

CLOSING THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP:

Leveraging City Year and National Service as a New Human Capital Strategy to Transform Low-Performing Schools



A Report by
City Year, Inc.

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LETTER FROM

Joe Echevarria Chief Executive Officer, Deloitte LLP

In our nation's inner city schools, half of the students do not graduate and even fewer attend post-secondary schools. As a result, we continue to fall behind other countries in the percentage of students who obtain a college degree. By 2020, it is projected that 123 million high-skill/high-wage jobs will be available, but only 50 million workers will be qualified to fill them.

Students in today's low-performing schools need more help and I'm pleased to report that City Year's model is showing positive results. Young adults, who commit to a year of national service, can decrease that talent deficit in inner city schools and significantly reduce the number of students off track to graduate, which nears 50 percent in some areas. When City Year infuses passionate, dedicated and talented young people into schools for a year, more students are showing up to school and improving their academic performance. Scaling efforts like City Year's model has the potential to be the disruptive innovation that schools need.

The business community has a collective responsibility to invest in solutions that turn around our lowest performing schools, which are responsible for 80% of the nation's drop outs. It will result in a win for our communities, our future workforce, our businesses and our nation overall.

As the largest professional services organization focused on solving our clients' most complex problems daily, we know first-hand that when the best people tackle the most difficult challenges everyone wins. It is that philosophy that City Year applies to the nation's high school dropout crisis and we hope that this thought piece will generate more awareness on the potential solutions.

Join me and our Deloitte professionals by supporting organizations like City Year. Together we make America stronger.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joe Echevarria". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joe" being more prominent and the last name "Echevarria" following in a similar style.

Joe Echevarria
Chief Executive Officer, Deloitte LLP

FOREWORD

By Robert Balfanz with Johns Hopkins University and
Justin Cohen with Mass Insight

By 2018, two-thirds of the nation's jobs will require at least some form of post-secondary education, and estimates indicate that the nation will be 3 million college degrees short. In order to be competitive in today's global economy and combat the troubling trends produced by the dropout crisis, research has shown that America will need to achieve a 90 percent high school graduation rate (currently at 75.5 percent), which will require 600,000 more high school graduates each year.

Mass Insight's *The Turnaround Challenge*, and *Building a Grad Nation* authored by Civic Enterprises and the Everyone Graduates Center, demonstrate that the only way to achieve this goal is to focus on turning around our nation's lowest performing schools – the worst performing five percent of schools in each state, the high schools with less than a 60 percent graduation rate and their feeder middle schools. We know which evidence-based practices must be implemented and which students are most at risk of dropping out as early as elementary school – those struggling in attendance, behavior or course performance.

Our work with schools and districts across the country has shown us that reform is possible in our nation's lowest performing schools, but a unique approach is required – one that incorporates district and school investment as well as lead turnaround partners that are deeply embedded in the school to oversee and integrate the work of other, supporting organizations.

Transforming these schools requires the right mix of strong school leadership, skilled educators trained to analyze data and adjust instruction according to student performance, and the additional full-time people power to help teachers deliver effective, research-based interventions. When thoughtfully combined, these ingredients provide the holistic educational supports needed to meet the intensity of student needs, reform struggling schools and prepare students to succeed in the 21st Century.

Bringing all of these ingredients together has proved challenging, resulting in few examples of successful school turnaround efforts to date. In "Closing the Implementation Gap: Leveraging City Year and National Service as a New Human Capital Strategy to Transform Low-Performing Schools," City Year President Jim Balfanz and former Milwaukee Public Schools Superintendent William Andrekopoulos leverage their experience, along with

research conducted by leaders in the field, to examine how to transcend a history of failed school transformation efforts by leveraging a new human capital solution that enables schools to rethink how they collaborate with external partners. The authors illuminate an often overlooked challenge to successful, sustainable school reform – the implementation gap. Defined as the gap that results when school staff members' time and school resources are not sufficient to meet the intensity of student need, this implementation gap prevents schools from implementing the elements required to make drastic, rather than incremental, changes in our nation's lowest performing schools.

The authors' proposed solution to addressing the implementation gap is for districts and schools to develop partnerships with high-quality external organizations that leverage AmeriCorps – a national service program that engages adults of all ages and backgrounds in meaningful service opportunities to address critical needs. AmeriCorps members provide schools with the additional human capital and expertise needed to implement comprehensive, sustainable school reforms that address the multiple issues contributing to poor school performance.¹ These partnerships are most successful when a lead partner is present and able to manage supporting partners through an integrated and highly coordinated approach, which ensures schools have the strong leaders, data driven educators and additional human capital needed to implement proven reforms. All partners must have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and be able to implement their models with fidelity.² In turn, these partners are held accountable for delivering the reform strategies they have committed to and helping schools to meet students' unique needs.

In this timely paper, the authors shine a light on the implementation gap that is halting school reform efforts nationwide. School, district, state and federal leaders should read this paper to learn how partner organizations and AmeriCorps members can be leveraged to implement the reforms that schools once only dreamed were possible. This paper is an important addition to the national discussion on how to reform our nation's most challenged schools, enabling all students, regardless of zip code, to meet their full potential.



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As a public-private partnership, City Year relies on its many individual and corporate partners to support our work keeping students in school and on track to high school graduation and post-secondary success. In particular we want to recognize the unique role that our National Leadership Sponsors, ARAMARK, Bank of America, Cisco, Comcast, CSX, Deloitte, Pepsi and Walmart, play in supporting the work of our corps and staff across the country.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is the Implementation Gap?

There is hope in the fight to reform our nation's struggling schools and end the dropout crisis. We know which schools are most in need of reform and which practices have the greatest impact on student achievement. However, there is a gap – an implementation gap – that results when school staff members' time and school resources are not sufficient to meet the intensity of students' needs at the required scale. The implementation gap results from an outdated school structure. The American public school model was designed at the dawn of the 20th century in response to an emerging industrial labor market that demanded a more rigid school design, assessment system and administrative structure.³ This one-size-fits-all school design was never intended to meet each student's unique needs. However, a generation ago that was accepted because students without a high school diploma could secure a job that would sustain a reasonable standard of living.

Today, that is not the case. Due to globalization and advances in technology, the majority of jobs now require at least some form of post-secondary education. The higher level of education required for employment means that young people who do not graduate from high school have long odds of earning an income that would allow them to support themselves or a family. Right now, more than one million students, or 25% of all young people, do not graduate from high school.⁴ This means that they will earn approximately \$130,000 and \$1 million less than high school and college graduates, respectively over the course of their lifetimes.⁵ The situation is even bleaker for students of color, with approximately 40 percent of African American and Hispanic youth not graduating from high school and experiencing increased rates of incarceration.⁶

Over the course of their lifetimes, out of school, out of work youth are ultimately projected to cost America \$1.6 trillion in increased social service costs and lost earnings.⁷

Furthermore, according to a recent report published by the Council on Foreign Relations, 63 percent of science, aerospace and defense firms report a chronic shortage of qualified workers, and only 25 percent of U.S. citizens, ages 17 to 24, qualify for military service due to a lack of education or possession of a criminal record, threatening the future viability of our national security infrastructure.⁸

Substantive gains in our national high school graduation rate can only be accomplished by making the smart investments required to turn around our nation's lowest performing schools – the five percent of schools with the poorest performance in each state and secondary schools with graduation rates at or below 60 percent.⁹ Research has shown that effective teaching is the most critical element for student success. However, even a skilled teacher would find it difficult to meet each student's unique needs in an environment where more than half of the students struggle to overcome the challenges associated with intergenerational poverty and require more than a great lesson every day.

Providing every student with the evidence-based support he or she needs to reach his or her full potential requires a fundamentally different school design, one that is infused with extra people power and a culture of high expectations.

Addressing the Implementation Gap: City Year and National Service as a New Human Capital Strategy

A disruptive innovation, City Year AmeriCorps members are helping to evolve America's school structure by providing teachers and school leaders with the additional human capital they need to effectively meet students' needs in the context of a personalized learning environment.

There is a growing pool of highly educated young people who are inclined towards the social and education sectors as demonstrated by a national survey of college students by Universum.¹⁰ National service represents a powerful vehicle for attracting this diverse talent to address some of America's most pressing needs at a low cost. For only a small living stipend, AmeriCorps members work long hours in

service to their country. In return, this experience provides these young people with a rich leadership development opportunity that they use to propel themselves into full-time careers or additional education while continuing along their path of active citizenship. Organizations leveraging AmeriCorps members bring nearly one billion additional private and philanthropic dollars into the communities they serve and members produce three dollars' worth of services for each federal dollar invested, yielding a return on investment of four to one.¹¹ When compared to many external direct student support providers, AmeriCorps

members provide three times the number of hours of service for the same cost.¹²

City Year is one of the fastest growing nonprofits in the country with a national footprint and infrastructure focused on addressing the nation's graduation crisis. City Year prepares its more than 2,000 national service members, who are "near-peer" or close in age to the students they serve, to address the implementation gap by providing the full-time and holistic student and school supports that are needed to keep students on track to high school graduation. Currently working with 28 school

districts and nearly 200 schools in 24 U.S. cities, City Year collaborates with district leaders to identify high schools with the highest dropout rates and the middle and elementary schools that feed into those high schools that would most benefit from corps members. Once schools are selected, City Year places diverse teams of 8 to 20 highly trained AmeriCorps members (corps members) in these schools to implement its research-based Whole School Whole Child model (WSWC). This model is designed to address the early warning indicators shown to identify students at risk of dropping out – low attendance, poor behavior and course failure in English or math. City Year corps members, who are selected through a competitive application process, are in school before the first bell rings and do not depart until after the last student leaves. Corps members receive comprehensive training on how to implement rigorous strategies, such as attendance coaching, small-group and high-intensity one-on-one tutoring, and social-emotional learning, and can help teachers reach the often hundreds of off-track students in a given school who require extra support, while enabling the necessary school-wide reforms to affect dramatic change.



