

**Evaluation of the Kalamazoo Promise
Working Paper #6**

**THE IMPACT OF THE
KALAMAZOO PROMISE
ON STUDENT
ATTITUDES, GOALS,
AND ASPIRATIONS**

**Working
Paper**

6

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Executive Summary

Student aspirations are an important determinant of success in high school and post-secondary education. Student aspirations involve *inspiration* through identifying short-term and long-term goals, and *ambition* in the form of well-defined strategies to maintain momentum towards these goals. The review of the literature included in this paper illustrates the central role that aspirations can play in the development and academic success of students. The research literature also explains why aspirations may be so impervious to reform efforts that only improve instruction, but do not unlock the door to students' internalized goals and their perception of self. This paper examines whether the Kalamazoo Promise can have a positive impact on student aspirations.

Our analysis for this particular working paper sought to answer the following questions: Do students and educators in KPS perceive changes in student attitudes and behaviors as a result of the implementation of the Promise? Do stakeholders note changes in students' goal identification, pursuit, or both? How do changes in student aspirations affect the other anticipated outcomes and act as an agent of change in the district? Findings reported in this paper are based on various sources of data that include student surveys, student interviews, and interviews with district principals, guidance counselors, and teachers. This design allows for an examination of student aspirations from the multiple perspectives and stakeholders in the school district.

What the Literature Tells Us about Student Aspirations

Gender, current achievement levels, and socioeconomic background characteristics are key predictors of student aspirations. Females typically report higher levels of aspiration. Students from disadvantaged neighborhoods typically report lower levels of aspiration. With regards to ethnic background, there are mixed findings with some research showing that students of color have lower aspirations, and at least one study indicating that differences between blacks and whites are small.

Student aspirations are associated with a variety of positive student outcomes such as leadership skills, psychological well-being, and educational attainment. Aspirations also provide direction for engagement,

and determine the intensity with which students pursue their educational, career, and life objectives. Clearly, student aspirations play an important role in students' development as well as in their achievement outcomes.

What Our Survey Data Reveals Regarding Student Aspirations

Several items from the student survey that relate to student aspiration were combined into a single unique factor. We then analyzed the relationship between this factor and several background variables. The list below summarizes findings from the student survey data.

- ❑ Females are more likely than males to report higher levels of aspiration.
- ❑ No statistically significant differences were found by race/ethnic background of students.
- ❑ Students who do not qualify for free or reduced-price lunch have higher aspirations.
- ❑ Students with higher grade point averages were more likely to have higher levels of aspiration.
- ❑ There is a positive relationship between the level of awareness about the Promise and student aspirations.
- ❑ Students whose parents have earned a degree are more likely than other students to report higher levels of aspiration.
- ❑ Students aspirations were not statistically significant different between grade levels.
- ❑ Self-reported aspirations by students increased from 2007 to 2008. We drew comparisons across several subgroups of students and consistently found higher ratings of student aspiration in 2008 than in 2007.

We further examined the student aspiration factor in relation to a number of anticipated short-term and intermediate outcomes that we would expect to see if the Promise was serving as a catalyst for systemic change. The strongest relationships are between students' aspirations and their perceptions of teacher expectations. Another statistically significant and positive relationship exists between students'

aspirations and their perceptions of efforts made by the schools to guide and prepare them for college. One other important finding that was statistically significant and positive in nature was the relationship between students' aspirations and the teacher-student relations factor, which is a component of school climate.

What We Learned About Student Aspirations from Interviews with Students and Educators

The students and educators we interviewed were asked to rate the amount and direction of change across a number of specific aspects of their school since the announcement of the Promise. From the 42 middle and high school students we interviewed, we learned the following

- ❑ 58% of the students interviewed believed that *student's attitudes about school work* had improved, while 32% believed that there was no change in attitudes about school work. Additionally, 10% reported that attitudes had actually worsened slightly. The students who perceived no change or negative change were more concentrated in the high schools, especially grades 10-12.
- ❑ Among the KPS employees we interviewed, 66% believed that *student's attitudes about school work had improved* since the introduction of the Kalamazoo Promise. About 27% reported that there was no change, and 7.3% believed that attitudes had worsened slightly since the Promise was announced.
- ❑ Middle and high school students were also asked to share their perceptions of *change in their peer's motivation to succeed in school*. Nearly 85% of the students indicated that they believe that there was positive change in terms of motivation to succeed. Fifteen percent of the students reported no change, and these responses were more common among high school students.

Results from our student interviews and responses from the open-ended questions on the student survey indicate that students are experiencing improvements in student attitudes, goals, and aspirations as a result of the Kalamazoo Promise. All students interviewed reported at least some positive change in their own aspirations or those of their peers

since the announcement of the Promise. Many also noted related behavioral changes, such as students taking more challenging and advanced courses.

The paper contains rich descriptions from students and educators illustrating the nature and scope of change that is occurring. Common stories from students often focused on improved work ethic, increased interest in school work, and increased plans to enroll in college preparatory classes. Students noted that they and their peers were more ambitious about their plans to go to college, and a number of them noted that they now planned to complete college at a more accelerated pace due to the alleviation of financial burden.

Out of the 41 KPS employees interviewed, a vast majority note that the Promise has had a positive effect on students. Behavioral changes that educators note include increased college-prep conversations, a "willingness to try" postsecondary education, and increased student responsibility in school. Educators also noted that there have been affective or psychosocial changes in students due to the presence and incentive of the Promise. These effects include increased confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of hope.

An increased sense of hope in students was not an anticipated outcome highlighted in the logic model, but this became a prevalent theme in the analysis of qualitative evidence. In terms of student aspiration, educators reported that the Promise had made a positive impact on the goals that students set for themselves, as well as on strategies they employ to reach those objectives. Educators stressed the importance of identifying and pursuing pro-academic goals and linked this with a sense of change in the district and positive student outcomes. Subsequently, educators have seen students taking ownership, reviewing priorities, and raising their own academic expectations.

The Kalamazoo Promise has changed the discourse within the schools, within families, and across the community. This was a commonly reported change by all groups of informants. Generally speaking, the discourse has changed the focus from preparing the traditionally college-bound students to the preparation of all students for postsecondary education. Consistent with what is known about student aspirations, this has affected the "direction and intensity" of students' educational and career pursuits. Teachers may be using the incentive of the Promise to help students connect future career goals

with present academic attitudes and behaviors. A concern repeatedly expressed in interviews is the need to continue to fight the perception that the Promise is “not for everybody.” Doubt or misinformation about the Promise was most prevalent among African American students and students coming from more disadvantaged families.

For some, information about the Kalamazoo Promise scholarship will take time to sink in. The initial notion for some students that “it’s not for me” appears to be changing, but may represent an important challenge for the district as it moves forward in promoting postsecondary access for more and more KPS students. Educators note that this effort benefits from a common language, an indicator of the larger movement to create shared purpose towards a common goal. Day-to-day conversations “chip away” at the perception that this goal remains out of reach for some. Educators also note intentional efforts by the administration to get the word out. These practices may have a positive impact on deep-seated cultural norms and practices that affect college attendance and success.

