



PILLAR

3

Integration with the Social Infrastructure

Part 1: The Role of Schools, the Heart of the Neighborhood

This brief focuses on how the district administration and school leadership and stakeholders in the pilot area have co-created core components of the Save for College Program with NYC Kids RISE and integrated it into each school community. Throughout this school district, key partners—including Community School **District 30** Community Superintendent Dr. Philip A. Composto and his office, the **Queens North Borough Citywide Office**, and **parent coordinators**, principals, school secretaries, teachers, and other school leadership at each school—are integrating this platform into their operations to promote their goals around post-secondary readiness, family empowerment, and family-community ties. This partnership will serve as a model as the Save for College Program expands into new school districts across New York City.

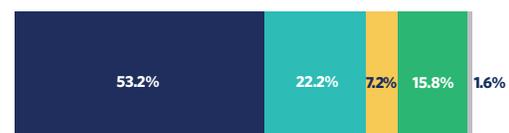
***Bolded words** are defined as Key Definitions at the end of this document

Facts about the Pilot School District

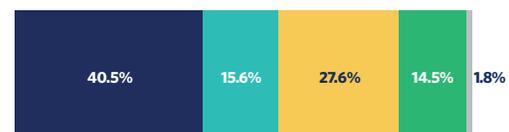
- Geographic School District 30 in Queens includes 39 public schools from Community School District 30, specific Citywide District 75 sites, and charter elementary schools in the neighborhoods of Astoria, Corona, East Elmhurst, Hunter’s Point, Jackson Heights, Long Island City, Sunnyside, and Woodside.
- In its first year, approximately 3,200 Kindergarten students were eligible to participate in the Save for College Program from these schools.
- The student population in Geographic School District 30 is highly diverse and the majority are students of color: 53.2% are Hispanic; 22.2% are Asian; 7.2% are Black; and 15.8% are White.¹ This compares to the overall students in New York City public schools, where 40.5% are Hispanic; 15.6% are Asian; 27.6% are Black and 14.5% are White.
- 21.5% of Students in Geographic School District 30 are English Language Learners with primary languages spoken at home including Spanish and Bangla. This is higher than New York City schools overall, where 13.5% are English Language Learners.¹
- Geographic District 30 students show similar rates of economic disadvantage when compared to New York City schools students overall, with 71.1% qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch or receiving HRA benefits, compared to 72.8% in New York City schools overall.²

Composition of Students, by Race/Ethnicity

Geographic School District 30



NYC Public Schools



■ Hispanic ■ Asian ■ Black ■ White ■ Other

SOURCE: NYC Department of Education

39 Pilot Schools co-created the Save for College Program with NYC Kids RISE and integrated its two-account platform into their everyday goals and operations.

Elementary schools are at the heart of every neighborhood and are a core component of the neighborhood **social infrastructure**, defined as “the physical places and organizations that shape the way people interact.”³ The Save for College Program is designed to support, leverage, and reinforce the neighborhood social infrastructure—the ecosystem of associations, organizations, and institutions in each neighborhood that impact a child and family’s likelihood of educational and economic

success. Other aspects of the social infrastructure besides schools, such as community organizations and small businesses, will be explored in separate briefs.

Over the course of the pilot phase, NYC Kids RISE and the founding school partners envisioned the opportunity for the Save for College Program to serve as a tool to enhance elementary schools’ college- and career-going culture, in alignment with the DOE’s **Equity and Excellence** Agenda and College Access for All initiative. This brief tells the story of how public schools in the pilot area co-created components of this initiative and integrated it into their operations to advance their goals.



Students celebrate the Save for College Program's very first 529 Day by participating in a college and career themed arts and crafts activity with other kindergarten classes. By integrating financial education directly into students' classrooms, the Save for College Program ensures that college-going expectations are nurtured from a young age.

Pilot Schools Co-created the Save for College Program with NYC Kids RISE.

The founding school- and district-level partners worked with NYC Kids RISE to launch and customize the platform in the way that best supports each school community in this highly diverse school district. Below are some examples of how school leadership and staff at every level informed and continue to inform the design and iteration of the Save for College Program.