Over the past 18 months, my team and I have been working with City Year to build a strategic partnership that will integrate City Year as part of our school turnaround strategy. As powerful role models and near peer performance coaches, we see City Year corps members as a strong partner in improving student achievement and serving our families.

– Superintendent Tom Boasberg
Denver Public Schools

Diplomas Now: A Powerful Design for Chronically Low-Performing Schools

City Year's work with districts and schools has revealed that the persistently lowest performing schools – those that some would consider beyond repair – require a unique approach: one that employs an evidence-based partnership model to completely redesign the school structure and culture. That is why the organization began working as part of a collaborative in 2008 that provides a comprehensive approach to school turnaround – Diplomas Now (DN). Through DN, City Year is partnering with Talent Development Secondary of Johns Hopkins University and Communities In Schools to combine three complementary and evidence-based models. DN leverages each organization's expertise to put in place the necessary strategy and in-school resources to fundamentally reform struggling schools, demonstrating that when the right partnership model is implemented as part of a coordinated and comprehensive school reform strategy, big change is possible.

In August 2010, Diplomas Now was selected as a federal Department of Education Investing in Innovation (i3) award recipient, which made it the only national secondary school turnaround model to win an i3 award. As a part of the i3 grant, Diplomas Now is partnering with MDRC, a nonprofit and non-partisan research organization, and its partner, ICF International, to conduct the largest national research study on comprehensive whole school improvement combining student supports and an early warning system.

Lessons for Practice

By partnering with schools, districts, teachers and families nationwide to help students achieve their full potential, City Year has learned several important lessons for how to address the implementation gap and collectively improve student outcomes.

- Increasing demand for City Year as a core component of a district-wide turnaround strategy

has made expansive, transformational district and school partnerships even more important. To this end, City Year has formalized a school district relationship building process that includes activities such as assessing district priorities, articulating City Year's value proposition relative to these priorities, and ensuring the school conditions that maximize City Year's impact are in place.

DIPLOMAS NOW



- To significantly disrupt the status quo and elevate high school graduation and post-secondary attainment rates, City Year also recognizes that the business community has an essential role to play. The private sector must be engaged as partners by schools, nonprofits and community-based organizations to develop a workforce that is capable of meeting the demands of today's increasingly competitive economy.

- A key factor for optimizing City Year's impact at the school and city-wide level is to employ an evidence-based deployment model. In line with the core goals of the Civic Marshall Plan – a national campaign to end the

dropout crisis – City Year seeks to work in close partnership with school districts in each of its markets to identify matriculation patterns that link the lowest performing high schools with feeder elementary and middle schools.

- Over the next 10 years, more than half of America's teaching workforce is expected to retire. Informed by a deep understanding of the challenges in low-performing schools, City Year's alumni network (which will grow from 17,000 currently to 50,000 alumni by 2023) can serve as a teacher pipeline for high-need schools, ensuring the sustainability of the data-driven reforms they helped to implement as corps members. To effectively channel alumni toward serving as educators in urban schools and districts, City Year will continue to identify, develop and formalize partnerships with teacher residency/training programs.

Implications for Policy

Policymakers at the district, state and federal levels also have a critical role to play in filling the implementation gap. These decision makers have the power to provide struggling schools with the additional highly trained human capital needed to fill the implementation gap and accelerate school reform efforts. Policymakers also have a responsibility to hold schools and partner organizations accountable for improving student and school outcomes. Based on City Year's work with districts and schools across the country, we have identified five ways that policy makers can help to fill the implementation gap.

- First, under Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility, states can redirect Title I Part A funds previously set aside for school choice and supplemental educational services to support strategic partnerships with high-performing nonprofit and community-based organizations.
- Second, the Administration could designate certain Race to the Top funds for a special secondary school reform competition, which would require districts to partner with high-quality nonprofit and community-based organizations to implement early warning systems and evidence-based, comprehensive school reform models.
- Third, federal appropriators should maintain current funding for the School Improvement Grants program. City Year's on-the-ground experience has shown that School Improvement Grant dollars have the greatest impact on student performance when grantee districts and schools leverage funds to partner with external organizations to implement evidence-based, comprehensive school reform models. Appropriators should continue to fund the critical SIG program and encourage funds to be used to adopt comprehensive models.
- Fourth, through ESEA Reauthorization, Congress should designate Title I funding for direct student supports and school-wide interventions. Low-performing districts should be encouraged to partner with high-quality nonprofit and community based partners to ensure struggling schools have the resources and person power needed to provide critical, direct student supports and to implement proven reforms.
- Fifth, new initiatives that harness the assets of different departments could also help to fill the implementation gap. For example, the

Department of Education could partner with the Corporation for National and Community Service to combine school transformation efforts by creating a School Transformation Corps. Through the School Transformation Corps, AmeriCorps members across the country could serve with host organizations that have a demonstrated record of supervising and deploying corps members to schools to successfully and sustainably implement School Improvement Grant reforms.

In order to make dramatic, rather than incremental, improvements in our nation's lowest performing schools, we must work across sectors to close the implementation gap. Deploying City Year corps members to struggling schools to implement proven practices will not only help to address the implementation gap, but also to ignite substantive reforms. These reforms will propel students and schools to achieve greater success and set America on the path to continued economic prosperity and security in the 21st Century.







WHAT IS THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP?

Part of what exacerbates the educational achievement gap is the implementation gap, which continues to widen between well-resourced schools and communities, and schools that are serving students who are confronting the unique obstacles associated with intergenerational, concentrated poverty.¹³

Over the last two decades, numerous research studies have highlighted the importance of individualized learning opportunities for students.¹⁴ In high-poverty schools, there is a large concentration of students who require these personalized supports, making it increasingly difficult to meet each student's needs without an evolution in our school design. While schools were originally designed to provide additional services to only 15% of students, in an average high-poverty school, as many as 54% of students require additional support, such as tutoring and professional counseling, outside of their standard daily lesson.¹⁵ There is a gap – an implementation gap – between the individualized supports that students who are struggling with the distinct challenges of poverty require

and the time and resources school leaders and teachers have to help these students succeed.

As an example, imagine a teacher working in a high-poverty, low-performing middle school with 30 students in the classroom. Many days, five different students are absent; eight have received office referrals or detentions; five have been suspended; 20 are multiple grade levels behind in reading; and four require case managed supports. Now, imagine a principal with 30 classrooms just like this. Even the most skilled teachers, school counselors and principals would find it difficult to provide all of these struggling students with the necessary, individualized instructional and behavioral supports, leaving educators overwhelmed by the scale and intensity of student need.

The inability of our current school structure to meet each student's unique needs has severe ramifications for our national economy, security and global competitiveness. More than one million young Americans drop out of high school each year. Twenty-five percent of all young people,



Increasingly, we have the data available and the research in place to support student success. In other words, we know which children need supports and what interventions work.

– General Colin Powell

and approximately 40 percent of African American and Hispanic youth are not graduating from high school.¹⁶ This leads to severe economic consequences: high school dropouts earn approximately \$130,000 less than high school graduates and \$1 million less than college graduates over their lifetimes.¹⁷ Only 25 percent of U.S. citizens, ages 17 to 24, qualify for military service, due to a lack of education or possession of a criminal record, threatening our national security.¹⁸ And young people who drop out of high school are shut out of the American dream and face barriers to becoming informed, engaged and productive citizens able to contribute to America's growth and prosperity. Of the students who do graduate from high school, fewer than half of the students who go on to college are adequately prepared for the post-secondary curriculum. As a result, America has slipped to 15th among 34 OECD-ranked countries in college completion threatening our ability to compete with other nations.¹⁹

Providing school leaders and teachers with additional human capital support to effectively meet student needs is critical to ensuring that reforms are implemented with fidelity and that resources are appropriately leveraged to maximize school improvement and student outcomes.²⁰

Proven Strategies

There is reason for optimism among educators who work in low-income communities. A small, but growing number of high-poverty, high-performing schools are demonstrating that new strategies can generate positive results for struggling students. Over the past decade, improvements in data collection and dissemination have enabled

researchers to identify a collection of scalable evidence-based strategies that, when implemented with fidelity, lead to reform in low-performing schools and advances in student achievement.²¹ These practices, including early warning indicator and intervention systems, Response to Intervention, social-emotional learning and extending the school day, are included in many school improvement plans and are yielding positive results for a subset of schools. However, a large number of high-poverty schools lack the resources and person power needed to bring their improvement plans to life.²²

Early Warning Indicator and Intervention Systems

Research indicates that poor school attendance, poor student behavior that interferes with a student's ability to learn, and course failure in English or math are more valid predictors of whether a student will drop out of school than are social and economic indicators, such as family income and engagement. If a 6th grade student in a high-poverty school has even one of these indicators, he or she has less than a 20 percent chance of graduating from high school.²³

Early warning indicator and intervention systems (EWS) centralize data in a single location so that educators can frequently review this data, determine what interventions are needed to meet each student's unique needs, and monitor the effectiveness of the selected interventions. EWS empowers educators to quickly diagnose struggling students and monitor student progress, ensuring that the right students receive the right interventions at the right time.

