

## Chris Steller

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**From:** Kumar Balasubrahmanyam <KBalasubrahmanyam@collegepossible.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 31, 2019 10:45 AM  
**To:** Chris Steller  
**Cc:** Beecham, Maya (OHE); nekey.oliver@state.mn.us  
**Subject:** College Possible Legislative Report  
**Attachments:** Impact Report for the MN Legislature 2018-19.pdf; College Possible Report for MN OHE - 11.30.18.docx

To whom it may concern,

Please find College Possible's Impact Report for the State of Minnesota attached to this email. In addition, there is a copy of our detailed program report that was sent to the Minnesota Office of Higher Education covering our programmatic results in the 2017-18 academic year. Both of these reports have also been sent to the chairs and ranking minority members of legislative committees with jurisdiction over higher education and E-12 education. The SWIFT Contract number for this appropriation is 137740. Additionally, we are sending a paper copy through the mail to the Legislative Reference Library.

If you have any questions about this report, or need any additional information from College Possible, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Thank you,

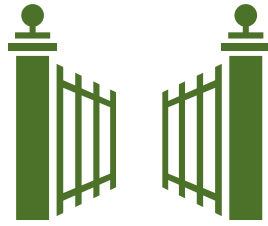
**Kumar Balasubrahmanyam** | Senior Manager of Community Partnerships and Engagement

*Pronouns: he/him/his*

**College Possible™ Minnesota**

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## 2018-19 MINNESOTA IMPACT REPORT

### COLLEGE POSSIBLE AND THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

College Possible is a nonprofit making college admission and success possible for low-income students through an intensive curriculum of coaching and support. Since 2014, College Possible Minnesota has received appropriations from the State of Minnesota to expand our work within the metro area and across the state to support more students as they pursue higher education. This report describes College Possible's impact as a result of your support.

### COMMUNITY NEED

Only 12% of students from low-income backgrounds earn a college degree by their mid-20s, compared to 58% of their upper-income peers<sup>1</sup>. And yet a college degree is the surest pathway out of poverty. **College graduates earn \$1 million more over a lifetime** than high school graduates and they're more likely to vote, wear seat belts, refrain from smoking, stay out of jail and engage in healthy, productive behaviors<sup>2</sup>.

### PROVEN RESULTS

College Possible has demonstrated success in closing the opportunity gap for low-income students: **98% of our students earn admission to college**, and they go on to graduate at the same rate as students from all income levels nationwide. **Overall our students are 4 times more likely to earn a college degree** than their low-income peers. When a student joins our program we make an 8-year commitment to serve them through college graduation.

### ECONOMIC BENEFITS

**By 2020, 74% of jobs in Minnesota will require post-secondary education<sup>3</sup>**, and the only growing populations are those who have been least likely to earn degrees: low-income students and students of color.

### RIGOROUS EVALUATION

A Harvard evaluation confirmed that College Possible significantly improves low-income students' chances of enrolling in college. The evaluation showed College Possible more than doubles a student's chances of enrolling in college and has a significant positive impact on four-year college enrollment rates. A social return on investment analysis found an **investment in a College Possible student yields a 333% return to society<sup>4</sup>**.

### ABILITY TO SCALE

We've grown more than 250-fold since our founding in 2000, replicating our program across the country while maintaining the same strong results. Our program is highly scalable because it's cost-effective: College Possible is just 1/6th the cost of similar government-funded programs.

Sources:

1. 2018 Pell Institute's Indicators Report, using CPS data through 2016
2. The College Payoff, 2011; U.S. Census, 2012; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013
3. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2013
4. Social Return on Investment; Peter Heegaard, 2011

