

# FROM REMEDIATION TO ACCELERATION

EARLY LESSONS FROM TWO PHILADELPHIA BACK ON TRACK SCHOOLS

OCTOBER 2011

By Cecilia Le and Lili Allen

**BACK ON TRACK**

PATHWAYS THROUGH POSTSECONDARY



**JOBS FOR THE FUTURE**





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**Jobs for the Future** develops, implements, and promotes new education and workforce strategies that help communities, states, and the nation compete in a global economy. In more than 200 communities across 43 states, JFF improves the pathways leading from high school to college to family-sustaining careers. JFF works with districts, states, national youth-serving networks, intermediaries, and community college systems to reengage youth who are off track to graduation or out of school and put them on a path to postsecondary success. To assist its partners in this work, JFF offers a comprehensive range of services, tools, and resources.

## BACK ON TRACK

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JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

**Back on Track** models are the next generation of alternative schools and programs, designed to prepare off-track and out-of-school youth for college and career success. Jobs for the Future has developed a *Back on Track* school design that incorporates three phases: Enriched Preparation, Postsecondary Bridging, and First-Year Supports. *Back on Track* schools offer rich academic preparation and a clear path to college, supporting young people who have fallen off track from graduation or dropped out to reengage and achieve their postsecondary ambitions.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Cecilia Le** develops publications and products that capture the key approaches behind school designs that connect all young people to postsecondary success. These designs include *Back on Track* schools that put off-track and out-of-school youth on paths to college and careers, as well as early colleges that blend high school and college coursework in an accelerated program for students underrepresented in higher education. Before coming to JFF, Ms. Le was a Thomas B. Fordham Foundation fellow at Education Sector in Washington, DC. She has also helped prepare Boston students for college through an intensive tutoring program at MATCH Charter Public High School. She spent four years as an education reporter for newspapers in upstate New York and Wilmington, Delaware.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

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School systems are facing intense pressure to improve graduation rates and reduce dropout rates. As a result, they are looking with increasing interest at credit recovery and alternative education options for students who are over-age and off track from completing high school or who have dropped out of school altogether.

Alternative education has long been a part of the education landscape, but never before has it faced the challenge of preparing students not only to complete high school but also to succeed in postsecondary education. In today's economy, these young people will not be able to support a family without moving beyond a high school diploma to a postsecondary degree or other credential.

While the desired end goal is evident, the path to it remains murky—for both young people and the schools and teachers who want to help them succeed. Given their checkered academic histories, potentially low skill levels, and little time to reach graduation, helping off-track high school students graduate with college-ready skills can seem like an overwhelming challenge. What does it take for teachers in alternative settings to move from “remediation,” guided by a minimal standard for a high school diploma, toward “acceleration,” rooted in a higher standard of learning for all young people and leading as rapidly as possible to credentials with value in today's economy? And how do we achieve that with students who may have struggled with attendance and disciplinary issues? How can educators develop the skills to increase the level of academic challenge without causing students to become frustrated and discouraged? Across the country, educators in what JFF terms *Back on Track* schools are grappling with these questions and piloting solutions.<sup>1</sup>

With JFF's longtime partners at the Philadelphia Youth Network and the School District of Philadelphia's Office of Multiple Pathways, we are testing one possible solution. Together, we have begun to uncover the potential of adapting a leadership and instructional approach originally designed for small, innovative high schools serving low-income populations.

In 2008, with an eye toward exploring this potential, JFF invited educators from Philadelphia alternative schools—called Accelerated Schools—to visit University Park Campus School in Worcester, Massachusetts. UPCS is a nonselective, nationally recognized high school in a high-poverty neighborhood. Despite entering students' low skill levels, every student has graduated from UPCS in 5 years or less, and 85 percent of UPCS graduates dating back to the school's founding in 1997 are enrolled in college or have earned a postsecondary credential. JFF presents UPCS, a public high school, as a “clinical site” where educators can observe and learn from an instructional coaching program that JFF designed to help schools adopt and implement instructional strategies designed to foster college readiness in *all* students.

Before partnering with Philadelphia, JFF had provided its instructional coaching services primarily to early college high schools, which offer a rigorous academic program to low-income students, first-generation college goers, students of color, and others who have been underrepresented in higher education. Early colleges combine high school and college, enabling students to graduate with college credits and, potentially, an Associate's degree. JFF has assisted more than 100 early colleges in implementing its Common Instructional Framework—designed to accelerate student learning—and in supporting intensive, ongoing coaching for teachers and school leaders (see box, “*The Common Instructional Framework*,” on page 2).

