

FY 25/26



COLLEGE READINESS PROGRAM

REPORT OF FINDINGS

JULY 10, 2026



PREPARED BY:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary goal of Students Without Mothers, Inc. (SWM) is to provide scholarships for college-bound high school seniors who are without their mothers due to death or other unfortunate circumstances. The organization's ultimate goal is to reduce barriers to higher education, support students in overcoming personal challenges, and promote long-term academic and personal success. SWM provides guidance and support leading up to graduation and throughout students' college experience.

To achieve this goal, SWM provides life coaching, grief counseling, and scholarship opportunities for selected Metro-Atlanta high school students. Students are accepted into the college readiness program at the end of their junior year of high school. The program provides life skills development in critical thinking and self-sabotage, time management skills, effective communication and positive social engagement, peer pressure, employability skills, and financial literacy, along with mentoring, college application guidance and support, emotional support, and financial assistance.



Participants gain the tools and skills needed to make informed decisions and live as independently as possible. The program is dedicated to empowering students to overcome personal challenges, continue their education, and develop the skills necessary to lead healthy and productive lives.

The college readiness program is a year-long program occurring during students' senior year of high school. Participants participate in monthly life coaching sessions covering various topics prior to receiving financial support and assistance at the end of their senior year.

Feedback from participants indicated that the program was supportive and provided opportunities to bond and interact with peers. Their participation allowed them to develop knowledge related to college planning and life skills needed to express emotions and navigate life challenges.

A quasi-experimental pre/post evaluation design was utilized to assess changes in student knowledge and skills following participation in the program. A quantitative assessment was conducted using online pre- and post-surveys administered to youth participants.

The analysis revealed that students demonstrated the greatest increases from pre-test to post-test in the areas of college preparation, choosing a college, choosing a major, financial aid, the college admissions process, transition to college, critical thinking and self-sabotage, peer pressure, and financial literacy, with a ≥ 20 percentage-point increase/decrease. Moderate increases (5–19 percentage-point increase/decrease) were observed in employability skills, peer pressure, financial literacy, choosing a college, choosing a major, financial aid, and transition to college. Areas with limited or no increases included sections in effective communication and positive social engagement, employability skills, peer pressure, financial literacy, and choosing a major.

Overall, students indicated that the program exceeded their expectations and that the skills and knowledge gained through the sessions will support their transition to college and continued success beyond high school.

FINDINGS

The pre-survey was conducted to obtain baseline data from the 2024/25 SWM cohort for the college readiness program. The recipients continue to be taught from the Intangibles curriculum. The curriculum was taught over an 8-month period ending April 2026.

The pre-test survey was administered online to attendees prior to the first in-person session. Initially, the QR code was sent to the Project Coordinator. The QR code was displayed on the screen for students to scan and complete the survey. Once the survey was completed, they were asked to place their phones down.

The post-test survey was administered following the same process for online completion. To protect the confidentiality of each attendee, the evaluator was the only person who had access to the results from the survey. There was a 100% and 67% completion rate at pre and post-test, respectively, down from 25% for pre-test and up at 33% post-test for the previous 2024/2025 year.

The findings below represent data collected from high school surveys.

