

**YEAR 2 EVALUATION OF CITY YEAR NEW YORK'S  
WHOLE SCHOOL WHOLE CHILD INITIATIVE—  
Final Report**

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## I. Overview

City Year, founded in 1988, works to promote the positive development of youth, ages 17 to 24, by engaging them in service to schools and communities around the country. City Year is unique among national youth-serving nonprofit organizations in that it focuses on promoting both the positive development of its young adults—known as corps members—and the individuals and communities that corps members serve. In the mid-2000's, City Year developed a school-based program that addresses the educational, civic, and social needs of urban youth who are at risk of dropping out of school before graduation. The resulting Whole School Whole Child (WSWC) model emphasizes literacy skill development, civic engagement, and the creation of a school climate that supports high achievement and positive youth development. City Year corps members at WSWC schools are expected to serve as positive role models and facilitators of active learning opportunities for elementary-grades youth.

The WSWC model places corps members in schools where they act both as extensions of a school's instructional staff as well as positive role models by establishing informal "near peer" relationships with elementary-grades students. These corps members are led by a team leader (often a second-year City Year volunteer). The team leader works with a City Year Liaison—a member of the school's administration—and other school leaders to coordinate City Year's work within their school. Although the work of each City Year team may vary somewhat from school to school, all WSWC City Year teams share the following three central goals of the model initiative: (1) to improve the school climate, (2) to improve student literacy, and (3) to foster positive youth development and civic engagement among students. Within each of those broad goals, City Year teams focus on achieving some very specific outcomes over time, including the following:

### Short-term outcomes

- Students show improved performance in English/Language Arts and literacy
- Students show improved school attendance
- Students show improved behavior (decrease negative behaviors, increase positive behaviors)<sup>1</sup>
- Students show improved performance in math<sup>1</sup>

### Intermediate outcomes

- Students have a growth-mindset; they feel capable and committed to their learning and effort.
- Students have an improved connection to school
- Students are community-minded

### Longer-term outcomes

- Students graduate from high school
- Students are college ready and job competitive
- Students have a strong civic identity

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<sup>1</sup> Not yet part of the WSWC model, but being developed as a prototype; adoption planned in FY12.

The WSWC model was first piloted in seven schools in 2007-08. In 2010-11, approximately 112 teams in 19 cities implemented the model. During the 2010-11 school year, City Year New York (CYN Y) deployed teams of corps members in 20 schools—14 elementary and 6 middle schools—throughout the city to implement the WSWC model.

## Evaluation of WSWC in New York City

In 2009, CYN Y contracted with Policy Studies Associates (PSA) to evaluate the WSWC model among third- through fifth-graders in a sample of four schools. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess WSWC implementation in the sampled schools and to measure the effects of the model on school climate, student civic engagement, and student literacy. The study found that, in their efforts to improve their schools' climate for learning, City Year teams built positive relationships with school staff and students and implemented engaging school-wide programming. Indeed, aspects of the WSWC model, such as Bringing Books to Life and other school climate improvement efforts resonated in schools. In addition, literacy-tutoring participants moved closer to targeted reading benchmarks during the course of the school year, and student participants reported that CYN Y tutoring helped them improve their reading skills.

In 2010, CYN Y again contracted with PSA to describe the implementation, outcomes, and impact of the WSWC model, answering central questions about the effectiveness of the model in improving student-level attitudes toward academic learning and civic engagement and also improving student literacy. The evaluation is designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of the implementation, effectiveness, outcomes, and impacts of the literacy tutoring and Starfish Corps components of the WSWC model; its study sample includes 13 of the 14 elementary schools that have implemented the WSWC model in New York City<sup>2</sup> and compares student literacy outcomes to the corresponding outcomes of a matched comparison group of students who attend schools that are similar in terms of their learning environments<sup>3</sup> but that do not participate in the CYN Y program and have not implemented the WSWC model.

The study design is organized around the following research questions:

- To what extent are the literacy and civic engagement aspects of the WSWC model being implemented as intended? What are the common program features among the 13 sampled elementary schools and to what extent does WSWC implementation vary across schools?
- What outcomes in attitudes toward civic engagement and academic learning are achieved among students participating in Starfish Corps?
- What literacy outcomes, including perceptions of reading skills and overall reading performance, are achieved among students receiving literacy tutoring

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<sup>2</sup> One of the elementary schools refused to participate in the study.

<sup>3</sup> As measured by the New York City Department of Education 2010 Learning Environment Survey.

through CYNV? To what extent do the literacy outcomes across the 13 elementary schools vary by students' exposure to tutoring services? To what extent do literacy outcomes vary by corps member team quality and by corps member efficacy and level of satisfaction?

- How do students' literacy skills compare to those of students in un-served conditions?

To answer these questions, the evaluation assessed program implementation, participant outcomes, and program impact, as described in the following design plan.

## **Sample Selection**

Because student performance is strongly linked to students' demographic and educational characteristics, accurately measuring the effect of literacy tutoring on the academic performance of participating students requires the comparison of participating students to non-participating students who share similar demographic, educational, and performance characteristics. Accordingly, we selected a sample of non-participants from among schools that share similar demographic and performance characteristics to schools with WSWC, as well as similar scores on the New York City Department of Education's (DOE's) Learning Environment Survey. Specifically, we matched the WSWC literacy-tutoring recipients to non-participants who shared similar characteristics including: prior performance on the DOE English language arts (ELA) test (grades 3-8); school attendance; race/ethnicity, gender, grade level, special education eligibility, and English Language Learner status.

We employed propensity score matching to identify the ideal match between participating and non-participating students. With propensity matching, potential comparison cases are selected one-by-one from a pool of eligible comparison cases in order to minimize the "distance" between program cases and the selected comparison cases. "Distance" refers to the overall difference in group means on the matching variables, which might include prior achievement, race, and socioeconomic status. The procedure is an automated iterative process with possible replacement of potential matches if a different set of matches is identified in later iterations that will produce an overall reduced "distance" between the two groups. The propensity score method reduces all observed student performance and demographic characteristics into one indicator—the propensity score of being an WSWC literacy tutoring recipient—for all students in the schools.

The size of the treatment group varied by school, partly because participation rates in Starfish Corps and literacy tutoring varied by school size, and partly because of uneven efforts within the schools to gain parent consent for evaluators to access student data. In the end, parent consent forms were collected for approximately 500 students who participated in either Starfish Corps or received literacy tutoring across the 13 schools participating in the study. An expanded discussion of the process used to identify the comparison group of non-participants is included in Chapter IV of this report.

## Data Collection

City Year administered end-of-year surveys to teachers and principals/school liaisons in each of the 13 WSWC schools included in the study. The surveys, designed and administered by City Year headquarters, were sent by email to 222 teachers and 52 principals/liaisons. Surveys were completed by 190 teachers and 40 principals/liaisons, for response rates of 86 and 77 percent, respectively. In addition, 148 corps members completed online surveys at the beginning of their service year, at mid-year, and at the end of their service year. These surveys were also designed and administered by staff at City Year headquarters.

Corps members at each of the 13 schools administered a survey—designed by City Year headquarters but slightly modified by PSA—to students participating in one-on-one literacy tutoring activities and/or Starfish Corps. According to participation data tracked by corps members, 1,142 students in the 13 schools were participating in either Starfish Corps or received literacy-tutoring services during the 2010-11 school year. Parent consent forms were collected for 544 students or 48 percent of students who participated in City Year programming. Ultimately, 449 students completed a survey, representing approximately 39 percent of all students participating in the WSWC initiative.

Site visits to four of the 13 WSWC schools were conducted between April and May of 2011. During these one-day visits, PSA staff conducted interviews with school administrators, teachers, and team leaders, and conducted focus groups with 3-4 corps members in each of the four schools.

Finally, we worked successfully with the New York City DOE to obtain student-level demographic and performance data. The student-level data we obtained included yearly test scores, number of years continuously enrolled in current school, bilingual education status, special education status, and whether students were eligible to receive free or reduced-price school lunches.

## Analysis

Our analyses encompassed both the quantitative and qualitative data collected for this study. Our quantitative analyses consisted of building scales, conducting descriptive analyses, conducting exploratory cross-tabulations, and developing multivariate models. We drew on the qualitative site-visit data to analyze the connections linking school context, program implementation, and student outcomes.

**Scale construction.** Data from teacher, principal, and corps member surveys were used to create scales or indices that measured each of the following: (1) the quality of the corps member teams; (2) teacher satisfaction with and perceptions of the quality and effectiveness of CYNV services; and (3) corps member efficacy and satisfaction. After identifying items that are theoretically associated with the construct to be measured, we conducted analyses of these items. Three statistics were considered in selecting items for inclusion in the indices—the inter-item correlation coefficient, Cronbach’s alpha, and item-total correlations. Selected items were then added together to create each index score. Altogether, two indices were created for corps

member team quality (preparation, training, and support; and leadership and cohesiveness); one index for teacher satisfaction with CY services; and one index for corps member efficacy and satisfaction. (See Appendix for further details regarding the definition of each of these indices.)

*Descriptive and explanatory analyses.* Data in this report include descriptive statistics from surveys and City Year’s participation records. We explored the relationships in these data using independent samples t-test plus analysis of variance (ANOVA) for continuous variables and chi-square tests for categorical variables. Where statistically significant differences were found (using the threshold of  $p < 0.05$ ), we computed an effect size to measure the magnitude or strength of the finding. The statistical tests and measures of effect size used in analysis were varied based on the properties of the data analyzed. For analyses of continuous variables, we computed a Cohen’s  $d$  measure of effect. For categorical variables we calculated a Cramer’s  $V$  effect. Conventions for educational research suggest that effect size values between 0.10 and 0.20 indicate a “meaningful” association, 0.21 and 0.50 indicate an “important” association, and values of 0.51 or higher indicate an “impressive” association (Cohen, 1988; Lipsey, 1990).

## Summary of Findings

- Overall, the vast majority of students who participated in Starfish Corps (two-thirds to over three-fourths of those reporting) “agreed a lot” that the program had a positive effect on their attitudes, behaviors, and level of civic engagement. Survey data suggest that students who participated in a wider variety of Starfish Corps activities were more likely to believe that the program had a positive effect on their attitudes, behaviors, and level of civic engagement. Survey data also suggest that students who attended schools where the Corps member teams had a higher overall rating with respect to corps member training and preparation also were more likely to believe that Starfish Corps had a positive effect on their attitudes, behaviors, and level of civic engagement.
- Most teachers agreed that the literacy tutoring provided by City Year corps members helped students in myriad ways. Almost all teachers who responded to the survey agreed that literacy tutoring helped students improve in areas critical to school success, including improving their students’ active engagement in learning (92 percent), their confidence in their ability to learn (91 percent), their English/language arts performance (90 percent), their motivation to learn (89 percent), and the time students spent on learning tasks (86 percent). During site visit interviews, teachers said they noticed positive changes in their students who participated in literacy tutoring.
- The majority of students who received City Year tutoring services—and who responded to the survey—generally agreed “a lot” or strongly that City Year helped them be good readers and enjoy reading more. Survey data suggest that students who participated in a wider variety of activities during their tutoring

sessions were more likely to believe that literacy tutoring had a strong, positive effect on their reading skills.

- Participating in literacy tutoring did not have a significant effect on students' test scores. Even so, controlling only for prior ELA test scores, the number of hours spent in literacy tutoring among students receiving City Year tutoring services had a small positive effect on students' test scores in 2011.

## II. Implementation of WSWC

In 2010-11, implementation of the Whole School Whole Child model in the 13 schools included in this study was relatively uniform. That is, every school was assigned a City Year team made up of 10-12 young adults and received a range of City Year services that included afterschool activities such as Starfish Corps, literacy tutoring and support, and classroom and school-based assistance. Still, within this broad model framework, implementation of the WSWC model varied across schools. For example, corps member teams in each school took differing approaches to organizing their work, especially in terms of selecting specific activities for Starfish Corps. In addition, the structure of literacy tutoring sessions and school climate activities was often dictated by the needs of individual schools, as defined by the school leadership. For example, corps members sometimes provided “in-class support,” in which they were assigned to a specific teacher and worked in that classroom for the majority of the day, or they floated throughout the school and, as appropriate, worked with students from multiple classrooms by pulling them out of class. With respect to program administration, some teams assigned individual corps members to lead an area of activity, such as Starfish Corps. In addition, corps members sometimes had individual or group planning time during the school day or after school, and sometimes met with classroom teachers to discuss instructional activities and student progress.

The following sections describe the types of City Year services and activities provided in the WSWC schools, including the services and activities that corps member teams offered throughout the schools as well as those they offered directly in the classrooms. In addition, this chapter describes the quality of the corps member teams assigned to each school with respect to their background and experience; their preparation, training, and school-based support; and their leadership strength and cohesiveness.

### City Year Services and Activities

*Principal/liaison<sup>4</sup> survey data suggest that City Year teams offered schools a broad array of services and activities—including parent and family engagement, positive behavior programming, and attendance monitoring and coaching—and that the number and types of those services and activities did not vary significantly across the 13 schools participating in the WSWC initiative in 2010-11.* As shown in Exhibit 1, the vast majority of principals reported that CY teams provided physical/community service projects or service learning programs (89 percent); in-school academic tutoring (89 percent); parent and family engagement (78 percent); positive behavior programming (78 percent); whole-class academic support (78 percent); and in-school extra-curricular clubs/activities or enrichment activities (72 percent). Approximately two-thirds of principals reported that their corps member teams also provided attendance monitoring and coaching (67 percent); capacity building projects (61 percent); afterschool

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<sup>4</sup> A survey was administered to all administrators within a school who had some “official” connection to City Year programming. That is, in some schools, the principal was not necessarily the “official” or point person for managing City Year work. For example, in some schools, the afterschool partners were the best or most knowledgeable respondent regarding City Year afterschool activities.



academic or homework support (61 percent); and Starfish Corps (61 percent). Only support for transition or non-classroom times was reported as a corps member team activity in fewer than half the schools.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Principal/liaison reports of the services and activities that corps members provide**  
*(N=18 principals/liaisons)*

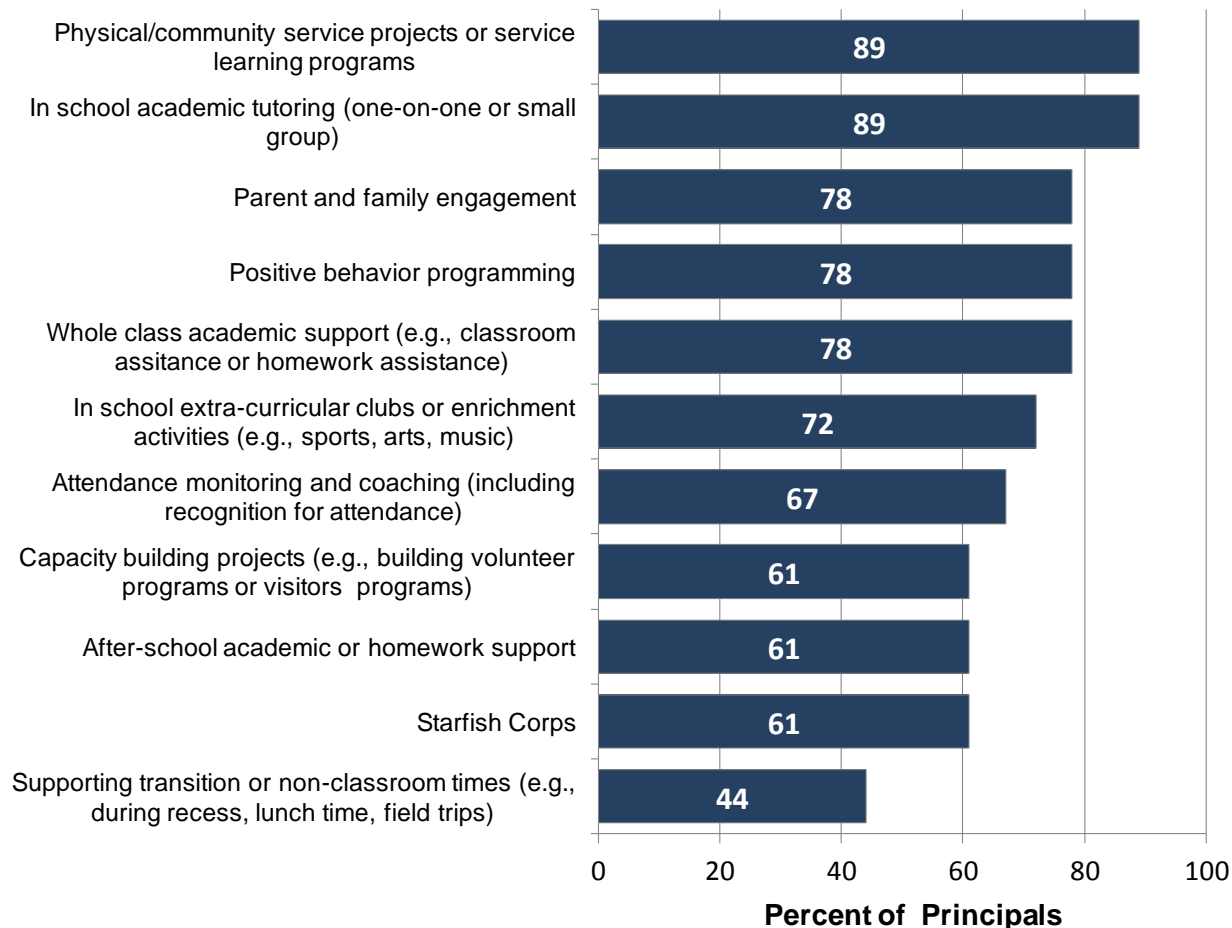


Exhibit reads: Eighty-nine percent of principals/liaisons reported that City Year corps members provided physical/community service projects or service learning programs in their schools.  
 Source: Principal/liaison EOY Survey, Question 4

*At the classroom level, the types of activities and services that corps members provided varied by classroom and by school. That is, not every teacher in every school reported receiving the same types of corps member services and activities in their classrooms, suggesting that the WSWC initiative is not uniformly implemented at the classroom level.* As shown in Exhibit 2, beyond one-on-one or small group literacy tutoring services, teachers varied widely in their reports of the types of services and activities corps members provided in their classrooms. This reflects the variety of programming options that City Year New York has been

experimenting with in developing the WSWC model. That is, not every corps member team provides every school with the same set of services at this point in time. While City Year considers and tests the full range of service options that it has the capacity to offer every school, some schools will receive behavior coaching and mentoring support while others will not. Similarly, some schools will receive math one-on-one or small group tutoring support while others will not.

