

Appendix C

Selected programs that have been proven effective at improving graduation rates

Accelerated middle schools are self-contained academic programs designed to help middle school students who are behind grade level catch up with their age peers. If these students begin high school with other students their age, the hope is that they will be more likely to stay in school and graduate. The programs serve students who are one to two years behind grade level and give them the opportunity to cover an additional year of curriculum during their one to two years in the program. Accelerated middle schools can be structured as separate schools or as schools within a traditional middle school.

One study of accelerated middle schools met the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards, and two studies met them with reservations. The three randomized controlled trials included more than 800 students in school districts in Georgia, Michigan, and New Jersey.

Accelerated middle schools were found to have potentially positive effects on staying in school (average 18 percentile points) and positive effects on progressing in school (average 35 percentile points). <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/dropout/ams>

ALAS, an acronym for “Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success” that means “wings” in Spanish, is a middle school intervention designed to address student, school, family, and community factors that affect dropping out. Each student is assigned a counselor who monitors attendance, behavior, and academic achievement; provides feedback; and coordinates students, families, and teachers. Counselors also serve as advocates for students and intervene when problems are identified. Students are trained in problem-solving skills, and parents are trained in parent-child problem solving, how to participate in school activities, and how to contact teachers and school administrators to address issues. One study of *ALAS*, involving 94 high-risk Latino students entering seventh grade in one urban junior high school in California, met the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards.

ALAS was found to have potentially positive effects on staying in school (average 42 percentile points) and potentially positive effects on progressing in school at the end of the intervention (ninth grade)(average 19 percentile points). <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/dropout/alas>

Talent Search aims to help low-income and first-generation college students (those whose parents do not have four-year college degrees) complete high school and gain access to college through a combination of services designed to improve academic achievement and increase access to financial aid. Services include test taking and study skills assistance, academic advising, tutoring, career development, college campus visits, and financial aid application assistance.

Two studies of *Talent Search* met What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards with reservations—one conducted in Texas and another in Florida. Together, the studies included about 5,000 students.

Talent Search was found to have potentially positive effects on completing school (average 17 percentile points). <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/dropout/talent%5Fsearch>