

HELPING HANDS RESULTS 2007-08: GRADES 3-8

(Revised July 2009, see page 4)

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Question 1: What need does Helping Hands address?

In 1987, the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) began the Helping Hands program in response to research indicating Black/African-American males' academic achievement lagged behind other ethnic subgroups. Helping Hands targets Black/African American male students enrolled in grades 3-8 who are academically marginal. In 2007-08, Helping Hands served 419 students. Results are based on the 385 students in grades 3-8 with available data.

Question 2: What are the program goals and strategies?

The mission of the Helping Hands program is to provide services to African-American male students to promote personal development and academic achievement. Helping Hands has academic, behavioral, and attendance goals. The program goals are to increase the percentage of students who are academically successful, decrease the number of discipline referrals, and increase the percentage of students with daily attendance.

A key program strategy is to match students with Personal Models (African-American male educators) or Community Models (African-American males within the community who demonstrate strong character) who serve as mentor/tutors to Helping Hands participants.

Mentors and students meet weekly to promote students' organizational skills, study habits, test-taking strategies, character education, and leadership skills. (See attachment for further program information).

Major Findings

- **Expenditures:** In 2007-08 Helping Hands spent \$171,744.79 (approximately \$410 per student).
- **Students Served:** 94% of students served were Black/African American and nearly three-fourths qualified for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL).
- **Achievement:** Overall, findings suggest that Helping Hands did not have a positive impact on academic success as measured by EOG proficiency or growth. At the middle school level, a higher percentage of Helping Hands participants made growth than did Black/African American males, but the reverse was true at the elementary school level. Differences were not statistically significant with the exception of growth scores in mathematics for students in grade 8.
- **Suspensions:** Helping Hands appeared to have a positive impact on suspension trends relative to Black/African American male students. Helping Hands students had smaller increases in the percentage of students suspended and positive trends in suspension incidents.
- **Attendance:** Helping Hands did not appear to impact overall attendance, with high attendance (93%) before and after the 2007-08 year. On a positive note those with excessive absences (10 or more days), patterns over one year were more positive than for Black/African American males.
- **Recommendations:** Review approaches used for academic support in consultation with Curriculum and Instruction Department staff. Individualize goals for students based on student needs. Change goal from overall attendance improvement to improvement for those with excessive absences.

Impact Evaluation reports provide basic evaluative outcome information on standard indicators. These reports may suggest a need for further study of the efficacy of a program.

Question 3: What resources are needed to implement the program?

In 2007-08 the Helping Hands program spent \$171,744.79 (\$151,913.05 in funds budgeted specifically to the Helping Hands program and an additional \$19,831.74 from the Prevention Services budget). These funds served 419 students in grades K-12 at a cost of approximately \$410 per student. Table 1 displays the 2007-08 Helping Hands expenditures by each of the major expense categories. The largest expense in 2007-08 was for End-of-Grade (EOG) tutors, which included tutor/mentors pay for WCPSS employees.

**Table 1
Helping Hands 2007-08 Expenditures**

Expense Category	Amount
Field Trips	22,309.35
Contracted Services	17,097.50
Workshop Expenses/Allowable Travel	4,595.53
Printing & Binding	2,291.04
Travel/Mileage Expenses	3,730.85
Supplies	16,176.96
End-of-Grade Tutors	79,890.00
Food	13,271.35
Other Expenses	12,382.21
Total Expenditure	\$171,744.79

Note: Non-WCPSS employees are paid through contracted services' funds.
 Data Source: WCPSS 2007-08 Oracle report and budget information from program staff.

Question 4: What are the characteristics of the students served?

In 2007-08, Helping Hands served 419 students in grades K-12. Although the program is focused on servicing students in grades 3-8, in 2007-08, 25 students were served outside of these targeted grades. Three students were served in K-2 and 22 students at the high school level; however, due to the small number of students at these grade levels and the program's focus on grades 3-8 these students are not included in this evaluation. Thus, the evaluation results are based on the 385 students in grades 3-8 with data available for analysis.

The population served by Helping Hands in 2007-08 (grades 3-8) differed demographically from the overall WCPSS student population. Notable differences include:

- While 94% of students served by Helping Hands in grades 3-8 were Black/African American males, Black/African American males comprise 27% of the overall WCPSS student population.
- Of the remaining 6% (23 students) served by Helping Hands in grades 3-8, 19 were Multiracial, three were Hispanic/Latino, and one student was Asian.