Although the Philadelphia educators visiting UPCS work with an older population of students, many of whom are returning dropouts, they could see the potential in applying the teaching and coaching strategies used at UPCS and schools in the early college network. JFF, the Philadelphia Youth Network, and the School District of Philadelphia entered into an agreement to pilot the instructional strategies and coaching program with a small group of Philadelphia Accelerated Schools. These schools serve former dropouts and other off-track students ages 16 to 21 who wish to complete school. Most of the students in these schools have fewer than one-third of the credits they need to graduate.

Based on the first year of the Accelerated Schools pilot, data indicate that the UPCS instructional model has strong potential for accelerating the learning of off-track students. The two Philadelphia schools that implemented the instructional strategies with the most fidelity—Excel Academy North and Excel Academy South—achieved strong skill gains. More than two-thirds of students progressed two or more grade levels in reading, and the same was true in math. Also, between one-fourth and one-third of students advanced four grade levels in just one year; the schools themselves credit the strategies for these outcomes.

This brief explores how the two Accelerated Schools revamped their instruction, the level of commitment required to sustain these practices, and the early lessons that emerged about adapting these instructional strategies in a *Back on Track* setting. The schools are now in their third year of implementation, and JFF is working with city and educational leaders to expand their success.

## THE COMMON INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK: SIX STRATEGIES TO BUILD COLLEGE READINESS

- > **Collaborative Group Work** brings students together in small groups to engage in learning, with each student accountable for her or his contribution. Activities are designed so that students with diverse skill levels are both supported and challenged by their peers.
- > **Writing to Learn** helps students, including English language learners, develop their ideas, critical thinking, and fluency of expression in all subjects. Students experiment with written language in every class every day.
- > **Literacy Groups**, a form of Collaborative Group Work, provide students a supportive structure for accessing challenging texts, broadly defined, and engaging in high-level discourse. Using roles that have an explicit purpose, students deconstruct text and scaffold one another's learning.
- > **Questioning** challenges students and teachers to use deep, probing questions to foster purposeful conversations and stimulate intellectual inquiry.
- > **Classroom Talk** encourages all students to develop their thinking, listening, and speaking skills, and promotes active learning. Classroom Talk takes place in pairs, in groups, and with whole classes.
- > **Scaffolding** encompasses a broad range of techniques, such as pre-reading activities and graphic organizers, that help students connect prior knowledge—from an earlier grade, different content area, or personal experience—to challenging new concepts.



# COLLEGE-READY INSTRUCTION IN AN ALTERNATIVE SETTING

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Over the past decade, Philadelphia's city leaders have invested in significant efforts to improve options and outcomes for off-track and out-of-school youth. Through Project U-Turn, a cross-sector collaborative of educational and civic leaders launched in 2004, the city has expanded its portfolio of options for struggling students.<sup>2</sup> The focus of Philadelphia's alternative school system has shifted from correcting disciplinary problems to helping students graduate ready for college or careers.

This progress led to the launch of Accelerated Schools—*Back on Track* schools that enroll older high school students and returning dropouts who are behind in credits. Accelerated Schools address Pennsylvania's state standards within a condensed curriculum, enabling students to earn credits toward graduation more quickly than in a traditional school. Philadelphia contracts with a diverse range of providers to manage these schools.

These schools are paying off: A 2010 Mathematica report found that Accelerated Schools have improved academic outcomes for Philadelphia students at high risk for dropping out. When compared with students in other schools with similar prior achievement, attendance, disciplinary history, and demographic characteristics, Accelerated School students graduated at higher rates and earned more credits over one school year.<sup>3</sup>

Accelerated Schools aim not only to graduate more students but also to ensure that graduates are ready for college. A coherent instructional framework specifically pegged to college readiness is key to helping schools achieve this ambitious goal. To this end, in 2008 Philadelphia offered its Accelerated Schools the opportunity to collaborate with JFF.

JFF helps schools implement its Common Instructional Framework, which prepares all students, regardless of their incoming academic skill levels, for college-level work. The intent is to empower school leaders and teachers to implement proven, high-engagement instructional strategies that have long been staples of education for gifted and talented youth. Adapted for use in classrooms with diverse learners, the

strategies foster high-level intellectual discussion and inquiry, and make difficult material engaging and accessible.

