I course. Table 1 provides more detailed information for grade changes in each specific subject.²

Table 1.

Improvements in English and Mathematics	
Percent of students who passed Corrective Reading	78%
Percent of students who improved or maintained passing grade in English I	69%
Percent of students who passed Corrective Reading and also passed English I	77%
Percent of students who passed Corrective Mathematics	81%
Percent of students who improved or maintained passing grade in Algebra I	49%
Percent of students who passed Corrective Math and also passed Algebra I	57%

Student Survey Feedback

Student feedback was gathered during the school year from surveys distributed in classrooms where the CAAP members served. Students were asked to respond to questions about their dedication to school and also to respond about the general assistance and specific support they received from CAAP Members. We surveyed 963 high school students. Results are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

¹ CAAP members were able to collect report cards from 9 of the high schools in which they served. CAAP members reported difficulty in getting report card grades from their high school offices for students they served at many of the CAAP high schools.

² We do not have comparable data for youth that did not have a CAAP AmeriCorps member in their class.

Table 2.

Students' School Relations					
	Always	Very Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I like attending school.	27%	21%	36%	8%	8%
		84%		16%	
I try to do my best in my classes.	46%	31%	20%	3%	1%
		96%		4%	
I complete all of my homework.	19%	24%	35%	16%	6%
		78%		22%	
I study for tests.	14%	18%	32%	19%	17%
		63%		37%	
I care about the grades I get in school.	69%	15%	12%	3%	2%
		95%		5%	
I get along with my teachers.	32%	28%	30%	7%	3%
		90%		10%	
I get along with my classmates.	33%	33%	26%	6%	2%
		92%		8%	

As presented in Table 2, although many students (95%) reported caring about the grades they received, a smaller proportion (78% and 63%, respectively) reported completing all of their homework and studying for tests. Thus, having well-trained CAAP members serving as caring adults in and out of the classrooms in order to support and motivate students is essential in improving and maintaining students' positive study habits. The teacher survey results in the next section further highlight the value of the support given by CAAP members.

Table 3.

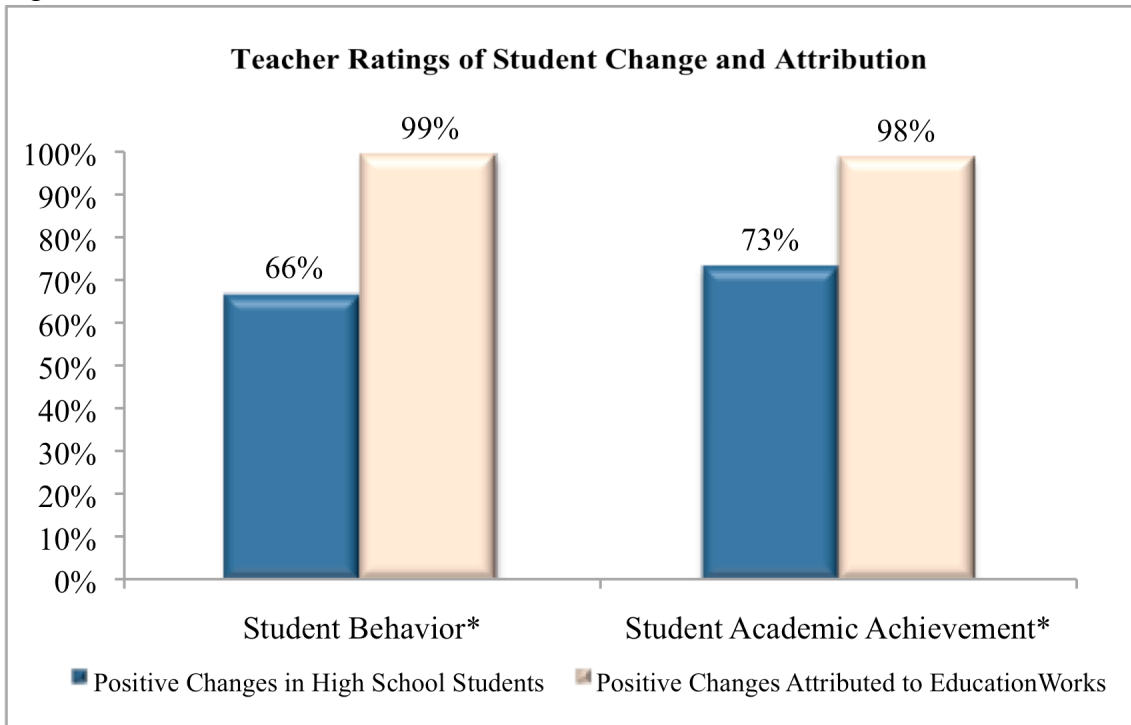
Student Responses Regarding CAAP AmeriCorps Members' Assistance and Support					
	Always	Very Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
If I have a question in class I feel comfortable asking the CAAP member.	31%	30%	29%	6%	3%
	91%			9%	
The CAAP member has helped me complete class assignments.	57%	20%	14%	4%	5%
	91%			9%	
The CAAP member gives me correct advice when I ask a question.	48%	24%	17%	5%	6%
	89%			11%	
The CAAP member has helped me with my homework.	51%	24%	16%	4%	5%
	91%			9%	
Having the CAAP member in this class is very helpful.	54%	19%	15%	4%	8%
	88%			12%	
I feel safe working with the CAAP member.	58%	21%	13%	3%	4%
	93%			7%	
The CAAP member is clear when explaining the class materials.	51%	25%	16%	3%	4%
	93%			7%	
I feel that the CAAP member cares about the students.	57%	20%	15%	4%	4%
	93%			7%	
I feel that the CAAP member cares about helping me with my work.	56%	22%	14%	3%	5%
	92%			8%	
If I have a problem, I feel comfortable talking to the CAAP member.	46%	20%	16%	8%	11%
	82%			18%	
The CAAP member has answered any questions I had about my classwork.	49%	20%	20%	4%	7%
	88%			12%	

