

2016-2017

# Evaluation of Academic Outcomes for Zone 126 Program Participants



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# CONTENTS

Introduction .....	3
Summary of Academic Evaluation Findings .....	4
Evaluation Overview .....	5
Evaluation Results .....	6
Regression Results .....	9
About Owen Consulting .....	14



# INTRODUCTION

## Zone 126

Founded in 2011, Zone 126 a non-profit organization based in Astoria/Long Island City Queens, New York, uses a **Collective Impact framework** to increase students' academic achievement, social-emotional development, and make strong connections between home, school, and work to break the cycles of poverty. More than 20,000 families are living in concentrated pockets of poverty in Astoria and Long Island City, the "Zone" which the organization serves. Over 8,000 are children. A child living in poverty faces multiple environmental, social, and physical barriers to academic success. Zone 126 exists to break down those barriers. It's overarching goal is for every child to graduate from high school prepared for college, and enter the workforce equipped with the skills needed to thrive in a 21st century world. To achieve these objectives, during the 2016-2017 school year Zone 126 partnered with 10 schools and 12 non-profit and community based partner organizations that provided a continuum of evidence-based programs and services; from early childhood through high school, during the summer before the school year kicks, off and through the duration of the school-year.

Visit [www.Zone126Queens.org](http://www.Zone126Queens.org)  
to learn more about the organization and opportunities for collaboration.

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## Evaluation of Zone 126 Implementation Partner Programs Measuring Collective Impact and Academic Outcomes

Owen Consulting Inc., a Brooklyn-based evaluation firm, has been working with Zone 126 since 2016 to help the organization measure the collective impact of their partner programs and schools on youth and families in the Zone. The evaluation was designed in part to determine whether Zone 126 was having a positive impact on students' academic achievement, specifically school attendance rates, scores on state exams, and credit accumulation rates. This report summarizes evaluation findings on academic outcomes for Zone 126 partner program participants for the 2016-2017 school year.



# SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC EVALUATION FINDINGS

## Impact of Zone 126 Programs at All Partners Schools

Findings from statistical analyses of NYCDOE academic outcomes **strongly indicate that student participation in Zone 126 programming contributes to improved school attendance and credit accumulation rates.**

Overall findings across all Zone 126 schools and program partners show that:

- 1) Zone 126 students were in attendance at school on average about 6 more days than non-participants
- 2) Zone 126 students on average earned about 2 more credits than non-participants
- 3) No participation impacts were found for scores on state exams

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## Impact of Zone 126 Programs at Long Island City High School

Additionally, the evaluation assessed academic outcomes for Zone 126 participants attending the organization's main high school partner - Long Island City High School (LICHS), a NYCDOE Community School, and designated "Renewal School." The Renewal School program, initiated by Mayor Bill DeBlasio in 2014, supports long-struggling schools by setting clear goals, providing targeted resources, and holding each school accountable for sustainable improvement. Low performing schools were selected for participation in the School Renewal Program in 2014 based on a demonstrated history of low performance, a low capacity for school improvement, and a low capacity for growth on key measures.<sup>1</sup> **The evaluation findings indicated that Zone 126 and its partners were contributing towards LIC HS overall school improvement by positively impacting student performance on two key academic outcomes :**

- 1) Zone 126 students attending Long Island City High School were in attendance at school on average about 15 more days than non-participants.
- 2) Zone 126 students on average earned about 2 more credits than non-participants.
- 3) Compared to findings at all partner schools, Zone 126 programs appeared to be more impactful at Long Island City High School.
- 4) No participation impacts were found on scores state exams

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<sup>1</sup> [www.schools.nyc.gov](http://www.schools.nyc.gov) accessed October 11, 2018



# EVALUATION OVERVIEW

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

In order to accurately determine whether participation in Zone 126 Programs might impact academic achievement outcomes Owen Consulting (OC) obtained academic and demographic data from the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) on more than 600 students participating in Zone 126 partner programming across schools during the 2016-2017 school year, and identified a comparison cohort of students from the same schools and broader NYCDOE data base based on demographic information and academic performance. OC then performed several analyses looking for differences between program participants and comparison group in target academic outcome areas: **School Attendance rates, Credit Accumulation rates, and Scores on State exams.** Regression analysis was chosen because it allows researchers to hold other variables constant while examining the impact of participation in (Zone 126) programming. It is also a common statistical method used to study program impact on school outcomes (Grogan, Henrich, & Malikina, 2014; Leos-Urbel, 2015).