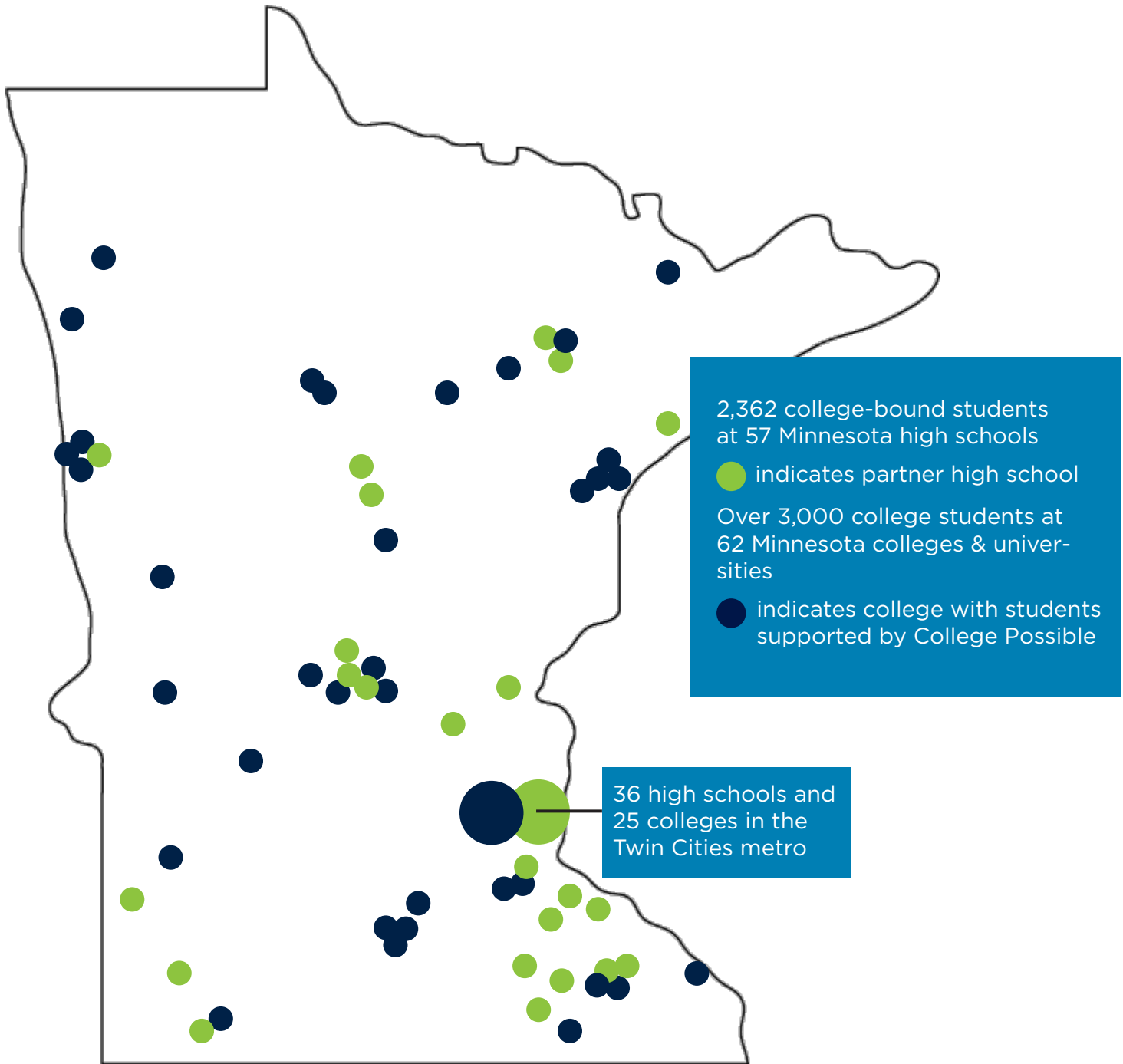
## STATEWIDE IMPACT IN 2018-19

- + **74** College Possible high school and college coaches
- + **57** partner high schools
- + **7,586** high school and college students from Minnesota currently being served by College Possible throughout the country
- + **24%** average ACT score increase achieved by the class of 2019
- + **98%** of the class of 2018 earned admission to college
- + **2,953** degrees earned by students since College Possible's founding in 2000



**Throughout her college journey,** College Possible empowered Ka Ying to navigate the higher education system as she discovered her passion for fashion design and community service. Now a college graduate, she's sharing her fashion designs with the world while also envisioning her future as a nonprofit leader. "I'm just really amazed at the amount of support that College Possible has given me throughout my whole college experience," said Ka Ying. Ka Ying is pictured here with her College Possible coach, Sierra.

## STATEWIDE IMPACT IN 2018-19



# MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

## Flagship Campus-Based High School Partners

Bloomington Kennedy  
Burnsville  
Central  
Champlin Park  
Community of Peace Academy  
Como Park  
Columbia Heights  
Coon Rapids  
Edina  
Edison  
Harding  
Highland Park  
Humboldt  
Johnson  
North Community  
North St. Paul  
Patrick Henry  
Richfield  
Roosevelt  
Roseville  
Park Center  
Robbinsdale Armstrong  
Robbinsdale Cooper  
St. Louis Park  
Ubah Medical Academy  
Washington Technology Magnet

## Navigate Tech-Connected High School Partners

Apollo Senior  
Becker  
Blooming Prairie  
Bloomington Jefferson  
Cambridge-Isanti  
Cannon Falls  
Century  
Cristo Rey  
East Ridge  
Eden Prairie  
Eveleth-Gilbert  
Fridley  
John Marshall  
Lakeville ALC  
LEAP  
Moorhead  
Mt. Iron-Buhl  
Murray County Central  
Orono  
Owatonna  
Park

Pequot Lakes  
Pine River Backus  
Red Wing  
RTR  
Saint Paul Conservatory  
for the Performing Arts  
Sartell  
Technical Senior  
Tower View Alternative -  
Red Wing  
Triton  
Two Harbors  
Worthington

## Campus-Based College Partners

Augsburg University  
Century College  
College of Saint Benedict &  
Saint John's University  
Saint Cloud State University  
St. Catherine University  
University of Minnesota -  
Twin Cities  
Minnesota State University -  
Mankato

## Flagship Tech-Connected Colleges

Anoka-Ramsey Community  
College  
Anoka Technical College  
Bemidji State University  
Bethany Lutheran College  
Bethel University  
Carleton College  
Central Lakes College-Brainerd  
Concordia College at Moorhead  
Concordia University-Saint Paul  
Crown College  
Dakota County Technical College  
Dougherty Family College  
Dunwoody College of Technology  
Fond du Lac Tribal and  
Community College  
Gustavus Adolphus College  
Hamline University  
Hennepin Technical College  
Hibbing Community College  
Inver Hills Community College  
Itasca Community College  
Lake Superior College

Macalester College  
Mesabi Range Community and  
Technical College  
Metropolitan State University  
Minneapolis College of Art and  
Design  
Minneapolis Community and  
Technical College  
Minnesota State Community and  
Technical College  
Minnesota State Community and  
Technical College at Moorhead  
Minnesota State University  
Moorhead  
Minnesota West Community and  
Technical College  
Normandale Community College  
North Central University  
North Hennepin Community  
College  
Northland Community and  
Technical College  
Northwest Technical College  
Ridgewater College  
Riverland Community College  
Rochester Community and  
Technical College  
Saint Cloud Technical and  
Community College  
Saint Mary's University of  
Minnesota  
Saint Paul College - A Community  
and Technical College  
South Central College  
Southwest Minnesota State  
University  
St Olaf College  
Summit Academy Opportunities  
Industrialization Center  
The College of Saint Scholastica  
University of Minnesota -  
Crookston  
University of Minnesota - Duluth  
University of Minnesota - Morris  
University of Minnesota -  
Rochester  
University of Northwestern  
University of St Thomas  
Vermilion Community College  
Winona State University

**Fiscal Year 2018 – College Possible  
Final Report Requirements  
Project Period: July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018**

*Using the guidance provided below, report the outcomes of your fiscal year 2018 appropriation of \$250,000. The fiscal year runs from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018.*

**I. Participant Data**

**A. Number of Participants:**

Projected number of participants: 7,300

Actual recipients of service: 7,362

**B. Total number of participants by grade level:** Varies – see below

Cohort	African American	Native American	Hispanic	Asian	Other Race/Ethnicity	Immigrant	First-generation college students	Low-income students
High school Juniors	258	1	168	360	380	759	1,050	1,167
High School Seniors	255	1	158	425	259	714	988	1,098
1 <sup>st</sup> year postsecondary	307	1	132	357	280	700	969	1,077
2 <sup>nd</sup> year postsecondary	278	4	138	365	185	631	873	970
3 <sup>rd</sup> year postsecondary	245	7	99	311	175	544	753	837
4 <sup>th</sup> year postsecondary	174	2	80	307	168	475	658	731
5 <sup>th</sup> (+) year postsecondary	448	7	124	414	489	963	1,344	1,482
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,965</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>899</b>	<b>2,539</b>	<b>1,520</b>	<b>4,785</b>	<b>6,626</b>	<b>7,362</b>