- 72% of students served by Helping Hands in grades 3-8 qualified for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL), compared to 31% of WCPSS students overall.
- 30% of Helping Hands participants were students with disabilities (SWD) students, which is similar to that of Black African American male students (28%) and twice that of WCPSS overall (15%).
- Only 2% of students served by Helping Hands in grades 3-8 had limited English proficiency (LEP), compared to 8% of WCPSS students overall.

Because Helping Hands services are targeted to Black/African American male students, data on Black/African American male students in WCPSS are offered as a reference. However, it should be noted that Helping Hands participants are included in WCPSS’ Black/African American male student group; thus, this group does not represent a comparison group matched by demographic characteristics or achievement. Table 2 displays the demographic characteristics of students enrolled in grades 3-8 in 2007-08 who were in Helping Hands, the population of WCPSS Black/African American male students in grades 3-8, and the total population of WCPSS students in grades 3-8. Helping Hands participants were more likely to be low income (as determined by FRL status) than Black/African American male students or the overall WCPSS student population.

Table 2
Students Characteristics, 2007-08, Grades 3-8

	Helping Hands		WCPSS Black Males		All WCPSS Students	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
FRL	276	71.7%	5,140	60.4%	19,290	31.2%
SWD	116	30.1%	2,345	27.6%	9,159	14.8%
LEP	7	1.8%	158	1.9%	4,694	7.6%
Male	385	100.0%	8,503	100.0%	31,677	51.2%
Female	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	30,150	48.8%
American Indian	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	176	0.3%
Asian	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	3,463	5.6%
Black/African Am.	362	94.0%	8,503	100%	16,585	26.8%
Hispanic/Latino	3	0.8%	0	0.0%	6,848	11.1%
Multiracial	19	4.9%	0	0.0%	2,746	4.4%
White	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	32,009	51.8%
Total	385	100%	8,503	100%	61,827	100%

Note: 1: Students will appear in more than one category: race and gender, FRL, SWD, and/or LEP.

2: Participants total 385 within race and gender categories.

Data Source: 2007-08 End-of-Year Elementary & Middle School Student Rosters and June 2008 WCPSS Student Locator.

Of the 385 students participating in Helping Hands in 2007-08, 259 students (67%) were served one year, 92 (24%) were served two years, and 34 (9%) were served three years. Thus, for the majority of students 2007-08 represented their first year in the program. One in four students participated for two years and only one in ten students participated for three or more years.

Question 5: Has Helping Hands improved students’ academic achievement?*

Overall, findings suggest that Helping Hands did not have a measurable positive impact on academic success as measured by EOG proficiency or growth. Helping Hands participants and WCPSS Black/African American male students had similar achievement patterns. A slight positive impact was found at the middle school level.

Improvement in academic achievement was measured in terms of proficiency on the 2007-08 mathematics EOG exam and growth on the reading and mathematics EOGs as measured by the students’ 2007-08 academic change scores. Reading standards were revised in 2007-08; thus, proficiency in reading from 2006-07 to 2007-08 is not included in this evaluation. Black/African American male students were included to contextualize the Helping Hands results. WCPSS overall was included to provide further context for the results.

Academic Proficiency

Table 3 depicts the proficiency of students on the 2006-07 mathematics EOGs. The 2006-07 results are used to capture student performance prior to program participation in 2007-08. For both Helping Hands participants and WCPSS Black/African American male students, approximately 50% were at or above grade level in 2006-07 (Level III or IV); for WCPSS overall, 76% were at or above grade level.

**Table 3
Percentage of Students by Mathematics EOG 2006-07, Grades 3-8**

	Level I		Level II		Level III		Level IV	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Helping Hands	48	13.8%	130	37.4%	156	44.8%	14	4.0%
Black/African American Males	916	12.8%	2,574	36.0%	3,055	42.7%	605	8.5%
WCPSS	2,934	5.3%	10,003	18.2%	24,228	44.1%	17,759	32.3%

Data Source: 2007-08 End-of-Year Elementary & Middle School Student Rosters and June 2008 WCPSS Student Locator.