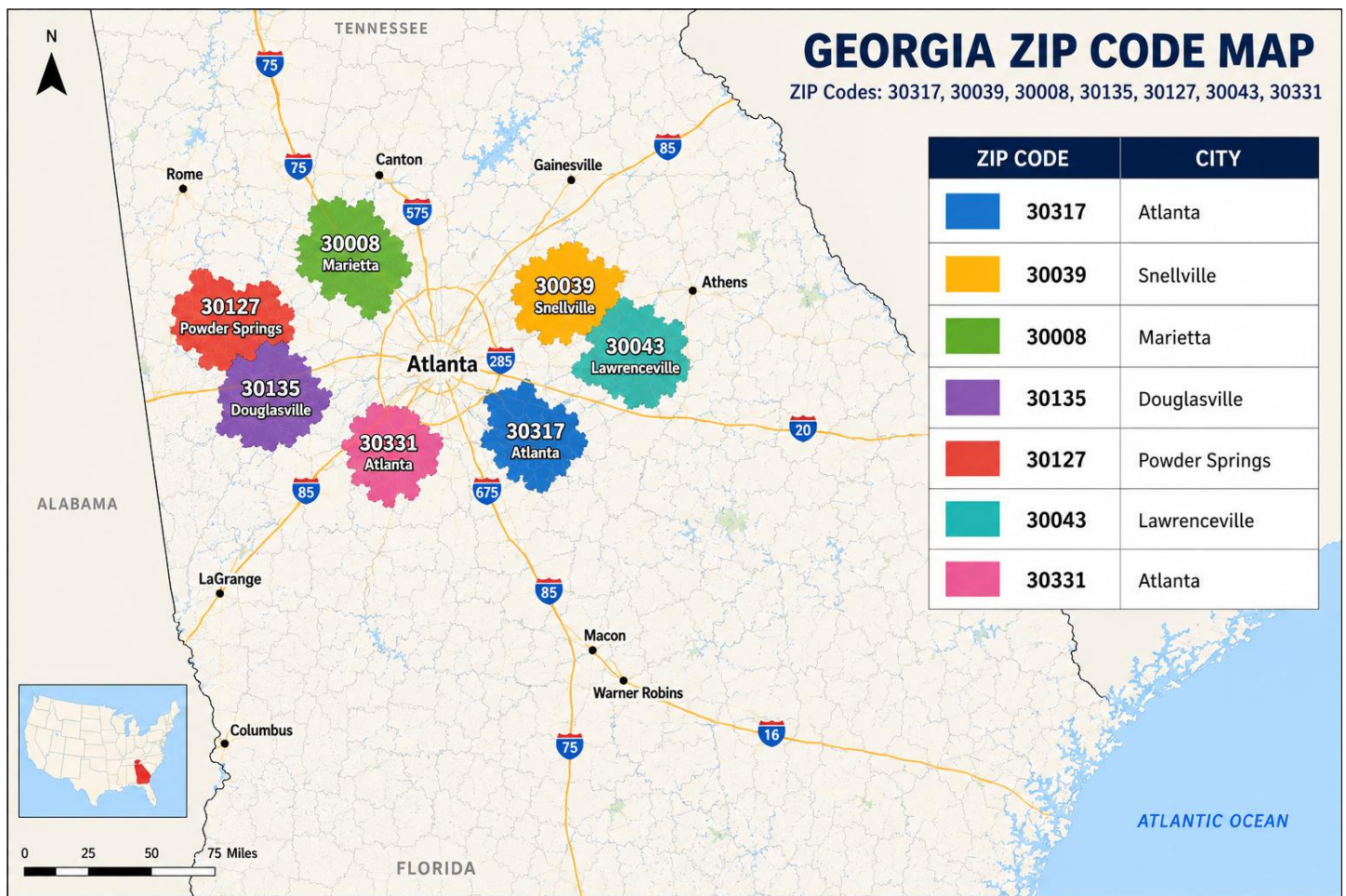


Demographics of Students

The table below represents the demographic profile by gender, age, race, and grade for each survey respondent. The sessions were a combination of virtual and in-person with 2 virtual and 3 in-person. There were 6 participants who completed the survey at pre-test and 8 participants at post-test.

The respondents live in varied locations and are from these zip codes: 30317 (2), 30039 (1), 30008 (1), 30135 (1), 30127 (1), 30043 (1), 30331 (1) zip codes. The map below represents the geographic distribution of participants in Georgia.

Figure 1: Map of participants by zip code



Based on the demographic profile of the respondents who completed the survey at post-test, 62% of the respondents were African American, (38%) were Caucasian; they were mostly female (75%) and 18 (75%) years old. At post-test, most (62%) of the respondents received a grade of A while the remaining 38% received a grade of B.

For more details about the profile of the respondents who completed the survey at pre and post-test, refer to the table below.