Initial Feedback on Platform Design, Informational Materials, Messaging, and Account Options:

From May 2017 and through that summer, as the Save for College Program was being developed in preparation for the first pilot school year that fall, NYC Kids RISE met with key school stakeholders (typically the Principal and Parent Coordinator) at the initial 37 participating district and charter schools.⁴ At these meetings, the school leadership raised critical questions that they felt families at their school would have about the Program and gave feedback on how it could be best adapted to their school community. This feedback informed core elements of the platform's design, including informing the decision to offer a traditional bank savings account option as an alternative to a 529 investment account for families' own savings, as discussed in the Account Infrastructure brief.

In July 2017, Parent Coordinators, along with the Community School District 30 Superintendent Dr. Composto, participated in a feedback session to inform the Program's messaging and

informational materials, including how to explain financial concepts in accessible ways to families who may not be familiar with saving for college or investments. This feedback was incorporated directly into the Save for College Program's materials and website launched that fall. Meeting with District 75 stakeholders, including Superintendent Ketler Louissaint, offered key insights into a broader range of questions and concerns. For example, based on their feedback, the Program's materials more clearly emphasized the term "career training," in addition to "college," as eligible expenses for the scholarship money. NYC Kids RISE also added more specific information to its materials about how immigration status relates to a family's ability to participate in the Program. The materials were also revised to clarify the differences between the scholarship and savings components of the account infrastructure in a way that would be more accessible to the pilot area's diverse communities.

Building Ongoing Communities of Practice within and across Schools: Since the Program's launch, NYC Kids RISE has worked with DOE Central, the Superintendent's Office, and the Queens North Borough Citywide Office to foster **Communities of Practice** within each school and among stakeholders across the district for ongoing professional learning and feedback, best practice sharing, and iteration to further refine the model and make it work better for each school.

Since September 2017, NYC Kids RISE, DOE Central, and the Superintendent's Office have partnered to hold regular professional learning and feedback sessions for key school

The Inaugural Save for College Schools Conference

NYC Kids RISE and the Superintendent's Office hosted an inaugural conference in the summer of 2018 for the key school leadership at all participating elementary schools. This conference convened Principals and Parent Coordinators across the pilot schools, along with members of NYC Kids RISE team, the Queens North Borough Citywide Office, and the Chancellor's Office. 64 people, representing 33 of the initial 37 participating schools, attended. The goals of the convening included sharing accomplishments from the first year of the Save for College program; providing an opportunity and space for meaningful feedback; and creating concrete plans for achieving shared goals between schools and the Save for College Program in the second school year. Key takeaways from the conference included:

- Ways for NYC Kids RISE and the Save for College Program to continue building trust and program recognition with families;
- The need for a common language and greater awareness and information sharing across the school community, so that school staff and program participants can talk openly about the Save for College Program and spark conversations about saving and planning for college and career;
- The increased role teachers must take on to explain the program and build families' trust in the program with families;
- Ideas for creating a more regular schedule of Save for College Program events throughout the school year that enable greater predictability for schools and parents/guardians while also being customizable for the needs of each school; and
- Excitement around further integrating the platform and the foundational Building Block steps into schools' calendar and operations, including through school-wide campaigns and efforts.

Throughout the conference, attendees presented some of their learnings and best practices from the Program's first year. P.S. 85 Parent Coordinator Margareta Kalis, for example, shared her tips and tricks for getting high attendance at her Save for College Program workshops. P.S. 149 Principal Onalis Hernandez spoke about a movie night her school hosted for families at her school and surrounding schools in the neighborhood, which gave parents the opportunity to learn about their college savings options and have the time and space to open their own accounts while their children watched a movie in the auditorium. Other schools went on to replicate these and other best practices in the next school year.



When we launched the Save for College Program at P.S. 85, I knew that it would not necessarily be an easy lift to get families engaged with the Program amid so many other priorities and the busy schedules that elementary school families have. What we also knew, though, was how to get families in the door, how to throw a great event, and how to build trusting relationships with parents. I believe we have had such high engagement with the Program at P.S. 85 in large part because of the ability to customize Program outreach and events to meet the needs and interests of our families.