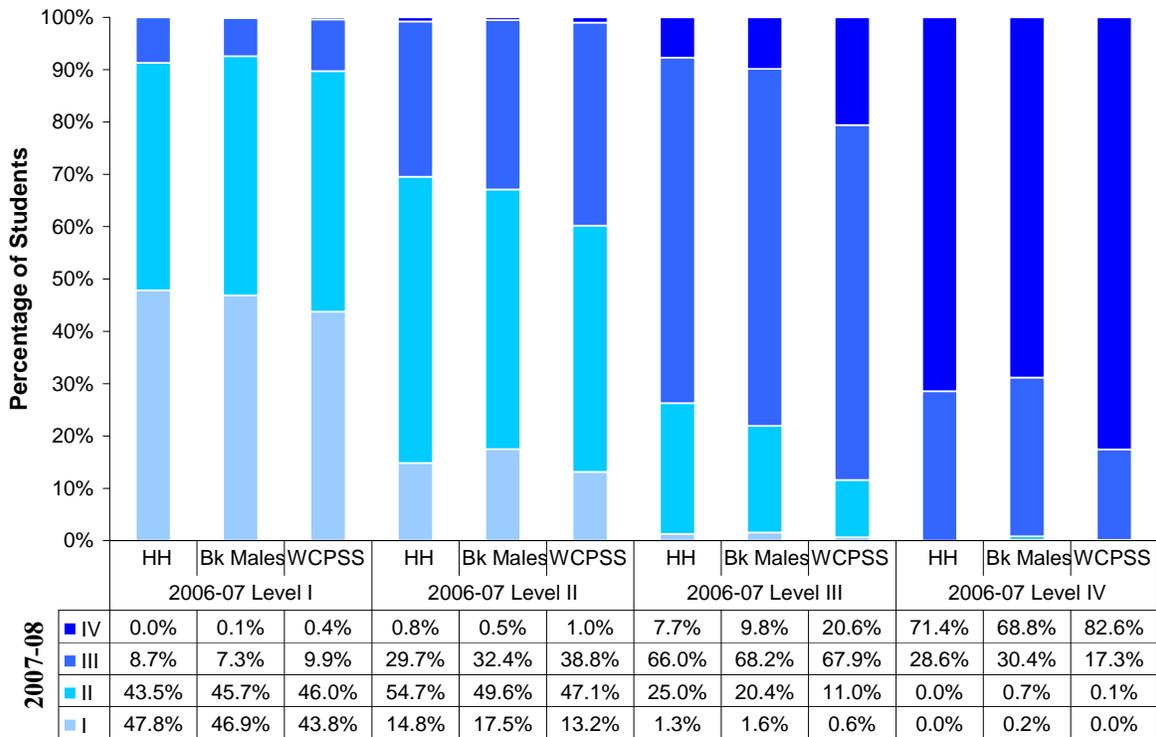
* Student achievement data was revised on July 16, 2009 to reflect slight modifications to the number and percentage of students. Table 3 and figures 2-5 and 10 reflect these slight modifications. Modifications did not change the conclusions or recommendations associated with this report and its findings.

The percentage of students moving up at least one EOG level is one way to gauge program effectiveness in improving achievement. As shown in Figure 1:

- Slightly more than half of Helping Hands and Black/African American male students (52% and 53% respectively) who started in Level I increased their scores to Level II or better. For WCPSS overall, 56% improved their level scores.
- Of students who scored in Level II in 2006-07, 31% of Helping Hands, 33% of Black/African American males, and 40% of WCPSS students moved up to Level III or IV (at or above grade level).
- Of students who scored in Level III in 2006-07, 26% of Helping Hands, 22% of Black/African American males, and 12% of WCPSS students moved down to Level I or II scores in 2007-08. Few students scoring in Level IV in 2006-07 scored lower than Level III in 2007-08.

Helping Hands and Black/African American male student-proficiency patterns were similar. WCPSS patterns were slightly more positive in each case. Across the district, Level III students were twice as likely to achieve a Level IV in 2007-08 and Level IV students were more likely to remain at Level IV than among Helping Hands participants or Black/African American male students.