Conclusion

Early indicators suggest that student aspirations have been positively influenced by the existence of the Kalamazoo Promise. A majority of students and two thirds of educators interviewed report that student attitudes about school work have improved. Around 85% of students interviewed note an increased motivation to succeed in school among their peers. In exploring the student aspiration factor in the high school survey, significant differences were found among groups of students. These differences are consistent with traditional risk factors and previous research. One especially interesting finding is that after accounting for other background variables, we found no difference in student aspirations by race/ethnicity. Another important finding is that when studying various subgroups of students, we consistently saw improvement in student aspirations between 2007 and 2008.

Student aspirations are clearly a multidimensional and complex feature in schools. Educator comments suggest that teachers are increasingly using the Promise as a long-range incentive in classroom interactions with students, motivating students to make cognitive and behavioral adjustments to achieve the identified goal of postsecondary education. Peers

may also be reinforcing pro-academic behaviors, reinforcing the landscape within which youth form and reformulate their educational, career, and life goals. Through a reciprocal effort, the Promise may inspire changes in both the goals that students set for themselves, as well as the intensity with which they pursue their aims.

The findings indicate that the Promise has opened up an opportunity—indeed, it has thrown open a large, and previously impenetrable door. The Promise was announced in 2005 and is still relatively new. Initially, some students felt that it was categorically out of reach, but as educators and students suggest here, these initial changes will progress as students are exposed to the “opportunity” for a longer period of time.

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The Impact of the Kalamazoo Promise on Teachers' Expectations for Students

Introduction and Background

The Kalamazoo Promise, announced in November 2005 and funded through the generous support of anonymous donors, offers free college education at any public state school for all district students who graduate and gain acceptance to a postsecondary institution. This evaluation examines whether the Kalamazoo Promise has the potential to serve as a catalyst for systemic change in the Kalamazoo Public Schools district. As a universal scholarship program that covers tuition and fees, it provides a powerful incentive for diverse stakeholders to work toward a common goal: preparing all students for post-secondary options. While many school reforms seek to alter structures and more tangible aspects of schools, one component of our evaluation is to examine whether the Promise can

exert a positive impact on deep-seated belief systems among key stakeholders (i.e., student aspirations, teacher and parent expectations).

A number of anticipated outcomes related to the Promise have already been studied. Thus far, we have preliminary evidence of increased community support, improved teacher expectations for students, increased enrollments and retention, and improved postsecondary enrollment and attendance rates. Since it will take five or more years before we can expect to see long-term outcomes resulting from the Promise, we have developed an outcomes logic model (see Figure 1) to provide a causal framework that includes short-term and intermediate outcomes linked to the long-term outcomes.

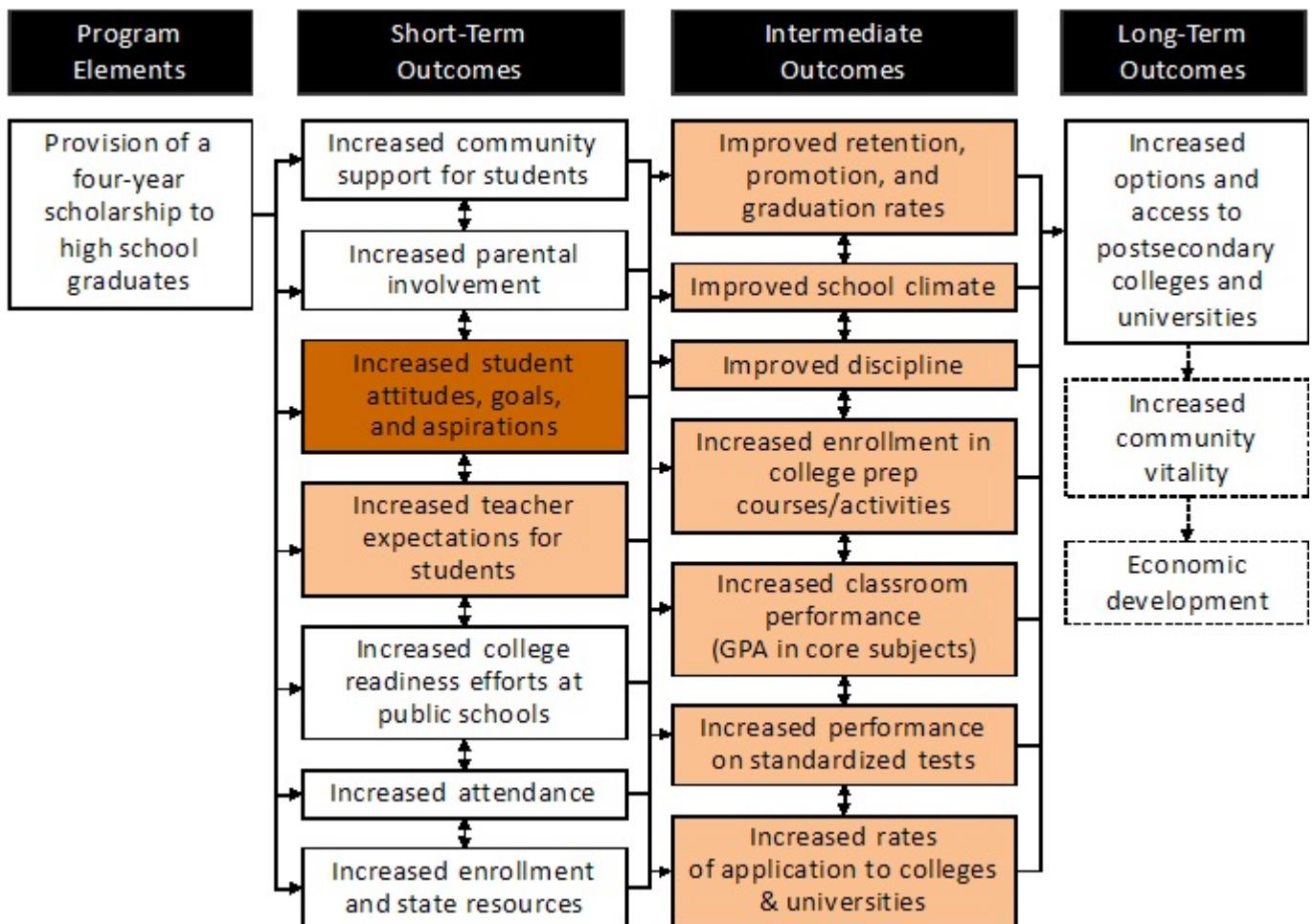


Figure 1. Outcomes Logic Model for the Evaluation of the Kalamazoo Promise

This is the sixth in a series of working papers on the evaluation of the Kalamazoo Promise. This paper centers on changes in student attitudes and behaviors that may result from the implementation of the Promise. Student aspirations are formed in context, and the Promise may alter the landscape within which youth form and reformulate their educational, career, and life goals. Findings in this paper are based on various sources of data that include student surveys, student interviews, and interviews with district principals, guidance counselors, and teachers. This design allows for an examination of student aspirations from multiple perspectives and stakeholders.

The logic model in Figure 1 guided the conceptualization of the data collection and analysis. We were also guided by the existing body of research on student aspirations. Specifically, our analysis for this particular working paper sought to answer the following questions: Do students and educators in KPS perceive changes in student attitudes and behaviors as a result of the implementation of the Promise? Do stakeholders note changes in students' goal identification, pursuit, or both? How do changes in student aspirations affect the other anticipated outcomes and act as an agent of change in the district?