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### Limitations

While the evaluation design did control for selection bias to some extent, there remains the possibility that students may have selected to participate in programs, which could bias estimates of the impact Zone 126 programs have on student outcomes. In addition, results do not compare participation in Zone 126 programs to other programs or activities, nor do they generalize to students who actively choose not to participate. That said, the evaluation's findings strongly indicated that participation in Zone 126 programming positively impacted several academic outcomes.



# EVALUATION RESULTS

## Zone 126 Programs in 2016-2017 and the Number of Student Participants

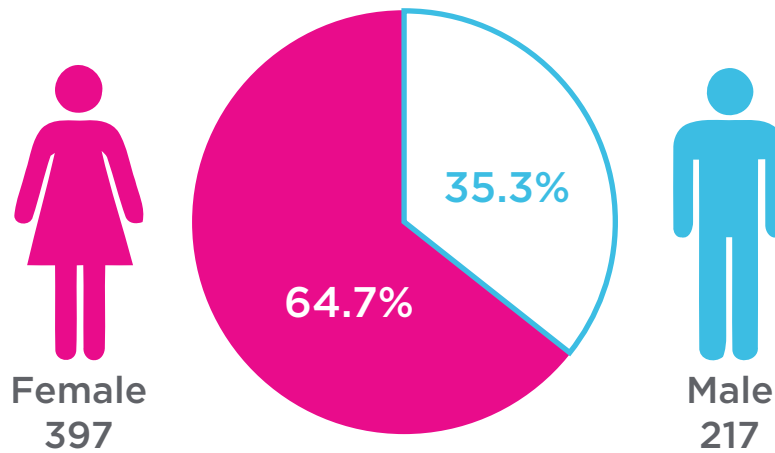
614 students were identified as part of a Zone 126 Program. The following are programs that had a substantial number of participants ( $n \geq 10$ ):

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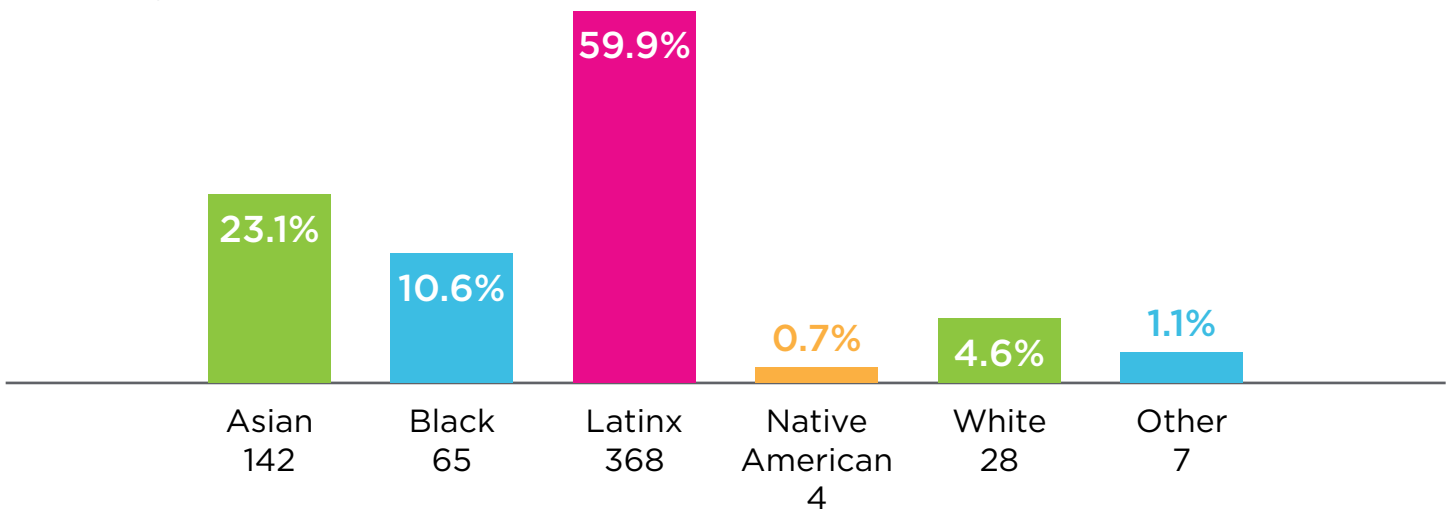
- 16** The Child Center of NY (Implementation of Safe Dates Program)
- 27** Community-Word Project
- 48** enAct
- 74** Let's Get Ready
- 22** Little Flower Yoga (LFY)
- 16** Rock the Street Wall Street (RTSWS)
- 25** Socrates Sculpture Park
- 73** Summer Bridge
- 239** Unknown  
*An indicator showed that students were a Zone 126 participant, but it is not known in which specific program(s).*

