



# LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORT: THE RELATION OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL INTERVENTION WITH POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION

## OVERVIEW

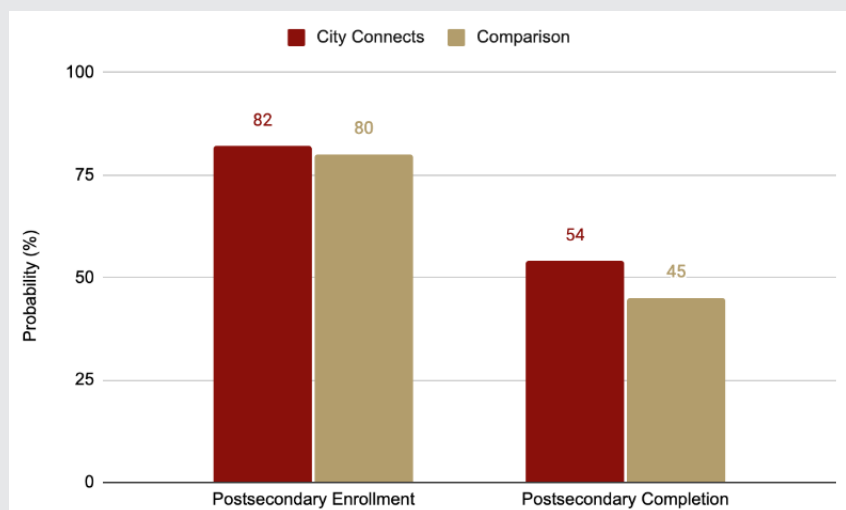
Students who received the City Connects integrated student support (ISS) intervention during elementary school were more likely to enroll in and complete postsecondary education.

### KEY FINDINGS

Students who experienced City Connects in elementary school have an estimated 82% probability of enrolling in college, compared to an estimated 80% probability for students who never received the intervention. In other words, an additional two of every 100 high school graduates who experienced City Connects enrolled in postsecondary education, when compared to a similar group of students who did not receive the intervention.

Students who experienced City Connects also have an estimated 54% probability of completing their postsecondary education in four years, contingent on enrollment. The corresponding estimated probability for students who never received the intervention is 45%. In other words, for every 100 students who enrolled in postsecondary education, the group of students who attended City Connects schools would have an additional nine students who would complete their degrees in four years.

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## WHAT WAS STUDIED?

The study examines a long-term effect of being exposed to the City Connects model of integrated student support in elementary schools. More specifically, the study examined the likelihood that students who attended these elementary schools and received the City Connects intervention would go on to enroll in and complete postsecondary education.



## WHY WAS IT STUDIED?

Approximately 65% of the jobs in the US require postsecondary education [1]. More generally, postsecondary education is positively associated with labor market outcomes such as full-time employment [2] and lifetime earnings [3]. The benefits of postsecondary education extend far beyond the labor market to include greater chances of social mobility [4], health insurance coverage [3], greater participation in retirement plans, less reliance on public assistance, and greater exercise, voting, and volunteering [5].

Students from low socioeconomic status households ([6]; [4]; [2]; [7]; [8]) as well as African-American and Hispanic students ([5]; [2]; [8], [9]; [10]), are less likely to enroll in and complete postsecondary education. Both in-school and out-of-school factors contribute to education disparities and eventually lead to disparities in postsecondary outcomes. For example, students from low-income households more often have limited school resources [11]. Students of color may face racial biases in school and lowered teacher expectations ([12]; [13]; [14]; [15]). Out-of-school stressors, including food insecurity and lack of quality childcare ([16]; [17]) negatively influence students' readiness to learn and school achievement [18]. All of these factors lead to a lower educational attainment which, in turn, leads to lower chances of upward income mobility.

Mitigation and support efforts at early ages might be more effective than intervening once the postsecondary education disparities are realized. One way to provide such support is via ISS, which systematically addresses comprehensive student needs. Exposure to the ISS at an early age could translate into better long-term outcomes because, unlike other forms of support, ISS addresses multiple developmental domains. City Connects ISS intervention tailors its support to every child individually by conducting an annual review of every student's strengths and needs. This tailored approach helps to ensure that the right support is provided at the right time, changing students' developmental and learning environments. ISS could also help to promote sustaining educational environments for its participants even when they stop receiving the intervention. Motivated by these theoretical mechanisms, this study sheds light on the relationship between ISS and students' postsecondary outcomes and how ISS compares to some of the alternative ways of promoting postsecondary education (e.g., college-preparatory charter schools). The study's implications could be valuable for education policymakers, district and school leaders, and practitioners who want to ensure that marginalized students can also take advantage of postsecondary opportunities.

## HOW WAS IT STUDIED?

The study focuses on a sample of students from a large, urban, public school district and utilizes the rich data from the National Student Clearinghouse that tracks student educational outcomes after high school graduation. The study compares students who were exposed to City Connects intervention during their elementary school grades to students who did not experience City Connects intervention during the same grade levels. Due to the fact that students are not assigned to the schools at random, the relevance of the comparison is achieved via propensity score weighting. Propensity score weighting is a widely-used technique in applied empirical research that alleviates concerns for the selection bias by applying a weighting scheme (based on observable characteristics) that balances the baseline covariates, thus making the two groups (students from City Connects and non-City Connects schools) comparable.



## CONCLUSION

Findings demonstrate positive association between ISS and postsecondary outcomes among historically underserved students that is significant both statistically and in magnitude, suggesting that ISS might be one approach to reduce disparities in postsecondary outcomes. Findings indicate that City Connects may more effectively support students' postsecondary success than college-preparatory charter schools serving similar student populations that may boost postsecondary enrollment but not persistence [1], or programs closer to the high school-college transition that show mixed results [2,3,4,5,6].

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