



# **ZONE 126 PROGRESS REPORT:**

## **SCHOOL YEAR 2014/2015**



## **Introduction**

Two years ago, Zone 126 embarked on setting forth an innovative approach to transforming its community. By taking best practices from others in their work in Collective Impact, Community Schools, and Placed-based initiatives, Zone 126 is aligning and addressing the needs of over 10,000 children and families living in the concentrated pockets of poverty in Astoria/Long Island City.

Collective Impact, the model on which Zone 126 is designed, addresses these needs by working in collaboration and trust with partners who share the mission and goals. No single organization can create the significant change we need. Zone 126 facilitates the coordinated action of its partners, the communication feedback loops, and the analysis of data, to advance our vision; For every child to graduate from high school prepared for college, and enter the workforce equipped with the skills needed to thrive in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century world. To reach our vision, we work in collaboration with school administration within ten schools, PK-12<sup>th</sup> grade to build Community Schools. Community Schools integrate academics, health and social services, youth development, and community and family engagement to improve children educational outcomes and create stronger families and communities.

It has been thrilling to witness the evolution of the Zone 126 project. This report marks a full year of partner program implementation and data analysis. Thank you to all our partners for their commitment and dedication to the communities of the Zone.

Maritza Arroyo



CEO  
Zone 126



Did you know more than 20,000 families in Astoria/Long Island City are living in poverty?

At a median income of **\$22,000**

*Among adults in Zone 126*



**36.6%** are overweight

**21%** are obese



**more than 1/2** report experiencing depression

**37%** of Zone 126 families are uninsured

Those making less than \$25K/Year are **TWICE AS LIKELY** to be without health insurance as those making more than \$50K/Year



More than **8,000 children** live in poverty in Astoria/LIC.



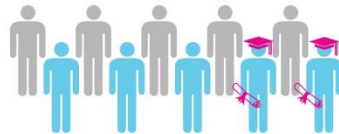
More than **91%** of Zone 126 children qualify for **FREE OR REDUCED LUNCHES**. Most live in one of three nearby public housing developments.

We know the effects of poverty are complex, and directly affect education outcomes.



**More than 75%** are not proficient in ELA and Math

**50%** will drop out



**2%**

earn a college degree

**A Complex Problem Needs a Complex Solution.**

Zone 126 brings a diverse network of programs and services to high-poverty schools so every child can graduate.

**Zone126.org**

## **Executive Summary**

To successfully implement Cradle to Career Community Schools, data is continuously collected from families, community members, program staff, school administration, and other cross-sector partners, ensuring that a diverse set of voices are heard. Results facilitate continuous feedback loops, leading to a continuous incorporation of lessons learned and best practices into the Zone 126 strategy.

The Zone 126 School Year 2014/2015 Progress Report that you are about to read summarizes data collected from children and adults served by Cradle to Career Implementation Partner programs in our 10 Community Schools. Since data is being collected longitudinally, findings in this report encompass both participants served in School Year 2014/2015, as well as retrospective data from students served in School Year 2013/2014. Following are the four key areas assessed and respective method of evaluation:

### **1. Students' social, emotional, and behavioral development**

To ascertain behavioral changes over time, Zone 126 collected surveys from students enrolled in Cradle to Career Implementation Partner programs during and after the period in which program(s) were being implemented. Among students who were (1) attending a Zone school; and (2) participating in one or more Zone 126 interventions in School Year 2014/2015, Zone 126 collected and analyzed the following social, emotional, and behavioral indicators: academic self-efficacy; growth mindset or mastery; grit; emotional competence; and self-regulation. If part of the program's evaluative paradigm, pretests were conducted prior to each program's implementation (in concert with the enrollment process, if applicable), during the first session, or by the end of the second session. Posttests were conducted either at the second to last workshop or session, last workshop or session, or after the program concluded.

### **2. Family engagement**

To ascertain trends in family involvement, Zone 126 collected surveys from parents/guardians who were (1) participating in a Cradle to Career Implementation Partner program in School Year 2014/2015; and (2) had at least one child in a Zone school during the period in which program(s) were being implemented. The surveys evaluated the degree to which parents/guardians supported their child's learning at home. The analysis focused on: parent/guardian involvement in child's education (as measured by levels of encouragement, support, pro-social behavior modeling, and instruction); knowledge of resources to facilitate learning; confidence in abilities to support child's schooling; programs and services needed in schools to augment their child's success; and programs, services, and activities desired to address and mitigate challenges faced as a parent/guardian. If part of the program's evaluative paradigm, pretests were conducted prior to each program's implementation (in concert with the enrollment process, if applicable), during the first session, or by the end of the second session. Posttests were conducted either at the second to last workshop or session, last workshop or session, or after the program concluded.