# Demographics of the 614 participants:

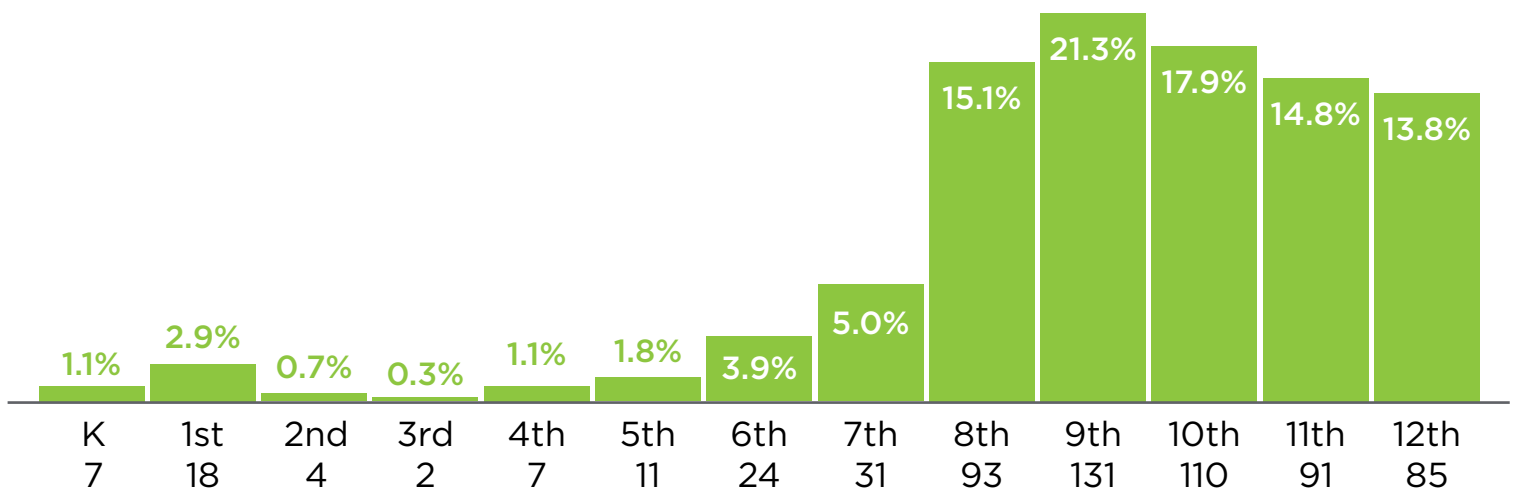
## Sex



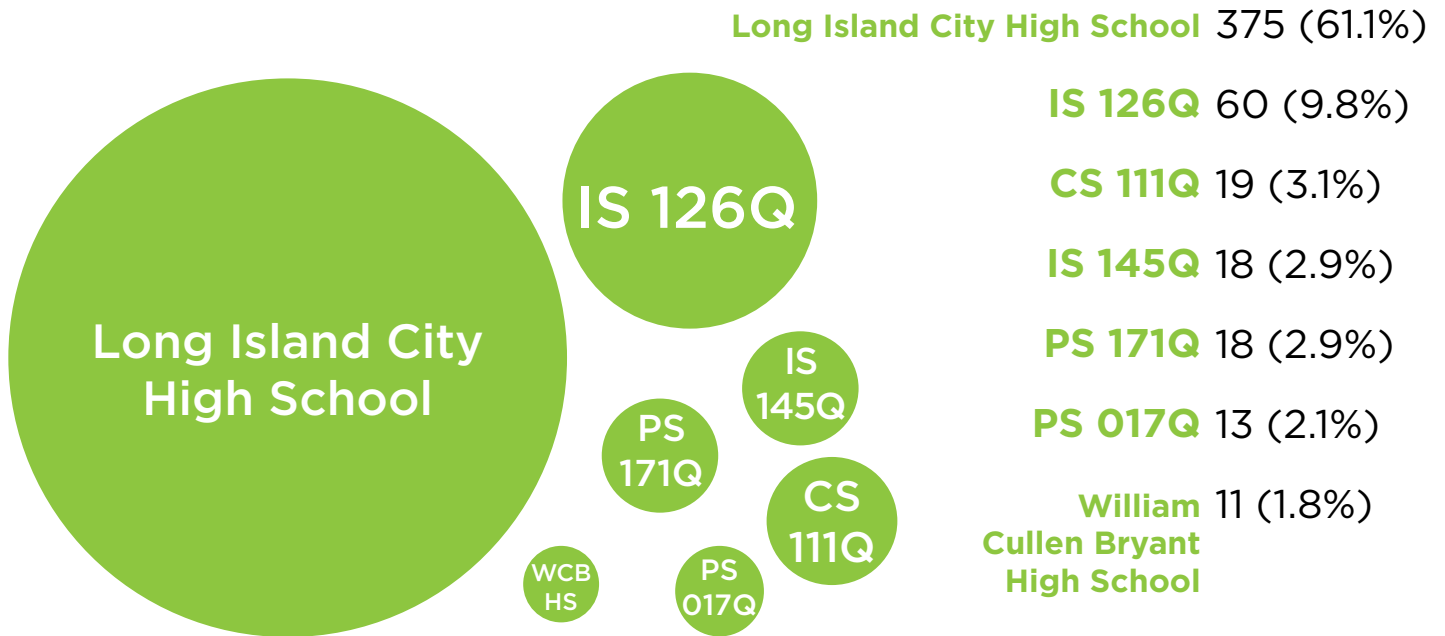
## Ethnicity



## Grade Level



Participants by Schools (n > 10):



**51**  
(8.3%)

participants were identified by the NYCDOE flag as English Language Learners (ELL)

**71**  
(11.6%)

participants had an IEP\*  
\* Individual Education Plan, meaning students are designated as Special Needs

**506**  
(82.4%)

participants were identified as eligible for free or reduced lunch\*\*  
\*\* An indicator that the students' family lives at or below NYC poverty level



# REGRESSION RESULTS

## Overall Zone 126 Schools and Partners

Several multiple linear regression models were developed to examine the impact of Zone 126 Programs on school attendance and credits earned. The first set of regression models was conducted on schools where there were at least ten Zone 126 participants - this was done for methodical considerations. The participant group consisted of 614 students who took part in a Zone 126 program during the 2016-2017 academic year. The control group consisted of 7,949 students who did not take part in any Zone 126 programs but were students within the same schools as Zone 126 participants.

The dependent variable for the first regression model is Days Present and the independent variables are English Language Learner (ELL) indicator, disability status, free/reduced lunch indicator, underrepresented minority indicator (Latinx or Black), female (dummy coded 1=female, 0=male), and Zone 126 program participation indicator. Prior year attendance (days present or days absent) cannot be controlled for in this model because there are significant differences, which cannot be systematically explained, in the way attendance is accounted for between the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years. However, comparisons of attendance within the same school year are still valid. The following table provides a summary of the regression model results:

### Statistical Model Examining Impact of Zone 126 Programs on Attendance

Table 1: *Multiple Linear Regression for Days Present*

	Coefficients	SE	t <sup>2</sup>
<b>Model 1</b>			
Female	0.98	0.81	1.35
Individualized Education Plan	-2.40	0.98**	-2.45
Free/Reduced Lunch	15.14	0.96***	15.82
Underrepresented Minority	0.85	1.04	1.04
English Language Learner	-7.03	0.95***	-7.37
Zone 126 Program Participant	5.76	1.52***	3.80
Constant	135.84	1.10	
R-square	0.04		
N	8,462		

Significance \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001.