These strategies are deeply rooted in pedagogical research and have a strong record of success in practice. The development of the instructional framework originated at University Park Campus School in Worcester, Massachusetts. Many schools and districts find these instructional strategies familiar, and most teachers use them in the classroom to some extent. What teachers typically lack is the critical structure to tie the six strategies together into a fully realized framework, along with the leadership support, instructional support, and coaching needed to ensure that these practices are employed consistently in all classrooms.

With UPCS as the clinical site, JFF brings teachers and school leaders to Worcester for a multi-day residency that demonstrates the strategies in action as well as why and how to implement the Common Instructional Framework across grades and content areas. After the residency at UPCS, an instructional coach trained by JFF and hired by the district offers intensive, ongoing support to help teachers implement the instructional strategies in their own classrooms and to build the school system's capacity to provide ongoing coaching for the teachers. School staff take part in "rounds," non-evaluative observations of other classrooms based on the "medical rounds" model: learning from one another's practice and building a professional community of educators focused on instructional coherence and continuous improvement. Early colleges that have implemented the Common Instructional Framework now show student success outcomes similar to those at UPCS.

The Philadelphia Accelerated Schools that chose to participate were the first programs for off-track and out-of-school youth in the country to go through JFF's instructional coaching program. Thus, in addition to serving Philadelphia's needs, JFF sought to answer critical questions: How would implementation of the Common Instructional Framework and the coaching vary in an alternative school, as opposed to one that serves more traditional students? Would the Accelerated

Schools see the same successful outcomes as UPCS and early college high schools?

Two of the Accelerated Schools provided particularly fertile ground for high-quality implementation of the Common Instructional Framework. They were Excel North and Excel South, both operated by Camelot, an education management organization focusing on students who have not succeeded in traditional classrooms. Notably, staff at both schools had a strong commitment to JFF's Common Instructional Framework, as reported in a forthcoming study conducted by Research for Action. The study, which examined the adoption of the framework across Philadelphia's Accelerated Schools, found varying levels of implementation and commitment to the framework among the schools.

In its previous incarnation as a school for students with discipline problems, Excel North had acquired a record of success by keeping buildings orderly, students calm, and violence low. The school was achieving high graduation rates among those often seen as the problem students in their previous schools. But were those students ready to succeed in college or a postsecondary training program?

Angela Kerrick, then principal of both Excel North and Excel South, was committed to elevating teaching and learning. When Kerrick and a group of Excel teachers and other staff attended an initial residency at the UPCS Institute in August 2009, they immediately knew they wanted to adopt the JFF instructional strategies and coaching program. "We went to the classrooms in Worcester and saw they were achieving the kinds of things we had been talking about," said Alyssa Boyle, who succeeded Kerrick as principal at Excel North.

Upon returning to Philadelphia, Kerrick and her team launched a comprehensive effort to redesign the approach of the two Excel schools around the Common Instructional Framework. Along with Greg Bloom, an experienced coach hired by the district to work in Philadelphia under the guidance of JFF, school leaders delivered workshops for all teachers before and during the first month of the 2009-10 school year. This helped set the clear expectation that the Common Instructional Framework strategies would now be the foundation of instruction. Each school chose two to three initial strategies to focus on, gradually building to incorporate all six into daily instruction. The Excel schools expected all teachers to implement these strategies.

"It was like a nonnegotiable—this is what we're going to do," explained Excel South Principal Stephanie Goshert, who had been the school's academic coordinator under Kerrick. "We were all in this together—it's not that only certain people are going to do it. These were things I was already doing as a teacher, but it

## THE EXCEL SCHOOLS

Excel North and Excel South are two of Philadelphia's Accelerated Schools, designed for former dropouts and other off-track students ages 16 to 21. Each enrolls 200 to 300 students. The Excel schools are operated by Camelot, one of many providers that manage the city's alternative schools. Although the schools are privately managed, the district holds all of them to common citywide standards for accelerating student learning. Students typically complete the alternative school program within 2.5 years.

Out of newly enrolled students at Excel North in fall 2010:

- > 50 were classified as "young and far" from graduation: between 16 and 18 years old with few or no credits.
- > 50 were between 17 and 18 years old and about halfway to graduation.
- > 40 students fell in the "old and far" group: over 18 and more than a year from graduation.
- > 7 were "old and close," with just a few credits needed to graduate.