Although a third of states have the longitudinal data needed to operate early warning indicator and intervention systems, the extent to which this data is being analyzed on a regular basis and used to improve the quality of instruction is unclear. This lack of clarity can be attributed to the limited person power, time and resources in schools to consistently review the requisite data and deliver the appropriate interventions.²⁴

Response to Intervention

Formerly reserved for use among special education teachers, Response to Intervention (RTI) is now viewed as a promising strategy for all educators to monitor students and make real-time adjustments to interventions.²⁵ The RTI framework includes three tiers of direct student support: Tier 1 – school-wide supports, Tier 2 – targeted extra help for struggling students and Tier 3 – intensive interventions for the most at-risk students (please see Figure 1 for an illustration of this structure). To ensure the successful implementation of RTI, a team of educators

must be devoted to frequently analyzing student data and delivering the requisite interventions. In many cases, students' needs are complex and require Tier 2 supports such as small group or one-on-one attention, which presents a challenge for educators and school leaders who are frequently juggling multiple tasks.

One area where the RTI framework can be particularly helpful is in addressing chronic absenteeism. Many low-performing schools struggle with chronic absenteeism. Using an RTI approach, educators would implement school-wide attendance incentives (Tier 1), individual student coaching and engagement (Tier 2) and specialized case management (Tier 3) to address the reasons behind students' absences and to improve student attendance. Implementing RTI effectively requires alignment among all of the adults in the school and the additional human capital needed to provide personalized attention to the students who most need it.

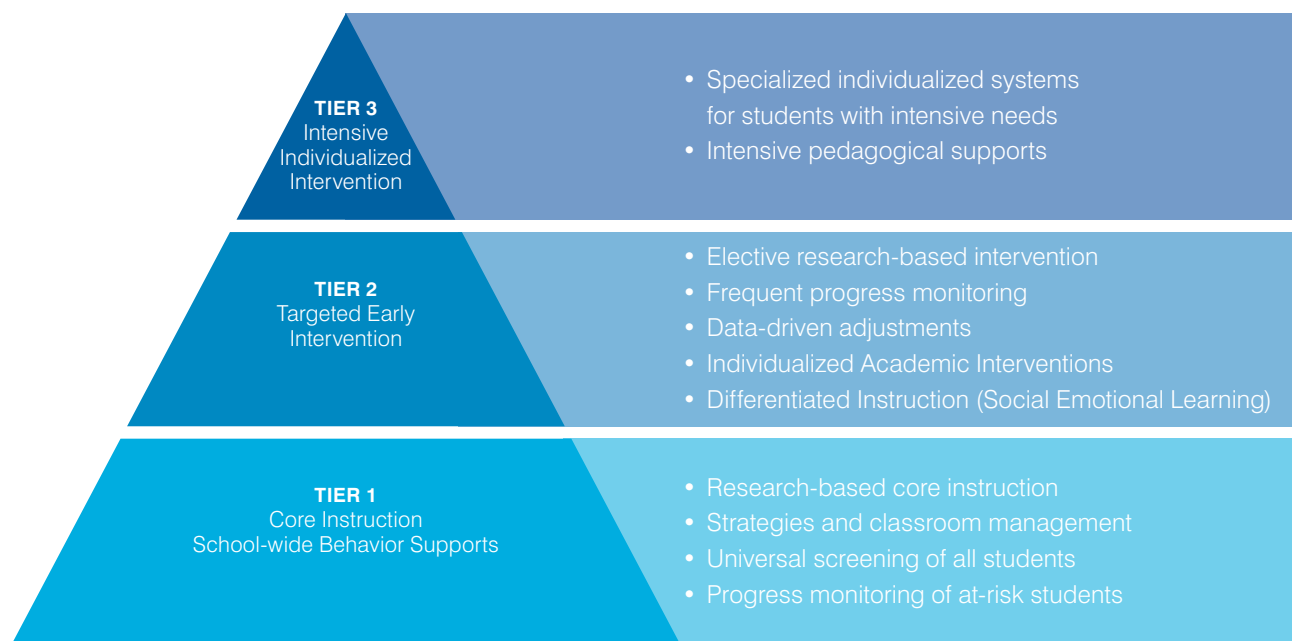
students and adults. In school climates with healthy levels of trust, respect and support, students are much more likely to emotionally connect with the adults in the building and their school as a community.

This is particularly important because the student-school connection leads to engagement on many levels. For example, students are more likely to work hard and to be involved with positive activities inside and outside of school time if they feel strongly connected to school.

In traditional secondary school design, students move individually from classroom to classroom and teachers can have up to 150 to 200 students who they work with on a

According to a 2010 survey by the American Association of School Administrators, 81% of school leaders report lacking the trained, dedicated individuals needed to consistently and effectively implement RTI systems.

Figure 1: Response to Intervention Framework



Social-Emotional Learning

A growing body of research²⁶ demonstrates that social-emotional learning, the process of developing self-management and interpersonal skills in the context of safe, well-managed and engaging environments, is an important contributor to student success. Not only does a systemic focus on social-emotional learning better prepare the individual student to meet his or her academic goals, but it also helps to transform the whole school by promoting school-wide cultural norms/standards related to student responsibility, efficacy and interactions between peers,

daily basis. As a result, students have fewer opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with specific teachers. This school design has implications for students enrolled at high-poverty secondary schools who often need more personalized attention. A student surveyed for a groundbreaking 2006 report by Civic Enterprises on the dropout crisis shared, "if they [had] related to me more and understood that at that point in time, my life was...what I was going through, where I lived, where I came from. Who knows? That book might have been in my book bag. I might have bought a book bag and done some work."²⁷

Extended Learning Time

Research has shown that consistent participation in high-quality extended learning programs can help close the achievement gap that divides low-income students from their more affluent peers. These activities are most effective when they build upon and reinforce the skills that students learn during class, providing students with extra time on-task to cultivate the skills that they need to succeed.²⁸ Additional learning opportunities can take the form of “just-in-time” tutoring during class when a student struggles to understand a key concept, scheduled tutoring sessions, or before-school and after-school programming. When students grasp the connection between what is being taught during the school day, and the before-school or after-school hours, they begin to recognize that being present and attentive during their extended school day experience helps their performance in the classroom.²⁹

Despite the strong correlation between additional learning time and improved student achievement, schools across the country are unable to align their extended learning opportunities with classroom lessons. Two major barriers to alignment are: insufficient financial resources to hire school staff that can ensure that extended learning activities build upon classroom lessons,³⁰ and a lack of data sharing among schools and the partner organizations that provide many students with after or before school learning opportunities.³¹

Since extended learning programs are not being effectively implemented, students who would benefit from these programs struggle to improve their skills outside of classroom lessons.







ADDRESSING THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP:

City Year and National Service as a New Human Capital Strategy

The human capital constraints facing today's schools hinder the implementation of the proven reform practices described above, making investing in a high-yield, cost-effective human capital solution a national imperative. At the same time, there is a growing pool of highly educated young people who are inclined towards the social and education sectors who are standing up to meet the needs of our high poverty schools. A nationally representative survey of college students conducted by Universum showed that nonprofit careers (18 percent of college students stating it was their top career choice) and education (13 percent) are top professional interests among current college students.³²

National service represents a powerful vehicle for connecting these idealistic young people with the schools that need them to implement proven reform practices. The Corporation for National and Community Service – a federal government agency – oversees and provides funding for all national service programs, including

AmeriCorps. A sign of young people's desire to serve – last year, the Corporation for National and Community Service received 582,000 applications for just over 82,000 AmeriCorps positions. Young people recognize that the service experience provides them with a rich leadership development opportunity that they can use to propel themselves into full-time careers or additional education while continuing along their path of active citizenship. For a small living stipend, AmeriCorps members work long, hard hours, delivering, on average \$3.00 worth of services for each federal dollar invested in the AmeriCorps program.

As an AmeriCorps organization, City Year has found an increasing interest in education among a growing pool of applicants that will surpass 10,000 this year for 2,000 positions. A career in education represents the number one anticipated path among graduating City Year AmeriCorps members – with nearly 20 percent indicating an interest in



City Year Corps Member Profile

22 years old average age
55% individuals of color
40% from urban communities
75% college grads
5:1 applicant-to-acceptance ratio

City Year Corps Member Unique Assets

Diverse
Near-peer
Team-based
Full-time
Idealistic Leaders

teaching and 6 percent in school leadership upon completion of their year of service. City Year expects the interest in education among applicants and alumni to increase as the organization more deliberately establishes career pathways into education through graduate school, teacher residency, district and charter management organization partnerships. Furthermore, according to Gallup, City Year AmeriCorps members are statistically one of the most engaged work groups in the country across all industries,

greater than the majority of all Gallup clients.

In the school turnaround field, districts and schools are seeking holistic, scalable human capital strategies that meet students' personalized academic and social-emotional needs and support school-wide reform efforts. However, typical interventions available in today's marketplace often only serve a subset of students on a part-time basis, yielding random acts of improvement and marginal, rather than substantial, gains in student achievement.