**Exhibit 2**  
**Teacher reports of corps member activities in their classrooms**  
*(N=115 teachers)*

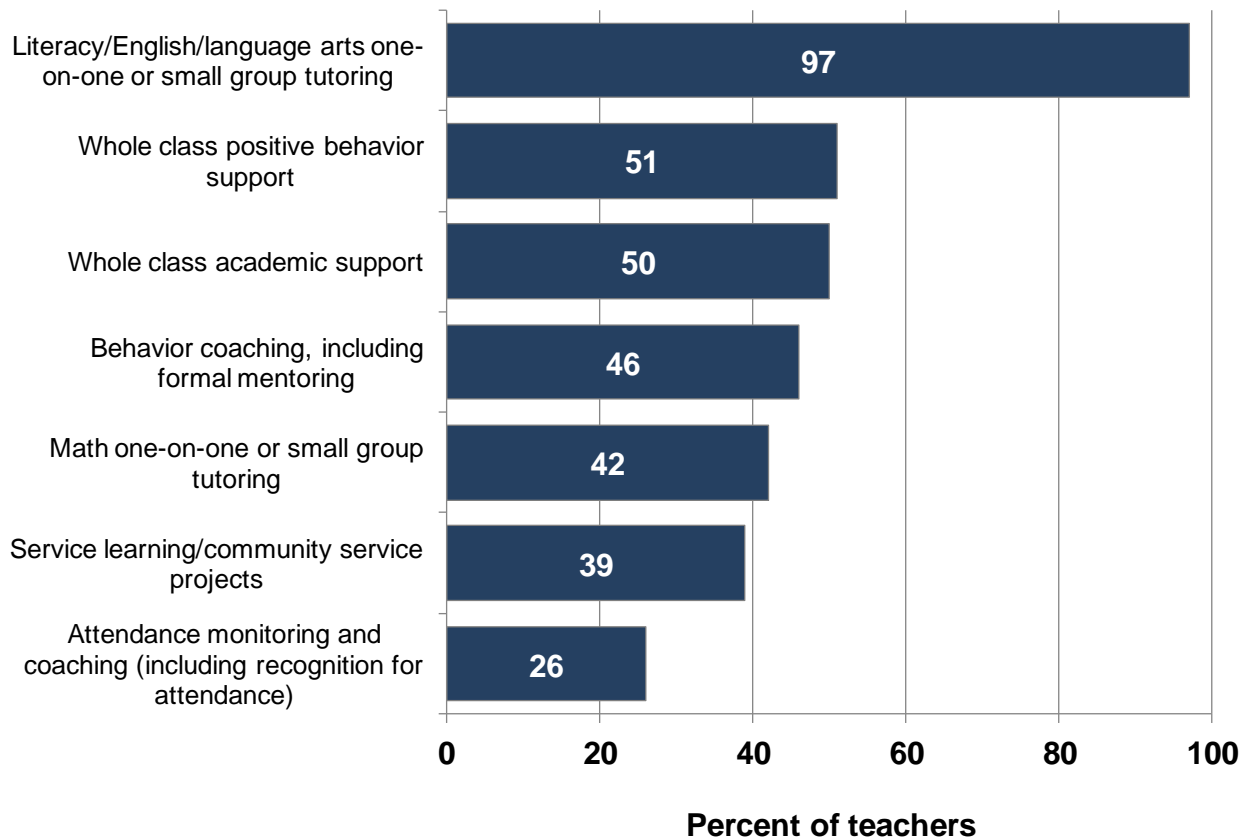


Exhibit reads: Ninety-seven percent of teachers reported that City Year Corps members provided one-on-one or small group tutoring in Literacy/English/language arts in their classrooms.  
 Source: Teacher EOY Survey, Question 4

## Corps Member Team Quality

### Corps Member Background and Experience

City Year New York succeeded in ensuring relatively balanced teams across the 13 WSWC schools with respect to corps member background and experience. That is, corps

member teams were not significantly different in terms of the background and experience of the corps members who comprise them. The majority of corps members on each of the teams fit the following profile: (1) were 22 years of age or older (64 percent); (2) had a bachelor's degree or more (66 percent); (3) were not from New York City (82 percent); (4) had not worked with children as a teacher or classroom aid before joining City Year (80 percent), although half had worked with children as a tutor or mentor; (5) had worked with children in a volunteer or paid position before joining City Year (68 percent); (6) did not understand City Year very well before signing the contract (67 percent); (7) were somewhat or very comfortable entering an urban school (94 percent); and (8) considered themselves hard workers (95 percent) and able to maintain focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete (60 percent).<sup>5</sup>

### **Corps Member Preparation, Training, and School-Based Support**

Corps members receive intensive training during the month of September, where they learn about being a part of City Year, working with youth, and the components of the WSWC model such as literacy, positive school climates, and Starfish Corps. In the 2010-11 school year, the month-long corps member training began on September 1st and ended October 1st, when corps members began working in the schools. (Team leaders attend their own training during the summer months, before corps members arrive.) After the September training, corps members continue to receive City Year trainings every Friday. These day-long Friday sessions cover many of the same topics as in the September training, including: literacy, math, behavior management, and after school programming, as well as community/team building, and debriefing sessions to reflect upon service successes and challenges. In the mid-year survey, most corps members reported receiving or participating in various City Year-sponsored preparation, training, and support activities 2-4 or more times during the school year, including training sessions on school-based services, and being observed and receiving related coaching from their program manager. However, fewer than half the corps members found very helpful any of the trainings they received (i.e., on English/language arts/literacy instruction; positive behavior support and management; attendance coaching; youth development; tutoring; specific curricula, etc.) that were intended to help them plan for and carry out their service in their respective schools.

In addition to the training corps members receive from City Year, they also receive training and support from the schools where they work. Analyses of corps member mid-year survey data revealed, however, that corps member preparation, training, and support varied within teams and across schools. That is, for those who worked in classrooms, fewer than half of the corps members said that the teachers with whom they worked supported them by establishing clear expectations for their work in the classroom, meeting with them regularly to review their performance as well as their students' performance, and giving them increasingly greater responsibilities in the classroom. In addition, since starting their full-time service, few corps members had participated very often (e.g., 2-4 or more times) in training or professional

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<sup>5</sup> In light of the fact that corps member background and experience did not vary significantly from team to team, and therefore was unlikely to be associated with any differences in outcomes related to the WSWC initiative, we eliminated this variable from subsequent analyses.

development offered by the school or school district or in observation and related coaching by teachers or other school staff.

Given that the amount and quality of training that corps members received varied (based on corps member self-reported survey data), we elected to test whether there were differences in levels of team preparation, training, and support in each school. Accordingly, we created an aggregate measure or index of corps member team preparation, training, and support that included: (1) whether corps members were able to interact with corps members from other sites around resources/best practices via the internet; (2) whether corps members agreed that teachers with whom they worked established clear expectations for their work in the classrooms, met regularly with them to plan their work with students, and the like; (3) whether corps members participated in training/professional development sessions offered by the school or by the site, etc.; (4) whether corps members considered various types of trainings to be quite helpful or very helpful in planning for and carrying out service in their respective schools; (5) whether corps members went to a content area specialist with questions or concerns; (6) whether corps members felt “quite” or “very” prepared to carry out various school-based activities; (7) corps members’ sense of self-efficacy with respect to solving student behavior problems; and (8) whether corps members seek resources and support on student behavior.

Still, because variation in levels of corps member preparation, training, and support only emerged at the highest level of the index, and because we suspected that subtle variation in levels and quality of preparation, training, and support might exist across the 13 schools, we created an index that measured levels of corps member team quality at the outer end of the item scales. That is, scores were based on whether corps members strongly agreed with statements about frequency of access to teachers; received various types of training and support 2-4 times or more since starting their service; considered various training and support to be “quite” or “very” helpful in planning for and carrying out their service in schools; and whether they felt “quite” or “very” prepared to effectively carry out school-based services.<sup>6</sup>

Using the corps member team Preparation, Training, and Support (PTS) Index, we looked at the distribution of corps member index scores across the 13 WSWC schools and found that the quality of the City Year teams did vary somewhat. That is, the average corps member team score on the PTS index across the WSWC schools ranged from 10 to 17 points on a 35-point scale (Exhibit 3). The overall average index score across all 13 schools was 12 points, suggesting that the quality of the corps member teams with respect to their overall preparation, training, and support was probably not as high as it could be and might be associated with the overall effectiveness of their service activities and student-level outcomes.

Despite the relatively low PTS index scores, most corps members (64 percent or more) reported feeling very prepared to carry out most of their service responsibilities, including one-on-one/small group tutoring in literacy, whole classroom academic support, enrichment activities (e.g., clubs, sports, arts, music, student govt., debate), afterschool activities, and homework assistance. During site visit interviews, corps members described the training they received as useful. They learned about City Year culture, as well as lesson planning using the IPARD model

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<sup>6</sup> A complete description of the Corps Member Team Quality PTS index is provided in the Appendix of this report.

during their initial orientation. One corps member, who said he was also the literacy coordinator, received an additional week of training on literacy prior to the start of the school year. Still, when asked whether they felt their training prepared them for their work, one corps member said that the only real way to learn was by experiencing and that training could only teach them a limited amount. In interviews, teachers and corps members both believed that corps members needed more training before starting work at a school. That is, teachers said that corps members did not have enough knowledge of teaching models, and had never been able to observe classrooms to see how different models were implemented. One teacher suggested providing weekly or monthly curriculum guides for the corps members to review. Corps members we interviewed said that they would like more training from CYNV, especially around structuring and executing Starfish Corps lessons and activities.

**Exhibit 3**  
**Range in corps member team quality index scores related to**  
**preparation, training, and support, by school**  
*(N=114 Corps members)*

**CM Team Quality:**

**Preparation and Training Index Score**

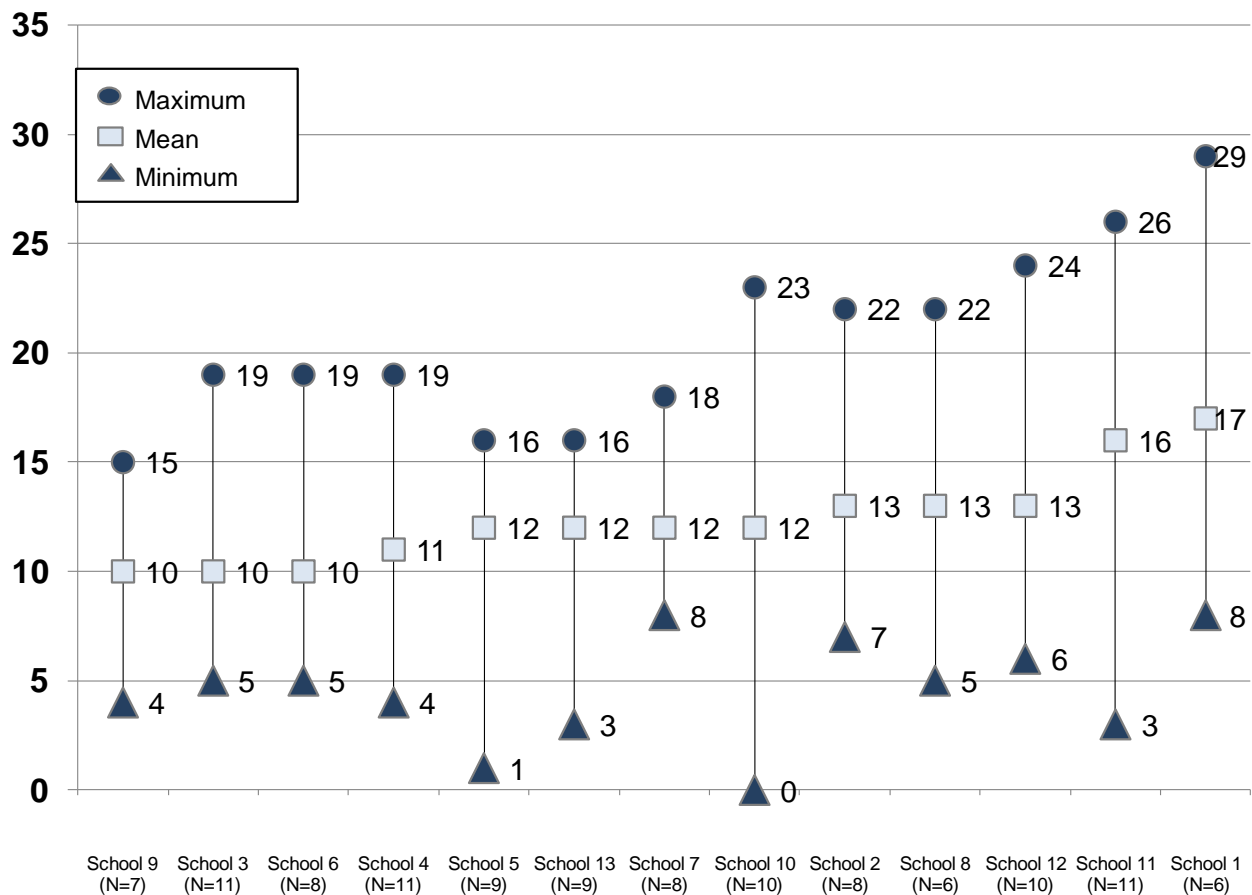


Exhibit reads: Among the 13 City Year schools, School 9 had the lowest index score for preparation, training, and support with 10 points.

## Leadership Strength and Cohesiveness

*Analyses of corps member end-of-year survey data reveal that corps members' perceptions of the strength of their teams' leadership and overall cohesiveness varied within teams and across schools.* That is, the vast majority of corps members reported that they met as a team and discussed best practices once a week or more. However, only about two-thirds said they meet with their team leader once a week or more and only half the corps members reported that their teams shared regularly (i.e., once a week or more) strategies to positively affect student success (53 percent). Less than half the corps members responding to the survey said that their corps member teams discussed student improvement, got feedback from each other about what is working and what needs improvement in their service, or met with their program manager. In addition, few corps members rated their team leaders or program managers highly with respect to their capacity to work together to lead the corps member teams. That is, fewer than one-third of corps members believed that their program manager and team leader were aligned with respect to: (1) their expectations for corps members on the team; (2) their goals for the team; (3) corps member roles and responsibilities or each other's roles and responsibilities; and (4) communicating with the team. Fewer than half the corps members agreed strongly that their program manager or their team leader were very effective leaders (30 and 48 percent, respectively). Indeed, few corps members agreed strongly that either their program manager or team leader maintained high expectations for them and their team; could be trusted; communicated effectively; helped connect them with resources to perform their service activities; helped the team resolve conflicts; helped facilitate leadership development experience; helped facilitate strong relationships with service partners; or helped corps members understand the culture of City Year.

Again, in light of the variation in corps member reports about the strength of their team's leadership and overall cohesiveness, we developed an index to measure this dimension of corps member team quality, by school. Specifically, we created an aggregate measure of corps member team leadership strength and cohesiveness that included whether corps member teams met as a team, met to discuss best practices, got feedback from each other about what was working and what needs improvement in their service, or discussed issues related to team functioning and dynamics once a week or more. In addition, the index included whether corps members met frequently with their program manager (PM) and agreed strongly that their PM and or team leader communicated effectively with them or their team, helped connect them or their team with resources to perform a service, maintained high expectations for the team, helped teams resolve conflicts, and the like. Finally, the index measured whether corps members agreed strongly that their PM and team leader were aligned about: (1) the goals for the team; (2) their expectations for corps members on the team, and (3) corps member roles and responsibilities. Finally, the index includes a measure of whether corps members believe that the overall team functioning was very good/excellent. As was the case for the PTS index, the leadership and cohesion index measured levels of corps member team quality at the outer end of the item scales.

We found that the quality of the City Year teams with respect to corps member leadership strength and cohesiveness varied somewhat across the 13 WSWC schools. That is, based on the corps member Team Leadership Strength and Cohesiveness index, the average corps member team score among WSWC schools ranged from 14 to 22 points on a 33-point scale (Exhibit 4).

The overall average index score across all 13 schools was 17 points, suggesting that corps member team leadership and cohesion could be better. Still, a review of the range of index scores across schools have relatively strong team leadership and cohesion in that the lowest individual scores begin at a third of the total value of the index and spanned that upper end of the range.<sup>7</sup>

**Exhibit 4**  
**Range in corps member team quality index scores related to leadership and cohesion, by school**  
*(N=101 Corps members)*

**CM Team Quality:  
 Leadership and Cohesion Index Score**

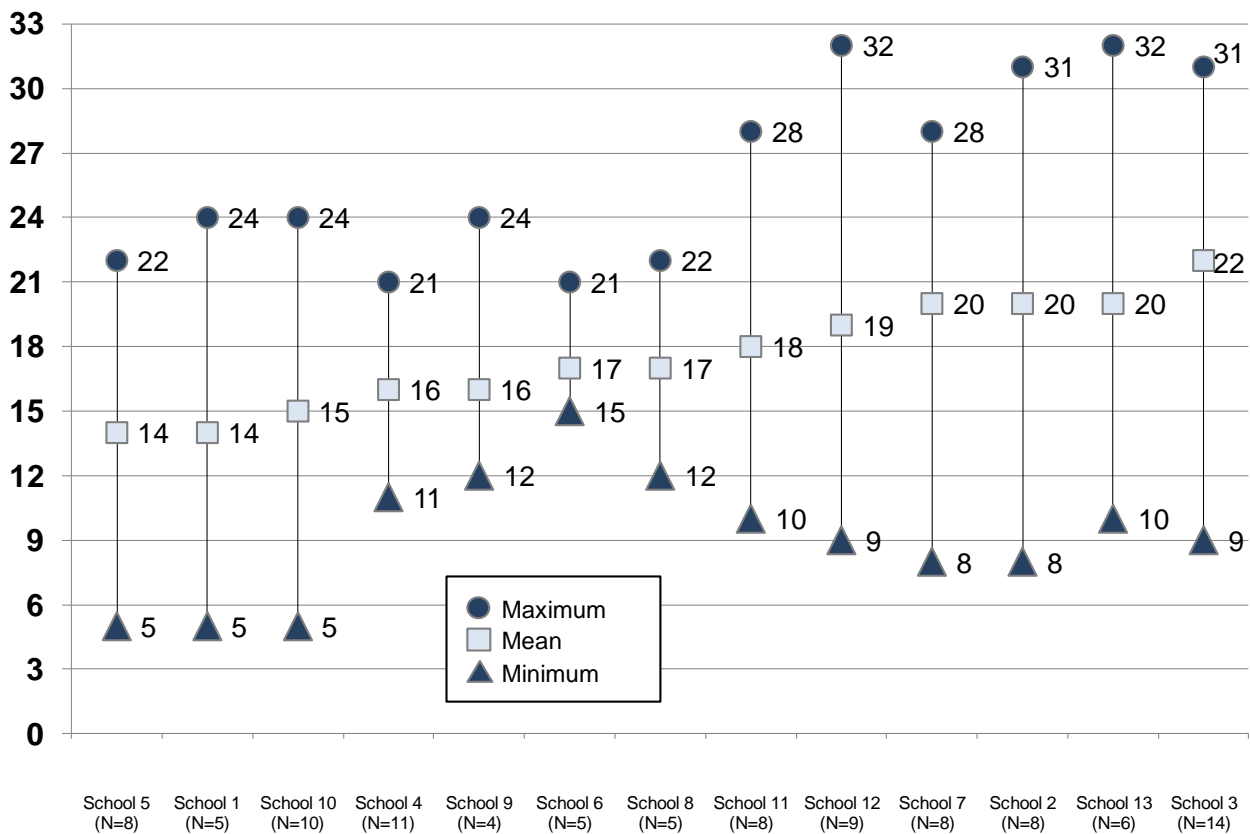


Exhibit reads: Among the 13 City Year schools, School 5 had the lowest average score for overall team leadership and cohesion, with 14 points.