— MARGARETA KALIS, P.S. 85 Parent Coordinator



team members. This includes half-day sessions with Parent Coordinators approximately three times per year. As the lead on family engagement and empowerment at their school and the main point person for the Save for College Program, Parent Coordinators have played a central role in designing the platform and customizing it to best suit the parents/guardians and families they work with every day.



The commitment and creativity of the school principals, parent coordinators, teachers, secretaries, school aides, and other members of each school community across District 30 who have helped build this program has been impressive and inspiring. Through their close partnership with NYC Kids RISE, and with support from dedicated teams throughout the DOE, District 30's schools have set the standard for how to launch a new initiative, customize it to the needs of their communities, and advance equity and excellence. Though this work has not been simple, the hard work of these partners has created a model for districts throughout the NYC school system.

— **MARIANO GUZMAN**, *Senior Advisor to the First Deputy Chancellor and the alternate for the Chancellor on NYC Kids RISE's Board*



These sessions sought to equip Parent Coordinators to host events and workshops to introduce the Save for College Program, answer families' questions—including about some of the Program's more technical features—and support families to take the first step to activate their NYC Scholarship Account. In these sessions, Parent Coordinators share feedback with NYC Kids RISE and share best practices with one another. The ideas and feedback at these sessions directly contributed to everything from the Save for College Program's core messaging, to the flyer templates and customization process for events, to the evolution of how the platform has been integrated into schools' operations (as discussed further below).

Secretaries and Teachers also participated in annual professional learning sessions related to their specific operational roles in the Program. NYC Kids RISE and Superintendent Composto also present regularly at Principals meetings about the Save for College Program to gather feedback and share updates. In addition, as part of informal **School Community Teams** at each of their schools, Teachers, Secretaries, Principals, and other school staff hear regularly from NYC Kids RISE and the DOE about the Program, give feedback on design and implementation at the school and district-wide level, and support integration of the platform into their school operations.

Schools Integrated this Platform into their Everyday Goals and Operations to Enhance their College- and Career-going Culture.

Through this process of collaboration and co-creation, NYC Kids RISE, the DOE, and school partners increasingly saw the potential for how this platform could be integrated as a core component of each participating school's operations, rather than as an add-on or outside program. Through the pilot's three years, these partners developed, prototyped, and iterated on a model for using this platform to build and reinforce a college- and career-going culture that starts in kindergarten and continues throughout elementary school.

YEAR 1 — Meeting Families Where They Are through a School-based Organizing Strategy

Because Program enrollment happens through the school system—each fall, when a new class enrolls in kindergarten—schools are the first point of contact for a parent learning about the Save for College Program. For that reason, in the Program's first school year, NYC Kids RISE heavily invested in a school-based organizing strategy. NYC Kids RISE partnered with the Parent Coordinator and other staff at each school to attend key preexisting events, present and lead college savings workshops for kindergarten parents/guardians, and foster connections and trust with both the families and the school staff in each school community. That first year, NYC Kids RISE's community engagement team led more than 200 workshops and events for parents/guardians across the schools, with space, outreach, support, and feedback provided by school staff.

- **Meet the Teacher Nights:** Each school holds a Meet the Teacher Night at the beginning of the school year where parents/guardians can meet their children's teacher. In Fall 2017, in coordination with DOE central and each school, NYC Kids RISE staff attended the Meet the Teacher Night at the kindergarten class of each participating school. The team showed an [introductory video](#), presented the basics of the Save for College Program, and answered parents' and guardians' questions. NYC Kids RISE made note of every question asked during those events and incorporated

them into Q&A materials for use in the spring semester and future years. At a Parent Coordinator professional learning session later that year, participants practiced answering those questions so they could be equipped to respond directly to parent/guardians' most common questions and concerns. The most common questions asked included: does participating in the Save for College Program cost anything? What happens to my child's scholarship account if we leave a participating school before my child graduates from high school? What is a 529 account?