**(The total number under B should equal the recipients of service under A)**

**C. Total number of college completers (this includes a certificate, associate’s degree, or bachelor’s degree):**

257

Please see the chart below for more details about our most recent college graduates:

**Degrees Earned From MN HS Grads In 2017-18**

DEGREE TYPE	TOTAL	DEGREE TYPE	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years	6 Years	7 Years	8 Years	9 Years	10 + Years	TOTAL
Certificate	1	Certificate	1		1	1							3
Associate	9	Associate		2	4	3	3	1	1	1			15
Bachelor	179	Bachelor			6	118	59	18	17	8	6	7	239
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>257</b>

**D. Total hours of community service by high school and college students: 17,600**

**E. Please list the community organizations who benefitted from student service hours, and their location.**

Name of Community Organization	Location
The Food Group (fka Emergency Foodshelf Network)	8501 54th Ave. N, New Hope, MN 55428
26 partner high schools and various communities/organizations*	Greater Twin Cities

*\*All high school students participate in Spring Service Days, during which they work in their high school cohorts to identify, plan and implement a service project that benefits their high school and/or the local community. Cohort service projects this year included teacher appreciation meals; kindness notes to faculty; school clean up and painting projects; organizing school libraries; tree planting and gardening on school grounds. Community projects this year included packing food for Feed My Starving Children; highway cleanup; Lake Phalen cleanup; park cleanup; and coloring for the community. College students also participate in volunteer “college panels” for high school students to help younger peers envision what college will be like.\**

**II. Methodology**

**A. Please describe the methodology used to make funding decisions based on *geographic location in MN* (appropriation language requires that “to the extent possible it be proportionately allocated between students from greater Minnesota and students in the seven-county metropolitan area”). (*For the purposes of this question, please identify student’s geographic area by Congressional District*).**

According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 3,033,634 of the 5,519,952 Minnesotans live within the seven-county metropolitan area (55%). For the allocation of the appropriation, we identified growth within our high school and college programming in both greater Minnesota and the metropolitan area that mirrored this distribution:

- Of the 600 students funded by the FY18 appropriation, 246 (41%) attended school in greater Minnesota during the 2017-18 academic year

We were also intentional in the selection of this cohort to ensure it included our different program models and different institution types:

- 307 of the students funded by the FY18 appropriation were college students
  - 79 students attended a Community or Technical College (99.99 % public non-profit, 0.01% private non-profit)
  - 228 students attended Bachelor’s granting institutions (54% public non-profit, 46% private non-profit)
- 293 of the students funded by the FY18 appropriation were high school students
  - 126 of the high school students participated in our Tech-Connected programming (greater MN)
  - 167 participated in the Campus Based model (metropolitan area)

This cohort represents our Tech-Connected High School program, Campus Based High School Program, Tech-Connected College Program and Campus-Based College Program, all of which were supported in part by the \$250,000 FY18 appropriation. The following is a list of high schools and colleges that the students funded by this appropriation attended:



- + Apollo High School
- + Becker Senior High School
- + Blooming Prairie High School
- + Cambridge-Isanti High School
- + Cannon Falls High School
- + Century High School(Rochester)
- + Eveleth-Gilbert High School
- + Moorhead High School
- + Mountain Iron Buhl High School
- + Murray County Central High School
- + Orono High School
- + Owatonna High School
- + Pequot Lakes High School
- + Pine-River Backus High School
- + Proctor High School
- + Red Wing High School
- + Sartell High School
- + Spring Lake Park High School
- + Technical High School
- + Tower View High School
- + Triton High School
- + Worthington High School
- + Park Center Senior High
- + Anoka-Ramsey Community College
- + Anoka Technical College
- + Century Community and Technical College
- + Dunwoody College of Technology
- + Normandale Community College
- + Inver Hills Community College
- + Hennepin Technical College
- + Saint Paul College
- + Carleton College
- + Concordia College at Moorhead
- + Gustavus Adolphus College
- + Hamline University
- + Macalester College
- + Metropolitan State University
- + St. Olaf College

- + Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
- + Southwest Minnesota State
- + University of Minnesota – Duluth
- + University of Minnesota – Twin Cities
- + University of Minnesota - Rochester

**B. Provide the numbers of participants from each congressional district of the state.**

<b>Congressional District</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
<b>One</b>	68
<b>Two</b>	57
<b>Three</b>	199
<b>Four</b>	120
<b>Five</b>	35
<b>Six</b>	33
<b>Seven</b>	26
<b>Eight</b>	62

**C. Describe the *plan of delivery* for the “intensive curriculum of student coaching and support for both high school and college level students.” Describe topics covered, mode of delivery, number of sessions held with students and related issues. Describe barriers and opportunities encountered and lessons learned.**

***PROGRAM DELIVERY***

College Possible programming begins during students’ junior year in high school and continues all the way through their college graduation. We recruit students during the spring of their sophomore year of high school to begin the program the following fall. Eligible students are low-income, as determined by county’s median household income or free and reduced lunch eligibility, have a GPA of at least 2.0, are not supported by other college prep programs, and are interested in attending four-year colleges\*. We market our program to all low-income sophomores in our partner high schools, and hold informational sessions for all interested students where we clearly outline requirements for selection and participation. We also work with the school administration and counselors to identify students who may be a good fit for the program and assist with the student selection process. Interested students complete a College Possible application and interview, which helps them feel “buy in” to the program and understand they are committing to College Possible until they graduate from college.

*\*College Possible markets and designs our program with a four-year degree in mind, because we know that four-year institutions have higher persistence and graduation rates (graduation rates can be twice as high), as well as the highest return on investment for low-income students. However, we recognize that many factors influence a student's decision to attend a certain type of college, and support them no matter where they enroll. Approximately 30% of all College Possible students attend Community and Technical Colleges. Our students' reasons for choosing Community and Technical Colleges vary widely. Many students choose a two-year school because they may not have a four-year option; do not have to pay anything out of pocket if they complete the FAFSA; and/or because of the general short-term financial feasibility (lower tuition, ability to live at home, ability to take a lower credit load that costs less and/or allows time for an off-campus job or family responsibilities). Additionally, some students choose this route because it is the best way to get the skills and training needed for their desired career path.*

### **Campus Based High School Program**

In our traditional program, students are placed in cohorts of 30-40 at their respective high schools, and led by a College Possible AmeriCorps coach who is based at the school. They participate in two-hour after school sessions, twice each week, during the entirety of their junior and senior years.