Research on Student Attitudes, Goals, and Aspirations

Student aspirations are an important factor to track in an evaluation of the impact of the Kalamazoo Promise. We know that student aspirations are constructed in, and influenced by, local contexts. The Promise, we believe, is likely to affect the landscape within which youth identify goals, and invest themselves in practical activities to meet their identified objectives. This section reviews the literature on student aspirations and considers student goals, volitional strategies, and the construction of possible selves in context.

Student aspirations involve *inspiration* through identifying short-term and long-term goals, and *ambition* in the form of volitional strategies to maintain momentum towards these goals (Plucker & Quaglia, 1998; Schallert, Reed, & Turner, 2004). Summarized another way, inspiration refers to value and engagement, while ambition refers to future goals and expectancies. Ambition measures distal goals while inspiration refers to academic emotions, such as excitement, satisfaction, and enjoyment (Plucker, 1996).

Aspirations guide students toward future academic opportunities and therefore influence what they choose to learn in school, and whether they will graduate from high school (Muller, 1997; Walberg, 1989; Yeung & McInerney, 2005). They can also guide future career prospects. Aspirations are a multidimensional and complex phenomenon (Quaglia, 1989; Plucker, 1996; Schallert, et al., 2004), involving affect, cognition and behavior.

Peckrun (2000) proposes a model where several reciprocal influences conspire to promote or inhibit student aspirations and achievement. Initial conditions (i.e., social climate and interpersonal support in the learning environment), task appraisal (i.e., value for task, and perceived autonomy and competence), and academic emotions (e.g., excitement, hope, and satisfaction) all influence the construction and reconstruction of aspirations over the course of students' schooling. Aspirations provide direction for engagement and determine the intensity with which students pursue their educational, career, and life objectives.

Aspirations should be considered a function of embedded contexts that form the ecology of human development (e.g., Rogoff, 1990; Quaglia, 1989; Bronfenbrenner, 1979), nested within the multiple influences on student achievement and experience. Families, peers, teachers, classrooms, schools, and larger social forces can shape students' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Each of these contexts shapes the beliefs, values and ultimately the short-term and long-term goals students adopt for themselves.

Goals are a major component of achievement motivation, and there is a related literature on goal orientations and student achievement. Researchers have identified task-specific goals (i.e., working for good grades), as well as longer-term goal orientations

i.e., ...so that I can go to college), as instrumental in the development of student engagement in learning (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). There is some degree of definitional overlap between student aspirations and goal-orientation; a goal-orientation perspective may approximate a view of volitional strategies directed at the obtainment of a valued outcome (Plucker & Quaglia, 1998). Researchers have identified differential outcomes as students pursue mastery (for the sake of improving skills), performance (for the sake of demonstrating or showing competency), and extrinsic (for the sake of an external reward) goal orientations (Ames, 1992). The Promise may motivate students to alter or reformulate their educational goals by serving as an incentive, or indirectly, as students make cognitive and behavioral adjustments to achieve the identified goal. The benefit of considering positive student outcomes through the lens of goal identification and pursuit, whether from a motivational view or from a student aspiration perspective, is that goals are malleable through intentional policy and practice.

The development of schematic “possible selves” is critical in identifying and pursuing short- and long-term goals (Pizzolato, 2006). It is essential that students create positive conceptual schemes (i.e., me as a college student), as well as procedural schemes (i.e., me as a hard-working high school student so that I can achieve “me as a college student”), to obtain their goals and achieve their aspirations. Harter (1999) considers the progression of self-representations. Students present multiple selves for the varying contexts in their lives, and schools can promote achievement by creating positive academic conditions and aiding students in the development of pro-academic identities (Harter, Bresnick, Bouchey, & Whitesall, 1997).

Factors affecting student aspirations. Trusty, Robinson, Plata, and Ng (2000) studied the interaction between different groups of individual characteristics and predictors of student aspirations. They found that gender was the strongest correlate of aspiration, followed by prior achievement, and socioeconomic status. They further explain that this interaction is conditional on context. In terms of developing aspirations, gender is a critical consideration. Female students tend to report higher aspirations than males. The societal cues provided to females about educational goals and career plans are

often different from those provided for males. In addition, males and females are likely to interpret these cues differently. This gender role socialization can affect both educational and career goal choices (Eccles, 1994).

Ethnicity is also an important consideration in the development of aspirations. In a society that has historical racism and classism, students of color and students of lower socioeconomic status may derive different messages about what their futures hold. For example, students of color may be inclined to respond to institutional racism by viewing academic success as out of their reach and by associating academic success with “acting White” (Pizzolato, 2006; Ogbu, 1992). Disadvantaged neighborhood contexts can negatively affect college aspirations among minority youth (Stewart, Stewart, & Simons, 2007). Some research has found that African American and white students have been shown to have similar aspirations but different levels of achievement (Pitre, 2006), or what researchers have described as “aspiration-discrepancy” (Pizzolato, 2006, p. 59). Latino students’ aspirations have been shown to predict levels of achievement (Yowell, 2000), though postsecondary aspirations for Latino students remain lower than those of their white peers (Mau & Bikos, 2000; Behnke, Piercy, & Diversi, 2004).

Student aspirations are associated with a variety of positive student outcomes such as leadership skills, psychological well-being, and educational attainment (Plucker, 1996). Student aspirations are related to a sense of belonging, and both predict student self-efficacy (Uwah, McMahan, & Furlow, 2008). Quaglia and Fox (2003) propose eight conditions that raise student aspirations: belonging, heroes, a sense of accomplishment, fun and excitement, curiosity and creativity, a spirit of adventure, leadership and responsibility, and confidence to take action. Ultimately, “aspirations for the future provide a valuable source of purpose” (Yeung & McInerney, 2005, p. 540).

This review of the literature illustrates the central role that aspirations can play in the development and academic success of students. The research literature also explains why aspirations may be so impervious to reform efforts that only improve instruction, but do not unlock the door to students’ internalized goals and their perception of self.

Methodology

This paper reports on one piece of a larger puzzle. The puzzle is illustrated by the outcomes logic model (see Figure 1) created to track changes that result from the implementation of the Promise. The paper provides a close look at changes in students' aspirations and goals and considers how these changes are linked to other outcomes identified in the model. This study, consistent with many efforts to assess the quality and effectiveness of social programs, elicits responses from various stakeholders and considers multiple sources of data. This section describes the data collection, sampling information, and analytical methods used in our examination of student attitudes, goals, and aspirations.

Student Surveys

This research relies heavily on student perceptions. These perceptions were assessed through a survey of all three high schools in the school district. The survey was administered in the spring of 2007 and again in the spring of 2008. Surveys contained questions regarding educational experiences as well as questions related to the anticipated short-term and intermediate evaluation outcomes. The survey contained Likert-scale items, multiple choice items, and open-ended questions. Surveys generally took students 12-15 minutes to complete. In total, 1,893 students participated in the survey in 2008, a sample that is large and representative of students in the district. In addition to the high school survey, a number of items were added to a GEAR UP survey, which was administered in two of the three district middle schools in 2008; a total of 867 middle school students participated in this survey.