City Year enables district and school leaders to re-imagine traditional school design by providing full-time, holistic student and school supports that give educators the extra person power needed to coordinate reform efforts and produce dramatic change at a low cost. Currently working

with 28 school districts and nearly 200 schools in 24 U.S. cities, City Year partners with district leaders to identify the high dropout rate high schools and feeder middle and elementary schools that would most benefit from full-time, highly trained national service members. City Year AmeriCorps members, who are near-peer or close in age to the students they are supporting, provide ongoing support to students from grades three through nine, which Secretary Arne Duncan has referred to as "the 'Bermuda Triangle' of education...the time when students sink or swim."³³

City Year's Whole School Whole Child (WSWC) service model is a comprehensive school-based approach to advancing school-wide reform practices and providing the right individualized academic and social-emotional supports to students exhibiting one of the early warning indicators of poor attendance, disruptive behavior and course failure. Grounded in research showing that the development and growth of a pro-social mindset is just as important as academic skills, WSWC uses the near-peer connection between City Year corps members and students to set high expectations for student achievement. During their year of full-time service, diverse teams of 8 to 20 City Year corps members (team size is based on school enrollment) collaborate with teachers and school leaders to identify at-risk students who are then placed on corps members' "focus lists." Corps members travel from class to class with their focus list-students throughout the school day (including lunch, recess and before/after school programs), providing a blend of supports designed to address students' attendance, behavior and course performance challenges. Working closely with school partners, City Year regularly monitors individual student performance to tailor the types and intensity of supports needed to deliver the right support to the right students at the right time. City Year teams are led by a full-time on-site Program Manager (PM). This PM directly manages corps member teams in schools, relationships with teachers, school administrators and other school partners, as well as

Leveraging Best Practices from High-Performing Charter Schools

Dr. Roland Fryer (Director of the Education Innovation Laboratory at Harvard University, Professor of Economics at Harvard University and research associate at the National Bureau of Education Research) has identified five best practices of high-performing schools through studying 35 charter schools to understand what inputs are most strongly associated with school effectiveness. The findings conclude that five best practices – data driven instruction, high-dosage tutoring, increased instructional time, a culture of high expectations and teacher feedback – explains approximately 50 percent of variation in school effectiveness. In our experience, City Year and other national service programs are well positioned to support all five of these best practices by providing the high-yield, cost-effective human capital necessary for intensive data-driven tutoring, supporting extended learning time, enabling differentiated instruction and setting high expectations for student success.³⁴

the collection of student data to inform service delivery. Well-trained Program Managers are vital to ensuring successful school partnerships and service impact.

The following paragraphs explain how City Year corps members address the implementation gap and facilitate the delivery of proven reform practices due to their full-time presence in schools and near-peer relationships with students.

Using Early Warning Indicator Data to Inform Response to Intervention Strategies

In City Year's partner schools, the majority of students are struggling to overcome the challenges associated with intergenerational poverty. Meeting all students' needs requires a coordinated set of supports, which is why City Year's work is grounded in the data-informed Response to Intervention (RTI) model. RTI provides an effective and efficient process for City Year corps members to work with teachers to identify and collaboratively monitor the progress of off-track students based on early warning indicator data and make real-time adjustments to ensure student success.

Using the RTI framework, teams of City Year corps members collaborate with educators at the beginning of the school year to analyze early warning indicator data, including student attendance rates, behavior marks and course grades, to identify students with one or more off-track indicators. Having received training at the beginning of the academic year on their school's English and math curricula and teaching methodologies, corps members are assigned up to 20 students to create a "focus list" of at-risk students who require evidence-based, individualized interventions to achieve their full potential. Over the course of the entire school day (including lunch, recess and before-school and after-school programs), corps members provide their focus list students with targeted academic support and behavior coaching. Working in close partnership with teachers and school leaders, City Year Program Managers and corps members hold regularly scheduled data review meetings with teachers and school staff to tailor the type and intensity of support to meet each student's distinct needs.

Having additional, highly trained City Year corps members in the classroom enables teachers to continue the classroom lesson and better differentiate instruction, a key component of an effective RTI strategy. In fact, 72 percent of the more than 1,000 educators interviewed for City Year's 2010 – 2011 end of year teacher survey reported that corps members helped them differentiate instruction.



"My corps member helped me to meet individual students' needs by monitoring student progress, by administering Response to Intervention Strategies, conducting small group instruction in all subject areas...[and delivering] 1:1 support [to] high risk students."

– A Boston Public School teacher

The demand for additional human capital to support RTI strategies in urban school districts across the country is significant. For example, in April 2011, Boston Public Schools (BPS) engaged City Year in a multi-year strategic partnership to deploy teams of City Year corps members to work in each of the city's designated turnaround schools. This decision to make City Year the district's primary provider of targeted interventions for at-risk students was a result of City Year's success in improving outcomes for BPS students:

- **Attendance Coaching:** During the 2010-2011 school year, 69.2 percent of students who received at least 8 weeks of City Year's attendance coaching improved their average daily attendance.
- **Behavioral Supports:** During the 2010-2011 school year, 86 percent of teachers reported that corps members improve the motivation to learn of the students they tutor consistently. 74 percent of teachers reported that their corps member(s) helped improve overall student focus and order in the classroom.
- **Course Performance:** 95 percent of the students in grades 3-5 who received City Year's literacy interventions improved their scores on literacy assessments from the fall of 2010 to the spring of 2011.

Additional support to ensure that students' unique needs are met will prove increasingly important as states start to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) championed by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governor's Association. As the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices pointed out in a recent publication, teachers will need additional support because they will not only be teaching more rigorous standards, but they will also be engaging students in more challenging work in the classroom;³⁵ many students will require additional support to master these more challenging academic standards.



City Year's Partnership with Miami-Dade County Public Schools

The Education Transformation Office (ETO) of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is responsible for 26 schools identified by the Florida Department of Education as the persistently lowest achieving. Led by Superintendent Alberto Carvahlo and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Nikolai Vitti, the ETO is implementing a comprehensive strategy to turn around the "rising 26" M-DCPS and is partnering with nonprofits such as College Summit, Teach for America and City Year to support their turnaround strategy. The ETO has deployed City Year to all 10 of the ETO high schools and three feeder middle schools specifically focused on providing intervention and enrichment to struggling students. Additionally, the ETO has partnered with the Diplomas Now collaboration (Talent Development Secondary, Communities In Schools and City Year) as a part of the Investing in Innovation (i3) grant to provide a higher level of support to three ETO schools. City Year is a member of the ETO task force and works collaboratively with Assistant Superintendent Vitti to ensure strong school partnership conditions and successful implementation of City Year's Whole School Whole Child model.

"As Assistant Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, I am charged with turning around the lowest achieving schools in our community, and I could not do this without City Year as a partner. City Year AmeriCorps teams are a game-changing resource for our schools. They arrive before 7 AM and enthusiastically greet every student at the school house door. All day long they are tutoring students to get them back at grade level and mentoring students who need a near-peer role model to listen to them and to help them succeed. They even call every student who is absent to get them to come to school that day. Through our partnership with City Year, attendance is climbing, student attitudes are improving and grades are rising. The culture of an entire school is being transformed by their 'can do' spirit. We're investing school district funds to match AmeriCorps and private sector funds in our City Year teams, and we are urging governmental officials and philanthropists to help us scale up the number of City Year teams serving in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. It's an extraordinary investment."

– Nikolai Vitti

Assistant Superintendent, Education Transformation
Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Leveraging City Year and National Service to Address Chronic Absenteeism

“At the core of school improvement and education reform is an assumption so widely understood that it is rarely invoked: Students have to be present and engaged in order to learn.”³⁶

Just as City Year corps members collaborate with educators to effectively implement the Response to Intervention framework, corps members also partner with school staff to address one of the early warning indicators – poor school attendance.

To encourage higher attendance school-wide, corps members conduct a morning greeting each day, enthusiastically greeting students as they arrive at school and inviting them to participate in welcoming activities to help students start their days energized and engaged. Corps members also conduct school-wide and classroom attendance recognition programs to appreciate students with improved and/or excellent attendance, including those who have missed fewer than five days of school.

In addition to these school-wide initiatives, corps members meet with teachers to identify students who are at risk of becoming chronically absent (missing a month or more of school over the course of the school year) and are in need of tailored attendance support. These students are placed on corps members’ focus lists, meaning corps members meet with teachers regularly to monitor their attendance data. If one of these students is absent, corps members promptly make a phone call home to find out the reason for the student’s absence – a research-based practice that has yielded positive results for students, schools and districts.³⁷ Corps members also provide students at risk of being chronically absent with attendance coaching, which is a targeted intervention where corps members check in with their focus list students throughout the week. Early in the year, these conversations are used to gather information on why the student is absent and help to guide future conversations. More frequent follow-ups occur if student’s absence or tardiness continues. Check-ins can take place during homeroom, lunch, afterschool or any other time of the school day. An integral part of attendance coaching is building trust with students – corps members set high expectations and coach students to internalize high expectations. Through a deliberate process, students increase their ownership over their school attendance over time.

