

The Impact of the ACE Program on Regular School Attendance and Academic Achievement

EduCare's ACE (Achievement and Commitment to Excellence) Program is a comprehensive student success and character-building program designed to empower students to achieve excellence in personal, social, and academic pursuits. ACE is offered as a three-day student workshop, supported by parent involvement and teacher professional development, focused on the following socio-emotional learning elements:

- Character development: confidence-building, positive decision-making & constructive choices.
- Personal management: personal responsibility and accountability.
- Emotional intelligence: managing anger, fear, rejection, and peer pressure.
- Interpersonal skills: communication, conflict resolution, problem-solving, and team-building.

To determine the impact of participation in the ACE Program on school-related outcomes of students in grades 9-12, the EduCare Foundation commissioned an external evaluation company, ERC, to conduct trend analyses using data from fifteen Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) High Schools at which the ACE Program was offered during the 2015-16 academic year. Outcomes analyzed included percentages of students meeting LAUSD's district goal of a 96% regular school attendance rate, and percentages of students meeting or exceeding standards on the **California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) in English-language arts and math**. Outcomes of ACE Program participants were compared with outcomes of students who participated in the general after school program only, and outcomes of non-participating students, who attended the same schools but did not participate in either program. Schools included in this study were:

- Academy of Environmental and Social Policy
- Caser Chavez Social Justice Humanitas Academy
- Cesar Chavez Arts, Theater and Entertainment School
- Diego Rivera Communication and Technology School
- Esteban Torres East Los Angeles Performing Arts Magnet
- Esteban Torres East Los Angeles Renaissance Academy
- Esteban Torres Engineering and Technology Academy
- Esteban Torres Humanities Academy of Art and Technology
- Esteban Torres Social Justice Leadership Academy
- Jordan Senior High
- Lincoln Senior High
- Robert F Kennedy New Open World Academy
- San Fernando Senior High
- Sun Valley Senior High
- Washington Preparatory High School

Figure 1 shows that ACE Program participants were 5.3% more likely to attain a regular school day attendance of 96% than participants in the general after school program, and 8.7% more likely than non-after school program participants.

Figure 1.

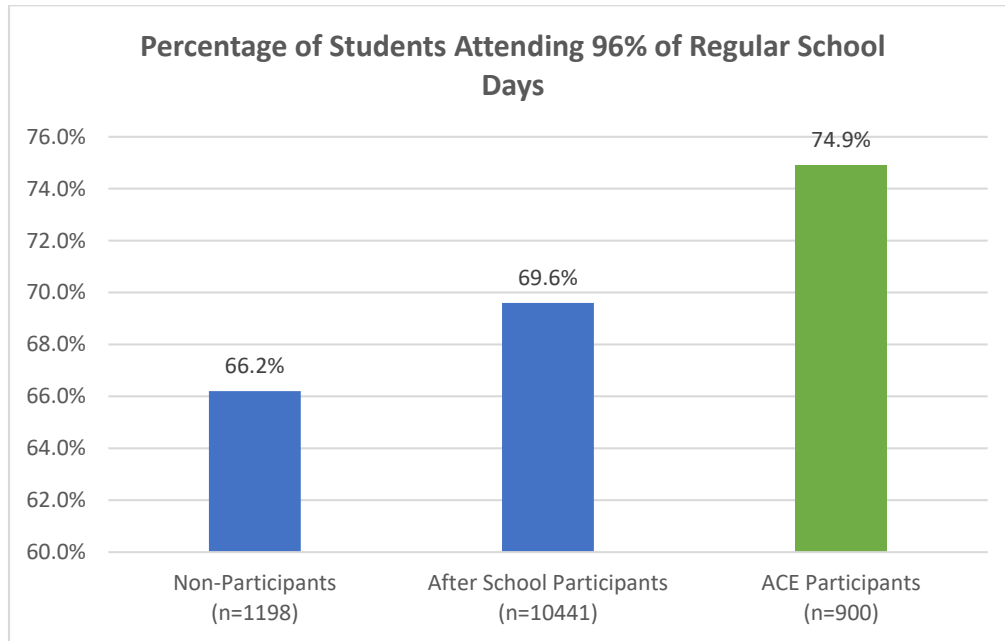


Figure 2 shows that ACE Program participants were 9.1% more likely to meet or exceed standards in English-language arts than participants in the general after school program, and 13.0% more likely than non-after school program participants.

Figure 2.