Interviews with Students and District Employees

To explicate the trends identified in survey responses, the evaluation team conducted interviews with 42 students. To obtain a sample with greater ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, researchers worked with neighborhood associations. These associations, distributed geographically through the city, facilitated interviews by hosting events or

through staff nomination. Students were provided with soft drinks and pizza and received a free university t-shirt for participating in the summer interviews. The median duration of interviews with students was 35 minutes. Seventy-five percent of the students were in district high schools, and 25% attended middle schools. The student interview sample was 57% female and 83% were students of color. Almost 80% of students interviewed reported that they qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. In total, 90% of the students we interviewed reported that they plan to use the Promise in the future.

Interviews were also conducted with 41 educators in the district to see how the Promise may be affecting schools and students. The sample consisted of 12 principals, 9 guidance counselors, and 20 teachers. These interviews, conducted in the spring and summer of 2008, asked about changes in students' attitudes and behavior, as well as other anticipated and unanticipated outcomes. All high school and middle school principals and 6 out of 16 elementary principals participated in interviews. The evaluation design had principals identify potential counselors and teachers who could be invited to participate in an interview. This facilitated efficiency in data collection. This also means that counselors and teachers were not randomly sampled. Two counselors were interviewed from each of the three district high schools, and one from each of the three middle schools. Two to three teachers were interviewed from each high school, two from each of the three middle schools, and one from each elementary school. Interviews were conducted at the schools, and typically lasted 40 minutes, though several lasted over an hour. Twenty nine out of the 41 educators were female and approximately 25% reported ethnic backgrounds other than European-American.

Data Analysis

Surveys from high school and middle school students and interviews with students, teachers, counselors, and principals yielded both qualitative and quantitative data for analysis. The data we collected provided insight into stakeholder

perceptions of the current status and emerging trends that are taking place in the schools.

Qualitative data. With the guiding evaluation questions based on the outcomes logic model and theoretical frame, the evaluation team used focused codes, or codes based on preexisting constructs, to organize the interview data by theme. Specifically, codes were created to track preexisting constructs such as student goals, volitional strategies, and positive student outcomes. Sub-codes were created during the analysis to identify and track emergent themes. These codes were applied to all 41 educator interviews, the 42 student interviews, and the open-ended survey responses. This qualitative analysis was iterative, as researchers triangulated between patterns and associations in interviews,

survey responses, and relevant theoretical and empirical research.

Quantitative data. Initially, we calculated descriptive statistics for each item of interest. For high school survey respondents, we combined related items that measured the same outcome using factor analysis, a statistical technique that groups items together that measure a single construct. Student aspirations were then analyzed in relation to important student demographic factors such as gender and socioeconomic status. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) strategies were employed to explore differences across groups of students, and mean differences and significant relationships are reported.

Findings

In presenting the results from this investigation, we begin with the quantitative findings that are based on ratings that interviewees (e.g., students and KPS employees) were asked to make. These findings show perceptions of changes in students' attitudes toward school work and motivation to succeed. Next we use the student survey data to explore differences across students in terms of student aspirations and to examine changes in student aspirations in relation to the other identified evaluation outcomes. Finally, we present prominent themes identified in the analysis of qualitative data.

In these findings, students speak of constructing educational and career goals in the context shaped by the Promise while educators also comment on their perceptions of student changes and the processes that may lead to these outcomes.

Changes in Students Attitudes, Goals, and Aspirations

The interviews conducted with employees and students from the school district included a combination of open-ended and closed-ended items. Among the closed-ended items, we asked the interviewees to rate the amount of change across a number of specific aspects of the school since the announcement of the Promise. In Figure 2-5, we include the summary of responses from two items that

are related to student aspirations: (1) change in students' attitudes about school work, and (2) change in student motivation to succeed.

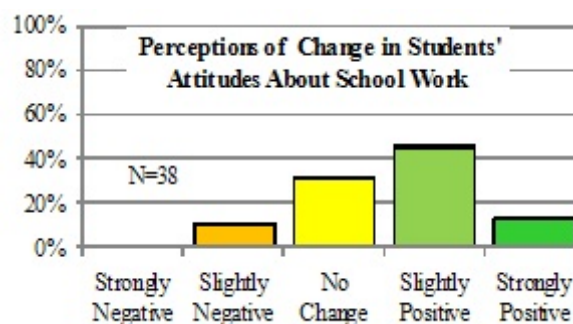


Figure 2. Student Ratings of Change in Students' Attitudes Toward School Work

Based on interviews with 42 students, we found that 58% believed that student's attitudes about school work had improved (i.e., Slightly positive change or Strongly positive change) since the introduction of the Kalamazoo Promise (see Figure 2). Still, 32% of the students believed that there was no change in students' attitudes about school work, and 10% reported that attitudes had actually worsened slightly. Interestingly, the students who perceived no change or negative change were more concentrated in the high schools, especially grades 10-12.

Among the 41 KPS employees we interviewed, we found that 66% believed that student’s attitudes about school work had improved since the introduction of the Kalamazoo Promise (see Figure 3). About 27 percent of the KPS employees reported that there was no change in students’ attitudes of school work, and 7.3% believed that attitudes had worsened slightly since the Promise was announced. On the whole, there were no substantial differences among the perceptions of school administrators, guidance counselors, or classroom teachers.

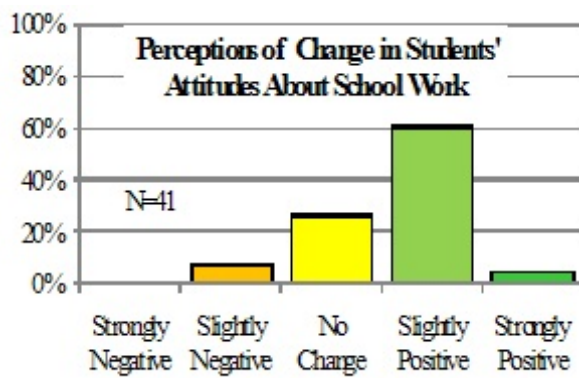


Figure 3. KPS Employee Ratings of Change in Students’ Attitudes Toward School Work

In an earlier working paper (Jones, Miron, & Kelaher Young, 2008), we found that perceptions of teacher expectations had improved in grades K-8 more than at the high school level. In terms of KPS employee’s perceptions of student’ attitudes about school work, there were no pronounced differences by school level (see Figure 4).

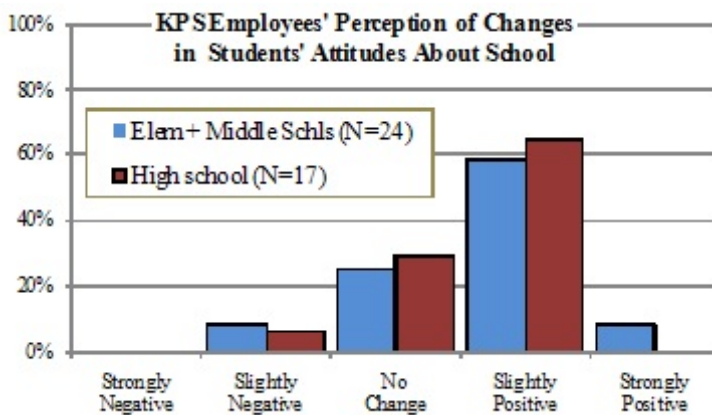


Figure 4. Educator Ratings of Student Attitudes about School

Middle and high school students were also asked to share their perceptions of change in their peer’s motivation to succeed in school (see Figure 5). Nearly 85% of the students indicated that they believed that there was positive change in terms of motivation to succeed. Fifteen percent of the students reported no change, and these responses were more common among high school students.