Skill levels in reading and math ranged from the third-grade level up to the twelfth-grade level. On average, the students were performing at a seventh-grade level in reading and a sixth-grade level in math.

was really nice to have it well defined. [Students] are not going to complain about doing group work because they're doing it in all our classes. The cohesion of it really made it work."

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"These strategies were made for this population. They thrive in this environment. They were so unsuccessful previously, and now they have a chance to be successful. It just opens their eyes to what the possibilities are."

–*Stephanie Goshert, Excel South principal*

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The Excel schools already had instituted a culture driven by certain behavior norms—for example, tucking in shirts, walking in lines while changing classes, and calling out peers' negative behavior. That set the groundwork for implementing academic norms as well. Supported by the Camelot management, the schools created time for common planning and internal coaching. Teachers quickly learned and supported one another through rounds, co-teaching, and modeling.

Implementation meant overcoming a number of challenges, both for teachers and students. Initially, some teachers were reluctant to transition away from teaching methods they had long been using. And some students, unaccustomed to working with one another or taking academic risks, became frustrated when pushed beyond their comfort zones. Eventually both schools found that the high-engagement instructional strategies are actually ideal for struggling students: they help previously unsuccessful students gain confidence in their academic abilities. "These strategies were made for this population," Goshert said. "They thrive in this environment. They were so unsuccessful previously, and now they have a chance to be successful. It just opens their eyes to what the possibilities are."

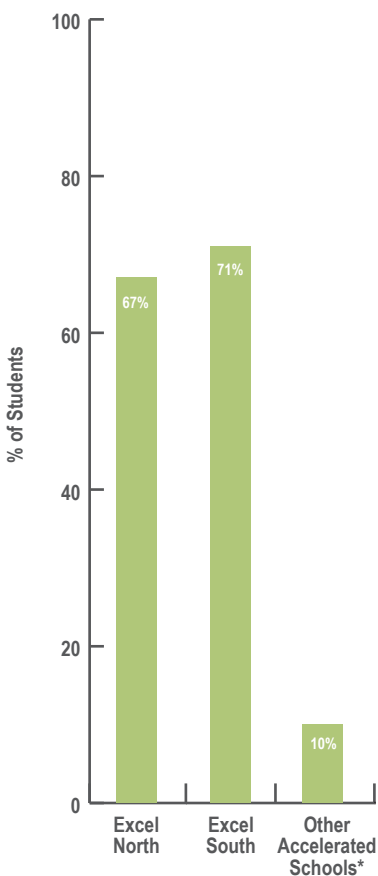


# EMERGING EVIDENCE OF PROMISING RESULTS

At the end of the first year of piloting the UPCS instructional and coaching strategies, test scores affirmed the positive changes that Excel educators had experienced in the classroom. In the course of one year, more than two-thirds of students at each school progressed

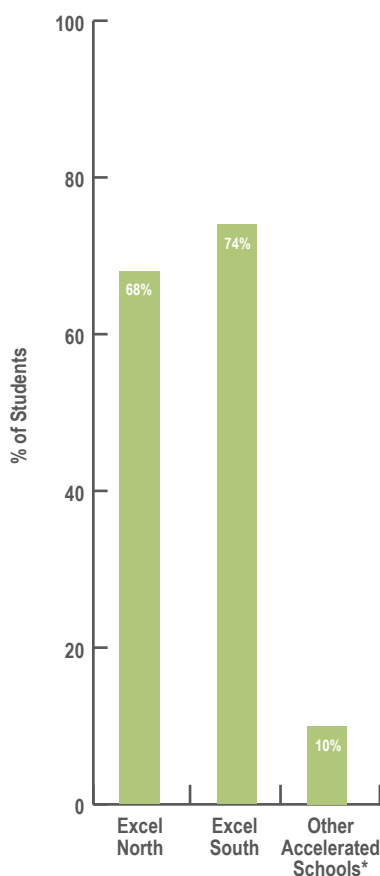
two or more grade levels in reading, and the same was true in math. In each subject area, more than 25 percent advanced four or more years—compared to an average of 3 percent at Philadelphia's other Accelerated Schools (see figures 1 and 2 below, and figures 3 and 4 on page 7).