- **Parent-Teacher Conferences:** In addition to hosting more than 170 standalone workshops across the schools during the Spring 2018 semester to support kindergarten families to complete the **three Building Blocks**, all NYC Kids RISE staff also attended parent-teacher conferences in March and May at almost every participating school. This was based in part on feedback from Parent Coordinators and Principals that these events are ideal moments to speak with parents, give them information, and sit with them for 15 minutes or so before or after their conference to take the next step. Indeed, NYC Kids RISE found these events to be prime opportunities for parents to complete the first step in particular—activating their child's NYC Scholarship Account. During the first school year, out of all the hundreds of events held, approximately 12% of the 1500 families who activated their accounts that spring did so at or right after their school's parent-teacher conference.



At Citi, we have been proud to support NYC Kids RISE since its inception to help develop a community-driven model that engages with the families, schools and communities of District 30 through multilingual program materials, Neighborhood Ambassadors and collaboration with community based organizations.

— **GREG SCHIEFELBEIN**, Director, Citi Community Investing and Development, was one of the Save for College Program's first funders, Citi contributed \$750,000 to the Program's pilot phase to support community engagement, community partnerships, and accessibility of the Program's online and offline materials.



YEAR 2 — Prototyping Integrations into Schools' Operations through School Leadership and Customization

Informed by the learnings and feedback from the first year, the Save for College Program partners put together a plan for the second year for how information about the program and support for completing the three Building Blocks could be more deeply integrated within a school's everyday operations in ways that would work best for that school community.

To enable this, NYC Kids RISE worked with each school through the fall's professional learning sessions and Principals meetings to develop a **Customized School Plan** for how they would integrate the platform into their operations to support the goals of families 1) understanding the Program; 2) completing the three Building Blocks; and 3) beginning to save regularly, in line with their financial health. For each month, schools designated one event that NYC Kids RISE staff would attend to support families directly, choosing from a menu of workshops and offerings that they felt would be most effective for their school communities. They also designated at least one event or activity they would lead on their own each month to integrate the Program in some way, including at key milestones like Meet the Teacher Nights, Parent Teacher Conferences, and Kindergarten Graduations. Schools were encouraged to get creative with how they wanted to integrate the Program into their events. Below are two creative examples from Parent Coordinators at P.S. 234 and VOICE Charter School.

1. College Money Mondays at P.S. 234: At the beginning of each month, Jabari Brown, the Parent Coordinator from P.S. 234 hosts "College Money Mondays" to speak with families about the Save for College Program in the context of the school's overall push for college awareness and readiness. Each month, Jabari creates a new theme. For example, November focused on being thankful for college opportunities, while January focused on "getting ready" to view scholarship accounts.

The parents that attended the January session worked with Jabari to complete Building Block 1. During the sessions, parents shared the importance of saving early and depositing amounts that makes sense for them.



P.S. 112 Parent Coordinator, Yocasta Polanco, at an event during NYC Scholarship Week, explaining Building Block 2 to parents.

2. VOICE Charter School—Save for College Office Hours and Other Outreach Methods:

Frank Headley, the Principal of VOICE Charter School, set a goal of reaching 100% of his participating families to register to view and track their NYC Scholarship Accounts (Building Block 1) for 2018-19. To reach this goal, Jasmine Calderon, formerly the Parent Coordinator at VOICE, implemented two different ways of embedding Building Block 1 into the culture of the school: office hours and morning events.

For office hours, Jasmine advertised to families that she is available for one-on-one appointments to complete Building Block 1. She had set hours, as well flexible options to work around the schedule of parents, if their availability is outside of her set hours. She has also hosted events in the morning on the days that NYC Kids RISE has events in the evening to accommodate parents who are available during different times in the day. At one morning event in January 2019, Jasmine worked with seven parents to complete Building Block 1.

Jasmine has also done effective outreach for VOICE's office hours and events, using a variety of methods. She includes both the morning and afternoon sessions on her flyers and asks parents to RSVP via a tear-off slip. She puts these flyers in children's backpacks to take home, as well as posts about the sessions in the VOICE weekly newsletter.