*To the extent that corps member teams adapted and modified services and activities to respond to the interests and needs of the schools, the overall strength and cohesiveness of the team—and the quality of CY services—probably suffered.* Among the schools visited, none of the corps member teams implemented the same literacy or Starfish Corps curriculum or used the

<sup>7</sup> A complete description of the Corps Member Team Quality Leadership Strength and Cohesiveness index is provided in the Appendix of this report.

same instructional strategies or activities with students in their one-on-one or small group tutoring sessions. Although tailoring services and activities in ways that are highly responsive to school- and classroom-based needs is certainly likely to help strengthen City Year's position as a valued service provider within the school, it limits the opportunity for corps members to come together across and within schools to discuss and solve common problems, identify best practices, and plan future lessons. Consequently, opportunities to strengthen the cohesiveness of the team and to clearly define its mission within the school are lost. Moreover, if the corps member team's attitude is "we'll do whatever you want us to do in your school," it muddies the definition of the "model" and makes it particularly difficult not only for CYNV to support the efforts of corps member teams but also difficult to measure implementation, outcomes, and impact across participating schools.



### III. The City Year Effect

The following summarizes the impressions of principals, teachers, and students regarding corps member performance. The extent to which principals and teachers are satisfied with corps member performance is discussed as well as the extent to which they and their students agree that corps members have positively affected student attitudes, behaviors, and academic performance.

#### **Principal/Liaison Satisfaction with Corps Member Performance**

*Principals/liaisons had strongly favorable assessments of the City Year program overall and the services that corps members provided to their respective schools.* Indeed, almost all principals and liaisons in all 13 elementary schools (over 90 percent of those responding to the survey) agreed or agreed strongly that City Year corps members: worked well with students, teachers, and staff; integrated smoothly into the school; served as positive role models; had a good rapport with each other; took initiative; were well prepared for the academic work they did with students; and demonstrated a strong work ethic. Perhaps the most important perception among principals was that they agreed that City Year corps members demonstrated through their words and actions that it is possible to “make a difference” (Exhibit 5). More principals/liaisons strongly agreed with this statement (61 percent) than any other statement regarding corps member performance, suggesting that City Year has succeeded in assuring principals (and/or other school leaders) that the WSWC initiative adds value to their schools. The only area on which fewer principals agreed was with regard to corps members being well prepared for the behavior support they offered students. That is, only 65 percent of principals agreed/agreed strongly that corps members were well prepared for the behavior support they offered students. Indeed, a lack of capacity and training among corps members to manage student behavior in the classroom was an issue that emerged in the principal, teacher, and corps member survey data.

**Exhibit 5**  
**Principal/liaison satisfaction with corps member performance overall**  
*(N=18 principals/liaisons)*

**Principals agreed that corps members:**

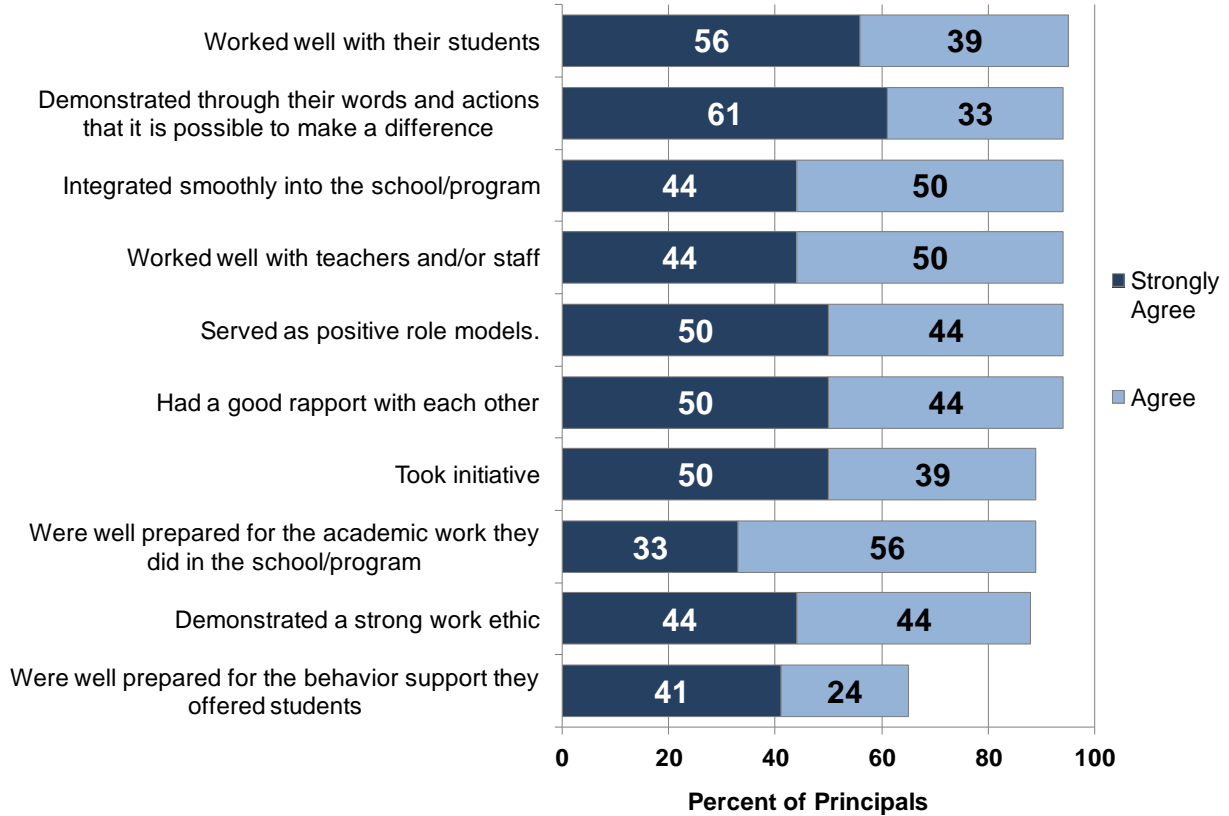


Exhibit reads: 56 percent of principals strongly agreed and 39 percent agreed that City Year Corps members worked well with their students.

Source: Principal/liaison survey, Question 8

## Teacher Satisfaction with Corps Member Performance

*On average, teachers also had favorable assessments of corps member performance, but were slightly less consistent than principals in their views.* That is, fewer teachers believed corps members were helpful in as many areas of the classroom as principals believed them to be in the schools. Over three-fourths of all teachers responding to the survey agreed or agreed strongly that their corps members had provided essential academic supports that their students would not otherwise receive (83 percent) and that their corps members were well prepared for the academic work they did with students (79 percent). Similarly, most teachers (approximately 70 percent) agreed that City Year corps members had helped them feel supported in their work (73 percent) and have positive relationships with their students (70 percent). Still, fewer teachers agreed that corps members helped them differentiate their instruction (67 percent), were well prepared to support them in classroom management (63 percent), reinforced their student

learning agenda in the afterschool program (59 percent), or gave them more time for planning (46 percent) (Exhibit 6).

**Exhibit 6**  
**Teacher satisfaction with corps member performance overall**  
*(N=115 teachers)*

**Teachers who strongly agreed/agreed that their corps member(s):**

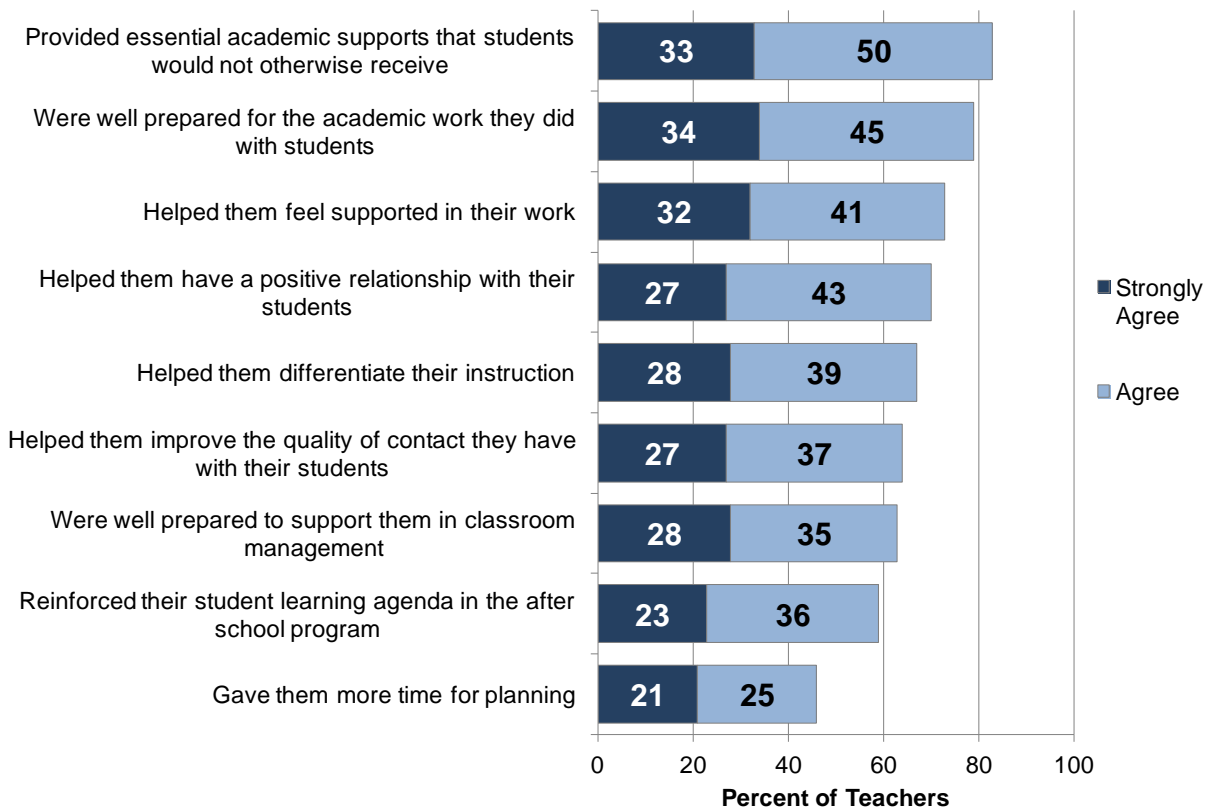


Exhibit reads: 33 percent of teachers strongly agreed and 50 percent of teachers agreed that City Year corps members provided essential academic supports that their students would not otherwise receive.

Source: Teacher EOY Survey, Question 8

In light of the variation found in measures of teacher satisfaction with corps member performance, we tested the extent to which an overall measure of teacher satisfaction varied, particularly by school. We created an aggregate measure of teacher satisfaction that included whether teachers believed that corps members: (1) had provided essential academic supports that their students would not otherwise receive; (2) were well prepared for the academic work they did with students; (3) had helped them feel supported in their work and have positive relationships with their students; (4) helped them differentiate their instruction; (5) were well prepared to support them in classroom management; (6) reinforced their student learning agenda in the afterschool program; or (7) gave them more time for planning. We also included items that measured whether teachers believed strongly that corps members had an impact on: their

school and its physical appearance; the number of parents and community members who participated in the school, the number of clubs and other extra-curricular activities available for students; the number of opportunities for students to serve the school and community; and the overall school climate. Finally, teacher satisfaction was measured in terms of the extent to which they were extremely satisfied overall with the quality of service provided by corps members and whether they were highly likely to recommend City Year to someone who serves in their position at another school.

Still, because variation in levels of teacher satisfaction only emerged at the highest level of the satisfaction index, and because we suspected that subtle variation in teacher satisfaction might exist across the 13 schools, we created a satisfaction index that measured levels of teacher satisfaction at the outer end of the item scales. That is, scores were based on whether teachers were extremely satisfied with corps member performance in that they “strongly agreed” with statements about corps member performance or believed corps members had a “great deal of impact” on their school, and/or were “very satisfied” with a range of City Year services. Exhibit 7 provides a complete list of the variables included in the Teacher Satisfaction index.

### Exhibit 7 Teacher satisfaction index

Survey number	Survey items	Value (0-20 pts.)
EOY Teacher Survey Q8	Whether teacher agrees strongly with the following statements about the impact of corps member(s) on his/her work. CMs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Helped me to have a positive relationship with my students</li> <li>-Helped me to feel supported in my work</li> <li>-Allowed me to improve the quality of contact I have with my students</li> <li>-Helped me differentiate my instruction</li> <li>-Gave me more time for planning</li> <li>-Reinforced my student learning agenda in the afterschool program</li> <li>-Provided essential academic supports my students wouldn't otherwise receive</li> <li>-Were well prepared for the academic work they did with my students</li> <li>-Were well prepared to support me in classroom management</li> </ul>	Strongly Agree=1; Else, 0
EOY Teacher Survey Q11	Whether teacher believes City Year has had a great deal of impact this year on the following aspects of his/her school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Our school's physical appearance</li> <li>-The respect the students exhibit to adults</li> <li>-The number of parents and community members who participate in our school</li> <li>-The number of clubs and other extra-curricular activities for students</li> <li>-The number of opportunities for students to serve our school or community</li> <li>-The overall school climate</li> </ul>	A great deal of impact=1; Else, 0
EOY Teacher Survey Q12	Whether teacher is very satisfied with each of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The quality of service provided by your corps member</li> <li>-The overall impact of CY on your students</li> <li>-The overall experience of having CY in your school</li> <li>-The overall training and preparation of corps member(s) for the services they provide</li> </ul>	Very satisfied=1; Else, 0
EOY Teacher Survey Q13	Whether teacher is extremely likely to recommend CY to someone else who serves in his/her position at another school	Extremely likely (10)=1; Else, 0

Exhibit reads: Teachers who strongly agreed with the statement, “My CM helped me to have a positive relationship with my students” received one point on the 20-point index of teacher satisfaction.

While most teachers were generally satisfied with corps member performance, survey data suggest that no school had an extremely high level of teacher satisfaction with corps member performance. The Teacher Satisfaction index had a total point range of 0 to 20 points. As shown in Exhibit 8, the range in the average school-level teacher satisfaction scores was 3 to 13 points, suggesting that teacher satisfaction did vary somewhat by school. Moreover, the index scores by individual teacher were wide-ranging, from 0 to 20 points, suggesting that the quality of corps member services varied within each school. In addition, the overall average Teacher Satisfaction score was 9 points out of a possible 20, suggesting that, on the whole, teachers were not extraordinarily satisfied with corps member performance and that there was likely to be some room for improvement.

**Exhibit 8**  
**Range in teacher satisfaction index scores, by school**  
 (N=110 Teachers)

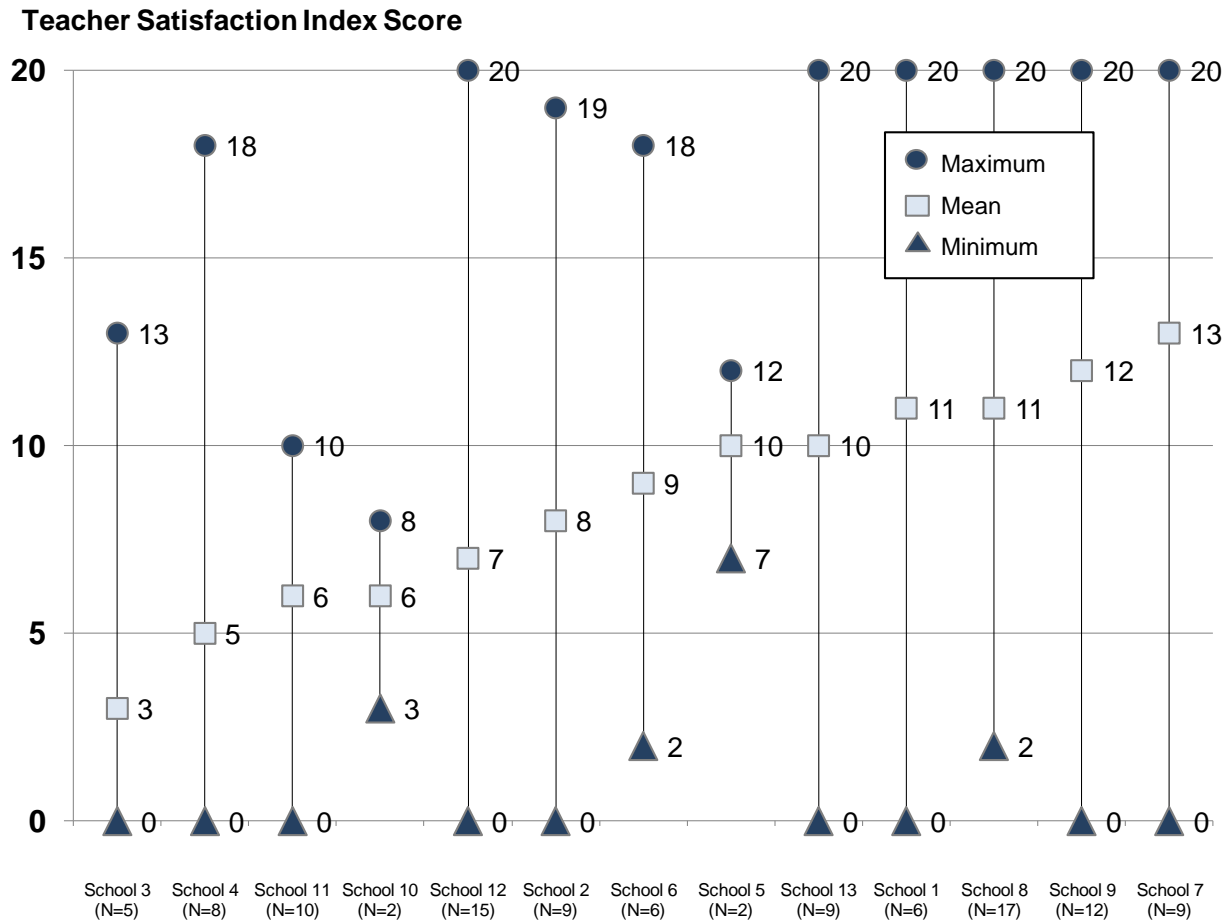


Exhibit reads: Among the 13 City Year schools, School 3 had the lowest average score for overall teacher satisfaction, with 3 points. The range among individual teacher index scores was 0 to 13 points in School 3.

*While teachers varied in their assessment of corps members' impact on their classrooms, the vast majority of teachers agreed—many of them strongly—that City Year corps members had a positive effect on their students in ways that the research literature suggests ultimately contributes to improved student performance.* Almost all or most teachers agreed that their corps members helped improve the climate of their classrooms by increasing their students' enjoyment of school (90 percent), fostering a positive environment for learning (89 percent), increasing students' respectfulness to each other (85 percent), and improving the overall academic performance of their students (84 percent). In addition, teachers agreed that City Year corps members had helped improve student relationships by creating opportunities for students to work collaboratively with peers (82 percent), reducing the number of conflicts between students (78 percent), and improving overall student focus and order in the classroom (74 percent) (Exhibit 9).