Table 1: Demographics of youth by gender, age, race, and grade

Demographics	Pre-Test (N=6)	Post Test (N=8)
Age	16 years old – 2(33%) 17 years old – 4(67%)	17 years old – 2(25%) 18 years old – 6(75%)
Gender	Male – 1(17%) Female – 5(83%)	Male – 2(25%) Female – 6(75%)
Grade's Received	A's (90-100) – 3(50%) B's (80-89) – 2(33%) C's (70-79) – 1(17%)	A's (90-100) – 5(62%) B's (80-89) – 3(38%)
Race	African American – 5(83%) Caucasian – 1(17%)	African American – 5(62%) Caucasian – 3(38%)



Findings from Student Surveys

The results below represent the summation of findings from respondents.

Table 2: Youth job status

Question:	Pre-Test (N=6)	Post-Test (N=8)
Do you currently have a job?		
a. Yes	4	5
b. No	2	3

Analysis: The results from the post-test indicate that 62% of the respondents had a job whereas 66% did at pre-test.

Intangibles Curriculum

The Intangibles curriculum was administered to the 2025/26 cohort, over a one year period, involving the areas of critical thinking & self-sabotage, time management skills, peer pressure, effective communication & positive social engagement, employability skills, choosing a college, choosing a major, financial aid, college admissions process, transition to college and financial literacy.

The findings below represent pre and post-test responses from the cohort in each area of the Intangibles Curriculum.

Table 3: Comparison of youth pre/post responses to critical thinking and self-sabotage

Critical Thinking & Self Sabotage											
Question	Pre-test (N=6)	*SA		A		NA Nor D		D		SD	
	Post-test (N=8)	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I can explain my thoughts regarding a situation decisively and logically.		50%	25%	50%	50%		12%		12%		
I am the only one who can solve my problems.		83%	38%				50%	17%			12%
I tend to avoid facing difficult problems and situations.		33%		16.6 %	63%	16.6 %	12%	16.6 %	12%	16.6 %	12.5 %
When I read information, I can understand the main idea and intention of the writer.		50%	25%	33%	50%	17%	25%				
I can pass an accurate judgement on a situation, and I can come to a conclusion with my thoughts.		67%	12%	33%	63%		25%				
I rarely put off doing things.		16.6 %	38%	16.6 %		50%		16.6 %	50%		12%

*Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Analysis: When asked questions about critical thinking and self-sabotage, 100% of the respondents at pre-test believed that they could explain their thoughts regarding a situation decisively and logically whereas (75%) believed so at post-test. Over 80% of respondents at pre-test believed that they are the only ones who can solve their problems while 38% believed so at post-test. There was a (13%) increase at post-test in the percentage of participants who tend to avoid facing difficult problems and situations. At pre-test, 83% of respondents believed that when reading information, they can understand the main idea and intention of the writer whereas 75% believed so at post-test. Similarly, 100% of respondents indicated that they could pass accurate judgement on a situation and come to a conclusion with their thoughts while 75% believed so at pre-test. 72% either disagreed or strongly disagreed at post-test that they rarely put off doing things while 16.6% indicated at pre-test.

Table 4: Comparison of youth pre/post responses to time management skills

Time Management Skills											
Question	Pre-test (N=6) Post-test (N=8)	*AA		O		S		R		N	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Do you feel in control of things?		33%	25%	50%	37.5 %	17%	37.5 %				
Do you plan well ahead?		17%	37.5 %	66%	25%	17%	37.5 %				
Do you manage your time effectively?		33%	38%	50%	25%	17%	25%		12%		

*Almost Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never

Analysis: When asked questions about time management skills, 83% of respondents almost always and often feel in control of things and plan well ahead whereas (62%) did so at post-test. Similarly, 83% of respondents almost always and often manage their time effectively whereas (63%) did so at post-test.