- **NYC Scholarship Week:** To encourage and support participating schools to further integrate Building Block 1 (activating the NYC Scholarship Account) into school operations, NYC Kids RISE collaborated with the Community School District 30 Office to launch the first-ever “NYC Scholarship Week” in April 2018. During that week, schools each led at least one activity about college and career readiness that incorporated an opportunity for families to activate their scholarship accounts and earn the Building Block 1 reward. Twenty-seven schools led NYC Scholarship Week events, and families collectively earned more than \$1,200 in rewards toward their children’s NYC Scholarship Accounts during those events.

A family knowing their child already has a financial asset for higher education, starting in kindergarten, can be an impactful way to spark conversations and planning for the future and enhance college-going culture at each school. NYC Scholarship Week demonstrated the potential for coordinated, district-wide events and campaigns led by schools to encourage more families to activate and see their scholarship accounts.



Many of our families come from situations that make the idea of going to college seem next to impossible due to financial concerns. As a result, many of them believe that it may be better to consider other options for their children’s future. Other families are so used to the idea of not going to college that it becomes a mindset that is passed down to their children. What inspires me is that through the Save for College Program, we are starting to break down these walls and create a much higher sense of achievability when it comes to college expectations.

— **JABARI BROWN**, P.S. 234 Parent Coordinator



Integrating Student Financial Education Lessons into Classrooms

Starting in 2017, NYC Kids RISE worked with the NYC Department of Education and the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity to explore options for financial education curricula that could be customized to include the messaging and activities of the Save for College Program and align with educational standards and existing activities in the classroom.

This group selected the FDIC Money Smart for Young People K-2 curriculum for the kindergarten classes. Led by the Queens North Borough Citywide Office and with the support of teachers, the DOE customized the Money Smart lessons to align with kindergarten curricula, standards, and Save for College Program milestones. For first- and second-grade students, the DOE extended the curriculum extension lessons forward and deepened integrations with the existing “Passport

to Social Studies Curriculum” used in first- and second-grade classrooms, including the unit on Community Economics.

Each school year, the Queens North Borough Citywide Office has led professional learning sessions for the lead teachers in each grade level. Those teachers are then expected to turn-key to the other grade level teachers at their respective schools. Some of the ways the platform

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has been integrated into the curricula in the first two years include: specific lessons about what the NYC Scholarship Account is and what it means to have one; different ways to save money, including bank accounts and 529 accounts and; how much college costs and different kinds of college and career training (e.g. two-year, four-year, vocational).

Some teachers also had their students create invitations for the Save for College Program workshops to give to their parents, or notes thanking their parents for saving for their educational future. As the students get older and can learn more complex topics, NYC Kids RISE, the DOE, and financial empowerment partners will continue to collaborate on other opportunities to weave together the financial education and financial capability offerings for parents/guardians and their kids.

From the outset of this work, the DOE teams leading the development of the curriculum extension lessons with NYC Kids RISE took an iterative, formative approach. Rather than starting with a complete 12-year financial education plan, the Save for College Program team has developed new lessons each school year. This approach was taken for several reasons, including: 1) the unique diversity, size, and complexity of the NYC school system, which meant that any pre-existing curriculum would need to be customized to NYC's context; 2) a strong desire to make the lessons reflective of the particular communities in which it is being



Parent Coordinator, Erica Cacioppo, and attendees of a parent workshop in front of the P.S. 361 Save for College Program Money Tree.



P.S. 212 Parent Coordinator Olga Flores, "making it rain" at a parent workshop during NYC Scholarship Week in April 2019.

taught, such as photos from program events that were incorporated into the second-grade lessons about community economics; 3) the ability to incorporate feedback and lessons learned from previous years into the following year's curriculum extension lessons; and 4) the desire to align these lessons with other DOE initiatives like College Access for All, particularly as students get into middle and high school.