**Exhibit 9**  
**Teacher perceptions of corps member effects on their students**  
*(N=98 teachers)*

**Teachers who agreed that their corps member(s) helped:**

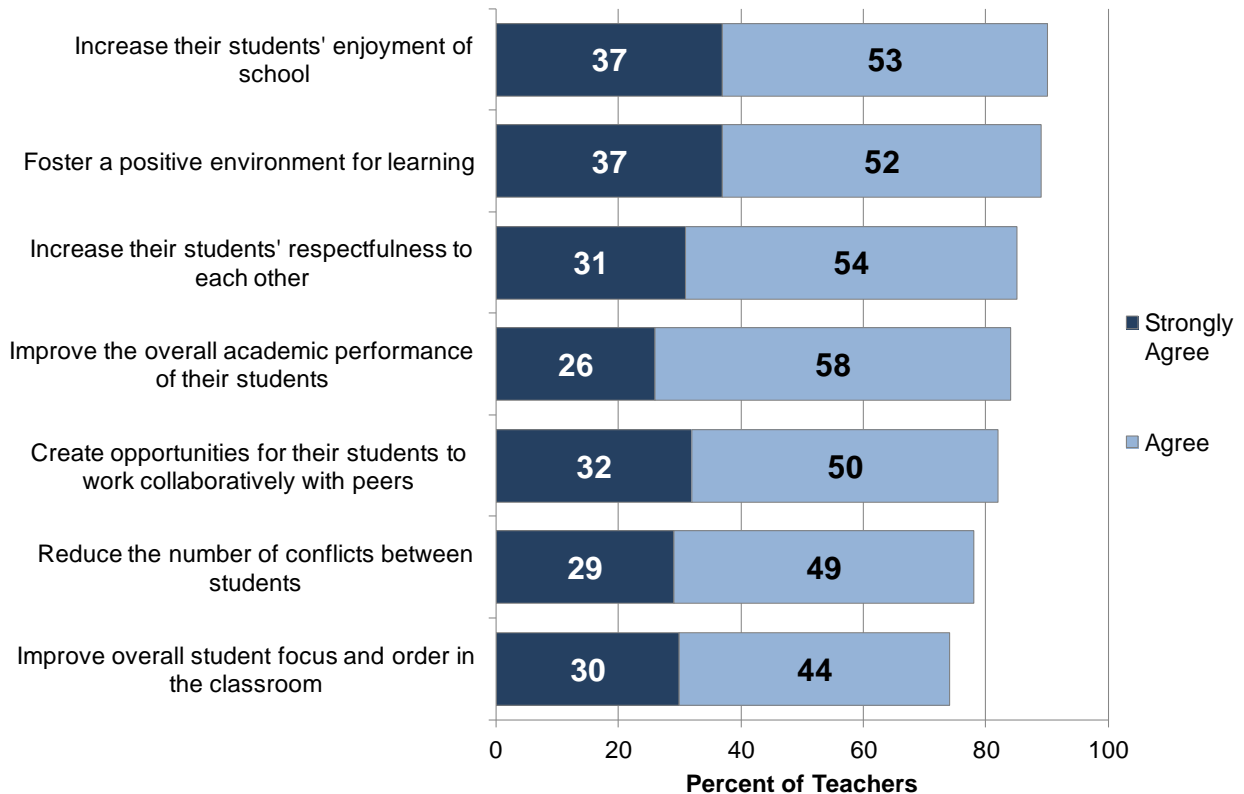


Exhibit reads: 37 percent of teachers strongly agreed and 53 percent of teachers agreed that City Year Corps members helped increase their students' respectfulness to each other.

Source: Teacher EOY Survey, Question 10

*In visits to four of the 13 CY schools, teachers had extremely positive views of corps members in schools where corps members were assigned to specific teachers' classrooms.* By working directly in classrooms, corps members believed they were able to develop more trusting and collaborative relationships with teachers. Moreover, the teacher was able to observe the corps member over a long period of time and to give the corps member specific feedback about his or her interactions with students, thus contributing to the quality of corps member services. In addition, the corps member was also able to observe and learn from the teacher over an extended period of time and see how he or she managed student behavior, scaffolded student learning, and encouraged positive peer interactions. By contrast, in schools where corps members pulled students out of the classrooms, they had minimal opportunity to interact with and develop a working relationship with teachers. Indeed, in one school where corps members did not work directly in classrooms, the team leader believed that school staff were still unsure about the role City Year played in their school, despite having corps members working there the past three years.

## **Students' Overall Perceptions of City Year**

*The vast majority of students who participated in Starfish Corps and/or who received literacy tutoring services were very satisfied with City Year.* Over 60 percent of the students who responded to the survey suggested that City Year programming offered a welcome departure from their typical school day schedules and activities. Indeed, the majority of students agreed “a lot” that City Year: gave them a chance to do a lot of new things (74 percent); allowed them to work on activities that really made them think (70 percent); and got them interested (69 percent). Finally, 61 percent of students agreed “a lot” that, with City Year, they got to do things that they didn't usually get to do anywhere else (Exhibit 10).

**Exhibit 10**  
**Student satisfaction with City Year activities**  
*(N=440 students)*

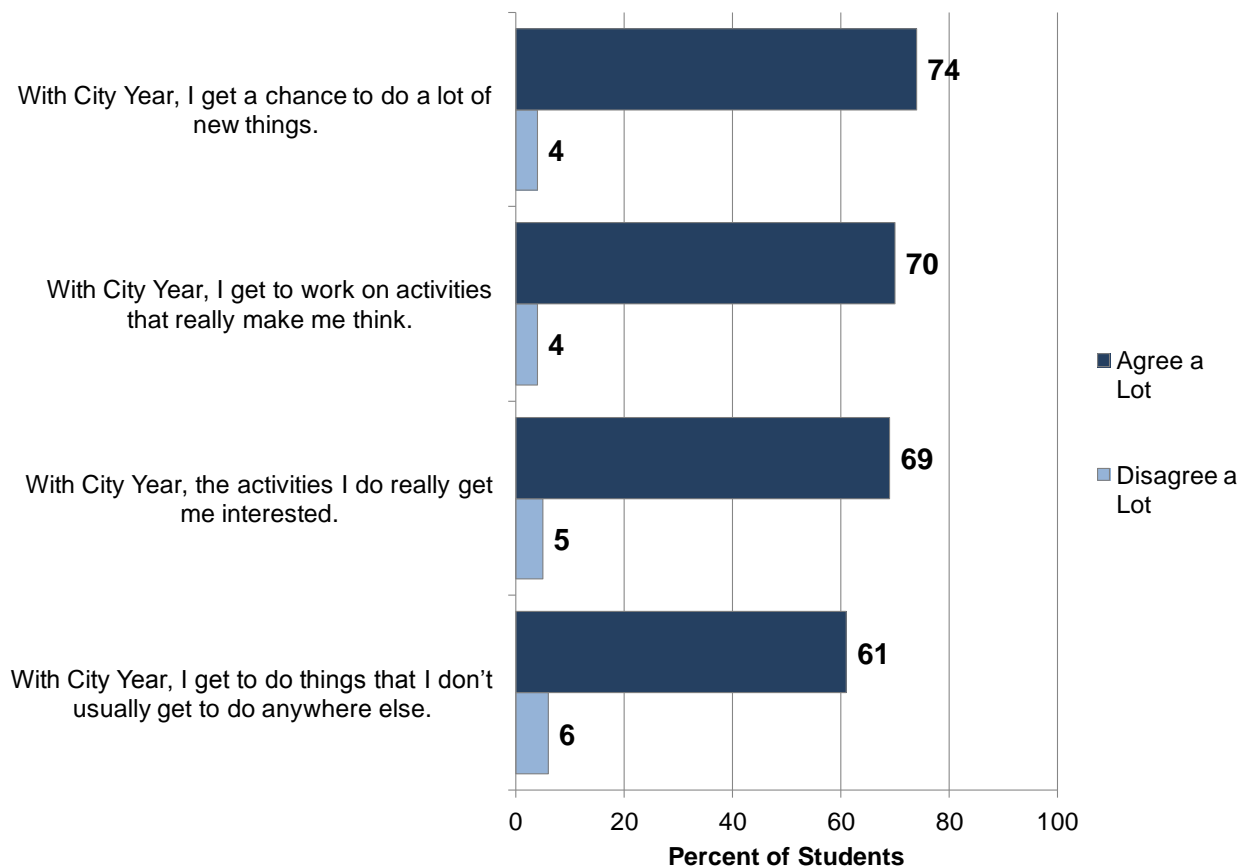


Exhibit reads: Seventy-four percent of students agreed a lot that, with City Year, they get a chance to do a lot of new things; four percent of students disagreed a lot with this statement.  
 Source: Student Survey, Question 4

*The vast majority of students who responded to the survey were quite enthusiastic about City Year corps members; most believed that City Year corps members cared about them and their school.* Over three-quarters of the students who had received literacy tutoring services or participated in Starfish Corps said they often or almost always: believed the their City Year corps members cared about their school (93 percent) and cared about them (91 percent); trusted their City Year corps members (89 percent); believed that they could ask their corps members questions (85 percent) and talk to them about things that were bothering them (79 percent).

*Students' perceptions of the myriad ways in which City Year helped and influenced them were extremely positive.* The vast majority of students said that City Year had helped them: (1) learn (90 percent); (2) believe that they can succeed (89 percent); (3) feel good about themselves (89 percent); and (4) know how they are supposed to behave (87 percent). City Year did not have quite as strong an effect on students' attitudes toward their school, as shown in the 10 percentage point difference between the percent of students' reporting that City



Year had helped them personally and the percent of students who reported that City Year positively affected their attitudes toward school; this difference was statistically significant. Indeed, fewer students reported that City Year often or almost always caused them to like school better than they used to (78 percent) or try to get to school on time (68 percent) (Exhibit 11).

**Exhibit 11**  
**Student perceptions of how City Year has helped and influenced them**  
*(N=440 students)*

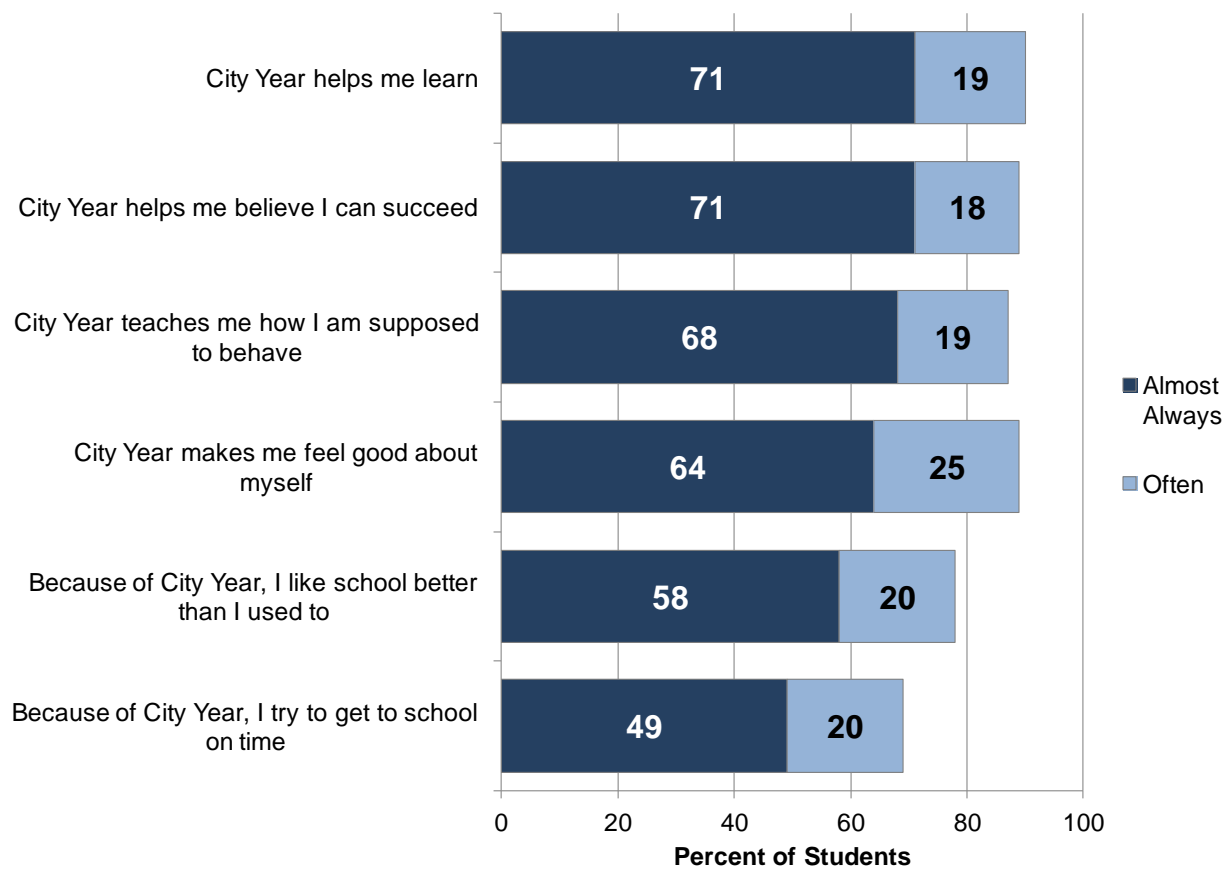


Exhibit reads: 71 percent of students report that City Year corps members help them learn almost always and 19 percent report that City Year often helps them learn.  
 Source: Student Survey, Question 2

One school had consistently lower than average percentages of students reporting that City Year had helped and influenced them in various ways. In this school, fewer students than average reported that City Year had helped or influenced them in nine of the eleven areas about which they were surveyed. This school also had higher than average percentages of students reporting that they disagreed with statements about the ways in which the Starfish Corps had affected their attitudes and behaviors, suggesting that fewer students in this school had strong, positive experiences with corps members compared with students in the average WSWC school.

## IV. Student Civic Engagement

One of the central problems targeted by the WSWC model is that students do not feel “connected to their school as a community.” The afterschool program known as Starfish Corps seeks to address this problem by providing opportunities for students to serve their school and their community and by showing them they are capable of making positive changes in these places. Other intended outcomes of Starfish Corps include helping students feel connected to their school, thereby encouraging higher attendance and achievement. Starfish Corps also aims to help participants become leaders in their schools.

The following sections describe: (1) the structure of Starfish Corps with respect to programming and corps member perceptions of their capacity to implement and manage the program; (2) teacher and principal perceptions of Starfish Corps and its effect on their school and on participating students; and (3) students’ experiences in and perceptions of Starfish Corps and its effect on their perceptions of themselves, their school, and their level of civic engagement.

### The Starfish Corps

Starfish Corps is held once a week as part of City Year’s afterschool programming. Across the 13 schools participating in the study, Starfish sessions ranged in duration from 35 to 50 minutes. Over the course of the year, the 378 Starfish participants in the study spent an average of 22 hours in Starfish, in an average of 36 sessions. The average number of total hours students spent in Starfish at each of the schools in the study ranged from 7 to 36 hours. These hours included both activity hours and service hours: service hours represent time in which participants performed some type of community service during Starfish. Greater detail on school-level participation in Starfish is provided in Exhibit 12.

Starfish Corps content is organized into units, beginning with a “Basic Training” unit that is designed to teach participants about teamwork and community. Other units include Healthy Choices, Peace in the Community, Needs and Wants, and Environment. City Year provides corps member teams a one-page overview for each unit, which includes a description of the topics covered in that unit, ideas for activities, and ideas for service. In addition to the overview, City Year provides a framework or skeleton for activities within each unit. Each skeleton includes an activity snapshot, which outlines the goals for the activity and topics to be covered within each activity. The skeleton also includes learning objectives, which, for a particular Healthy Choices lesson, included questions such as: “What are the benefits of exercise?” “How can I stay physically fit?” and “How can we help the community stay healthy through exercise?” Finally, the skeleton includes brief statements about how a particular lesson connects to the previous and subsequent lessons. The overview and activity skeletons serve as starting points for City Year teams, who design their own lessons and decide how best to incorporate activities and service.

**Exhibit 12**  
**Student participation in Starfish Corps, by school**

<b>WSWC Schools</b>	<b>Number of youth in Starfish Corp</b>	<b>Average number of sessions attended</b>	<b>Average number of hours in Starfish Corps<sup>a</sup></b>
School 1	29	19	17
School 2	29	24	17
School 3	4	40	33
School 4	28	61	26
School 5	13	19	19
School 6	5	12	11
School 7	17	18	14
School 8	39	23	9
School 9	38	48	36
School 10	2	22	7
School 11	9	39	33
School 12	44	67	28
School 13	21	18	15
<b>All Schools</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>22</b>

Exhibit reads: School 1 enrolled 29 students in Starfish. On average, those 29 students attended 19 sessions each during the 2010-11 school year for an average total of 17 hours of Starfish programming per student.  
a: Program hours and service hours were added together to compute the average number of hours.

**Corps Member Preparation and Training for Starfish Corps**

The 2009-10 evaluation found that corps members needed guidance on how to differentiate Starfish Corps instruction and suggested that lesson skeletons could include ideas for differentiating lessons for older and younger students. The evaluation also noted that corps members might benefit from training on how to move from the lesson skeletons to full lesson plans. During visits in 2011, corps members in some schools reported receiving special training in writing Starfish lessons. Specifically, the training focused on helping corps members develop Starfish lessons that include five key elements: Investigation, Preparation, Action, Reflection, and Demonstration or “IPARD.”

*Interviews with corps members suggest that there is still a need for additional training in how to differentiate Starfish lessons for older and younger students as well as how to convert lesson skeletons or frameworks into full lesson plans.* Corps Members expressed concern about Starfish training provided by City Year, reporting that the training was rushed and that concepts were not thoroughly explained. “[Training] could have been improved upon, focusing on answering questions such as what each part of a lesson means and why it is important. [The training] was very rushed. I didn’t get it.”

The corps member team in one school we visited, for example, struggled to find ways to make their Starfish pre-planned and packaged lessons fun and engaging for their students, particularly in light of the fact that Starfish had been unpopular with students in the previous year and its poor reputation had carried over to the following year. After some discussion with CYNY headquarters, the team realized that the lessons were designed to be implemented in a way that best suits the needs of a particular school. In response, the team leader began encouraging her team members to write Starfish lesson plans that she would then review and provide feedback on to her team. Still, neither she nor her fellow team members had adequate training to fill this role: “None of us was given any training on editing lessons or giving feedback. We were supposed to monitor quality but weren’t sure what high-quality looked like.”