Table 5: Comparison of youth pre/post responses to effective communication and positive social engagement

Effective Communication & Positive Social Engagement											
Question	Pre-test (N=6) Post-test (N=8)	*AA		O		S		R		N	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I am comfortable making eye contact with others.		33%	63%	50%	12%	17%	25%				
I value my friendships.		100 %	88%		12%						
I like being around people.		50%	38%	17%	25%	33%	25%				12%
I have many friends.		33.3 %	38%	33.3 %	12%		25%	33.3 %	12%		13%
I know how to speak and write clearly so that others can understand my ideas and thoughts.		67%	38%	33%	38%		12%		12%		

*Almost Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never

Analysis: When asked questions about effective communication and positive social engagement, there were 75% of respondents who are almost always or often comfortable making eye contact with others while (25%) are sometimes comfortable. There was no difference at pre and post-test when asked if respondents value their friendships with 100% almost always and often doing so. At post-test, 63% almost always and often like being around people, 25% sometimes like being around people and 12% never likes being around people. Half (50%) of respondents have many friends almost always and often with 67% had them at pre-test. 76% almost always and often know how to speak and write clearly so that others can understand my ideas and thoughts while 100% believed so at pre-test.

Table 6: Comparison of youth pre/post responses to employability skills

Employability Skills											
Question	Pre-test (N=6) Post-test (N=8)	*AA		O		S		R		N	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I am confident in being interviewed for a job.		66%	63%	17%	37%	17%					
I know how to dress appropriately for a job interview.		67%	38%	33%	50%		12%				
I work well with other people.		83%	50%	17%	50%						
I know how to manage my time and set priorities.		67%	38%	33%	50%		12%				
I know how to dress appropriately for professional events.		83%	50%	17%	38%		12%				

*Almost Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never

Analysis: When asked questions about employability skills, 100% of respondents are almost always and often confident in being interviewed for a job whereas (83%) were pre-test. 88% know how to dress appropriately for a job interview with 100% indicating so at pre-test. There was no change in pre to post-test responses when asked if they work well with other people as 100% of respondents do so. 88% know how to manage their time and set priorities whereas 100% indicated so at pre-test. Similarly, 88% know how to dress appropriately for professional events whereas 100% indicated so at pre-test.

Table 7: Comparison of youth pre/post responses to peer pressure

Peer Pressure											
Question	Pre-test (N=6) Post-test (N=8)	*AA		O		S		R		N	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I get people to like and respect me by putting them first and doing things to please them.		33%	25%	33%	38%	17%	25%	17%	12%		
Being at odds with other people makes me feel uncomfortable and anxious.		33%	38%	50%	38%		12%	17%	12%		

I value other's opinions above my own.	17%	25%	33%	12%	33%	38%		12%	17%	12.5 %
I face peer pressure.		12%		12%	17%	25%	33%	38%	50%	12.5 %

*Almost Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never

Analysis: When asked questions about peer pressure, 63% of the respondents almost always and often get people to like and respect them by putting them first and doing things to please them, 25% sometimes do so whereas 12% rarely do so. There was a 7% reduction from pre to post-test in the percentage of respondents who believe that being at odds with other people makes them feel uncomfortable and anxious while 83% did so at pre-test and 76% at post-test. At post-test, 37% almost always and often value other's opinions above their own while 50% believed so at pre-test. 24% of respondents almost always and often face peer pressure, 25% do sometimes and 50% rarely or never do so.

Table 8. Comparison of youth pre/post responses to choosing a college

Choosing a College											
Question	Pre-test (N=6); Post-test (N=8)	*SA		A		NA Nor D		D		SD	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I need to have good grades to get into college.		50%	38%	33%	37.5 %	17%	25%				
I need to have a lot of money to get in college.		50%	12%		12.5 %	33%	75%	17%			
I need to attend a college with a good athletic team.		17%	12%		25%	33%	25%	33%		17%	38%
I need to apply to a prestigious college in order to get a good job.		17%	12%		12.5 %	50%	25%	17%	25%	16.6 %	25%
I need to choose a college that has my major.		67%	62%		38%	33%					

*Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Analysis: When asked questions about choosing a college, 75.5% of respondents believed that you needed good grades to get in college whereas 83% believed so at pre-test. There was a 49% reduction in the percentage of respondents from pre (50%) to post-test (24.5%) who either strongly agreed or agreed that you need to have a lot of money to get into college. At post-test, 37% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that you need to attend a college with a good athletic team while 17% did so at pre-test. Similarly, 50% of respondents at post-test either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they need to apply to a prestigious college in order to get a good job whereas (33.6%) disagreed at pre-test. All (100%) of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they need to choose a college that has their major while (67%) believed so at pre-test.