**FIGURE 1**  
STUDENTS ADVANCING 2+ YEARS IN READING AT PHILADELPHIA ACCELERATED SCHOOLS, MEASURED BY THE TEST OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION, 2009-2010

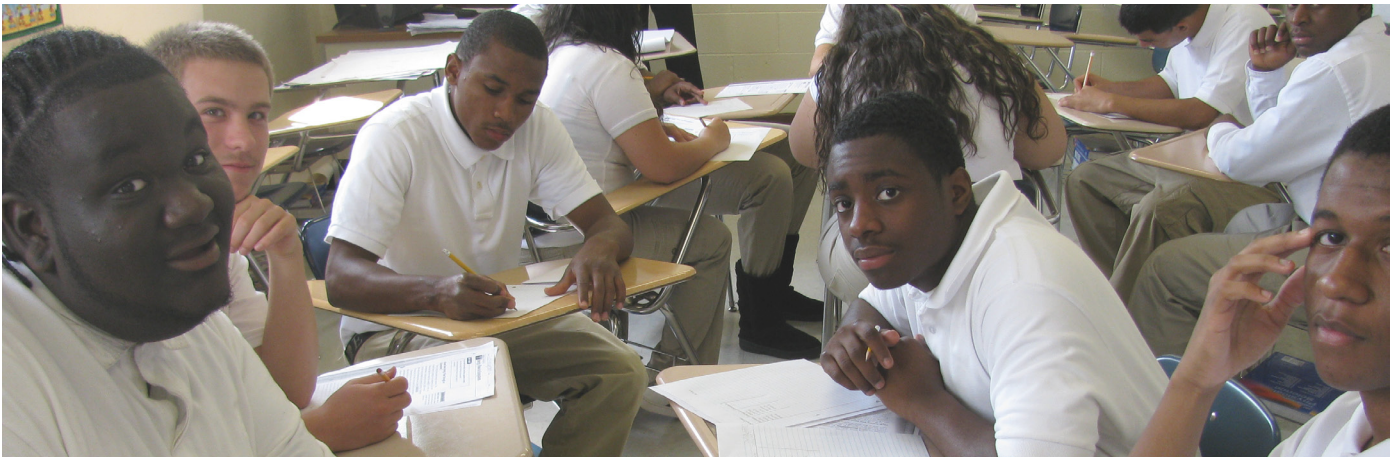


\* Figures reflect the performance of 1,472 students across the eleven other Accelerated Schools, three of which have closed.

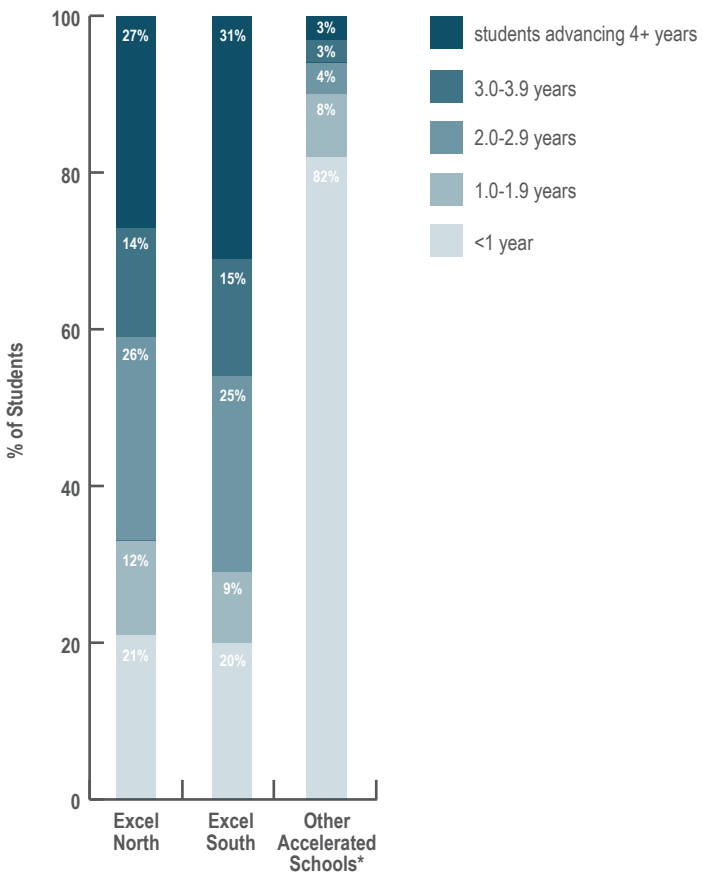
**FIGURE 2**  
STUDENTS ADVANCING 2+ YEARS IN MATH AT PHILADELPHIA ACCELERATED SCHOOLS, MEASURED BY THE TEST OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION, 2009-2010



\* Figures reflect the performance of 1,472 students across the eleven other Accelerated Schools, three of which have closed.