City Year’s school-wide and targeted attendance initiatives have yielded positive results for students nationwide. During the 2010 – 2011 school year, 58 percent of students

receiving attendance coaching from City Year who began the year with less than 90 percent attendance improved their average daily attendance by the end of school year. In Chicago, creative attendance programs have led students benefiting from City Year’s support to have, on average, attendance rates that are eight points above the district average. Similarly, New York City students with attendance coaching by City Year corps members went to school five percent more days (nine days in elementary school and seven days in middle school) than students in similar schools without this coaching.³⁸

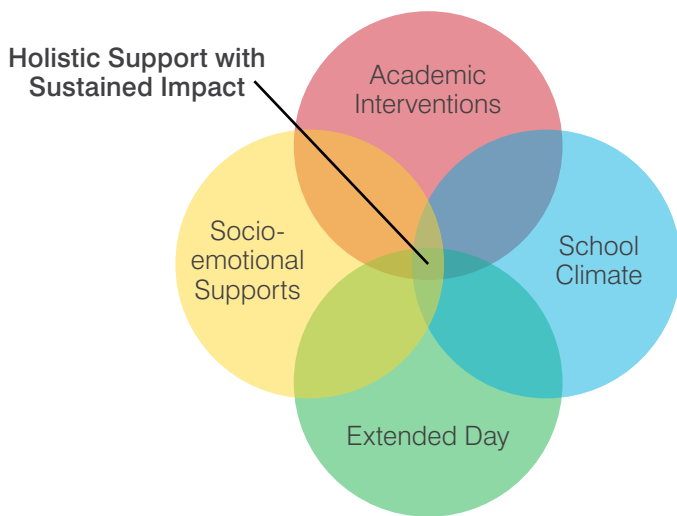


One of my fourth grade students struggled in school and often had a difficult time getting prepared for school in the morning. During morning greeting, he enjoyed playing bingo and we often had the opportunity to talk one-on-one. Morning greeting gave us the chance to talk about the day ahead and together, we would set goals before entering the classroom. One week, the student was suspended from school after getting into a fight with another student. When he returned to school, he was very discouraged. Each morning, I would check in with him, and one day I wrote him a note to encourage positive behavior. At the end of the day, he came to me with the note in hand. He thanked me and told me that our time in the morning helped him with his behavior. He felt that he could use the note as reference throughout the day to put him back on track to good behavior.”

– City Year AmeriCorps Member
Malcolm X Elementary School in Washington, DC

Promoting Social-Emotional Learning to Improve School Climate³⁹

The American Institutes for Research partnered with City Year to explore corps members’ unique ability to provide struggling students with the high-quality, social-emotional supports that they need to do well in school, but that staff may not have the time to deliver. The resulting 2010 paper by nationally recognized researchers David Osher and Yael Kidron validated the unique role of City Year corps



members in promoting social-emotional learning as they are old enough to offer guidance, yet young enough to relate to a student's perspective, enabling corps members to effectively communicate new ideas for students to consider and subsequently act upon. Corps members are trained to approach their relationships with students using a "growth mindset,"⁴⁰ which conveys to students that their true potential is not determined solely by biology or genes. Instead, a student's work ethic and academic dedication shape the student's ability to achieve his or her goals.

The most recognized social-emotional activity implemented by corps members is mentoring, which promotes school engagement and connectedness, gains in social skills, self-management and self-esteem. As mentors who follow groups of students throughout the day, corps members provide attention, guidance, emotional support and caring over an extended period of time. Corps members' close relationships with students position them to handle negative student perspectives such as "I don't care" statements. In the classroom an "I don't care" attitude or statement may trigger adult anger or avoidance of students. Corps members' near-peer relationships with students enable them to discover the motivation for such statements and identify current difficulties that lead to the student's observed behavior.

In addition to promoting positive student behavior and engagement, City Year helps to improve the overall levels of trust and respect within a school community thereby enhancing the overall school climate and culture. Entrenched within all schools is an interconnected web of responsibilities among key stakeholders such as teachers, administrators, parents and students. Through their unique relationships with students, teachers and parents and influenced by a strong organizational culture that

emphasizes the importance of building relationships across lines of difference (as illustrated by the diversity of City Year's corps), City Year corps members help these interdependent groups forge closer connections, thus creating a more unified school community. City Year corps members help engage families by placing calls home when students are absent, letting parents know when students experience notable success in school, and conducting special programs to facilitate family engagement. This is one of the many reasons why 88 percent of the educators working with City Year report that corps members help to create a positive learning environment.

Teachers and school leaders notice the positive impact that interactions with corps members have on struggling students and school culture. A New York City teacher shared that teachers and school staff "have seen the progress [one student] has made in her social skills, problem-solving ability and more positive interaction with her peers." City Year's presence can help to improve school-wide behavior as well. For example, in Detroit, City Year's behavioral initiatives helped a school overcome a culture of violence. According to the school's principal, corps members de-escalated conflicts, intervened when needed and reported essential information to school administration and staff.⁴¹



Since the beginning of the school year I have been working in an eighth grade math class. In one of my classes there was a student who seemed very withdrawn and did not complete any work. I worked with her in math but she still did not want to get much done in class. One day I invited her to stay after school for chess club. She had never played chess before, but became interested quickly. She really came out of her shell in chess club and I formed a relationship with her. Then I was able to transfer my relationship with her back to math class where she actually would work and ask for my help readily. Her math grades and test scores have been on the rise ever since.

— Philadelphia corps member
serving at Anna H. Shaw Middle School

Providing Additional Opportunities for Learning

Since City Year corps members serve in schools throughout the school day, they develop relationships with students both inside and outside of the classroom and are well positioned to help schools reap the maximum benefits of extended learning time. City Year corps members collaborate with partner schools to provide attendance, behavioral and course performance interventions before school, during the school day and the afterschool hours. During classroom instruction, City Year corps members are able to provide just-in-time tutoring to struggling students, giving them the help they need without distracting the entire class from the classroom lesson. As a result of their full-time presence in partner schools, corps members are able to reinforce core instructional concepts with their students in multiple contexts.

City Year corps members work closely with partner school to assess how they can enhance and effectively implement extended learning opportunities that are aligned with the school day. For example, at the beginning of the 2010-2011 academic year, the principal of John Liechty Middle School in Los Angeles, CA, noticed that only five to ten students took advantage of the school's morning instructional program. As a result, the principal requested that City Year corps members re-launch morning instructional time to provide additional one-on-one and small group tutoring for struggling students. Leveraging their near-peer relationships with students, corps members recruited 70 students, growing the size of the program by 700 percent. Similarly, during the 2009-2010 school year, 80 percent of students from a Boston middle school who received afterschool homework help from City Year achieved an average homework completion rate of 87 percent, exceeding the school's 75 percent homework completion rate goal.



Many students come to ninth grade lacking the pre-requisite skills to work at the ninth grade level and beyond. With the help of City Year corps members who provide students with academic support outside of class, I am able to spend less time re-teaching these skills and thus students are able to have a richer, more challenging classroom experience.

– 9th Grade Teacher
Philadelphia



**TURNAROUND
COLLABORATION
CASE STUDY**



DIPLOMAS NOW

A POWERFUL DESIGN FOR CHRONICALLY LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

City Year's work with districts and schools has revealed that the persistently lowest performing schools – those that some would consider beyond repair – require a unique approach: one that employs an evidence-based partnership model to completely redesign the school structure and culture. That is why the organization began working as part of a collaborative in 2008 that provides a comprehensive approach to school turnaround - Diplomas Now (DN). Through DN, City Year is partnering with Talent Development Secondary of Johns Hopkins University and Communities In Schools to combine three complementary and evidence-based models to help students stay on track to high school graduation and succeed in post-secondary education. Currently operating in 12 cities and over 40 schools, DN leverages each organization's expertise to put in place the necessary strategy and in-school resources to

fundamentally reform struggling schools, demonstrating that when the right partnership model is implemented as part of a coordinated and comprehensive school reform strategy, big change is possible.

The Diplomas Now Model

The DN model combines Talent Development's comprehensive instructional support, anchored around interdisciplinary teacher teams, embedded teacher professional development and accelerated learning curriculum, with City Year's tutoring, mentoring and engagement activities and Communities In Schools' integrated student support services, which includes case management, for the highest need students. The DN model

DIPLOMAS NOW MODEL



3-5 TEACHERS
75-90 STUDENTS

Instructional Supports

- Double dose math & English
- Extra help labs
- Common college preparatory or high school readiness curricula

Organizational Supports

- Inter-disciplinary and subject focused common planning time
- Bi-weekly EWI meetings
- On-site school transformation facilitator

Professional Development Supports

- Job-embedded coaching - Math and English instructional coaches
- Professional learning community
- Professional development linked to grade/subject specific instructional practice

Data Supports

- Easy access to student data on the Early Warning Indicators
- Benchmarks tied to national and state standards
- On-site facilitator to leverage EWI data

Student Supports

- Multi-Tiered Response to Intervention Model
 - 10 to 15 City Year AmeriCorps members: whole school and targeted academic and socio-emotional supports
 - Communities In Schools on-site coordinator: case managed supports for highest need students
- Interventions to address early warning indicators of
 - Attendance
 - Behavior
 - Course Performance
- Whole school attendance, positive behavior, college-going culture
- Strengthening student resiliency

is centered on the use of 1) an early warning system that identifies the students most at risk of not graduating and 2) regularly occurring early warning indicator meetings that enable increased time for collaborative planning among teacher teams and DN staff to regularly review student data. In these meetings, the DN team, teachers and other school staff craft individual student plans for identified students that meet their specific needs in real-time. The targeted interventions within these plans include, but are not limited to, additional tutoring time in math and English, attendance and behavior coaching and family engagement.