Table 9: Comparison of youth pre/post responses to choosing a major

Choosing a Major											
Question	Pre-test (N=6) Post-test (N=8)	*SA		A		N Nor D		D		SD	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I need to choose a major before attending college.		33%	38%	33.3 %	25%	33.3 %	37.5 %				
I am choosing a major based on the school subjects and topics I am truly passionate.		33%	50%	33.3 %	38%	33.3 %	12%				
I am choosing a major based on high income potential.		17%	12%		38%	66%		17%	25%		25%
I am choosing the same major as my friends.			12%		25%	17%		33%	12%	50%	50%

*Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Analysis: When asked about choosing a major, (63%) of respondents believe they need to choose a major before attending college while (66.3%) believed so at pre-test. 83% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they would choose a major based on the school subjects and topics that they are passionate about while 66.3% would at pre-test. At post-test, 50% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they would choose a major based on high income potential whereas 17% agreed at pre-test. 62% of respondents would not choose the same major as their friends while 83% would not at pre-test.

Table 10: Comparison of youth pre/post responses to financial aid

Financial Aid											
Question	Pre-test (N=6) Post-test (N=8)	*SA		A		N Nor D		D		SD	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
It is easy to get financial aid.				16.6 %	50%	50%	38%	17%	12%	17%	
I can get financial aid at any time.			12%	33%	38%	50%	25%		25%		
Financial aid is only for people who have good grades.			25%	33.3 %	12%	33.3 %	12%	33.3 %	38%		12.5 %
Financial aid is only for people who are athletes.			12%	17%	12%	17%	12.5 %	50%	25%	16.6 %	38%
I can only get a scholarship if I have good grades.		17%	12%	17%		33%	38%	17%	25%	16.6 %	25%

*Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Analysis: When asked about their knowledge of financial aid, (50%) of respondents agreed that it is easy to get financial aid while (16.6%) believed so at pre-test. At post-test, there were (50%) of respondents who either strongly agreed or agreed that they can get financial aid at any time whereas (33%) believed so at pre-test. 50% either strongly disagreed or disagreed that financial aid is only for

people who have good grades whereas (33.3%) did not believe so at pre-test. 63% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that financial aid is only for people who are athletes whereas 17% agreed at pre-test. 50% either strongly disagreed or disagreed that they can only get a scholarship if they have good grades whereas 33.6% did not believe so at pre-test.

Table 11: Comparison of youth pre/post responses to college admissions process

College Admissions Process											
Question	Pre-test (N=6) Post-test (N=8)	*SA		A		N Nor D		D		SD	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I need to take the SAT/ACT to get into college.		33%	12%	50%	38%		25%	17%	12%		12%
I can apply early to get into college.		33%	38%	67%	37.5 %		25%				
I know what is needed to apply for college.		33%	38%	33%	50%		12%	17%		17%	
I know which forms to complete to apply for college.		17%	38%		62%	33%		33%		16.6 %	

*Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Analysis: When asked about their knowledge of the college admissions process, (50%) of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they need to take the SAT/ACT to get into college whereas 83% believed so at pre-test. 75.5% of respondents believed that they could apply early to get into college while 100% believed so at pre-test. Conversely, 88% of respondents, at post-test, believed that they that know what is needed to apply for college while 66% believed so at pre-test. All (100%) either strongly agreed or agreed that they know which forms to complete to apply for college while 17% believed so at pre-test.

Table 12: Comparison of youth pre/post responses to transition to college

Transition to College											
Question	Pre-test (N=6) Post-test (N=8)	*SA		A		N Nor D		D		SD	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I know what it takes to get into college.		50%	25%	50%	63%		12%				
I know what my major will be in college.		50%	38%	17%	38%	17%	12%	16.6 %	12%		
I know where I want to go to college.		50%	38%		50%	33%	12%	17%			
I am ready to go to college.		33%	38%	33%	50%	17%		17%	12%		

*Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Analysis: When asked about their knowledge of transitioning to college, (88%) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they know what it takes to get into college whereas 100% believed so at pre-test. 76% believed that they know what their major will be in college while 67% did at pre-test.

