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## **New Report Details Positive Outcomes for City Connects Students, Schools**

### ***Findings show improved student achievement and reduced dropout rates***

**June 19, 2014—Chestnut Hill, MA**—A new report about the City Connects intervention demonstrates that addressing the out-of-school needs of students living in poverty has a significant and lasting impact on academic achievement. The report summarizes outcomes of the City Connects evaluation for academic year 2011-12 in 16 [Boston](#) and 5 [Springfield](#), MA, public elementary/K-8 schools.

Developed at [Boston College's Lynch School of Education](#) in 2001, City Connects is a student support intervention that addresses the non-academic factors that can limit academic achievement, especially for children living in poverty. The intervention identifies the strengths and needs of every child and connects each student to a tailored set of prevention, intervention, and enrichment services in the community and school.

Specifically, [The Impact of City Connects: Progress Report 2014](#) indicates that the City Connects intervention results in:

- **Reduced dropout**  
Students who attended City Connects elementary schools beginning in kindergarten have 50% [lower odds of dropping out](#) of high school than students never in a City Connects school.
- **Improved standardized test scores**  
Students who attended City Connects elementary schools [outperform their peers](#) in middle school and achieve close to state proficiency levels on both English and Math statewide standardized test scores (MCAS). City Connects students also scored [significantly higher](#) than comparison students on the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-9) scores in grades 3, 4, and 5 in Reading and Math.
- **School transformation**  
After one year of implementing City Connects in Springfield's persistently underperforming ("turnaround") elementary schools, the gap between these schools and other Springfield schools was significantly reduced in grades 3, 4, and 5 for both English and Math MCAS.

"The data in this report make clear that thoughtful strategies and rigorous practices that provide non-academic supports for students can make a significant difference toward closing the achievement gap for children living in poverty," said [Mary E. Walsh](#), Ph.D., Executive Director of City Connects and the Kearns Professor at the Boston College Lynch School of Education. "Schools have always made efforts to address students' out-of-school needs. This report shows that using evidence to inform practice, making effective use of community resources, and tailoring a plan for every student can alter trajectories for children. It has implications for changing the way school counselors, social workers, and other student support staff meet the needs of students."

The Progress Report also notes that students in City Connects elementary schools are, on average, [more likely to attend the highly selective secondary schools](#) in Boston known as "exam schools." The



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probability of attending an exam school increased with each additional year in a City Connects elementary school. Students also continue to show decreased likelihood of being chronically absent (missing 10% or more of school days) and being “kept back” (retained) in a grade.

The report reveals the large number of supports and services provided to students. Across the City Connects schools in Boston and Springfield, 9,500 students were linked to 55,400 services and enrichment opportunities provided by the district and 550 community partners. Surveys administered in academic year 2012-13 showed that across districts, [teachers](#), [principals](#), and [community partners](#) consistently reported high levels of satisfaction with City Connects.

City Connects’ work has been supported by the Barr Foundation, the Better Way Foundation, Boston College, Boston Public Schools, the Charles Hayden Foundation, the GHR Foundation, the Ludcke Foundation, the Mathile Family Foundation, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the New Balance Foundation, the Philanthropic Initiative, Springfield Public Schools, and Strategic Grant Partners.

#### **About [City Connects](#)**

Developed at Boston College’s Lynch School of Education in 2001, City Connects is an evidence-based system of student support that ensures that all children engage and learn in school by connecting each child with a tailored set of prevention, intervention, and enrichment services. By leveraging the resources of community agencies, City Connects works efficiently within the existing framework of schools and society to alleviate barriers to learning, especially those barriers posed by poverty. City Connects is active in 56 sites across public and private schools in Boston and Springfield, Mass.; New York City; and Dayton, Ohio. Read the City Connects blog at [blog.CityConnects.org](http://blog.CityConnects.org) or follow City Connects on Twitter [@CityConnects](https://twitter.com/CityConnects).

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