

Public Abstract

First Name: Patricia

Middle Name: Jane

Last Name: Holloway

Adviser's First Name: Ruth

Adviser's Last Name: Roberts

Co-Adviser's First Name: Paul

Co-Adviser's Last Name: Watkins

Graduation Term: FS 2009

Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Degree: EdD

Title: An Analysis of the Impact of the A+ Schools Program on Student Enrollment, Certificate or Degree Completion and Transitioning to a Four-Year University

The purpose of this research was to discover the number and gender of students utilizing A+ funds to enter a mid-western community college, obtain a certificate or an associate degree, and/or transition to a four-year college or university to determine whether or not the intent of the A+ Schools Program was accomplished. The intent of the policy makers was that this high school reform effort would create a well-prepared workforce by encouraging high school graduates to succeed at some form of post-secondary education.

This study utilized pre-existing data gathered by the A+ Coordinator and the Assistance Institutional Researcher at the mid-western community college and the Department of Higher Education database. Participants consisted of A+ students and non-A+ students enrolled full-time at a mid-western community college in the state of Missouri during the period of the first decade in which the A+ Program incentives were made available.

Results from the investigation of the impact of the A+ Schools Program at the mid-western community college was found to have no significant impact on increased enrollment, certificate attainment, associate degree attainment and transition to a four-year institution. When comparing statewide enrollment data of A+ and non-A+ students, significant differences were identified. While data reflecting gender differences for certificate attainment was lacking, the research found no significant difference among gender categories of A+ students and non-A+ students regarding enrollment, associate degree attainment and transfer to a four-year institution.

A common framework for effective collection, analysis and use of data on student outcomes at the community college level was recommended. Additional recommendations include: (a) increase connections with K - 16 educators to provide a seamless path for the success of Missouri students, (b) encourage all high schools in Missouri to adopt the requirements of the A+ Schools Program to ensure all students in Missouri graduate prepared to pursue post-secondary education and employment, and (c) promote vocational programs that provide necessary skill and training for students to pursue postsecondary education and employment.