### **3. Overall participant need**

To identify and respond to service provision gaps, Zone 126 aggregated data from all children and adults surveyed, using only one test per participant: if a participant only completed a pretest, pretest results were included in the analysis. Likewise, if a participant only completed a posttest, posttest results were included in the analysis. If a participant completed both a pretest and posttest, Zone 126 reported the posttest results for the most up-to-date snapshot.

### **4. Academic performance**

To posit how participation in Cradle to Career Implementation Partner programs impacts academic performance in our Community Schools, Zone 126 procured identifiable, student-level data from the New York City Department of Education for a cohort of children involved with the Cradle to Career Implementation Partner programming in School Year 2013/2014. This school-level data includes Zone school students who were either: (1) primary beneficiaries of services in School Year 2013/2014; and/or (2) had at least one parent/guardian participating in a Cradle to Career Implementation Partner program in School Year 2013/2014. In an effort to contextualize academic performance, Zone 126 juxtaposed school attendance rates and standardized exam results for the Zone 126 2013/2014 Program Cohort with comparable populations at the city-level (encompassing all New York City public school students) and

school-level (encompassing all students enrolled in Zone school, irrespective of whether or not they participated in Zone 126 Cradle to Career Implementation Partner programming).

During the time period in which Cradle to Career Implementation Partner programs were either in operation or concluding service provision, the following changes transpired:

### Internal Assets

- For all internal assets measured (academic self-efficacy, growth mindset, self-regulation, grit, and emotional competence), the average percent of instances in which participants exhibited positive behaviors increased.
- Results differed based on the participants' grade-level. Middle School students experienced the largest gains in perceived academic self-efficaciousness and self-regulation; elementary school students experienced the largest gains in growth mindset and emotional competence; and High School Students experienced the largest gains in grit.
- Instances in which High School students perceived themselves as having academic self-efficaciousness, a growth mindset, and self-regulation decreased after participating in a Cradle to Career Implementation Partner program.
- Instances in which Middle School students perceived themselves as having grit decreased after participating in a Cradle to Career Implementation Partner program.

### Family Engagement

- There was a considerable increase in the percentage of participants who knew about and utilized programs for children in the community, yet there was a notable decrease in the percentage of participants who knew how to get extra help for their child if he/she were having trouble in school and/or were confident in their ability to support their child's learning at home.
- The percentage of instructive and modeling behaviors that participants exhibited while assisting their child with homework increased, while the percentage of encouraging behaviors exhibited decreased.
- Parents/guardians found it difficult to connect with other families in the community both before and after participating in one or more Cradle to Career Implementation Partner programs.

### Academic Performance

- The Zone 126 2013/2014 Program Cohort performed better than comparable students in Zone schools in terms of school attendance rates; and ELA, Mathematics, and 4th Grade Science exam scores
- The Zone 126 2013/2014 Program Cohort fared better than comparable students in New York City public schools in terms of school attendance rates; Mathematics and 4th Grade Science exam scores.
- The Zone 126 2013/2014 Program Cohort performed worse than comparable students in Zone schools and New York City public schools on the 8th Grade Science exam and High School Regents exams during the time period in which Cradle to Career Implementation Partner programs were either in operation or concluding service provision.

## **Recommendations**

To bolster students' **internal assets**:

1. Scale-up programs and services in Elementary and Middle Schools, since there is a demonstrated record of growth in positive behaviors after participating in Cradle to Career Implementation partner program.
2. Recruit partners in the Cradle to Career pipeline whose programming focuses on building High School students' academic self-efficacy, growth mindset, and self-regulation and Middle School students' grit.

To strengthen **family engagement**:

1. Incorporate social activities in Cradle to Career Implementation Partner programs that promote communication and camaraderie with fellow parents.
2. Regularly monitor each child's school performance; liaising with parents/guardians; and make apposite referrals based on findings.
3. Integrate activities in the Cradle to Career Implementation Partner programs that instill confidence in parents, so that the behaviors exhibited are analogous to instructions conferred to their child.

To improve **academic performance**:

1. Scale-up programs and services in Elementary schools, since students in the Zone 126 2013/2014 Program Cohort outperformed comparable populations during the time period in which Cradle to Career Implementation Partner programs were either in operation or concluding service provision.
2. Conduct research about why Middle School and High School Students in the Zone 126 2013/2014 Program Cohort are lagging behind their peers, academically.
3. Increase the number of academic support programs available for Middle School and High School students.
4. Conduct outreach to students who are either not attending school regularly and/or not scoring at the proficient level on standardized exams. Based on their needs, enroll them in new or existing programs in the Cradle to Career pipeline with track record of increasing academic performance.