<sup>2</sup> This is the “t score,” which is a statistical test used within the regression model. It is reported based on APA format.

## Statistical Model Examining Impact of Zone 126 Programs on Credits Earned

The dependent variable for the second regression model is Credits Earned and the independent variables are English Language Learner (ELL) indicator, disability status, free/reduced lunch indicator, underrepresented minority indicator (Latinx or Black), female (dummy coded 1=female, 0=male), credits attempted, and Zone 126 program participation indicator. Credits attempted is used to control for any pre-existing differences on the variable between the participants and control group. The following table provides a summary of the regression model results:

Table 2: *Multiple Linear Regression for Credits Earned*

	<b>Coefficients</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>t</b>
<b>Model 2</b>			
Female	0.74	0.87***	8.44
Individualized Education Plan	-1.25	0.12***	-10.38
Free/Reduced Lunch	1.42	0.12***	12.00
Underrepresented Minority	-0.96	0.10***	-9.81
English Language Learner	-0.58	0.12***	-4.94
Credits Attempted	0.43	0.01***	41.62
Zone 126 Program Participant	1.57	0.18***	8.97
Constant	4.20	0.20	
R-square	0.26		
N	7,030		

Significance \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001.

# Overall Zone 126 Schools and Partners

## Highlights of Findings for the Overall Regression Models:

Students who participated in a Zone 126 Program on average were present almost **6 more days** compared to students who did not participate in a Zone 126 Program, controlling for all other variables in the model.

Students who participated in a Zone 126 Program on average had almost **2 additional credits earned** compared to students who did not participate in a Zone 126 Program, controlling for all other variables in the model.

**The findings from this analysis strongly suggest that participation in Zone 126 Program had a positive impact on attendance and credits earned.**

Chart 1: Zone 126 Participants versus Control Group on Days Present

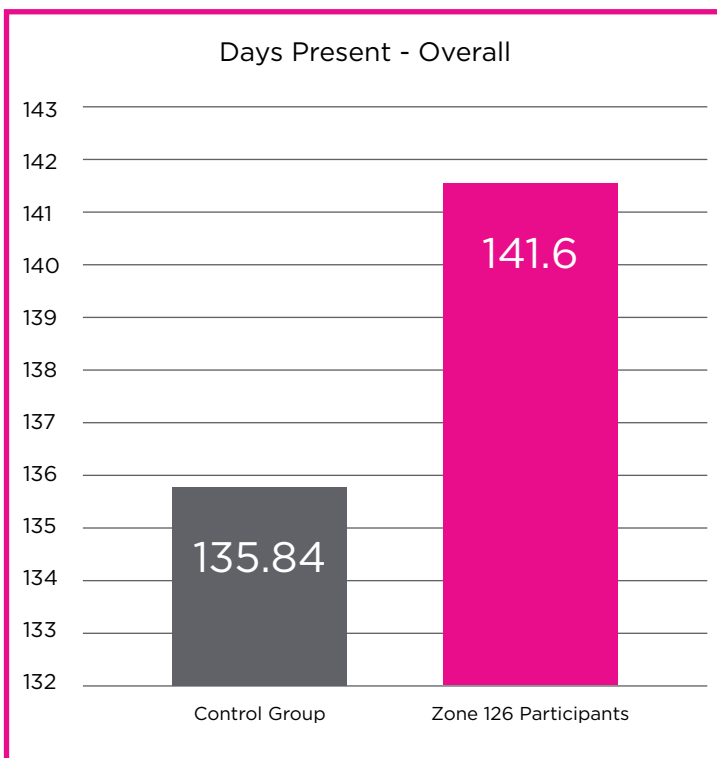
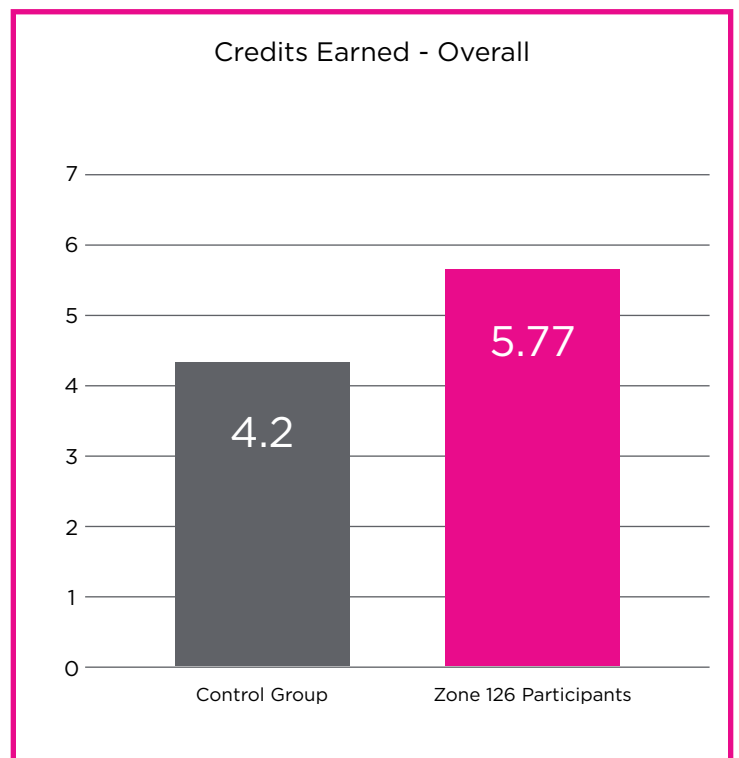