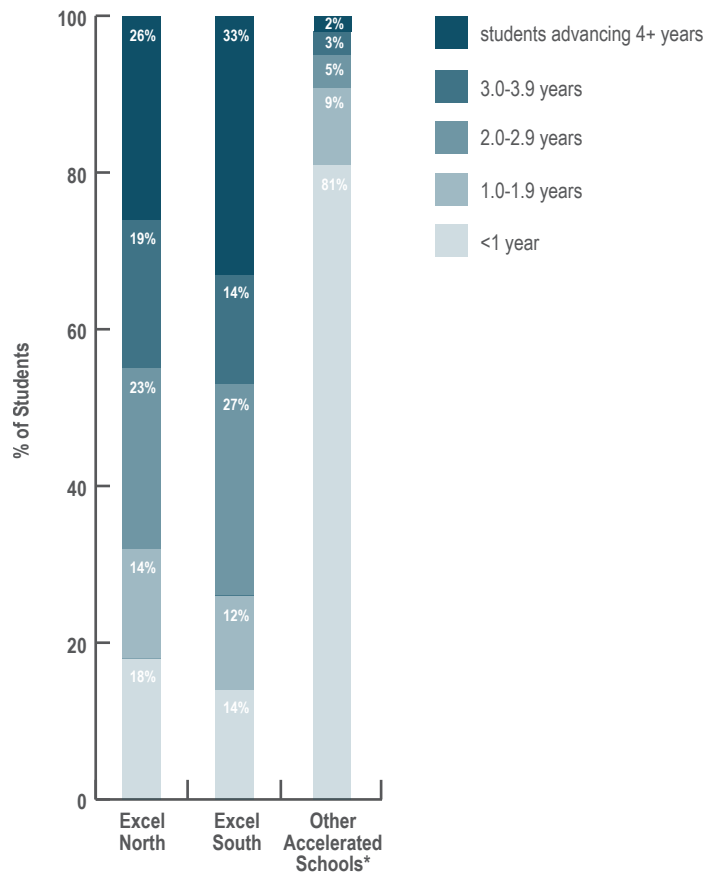


**FIGURE 3**  
**SKILL GAINS IN READING AT PHILADELPHIA ACCELERATED SCHOOLS,**  
**MEASURED BY THE TEST OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION, 2009-2010**



\* Figures reflect the performance of 1,472 students across the eleven other Accelerated Schools, three of which have closed.

**FIGURE 4**  
**SKILL GAINS IN MATH AT PHILADELPHIA ACCELERATED SCHOOLS,**  
**MEASURED BY THE TEST OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION, 2009-2010**



\* Figures reflect the performance of 1,472 students across the eleven other Accelerated Schools, three of which have closed.



# LESSONS LEARNED

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**D**uring the first year of implementation, JFF and the Excel schools learned important lessons about implementing the strategies in the Common Instructional Framework to serve formerly off-track and out-of-school students. These lessons will guide JFF as it helps Philadelphia—and educators around the country—expand this instructional model to more *Back on Track* schools.

## **OFF-TRACK STUDENTS WITH LARGE AND VARIED GAPS IN THEIR LEARNING BENEFIT FROM TEACHING ONE ANOTHER.**

Off-track students, some of whom have been out of school for years, typically have large gaps in their education. A room full of returning dropouts and other off-track students can seem like a patchwork quilt in which none of the patches connect. Students with strong math skills but weak writing skills may be seated next to students with opposite skill sets. Within a math class, half the students may not know how to add fractions, while the other half is unfamiliar with the properties of negative numbers.

What teachers at Excel have found is that the strategies in the Common Instructional Framework are particularly well suited to this student population. For example, in students' previous schools and classrooms—where instruction was more “teacher-centric”—students who missed a step or fell behind quickly became bored or lost. Within an instructional framework in which students teach one another in collaborative groups, students remain engaged and, what's more, help one another fill in knowledge gaps. “There are some really brilliant kids in our schools,” said Greg Bloom, the instructional coach. “If we can deliver instruction that taps into what they know, their learning just takes off.”