With these findings and recommendations, Zone 126 is focused on continuing to leverage best practices and implementing recommendations based on lessons learned. As such, Zone 126 is actively recruiting partners in the Cradle to Career pipeline that address the aforementioned gaps in internal asset development and academic performance. Additionally, we are scaling up existing Cradle to Career Implementation Partner programs to increase both the reach and magnitude of our partners' array of services.

In particular, Zone 126 is actively soliciting partners with a track record of developing emotional competence, and self-regulation for Middle and High School. Once these programs are implemented, Zone 126 will identify students who exhibited these behaviors in less than 50 percent of instances posed and enroll them in new or existing programs accordingly. In addition, Zone 126 is also committed to liaising with parents/guardians to ensure that their families are cognizant of the programs available to them and the processes needed to enroll and succeed.

## CHILDREN SERVED

Since launching the Zone 126 Cradle-to-Career project in January 2014, our Cradle-to-Career Implementation partners served a total of 2,143 children.<sup>1</sup> Out of all children served between January 2014 and June 2015, approximately 3 percent (69 children) participated in more than one Cradle-to-Career Implementation Partner program.

### Children Served, School Year 2014/2015<sup>2</sup>

In School Year 2014/2015 alone, Zone 126 Cradle-to-Career Implementation Partners served 1,888 children, 3 percent of which (63 children) participated in more than one Cradle-to-Career Implementation Partner program.<sup>3</sup>

- **Camp Herrlich** served **28** students from zip codes 11101, 11102, and 11106. Camp Herrlich's sleep away summer camp program provided campers with opportunities to make friends; have fun; and develop a sense of cooperation and independence. Camp Herrlich's 156-acres offer children a wealth of enriching experiences and a variety of activities. It encompasses lakes, fields, streams, swamps, and forests, crossed with hiking trails. Campers embraced the great outdoors and learned to appreciate and respect all aspects of camp life. There was also time for growth and experiential learning.
- **City Harvest** served **658** students in PS 234 and CS 111 through the CATCH and Cooking Matters for Kids programs. The CATCH Program is a nationally recognized, evidence-based program that provides children with the knowledge and skills to lead healthy lives. In our Zone schools, CATCH students explored the importance of healthy eating through hands-on activities and interactive stories. Through Cooking Matters for Kids, students developed cooking skills and learned simple, nutritious recipes that they could prepare themselves.
- **City Year** served **420** students in PS 171, PS 112, IS 204, and IS 126. Before the school year started, teams of City Year AmeriCorps members were placed in Zone schools to meet with school administrators, develop student focus lists, and enroll at-risk students in the program. Students were targeted based on the ABS's: chronic absenteeism; B behavioral issues, and course performance.
- **Community Word Project** served **237** students in PS 17 and IS 126. Community Word Project delivered Blueprint aligned theatre and creative writing residencies to students in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade within the Zone. Each integrated arts residency placed two teaching artists in the classroom. These teaching artists worked closely with classroom teachers to align arts activities to classroom education goals. Over the course of the residency, students learned vocal and physical theatrical skills and wrote original dramatic works. Students presented their work to an audience of their families, peers, and educators.
- **Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement House** served **190** students in PS 171, IS 204, and CS 111. Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement House provides a wide array of youth development program for students in Kindergarten through 12th grade.

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<sup>1</sup> (1) Total number of children served represents an unduplicated count of participants served between January 2014 and July 2015. Each Cradle-to-Career Implementation Partner's respective participant count contains all individuals who attended the program, irrespective of if he/she participated in other programs in the pipeline. Therefore, adding each program's participant count together will not add up to total students served. (2) Not all children included in participant count attended a Zone school.

<sup>2</sup> School Year 2014/2015 encompasses all programming implemented between July 2014 and June 2015.

<sup>3</sup> (1) Total number of children served represents an unduplicated count of participants in School Year 2014/2015. Each Cradle-to-Career Implementation Partner's respective participant count contains all individuals who attended the program, irrespective of if he/she participated in other programs in the pipeline. Therefore, adding each program's participant count together will not add up to total students served. (2) Not all children included in participant count attended a Zone school.