Since that time, every team member has written between seven and ten Starfish lessons, and a drafting and review process has taken shape for the team:

*[Two corps members] have done an excellent job of managing a process for writing lessons. We write a skeleton one week. The next week, we write a first draft of the lesson and the following week we get comments. Then, we submit our final draft. We also have a conference where we receive feedback on the lesson plan. I live with two corps members who work in different schools and I don’t think they have a process like [ours]. It allows us to be critical and improve. It also lets us put our own interest into the lesson.*

At another school, corps members said that it took them until about the middle of the year to be able to write good Starfish Corps lessons that engaged students. Nevertheless, the teams eventually learned to mix up different types of activity formats—instead of solely providing lecture/group discussion—that involved outdoor activities whenever possible, as well as occasional games.

***Corps members also recommended that they receive more training in behavior management techniques, recognizing that behavior management was a critical component to running a successful Starfish lesson.*** Indeed, some corps members admitted that they did not have any idea how to manage student behavior and that this resulted in rather chaotic Starfish Corps sessions. While the corps members said they tried to engage youth in question and answer sessions, some participants did not appear to have the attention span or interest to be active participants in the discussion.

## **Principal Perceptions of Starfish Corps**

***Principals had strongly favorable views of Starfish Corps and its effect on their school.*** Over 75 percent of the principals/liaisons who responded to the survey said they believed that Starfish Corps had positively affected their school in eight of nine areas about which they were questioned. Indeed, the vast majority of principals (83 percent) reported that they believed the Starfish Corps had had a remarkable effect on their respective schools in areas that are sometimes difficult to influence in education and youth development, including fostering a

positive learning environment in school, helping to foster students’ social-emotional learning, and helping students care more about social issues (Exhibit 13).

**Exhibit 13**  
**Principal/liaison perceptions of the effect of**  
**City Year’s Starfish Corps on their school**  
*(N=18 principals/liaisons)*

**Principals agreed that City Year’s Starfish Corps:**

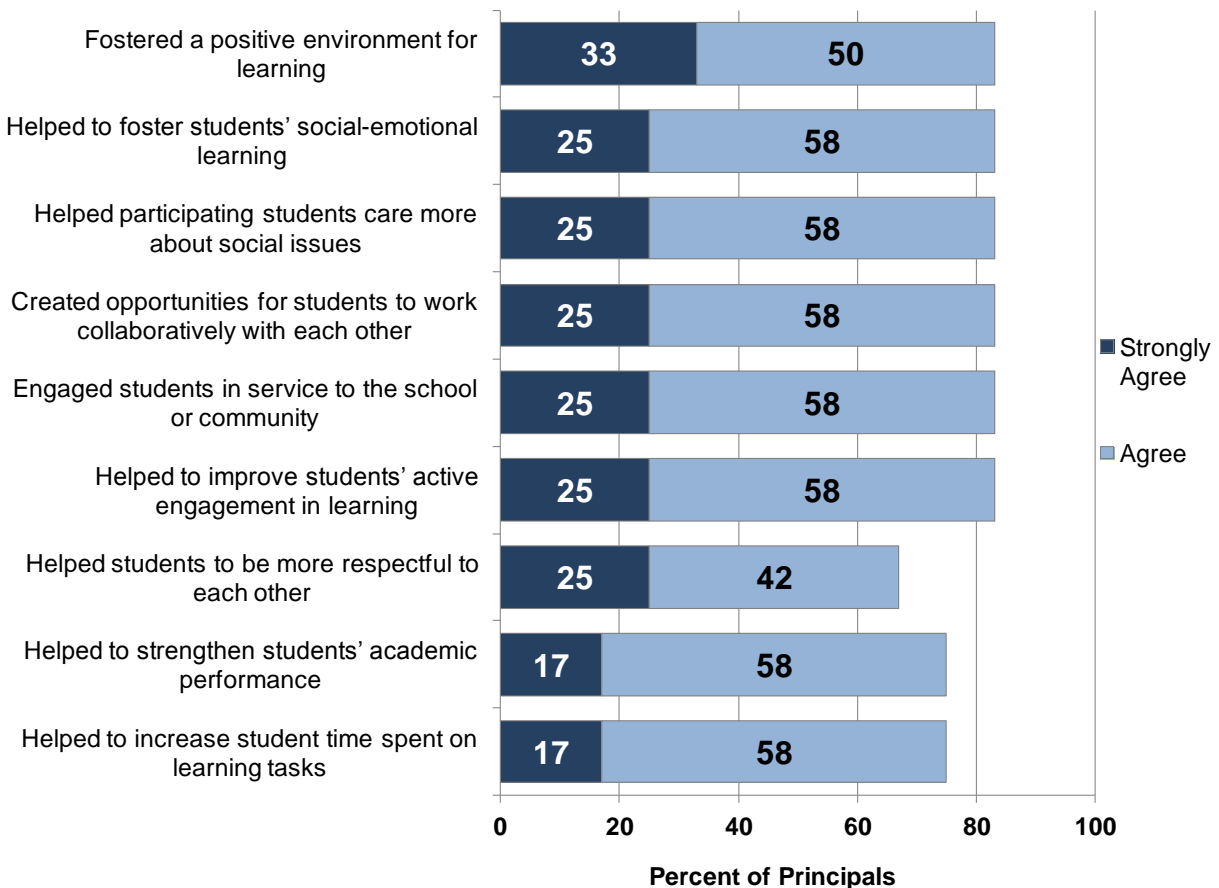


Exhibit reads: 33 percent of principals agreed strongly that City Year’s Starfish Corps fostered a positive environment for learning in their school.

Source: Principal EOY Survey, Question 9

## Students’ Civic Engagement

*The range of activities and service opportunities offered through Starfish Corps is wide but does not vary significantly by school.* At least some, if not all, students in every school reported participating in each of the 16 activities that might be offered through the Starfish Corps, suggesting that every activity was offered in every school. On average, students

participated in about 10 activities total, including five learning activities and about five hands-on activities, based on student self-reported survey data. The range in number of activities in which students participated was relatively narrow, with a low of 9 activities per student to a high of 11 activities. This suggests that implementation of the Starfish Corps was relatively uniform across the 13 schools. Still, as shown in Exhibit 14, higher percentages of students reported participating in activities in which they learned about something as opposed to activities that are considered “hands-on.” Overall, 72 percent of students reported learning about something such as: how to work as part of a team (87 percent); healthy eating habits (86 percent); the difference between things people need and things people want (85 percent); natural resources and the environment (77 percent); and how to make good decisions about saving and spending money (72 percent). By contrast, only 59 percent of students overall reported participating in hands-on activities such as: no-bullying or anti-violence activities (76 percent); yoga or exercising (74 percent); raising money, making cards, or decorating items for a good cause (63 percent); or a health fair to teach the community about healthy choices (61 percent). Fewer than half the students reported participating in a recycling program at their school (49 percent), making recycled paper, a mini-greenhouse, or a water filter (47 percent), or participating in a food or clothing drive (45 percent).

**Exhibit 14**  
**Percent of students who report participating in various learning and hands-on activities in City Year’s Starfish Corps**  
*(N= 305 students)*

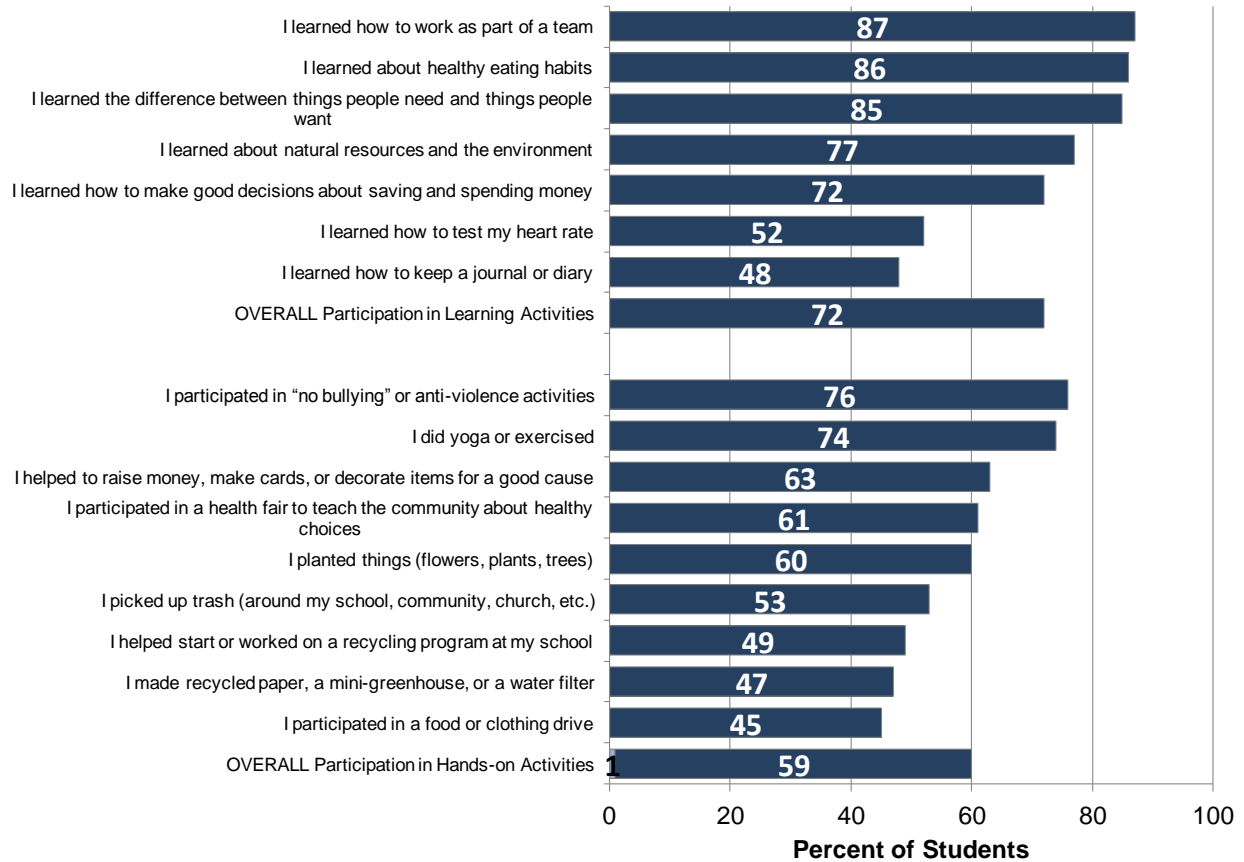


Exhibit reads: 87 percent of students reported learning how to work as part of a team in Starfish Corps; 86 percent reported learning about healthy eating habits.  
 Source: Student Survey, Question 5

*Overall, the vast majority of students who participated in Starfish Corps (two-thirds to over three-fourths of those reporting) “agreed a lot” that the program had a positive effect on their attitudes, behaviors, and level of civic engagement.* For example, 82 percent of students reported that, because of City Year, they learned that it is important to volunteer and help others and 79 percent reported that, because of City Year, they try to keep their body clean and healthy and that it is important to know about their community (Exhibit 15). While students were overwhelmingly positive about the effect Starfish Corps had on their attitudes and behaviors, a small, but appreciable percentage of students disagreed “a lot” that City Year had affected their civic behavior with respect to volunteering (10 percent of students disagreed a lot that City Year caused them to volunteer) or recycling (9 percent of students disagreed that City Year caused them to recycle or recycle more). This last finding is probably the result of frustration among students, some of whom have participated in Starfish Corps several years and have covered some topics, like recycling, so many times that they’re bored and frustrated. Indeed, in interviews, corps members said they realized that there are some topics that have been covered so much that

students no longer find them interesting. For example, the team in one school brought up the topic of recycling, which they said did not resonate with their students because “kids hear about recycling all the time,” and some even associate it with school. In response, the team opted to take Starfish Corps in a different direction on the Environment unit and created an activity around recent weather events (e.g. flash floods, tornadoes) and engaged students in a discussion about “how can we help?”

**Exhibit 15**  
**Student perceptions of Starfish Corps’ effects on their civic engagement and other attitudes and behaviors**  
*(N=300 students)*

**Because of City Year:**

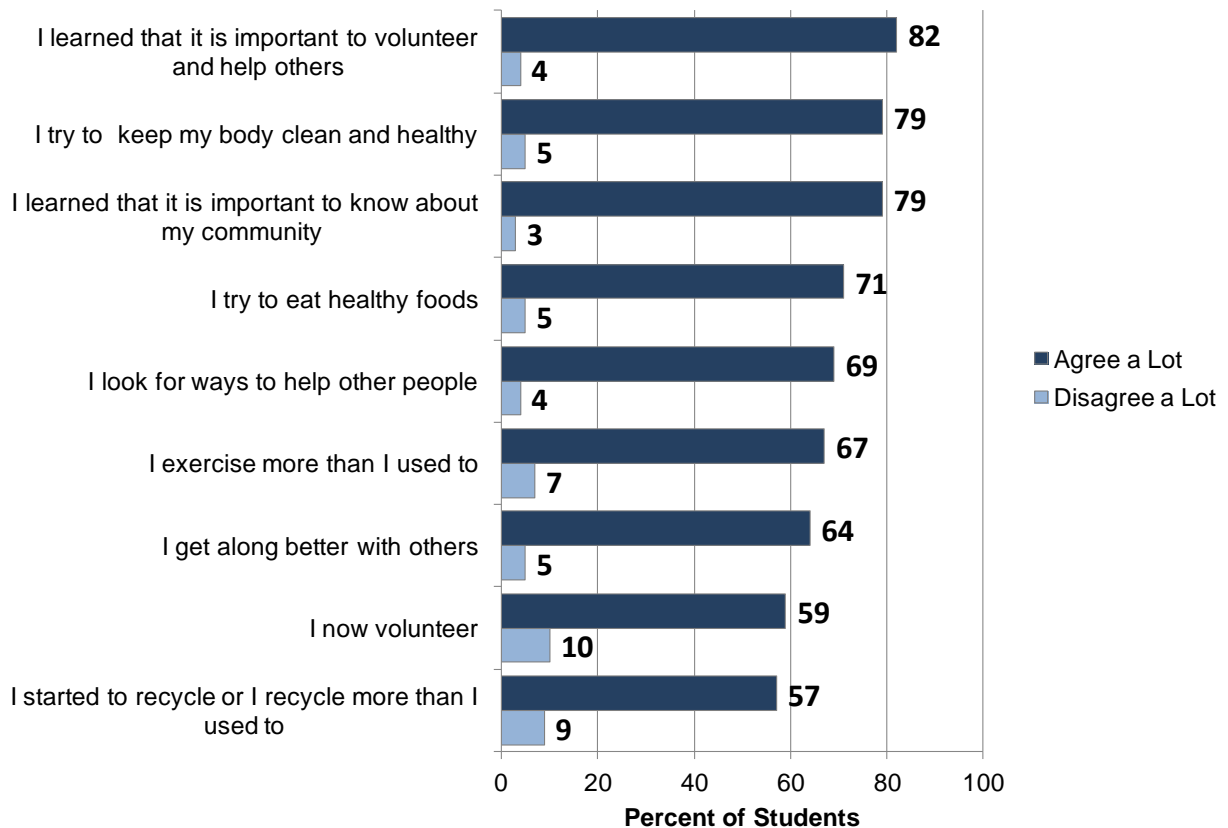


Exhibit reads: 82 percent of students agreed a lot that because of City Year, they learned that it is important to volunteer and help others.

Source: Student Survey, Question 6

*Survey data suggest that students who participated in a wider variety of Starfish Corps activities were more likely to believe that the program had a positive effect on their attitudes,*



*behaviors, and level of civic engagement*<sup>8</sup>. That is, as described in the previous section, as many as 16 different Starfish Corps activities might be offered in any given school. Survey data suggest that the number of activities students participate in is related to their likelihood of rating Starfish Corps as having a strong positive effect on their attitudes, behaviors and level of civic engagement. That is, among the students who participated in more than nine types of Starfish Corps activities, 84 percent rated Starfish Corps highly in terms of it having a strong positive effect on their attitudes, behaviors, and level of civic engagement. By comparison, 45 percent of students who participated in nine or fewer types of Starfish Corps activities gave Starfish Corps a high effectiveness rating (Exhibit 16).

Site visit data shed some light on number of activities being associated with overall student satisfaction. Corps members in one of the schools raised the point that because Starfish Corps topics do not change from year to year, students who have been in City Year programming for multiple years become tired of the topics. Corps members in another school said that when they asked students about what they wanted to do in Starfish Corps, they were quite clear about wanting more activity and less lecture/discussion:

*They said they were sick of activities where we sit down and have a discussion and somebody explains to them what the environment is or what racism is and we talk about it. And frankly, I don't blame them because they get that all throughout their classes. So that was kind of like a wake-up call for us to write more engaging lessons. So we've tried to come up with scavenger hunts and activities that involve going outside. And it's a balance between doing things that they're going to enjoy and doing things that are actually lessons and not 'Let's go outside and have fun.' It's a learning process. I think if we were starting over again, we could put together a very good curriculum, but it's been tough this year with Starfish.*

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<sup>8</sup> We assigned a scale score to each student based on an aggregate measure of his or her perceptions of Starfish Corps' effect on him or her, using survey responses presented in Exhibit 15. We then divided students into two groups—those who believed Starfish Corps had a strong effect on their attitudes, behaviors, and level of civic engagement and those who believed the effect was somewhat average or weak. We disaggregated the data by hours of participation, number of activities in which they participated (i.e., an aggregate measure of the activities presented in Exhibit 14), grade, and gender, as well as by each of the implementation indices (i.e., corps member team preparation and training, corps member leadership, teacher satisfaction, and corps member satisfaction). While there were no significant differences by hours of participation, grade, or gender, we found significant variation in student ratings of Starfish Corps' effects by the number of activities in which they participated and by corps member team training, preparation, and support.