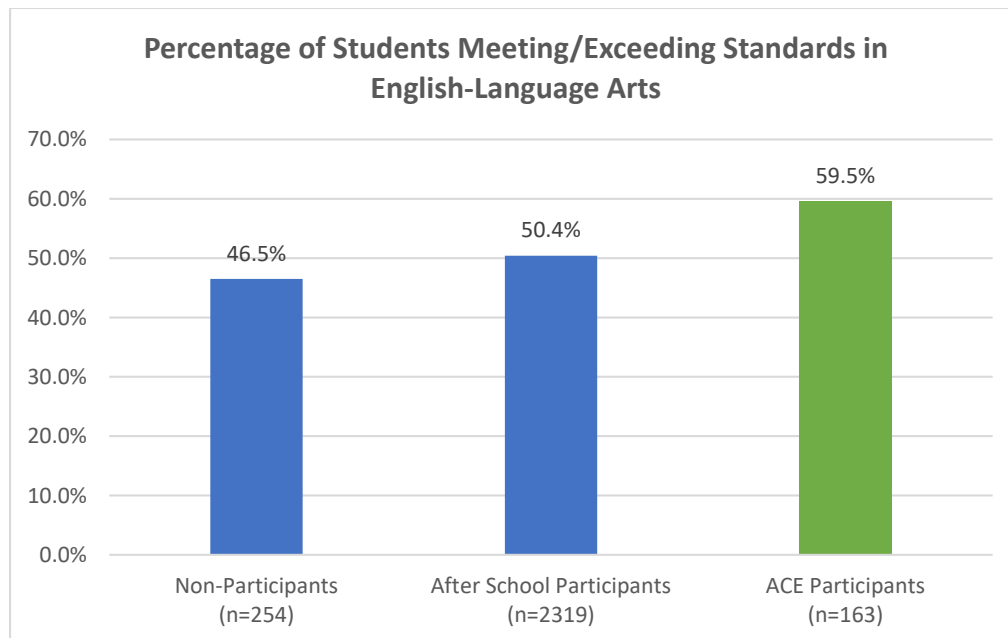
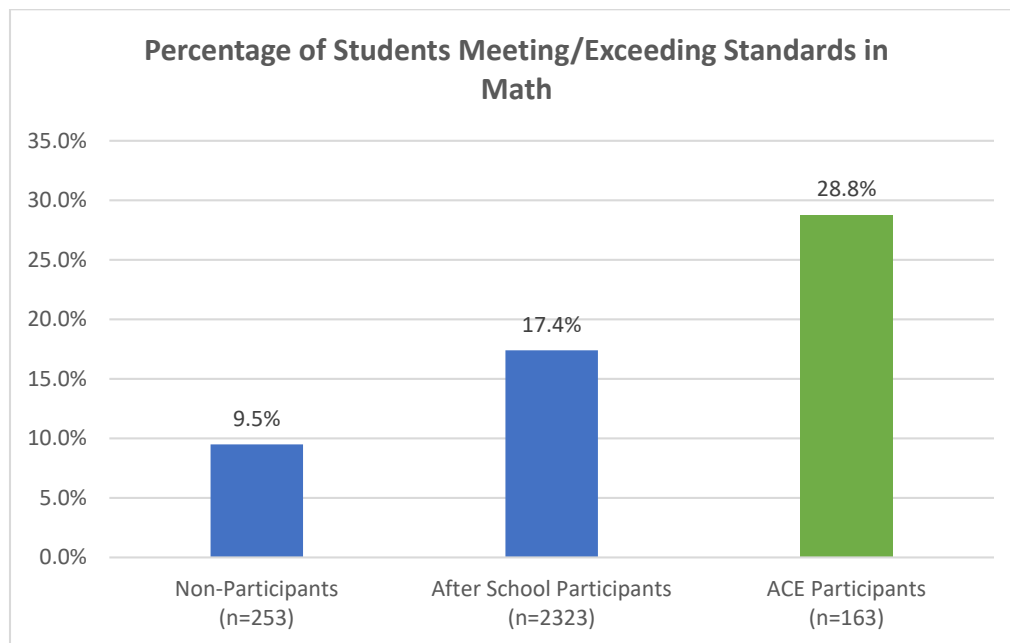


Figure 3 shows that ACE Program participants were 11.4% more likely to meet or exceed standards in math than participants in the general after school program, and 19.3% more likely than non-after school program participants.

Figure 3.



Conclusion

Percentages of ACE students who met LAUSD’s district goal of a 96% regular school attendance rate, and who met or exceeded standards on the CAASPP in English-language arts and math were greater than those for the general after school program participants and for students who attended neither ACE nor the after school program. **This trend data suggests that the ACE Program has a positive impact on students’ regular school attendance and academic achievement.** Positive differences between the outcomes of ACE participants and after school participants are especially noteworthy. Students who voluntarily participate in an after school program are more likely to be on track for better prosocial development than those who do not,¹ which increases their likelihood of favorable academic and school-related outcomes.²

¹ Gottfredson, D. C., Cross, A. B., & Soule, D. A. (2007). Distinguishing characteristics of effective and ineffective after-school programs to prevent delinquency and victimization. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 6(2), 289-318. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9133.2007.00437.x

² Jones, S. M., & Bouffard, S. M. (2012). Social policy report: Social and emotional learning in schools: From programs to strategies. *Sharing Child and Youth Development Knowledge*, 26(4). Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED540203.pdf>

About ERC

Established in 1999, ERC is a consulting firm experienced in program development, evaluation and research for school districts, county offices of education, community colleges and universities. Evaluation and reporting experience includes programs funded through federal, state and private sources. ERC evaluates after school programs at more than 400 school sites, operated by Fresno, Tulare, Kings and San Diego county offices of education; and, Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Ana, Clovis, Madera, Sanger Unified School Districts, and Merced Union High School District. ERC's lead evaluator, Stephen Price, has a doctorate in educational leadership, is experienced in experimental and quasi-experimental designs, data analysis using a variety of statistical software programs such as SPSS and HLM, survey construction, facilitation of focus groups, program observation, and interpretation of evaluation results for a broad spectrum of audiences.