Diplomas Now is not simply co-locating nonprofits, but rather creating a synchronized and tightly integrated collaboration with schools and districts that is tied to common metrics. Without the effective coordination and communication among the primary stakeholders working in a school, such as the DN partners, “multiple partnerships...can lead to inefficient or contradictory reform efforts that burden and confuse school leadership... because no one is explicitly in charge of integrating and coordinating efforts at the school-level.”⁴² While each of the DN organizations could work independently toward their shared goal, the combination of their strengths and the highly coordinated integration of their services has led to a greater level of impact. For example, the near-peer relationships that City Year forms with students in a multitude of settings allows for more timely referrals to the CIS site coordinator, who then brokers critical community resources to ensure that students’ non-academic needs are met sooner.

In August 2010, Diplomas Now was selected as a federal Department of Education Investing in Innovation (i3) award recipient, which made it the only national secondary school turnaround model to win an i3 award. As a part of the i3 grant, Diplomas Now is partnering with MDRC, a nonprofit and non-partisan research organization and its partner, ICF International, to conduct the largest national research study on comprehensive whole school improvement combining student supports and an early warning system. This study is a randomized control trial

designed to provide the highest level of scientific validation of the impact of the Diplomas Now model on middle school to high school promotion, high school graduation and all of the early warning indicator areas.

Since its founding, the Diplomas Now collaboration has seen strong results in low-performing schools across the country. For example, in the 2010-2011 school year, Diplomas Now was implemented in four high-poverty middle schools in Philadelphia. Working in partnership with school leadership and teachers, the Diplomas Now team helped to improve outcomes for students:

- 76 percent of students who began the year failing math improved by at least one grade level;
- 65 percent of students who began the year failing English improved by at least one grade level;
- the school experienced a 47 percent reduction in the number of students with under 80 percent attendance; and
- there was a 76 percent reduction in the number of students identified as off-track in behavior.





LESSONS FOR PRACTICE

Successful school turnaround requires a sense of urgency, humility and a steadfast commitment to producing dramatic academic gains for the thousands of students who attend high-poverty, low-performing schools across the country. As the education community seeks proven ways to enable optimal school turnaround, City Year seeks to continually learn from partners and share key insights and best practices for effectively collaborating with schools, as well as the business community, to maximize student outcomes.

Developing Effective Partnerships with Schools and Districts

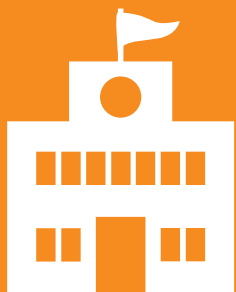
School Operating Conditions for Success

In 2010, City Year partnered with Deloitte Consulting to deepen the organization's understanding of the fundamental school operating conditions that are needed to maximize the effectiveness of the Whole School Whole Child model in schools. Through this work, we conducted

an extensive review of each of City Year's partnering schools and districts to codify the specific school operating conditions that would help to create an environment for increased model fidelity and enhanced student impact. These "Conditions for Success" include 12 critical factors that City Year now examines within all potential and current partner schools to plan for the most effective integration of the WSWC model.

City Year staff are trained to understand the implications of these school operating conditions on their ability to successfully implement WSWC. For example, the school's master schedule is a key determinant of the amount of academic and intervention time City Year corps members will have with students. Additionally, the presence of core content specialists has implications for aligning and integrating corps member interventions with the school's pedagogical and curriculum approach. City Year will continue to assess the degree of alignment with key conditions and "degree of difficulty" of school partners to ensure effective site support for model implementation.

SCHOOL OPERATING CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS



School Mindset and Culture
Data-informed Tiered Intervention Strategy
Student Cohorts/Grouping
Master Schedule
Attendance Program
Behavior Approach/Disciplinary System

Family Engagement Program
Extended Learning Time
Instructional Program/Curricula
Core Content Specialists
Training/Professional Development
Student Support Services

District Partnership Advancement Progress

Strong school and district level partnerships are critical for City Year to deliver the interventions required to meet the level of need. Increased demand for City Year as a core component of a district-wide turnaround strategy – similar to the aforementioned Boston Public Schools example – has made expansive, transformational district and school partnerships even more important.

City Year has formalized a school district relationship building process that includes such activities as assessing district priorities, articulating City Year's value proposition relative to these priorities, engaging key district stakeholders, ensuring school conditions that maximize City Year's impact, formalizing partnership agreements and providing ongoing evaluation and customer service.

City Year has begun to assess the strength of each district partnership according to key factors along a continuum from one-way to transformational by looking at factors such as: Partnership & Implementation of WSWC, Financial Investment, Accountability, External Communication and Planning and Decision Making. This continuum of partnership levels include:

TRANSFORMATIONAL districts consider City Year a part of its team and call on us as an additional district leader to leverage and depend on to plan, implement and accomplish student achievement together.

COMMON GOALS districts partner closely with City Year to set and work toward a common set of student achievement goals within the parameters of our work.

TRANSACTIONAL districts provide resources and time in exchange for City Year's separate and supplemental services to students.

ONE WAY districts do not contribute any resources, time, energy, or expectations for City Year and/or inhibits our ability to conduct WSWC activities.

Engaging the Business Community

To significantly disrupt the status quo and elevate high school graduation and post-secondary attainment rates, the private sector has a key role to play and a vested interest in developing a workforce that is capable of meeting the demands of today's increasingly competitive economy. Over the last decade, the field of Corporate Social Responsibility has evolved from an emergent to mainstream practice, and at the same time has become increasingly more sophisticated about defining return on investment with nonprofit partners. The availability of data from schools and districts has allowed corporations to engage with their grant recipients in data-driven decision making towards achieving collective goals. Since its inception, City Year has had a strong corporate partnership model, which ensures that every AmeriCorps dollar the organization raises is highly leveraged. We work to drive value to our partners through brand recognition, employee engagement and enriched opportunities to connect with customers and communities and, in turn, our national partners have played a key role in helping to catalyze major organizational change and drive a broader understanding around the need to increase the urban graduation pipeline.

Strategically Deploying for Impact

A key factor for optimizing City Year's impact at both the school and city-wide level is to employ an evidence-based deployment model. In line with the core goals of the Civic Marshall Plan - a national campaign to end the dropout crisis – City Year seeks to work in close partnership with school districts in each of its markets in order to identify matriculation patterns that link the lowest performing high schools with feeder elementary and middle schools. In markets where these feeder partners exist, City Year targets its deployment to saturate a critical mass of schools within the lowest performing clusters of schools. With a focus on grades 3-9, this strategy draws upon a compelling foundation of research and practices confirming that student performance challenges develop over time and can be detected early in a student's academic career.⁴³

Deploying City Year AmeriCorps members to clusters of the low performing schools creates a “continuum of care” that provides students with multiple years of coordinated interventions and supports, thereby improving their performance at a rate that cannot be achieved or sustained by focusing exclusively on the primary or secondary grades. Furthermore, by viewing school systems as ecosystems in which multiple schools are transformed together, school districts and organizations can create more equitable options for families as they select schools for their children.

Analysis shows that a cohort focus, which is an emerging trend in many states, further amplifies the effectiveness of ongoing, longitudinal interventions.⁴⁴ By following student cohorts over time as they matriculate through the grades, the continuum of care can reduce both the number of off-track students and the number of off-track indicators exhibited by a student population – thereby improving graduation rates.

Deployment decisions within individual schools are equally important for maximizing impact and for unlocking the full human capital potential of national service. City Year and its school partners leverage early warning indicator data to calibrate team sizes based on the number of off-track students. Teams are typically comprised of 8 to 20 full time AmeriCorps members that are deployed to optimize the adult to student ratio so that off-track students receive the individualized attention necessary to improve their performance. This deployment provides immediate value to schools, as it scales their intervention and data management capacity to meet the full scope of need.

The evidence base that supports strategic deployment decisions is compelling and is at the heart of a new long-term impact strategy that City Year has developed to build the nation’s graduation pipeline in communities where the dropout challenge is most concentrated. Similarly, outside of City Year, these learnings have far reaching implications for organizations that are looking for ways to leverage their finite assets in order to maximize impact and return on funders’ investments.

Leveraging City Year Alumni to Address the Graduation Challenge

Developing a Pipeline of Talented Educators

In order to ensure that students in all schools continue to receive the support that they need to reach their full potential, we need a pipeline that delivers prepared educators into our nation’s struggling schools.



Over the next 10 years, more than half of America’s teaching workforce is expected to retire, requiring an infusion of a new generation of educators in our nation’s schools.⁴⁵ Informed by a deep understanding of the pressing challenges that exist in low-performing schools, City Year’s alumni network can serve as a teacher pipeline for high-need schools, ensuring the sustainability of the evidence-based reforms they helped to implement as corps members. City Year will grow from 17,000 to more than 50,000



When I started working for City Year I had no intention of going into education. However, working in schools and seeing the need of students and schools went way beyond my purview as a corps member or even a senior corps member and I was inspired to go back to school and get my teaching certification. Working as a corps member gave me skills in the classroom and in the school that I don’t think any other job or training could have ever provided me. I am more comfortable than most of my colleagues working in a team; my classroom team builders are often former corps member training activities; and my time in schools working as a corps member has given me insight into some of the best and worst aspects of education life.