At post-test, 88% know where they want to go to college while 50% did at pre-test. Similarly, 88% are ready to go to college whereas 66% believed so at pre-test.

Table 13: Comparison of youth pre/post responses to financial literacy

Financial Literacy											
Question	Pre-test (N=6) Post-test (N=8)	*SA		A		NA Nor D		D		SD	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I think it's important to save money for my education and my future.		67%	50%	33%	50%						
I spend money on things that aren't important to me because my friends are doing it.				17%	38%		25%	50%		33%	37.5 %
I can save money for things I really want.		50%	25%	50%	63%		12%				
My credit rating will not be affected by how much I charge on my credit cards.				17%	38%	50%	25%	17%		16.6 %	37.5 %
I think it's important to save money for things I want to buy or have.		83%	38%		50%		12%				

*Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Analysis: When asked about their knowledge regarding matters of finance, there was no change from pre and post-test findings with (100%) of respondents who think it is important to save money for their education and future. At post-test, there were (37.5%) of respondents who strongly disagreed that they spend money on things that aren't important to them because their friends are doing it whereas (83%) of respondents did not at pre-test. 88% of respondents believe they can save money for things they really want with (100%) believing so at pre-test. At post-test, 37.5% of respondents strongly

disagreed that their credit rating will not be affected by how much is being charged on their credit cards whereas (33.6%) did not believe so at



pre-test. 88% of respondents think it is important to save money for things they want to buy or have while (83%) of respondents did at pre-test.

COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

What do you think about this program?

Most, if not all, of the participants indicated that they have enjoyed the program and found it to include a supportive group of people along with critical resources. It was indicated that the program provides them with opportunities and exposure that they would not have otherwise received.

Quotes from Participants on Thoughts about the Program:

"I think it's really been helpful and has opened my eyes to things that I have not been privy to prior."

"This program is very good, providing students with resources and help whenever they need it, even if they think they don't."

"I love this program; the opportunities are great!"

Thinking back to the start of the program, did you get what you expected out of it? If so, in what ways did the program meet your expectations? If not, why?

All of the participants indicated that the program had met and, in most cases, exceeded their expectations. They indicated that the program has been instrumental in their preparation for college. It is deemed by participants as a supportive environment where they feel safe to bond with other students their age and learn how to process their emotions and ask for help if needed. They believe that the skills learned will be beneficial for them later in life.

Quotes from Participants about Whether Expectations were Met:

“This program has lived up to more than my expectations.”

“Yes, I got what I expected out of the program. It has helped me feel more ready for college and understand my needs to prepare for my future.”

“Yes, this program has become a great support system.”

All of the participants were complimentary about the program with a particular focus on the supportive environment and helping them prepare for college. They indicated that the program had exceeded their expectations and provided them with tools to utilize for a successful transition into adulthood.



CONCLUSION

Pre/post surveys were conducted to assess if the students increased knowledge of life skills in the following areas: critical thinking & self-sabotage, effective communication & positive social engagement, employability skills, financial literacy, choosing a college, choosing a major, financial aid, college admissions process, and transition to college, and peer pressure. Ultimately, the data from these findings will be used for programmatic and sustainability efforts.

According to analysis of the data, the college readiness program has provided the students with the skills needed towards a successful matriculation into college. As a result of learning these skills, the students are equipped to apply and enroll in college and know what is required to obtain access to financial aid.



When it comes to the attainment of life skills in the areas of critical thinking and self-sabotage, effective communication & positive social engagement and peer pressure, they have obtained the knowledge in social engagement, the importance of community, conflict resolution, and interaction with other people.

In the area of employability skills, the students indicated that their level of confidence increased when applying for opportunities. Moreover, students have acquired fundamental knowledge in financial literacy and planning for their financial wellbeing. However, students were most unsure about setting priorities and managing time effectively.

To better understand what aspects of the curriculum where the impact was greatest, the areas of each course were ranked according to largest, moderate and with little to no increase. Those areas where continued focus may be needed were discussed later in this section.

The areas ranked according to percentage point increase can be found below.

Areas Demonstrating the Largest Increase (≥ 20 percentage-point increase/decrease)

The areas demonstrating the largest increases were items with the largest percentage in favorable responses from pre- to post-test.