Coaches are recent college graduates; many are people of color and/or first-generation college students, making them especially relatable for the students we serve who share the same background. These idealistic, motivated leaders receive intensive, ongoing training and a structured curriculum. Coaches act as student mentors, resources and advocates, building a culture of high expectations in which students learn to thrive.

#### *Junior Year Topics:*

- **College awareness:** introduce the benefits of college and the process for admission.
- **Academic support:** individual and group support in math, science, writing and reading comprehension.
- **Financial planning:** introduction to financial literacy utilizing an evidence-based curriculum.
- **Test preparation:** intensive ACT/SAT preparation in collaboration with the Princeton Review to ensure student scores reflect true aptitude and improve academic preparation for college. College Possible students have raised their ACT scores from the bottom 17<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 37<sup>th</sup> percentile of test takers, putting college admission within reach. So far in the 2017-18, College Possible students in our Campus Based program increased their scores by 19%. Not all scores have been returned to us from the ACT and we anticipate that our overall increase for the program year will end around our annual average of a 23% score increase.

- *Senior Year Topics:*
- **College selection/college fit:** individual support to develop a list of target colleges and determine best match.
- **College application:** support to prepare college applications, write essays and secure reference letters.
- **Financial aid consulting:** intensive individual support in securing financial aid and scholarships.
- **Financial planning:** students receive targeted curriculum on budgeting, credit and debt, college costs, savings, loans, interpreting award letters, and securing federal grants and work-study positions.
- **College transition and summer-bridge:** programming to help students matriculate to college after high school graduation including; financial, academic and social-cultural transition to post-secondary education.

### **Technology Connected High School Program**

In our Tech-Connected Program, students from high schools across the state are placed in portfolios of 60-70 and led by a coach based in our St. Paul office. The Tech-Connected High School Program is supported primarily by partnerships with these high schools and we are able to leverage community and school support for student participation, starting with the application process and continuing through a student's experience. Eligible students (the eligibility requirements are similar to our Campus Based Program, but require a 2.5 minimum GPA) are identified by the counseling staff and administration of our partner schools and then recruited by College Possible coaches in the start of their junior year. Interested students complete an on-line application with the support of staff at their school.

The tech-connected high school coaching model consists of an unbundled version of our campus-based high school curriculum. Coaches use a combination of e-newsletters, individual monthly conferences, and online group workshops to connect with students and deliver the curriculum. This year, there was a significant emphasis on exploring college options and setting goals, navigating college costs through scholarships and saving income, and drafting well-written essays and applications. The content covered is very similar to that of their campus-based peers, but altered slightly due to the delivery format and regional context.

#### *Junior Year Topics:*

- **College Awareness:** this is even more important for our tech-connected students who live throughout greater Minnesota as there is often less exposure and accessibility to wide variety of college options that exist.

- **Academic support:** because tech-connected students participate in more individual meetings with their coach than students in our traditional program, they are able to dive even deeper into their academics and ensure they are selecting the right courses and staying on top of their assignments.
- **Financial planning:** As coaches are often communicating individually with students, they are able to hold very specific conversations about a student's financial situation and encourage them to connect with their family to make a plan for paying for college
- **Test preparation:** similar to the campus based program, tech-connected students use the Princeton Review curriculum to prepare for college entrance exams. However, as they do not have as much time working directly with a coach as campus based students, our tech-connected program utilized Princeton Review's online portal, giving students consistent access to testing strategies, sample problems, and even timed practice tests.

*Senior Year Topics* are similar to our Campus Based Program, as both include more individual support for students.

### **College Program**

After graduating from high school, students are supported by an AmeriCorps college coach, who helps them transition to college, persist, and earn their degrees. Through both in-person and technology-based consulting, these coaches provide support to students centered on the following curriculum topics:

- **Succeeding in college academics:** connecting with students early in their first year of college to discuss study skills, use of office hours and campus tutoring services and managing college academic work loads.
- **Financing a college education:** working with students to pursue all viable financial resources, find work-study positions, manage account balances, renew the FAFSA (93% of College Possible students renew), and renew or find new scholarships.
- **Building campus connections:** helping students develop on-campus networks by organizing study groups or Facebook groups to create structured, supportive environments.
- **Transferring or re-enrolling:** coaches work with all students, regardless of enrollment status, checking in frequently to provide support, encouragement and guidance to students as they work toward a degree. Together with the student, coaches assess the likelihood and timeframe of anticipated re-enrollment and have defined touch points to ensure students receive the support they need to re-enroll when the time is right for them

- **Career preparation:** support preparing for post-graduation work by covering topics such as securing internships and working with the campus career services office, share job and networking opportunities.

### ***BARRIERS & OPPORTUNITIES***

#### HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM CHALLENGES & LEARNINGS:

ACT Consistency: As schools and districts are adding more opportunities for students to get exposure to the ACT, it has become more challenging to schedule practice ACT examinations. Some school districts provide their own practice tests while others host official ACTs during a school day, and others provide nothing at all. We still require each student to participate in four practice examinations, but the logistics and schedules for these tests must be adjusted on a school-by-school basis, which can create timing challenges. Each supervisor works hard to ensure that they and their coaches have individualized plans that meet the needs of their school and they are all in constant communication with our ACT lead to ensure that all students are receiving a full dose of our ACT programming. We have also found that individual schools can make changes to their offerings around the ACT from year to year, which can make it difficult to plan for programming year over year, even within the same building. We connect frequently with school staff, in particular Principals and Counselors, to remain on the same page for upcoming changes to ACT offerings, but in the fast-paced environment of high schools, this can be a challenge.

In order to combat some of the challenges we have faced in terms of pacing of our ACT curriculum and support of students through this process we have implemented some additional tools. Princeton Review's online portal for ACT preparation has proven to be an effective way to provide consistent support in the face of varying schedules. The 2017-18 program year was our first year utilizing this tool and reported that it was helpful in individualizing their support for students and providing them with opportunities to study outside of the afterschool sessions. The portal allows students to access practice problems and test taking strategies from any device with an internet connection and allows coaches to assign individual students problems based on the sections of the test they need to focus on most. It also allows coaches to track student engagement with the material outside of school and see which concepts and questions each student is struggling with most. The portal also allows coaches to receive their students' practice test scores in a much timelier manner and it helps them identify which section each student needs to work on the most.