Rahjia Vandiver, Instructional Lead at the Queens North Borough Citywide Office and one of the team leaders of the group that wrote the kindergarten, first-grade, and second-grade Save for College Program Financial Education Curriculum Guides, said, "Creating the Save for College Program's financial education curriculum was an exciting new challenge for our team back in 2017. The DOE has not had centralized financial education resources of any kind in the recent past, so we had to get creative in bringing the right experts to the table, identifying the right resources, and creating a customized curriculum guide that would fit into the day-to-day of District 30 teachers' other lessons and priorities. What has made this work so powerful for teachers and students is that these lessons are linked to something real: the universal college savings accounts available to every kindergartner. The fact that these students already have savings for higher education, and that their community and city is investing in their success, increases the impact of these lessons not just for the student but for their entire family. We are proud of what our team has created with District 30's schools and NYC Kids RISE."

YEAR 3 — Solidifying a School Year Calendar and Organizing School Communities

Entering the third school year of the pilot phase, the Save for College Program partners co-created, prototyped, and customized ways to integrate this platform into schools' operations. Schools and the Superintendent's Office saw and experienced the alignment of the Program with their goals around post-secondary readiness. As a result, Superintendent Dr. Composto set the goal that Community School District 30 schools would support 100% of parents/guardians to activate their children's NYC Scholarship Accounts by the end of the school year. He saw this as a core component of their mission to create a college-going culture.

Anchor Events: At the second-annual Save for College Schools Conference in summer 2019, Dr. Composto announced the district's plan for how schools would integrate the Program. In addition to the financial education in classrooms and the other ways schools were already engaging families around college and career, a key part of the structure of the year would be six key family engagement "anchor events." Schools were charged with making scholarship account activation an integral part of these events. These six anchor events were designated

because they were found in the first two years to be the most effective moments for family engagement around the Program. The events are:

1. **September-October:** Meet the Teacher Nights / other introductory events
2. **October-November:** Back-to-School Workshop
3. **January:** NYC Scholarship Month—an evolution of the NYC Scholarship Week piloted in Year 2
4. **March:** Parent-Teacher Conferences
5. **May:** 529 Day (May 29th)
6. **June:** Kindergarten Graduations

Building Capacity across the School Community:

To support schools to more deeply integrate this platform and achieve the district's goal of reaching every parent/guardian to complete Building Block 1, NYC Kids RISE revised its professional learning and technical assistance model to build deeper capacity and strengthen communities of practices among the whole school community. In addition to continued regular professional learning sessions with Parent Coordinators, NYC Kids RISE also expanded its professional learning session offerings for secretaries and teachers. NYC Kids RISE also launched monthly conference



In August, at NYC Kids RISE's second-annual Save for College Schools Conference, it was my honor to unveil and kick off our 2019-20 Save for College Program Plan. Learning from our first two years of working with families, we have embraced a new organizing principle this year to allow for consistent programming throughout the academic year with technical support from NYC Kids RISE. Through professional learning sessions, toolkits, monthly conference calls, feedback sessions, and on-site training meetings, NYC Kids RISE and our schools have established true partnership at every turn.

— **DR. PHILIP A. COMPOSTO**, Community School District 30 Community Superintendent. Read more from Dr. Composto from the second-annual Save for College Schools Conference on the NYC Kids RISE blog.



calls for Parent Coordinators and any other school team member to receive more frequent updates, share best practices, and prepare for upcoming anchor events.

In addition, each Principal was asked to convene a “school community team” of at least five people in preparation for the four anchor events in the Spring semester. The team includes the Parent Coordinator and four or more other members of the school community, be it school staff, CBO partners, parent leaders/volunteers, PTA, School Leadership Team, etc. Each school’s team received on-site training from NYC Kids RISE in how to support families to activate their accounts and strategized on how to build momentum and reach their 100% goal throughout the Spring. NYC Kids RISE also presented to each school’s School Leadership Team (SLT) as another important cross-school body to build capacity and drive ongoing excitement and momentum.



Principals, Parent Coordinators, and other staff from pilot schools convened for the third annual Save for College Schools Conference. Held each summer, the Conference is an opportunity to review program learnings + outcomes and plan for the school year.