– 11th grade English teacher
Philadelphia

alumni by 2023 and currently education is the number one anticipated career pathway for graduating corps members.

Bolstered by their experience in City Year's comprehensive leadership development program, which emphasizes coaching, reflection and self-directed learning, corps members learn how to become effective and contributing members of their diverse school-based teams, which represents an essential skill set for anyone working in the education sector. A former corps member, Jed, shares, "I have gained more skills and learned more lessons working at City Year than I have at any other job. The leadership, time management, planning and team building skills that I acquired are so valuable to me now and will remain valuable assets to me in the future." Large numbers of AmeriCorps members, who currently serve in schools, remain in the education field, drawing upon their service experience to inform their career decisions over the course of their lifetimes. In fact, research shows that the skills national service members acquire during their service term make them more likely to be successful in their life.⁴⁶

To effectively channel alumni toward serving as educators in urban schools and districts, City Year will continue to identify, develop and formalize partnerships with teacher residency/training programs. Some of the nation's most

competitive teacher residency programs in the country acknowledge that serving a year with City Year is a strong indicator of success in their programs. For example, the Urban Teacher Center in the Baltimore-Washington area filled 14% of its 2012-2013 cohort with City Year Alumni and the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) in Chicago extended offers to a dozen City Year corps members for its 2012-2013 cohort. City Year plans to collaborate with our existing 24 teacher acceleration/fellowship program partners to increase the pipeline of corps members who are accepted to and matriculate as teacher residents/fellows.

Channeling Alumni Impact through Direct Service

City Year is also committed to engaging its alumni in targeted outcome-based volunteer opportunities in City Year schools to bolster the impact of the Whole School Whole Child service model. Harnessing the assets of its alumni population, City Year is well positioned to begin incorporating college and career readiness into its service model to help off-track students cultivate the skills and the mindset they will need for post-secondary success. City Year is already seeing promising early results through an innovative alumni pilot called cyMentor that is currently being implemented at the Mastery Charter School – Shoemaker Campus in Philadelphia.

City Year's Partnership with the Academy for Urban School Leadership

Founded in 2001, the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) is a nonprofit that turns around persistently low achieving schools built on a foundation of specially trained AUSL teachers. AUSL manages 14 turnaround schools situated in Chicago's most challenging west and south side communities, which are significantly staffed from AUSL's seven teacher training academies. AUSL's partnership with City Year began in 2008 and has grown significantly, now serving in nine AUSL turnaround schools. AUSL views City Year as a critical partner in turning around schools through the direct academic tutoring corps members provide and how they help support AUSL's rigorous approach to ensuring a positive school culture. In addition to deploying City Year's Whole School Whole Child model in turnaround schools, AUSL values the corps member experience as an accelerated pipeline of qualified candidates for its teacher residency program. AUSL is an official "Leadership After City Year" partner and recently extended offers to 12 City Year corps members/alumni for its 2012-2013 cohort of teacher residents.

"I keep telling people you just shouldn't do turnarounds without City Year"

– Dr. Jarvis Sanford

AUSL's Managing Director of Elementary School.

cyMentor: Spotlight on Engaging Alumni in Direct Service

cyMentor is a college and career readiness direct service option for alumni, which City Year is currently piloting for three years in Philadelphia in partnership with iMentor (a national nonprofit organization) and supported by a Social Innovation Fund (SIF) grant awarded to iMentor. cyMentor is a high school mentoring program that combines online tools with face-to-face mentoring to help students stay on track to high school graduation and be prepared for post-secondary success. Picking up where the Whole School Whole Child model leaves off in the 9th grade, mentors work closely with 10th grade students (who had previously received targeted supports from City Year) from the time they are paired through high school graduation. During the 2011-2012 school year, cyMentor is supporting ninety-five 10th grade students at the Mastery Charter School – Shoemaker Campus, 64 of whom have been assigned to City Year alumni mentors. For the remaining two years of the cyMentor pilot, City Year will recruit 250 additional mentors, half of whom are projected to be local City Year alumni. This project will be evaluated by a third party researcher as a part of the SIF award and will inform City Year's approach for engaging alumni as mentors in schools.







IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

City Year's collaboration with nearly 200 schools, 28 districts and 24 cities has shown that local, state and federal policy makers have a unique role to play in ensuring that schools strategically leverage their resources to yield the largest gains in student and school performance. In order to maximize the taxpayer investment and ensure that public dollars achieve their intended educational goals, schools must have the human capital needed to fill the implementation gap and meet student needs at the required scale and intensity. We recognize that in these challenging fiscal times, smart investments must be made. Based on City Year's experience, the policy proposals outlined below will maximize the effectiveness of federal dollars and result in positive outcomes for today's students and the next generation of American leaders.

Effectively Leveraging Resources

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility

ESEA Flexibility presents a unique opportunity for states to empower districts to use federal dollars to develop partnerships with organizations that have a demonstrated record of supporting the implementation of critical, evidence-based school reforms. Through these partnerships, at-risk students will receive the individualized attention they require to be successful and school staff will acquire the support they need to increase student achievement. Furthermore, flexibility in the use of ESEA funds will allow districts to create the workforce

they need to effectively and sustainably implement the reforms required by ESEA Flexibility and ensure that they do not lose this flexibility due to an inability to implement the required actions.

Launch a Race to the Top Secondary School Challenge

As is proposed in the 2012 Building a Grad Nation report by Civic Enterprises, the Everyone Graduates Center, America's Promise Alliance and the Alliance for Excellent Education, the Administration should designate certain Race to the Top funds for a special, secondary school reform competition. Under this competition, districts would be required to partner with a high-quality nonprofit or community-based organization to implement a district-wide early warning system. The district and the partner organization would then work together to identify and to deliver an evidence-based comprehensive school reform model. The model would be selected based on its record of addressing the specific needs of the district's struggling schools and students.

The Federal Appropriations Process

It is imperative that Congress provide increased funding for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The appropriations process is an opportunity for lawmakers to examine current programs and make any needed tweaks to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent as effectively and efficiently as possible. Most of the organizations that are able to effectively implement proven comprehensive whole school reform strategies rely upon AmeriCorps members, who are supported by CNCS, to provide the additional workforce and expertise that these proven comprehensive school reform models require. If legislators want to make substantial improvements to our nation's struggling schools, it is critical that appropriators increase funding for CNCS.

Maintain funding for the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program. City Year has seen firsthand the transformative impact the program is having on our nation's schools. The organization's on-the-ground experience has shown that SIG dollars have the greatest impact on student and school performance when grant recipient districts and schools leverage funds to implement evidence-based, comprehensive school reform models. These partner organizations provide the human capital and expertise that schools need to fully adopt school reform strategies. Appropriators could maximize the federal investment in this critical program by including language in the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related

Agencies appropriations bill encouraging grant recipients to adopt proven, comprehensive school reform strategies.

Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Designate Title I funds to provide all struggling students with the individualized support they need to succeed. Reauthorization proposals presented by both Republicans and Democrats in the Senate and the House of Representatives highlight the importance of these direct student supports. Based on City Year's school-based experience, those districts with struggling schools should be required to set aside a percentage of their Title I Part A funding to provide data-driven interventions to individual students and comprehensive school-wide supports to benefit the entire school community. Districts should be empowered to use the Title I Part A funding they will be setting aside to develop district-wide partnerships with nonprofit and community-based organizations that can help the district to deliver these student and school-wide interventions.

A Specialized Corps is Needed to Transform Chronically Low-Performing Schools

Create a specialized corps, a School Transformation Corps, of AmeriCorps members intensively trained to implement critical School Improvement Grant (SIG) reforms. This could be accomplished through a partnership between the Department of Education (DOE) and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). To accelerate reform efforts, these corps members would serve with host organizations with a demonstrated record of supervising and deploying AmeriCorps members to schools to implement SIG reforms. This specialized corps would not only ensure appropriate implementation of SIG reforms, but also magnify the taxpayer investment in these struggling schools – AmeriCorps host organizations leverage private, philanthropic and public dollars to bring additional resources to low-performing schools. Additionally, this collaboration between CNCS and DOE would yield cost-savings for the American taxpayer by breaking down government silos to combine public efforts to reform our nation's lowest performing schools.



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CONCLUSION

A small number of high-performing, high-poverty schools are demonstrating that significant student gains are possible through the effective implementation of research-based practices. However, for the vast majority of high-poverty schools, there exists a gap in the human capital that is needed to implement school-wide reform efforts and individualized student supports at the scale and intensity that is required. Leveraging full-time City Year corps members to transform our country's lowest performing schools is a high-yield, cost-effective strategy to ensure that all off-track students receive the supports that they need to get ahead, get along and give back. Moving forward, City Year will continue to explore additional avenues for maximizing the impact of this new human capital strategy to achieve dramatic gains in student performance, including increasing the effectiveness of technology-based teaching and learning initiatives.

City Year is committed to partnering across sectors with teachers, principals, districts, families, community-based organizations and the private sector to advance the vital work of building the nation's graduation pipeline. We will continue to demonstrate the critical role of full-time, national service members in accelerating academic achievement in our country's most challenged schools, ensuring that all young people are positioned to reach their full potential in school and beyond.