Figure 1
Mathematics EOG Level 2006-07 to 2007-08, Grades 3-8

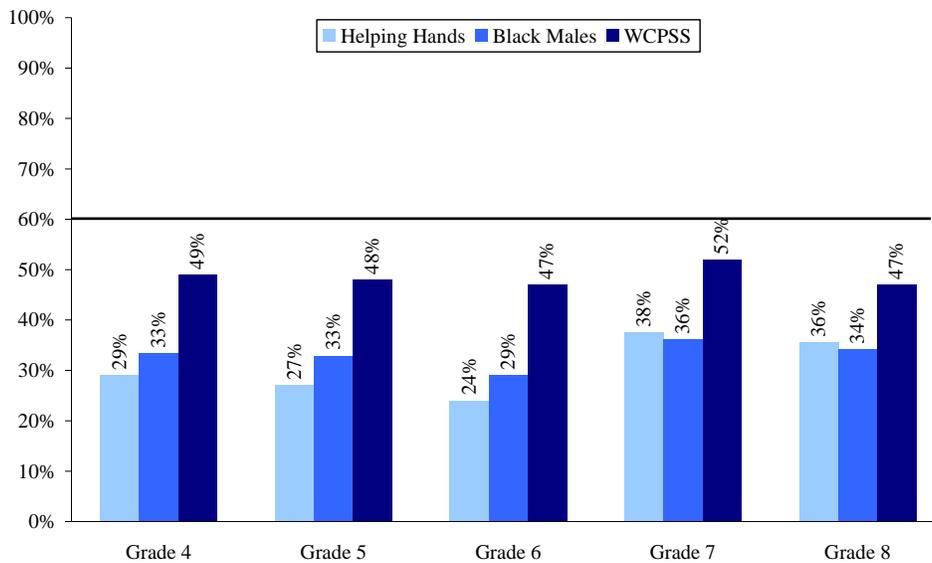


Note: Helping Hands n=323; Black/African American Males n=6,756; WCPSS N=54,711
 Data Source: 2007-08 End-of-Year Elementary and Middle School Student Rosters
 Interpretation Example: Among Helping Hands participants with a Level I in 2006-07, 47.8% remained at Level I, 43.5% received a Level II, 8.7% received a Level III, and 0% received a Level IV in 2007-08.

Academic Growth

Figures 2 and 3 display the percentage of students enrolled in 2007-08 who met North Carolina’s ABCs growth target (grades 4-8 for reading and 3-8 for mathematics). The state’s ABCs growth formula reflects one year’s growth for one year of instruction for each student. Increasing the percentage of students reaching growth targets is another way to gauge success in improving achievement, and can reflect student gains where growth was not sufficient to change level scores. A lower percentage of Helping Hands participants and WCPSS Black/African American male students met reading growth than in the district overall. All grade levels examined were below the 60% target for high growth. There were smaller differences between Helping Hands participants and WCPSS Black/African American male students, with a higher percentage of Helping Hands participants meeting growth in grades 7 and 8 and the reverse pattern in grades 4, 5, and 6. These small differences between Helping Hands participants and WCPSS Black/African American male students were not statistically significant.

**Figure 2
Percent Meeting Growth Target, by Grade
Grades 4-8 Reading, 2007-08**



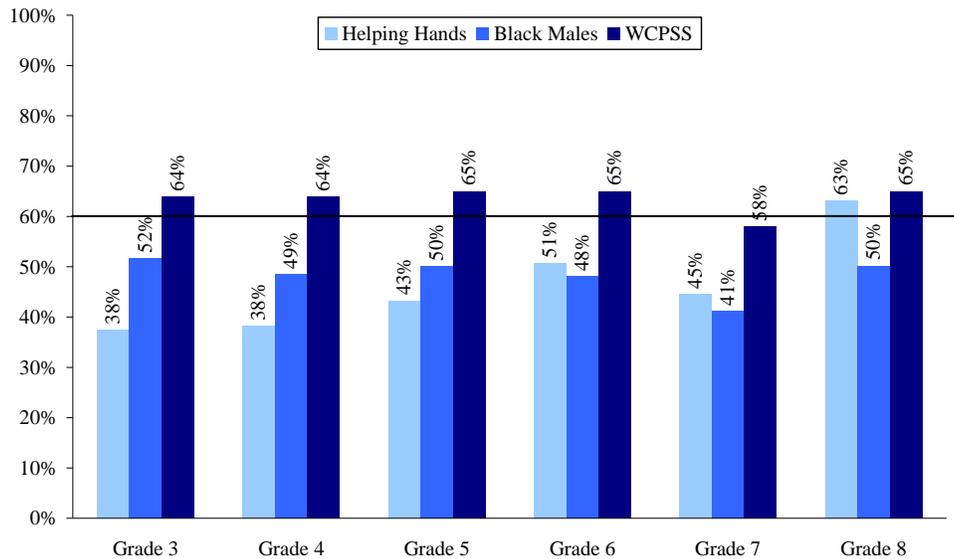
- Note:
1. Grade 3 reading pretest scores were not available in 2007-08; thus, grade 3 academic change scores were not computed.
 2. Helping Hands n=336; WCPSS Black/African American Males n=6,340; WCPSS N=42,161
 3. Figure includes only students with valid pretests and 140 days in membership