The areas demonstrating the largest increases from pre to posttest findings involved preparation for college which included courses in choosing a college, choosing a major, financial aid, college admissions process, and transition to college. Other areas of greatest percentage point increase were in critical thinking and self-sabotage, peer pressure, and financial literacy.

Choosing a College

When choosing a college, there was a 33% increase in the percentage of participants who need to choose a college that has their major; 25% increase who disagreed or strongly disagreed that you need to apply to a prestigious college in order to get a good job; 20% who agreed or strongly agreed that you need to attend a college with a good athletic team. Conversely, there was a 25.5% decrease in the percentage who believed that you need to have a lot of money to get into college.

Choosing a Major

In choosing a major, there was a 33% increase in the percentage of participants who would choose a major based on high income potential. Conversely, there was a 21% decrease in the percentage who would choose the same major as their friends.

Financial Aid

As it relates to financial aid, there was a 46% increase in the percentage of students who disagreed or strongly disagreed that their credit rating will not be affected by how much I charge on my credit cards and a 33.4% increase in those who believed that it is easy to get financial aid.

College Admissions Process

For the college admissions process, there was an 83% increase in the percentage of students who know which forms to complete to apply for college and a 22% increase in the percentage of students who know what is needed to apply for college. Conversely, there was a 33% decrease in the percentage of students who indicated that they need to take the SAT/ACT to get into college.

Transition to College

For the transition to college course, there was a 38% increase in the percentage of students who know where they want to go to college and a 22% increase in the percentage of participants who are ready to go to college.

Critical Thinking & Self Sabotage

In the area of critical thinking and self-sabotage, there was a 55.4% increase in the percentage of students who rarely put off doing things. Conversely, there was a 42% decrease in the percentage of students who believe they are the only ones who can solve their problems.

Peer Pressure

In the area of peer pressure, there was a 32.5% decrease in the percentage of students who face peer pressure.

Financial Literacy

When it comes to financial literacy, there was a 45.5% decrease in the percentage of students who indicated that they spend money on things that aren't important to them because their friends are doing it.



Areas Demonstrating Moderate Increase (≥5 - 19 percentage-point increase/decrease)

The areas which demonstrated moderate increases were ranked between a 5% to 19% percentage point increase or decrease. These areas included employability skills, peer pressure, financial literacy, choosing a college, choosing a major, financial aid, and transition to college.

Employability Skills

In the area of employability skills, there was a 17% increase in the percentage of participants who were confident in being interviewed for a job. Conversely, there was a 12% decrease in the

percentage of participants who know how to dress appropriately for professional events and for a job interview.

Peer Pressure

In the area of peer pressure, there was a 13% decrease in the percentage of students who value other's opinions above their own and a 7% decline in the percentage of students who believe that being at odds with other people makes them feel uncomfortable and anxious.

Financial Literacy

When it comes to financial literacy, there was a 5% increase in the percentage of students who think it's important to save money for things they want to buy or have. Moreover, there was a 45.5% decrease in the percentage of students who indicated that they spend money on things that aren't important to them because their friends are doing it.

Choosing a College

When choosing a college, there was a 7.5% decline in the percentage who believed that you needed good grades to get in college.

Choosing a Major

In the area of choosing a major, there was a 16.7% increase in individuals who would choose a major based on the school subjects and topics that they are passionate about.

Financial Aid

As it relates to financial aid, there was a 17% increase in the percentage of students who believed that they could get financial aid at any time and a 17.2% increase in those individuals who disagreed or strongly disagreed that financial aid is only for people who have good grades. Moreover, there was a 17% increase in those who either disagreed or strongly disagreed that financial aid is only for people who are athletes and a 16.4% increase who either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they can only get a scholarship if they have good grades.

Transition to College

For the transition to college course, there was 9% increase in the percentage of participants who know what their major will be in college.

Areas with Limited or No Increase (<5 percentage-point change)

Although several items demonstrated meaningful improvement following participation in the program, areas with limited change were examined to identify topics that may benefit from additional emphasis, reinforcement, or targeted strategies in future programming. It should be noted that limited change may indicate areas where participants entered with higher baseline knowledge/skills or where additional reinforcement may be needed.