Family and Community Engagement: Engaging with students' families is an extremely important aspect of supporting students on their journey to and through college, however it can be challenging to find effective ways to establish and maintain communication with this population. Our students' families are often extremely busy with many obligations from long working hours, to childcare

and family support, to obligations within their community. This makes it very difficult to establish good times to connect with families especially as each family's schedule and availability are unique. We always encourage students to be in communication with their families, providing discussion topics and materials to bring home to discuss, however we have found that relying on students to pass information to their parents or guardians is not always successful. Additionally, many of our students' families have immigrated to the United States and do not speak English as a first language or at all, which adds the extra challenge of translating written materials and finding interpreters for phone calls and in-person meetings. We work closely with our high school partners for support in this area, but have found that family engagement tends to be a challenge for them as well. We have also found that the resources and supports for engaging and supporting families across schools and districts can vary widely.

Despite the challenges associated with family engagement, it remains a top priority for our program. We have been engaging as a team in conversations about how College Possible Minnesota can engage more often and more meaningfully with students' families and the communities they live in and associate with. This spring we developed a small working group that began developing ideas for executing on this work this summer and into next year. Already there are two significant programmatic additions focused on engagement: one is a newsletter to families that coaches customized with student-level updates that were sent home to each family in April. The second was a parent and family breakout session at our end of year celebration as a time to talk with families about what to expect from the college enrollment process and specific ways they can support their students in the transition to college. Additionally, we are currently building out a Partnerships and Engagement department within the College Possible Minnesota team and hired a full-time Community Engagement Specialist to provide new tools and resources for the families of our students and become more actively engaged in schools and communities to best support our students.

#### COLLEGE PROGRAM CHALLENGES & LEARNINGS:

Early Filing of the FAFSA: With the shift in the FAFSA timeline that took place last year, we anticipated that this year students would be more aware of this change and take advantage of applying for financial aid earlier in the year. While there was an increase in early FAFSA applications from last year (by March 61.8% of students completed their FAFSA compared to 52% at that time the previous year), this jump was not as large as we anticipated. Many of our older students are used to applying for financial aid in the spring and summer. They did not fully understand the timing change and therefore are still approaching the process the same way they did when they began their college career. Many of these students may not have felt the impact of filing late in the year, so they have not changed their behavior in the second year of the early FAFSA. That said, we know that applying for financial aid earlier

provides students at many institutions with priority access to financial aid funds and can help them map out their college finances for the coming academic year in a more organized and thoughtful way. We will continue to create and employ strategies to encourage students to apply to the FAFSA early to ensure they are able to take advantage of all of the resources available to them.

Connecting with Upperclassmen: Connecting with upperclassmen also stood out as a challenge throughout the past program year. As students get more comfortable as college students and have more confidence in their ability to navigate the many systems on their campus, they are often less likely to reach out or respond to their coach. Some students do not think they need any additional support or no longer understand how their coach can add value to their college experience. This is a challenge, as we know that many students run into unexpected barriers (financial and otherwise) towards the end of their college career and we want to help them be proactive as they complete their final semesters. Without hearing from students early and often, it can be difficult to know which students may be in need of support and we need to be more reactive, which is less effective. One way we can be a resource for upperclassmen is by doing more with employers and community partners to connect students to internships and jobs. This past year we collaborated with the Itasca Project on an initiative to connect students to employers in the Twin Cities. The main outcome of this partnership is an on-line platform similar to LinkedIn, but that is designed specifically for students from underrepresented backgrounds and was done in close collaboration with some key local employers. In spring 2018, we also launched a Community Leaders program focused on creating an inclusive community for College Possible students on college campuses. Community Leaders are charged with developing, promoting and executing social gatherings and service events for College Possible students that foster a shared sense of community. Community Leaders also provide a critical amplification of students' voices in College Possible by offering a structured way for students to influence and guide improvements to College Possible's programming. Through this new leadership opportunity we are hoping to provide clear and meaningful ways for upperclassmen to interact with our programming and encourage their peers to engage as well.

Financial Gaps: As the cost of college continues to rise, the gap between the amounts of financial aid offered to students, and the cost of attendance at higher education institutions is continuing to grow. This is a big challenge for our students as they are already facing financial barriers to accessing and succeeding in college. This is often felt most acutely by students who are later in their college career as there are often fewer scholarships and financial aid available to them and their coursework is more rigorous, making it more difficult to balance school and work. As a result, relatively small financial barriers (\$1,00-\$2,500) can prevent a student from persisting in their collegiate career and ultimately earning their degree. In order to combat this challenge, our development team is working on a campaign to form a scholarship endowment specifically for College Possible students. Our vision is to provide scholarships to upper classmen to ensure they are able to remain in school and graduate on time. Additionally, we see this as a way to allow students who want to participate in studying abroad or unpaid internships to access these enriching



opportunities that otherwise might not be an affordable option. In addition, as part of our innovation agenda, we have a team exploring new ways to create more external scholarship opportunities for our students. This initiative is just underway but we know we will be looking at how we can create new and creative partnerships with scholarship granting organizations, deepen our partnerships with current scholarship granting partner organizations, increase student knowledge of scholarship opportunities and ensure that our students are as prepared as possible to be top-rate applicants for scholarship opportunities

**D. Describe *how this appropriation has allowed expansion of the program in Minnesota, including, but not limited to the number of coaches hired, the number of coaching sessions provided to students, the expansion within existing partner high schools, the expansion of high school partnerships, the number of additional high school and college students served.***

The \$250,000 appropriations received in FY2016 and FY2017 enabled College Possible to pilot and grow Tech-Connected programming to greater Minnesota high school students, and the FY2018 appropriation allowed us to expand and improve upon this programming. In FY2018, we had 5 Tech-Connected High School Coaches serving 341 students in 29 partner high schools throughout the state. In total, Tech-Connected students received 1,529 coaching sessions via a variety of technology mediums including phone calls, Skype conversations, Google Hangouts, and virtual workshops. In addition to formal coaching sessions, Tech-Connected coaches also had 3,101 successful interactions with students throughout last year, including text message conversations, emails, interactions via social media and shorter phone calls.

Our largest area of growth and our biggest programmatic focus has shifted to our College Program and specifically increasing the number of students who earn their college degrees in six years or less. Each year we are sending more and more students into college and ensuring that they receive all of the support necessary to have an enriching college experience and earn a degree in a timely manner is of the utmost importance for us. To help ensure this growth and improvement, the College Program added 10 additional coaches in FY2018, which is 7 more than we added in the previous year. Each of these coaches supported a group of 120-150 college students and provided a total of 2,979 campaign-coaching sessions (these are in-depth conversations about specific topics of high emphasis). In addition, these ten coaches had over 9,000 successful two-way communications (outside of formal campaign coaching sessions) with students through a variety of technology mediums including phone calls, Skype conversations, Google Hangouts, social media, and texting. In addition to the growth in the Tech-Connected High School Program and Tech-Connected College Program, we also expanded our Campus Based High School Program and Campus Based College Program. We grew the number of students being served at 4 of our Campus Based high

schools and added a Campus Based College Coach to an institution that did not have that support in the previous year. While the appropriation did not fully fund all of the growth of our Campus Based High School and Campus Based College program, it was a significant part of our diverse funding base that gave us the confidence in our long-term sustainability to grow our programming.