Data Source: End-of-Year Elementary and Middle School Student Rosters

Interpretation Example: Among grade 7 students, 38% of Helping Hands participants met growth, compared to 36% of Black/African American males and 52% of WCPSS students overall.

The mathematics results were similar to reading results. At the middle school level, a higher percentage of Helping Hands participants met growth than did Black/African American males; the reverse was true at the elementary level. By grade, comparisons revealed only the difference at grade 8 was statistically significant. The most positive result was for Helping Hands students in grade 8, who not only had a higher percentage of students meeting growth than Black/African American males but also achieved high growth (60%).

Figure 3
Percent Meeting Growth Target, by Grade
Grades 3-8 Mathematics, 2007-08



Note: 1. Helping Hands n=368; Black/African American Males n=7,578; WCPSS N=43,203
 2. Students with valid pretests and 140 days in membership
 Data Source: 2007-08 End-of-Year Elementary and Middle School Student Rosters

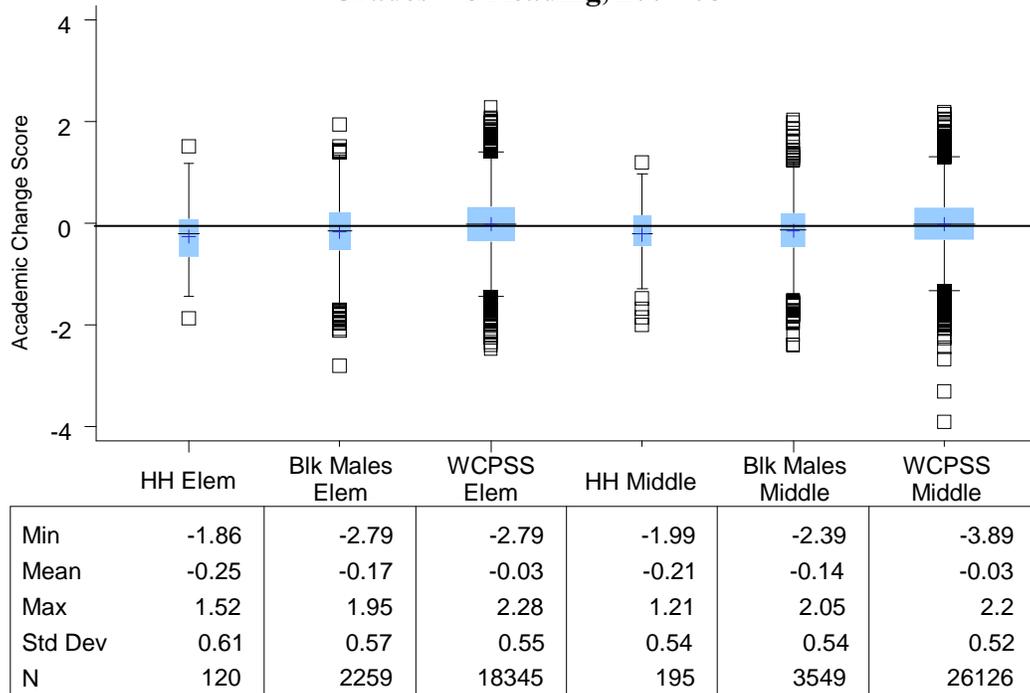
Academic Change

The state ABCs academic change score reflects whether students as a group grew more or less than the target projection. A growth score of zero means the target was met exactly. Figures 4 and 5 utilize a boxplot to depict the mean, median, and range of the academic change score for students enrolled in 2007-08 (grades 4-8 for reading and 3-8 for mathematics).