Chart 2: Zone 126 Participants versus Control Group on Credits Earned



# Long Island City High School

The second set of regression models was conducted at Long Island City High School, the school with the largest number of Zone 126 participants. The participant group consists of 375 students who took part in a Zone 126 program during the 2016-2017 academic year. The control group consists of 1,702 students who did not take part in any Zone 126 programs, but were attending Long Island City High School

The dependent variable for the first regression model is Days Present and the independent variables are English language learner indicator, disability status, free/reduced lunch indicator, underrepresented minority indicator (Latinx or Black), female (dummy coded 1=female, 0=male), and Zone 126 program participation indicator. The following table provides a summary of the regression model results:

Table 3: Multiple Linear Regression for Days Present

	Coefficients	SE	t
<b>Model 3 - Long Island City High School</b>			
Female	1.24	1.52	0.81
Individualized Education Plan	-7.78	2.10***	-3.71
Free/Reduced Lunch	10.53	1.74***	5.94
Underrepresented Minority	-2.89	1.76	-1.64
English Language Learner	-9.40	2.29***	-4.11
Zone 126 Program Participant	14.51	1.97***	7.37
Constant	130.73	2.17	
R-square	0.07		
N	2,076		

Significance \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001.

Table 4: Multiple Linear Regression for Credits Earned

	Coefficients	SE	t
<b>Model 4 - Long Island City High School</b>			
Female	0.87	0.21***	4.22
Individualized Education Plan	-1.44	0.28***	-5.06
Free/Reduced Lunch	1.60	0.24***	6.75
Underrepresented Minority	-1.17	0.24***	-4.88
English Language Learner	-1.74	0.31***	-5.60
Credits Attempted	-0.15	0.04***	-4.28
Zone 126 Program Participant	2.22	0.27***	8.32
Constant	13.50	0.64	
R-square	0.13		
N	2,061		

Significance \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001.

## Highlights of Findings for the Long Island City High School Regression Models:

Students who participated in a Zone 126 Program on average were present almost **15 more days** compared to students who did not participate in a Zone 126 Program, controlling for all other variables in the model.

Students who participated in a Zone 126 Program on average had more than **2 additional credits** earned compared to students who did not participate in a Zone 126 Program, controlling for all other variables in the model.