**Exhibit 16**  
**Student ratings of Starfish Corps' effectiveness, by range in type of activities in which they participated**  
*(N= 308 students)*

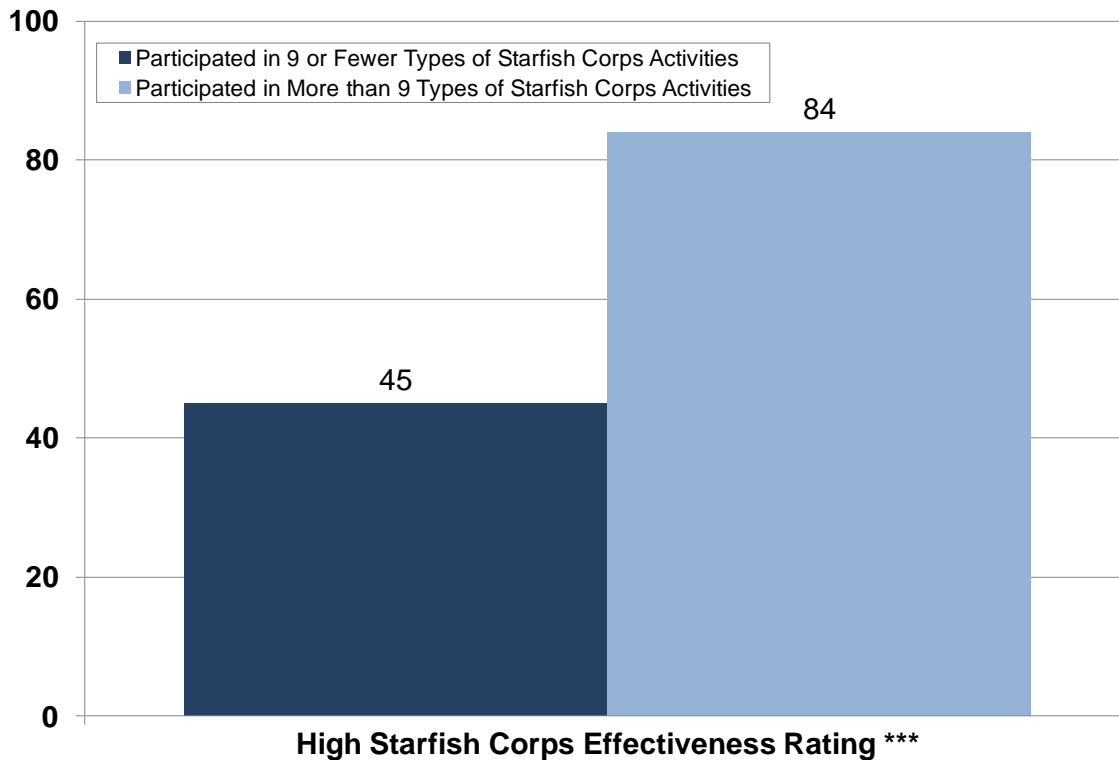


Exhibit reads: 45 percent of students who participated in nine or fewer types of Starfish Corps activities gave Starfish Corps a high effectiveness rating compared with 84 percent of students who participated in more than nine Starfish Corps activities.

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ ;  $V = .410$

Source: Student Survey, Questions 5 & 6

*Survey data also suggest that students who attended schools where the corps member team was of higher quality with respect to corps member preparation, training, and support were more likely to believe that Starfish Corps had a positive effect on their attitudes, behaviors, and level of civic engagement.* We found significant variation in student ratings of Starfish Corps' effects by whether students attended a school where the corps member team had received a high level of preparation, training, and support relative to other corps member teams in other WSWC schools. Among the students who attended schools with high-quality corps member teams, 73 percent rated Starfish Corps highly. By contrast, fewer students who attended schools with average corps member team quality with respect to preparation, training, and support rated Starfish Corps highly (54 percent) as did students who attended schools with below average corps member team quality (64 percent) (Exhibit 17). The difference between the percentage of students who rated Starfish Corps highly was statistically significant for those attending schools with high and average quality corps member teams; the difference between schools with high and low quality corps member teams was not significant.

**Exhibit 17**  
**Student ratings of Starfish Corps' effectiveness, by corps member team quality**  
**with respect to preparation, training, and support**  
*(N= 309 students)*

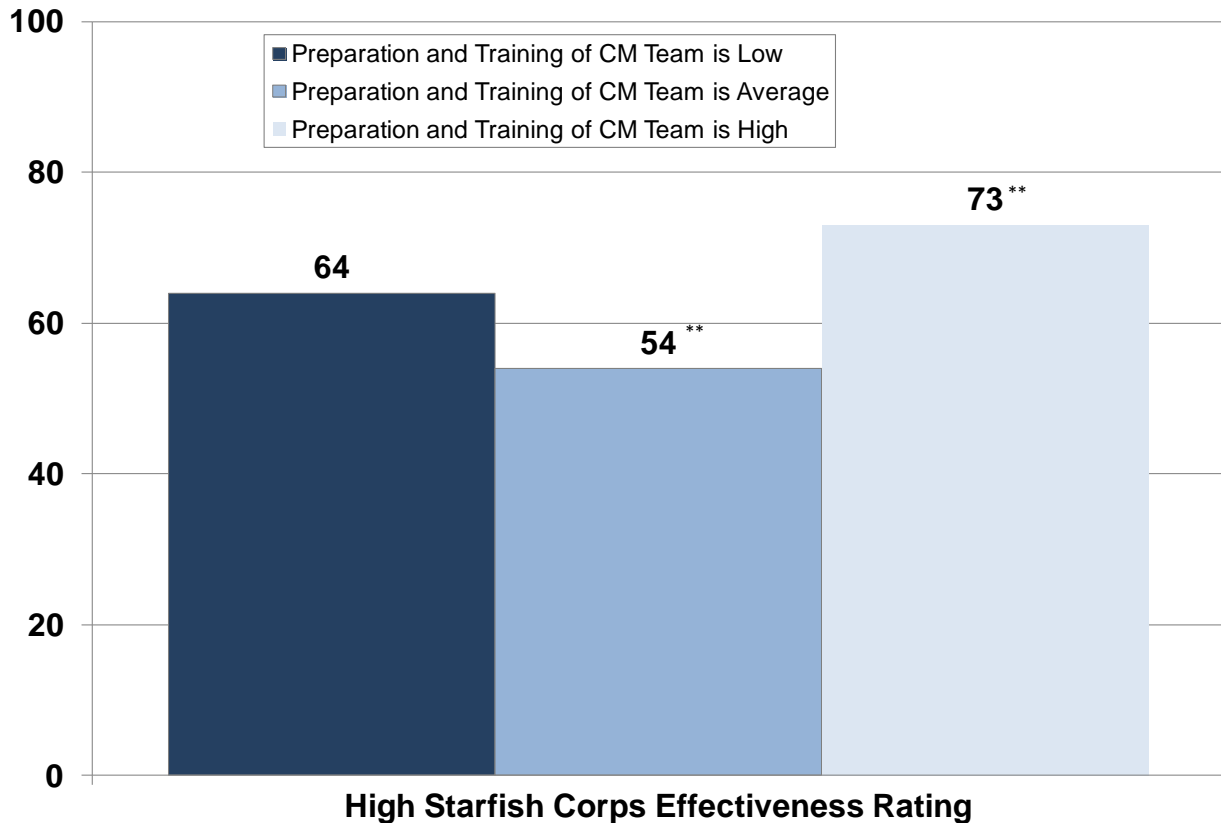


Exhibit reads: 64 percent of students in schools where the preparation, training, and support of the corps member team was relatively low gave Starfish Corps a high effectiveness rating.

\*\*  $p < .01$ ;  $V = .195$

Source: Student survey, Question 6; CM MY Survey, multiple items.

Finally, corps member satisfaction was significantly associated with students' perceptions of the effectiveness of Starfish Corps, but the two variables were inversely related. That is, students attending schools where corps member satisfaction levels were relatively low were more likely to rate their Starfish Corps experience highly. While seemingly counter-intuitive, this inverse relationship could reflect circumstances in which Corps members, believing that they lack the necessary support and structure to provide high-quality Starfish Corps programming, put forth added effort to ensure that students do not themselves become frustrated by their Starfish Corps experiences.

## V. Student Literacy

City Year corps members work in each school to improve students' literacy skills by leading one-on-one or small group literacy tutoring sessions with small groups of students who have been identified by the school as struggling readers. The specific WSWC literacy tutoring interventions that corps member teams provided varied from school to school and included one-on-one literacy tutoring, group literacy tutoring, and/or shared reading. In 2011, CYN Y provided literacy tutoring services to a total of 761 students, but the number of students served in each school varied significantly, ranging from 2 students in one school to as many as 59 students in another. The average number of students served was approximately 19 students per school.

The following sections describe: (1) the types of literacy tutoring services provided by corps member teams; (2) teacher and principal perceptions of literacy tutoring services and its effect on participating students; (3) students' experiences in and perceptions of literacy tutoring and its effect on their reading skills; and (4) the impact of literacy tutoring on students' reading achievement.

### Literacy Tutoring

City Year teams in the 13 New York City schools included in this evaluation implemented a variety of literacy tutoring curricula and activities in 2010-11, including Great Leaps, Intervention by Design, Read Naturally, Read 180, and other externally designed and validated curricula for literacy instruction. Some schools used more than one of these programs while others used no specific intervention method or curriculum. Indeed, school administrators at each school decide what, if any, literacy intervention curricula they would like corps members to use with students. In some cases, teacher wishes trump whatever intervention the City Year team is using. That is, if a teacher simply wants a corps member to help out in his or her classroom, providing general support, that corps member may not tutor youth in literacy at all. Alternatively, based on teacher request, that corps member may use a different literacy intervention than the one the rest of the City Year team at that school is using. These interventions are implemented either during classes or in a pull-out format, when the corps member takes a selected student or group of students into a hallway or another room in order to work on a particular literacy activity. Specific literacy interventions used by City Year teams include the following:

- ***Great Leaps*** emphasizes the improvement of reading speed (fluency). In this program, students are pulled out of class and spend 15 to 20 minutes with a corps member reading aloud from pages of syllables, words, sentences, poems, and stories included in the Great Leaps notebook. Once a student masters a page—measured in words per minute—the student “leaps” to the next page, which contains more advanced material.

- ***Intervention by Design.*** This intensive intervention program is designed for students in grades K–5 who are reading two or more grade levels below their on-level peers. Intervention by Design develops students’ reading skills by attending to the “five pillars” of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. Intervention by Design focuses on developing students’ word-level skills and comprehension strategies.
  
- ***Read Naturally*** focuses on developing students’ fluency and phonemic awareness. The program usually consists of three tutoring sessions per week of 20-30 minutes each. Corps members pull one or two students out of class at a time for these sessions. The three core elements of the Read Naturally program are: teacher modeling (in which the instructor models correct reading, or the student listens to a recording while following along in a book); repeated reading (which is designed to help students build fluency and confidence); and ongoing progress monitoring (in which students record the number of words they read correctly both before and after practicing). The Read Naturally program, like Intervention by Design, seeks to address the “five pillars” of reading.<sup>9</sup>
  
- ***Shared Reading*** is a newly designed literacy program targeted toward younger children in grades K-2 and was developed in one of the 13 WSWC schools in coordination with the literacy coaches. The program consists of small group or one-on-one time with a corps member, who reads to students after they are pulled out of class. Each session lasts about 30 minutes and emphasizes the development of a mentor-mentee relationship, so the corps member might not read with the students every day. Rather, the corps member may join the student in whatever class they were pulled out of. In addition, the goal is to foster a love of reading and not to practice phonics or reading out loud. Kids are hand-selected to be involved in Shared Reading and many are struggling readers or ESL students who need extra reading practice.

***Teachers reported observing corps members using a variety of tutoring strategies when working with students.*** Indeed, approximately three-fourths of all teachers reported observing corps members employ seven types of tutoring strategies when working with students. Among the strategies that the vast majority of teachers observed corps members using were: (1) encouraging students to read independently (88 percent); (2) employing after-reading strategies (e.g., asking and answering questions, reviewing what was learned) (85 percent), (3) employing during-reading strategies such as monitoring student comprehension and summarizing skills (83 percent); (4) employing before-reading strategies such as previewing the story and making predictions (80 percent); (5) assisting students with selecting appropriate independent reading materials (75 percent); (6) guided oral readings (75 percent); and (7) word part study (71 percent) (Exhibit 18).

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<sup>9</sup> From FY11 CYNV Literacy Audit Report.

**Exhibit 18**  
**Percent of teachers who observed Corps members using various instructional strategies with students during tutoring sessions**  
*(N=115 teachers)*

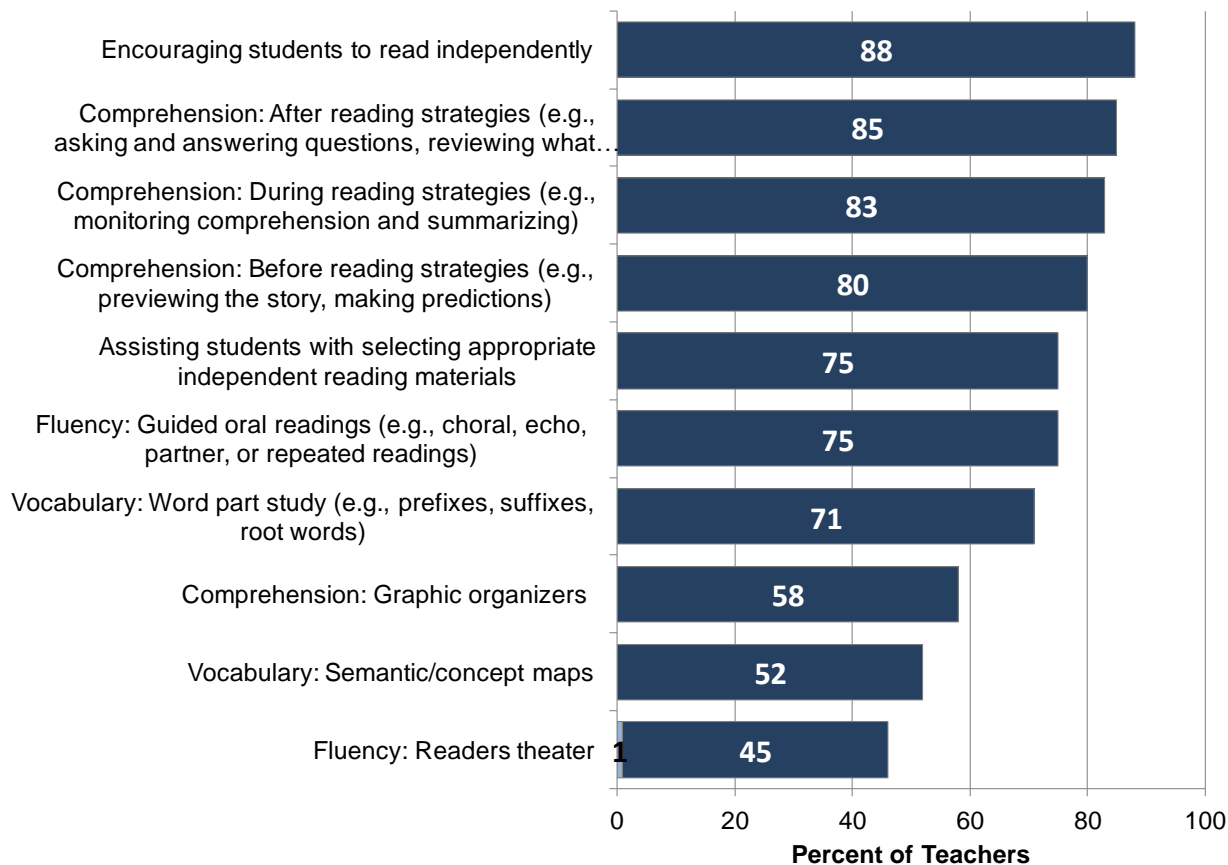


Exhibit reads: 88 percent of teachers reported observing Corps members encouraging students to read independently during tutoring sessions.  
 Source: Teacher EOY Survey, Question 7

While a critical component of the WSWC model, one-on-one literacy tutoring time was not always strictly used for literacy tutoring. In some of the programs we visited, if a student had an issue or problem they needed to discuss with a corps member, the literacy tutoring lesson might be put on hold. Some corps members used literacy tutoring time as an open time to help students with whatever the student perceived as their greatest need. As shown in Exhibit 19, students spent a good deal of time on non-literacy related activities, including talking about the things they like and don't like to do in school (half the students said they "almost always" did this with their City Year reading tutor); talking about their classmates and friends (47 percent reported "almost always" doing this with their City Year reading tutor); talking about things they like and don't like to do outside of school (41 percent); and talking about their family (40 percent).

**Exhibit 19**  
**Student participation in various activities during**  
**literacy tutoring sessions**  
*(N=194 students)*

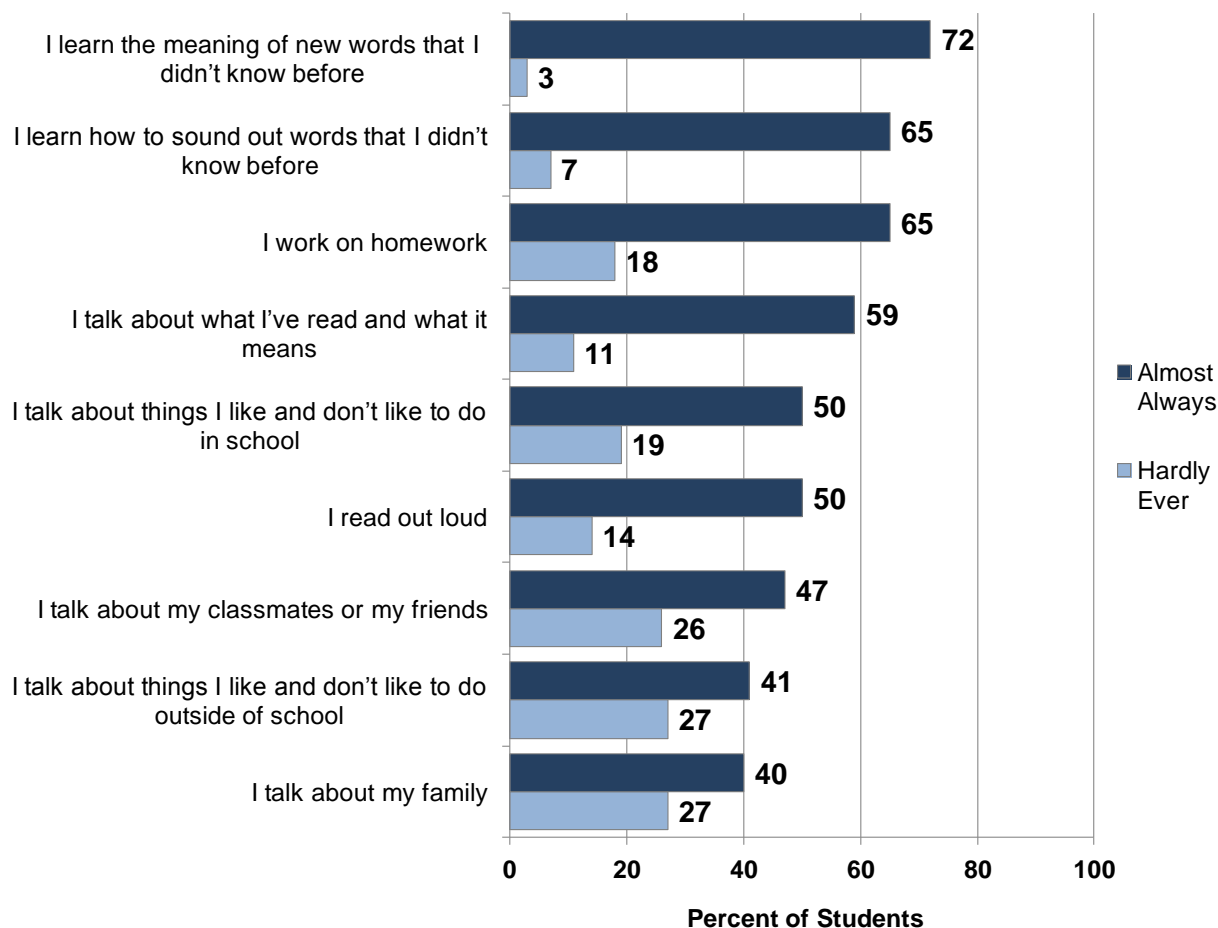


Exhibit reads: 72 percent of students reported that they almost always learned the meaning of new words that they didn't know before during their literacy tutoring sessions.  
 Source: Student Survey, Question 7

## Teacher Perceptions of CY Literacy Tutoring Effects on Students

*Most teachers agreed that the literacy tutoring provided by City Year corps members helped students in many ways.* As shown in Exhibit 20, almost all teachers who responded to the survey agreed that literacy tutoring helped students improve in areas critical to school success, including improving their students' active engagement in learning (92 percent), their confidence in their ability to learn (91 percent), their English/language arts performance (90 percent), their motivation to learn (89 percent), and the time students spent on learning tasks (86

percent). In addition, most teachers agreed that corps members helped improve their students' behavior (74 percent) and their study habits (73 percent).