The areas demonstrating little to no increase included effective communication and positive social engagement, employability skills, peer pressure, financial literacy, and choosing a major.

Effective Communication & Positive Social Engagement

In the area of effective communication and positive social engagement, all (100%) of the participants value their friendships with no difference between pre and post findings.

Employability Skills

In the area of employability skills, all (100%) of students indicated that they work well with other people.

Financial Literacy

When it comes to financial literacy, 100% of students think it's important to save money for their education and their future.



Peer Pressure

In the area of peer pressure, there was a 3% decrease in the percentage of students who get people to like and respect them by putting them first and doing things to please them.

Choosing a Major

In the area of choosing a major, there was a 0.3% decrease in the percentage of students who believe they need to choose a major before attending college.

Areas for Continued Focus

In the area for continued focus, there were items where favorable responses received low percentage point increase or decrease at post-test, items where there was no meaningful shift, and items where responses require greater emphasis.

The areas identified for continued focus included sections in time management skills, critical thinking and self-sabotage, effective communication and positive social engagement, employability skills, college admissions process, transition to college, and financial literacy.

Time Management Skills

For the time management skills course, there was a 21% decrease in the percentage of students who feel in control of things and who plan well ahead. Similarly, there was a 20% decline in the percentage of participants who manage their time effectively.

Critical Thinking & Self Sabotage

In the area of critical thinking and self-sabotage, there was a 25% decrease in the percentage of students who can explain their thoughts regarding a situation decisively and logically and who can pass an accurate judgement on a situation and come to a conclusion with their thoughts. Moreover, there was a 13.4% increase in the percentage of students who tend to avoid facing difficult problems and situations and an 8% decrease in the percentage who when reading information, can understand the main idea and intention of the writer.

Effective Communication & Positive Social Engagement

In the area of effective communication and positive social engagement, there was an 8% decrease in the percentage of students who are comfortable making eye contact with others; a 3% decrease in the percentage who like being around people; a 17% decrease in the percentage who have many friends; and a 24% decline in the percentage who know how to speak and write clearly so that others can understand their ideas and thoughts.

Employability Skills

In the area of employability skills, there was a 12% decrease in the percentage of students who know how to manage their time and set priorities.

College Admissions Process

For the college admissions process, there was a 24.5% decrease in the percentage of students who believe that you can apply early to get into college.

Transition to College

For the transition to college course, there was a 12% decrease in the percentage of students who know what it takes to get into college.

Financial Literacy

When it comes to financial literacy, there was a 22% decrease in the percentage of students who believe that they can save money for things they really want with a 21% increase in the percentage who believe that their credit rating will not be affected by how much they charge on their credit cards.



Overall, the findings indicate that participation in the college readiness program contributed to increased knowledge and skills needed to support college planning and successful transition beyond high school. Students demonstrated the greatest increase in the areas of choosing a college, choosing a major, financial aid, the college admissions process, transition to college, critical thinking and self-sabotage, peer pressure, and financial literacy.

Participants also expressed appreciation for the program, particularly the supportive environment, peer interactions, and the opportunity to develop skills needed for success in college and beyond.

Areas identified for continued focus included time management, critical thinking and self-sabotage, effective communication and positive social engagement, employability skills, college admissions, transition to college, and financial literacy. Continued emphasis on managing time effectively, setting priorities, strengthening verbal and written communication skills, and building financial literacy—particularly related to credit management—may further support students’ successful transition to college and future career goals. Continued engagement with parents/guardians is also recommended to strengthen support and participation throughout the college readiness process.

REFERENCE

OpenAI. (2026, June 29). *ChatGPT response to user prompt: Georgia ZIP code map and color-coded visualization* [Large language model].

https://chatgpt.com/s/m_6a54db4be21c819186e09e06420bc03b

Appendix A

Student Survey Instruments

To view a copy of the pre/post survey, click on the links below.

Pre-test Student Survey:

<https://forms.gle/uag6jSgUfScENEck9>

Post-test Student Survey:

<https://forms.gle/BqsMnAsFiWVwqqwX6>