### III. Program Outcomes

A. Number of students in College Possible who graduated from high school 1,268

B. Number of students *funded by this appropriation who successfully enrolled in postsecondary institutions and a breakdown of programs* TOTAL number all programs = 307\*

*\*Of the 600 students included in the appropriation cohort, 307 were college students who were successfully enrolled in a postsecondary institution. All other students funded by the appropriation were high school students. The enrollment data for high school seniors entering their first year of college will become available in the fall of 2017.*

Demographics/Type of Institution/Program	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Location	Public	Private Not-for-profit	Private For-Profit (Career)
Bachelor's degree/4-year students	American Indian/Alaska Native=0 Asian=85 Black/African American=82 Hispanic/Latino=24 Multiracial/Other=38 White=9	Male=84 Female=146 Other=0	District 1=31 District 2=36 District 3=3 District 4=71 District 5=31 District 6=0 District 7=16 District 8=40	124	104	0
Associate's degree/2-year students	American Indian/Alaska Native=0 Asian=23 Black/African American=18 Hispanic/Latino=9 Multiracial/Other=14 White=5	Male=34 Female=42 Other=1	District 1=0 District 2=1 District 3=26 District 4=49 District 5=2 District 6=1 District 7=0 District 8=0	79	0	0

Certificate/1 year or less	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>307</b>		<b>201</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>0</b>

**C. BACHELOR'S degree programs – persistence. Please indicate the number of students in each cohort who persisted from year-to-year and the percentage that represents of the original number of students enrolled in that cohort.\***

	<b>Public #/%</b>	<b>Private Not-for-profit #/%</b>	<b>Private For- Profit (Career) #/%</b>
<b># enrolled</b>	124	104	
<b>1<sup>st</sup> year to 2<sup>nd</sup> year</b> (Class 17 enrolled F17 & F18)	30/32 (93%)	39/41 (95%)	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> year to 3<sup>rd</sup> year</b> (Class 16 enrolled F17 & F18)	24/29 (82%)	25/26 (96%)	
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> year to 4<sup>th</sup> year</b> (Class 15 enrolled F17 & F18)	18/21 (85%)	19/22 (86%)	
<b>4<sup>th</sup> year to 5<sup>th</sup> year</b> (Class 14 enrolled F17 & F18) & beyond*	22/42 (52%)	2/15 (13%)	
<b># graduates</b>	6	13	
<b>TOTAL/%</b>	<b>100/124</b>	<b>98/104</b>	

\* This section includes students who have been in school for more than 4 years. It is often more challenging for students beyond their 4<sup>th</sup> year to persist due to a variety of factors including running out of federal financial aid.

**D. ASSOCIATE’S degree programs – persistence. Please indicate the number of students in each cohort who persisted from year-to-year and the percentage that represents of the original number of students enrolled in that cohort. \***

	<b>Public #/%</b>	<b>Private Not-for-profit #/%</b>	<b>Private For-Profit (Career) #/%</b>
<b># enrolled</b>	79		
<b>1<sup>st</sup> year to 2<sup>nd</sup> year</b> (Class 17 enrolled F17 & F18)	15/19* (78%)		
<b># graduates</b>	4		
<b>TOTAL/%</b>			

*\*Only 19 of the students within the appropriation cohort were in their first year of school. Many of these students have transferred between multiple institutions or have been at an Associate granting institution for multiple years.*

**E. CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS – persistence. Please indicate the number of students who persisted to completion of their program and the percentage that represents of the original number of students enrolled.**

	<b>Public #/%</b>	<b>Private Not-for-profit #/%</b>	<b>Private For-Profit (Career) #/%</b>
<b># enrolled</b>	N/A*		
<b># graduates</b>	-		
<b>TOTAL/%</b>			

*\*None of the students funded by this apparition were enrolled in certificate programs.*

Although we will not be able to confirm the exact persistence rate of the appropriation cohort until November, we do have our overall semester-to-semester persistence rates for college students supported by a College Possible Minnesota College Coach from the previous academic year, which can shed some light on College Possible’s impact on low-income students’ in their pursuit of a college degree. The table below contains aggregated from all College Possible Minnesota students who were enrolled in fall 2017 (at a 4-year Public or Private not for profit, or 2-year Public), and reenrolled in Spring 2018:

2017-18 Semester-to-Semester Persistence						
College Program				Actual		
Outcome	Definition	Data Source	Graduation Level	Cohort	# of Students	Percent
Semester-to-Semester Persistence	Fall 2017 students who remain enrolled in Spring 2018	National Student Clearinghouse	2017 HS Grads	743	655 <i>Same Institution</i> 26 <i>Transfers</i>	91.7%
			2016 HS Grads	574	507 <i>Same Institution</i> 10 <i>Transfers</i>	90.1%
			2015 HS Grads	487	429 <i>Same Institution</i> 12 <i>Transfers</i>	90.6%
			2014 HS Grads	361	331 <i>Same Institution</i> 7 <i>Transfers</i>	93.6%
			2013 HS Grads & Earlier	422	332 <i>Same Institution</i> 12 <i>Transfers</i>	81.5%

F. Number of students *who enrolled in developmental courses* at the postsecondary level: 42\*. Of this number, how many persisted in their programs? N/A\*\*

*\*This number represents the students who self-reported participating in developmental coursework and we know this is only a small fraction of the students we support who enrolled in developmental coursework last year. Students are not required to share academic information with us to receive programming and we have found that many students are unsure if they are*

*in developmental courses or are not willing to share that information with their coach. The vast majority of the 42 students who did share this information attend institutions where we have on-campus coaches. This likely influenced their comfort level in disclosing this information to their coach as they often have more touch points and can create an in-person relationship. As was mentioned in our 2016-17 report, this is clearly an area of growth and an emphasis for us moving forward. In an ideal world, we would like to have access to all students' transcripts so we can provide targeted support and guidance to each student. We are fully aware of the research around developmental courses and low levels of persistence among these students and would like to be a part of the solution!*

