

Evaluation of Get Focused...Stay Focused! (GFSF)

The federal government through its What Works Clearinghouse (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>) and prominent education organizations, such as the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy (<http://coalition4evidence.org/>), have long promoted the idea that education programs need rigorous evaluations to determine their effectiveness much like medical treatments. The GFSF evaluation will use the most rigorous evaluation design—random assignment—to create two equivalent groups, a treatment group that participates in the program and a control group that does not. This technique insures that any differences in student outcomes after participating in the program can be attributed to the program itself.

The GFSF Phase II evaluation will randomly assign schools to the treatment group through a school lottery.

How it will work	Participating schools offer the freshman course to all students. Schools enter a lottery, with half of the schools offering the program in year 1 and half of the schools offering the program in year 2.
Year 1 (2016-17)	Half of the schools are randomly selected by lottery to implement the program in year 1. The program is offered to all freshman.
Year 2 (2017-18)	Program is offered to all freshman in the second group of schools. Year 1 schools implement the 10th grade follow-up curriculum.
Advantages	Year 2 schools can learn from the experiences of year 1 schools, helping ensure a smoother implementation. Impact data available Winter 2016.
Disadvantages	All students are not served until year 2.

The evaluation will measure a variety of short-term and long-term student outcomes.

Those outcomes will include dropout, attendance, course failures, advanced courses completed (AP, IB, and dual-enrollment), on-track toward graduation, grade-point average, office referrals, and suspensions and expulsions.

What is the time commitment required by the schools?

Recognizing the demands on educator's lives, the majority of the data collected is readily accessible. The majority of the quantitative data will be accessed using Cal-PASS Plus (<https://www.calpassplus.org/>), a statewide organization that facilitates the sharing of data between k-12 and high education. Participating schools must have their school districts participate in Cal-PASS Plus (over 500 districts already participate) that allows for data sharing with UC Santa Barbara, where the evaluation will take place.

Other student-level data not collected by CAL PASS (absences, suspensions and expulsions) must be supplied by the participating school districts. The schedule for providing such data is:

Summer 2016	Data for 2015-16 8th grade students
Winter 2017	Data for Fall Semester 2016 9th grade students
Summer 2017	Data for Spring Semester 2017 9th grade students
	Similar schedule for subsequent years

For qualitative assessment, UC graduate students will conduct 20 minute interviews with key instructors and administrators up to three times per year the first year and two times per year the second year.

Besides a data report and the recognition an evaluation of this level is sure to bring, schools which participate in the evaluation will receive:

- Complimentary registration fees for two district staff to attend the [GFSF Conference](#) being held at SBCC January 7 and 8, 2016;
- Complimentary district professional development for staff of participating schools
- Coordination of data collection and analysis by Dr. Russell Rumberger, UC Santa Barbara