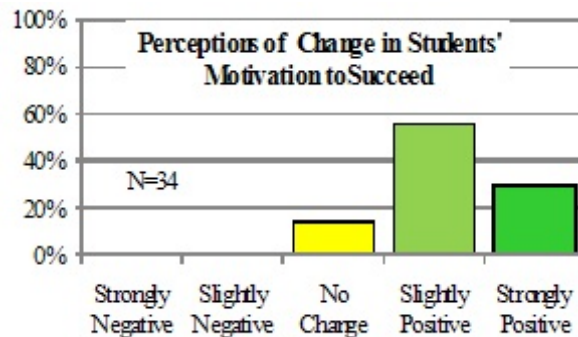


Figure 5. Student Ratings of Change in Their Peer’s Motivation to Succeed

Survey Results

Students were asked to rate the following statements on a scale of 1-5: getting good grades is important to me, I push myself to do better academically, I believe that I can be successful, and going to college is important to my future. In the analysis of survey responses, these items expressed a factor (in other words, they were statistically similar to each other and different from other survey items). This student aspiration factor includes perceptions of academic value, competence, and goals.

We analyzed a variety of predictor variables in relation to this student aspiration factor. These analyses revealed differences in reported levels of aspiration for different groups of students. Significant results include:

- Females are more likely than males to report higher levels of aspiration.
- No statistically significant differences were found by race/ethnic background of students.
- Students who do not qualify for free or reduced-price lunch have higher aspirations.
- Students with higher self-reported grade point averages were more likely to have higher levels of aspiration.

- ❑ There is a positive relationship between the level of awareness about the Promise and student aspirations.
- ❑ Students whose parents have earned a degree are more likely than students whose parents have not to report higher levels of aspiration.
- ❑ Students aspirations were not statistically significant different among grade levels.
- ❑ Self-reported aspirations by students increased from 2007 to 2008. We drew comparisons across several subgroups of students and consistently found higher ratings of student aspiration in 2008 than in 2007.

We further studied the student aspiration factor in relation to a number of other anticipated short-term and intermediate outcomes (see Table 1) by computing the statistical correlation between student aspirations and these related factors. These correlations reveal the importance of increased levels of student aspiration in the larger context.

The strongest relationships are between student aspirations and students’ perceptions of teacher expectations. This finding was explored further in Working Paper #5 (Jones, Miron, & Kelaher Young, 2008). Another statistically significant and positive relationship exists between student aspirations and students’ perceptions of efforts made by the schools to guide and prepare them for college. One other important finding that was statistically significant and positive in nature was the relationship between students’ aspirations and the teacher-student relations

factor, which is a component of school climate. Appendix A includes detailed results for the quantitative analysis.

Student Perceptions of Changes in Students Attitudes, Goals, and Aspirations

Results from our student interviews and responses from the open ended questions on the student survey indicate that students are experiencing improvements in student aspirations as a result of the Kalamazoo Promise. All students interviewed reported at least some positive change in aspirations—either by themselves or by peers—since the announcement of the Promise. Many also noted related behavioral changes, such as students taking more challenging and advanced courses. Below we include a few illustrative examples from students:

A 15-year-old female student at K Central said: “Before, my friend was in regular classes, and now she’s trying to go to advanced classes.”

“Like they take courses that they think will help them out in the future instead of like ones they think would be fun,” said one 15-year-old male Loy Norrix student.

A female Loy Norrix student, age 16 said, “I never picked my classes. I always let the school just decide them for me. I’m going to start picking my classes just because the Promise is coming.”

Table 1. Relationships between Student Aspirations and Other Identified Evaluation Outcomes

<i>Aspirations in relation to:</i>	<i>Standardized Estimates</i>	<i>Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)</i>	<i>Norm Fixed Index/Comparative Fixed Index (NFI/CFI)</i>
Teacher expectations	0.57*	.04	.98
Student motivation to succeed	0.11*	.04	.98
Student behavior	-0.03	.04	.98
Guidance and college preparation	0.44*	.07	.92
Student-peer relations	0.09*	.05	.97
Teacher-student relations	0.32*	.05	.94

* p<0.001

Most students we interviewed were careful to point out that the positive changes they were seeing applied to some, but not all students. Some high school students, according to interviewees, seemed not to care about their futures and continued to disengage from school activities.

When asked how the Promise had affected students' preparation for college, a 15-year-old male at Kalamazoo Central stated: "I'm not affected. I don't know if anybody else is. I always wanted to go to college and it's not really affecting me in my preparation."

"I know people that still don't know what they want to be, and they're not even trying to figure it out," said a Loy Norrix female, age 16. "I know some people that just skip past school and don't even come."

"My friends and I, we're all very driven so we like harder classes and we're already taking harder classes," said a 16-year-old female at Loy Norrix.

"I've been certain for a while that I wanted to [go to college]. Yeah, I think that's mainly my problem. I don't really notice any difference," said a 16-year-old female Kalamazoo Central student.

Goals and strategies. In terms of ambition, or setting goals for the future, a small number of students spoke in reference to their own experience, usually citing increased ambition to pursue a college education at an accelerated pace due to the alleviation of financial burden. Interviewees spoke more extensively about their peers' ambitions, with 23 referring to positive changes in their friends' ambitions as a result of the Promise. At the same time, 10 interviewees stated that at least some students did not experience a change in their ambitions as a result of the Promise; several individuals specified that their friends had ambitious goals even before the Promise was announced. Most prevalent was the notion that the Promise had created the opportunity for postsecondary education, essentially setting or standardizing educational goals:

"They're like yeah, I do have a chance to actually go to college because some people actually didn't think they were going to go to college," a 17-year-old Kalamazoo Central female said. "Because of the Promise I know a lot of my friends think, like, 'Free college, I'm going to try.'"

"At first I wasn't going to go to college, I had no intentions of going to college at all," said a 17-year-old female who attends Phoenix High School. "And then I started thinking about it, and then, because I figured that I wouldn't have money to go, I figured I'd just skip it. But then I read about the Promise."

"More people are actually interested now, seeing that this will be easier for them to go now," said a 15-year-old Kalamazoo Central male.

"Yeah. Some of my friends, like girls, were thinking 'I wasn't thinking about going to college before because I had no money and my parents weren't able to afford it,' but they say they're real fortunate for the Promise and that they want to go to college now that they have an opportunity. More people are talking about it and some people are just like, 'Oh whatever, it's the Promise,' and they just blow it off. But most of them talk about going to college," remarked a 16-year-old female at Phoenix.

"Outside of the fact that they have more chance to go to college because they know that they have the Promise, my personal friends have always been very driven, so they've always had that plan," explained a female 16-year-old at Loy Norrix. "Still, the Promise has opened more doors for them that they didn't know would be available."

"I have always like pulled to go to college and stuff like that, but I want to go even more now that I have the opportunity to use the Promise," asserted a 14-year-old female at Kalamazoo Central.