COVID-19 Pandemic — Using Networks of Mutual Support to Respond and Adapt to Unexpected Crises

Leveraging the Foundation of Trust to Respond and Adapt to Unexpected Crisis

In March 2020, New York City was unexpectedly and severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. NYC schools quickly shifted to a remote learning environment, and communities within the pilot area experienced some of the highest infection rates, placing them at the epicenter of the crises. The public health crises quickly became an economic and social one, as vast parts of the city’s economic and social infrastructure had to be shut down to limit the virus’s spread and keep people as safe as possible. Many families and individuals lost critical income, services, and loved ones. As this reality set in, NYC Kids RISE and its partners quickly moved to action, and were able to leverage the platform—the many relationships, networks, and trust that had been built through the pilot phase — to raise and distribute \$1.1 million in emergency cash relief, in collaboration with school partners, directly to participating families enrolled in the

Save for College Program. Thanks to funders including Robin Hood’s Relief Fund, the Gray Foundation, District Council 9 and the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT), and the Zegar Family Foundation, NYC Kids RISE developed and managed the distribution process while the schools played a pivotal role connecting directly with families to ensure they were able to claim the much-needed relief.

Beyond the Save for College Program’s work to increase community wealth and access to higher education, this effort served to underscore the platform as a tool to strengthen the social fabric and economic connections within participating communities. These kinds of connections, these networks of mutual support, form the foundation of neighborhood resiliency and recovery in times of crisis and uncertainty like the one we face now.

Metrics and Milestones

**Metrics as of June 30, 2020, unless indicated otherwise*

756 school staff and stakeholders attended a Save for College Program professional learning and feedback session

78 professional learning and feedback sessions held for school stakeholders

690 Save for College Program workshops and events hosted by participating schools

136 school-led Save for College Program events and activities were held

\$1.1M in emergency cash distributed to over 4900 unique families, between April and July 2020



92% of school stakeholders who attended a 2019-2020 professional learning and feedback session reported being equipped to support families to activate their NYC Scholarship Accounts

** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all NYC public schools transitioned to remote learning in March of 2020 for the remainder of the school year and through the end of the pilot phase (June 30, 2020), impacting metrics and milestones for the final quarter.*

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

The Save for College Program is rooted in the principle that each community is unique and must have ownership in shaping the way they interact with the platform. Schools are a critical part of the social infrastructure of each community. School Community Teams at each participating school co-created the Program and integrated it into their goals and operations, informing not only what the Save for College Program looks like the pilot area schools but how it will ultimately work in other districts throughout the city.

Going forward, NYC Kids RISE will continue and expand its work to foster learning communities and communities of practice

among different stakeholders, further building the capacity of schools to integrate this platform into their operations and advance their goals. This includes developing additional online resources and spaces for school partners to access information and resources about the Program, attend webinars and watch recordings, and share and upload best practices. NYC Kids RISE and the DOE also hope to work together to deepen the synergies and integrations between the Save for College Program and the DOE's College Access for All resources for middle and high schools, strengthening the continuum of college-going support from kindergarten to high school graduation.

Key Terms and Definitions

District 30: The School District in Queens that was selected as the pilot district for the Save for College Program. This includes the District 75 and charter schools located within District 30's geographic boundaries.

Queens North Borough Citywide

Office: Provides integrated supports to Community School Districts 24, 25, 26, 30 across areas of instruction, operations, student services including counseling, support to Multilingual Learners, and support to students with disabilities.

Parent Coordinator: Non-instructional school-based position that support NYC schools throughout the year in specific focus areas, including family engagement and empowerment. In the context of the Save for College Program, Parent Coordinators serve as College Savings Liaisons.

Social Infrastructure: Eric Klinenberg defines the social infrastructure of a neighborhood as “the physical places and organizations that shape the way people interact.”⁵ Schools are a central component of a neighborhood's social infrastructure.

Three Building Blocks: The three Building Blocks are the foundational steps that NYC Kids RISE encourages every family to take after their child has been automatically enrolled in the Save for College Program.

The three Building Blocks are: 1) Activating your child's NYC Scholarship Account on the online Savings Tracker platform; 2) Opening and connecting your own college savings account (either a 529 plan or bank account), and 3) Depositing at least \$5 into your connected account. Families receive a \$25 reward in their child's scholarship account for each of the three steps they complete by the end of the first semester in which their child is enrolled in the Program, which for most students is the least day of their kindergarten year.