*\*\*We do not yet have persistence data for students as they have not yet enrolled for fall 2018 classes*

#### **IV. PROJECT PRODUCTS AND SUPPORT**

- A. Did the students in your project participate in other college access programs? (A college access program would be a structured series of services designed to enhance academic and social development in high school students to better prepare them for postsecondary success.) If yes, identify those programs.**

College Possible targets students who do not participate in other college access programs. In some of our partner high schools we do work with students who are also involved in AVID. While AVID is also a program dedicated to supporting students on their pathway to college, our programs have different focuses and we have found that we complement each other well. AVID takes place during the school day and is more focused on establishing a classroom environment and study skills that will help students succeed in their current studies and that will translate well to college coursework. They are not able to provide the intensive test preparation nor the direct support with college and financial aid applications. In each school that we do serve students who also participate in AVID, we are sure to connect directly with the AVID teachers in that building to prevent duplication of work and establish the ways in which we can collaborate to support students.

- B. Were there any unanticipated results for the 2017-18 project, either positive or negative?**

## HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

Enrollment Support: In the final months of the High School program year we focus most intently on ensuring that students are prepared for their transition to the next year, whether that is Senior year of high school, their first year of college, or the beginning of a transitional period where they will continue to discern next steps. While we have coaches over the summer months, our team is smaller after the school year ends and so it is critical to ensure that most of our students have what they need to transition smoothly. The challenges that arise in this timeframe for graduating seniors are familiar: supporting students with a lower academic profile (under a 2.5 GPA and under a 17 ACT) in securing a good-fit college for enrollment, supporting students in completing their enrollment tasks – some of which students cannot complete until the summer months as per their institution’s timeline. Our data on student outcomes continues to show that where our students first enroll can have a significant impact on their long-term success.

Our chief solution this spring was to build out an even more robust summer support team for our graduating Class of 2018. Throughout the spring we used training for coaches, content embedded in our curriculum, and social media and print campaigns, to educate coaches and students about the supports available over the summer. We required Senior Coaches to make sure that all of their students had College Possible’s contact information in their phone. We also changed our summer texting campaign slightly, such that the messages sent during June referred students back to their Senior Coach for support rather than pre-emptively transitioning students to the summer team. As a result, we ended the program year ten percentage points higher in “predicted to enroll.” Going into the summer, nearly 50% of our students were predicted to enroll according to our students’ completion rate of key indicators identified by our historic data (Deposited, Registered for classes, and accepted financial aid). Last year we were just under 40% at the same point in time. This number will continue to grow over the summer through our focused summer coaching. We are very excited for what this will mean for our fall enrollment and the success of the Class of 2018 long term. We did not expect to see such a large increase in students who had taken these critical steps prior to the summer, but we believe this is a result of coaches’ greater attention to and ownership of enrollment tasks and tracking and students’ preparedness for transition. Having more of our students in a stable position going into the summer allows us to focus more intently on those students who most need our support.

## COLLEGE PROGRAM

Semester-to-Semester Retention Rates: Our persistence rates from Fall 2017 to Spring 2018 were much stronger than we anticipated. With an average semester-to-semester persistence rate of 89%, we surpassed our proposed internal goal of 80% and had some class years with retention as high as 93.6%. Our semester-to-semester persistence rate for students attending Community and Technical Colleges was particularly surprising and something that is making us hopeful for our programmatic pertaining to these students. Students attending Community and Technical Colleges typically have lower retention rates than their peers at bachelor granting institutions. While that trend remains true among our students, we are seeing higher semester-to-semester retention rates among our Community and Technical College students (77% Fall 2017 - Spring 2018 persistence) than we have seen in previous years (65% Fall 2016 - Spring 2017 persistence). This increase in semester-to-semester persistence is something we would like to replicate in future years, and our College Team is working hard to identify the specific supports and outreach that helped create this positive outcome.

**C. Increasing college access and the potential for success for underrepresented groups requires that students be academically, socially, and psychologically prepared. College enrollment and success is dependent on many factors. Research has documented that academic preparation is a key component for postsecondary success.**

**a. Identify the main academic support factor from your project that ensures participants in grades 11 and 12 are meeting college-ready standards or college-ready high school graduation requirements.**

College Possible utilizes a systematic, results-based approach to moving cohorts of low-income students along the pipeline to college graduation. To track students' progress towards this ultimate goal, we use incremental metrics correlated to college admission, matriculation and persistence. The main academic support factor in moving high school students along this path is increasing their ACT scores, which are a critical component of the college admissions process and an indicator of college readiness. We target concepts covered on the ACT not just so students can increase their test scores, but rather because of the correlation between these scores and success in college, and because these test scores are a quantifiable way to measure progress in this area.

To help students increase their ACT scores, College Possible's core high school programming includes intensive individual and group support in subjects including math, science, writing and reading comprehension. Coaches spend about 100 hours of session time covering academic content such as Math and English, delivering curriculum on exponents, algebraic equations and geometry formulas in math; and sentence structure and critical reading in English.



Coaches work with students in groups and individually, and collaborate with teachers and families as needed to monitor students' academic progress in school to help them stay on the path to college readiness.

Students with GPAs below a 2.5 receive individual support in developing an academic action plan to set them on a path to post-secondary success. Each cohort of students is led by a trained coach who has recently graduated from college and is keenly aware of the level of proficiency needed to succeed in college academics. Coaches participate in 28 hours of training from Princeton Review's master trainer as well as participate in a series of trainings throughout the year led by current and former educators. In addition to external trainings, coaches are placed in lesson planning groups with their peers to discuss common challenges in the classroom and share best practices for supporting their students academically. Coaches work with school staff and administration to ensure that each student is on track in their school coursework as well as in College Possible sessions, fostering a culture of achievement and high expectations in which students excel. Coaches also hold formal, individual meetings with each student near the end of every semester to touch on their academic progress and goals and to discuss what steps students should take to remain on track academically.

College Possible high school students also markedly improve their academic proficiency as measured by increased ACT scores from the beginning of the program to the official exam between their junior and senior years. Since our founding, College Possible students have achieved an average annual ACT score increase of 23%, from a "baseline" score of about 15 to an official score of about 18.5. Scores of 18 are typically the threshold for admission by many bachelor-granting institutions. The English section of the ACT - a key indicator of academic readiness for college - is historically the section on which our students achieve the greatest score increases. From the baseline test to the official administration of the exam, College Possible students typically increase their average English scores by more than 30%. In addition, virtually all students who attend session on a consistent basis maintain or improve their GPAs, indicating positive alignment of College Possible's services with students' in-school coursework.