At first, some teachers were unsure of how to implement consistent group work at Excel, where students' other commitments—such as jobs and parenting—can result in uneven attendance. A group formed one day is often composed of different students the next. But teachers have come to rely on

collaborative group work as a means for students to make up missed work by learning from their peers.

“I never thought about putting as much responsibility on the kids as I did when I started at Excel,” said Emily Uzun, a social studies teacher at Excel South. When students are absent in her class, she consistently reminds them to ask their partners or their groups to help them catch up. It can be tempting to just explain the lesson herself, she said, but if a peer explains it, both students learn.

## **STUDENTS WHO WERE PREVIOUSLY HELD TO LOW EXPECTATIONS CAN QUICKLY LEARN TO TAKE ACADEMIC INITIATIVE.**

The instructional strategies demand that students actively participate in class through writing, questioning, speaking, and collaborating. As a result, students find themselves held to higher academic expectations than ever before. This type of instruction sends a message to formerly off-track students that not only must they attend school and conduct themselves responsibly, but they will also develop the content knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college. “For many of these students, from the time they were little kids, they've been told they're not good at school,” Excel North Principal Alyssa Boyle said. “So before, their attitudes were, ‘I'm here, I'm in my uniform, I'm not talking—what more do you want from me?’ With the strategies it's a little bit more clear.”

The strategies have also helped improve students' test-taking skills. School leaders are finding that students attempt many more questions on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment than they had previously, indicating more comfort in taking academic risks. “There's a lot of writing on there, and they did it,” Boyle said. “The students are comfortable taking risks in a way they wouldn't have before. These are kids who are getting ready to graduate, and they should be highly accountable for their learning.”

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“Toward the end of the year, I don’t even necessarily have to assign a facilitator. They all start confronting each other and saying, ‘Hey, we need to get on task.’ ”

–Matt Sesno, Excel North Spanish teacher

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## **WHEN STUDENTS ARE ENGAGED IN AND RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR LEARNING, BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS DECREASE DRAMATICALLY.**

Originally, the Excel schools focused on behavior management, and active classrooms were not the norm. Typically, students sat in straight rows, quietly facing a teacher who delivered the lesson. For some teachers, the idea of breaking up this instructional model was intimidating, especially with students who are prone to falling off task and who appear unafraid of authority. But educators at both Excel schools say that implementing a more engaging model of instruction has reduced boredom among the students and diminished the need for behavior management. Teachers can reframe behavior issues as instructional issues, reminding off-task students of their role within the group or project at hand.

“On one hand, you might feel like you’re relinquishing control when you implement these strategies,” Boyle said. “But you’re actually freeing yourself to move around the room more, have a relationship with the work the students are doing.”

Matt Sesno, a Spanish teacher at Excel North, said he depends on strong student leaders to facilitate group work and set an example for their peers. When he began implementing group work in his classroom, he would choose one student to be group facilitator. That person was responsible for keeping the group on task so that redirection was coming from a peer instead of the teacher. As the year went on, he began to assign the facilitator role to more students, asking experienced facilitators to coach new ones. “Toward the end of the year, I don’t even necessarily have to assign a facilitator,” he said. “They all start confronting each other and saying, ‘Hey, we need to get on task.’ ”

## **WHEN STUDENTS ARE FULLY ENGAGED, SCHOOLS CAN REALLOCATE STAFF TO INSTRUCTION.**

The Excel model encompasses “behavior” staff members: their role includes patrolling the hallways and assisting teachers when a disciplinary problem arises in the classroom. But

as behavioral intervention becomes less necessary, leaders at both schools have redeployed these staff members to classrooms. It’s not uncommon now to see a behavior staff person joining students for collaborative group work or telling teachers about particularly effective lessons they witnessed in other classrooms. Because the instructional strategies keep students engaged, Excel leaders say, the schools will likely change the staffing model to involve these staffers more deeply in accelerating student learning.

## **THROUGH COLLABORATIVE LEARNING, FORMERLY OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH CAN BUILD THE SOCIAL SKILLS NEEDED FOR SUCCESS IN COLLEGE AND THE WORKPLACE.**

Teachers have found that students can be resistant to working with certain others, such as students from different neighborhoods or gangs. Getting students who view one another as rivals to collaborate can be extremely challenging, but it ultimately teaches students the social skills needed to work in more diverse groups—skills that are essential in college and almost any modern work setting. “It’s not a choice whether you’re going to work in a group,” Excel South Principal Goshert tells the students. “You don’t have to be best friends, but you can sit next to each other and be respectful.”