With this identified goal, then, students speak of marshalling energy toward achieving their objectives. In terms of students' inspiration to engage in present activities, nine students stressed a personal decision to work harder in school as a result of the Promise. According to a 15-year-old male at K Central, "Yeah, I've noticed one guy who, he's not real rich, and he didn't really want to go to college. He was acting up because he figured he couldn't pay for college and stuff and when the Promise came he started acting better and now he's like a B student." Other students share similar sentiments:

"Yeah, they don't like to hang out anymore. They like to be on top of their work," said a 15-year-old female student from the Reach and Teach program.

"Some students never really did their work," said a 14-year-old female student at Loy Norrix. "Now that they know the Promise, they work harder and are more successful since the Promise."

"We do our work more now," explained an 18-year-old male at Loy Norrix.

"We tend to work a little harder to get through school and stuff like that," said a male Loy Norrix student, age 16.

According to one 17-year-old female at Kalamazoo Central, "It seemed like I saw more people dedicated in school and working and all that stuff. I see a lot more people going to college and taking summer classes and just getting so pumped. More than it was before."

Twenty-nine of the students interviewed said that they had noticed an improvement in the work ethic of their peers. Of the twenty interviewees who said that at least some students had not adjusted their work ethic as a result of the Promise, six clarified that students in their peer group had worked hard in school prior to the Promise.

College prep courses. Fourteen respondents cited increased enrollment in college preparatory classes

since the Promise, while eight students noticed no such change. Related to this, several students pointed out underclassmen's schedules allow little room for students to choose their own classes, accounting for at least part of students' inattention in choosing college courses. Sixteen individuals described other specific measures students had taken to increase their preparedness for college.

According to a 15-year-old male at Kalamazoo Central, "It's time to talk about college. If the Promise wasn't here, they wouldn't talk about it, but now it's here so they'd rather use the money to go to college."

"A lot of my friends, they're starting to fill out applications, write letters and things like that to make a college know that's where you want to go," reported a 14-year-old male who attends Kalamazoo Central.

"Yeah, I think there has been a change," said a 16-year-old Kalamazoo Central female. "I know a lot more people applied for the AP History class last year than before, and in my little brother's AP class there's a huge storm of kids applying for that."

Educator Perceptions of Changes in Students Attitudes, Goals, and Aspirations

In this section, we report on educators' perceptions of student attitudes toward school work as well as goal setting and changes in student aspirations across the district. Principals, guidance counselors, and teachers were asked about changes in students' motivation and attitudes about school work. They were not directly asked about aspirations, though many of the responses relating to aspirations and positive student outcomes occurred organically through the larger conversation on changes that are occurring since the announcement of the Promise. The following then, are themes that were compiled across stakeholder responses through the analysis of interview data. We begin with positive student outcomes, and report on perceptions of change in students' goals and strategies, and career aspirations.

Perceptions of student outcomes. Out of the 41 KPS employees interviewed, a vast majority note that the Promise has had positive effects on students. Employees remarked on both behavioral changes and affective/psychosocial aspects of student experience and schooling. Behavioral changes that educators noted include increased college-prep conversations, a “willingness to try” postsecondary education, and increased student responsibility in school. The following are examples of educators noting positive behavioral changes in students:

Changes in the school, I think have been that I hear more conversations about college from parents and from students. There’s more heightened awareness... I’ve noticed if we’re sitting in on a parent-teacher conference, I’ve heard parents say--mention college, mention we want this type of thing where before...the word ‘college’ was not something you heard. (Elementary school principal)

[Q: Do you think students have changed?]
A: I think there are some children that never considered college and now that they have an opportunity to go, they’re considering that and they will try it for a semester or a year. I can’t guarantee that they’re going to stick with it, but I think there are more that are willing to try it than ever before. (High school teacher)

[Q: Has that translated to better grades or better discipline, better behavior?] A: Yes overall. I teach seniors, so seniors get it and they are a lot more aware...I notice even when they come in at the beginning of the senior year...they’re starting to realize that college is coming and that there really is a door that’s opening and it’s also going to close behind them-- they start getting the concept of the Promise. (High school teacher)

Children I think now know that they’re a little responsible for their actions for their education, as much as a fifth grader can know and they seem to understand. They

might not know what it is, but they know it’s something, so they’re a little more responsible for their actions. (Elementary school teacher)

Additionally, educators note that there have been affective or psychosocial changes in students due to the presence and incentive of the Promise. These effects include increased confidence and self-esteem and a sense of hope.

[The Promise] is encouraging students, especially those who think they can just blow it off or those who don’t have the confidence. It is giving students confidence, talking about college and careers. (Elementary school principal)

[Q: Have you noticed any changes since the Promise?] A: Yes, lots of changes. I think there’s a lot more hope and I think that kids there’s a lot more self-concept. They have this feeling that it’s not just about getting out of high school. (High school teacher)

[Q: Can you take me back to what it was like here at the school after the Promise was announced?] A: They knew it was big and there was a lot of excitement once they found out- Wow, they couldn’t believe it... You can see there’s more hope. Families have hope. (Elementary school teacher)

[Q: So what kinds of changes have you seen in this school then since the Promise was announced?] A: As a community liaison and guidance counselor I have had the opportunity to be involved with the immediate impact, the transmission of reality for students and the ultimate reward of Kalamazoo Promise. I’ve seen self-esteem change. I’ve seen the sense of hope increase. I’ve seen confidence rise on the part of students. (Guidance counselor)

An increased sense of hope in students was not an anticipated outcome highlighted in the logic model, but this became a prevalent theme in the analysis of qualitative evidence. In fact, over

one-third of all adult respondents refer to this phenomenon. “Hope” (and other related psychosocial indicators) can play an instrumental role in students’ task appraisals, and how they find autonomy, competence, and a sense of value in their academic pursuits (Peckrun, 2000, Plucker, 1996).

Goals and strategies. In terms of student aspirations, educators reported that the Promise has shown a positive impact, both on the goals that students set for themselves, as well as on volitional strategies in reaching those objectives. Goals give direction to student pursuits and have been shown to lead directly to positive student outcomes (Plucker & Quaglia, 1998; Plucker, 1996; Ames, 1992).

I’ve seen increased ownership of how students allow themselves the prerequisites for the ultimate reward, and how they need to review their values and their priorities—review choices that they make so it will promote and not impair or at least maintain performances and goals. (Guidance counselor)

Most people think that there are things that they’re not going to have in their life or things in categories that do not include them. So, in this particular space, just the common language and everyone telling everyone you, too, can be a part of this, that is pretty powerful in itself...So for us it’s raising the bar in a way that’s helpful to us. It raises the bar to help kids want to challenge themselves. (Secondary school principal)

[Q: How do you think students have changed?] A: There’s more hope. It’s no longer, you graduate from high school is the goal, more the goal now is graduate from college. There’s more hope and there’s higher expectations of themselves. (Elementary school principal)

Educators stressed the importance of identifying and pursuing pro-academic goals and link this with a sense of change in the district and positive student outcomes. The Promise has affected “this particular space.” Subsequently, educators see students taking

ownership, reviewing priorities, and raising their own academic expectations. In addition to the direction of student investment, we were interested in determining stakeholder perceptions of the strategies that student employ in achieving their objectives:

[Q: Tell me how you think students have changed in this school since The Promise was announced.] A: What lingers in my mind from my interactions with the students is that they’re talking about something that is actually worthwhile, of value and not just a passing thing...you get this sense they’ve reevaluated themselves and made an internal decision and a move toward self-improvement, and you get that sense of that person that they’re looking at life a little differently now...It was like “Wow!” It’s like a refocus almost. And I go back to that setting where you’re sitting with somebody and they’re ready to move on in a new direction with new energy. That’s the same sentiment I got from the students; a refocus, an energized feeling. (Guidance counselor)

[Q: So how have the students changed?] A: I talk about it in all my classes...I believe that the kids really know that being here every day is essential. Being involved, being on time, all those social school behaviors are important. It is about being bright, but most of it is about showing up and follow through, ambition in following your goals and setting goals. (Middle school teacher)

The evaluation design is not a prospective or controlled study that allows for causal claims, but these comments support the idea that the Promise is likely having an impact on students in intended and profound ways. Aspirations, in the simplest sense, refer to the direction and intensity of student effort (see Plucker & Quaglia, 1998; Schallert, Reed, & Turner, 2004). If the Promise has truly sparked “an internal decision and a move toward self-improvement,” and has affected students’ goals and “ambition in following goals,” then student aspirations must be considered as an influential mediating variable in the process whereby program inputs affect positive student outcomes. The principal

quoted above also refers to students “looking at life a little differently now.” This may illustrate research that suggests that students’ motivation and educational plans can be positively affected as youth create possible “academic selves,” or integrate role identities with their personal identities (see Pizzolato, 2006; Roeser & Lau, 2002).

Career goals. As noted, the Promise appears to making a positive impact on student aspirations, and several educator responses suggest that it may also be affecting students’ career and life goals:

Let me tell you what I hear. It comes up when the students are talking about their career goals. One of the things we focus on is “beginning with the end in mind,” which means: Where do you want to be? Some might want to be a teacher, some might want to be an athlete, a nurse. And so, if that’s what you want to be, this is how you get there. When we talk like that, then they talk about the finances: “Okay, I can do this because I have access to this Promise.” When those conversations go on, then the reality kicked in that I really don’t have to foot the bill for this, so I really can do what I want to do, I can be what I want to be. (Secondary school principal)

It’s about getting out of high school with somewhere to go and you could do something other than say “Do you want fries with that?” for a life path. I really noticed a big difference...a lot more direction and desire to graduate so they could go somewhere after here, most all the kids—not just kids who couldn’t afford college. A lot of kids have a lot of hope of going to one of the state universities. Huge difference in that. (High school teacher)

I met with a young man this morning, and my conversation with him was all based on trust—him trusting what I was sharing with him. He was talking about wanting to be a police officer, but he doesn’t like police officers because he doesn’t trust police officers. “But I want to be a police officer. What do I need?” And I shared with

him...ninety-something percent of the police officers have bachelors degrees, so they’ve been to college...So he thought, yeah, I want to go to college. So you mean to tell me police officers have degrees? Yes, they have four years...and he said, “Well okay, I’m going to go in that direction.” (Secondary school principal)

Changing Discourse about College

The Kalamazoo Promise has changed the discourse within the schools, within families, and across the community. This was a commonly reported change by all groups of informants. Generally speaking, the discourse has changed the focus from preparing the traditionally college-bound students to the preparation of all students for postsecondary education.

They also encourage each other. Hey, you know what? Just get done and you can go to college next year. A lot of times the students are getting on each others’ cases about it. They don’t want to see their friends wasting it. (Elementary and Secondary School Teacher)

[Q: How do you think students have changed since the Promise?] A: I think they have a more clear idea how important their education is now and for their future, so I think we’ve worked really hard to have good focus; students now focus on the importance of learning all along. (Elementary School Teacher)

[Q: How do teachers perceive the Promise?] A: I think it’s kind of a talking point for us...to try to encourage children...You have this opportunity. For me and I think one of the things Dr. Rice is really trying to promote is to make it a reciprocal paradigm to try to approach the kids with this idea that there is a reciprocity—that you are being promised this, but you promise this in turn...as opposed to just, this is an entitlement you have. (Middle School Teacher)

[Q: Did you do anything internally to help them realize it was for them?] A: Well, first it was just conversation, just trying to chip away at that perception that “it’s not for me,” “I’m not that kind of kid,” “My family didn’t go to college and I’m not going to college.” It was just conversation trying to chip away at that. Again since we had the facts and the media and things to back it up, then the kids started believing it. And then from there the staff just talked about college more. (High School Guidance Counselor)

There is now a common language for the entire community and the school system. People know what the Promise means, so we have a connection to everyone now and available of something for everyone to be able to have.... Most people think that there are things that they’re not going to have in their life or things in categories that do not include them. So in this particular space just the common language and everyone telling everyone you, too, can be a part of this. That is pretty powerful in itself. (Secondary School Principal)

We would talk about college before, but it started meaning more; this was for real, and we have college people coming in now and we make it a lot more real. (High School Guidance Counselor)

I agree a lot with what Dr. Rice said. It’s not a carnival prize. You can’t just tell kids, you’re going to get free college someday so you should do this. It should not be an extrinsic motivator. “You’re a hard worker and that’s something that’s great..” “Let’s put your hard work to use with all of these assignments so that you keep getting better so that you can go to college someday.” (Elementary School Teacher)

It didn’t really take them that long to embrace it [the Promise] and say, “Yeah, this is a possibility.” I mean, kids that maybe wanted to go to college or had a small part of

them that thought maybe that’s something I want to do, but were just overwhelmed either academically, economically—their own perceptions that they weren’t good enough to go to college, facing all those hurdles. Now we have kids all over the place talking about where they’re going to college... I was really surprised that the kids embraced it as fast as they did. That was our major concern initially—that the kids wouldn’t be able to wrap themselves around the possibility that they could go to school for free. (High School Guidance Counselor)

There are still students that believe that “this still doesn’t include me.” More drum beating and more usage across the school system of that common language can help people want to investigate “what I get a chance to have,” investigate how “I might get there,” and then they become interested in the process. (Secondary School Principal)

I see it as teachers using it [the Promise]... to get kids to understand even at the youngest of ages, the importance of college. (Elementary School Teacher)

The elementary kids... those little kids have gotten some new vocabulary words in their whole vernacular. They talk about college, they talk about university—they talk about what that may do for them. Now some of these kids don’t have families that probably have gone to college themselves, but their families are so excited with their kids. They’re talking to their young ones. Their teachers are talking to them about this whole experience of what they can be. (High School Teacher)

Consistent with what is known about student aspirations, this has affected the “direction and intensity” of students’ educational and career pursuits. Teachers may be using the incentive of the Promise to help students connect future career goals with present academic attitudes and behaviors.

Discussion

Beyond the previous analysis of how the Promise is affecting perceptions of change in student goals and aspirations, several related themes emerged in the analysis of interview data. The Promise quickly changed the equation for local youth in multiple ways, informing the culture within which educational, career, and life goals are formulated. Educator comments suggest several possible processes that may contribute to change in the district. A salient theme is how the Promise has expanded opportunities for youth:

Dr. Rice’s drive for being college-ready has permeated everybody. That the whole point of this education is to give them the best preparation, and that should include giving them the opportunity to go to college. It isn’t that everyone must go, but that they have the opportunity. (Elementary School Principal)

Student perceptions of these expanded opportunities may lead them to adjust their aspirations accordingly. Educator comments suggest that teachers are increasingly using the Promise as a long-range incentive in classroom interactions with students, and peers who recognize these opportunities may be reinforcing pro-academic behaviors. Through a reciprocal effort, the Promise may inspire changes in both the goals that students set for themselves, as well as the intensity with which they pursue their aims.