- **NYU Langone Medical Center** served **72** Pre-Kindergarten students at PS 17 through the NYU ParentCorps, a family-centered program designed to foster healthy development and school success;
- **The Parent-Child Home Program** served **24** children from the Astoria, Queensbridge, and Ravenswood houses. The goal of the Parent-Child Home Program is to increase verbal interaction between parent and child. This verbal interaction has both cognitive and affective components.
- **ReStart Academy** served **28** kids in Long Island City High School. ReStart Academy provided quality educational services for over age Middle School students in temporary/involuntary settings, including juvenile justice, substance abuse treatment, mental/behavioral health treatment, transitional housing, hospitals, social services agencies, etc.
- **Socrates Sculpture Park** served **227** students in Long Island City High School. In collaboration with Long Island City High School, Socrates Sculpture Park offered an expansion of its onsite educational offerings into the academic calendar. The art studio at Socrates served as a space for students to develop a visual language by observing and exploring materials and objects through a sculpture practice. Students were encouraged to draw from their specific area of study at Long Island City High School and were guided to further develop projects based on their findings.
- **Zone 126** served **5** Long Island City High School and William Cullen Bryant High School students in **Scholars of the Zone**; and **16** CS 111 students in **Dare to Be King/Dare to Be Queen**, The Scholars of the Zone Program is a school-based mentoring and pre-college access program, supporting a small cohort of 20-30 freshman and sophomore students who live in NYCHA Public Housing Developments (Astoria Houses, Ravenswood Houses, and Queensbridge Houses). Students participating in the program had an opportunity to: explore post-secondary high school plans; partake in individualized mentoring; attend gender specific-workshops; explore student work opportunities, visit colleges, etc. Dare to Be King/Dare to Be Queen is a gender-based program, working with students of color to reduce high-risk behaviors and improve socio-emotional competencies.
- **Nineteen** students in Long Island City High School and William Cullen Bryant High School attended a field trip to **Queensborough Community College**. These students were able to visit the campus, sit in on classes, and check out the bookstore, dining hall, and school facilities in order to get a better idea of what Community College entails.
- **Twenty seven** Elementary School students in CS 111 attended the Honeybee Education field trip on **City Growers'** rooftop farm. On this field trip, students had the opportunity to observe the inner workings of a bee colony through the safety of an observation hive. This hands-on field trip ignited the imaginations of students and adults alike by uncovering the fascinating world of the honey bee.



## ADULTS SERVED

Since launching the Zone 126 Cradle-to-Career project in January 2014, Zone 126 Cradle-to-Career Implementation partner programs served 398 adults.<sup>4</sup> Out of all adults served between January 2014 and June 2015, approximately 9 percent (37 adults) participated in more than one Cradle-to-Career Implementation Partner program.

### **Adults Served, School Year 2014/2015<sup>5</sup>**

In School Year 2014/2015, Zone 126 Cradle-to-Career Implementation Partners served 326 adults, 8 percent of which (27 adults) participated in more than one Cradle-to-Career Implementation Partner program.<sup>6</sup>

- **City Harvest** served **13** adults in PS 234 in the Cooking Matters for Adults program. Cooking Matters for Adults teaches low-income adults (primarily adults with children) how to prepare and shop sensibly for healthy meals on a limited budget.
- **NYU Langone Medical Center** served **66** adults at PS 17 through NYU ParentCorps, a family-centered program designed to foster healthy development and school success.
- **The Office of Adult and Continuing Education (OACE)** served **168** adults in the English in ESL (English as a Second Language) program. OACE's mission is to empower adults in their roles as parents, family members, workers and community members. They promote lifelong learning and the development of problem solving skills through a continuum of services, including Adult Basic Education, Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages, GED Preparation, and Career and Technical Education.
- **The Parent-Child Home Program** served **24** adults from the Astoria, Queensbridge, and Ravenswood houses. The goal of the Parent-Child Home Program is to increase verbal interaction between parent and child. This verbal interaction has both cognitive and affective components.

**Zone 126** facilitated workshops to **77** adults in Zone Elementary, Middle, and High Schools. Zone 126 Community School Coordinators (formerly known as Family & Community Engagement Coordinators) prepared and delivered workshops based on each school's unique population, conversations with parents, and literature on the skill acquisition needed to help support their child(ren)'s growth.

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<sup>4</sup> (1) Total number of adults served represents an unduplicated count of participants between January 2014 and June 2015. Each Cradle to Career Implementation Partner's respective participant count contains all individuals who attended the program, irrespective of if he/she participated in other programs in the pipeline. Ergo, adding each program's participant count together will not add up to total adults served. (2) Not all adults included in participant count had a child attending a Zone school.

<sup>5</sup> School Year 2014/2015 encompasses all programming implemented between July 2014 and June 2015.

<sup>6</sup> (1) Total number of adults served represents an unduplicated count of participants in School Year 2014/2015. Each Cradle to Career Implementation Partner's respective participant count contains all individuals who attended the program, irrespective of if he/she participated in other programs in the pipeline. Ergo, adding each program's participant count together will not add up to total adults served. (2) Not all adults included in participant count had a child attending a Zone school.