Students reported feeling a general comfort and trust with the CAAP members (Table 3) and this led the students to seek out the assistance and advice of CAAP members (91% reporting feeling comfortable asking the CAAP member any questions). The majority of students reported understanding class material presented by the CAAP members and feeling that the CAAP members cared about helping them.

Teacher Evaluations

Teachers were given questionnaires at the end of the 2009-10 school year asking about the effect of having the CAAP members serving in their classrooms during the school year. Teachers filled out surveys on over 1400 students who interacted with CAAP members. Below (Figure 1) are the results of the questionnaires:

Figure 1.



*For student behavior and academic achievement, 12% and 8% of teachers, respectively, responded “no improvement was needed.” These percentages are not included in the chart.

What is overwhelming in Figure 1 is that teachers attributed their students’ improvement in behavior and academic achievement almost completely to the work of the EducationWorks CAAP members. Teachers are reporting the direct effect they observed with their students and are not just attributing improvement to their own pedagogical strategies but to the assistance and support of EducationWorks CAAP members.

Teachers were also asked to describe how EW CAAP members had assisted them during the school year (Table 4). A total of 66 teachers responded to the open-ended questions of the survey. Every teacher commented positively on the assistance they received in the classroom. Four types of assistance were described.

Table 4.

Teacher Responses on EW CAAP Member Assistance	
Individualized or small group assistance	35%
Classroom/teaching assistance	34%
Tutoring/homework help	18%
Behavior/classroom management	13%

In the majority of responses, teachers commented on how they viewed members as colleagues who helped them carry out their duties. Specific teacher comments included:

I found that unlike previous experiences with other AmeriCorps groups, the EducationWorks members were very compatible to the classrooms to which they were assigned. This allowed them to help out with both academic and social content.

[The CAAP member] has worked in 2 classes. Sometimes we split the class and he took a small group/one student out of the room; sometimes [he] worked with individual students inside the room; sometimes we both worked with the entire class.

[The CAAP member] has come to my classroom for 5th period daily. He comes in and usually has a line of students waiting, wanting to work with him.

[The CAAP member] aided in the classroom and helped to provide the students with a great learning environment.

[The CAAP member] brought a different point of view to topics and assisted students in class.

[The CAAP member] has assisted me by helping students with their assignments, by co-teaching the class with me, and by directing students' behavior.

EducationWorks helped me with testing, grading, and student conduct.

With the education climate changing so much, more paperwork is given to the teacher, [therefore,] it is a help to have [the CAAP members] assist in the delivery of lessons.