ABOUT CITY YEAR

City Year is an education-focused, nonprofit organization that partners with public schools to help keep students in school and on track to high school graduation. In communities across the United States and through two international affiliates, this innovative public-private partnership brings together teams of young AmeriCorps members who commit to a year of full-time service in schools. Corps members support students by focusing on attendance, behavior and course performance through in-class tutoring, mentoring and after school programs.

During the 2011-2012 school year, City Year deployed more than 2,000 AmeriCorps members in teams of 8 to 20 (depending on school size) to nearly 200 schools, serving roughly 110,000 students. City Year partners with school districts to identify the lowest performing high schools and the middle and elementary schools that feed into them. Diverse teams of young, full-time AmeriCorps members are then deployed to work with students in these low-performing schools to provide a continuum of support to students in grades three through nine.

City Year developed its signature Whole School, Whole Child (WSWC) model in partnership with schools, districts, community organizations, education thought leaders and the private sector. The model is designed to advance school-wide reform practices and to provide continuous support for students struggling with attendance, behavior and course performance – or the “ABCs.” Researchers at Johns Hopkins University have identified these factors as strong predictors of a student’s risk of dropping out of school.⁴⁷ Corps members collaborate with school personnel and teachers to analyze student data, identify students struggling in one or more of these areas, and deliver the requisite evidence-based supports to get students back on track.

Attendance: To address students’ attendance challenges, corps members deliver a mix of school-wide initiatives as well as individual coaching. For example, corps members provide students with a personalized greeting each day as they enter the school building, helping students to focus their attention on the school day and creating a positive,

welcoming atmosphere. In addition, corps members immediately make phone calls home if a student is not in school, often returning the student to the classroom the same day. To inspire better attendance, corps members also conduct special attendance competitions. Among students who received attendance coaching from corps members in grades six through nine during the 2010-2011 school year, 58 percent of students who began the school year struggling in attendance had improved by the end of the school year.

Behavior: City Year corps members' behavioral initiatives range from school-wide programs to encourage positive behavior to individualized behavioral interventions. City Year's 50 Acts of Leadership program engages struggling students in small group or one-on-one mentoring, civic projects or artistic activities during lunchtime. As near-peer mentors, corps members often learn about the personal challenges that students confront and are well-positioned to refer them to appropriate school staff for the required services. Teachers recognize the value that City Year corps members bring to their classrooms. Of the more than 1,000 educators interviewed for City Year's 2010 – 2011 end of year Teacher Survey, 85 percent reported that the corps members improved student motivation to learn. Third party evaluator, Brett Consulting Group conducted an evaluation of City Year's Whole School Whole Child Model which showed that greater exposure to City Year was positively related to students' connectedness to their school and engagement in learning. RMC Research evaluated City Year New York's service in 19 elementary schools across New York City. This report found that frequency of student contact with corps members was significantly associated with positive outcomes in academic motivation, conflict resolution and resilience.

Coursework: To address students' course performance, City Year corps members offer one-on-one and small group tutoring to struggling students, provide needed support to teachers in classrooms and lead extended learning time programs that align with classroom lessons before and after school. Through in-classroom support, teachers can leverage corps members to increase the amount of time students spend in personalized learning environments. For example, in a classroom of 30, a teacher can create three small learning groups, each focused on their particular learning need; the teacher can work with one, the corps member can work with another, while the third group does independent work. This additional practitioner in the classroom is yielding positive results for students:

- Research for Action (RFA), a third-party evaluation firm, conducted a comparison study of our Whole School Whole Child model in Miami. The study focused on the impact of our tutoring program on literacy outcomes and found that 53% more City Year students advanced one or more FCAT reading level(s) in 2009-2010 than other students in their school who had not been working with City Year.
- Philadelphia school district data analyzed by Research for Action, found a:
 - 76% increase in the number of middle and high school students passing English as a result of City Year corps members' one-on-one and small group tutoring; and
 - 63% increase in the number of middle and high school students passing math as a result of City Year corps members' one-on-one and small group tutoring.

About AmeriCorps

Supported by the Corporation for National and Community Service, AmeriCorps is a program that places individuals of all ages with nonprofit, community-based and faith-based organizations for a year of service. Host organizations leverage federal, private sector and local dollars to address pressing national challenges. For the same financial investment, AmeriCorps members provide three times more hours of critical student support services than do many external providers hired to provide students with additional academic support.





ABOUT DIPLOMAS NOW

Diplomas Now is a proven approach that helps the toughest middle and high schools in America's largest cities ensure that students graduate ready for college or career. It is the first fully integrated approach that improves a school's curriculum and instruction while it provides the right students with the right support at the right time.

It is based on research by one of the nation's leading dropout experts who found that three-quarters of all dropouts can be identified as early as sixth grade due to poor attendance, poor behavior or failure in English or math. Diplomas Now identifies those students early and works to eliminate their problems.

The Approach

Diplomas Now combines 65 years of experience from three national nonprofits:



Johns Hopkins University's Talent Development Secondary, a school reform model that improves instruction and performance.



City Year's in-school, "near peer" AmeriCorps members who support students.



Communities In Schools' in-school trained case managers for the neediest students.

How It Works

Diplomas Now partners with the school community so every student has the support of caring adults and those adults have the tools to improve student success. Working with administrators and teachers, a Diplomas Now team organizes and supports schools to strengthen achievement and engagement. Diplomas Now provides curriculum, teacher coaching and student support. An early warning system identifies struggling students, and the team works to get each student back on track.

Young adults, working full-time in the school, welcome students, call them if they don't show up, provide tutoring and celebrate positive behavior. After school, they help with homework and involve students in service and enrichment programs.

For the neediest students, Diplomas Now provides case management and connects them with community resources, such as counseling, health care, housing, food and clothing.

The Results

Diplomas Now cut attendance and behavior problems in half, and decreased course failure by up to 75 percent on average across its schools, thus putting more students on track to graduate.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

WILLIAM ANDREKOPOULOS

Senior Advisor, City Year, Inc.
Former Superintendent, Milwaukee Public Schools

William Andrekopoulos dedicated 38 years to public education as an employee of the Milwaukee Public Schools. He attended Marquette University for his BA. degree, Cardinal Stritch for his Masters in Special Education and University of Wisconsin Milwaukee for his administrative license requirements. He started his career as a regular education and special education teacher and then became a school level administrator. He was one of the longest serving superintendents of Milwaukee Public Schools, serving for eight years in this role before retiring from the district.

Throughout his career Andrekopoulos was part of national committees on educational reforms and served on several national boards of educational institutions such as the Council of Great City Schools. One of the most rewarding professional experiences was participating in the Aspen Institute's Superintendent's Collaborative.

Andrekopoulos has been widely recognized at the local, state and national levels for his contributions to educational reform. He has been part of the Cardinal Stritch University Department of Administrative leadership since 1991 as a quarter-time instructor. In addition, he provides consulting services at the local and national levels, advising institutions on educational policy.

JIM BALFANZ

President, City Year, Inc.

Jim Balfanz has served as the President of City Year since May 2010. In this role, he steers City Year's continued evolution as a performance-driven organization. Balfanz has led City Year's strategic shift towards addressing the nation's urban education challenge as a scalable human capital strategy for high-poverty schools. He spearheaded the development of the In School and On Track initiative - City Year's scale and impact plan to increase the urban graduation pipeline and is focused on developing alumni as leaders and social entrepreneurs who are committed to strengthening our democracy. In partnership with Johns Hopkins Talent Development and Communities In Schools, Balfanz has also played a leadership role in the development of Diplomas Now, the school turnaround collaboration, which was awarded a \$36 million Investing in Innovation award by the Department of Education.

Prior to his role as President, Balfanz served as City Year's Chief Operating Officer for 5 years. During this time, he led the organization through a sustained period of growth that enabled it to grow from 15 to 21 U.S. locations and launch its second international affiliate in London; scale from 1,200 to 1,750 corps members; and increase its revenue by 70%, including a 500% increase in public education funding. Balfanz also led the development of City Year's brand strategy, resulting in a 50% increase in national awareness.

Balfanz began his work with City Year in 1993 as a corps member; after his corps year, he joined the City Year staff, assuming various roles in City Year's National Headquarters, including Director of New Site Development, launching sites in Seattle, Detroit, and Philadelphia. In 1997, Balfanz was named the Founding Executive Director of City Year Greater Philadelphia where he served for 8 years, growing City Year Greater Philadelphia to the largest City Year site.

Balfanz received his undergraduate degree from Northeastern University and is a graduate of the Wharton School of Business Executive Management Program. He is a 2011-2012 Aspen Institute - NewSchools Entrepreneurial Leaders for Public Education Fellow.

CITY YEAR LOCATIONS

Baton Rouge

Boston

Chicago

Cleveland

Columbia

Columbus

Denver

Detroit

Little Rock/North Little Rock

Los Angeles

Miami

Milwaukee

New Hampshire

New Orleans

New York

Orlando

Greater Philadelphia

Rhode Island

Sacramento

San Antonio

San José/Silicon Valley

Seattle/King County

Washington, DC

International Affiliates

Johannesburg, South Africa

London, England

cityyear.org [@cityyear](https://twitter.com/cityyear) facebook.com/cityyear

City Year is an education-focused, nonprofit organization founded in 1988 that partners with public schools to help keep students in school and on track to graduate. This innovative public-private partnership brings together teams of young AmeriCorps members who commit to a year of full-time service in schools. Corps members support students by focusing on attendance, behavior and course performance through in-class tutoring, mentoring and after school programs.



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