**Exhibit 20**  
**Teacher perceptions of how City Year corps members helped students through literacy tutoring**  
*(N=113 teachers)*

**Teachers strongly agreed/agreed that corps members who tutor consistently one-on-one or in small groups helped improve students':**

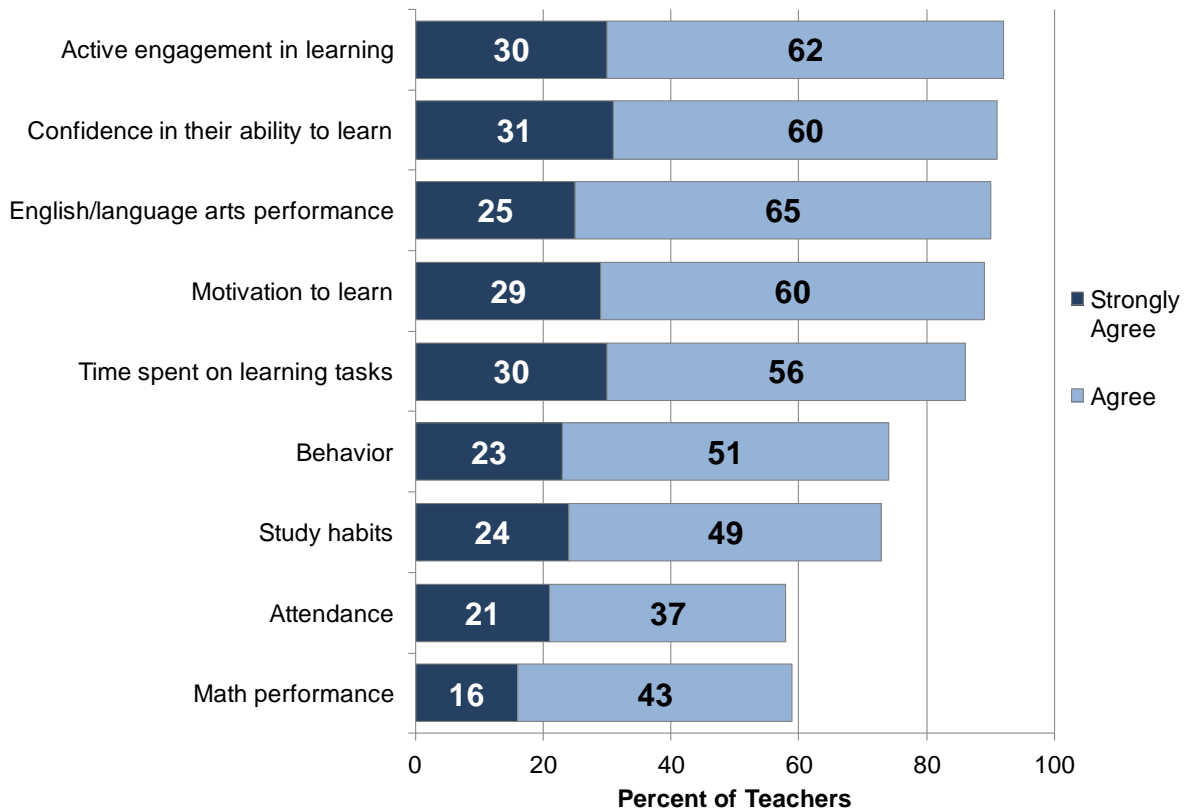


Exhibit reads: 30 percent of teachers agreed strongly that City Year corps members who literacy tutors who consistently helped improve students' active engagement in learning.

Source: Teacher EOY Survey, Question 9



During site visit interviews, teachers said they noticed changes in their students who participate in Great Leaps tutoring. In the words of one teacher, “I have one student in particular who does not ever put down a book. He jumped seven or eight levels.” Another teacher believed that literacy tutoring was the most beneficial service that City Year New York corps members provide. Similarly, the liaison in one school said the following: “I think [City Year corps members give] children a level of confidence that reaches across their personal life and their academic life, which just helps them as they move on.”

Still, team leader comments suggest that there is still room for improvement with respect to the implementation of literacy tutoring services. That is, in interviews, some team leaders explained that there are still teachers in the schools who do not have a clear picture of what Great Leaps is. One team leader suggested that if teachers had a better understanding of the literacy intervention model, they might recommend different students to receive literacy tutoring instruction from Corps members. In addition, there are multiple pull-out interventions happening in the schools on top of Great Leaps and there is no coordination among the groups providing the intervention services.

## **Student Perceptions of City Year’s Effect on their Reading Skills**

*The majority of students who received City Year tutoring services—and who responded to the survey—generally agreed “a lot” or strongly that City Year helped them be good readers and enjoy reading more.* In addition, the vast majority of students generally agreed strongly that, because of City Year, their reading skills had improved. As shown in Exhibit 21, students responding to the survey agreed “a lot” that because of City Year, they better understand what they read at the end of the year than they had at the beginning of the year (76 percent). In addition, most respondents agreed “a lot” that, compared with their reading skills at the beginning of the year, they are now better readers (72 percent); better at “figuring out words” (67 percent); and read faster (59 percent). Very few students (7 percent or fewer) disagreed “a lot” or strongly with statements suggesting that City Year had a positive effect on their reading skills.

**Exhibit 21**  
**Student perceptions of City Year’s effect on their reading skills**  
*(N=190 students)*

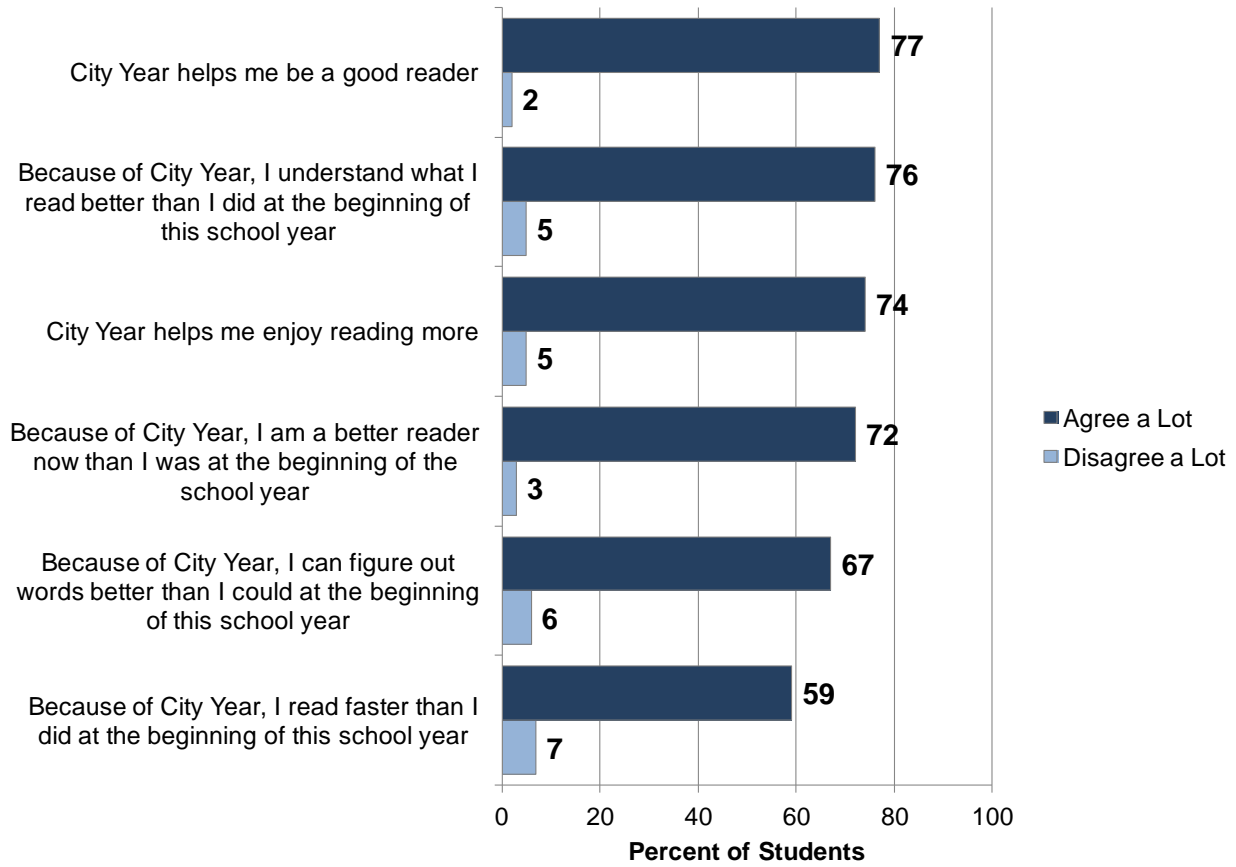


Exhibit reads: 77 percent of students agreed “a lot” or strongly that City Year’s literacy tutoring services helped them be good readers.  
 Source: Student Survey, Question 8

*Survey data suggest that students who participated in a wider variety of activities during their tutoring sessions were more likely to believe that literacy tutoring had a strong, positive effect on their reading skills.* We assigned a scale score to students’ based on an aggregate measure of their perceptions of the effect the literacy tutoring had on their reading skills (i.e., perceptions listed in Exhibit 21 above). We then divided students into two groups—those who believed literacy tutoring had a significant or strong effect on their reading skills and those who believed the effect was somewhat average or weak. We then disaggregated the data by hours of participation in literacy tutoring, types of literacy tutoring activities, grade, and gender, as well as by each of the implementation indices (i.e., corps member team preparation, training, and support; corps member leadership, teacher satisfaction; and corps member satisfaction). While there were no significant differences by hours of participation, by grade, by gender, or by implementation, there were significant variations in students’ literacy effectiveness ratings by the number of different types of literacy tutoring activities in which students participated. Specifically, survey data suggest that the number of literacy tutoring activities students participate in is related to their likelihood of rating literacy tutoring as having a strong,

positive effect on their reading skills. That is, among the students who participated in more than six types of literacy tutoring activities, 78 percent rated literacy tutoring as effective. By comparison, 31 percent of students who participated in fewer than six types of literacy tutoring activities rated literacy tutoring as highly effective compared. This difference was statistically significant (Exhibit 22).

**Exhibit 22**  
**Student ratings of literacy tutoring effectiveness, by number of literacy activities in which they participated**  
(N= 190 students)

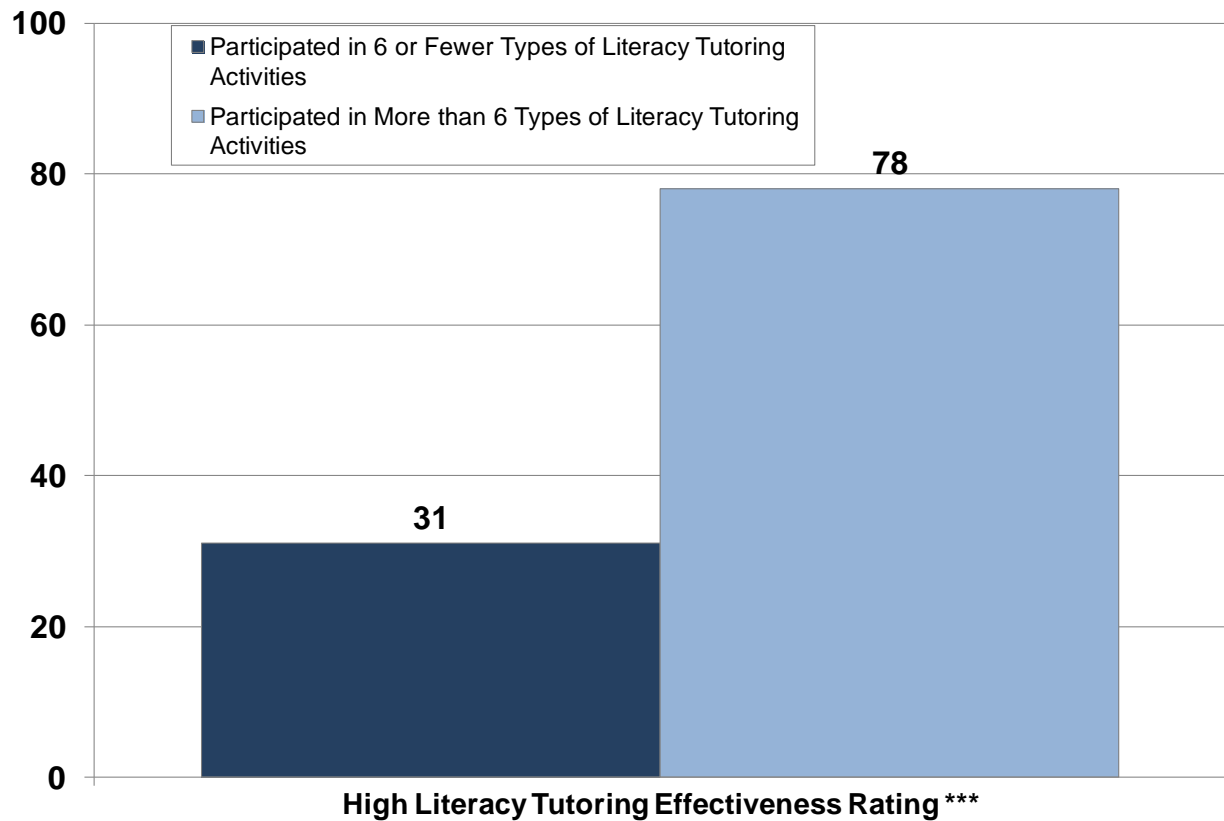


Exhibit reads: 31 percent of students who participated in 6 or fewer types of literacy tutoring activities gave City Year literacy tutoring a high effectiveness rating compared with 78 percent of students who participated in more than 6 types of literacy tutoring activities.

\*\*\* p<.001; V=.473

Source: Student Survey, Questions 7 & 8

## **Impact of Literacy Tutoring on Student Achievement in Reading/Language Arts**

To determine whether student literacy score gains over one year were attributable to City Year's literacy tutoring program, we analyzed City Year literacy tutoring participants' test scores in comparison to those of a matched group of students. Specifically, we employed a quasi-experimental design that compared the performance on the New York State English-Language Arts (ELA) test of City Year tutoring participants to the performance of a comparison group of non-participants who shared similar demographic and prior performance characteristics and who attended similar schools that did not implement the WSWC model.

### **Comparison Group Sample**

To form this comparison group of students, we first found schools which were similar to City Year schools in terms of their learning environments but did not participate in the CYYNY program and have not implemented the WSWC model. In order to find these similar schools, we reviewed school-level data from the DOE's Learning Environment Survey and Progress Reports from 2010 and identified non-participating schools that had similar learning environments, performance characteristics, and demographics. We used propensity score matching to select two schools for each City Year school. The characteristics of the City Year schools and the matched comparison schools are shown in Exhibit 23.

## Exhibit 23 Characteristics of City Year and comparison schools

	City Year schools	Comparison schools
<b>Number of schools sampled</b>	13	26
<b>Average enrollment</b>	525	536
<b>English language learners (percent)</b>	17	16
<b>Average environment score<sup>10</sup></b>	7	7
<b>Students scoring at level 3 or level 4 on state ELA test (percent)</b>	35	32
<b>Average performance score<sup>11</sup></b>	7	6
<b>Teachers with more than five years experience (percent)</b>	69	69
<b>Race/ethnicity (in percents)</b>		
African American or Hispanic	92	95
Other race/ethnicity	8	5

Exhibit reads: There were 13 City Year schools and 26 comparison schools in the matched group. Among the 13 City Year schools, the average enrollment was 525 students; among the comparison schools, it was 536 students.

Once we identified the set of schools that match the WSWC schools, we requested student-level data for these schools from DOE and began the process of identifying a matched comparison group of students. That is, because student performance is strongly linked to students' demographic and educational characteristics, accurately measuring the effect of literacy tutoring on the academic performance of City Year students required the comparison of City year students to non-participating students who share similar demographic, education, and performance characteristics.

We used City Year students' demographic and prior performance data (obtained from DOE using the department's student identification numbers) as control variables for identifying the matched comparison group of students. We employed propensity score matching to identify the ideal match between participating and non-participating students, and selected two comparison students for each WSWC literacy tutoring participant. In the propensity matching process, participants were matched exactly on: 2010 ELA scale score, 2010 school attendance rate, and 2010 grade level. Other variables that were used in the match were gender, 2010 ELL status, 2010 special education status, and two race/ethnicity variables: whether or not a student was African American, and whether or not a student was Hispanic. All of the variables were weighted equally in the matching process. As shown in Exhibit 24 below, the students in the treatment and comparison groups were similar on all measures; there were no statistically significant differences between the groups.

<sup>10</sup> The school environment score is taken from the New York City progress report, and incorporates measures for academic expectations, academic engagement, and safety and respect.

<sup>11</sup> The school performance score is taken from the NYC progress report, and incorporates the percent of students scoring at Level 3 and Level 4, as well as the median student proficiency on state ELA and Math tests.

**Exhibit 24**  
**Characteristics of City Year and matched comparison students**

	Students in City Year schools	Comparison group
<b>Number of youth sampled</b>	107	210
<b>Special educational needs</b> <i>(in percents)</i>		
Special education	16	15
English language learner	22	21
<b>Average ELA scale score</b>	655	656
<b>English/Language Arts achievement</b> <i>(percent at each performance level)</i>		
Level 1: Below basic	16	15
Level 2: Basic	57	57
Level 3: Proficient	24	25
Level 4: Advanced	3	3
<b>Average school attendance rate</b> <i>(percent of days attended)</i>	94	94
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b> <i>(in percents)</i>		
Hispanic	53	65
Black	30	29
Asian	9	3
White	8	2
Native American	0	1

Exhibit reads: There were 107 City Year students and 210 comparison students in the matched group. Among the 107 City Year students, 16 percent received special education services; in the comparison group, 15 percent received such services.