[The CAAP member] has worked with students who were disruptive in my class and has helped me mark students' workbooks and tests.

[The CAAP member worked] with students that fell behind due to suspension or absences, provided added support in classroom, worked with small groups, and kept me organized and focused.

It allowed me to pull out students to get one on one math help [and] assist student with projects.

Finally, teachers were also asked to describe one student they thought was impacted the greatest by working with the CAAP member. Teachers described the youth's behavior from the beginning of the school year, what change they saw occur in that student and how they believe EW CAAP contributed to this change. Below are six individual student descriptions:

CASE 1: Fels High School

Description of Student

[The student] has Asperger's [Syndrome]. At the beginning of the year, I was unable to provide the individual the attention he needs. He would run around the room, move in his seat, and stray easily.

Change Observed

[The CAAP member] worked with [the student] to complete assignments and connect them to his daily life. [The student] became way more involved in class, contributes more, and is much better at completing work.

EW CAAP Contribution

[CAAP] provided mentoring; gave direct help in class work.

CASE 2: George Washington High School

Description of Student

One student was verbally disruptive in the beginning of the year. He interrupted the teacher, harassed others, and used wildly inappropriate language. Academically, he struggled with long division, fractions and decimals.

Change Observed

[The student] is now calmer and quieter in class. He interrupts less and is able to focus more on his work. [He] has also made great strides in math and can comfortably work with decimals and percents.

EW CAAP Contribution

[The CAAP member] worked a lot with [the student], especially to improve his behavior. [The member] held one-on-one meetings with [the student] in the hallway and related to him on a more personal level by playing basketball with him.

CASE 3: Olney East High School

Description of Student

Our EW [CAAP member] worked with a student who was apathetic, disinterested, and uninspired at the beginning of the year.

Change Observed

Our EW [CAAP member] got the student to stay awake and keep focused. She helped him take more pride in his work and to complete what he started.

EW CAAP Contribution

Our EW [CAAP member] was present when the teacher could not be and provided personal support. She was an important factor in his academic and behavioral improvement.

CASE 4: Edison High School

Description of Student

[The] student was always late to class, never completed his work, and was very quiet towards [his] teachers and peers.

Change Observed

Once [the CAAP member] worked one on one with this student, he began to improve. He became more confident in himself. He began to do his work and was not afraid to ask for help.

EW CAAP Contribution

[The CAAP member] gave the student one-on-one attention. She worked with him on his workbook, helped him to achieve the right responses to questions, and allowed him to see the capability in himself.

CASE 5: Fels High School

Description of Student

I have one student who struggled in an environment that was too large. She was a behavior problem, failure risk, poor attitude, cut class, etc. I assigned her to [the CAAP member] one day to make up work and it was a complete 180. She now was been performing well in all environments.

Change Observed

As just stated, she did a complete 180. She is now interacting peacefully, helping teach the class. Her grades have risen significantly.

EW CAAP Contribution

[The CAAP member] welcomed this problem child and eased her into this 29:1 student to teacher ratio class. She performed extremely well thereafter and has become more manageable. The one-on-one while in the large class assistance transitioned her into the full classroom environment.

CASE 6: George Washington High School

Description of Student

The student was very disruptive. He called out, displayed many off-task behaviors and disrupted the flow of the lesson.

Change Observed

The student's behavior changed thanks to [the CAAP member] from EW. We were able to get [the student] to stay on task, to complete class work and stop calling out. [The student] does not disrupt the class at all.

EW CAAP Contribution

[The CAAP member] was able to model and work directly with SR. He set guidelines and let [the student] know what is good behavior. This help was invaluable for a classroom teacher in Philadelphia public schools.

Conclusion

Based on all of the qualitative and quantitative data, it can be concluded that the CAAP members offered teachers and students a great deal of support both inside and outside of the classroom. Students were given individualized attention and help on the classroom assignments, projects, and homework. Students felt comfortable asking CAAP members questions and seek assistance from them. Teachers were able to better manage their classes and complete their lessons with fewer student disruptions. CAAP was an invaluable opportunity and benefit for teachers, students, and the CAAP members, as many CAAP members are ultimately interested in becoming teachers and often pursue careers in education, themselves.