“The first week they came in and I said, ‘Okay, get in your groups,’ and they said ‘Ugghh,’ ” recalled Excel North math teacher Jamie Pomianek. “Now they don’t say that anymore. They can’t wait for me to be done standing in front of them so they can work together. They say, ‘We like this, we’re learning something.’ They love asking questions—they get involved. It really only took four weeks.”

Students say their Excel teachers expect much more of them in terms of engagement and collaboration than any other school they’ve been in. “You put your opinions together and combine ideas,” said a student at Excel North. “Everyone has a part in what they’re going to do in the group. We teach each other about the information, and in the end we put it together and come up with our product. They pay attention to the groups to see who’s working and who’s not. It’s not like in

other schools where you can say, 'Well, I'm not going to do anything.' "

**SYSTEMIC SUPPORTS, INCLUDING ONGOING COACHING TO BUILD INSTRUCTIONAL COHERENCE, ARE VITAL TO SUSTAINING THE COMMON INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK MODEL.**

Educators reiterate that a crucial aspect of implementation is providing ongoing support for teachers in the form of strong leadership, external coaching, and internal collaboration in activities such as rounds, modeling, and collaborative planning. Greg Bloom provided instructional coaching to both Excel schools at least once a week, observing classrooms and later providing feedback to teachers. Sometimes he would take a few minutes during class to model a particular instructional strategy. Excel leaders say the mentorship of an external coach has provided them with essential resources for improving instruction and encouraged consistent use of the strategies across all teachers and subjects.

Simultaneously, Bloom has worked to develop the capacity of each school's staff, training instructional leaders who could coach teachers on a daily basis and strengthening the professional community among teachers so they can learn from and support one another. For instance, Bloom led workshops on how teachers can use rounds to improve practice: " 'Good job' is not useful feedback," he said. Now when teachers visit other classrooms, the teacher being observed asks the colleagues specific questions about what student learning resulted in that class: "Did you observe evidence of the scientific method being used during this lab? Did students go to the text when I asked for supporting evidence?"

The schools have just completed their second year of implementation, and Bloom has scaled back his support as internal capacity builds. In this way, changes in instruction and culture are more likely to become self-sustaining. "Our culture here is that it's okay to trip and fall," Boyle said. "We're comfortable if we try something new and it doesn't go well—we know we'll be able to get everyone back on their feet."



# NEXT STEPS: BUILDING A DEMONSTRATION SITE

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The results and educators' experiences in Excel North and Excel South suggest that this instructional model has promise for what is perceived as a hard-to-serve population. Strategies that engage and accelerate students have served as essential tools for these schools to raise the rigor and expectations needed to get struggling students on track to a postsecondary education. Based on these results, Jobs for the Future and Camelot are partnering to develop one of these schools as a demonstration site. It will model promising instructional practices for visiting educators and be part of a strategy to expand high-engagement instruction to more *Back on Track* schools in Philadelphia and across the nation.



# ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Jobs for the Future has coined the term “Back on Track” to refer to the next generation of alternative schools—schools that prepare off-track students for college and career success and put them on a clear path to postsecondary education. JFF has developed a *Back on Track* school design that incorporates three phases: Enriched Preparation, Postsecondary Bridging, and First Year Supports. Each phase incorporates features that help young people who have fallen off track from graduation or have dropped out to reengage and achieve their postsecondary ambitions.

<sup>2</sup> For more information about Project U-Turn, Philadelphia’s campaign to reduce the dropout rate, see [www.pyninc.org/projectuturn/index.php](http://www.pyninc.org/projectuturn/index.php). See also Allen, Lili, 2010. *Mobilizing a Cross-Sector Collaborative for Systemic Change*. Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future. It is available at: <http://www.jff.org/publications/education/mobilizing-cross-sector-collaborative-sy/987> and at: <http://www.pyninc.org>.

<sup>3</sup> Chiang, Hanley & Brian Gill. 2010. *The Impacts of Philadelphia’s Accelerated Schools on Academic Progress and Graduation*. Cambridge, MA: Mathematica Policy Research.







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