For this analysis, we sought to include all literacy tutoring participants in all 13 CYNV elementary schools and the selected comparison sample of non-participants. The size of the treatment group varied by City Year school (i.e., the number of students served varied from school to school) and the number of students we were able to include in the analysis was affected by the number of consent forms returned from school to school. That is, we received student identification numbers for 491 City Year participants who had parental research consent. From that group, we removed 230 participants who were outside of the study's grade range (i.e. students in grades PK-2 in 2010 who had not yet taken the state ELA tests). We also removed 33 participants with fewer than five hours of attendance in City Year programming (in Starfish and Literacy combined). After removing additional students who were missing key information (such as grade level or ELA test scores), and removing the 118 students who participated only in Starfish activities, 107 City Year literacy students remained.<sup>12</sup> These 107 students and their 210 comparison students were included in the regression analysis.

<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that 38 percent of the literacy tutoring participants included in the final analysis came from one City Year school (41 out of 107).

## The City Year Impact

***Participating in CYNY literacy tutoring did not have a significant effect on students' test scores.*** We draw this conclusion based on the results of multivariate regression models we developed that compared the performance of 107 students who participated in CYNY literacy tutoring with the performance of 210 students not participating in literacy tutoring nor attending schools with a WSWC model. We tested whether students in the CYNY literacy tutoring program performed better on the ELA test (measured in raw scores rather than proficiency levels) after one year, compared with similar students not participating in literacy tutoring. For these analyses, we used raw scores from the 2011 New York state ELA assessment as the outcome variable. We investigated the possibility of interactions among variables in the model, but found no multicollinearity. The predictor variables that we considered included:

- ELA scale score in 2009-10
- Attendance rate in 2010-11
- Participation in literacy tutoring (yes/no)
- Hours of participation in literacy tutoring

Although participation in literacy tutoring did not significantly predict students' ELA test scores in 2011, other variables did. For example, students' ELA test scores in the previous year (2010) had significant effects on their 2011 scores. In addition, students' rate of school attendance in 2011 also significantly predicted their score on their 2011 ELA test.

***There were no significant effects of literacy tutoring on participants' attendance in school.*** That is, we examined whether participation in literacy tutoring had a significant effect on students' attendance in school in 2011 and found that there was no difference between the attendance rates of literacy tutoring participants and comparison students.<sup>13</sup>

***Among City Year participants, the number of hours spent in literacy tutoring had a small, positive effect on students' test scores in 2011.*** That is, to examine whether a greater number of hours of literacy tutoring might have an effect on student ELA performance, we built a separate regression model with only City Year participants and examined whether the hours they spent in literacy tutoring significantly predicted an increase in literacy scores over the course of one year. According to City Year's cyIMPACT database of program participation information, the median number of hours of literacy tutoring that participants received was 12; the maximum number of hours that any student received was 33 (Exhibit 25).

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<sup>13</sup> We looked at several other variables as possible predictors of student ELA achievement and school attendance rates, including several of the implementation indices discussed in earlier sections of this report. That is, we created models that looked at whether Corps Member Team Quality indices of preparation, training and support, as well as leadership and cohesiveness might predict student ELA performance or school attendance rates. In addition, we looked at whether the index on Teacher Satisfaction with corps member services and activities predicted either student ELA performance or school attendance. None of the indices predicted student ELA performance, nor did they predict student school attendance rates.

**Exhibit 25**  
**Hours of literacy tutoring**  
*(n=107)*

Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Std. Deviation
2	33	12	12	6

Exhibit reads: Among the 107 City Year literacy tutoring participants included in this analysis, the minimum number of hours spent in tutoring was 2.3.

The beta for the “hours of participating in literacy tutoring” variable was 0.57 (Exhibit 26), which means that for every additional hour of literacy tutoring, the model predicted a gain of about half a point on the ELA state test.<sup>14</sup> (The range of scores for City Year participants on the state test in 2011 was 599 to 745 points.) The R<sup>2</sup> for this model is 0.26, which means the model explains 26 percent of the variation in 2011 ELA test scores. However, when using a model that controlled for more factors, such as participants’ ELL status, special education status, and 2011 school attendance rate, hours spent in tutoring was no longer a significant predictor of ELA performance in 2011.<sup>15</sup> Finally, we tested for and found no significant effect of literacy tutoring on participants’ attendance in school. That is, the amount of time participants spent in literacy tutoring did not make a difference in their school attendance rates.

**Exhibit 26**  
**Literacy outcomes regression results, by City Year participants only**

Outcome variable: ELA scale score 2011

Coefficient	Beta	Standard Error of Beta	Standardized Beta	Significance
ELA scale score 2010	0.35	.08	.42	.000
Hours of participation in literacy tutoring	0.57	.29	.18	.048
(Constant)	425.41	48.34	n/a	.000

R<sup>2</sup>=0.26

Exhibit reads: For every one point increase in a student’s 2010 ELA score, the model predicts a 0.35-point increase in the student’s 2011 score. This model explains 26 percent of the variation in City Year literacy participants’ 2011 ELA scale scores.

The results of the literacy tutoring impact analyses may indicate that literacy tutoring has positive effects on students, even if these effects are not evident in the comparison group analysis. That is, more hours of literacy tutoring might improve participants’ literacy scores

<sup>14</sup> The beta (b) statistic for each regression finding explains the influence of a particular factor on students’ test scores. Beta, *b*, is a coefficient used in regressions to indicate the amount of change in an outcome that can be attributed to a predictor (independent) variable, when other predictors are held constant. In regressions with continuous outcome (dependent) variables, *b* can be interpreted in terms of the outcome variable. For example, if a predictor variable has a *b* of 2.5, for every 1 point increase in that predictor variable, the outcome variable will increase by 2.5 points.

<sup>15</sup> The total number of hours spent in Starfish and in literacy tutoring combined did not significantly predict ELA test scores in 2011 for City Year participants, in a model with the 2010 ELA scores as the other factor.



enough so that such effects would become evident when compared with a group of non-participants. City Year may also be positively affecting students' literacy outcomes in ways that the state test does not measure. Still, other studies of literacy interventions and intensive out-of-school time (OST) programming have shown that many hours of intervention are needed to have a measurable impact on student ELA test scores. Examples include the following:

- For the *Scholastic READ 180* program, Scholastic established a minimum number of minutes that students should use their reading instructional software. Under the program model, each student is expected to use the software for 20 minutes per day for five days per week. When the program is fully implemented according to Scholastic's specifications, a participant would be expected to use the software for as much as 60 hours during a 180 day school year. An evaluation by Policy Studies Associates in 2011 found a modest correlation between the number of minutes a participant used the READ 180 software during the school year and the gains on the SRI assessment. The correlation was +0.13 and was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). The positive correlation indicates that the greater a student's level of involvement in READ 180 activities, as measured in this case by use of the READ 180 software, the greater the student's gains in reading proficiency.<sup>16</sup>
- In *Higher Achievement*, an intensive OST academic program, students must commit to 650 hours of OST and summer programming per year. In a randomized control trial of students participating in Higher Achievement, after two years of OST academic interventions for middle school students (including the summer), the program showed significant effects on problem solving (0.12 standard deviations ahead of the comparison group) and on reading comprehension (0.09 standard deviations ahead of the comparison group). However, after one year of intervention, the program did not show significant effects.<sup>17</sup>
- An evaluation of *The After School Corporation (TASC)* in New York City, conducted by Policy Studies Associates, found that students who attended a minimum of 30 days over a school year—or 60 percent of the possible days they could participate while they were enrolled—made larger gains than nonparticipants and substantially larger gains when compared with afterschool participants who attended less often.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> White, R., Arcaira, E., Haslam, M. *Improving Student Literacy in the Phoenix Union High School District: Tenth Grade Results for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 Cohorts*. Policy Studies Associates. Washington DC, August 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Herrera, C. *Testing the Impact of Higher Achievement's Year-Round Out-of-School-Time Program on Academic Outcomes*. Public/Private Ventures. Philadelphia PA, October 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Welsh, M. et al. *Promoting Learning and School Attendance through After-School Programs: Student-Level Changes in Educational Performance Across TASC's First Three Years*. Policy Studies Associates. Washington DC, October 2002.

## VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

City Year New York’s Whole School Whole Child initiative seems to have taken root in the 13 elementary schools where it has been implemented. The principals/liaisons, teachers, and students who have worked with City Year corps members had strongly favorable assessments of the City Year program and the services that corps members provided to their respective schools. Indeed, perhaps the most important perception among principals/liaisons was that they agreed that City Year corps members demonstrate through their words and actions that it is possible to “make a difference.” More principals strongly agreed with this statement than any other statement regarding corps member performance, suggesting that City Year has succeeded in assuring principals (and/or other school leaders) that the WSWC initiative adds value to their schools.

With respect to Starfish Corps, principals had strongly favorable views about its effect on their school. Among students, the vast majority “agreed a lot” that the program had a positive effect on their attitudes, behaviors, and level of civic engagement. Still, analysis of the survey data yields some suggestions regarding ways to strengthen and improve the program. That is, student effectiveness ratings for Starfish Corps may improve if Starfish Corps offered—and students participated in—a wider array of activities. Survey data also suggest that students who attended schools where the Corps member teams had a higher overall rating with respect to corps member training, preparation, and support also were more likely to believe that Starfish Corps had a positive effect on their attitudes, behaviors, and level of civic engagement.

Literacy tutoring also received a favorable review from teachers and students. Teachers agreed that the literacy tutoring provided by City Year Corps members helped students in myriad ways. Indeed, the majority of students who received City Year tutoring services (and who responded to the survey) generally agreed “a lot” or strongly that City Year helped them be good readers and enjoy reading more. Survey data suggest, however, that students who participated in a wider variety of activities during their tutoring sessions were more likely to believe that literacy tutoring had a strong, positive effect on their reading skills. Still, participating in literacy tutoring did not have a significant effect on students’ test scores. That is, regression models were created using 107 of the literacy participants in the WSWC model and their 210 comparison students, and found that participation in literacy tutoring did not significantly predict students’ ELA test scores in 2011.

Despite the overall positive perceptions of City Year, the WSWC model remains somewhat amorphous in its design and implementation. That is, survey data from corps members and students suggest that the WSWC model varies from school to school with respect to the curricula, structure, and implementation of the literacy tutoring and Starfish Corps programs. In addition, corps member preparation, training, and support varied within teams and across schools and interviews with teachers and corps members suggested that both believed that corps members needed more training before starting work at a school.

## Recommendations

### Overall

- ***Consider standardizing the literacy tutoring curriculum, Starfish Corps curriculum, and classroom-based services and activities across the participating elementary schools.*** If the corps member team’s attitude is “we’ll do whatever you want us to do in your school,” it muddies the definition of the WSWC model and makes it particularly difficult not only for CYN Y to support the myriad efforts of corps member teams but also difficult to measure implementation, outcomes, and impact across participating schools.
- ***Consider mandating that corps members be required to work directly in classrooms. In cases where teachers had corps members assigned to their classrooms, they had extremely positive views of corps members.*** By working directly in classrooms, corps members believed they were able to develop more trusting and collaborative relationships with teachers. By contrast, in schools where corps members pulled students out of the classrooms, they had minimal opportunity to interact with and develop a working relationship with teachers. Indeed, in one school where corps members do not work directly in classrooms, school staff were still unsure about the role City Year played in their school, despite having corps members working there the past three years.
- ***Consider providing corps members both preservice and inservice training in classroom and behavior management.*** The only area in which fewer principals assessed corps member performance highly was with regard to corps members being well prepared for the behavior support they offered students. Indeed, a lack of capacity and training among corps members to manage student behavior in the classroom and during Starfish Corps is an issue that emerged in the principal, teacher, and corps member survey data.

### Starfish Corps

- ***Consider offering corps members additional training in how to differentiate Starfish lessons for older and younger students as well as how to convert lesson skeletons or frameworks into full lesson plans.*** Corps members expressed concern about the Starfish Corps training provided by City Year, reporting that the training was rushed, and that concepts were not thoroughly explained. As one corps member explained: “[Training] could have been improved upon, focusing on answering questions such as what each part of a lesson means and why it is important. [The training] was very rushed. I didn’t get it.”

## Literacy Tutoring

- *Accurately capturing more of the tutoring hours that corps members provide, and identifying those students who are being tutored intensively, might demonstrate that tutoring is having a stronger impact than shown in this evaluation.* Indeed, it is possible that corps members are providing much more tutoring than shown in the cyIMPACT numbers used here.
- *Consider relying on school-level rather than state-level tests to show program impact.* That is, rather than focusing on improving state-level test scores, which may not be aligned with the variety of literacy interventions and tutoring tools that corps members use, City Year could instead rely on school-level tests to show impact. That is, tests delivered by classroom teachers could be used to give feedback to corps members, and corps member notes on student progress could support continuous improvement of literacy tutoring.

**APPENDIX**  
**Implementation Indices**

## Corps Member Team Quality: Preparation, Training, and Support Index

Survey Items	Value (0-35 pts.)
Whether corps member was able to interact with corps members from other sites around resources/best practices via the Internet	1/0
Whether corps member agreed that teachers with whom he/she worked: -Established clear expectations for their work in the classroom -Met regularly with him/her to plan their work with students -Met regularly with him/her to review students' performance -Met regularly with him/her to review their performance -Gave him/her increasingly greater responsibilities	Agree/strongly agree=1; Else, 0
Whether corps member participated in each of the following since starting full-time service: -Training/professional development sessions offered by school/district -Training sessions related to school-based service offered by site -Observation & related coaching by corps member or program manager -Observation & related coaching by teacher(s) or another school staff member -Review of student performance data with teacher or another school staff member	2-4 times=1; Else, 0
Whether corps member considered each of the following to be "quite helpful/very helpful" to him/her in planning for and carrying out service in his/her school: -Trainings on English, language arts, and/or literacy -Trainings on math -Trainings on positive behavior support and management -Trainings on attendance coaching -Trainings on youth development -Trainings on tutoring -Trainings related to specific curriculum (e.g., a particular reading method or mathematics curriculum) -Trainings related to school-based service offered by your site -Training/professional development offered by your site -Training/professional development offered by your school district -Observation & related coaching by your SCM or program manager -Observation & related coaching by your teacher, or another school staff member -Regular supervision and feedback by your teacher -The Idealist's Journey	Quite helpful/very helpful=1; Else, 0
Whether corps member went to a content area specialist with questions or concerns	1/0
Whether corps member felt "quite" or "very" prepared to effectively carry out the following school-based activities: -One-on-one/small group tutoring in <b>literacy</b> -Whole classroom academic support -Whole class and/or homeroom behavior support -Attendance coaching -Parent and family engagement -Enrichment activities (e.g., clubs, sports, arts, music, student govt., debate) -Afterschool -Homework assistance	Quite/very prepared=1; Else, 0
Whether corps member agreed/agreed strongly that he/she should be able to solve student behavior problems	1/0
Whether corps member agreed/agreed strongly that he/she seeks out resources and support on student behavior	1/0
<b>Overall Average Score:</b>	12
<b>Minimum School-level Score:</b>	10
<b>Maximum School-level Score:</b>	17

SOURCE: Corps Member MY Survey

# Corps Member Team Quality: Leadership and Cohesiveness Index

Survey Items	Value (0-33 pts.)
Whether corps member's team did each of the following once a week or more: -Meet as a team -Meet to discuss best practices -Get feedback from each other about what is working and what needs improvement in your service -Discuss issues relating to team functioning/dynamics -Meet with your PM -Meet with your Team Leader -Discuss student improvement -Share strategies to positively impact student success	Daily, few times a week, once a week=1; Else, 0
Whether corps member meets every couple of weeks or more frequently with his/her PM	1/0
Whether corps member agrees strongly that the PM: -Communicated effectively with me and/or my team. -Helped connect me and/or my team with resources to perform service. -Maintained high expectations of me and/or my team. -Helped me and/or my team resolve conflicts. -Made me feel like I could trust him/her. -Helped me understand the culture of City Year. -Helped to facilitate leadership development experiences. -Facilitated strong relationships with service partners. -Overall, he/she was very effective as a leader.	Strongly Agree=1; Else, 0
Whether corps member agrees strongly that the Team Leader: -Communicated effectively with me and/or my team. -Helped connect me and/or my team with resources to perform service. -Maintained high expectations of me and/or my team. -Helped me and/or my team resolve conflicts. -Made me feel like I could trust him/her. -Helped me understand the culture of City Year. -Helped to facilitate leadership development experiences. -Facilitated strong relationships with service partners. -Overall, he/she was very effective as a leader.	Strongly Agree=1; Else, 0
Whether corps member agrees strongly that his/her Program Manager and Team Leader were...: -Aligned about goals for the team -Aligned about expectations of the corps members on the team -Aligned about communicating with the team -Aligned about corps member roles and responsibilities -Aligned about each other's roles and responsibilities	Strongly Agree=1; Else, 0
Whether corps member believes that, overall, his/her team functioning was very good/excellent	Very good/Excellent=1; Else, 0
<b>Average School-level Score:</b> <b>Minimum School-level Score:</b> <b>Maximum School-level Score:</b>	18 14 22

SOURCE: Corps Member EOY Survey

## Corps Member Efficacy and Satisfaction Index

Survey Items	Value (0-38 pts.)
<b>CORPS MEMBER MYS</b>	
Whether CM believes the following were quite/very helpful to him/her in planning for and carrying out his/her service overall? -Trainings -Team structures (e.g. team roles) -Team meetings -Your Team Leader -Your Program Manager -Your teammates -Your Service Partner -Resources on SharePoint	Quite/Very Helpful=1; Else, 0
<b>CORPS MEMBER EOY</b>	
Whether CM feels a great deal that the following occurred during his/her primary service work this year: -I felt I made a difference. -I led others in service. -I worked with people whose backgrounds were different than my own. -I learned new skills. -I felt integrated with the community I served. -I made valuable connections through the City Year Alumni Association.	A great deal=1; Else, 0
Whether CM feels a great deal that he/she made the following impacts on students and classrooms served: -Improved student attendance -Improved student academic performance -Improved students' study habits -Increased students' enjoyment of reading -Increased students' confidence in their reading ability -Improved students' reading ability	A great deal=1; Else, 0
Whether CM rates overall service experience as very good/excellent	1/0
Whether CM is satisfied/very satisfied with each of the following elements of the CY leadership development experience? -Basic Training Academy -Service-related leadership opportunities within your primary service -Additional service-related leadership opportunities outside your primary service -Self-Directed Learning opportunities -The Idealist's Journey -The Performance Management Process -The Six Civic Leadership Competencies -Leadership Development Days -Observation and coaching by PM -Observation and coaching by Team Leader	Satisfied/Very Satisfied=1; Else, 0
Whether CM rates leadership development experience as very good/excellent	1/0
Whether CM rates team experience this year as very good/excellent	1/0
Whether CM is very likely to volunteer or perform community service in the next few yrs.	1/0
Whether CM long-term career or work is very likely to involve service to others	1/0
Whether CM rates CY as an excellent learning experience for him/her?	1/0
Whether CM rates overall experience as a corps member this year as excellent	1/0
Whether CM is extremely likely to recommend CY to a friend or family member	9-10=1; Else, 0
<b>Average School-level Score:</b>	14
<b>Minimum School-level Score:</b>	9
<b>Maximum School-level Score:</b>	18

SOURCE: Corps Member MY and EOY Surveys