College Savings Liaison (Parent Coordinators for most schools):

Serves as the primary Save for College Program point of contact and champion within their school.

School Community Teams: Principals, secretaries, teachers in participating grades, CBO partners, school aides, PTA/PA leaders, and others in the school community form a team to embed the goals of saving for college and career training into the schools' goals and operations.

School Leadership Teams: According to the DOE's website, “the School Leadership Team (SLT) is a group of people who develop educational policies for their school. They also make sure there are resources to support those policies.

There are three members of the school community who must be members of the SLT: 1) Principal; 2) Parent Association/Parent-Teacher Association President; and 3) United Federation of Teachers Chapter Leader. The other members are elected parents and staff members. The SLT must have an equal number of parents and staff.”

Customized School Plans: Plans that each participating school created in Year 2 of the pilot phase to integrate the Save for College Program's Building Blocks into their existing goals and operations.

Equity and Excellence: Values articulated by the NYC Schools Chancellor. According to the DOE, Equity means meeting every student where they are, and providing the support, resources, and high expectations for them to achieve at consistently high levels.

Community of Practice: A group of people that share a concern or passion for something about which they engage in a process of collective learning. In the context of the Save for College Program, school staff including parent coordinators, teachers, principals, school secretaries and others form a community of practice focused on using the Program to enhance their schools' college- and career-going culture.

Endnotes

- 1 NYC Department of Education.
- 2 District and Citywide data provided by NYC Department of Education through [NYC Open Data](#) and here: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/reports/doe-data-at-a-glance>
- 3 Klinenberg, Eric. *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life*. 2018.
- 4 At the beginning of the pilot phase, Community School District 30 had 37 schools, but through the course of the pilot phase two new schools were added to the district, for a total of 39 participating schools.
- 5 Klinenberg, Eric, *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life*, 2018.

The NYC Kids RISE Save for College Program is a scholarship and savings program administered by NYC Kids RISE, Inc., a nonprofit, in partnership with the NYC Department of Education and the City of New York. NYC Kids RISE is neither affiliated with, nor an authorized distributor of, New York's 529 College Savings Program and does not solicit investments or provide investment advice. The City of New York and the NYC Department of Education offer no endorsement or recommendation about, and do not control, own or are affiliated with the program manager for New York's 529 College Savings Program and any particular college savings or other investment vehicle, including ones which families may learn about through the Save for College Program.

The NYC Kids RISE Save for College Program

The NYC Kids RISE Save for College Program is a public-private-community partnership that provides families, schools, and communities with a way to work together to save for their children's futures.

It's a universal scholarship and savings platform designed to make college and career training more accessible and achievable for all NYC public school students—regardless of their family's income or immigration status. NYC Kids RISE, a nonprofit organization, manages the Save for College Program in partnership with the NYC Department of Education and the City of New York.

The Save for College Program launched a pilot phase in Fall 2017 to enroll three cohorts of students across 39 pilot schools in Queens. Following this pilot phase, NYC Kids RISE aims to scale the Save for College Program to serve every NYC public school.

Ultimately, the Save for College Program will become a universal, community driven wealth-building platform—embedded in homes, schools, and neighborhoods—to build assets and support expectations for every NYC public school student's educational future. This platform represents an investment in the financial and social resiliency of NYC's families and neighborhoods, and it provides one immediate way to drive financial assets into the hands of low-income communities and communities of color that have been systematically excluded from wealth-building opportunities.



Parent Coordinators and others members of the School Community Teams during a Save for College Program professional development session.

This platform comprises six components, or “pillars,” that enable the platform to achieve its goals. Throughout this pilot phase, a network of partners from throughout Queens and the city has laid the groundwork for each of these pillars. Together, we are at the beginning of building a new, neighborhood-based financial infrastructure that will have an impact on generations of New Yorkers.

Each of these briefs focuses on one of these pillars, highlighting the stories, accomplishments, and learnings from the first phase of this work. We hope these briefs will inform and inspire similar efforts in other contexts, while also celebrating and deepening the Save for College Community's work together going forward.