**The findings from this analysis strongly suggest that participation in Zone 126 Program had a positive impact on attendance and credits earned at Long Island City High school.**

Chart 3: Zone 126 Participants versus Control Group on Days Present

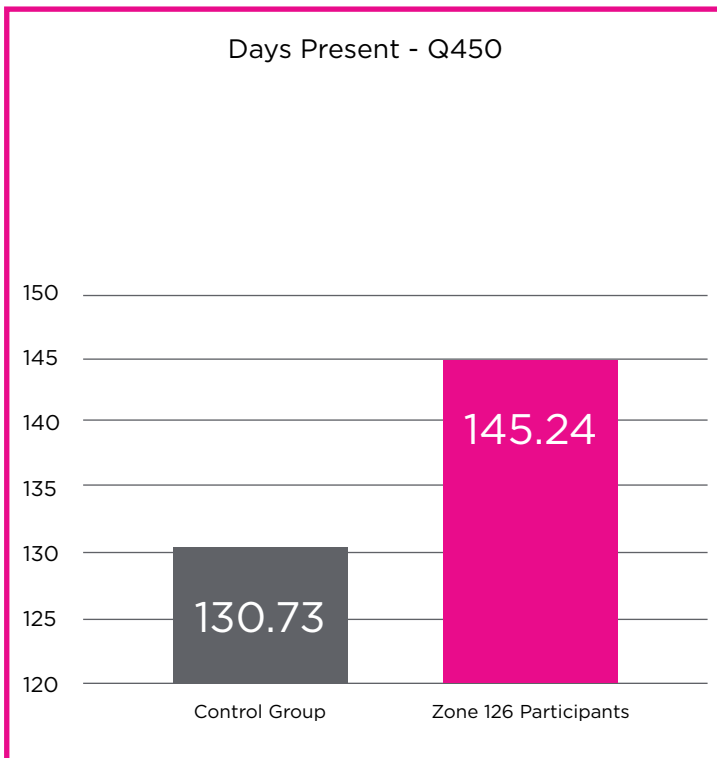
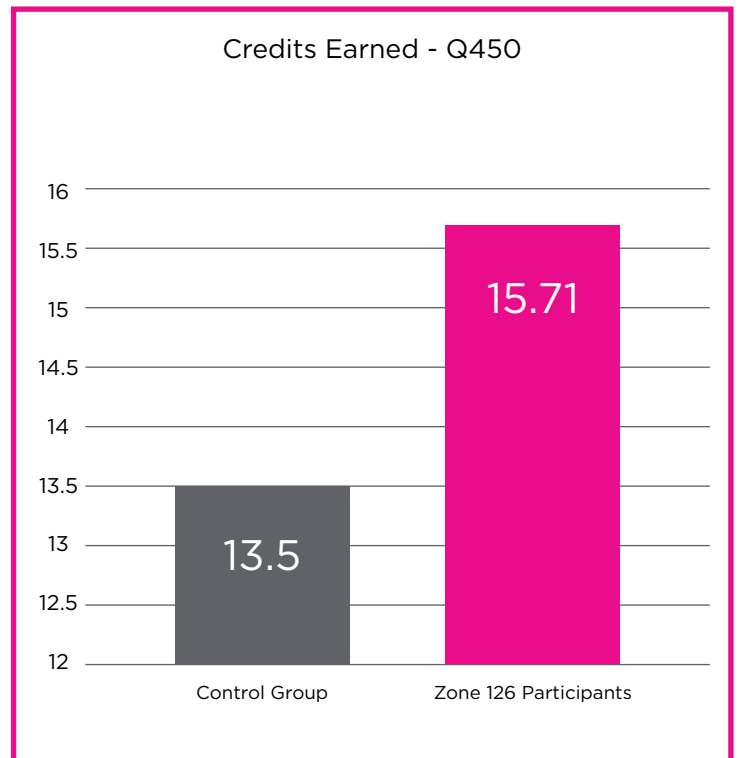


Chart 4: Zone 126 Participants versus Control Group on Credits Earned





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## About Owen Consulting Inc.

Owen Consulting Inc. (OC) helps clients make a difference for youth and families. Our clients include non-profit organizations, City and government agencies, corporations, and schools committed to helping people succeed. We provide evaluation services, technical assistance and training, curriculum development and fundraising services to clients nationwide. Visit [www.owenconsulting.com](http://www.owenconsulting.com) to learn more about how we can support organizations like yours.

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