While we do not believe that standardized testing is the best or only indicator of students' academic potential, the score increases do reflect increased academic proficiency and place them on a trajectory for college success by dramatically improving their chances of admission, as well as indicating increased preparedness for college level courses. We build on this foundation during students' senior year of high school by integrating academic preparation services with admissions and financial aid consulting, providing students with practical content that they can apply once in college. We continue to incorporate more academic content into our senior curriculum, helping our students

build on their junior year academic work and complementing in-school curriculum. In addition to academic content review, we spend significant time with students on a variety of writing assignments to increase their skills in the different types of writing that will be required in college. We also work with students on reading skills, covering everything from source documents to pieces of fiction to professional communications. In an effort to mirror a college classroom, many coaches hold group discussions on current events and topics relevant to the college experience which prepares students for the critical thinking and participation necessary to succeed in their college courses.

**D. Along with academic preparation, students must be socially and psychologically prepared for postsecondary enrollment.**

**a. Identify the main psychosocial support factor from your project that ensures postsecondary participants from your program are engaged in the postsecondary environment.**

College Possible programming is supported by a growing body of evidence that non-cognitive skill development is critical to high-need student success. Research shows that student engagement and academic outcomes can be increased by improving students' non-cognitive behaviors, attitudes and strategies. College Possible's model employs research-proven strategies to build non-cognitive skills and set students up for success in college. The main support factor is the use of AmeriCorps coaches to deliver intensive near-peer mentoring services to small cohorts of students in peer groups with other college-focused students. Coaches, who are close in age to their students and often come from similar backgrounds and experiences, build a culture of trust and high expectations in which students excel – enabling us to achieve unprecedented results.

College Possible also increases non-cognitive skills as measured through developmental assets such as achievement motivation and school engagement. We incorporate the Search Institute's research-informed "Conversation Starters" into high school sessions to foster social-emotional skill building. This is well-received by students and helps to foster further bonding within cohorts as students learn more about each other in addition to developing non-cognitive skills. This positive impact on group cohesion correlates with strong cohort results.

Throughout a student's senior year, we incorporate a series of "College Life Seminars" to begin discussions about the post-secondary environment and the skills, mindsets, and resources needed to be successful within that environment.

These sessions include a variety of formats ranging from large and small groups discussions, individual reflection to research, examination of videos and articles, and coach-led presentations. The topics and objectives of these sessions include:

Topic	Primary Objectives
College Life Seminar - Stress Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine personal responses to stress</li> <li>• Reflect on different strategies to manage stress</li> <li>• Discuss how managing stress can contribute to success in college and beyond</li> </ul>
College Life Seminar - Time Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a weekly schedule</li> <li>• Analyze current study skills and identify opportunities for improvement</li> <li>• Identify resources and strategies</li> </ul>
College Life Seminar - Balancing Family & School Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss how school demands and family dynamics might shift in college</li> <li>• Prepare to talk with family</li> <li>• Identify support resources on campus</li> </ul>
College Life Seminar - Housing, Campus Life & Getting Involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss campus life and what to expect when living on and off campus</li> <li>• Identify different forms of involvement</li> <li>• Explore potential activities and/or clubs to get involved with</li> </ul>
College Life Seminar - Budgeting & Money Management in College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore different personal budgeting resources</li> <li>• Discuss basics of Federal Work-Study and financial aid refunds</li> <li>• Examine the unique perspectives and strengths that low-income students bring to a college campus</li> </ul>
College Life Seminar - Using Your Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice asking for support in an email</li> <li>• Discuss the role of a College Coach and expectations for the college years</li> <li>• Write introductory letter to next year's Coach</li> </ul>
College Life Seminar - Choosing a Major (or not!)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on strengths, interests and personality</li> <li>• Discuss the connection between major and career path</li> <li>• Review resources available to assist students</li> </ul>

College Life Seminar - Imposter Syndrome, Culture Shock & Reverse Culture Shock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss differences between current and college environments</li> <li>• Identify strategies and resources to assist in the transition process</li> </ul>
College Life Seminar - Early Warning Signs & Help-Seeking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the concept of help-seeking behavior and identify personal help-seeking tendencies</li> <li>• Discuss early warning signs of academic, financial and social/emotional distress and the benefits of asking for help</li> <li>• Identify campus resource</li> </ul>

**E. If project information and outcomes were disseminated, please identify those efforts and materials.**

One of the greatest barriers to college access and success for low-income students is the affordability of college and financial acumen. As part of the Financial Empowerment Innovation Fund, the U.S. Department of the Treasury<sup>[1]</sup> contracted with College Possible to conduct a three-year exploratory study of the association between College Possible’s near-peer financial coaching approach—which includes a targeted curriculum, use of publicly available financial tools and access to a near-peer coach who provides mentoring and coaching—and changes in students’ financial literacy, financial preparedness and college decision-making.

The attached study includes the cohort of 1,869 students admitted into College Possible in the fall of their junior year of high school in 2014. The cohort is comprised of students selected from 53 College Possible partner high schools located in six major metro areas including Minneapolis, St. Paul, Milwaukee, Omaha, Portland (OR) and Philadelphia.

The College Possible research team used available data (including enrollment records, program participation data, financial aid documents, surveys and interviews) to produce descriptive statistics and multiple regression models to measure the association between program delivery and student outcomes, including increases in financial knowledge and confidence, decision-making about financing and attending college, and college matriculation and persistence. Please find the detailed report attached to the email containing this Narrative Report.

**F. Attach a copy of any publication, or provide the electronic link to any publication that resulted from grant support.**

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<sup>[1]</sup> This study was funded by the U.S. Department of the Treasury under contract award TOS-14-F-0023. The content of this document does not represent the official views or policy of the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

A College Possible student's journey navigating the challenges of the higher education application and enrollment process was highlighted in the Star Tribune article, you can find the [here](#).

St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter visited College Possible to meet with our AmeriCorps members, thank them for their dedication to National Service, and speak about his vision for educational equity in the State's capitol. This meeting was reported on by multiple local news outlets, including a segment from Fox9 that you can find [here](#).

Thank you for providing information on your programming. **A payment of \$250,000 in 2019 will be given upon receipt of 1) this project outcomes report and 2) an invoice detailing services to be performed in the 2019 fiscal year.**