



# AMERICORPS PROMISE FELLOW PROGRAM, 2019

## MINNESOTA ALLIANCE WITH YOUTH

Through the Promise Fellow program at Minnesota Alliance With Youth (the Alliance) AmeriCorps members work with students on their Focus Lists in grades 6–12 to keep them engaged in school and on-track for high school graduation. Focus List students are qualified to work with Promise Fellows based on low attendance and/or school engagement. During the 2018-2019 school year, the Alliance hosted 137 AmeriCorps members who served 2,830 students at schools and community sites

across Minnesota. The Promise Fellow program aims to increase student attendance, school engagement, and work completion, which are all early indicators of a student’s likelihood of graduating.

The Promise Fellow program draws on a menu of research-based, data-driven activities informed by leading research in dropout prevention to inform. Interventions fall into three categories that align with the National Dropout Prevention Center’s “Basic Core Strategies”: Caring Adults, Service and Service-Learning, and Out-Of-School Supports. More information is on the next page.

The Alliance partnered with The Improve Group, an independent evaluation consulting firm, and Dr. Chris Desjardins from the Research Methodology Consulting Center at The University of Minnesota, to evaluate the impact of Promise Fellow on student outcomes. Data on student attendance, school engagement, and work completion was collected during an initial baseline period and at benchmarks throughout the year. This document summarizes evaluation results from the 2018-2019 school year; see full report at [bit.ly/AllianceImpactReport2019](http://bit.ly/AllianceImpactReport2019).

### Attendance

**59%** of Focus List students increased their school attendance.

Focus List students experienced an average attendance increase from 73% attendance at baseline to 75% attendance at their final benchmark. This increase is equivalent to attending school 3.4 additional days in a 180-day school year. By the final benchmark, 30% of Focus List students had an attendance rate exceeding the 90% threshold to be included in the program.

Focus List students on average attended **+3.4** additional days in the school year.

**69%** of Focus List students decreased their tardiness.

Focus List students experienced an average tardiness decrease from 59% at baseline to 44% tardy at their final decrease is the equivalent of being on time for school on 35 additional days in a 180-day school year.

Focus List students on average were on time **+35** additional days in the school year.

## Work Completion

**45%** of Focus List students increased their work completion.

Average work completion was measured throughout the school year on a 10-point scale. Between the initial baseline and final benchmark, Focus List students' work completion increased from 4.8 to 5.3 on the 10-point scale.

## School Engagement

**74%** of Focus List students increased their engagement.

40% of Focus List students exceeded the engagement threshold for being included in the program by the final benchmark.

## ABOUT PROMISE FELLOW INTERVENTIONS

Promise Fellow activities draw from a menu of research-based, data-driven activities for preventing students from dropping out of school.<sup>1</sup> Activities fall into three primary categories:

- Caring Adult strategies aim to develop strong, positive relationships between students and adults which support student engagement and protect against negative outcomes. Activities may include informal mentoring, assistance with work completion, or daily check-ins.<sup>2,3</sup>
- Service-Learning strategies allow students to serve as mentors, volunteers, or engage in service-learning projects. These activities boost students' commitment to school, their academic achievement, and attendance.<sup>4</sup>
- Out-of-School Supports involve students in clubs or activities and benefit from the demonstrated relationship between extracurricular activities and increases in attendance, homework completion, grades, and motivation to learn.<sup>5</sup>

1 <http://dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies/>

2 Wilkins, J., & Bost, L. W. (2016). Dropout Prevention in Middle and High Schools: From Research to Practice.

3 America's Promise Alliance (2006). Every Child, Every Promise; Turning Failure into Action

4 Scales, Blyth, Berkas, & Keilsmeier (2000). The Effects of Service-Learning on Middle School Students' Social Responsibility and Academic Success.

5 Afterschool Alliance (2015). Evaluations Backgrounder: A summary of Formal Evaluations of Afterschool Programs' Impact on Academics, Behavior, Safety, and Family Life.