In exploring teacher expectations in Working Paper #5, we found an enthusiasm by educators for the “real change,” or a time when the Promise, and supporting district practices, take root and affect pro-academic changes in the district and community. We again noticed these remarks when we were analyzing the data related to student aspirations:

So one thing I’m really interested in as we look at the longevity of the particular experiment is how these younger kids will respond, and certainly I’m hoping that if discussions here have increased and the frequency and the depth of discussion here about college has increased, then in certainly elementary school they’ll have a number of

years more where it’s just sort of this given that I can go, and I can’t wait for that to hit Loy Norrix. I can’t wait to have that group of kids who is like since they were in kindergarten or first grade or third grade...I can’t wait for that. (High school teacher)

The difference will come in five or six years, with those students who have a chance to make changes to their classes and aspirations. (High school teacher)

The impacts of the Promise are subtle and complex, and several instrumental variables and processes must be considered. Given the frequency of response, it appears that one process may be a kind of systemic change inspired by younger students who grow up with college on their radar—supported through intentional district practices—populate the secondary schools with a directed set of academic goals, aspirations, and attitudes.

A concern repeatedly expressed in interviews is the need to continue to fight the perception that the Promise is “not for everybody.” Doubt or misinformation about the Promise was most prevalent among African American students and students coming from more disadvantaged families. A 17-year-old Phoenix female said:

I don’t know. My mom thinks it’s not going to happen for me when it comes around. This is going to be like people giving her the run around and stuff like that. Because she’s been hearing a little stuff about how there are only 200 scholarships, or like she told me they’re going to give us a test and then only 550 of us get it out of all the high schools in Kalamazoo. They said that if you don’t have an overall GPA of over 3.8 then you won’t get it. She believes this, too.

Many educators also comment on this phenomenon:

My biggest observation with the Promise was the perception of the students when they realize that they were included. Initially the

day, and probably a few weeks after, we all heard it, but it was like our kids didn't think it had anything to do with them. It was another, you know, smart kids and rich kids; Norrix and Central kids—it's for them. First our kids didn't even really think twice about it, but then a change did take place and the kids started to realize that it meant them, too. Fortunately, people from the administration including Mr. Jorth [the Promise administrator] were willing to help make that a reality by stressing that [the Promise] is also for students in alternative education.... As soon as the kids saw that it was for real and that it meant them, then it really did make a difference. (Guidance counselor)

A policy initiative of this scale takes time, directed effort, and persistence in implementation. The initial notion for some students that "it's not for me" appears to be changing, but may represent an important challenge for the district as it moves forward in promoting postsecondary access for more and more KPS students. Educators note that this effort benefits from a common language, an indicator of the larger movement to create shared purpose toward a common goal. Day-to-day conversations chip away at the perception that this goal remains out of reach for some. Educators also note intentional efforts by the administration to get the word out. These practices may positively influence deep-seated cultural norms and practices that affect college attendance and success.

Conclusion

Early indicators suggest that student aspirations appear to have moderately benefitted from the announcement and implementation of the Kalamazoo Promise. A majority of students and two-thirds of educators interviewed report that student attitudes about school work have improved. Of students interviewed, 85% note an increased motivation to succeed in school on the part of their peers. In exploring the student aspiration factor in the high school survey, significant differences were found among groups of students. These differences are consistent with traditional risk factors and previous research. The student aspiration factor is also correlated with other evaluation outcomes, notably with perceptions of guidance/college preparation, teacher expectations, and teacher-student relationships.

Stakeholders report on changes in student goals and aspirations, but speak of changes that result from the implementation of the Promise more broadly. In the discussion, we note how the Promise has opened up an opportunity—it has, in a way, thrown open a large, and (previously) impenetrable door. Some students initially felt that college was categorically out of reach, and educators and students suggest that there are initial changes in progress as students are exposed to the "opportunity" for a longer period of time. As one educator notes:

That's the cool thing about the Kalamazoo Promise. It's not just for this particular generation, because when these kids go to college, that's going to be the inspiration for them to want their kids to go to college, so it has these long-reaching effects. (High School Teacher)

The Promise was announced in 2005 and has been in place for only a few years. Such a policy has the potential to affect positive changes in students' social, academic, and career plans. Student aspirations are affected by proximal factors in the school environment as well as distal factors such as the Promise, which may radically alter the postsecondary landscape for youth. It will be necessary to continue to track changes in student experience and achievement over time to get a more developed sense of how this college-prep program is lifting student aspirations for academic success.

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Appendix A

Details from the Statistical Analyses

In this appendix, we include data on mean differences in the student aspirations factor across sub-groups in the school district.

Year

<i>Year</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
2007	982	4.416	.725	8.105 (1, 2675), p=.004
2008	1,695	4.494	.656	

Gender

<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
Female	1,238	4.366	.734	50.768 (1, 2671), p=.000
Male	1,434	4.552	.622	

Ethnicity

<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
White	1,051	4.493	.638	2.290 (5, 2609), p=.043 No post hoc significance
Black	983	4.482	.680	
Hispanic	229	4.405	.722	
Asian	63	4.484	.810	
Native American.	42	4.268	.810	
Other	227	4.377	.769	

Free- and Reduced-Priced Lunch Status

<i>FLR Status</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
NoFRL	1,315	4.524	.634	102.569 (4, 2546), p=.000 A>B, C, D, E B>C, D, E C>D, E D>E=1663
FRL	1,320	4.413	.719	

Mean Grade Point Average

<i>GPA</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
AA/A&B	1,231	4.671	.529	102.569 (4, 2546), p=.000 A>B, C, D, E B>C, D, E C>D, E D>E
B/B&C	720	4.481	.648	
C/C&D	426	4.169	.751	
D/D&E	148	3.948	.754	
E	26	3.353	1.106	

Level of Awareness of Promise

<i>Level of awareness</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
1 Not at all familiar	51	4.221	.959	23.283 (4, 2639), p=.000 5>1,2,3,4 4>2,3
2	132	4.194	.918	
3 Somewhat	475	4.292	.714	
4	869	4.484	.639	
5 Very familiar	1,117	4.577	.613	

Female Guardian holds a College Degree

<i>Degree status</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
Yes	1,213	4.548	.623	12.320 (3, 2597), p=.000 Yes>No, I don't know
No	1,000	4.424	.718	
I don't know	369	4.328	.741	
Not applicable	19	4.382	.694	

Male Guardian holds a College Degree

<i>Degree status</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
Yes	973	4.570	.611	14.083 (4, 2590), p=.000 Yes>No, I don't know 14.083 (4, 2590), p=.000
No	1,075	4.435	.702	
I don't know	480	4.380	.707	
Not applicable	66	4.207	.939	

Grade Level Results

<i>Grade level</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
9th	860	4.431	.688	.000 (1, 2616), p=.999
10th	680	4.453	.720	
11th	650	4.509	.653	
12th	483	4.488	.657	

Employment

<i>Employment</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
No	1,970	4.468	.682	.000 (1, 2616), p=.999
Yes	648	4.468	.687	