The box represents the majority of student scores (25th to 75th percentile). The “whiskers,” or vertical lines, extending from the box represent the range of scores, with the most extreme scores denoted by small boxes. Within each box, the mean is signified by a plus sign and the median by a horizontal line in the middle of the box.

Although Helping Hands participants and Black/African American male students had a negative average academic change score in reading (indicating less than expected gains in 2007-08), by grade level for all student groups the average academic change scores in reading hovered close to zero, indicating performance close to what was expected (see Figure 4). When considering these small differences, it should be noted that the standard deviations of these averages are approximately 0.5. Thus, in actuality, the results should be considered approximately the same. Among elementary school students, there were fewer Helping Hands participants (indicated by the narrower blue box); thus, it is not surprising there was a smaller range of scores than for WCPSS overall.

Figure 4
Academic Change Score for Elementary and Middle School Students
Grades 4-8 Reading, 2007-08



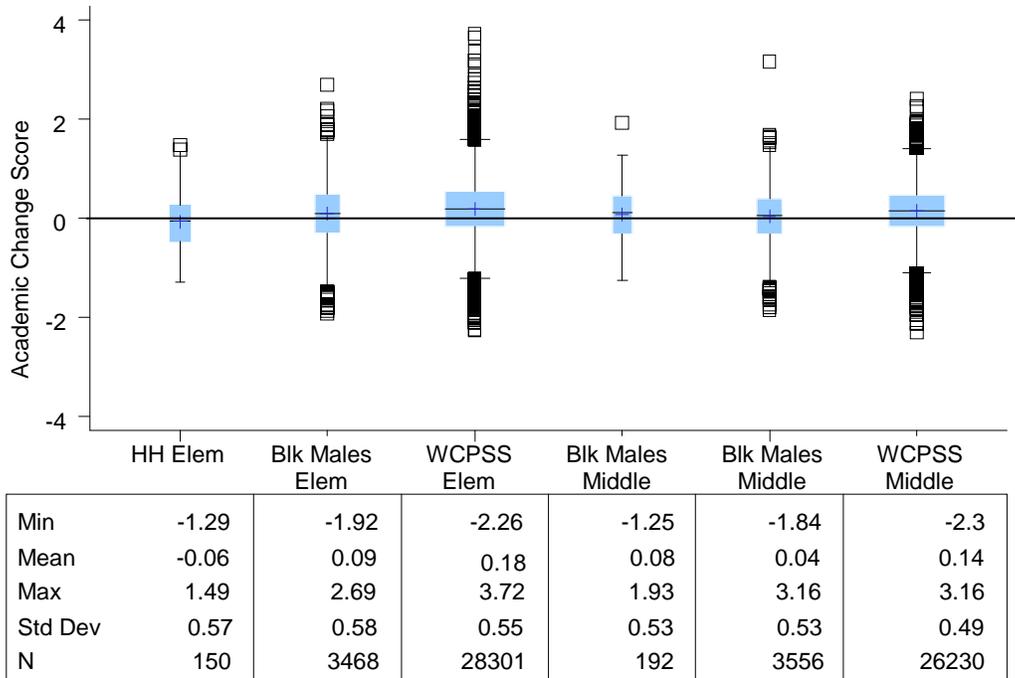
Note: Wider boxes indicate more students in the group.

Data Source: 2007-08 End-of-Year Elementary and Middle School Student Rosters

Interpretation Example: At the elementary level, both Helping Hands participants and Black/African American males had an average academic change score of less than zero (signified by plus sign on blue bar), while the average among WCPSS Elementary school students was approximately zero.

As figure 5 shows, for mathematics, Helping Hands participants had mixed results on their academic changes score. Results were positive at the middle school level, indicating that students performed slightly better than expected, while at the elementary school level, the average academic change score was approximately zero. For Helping Hands participants, Black/African American male students, and overall WCPSS students the mathematics results remained close to the zero line, which represents the expected growth for these students.

Figure 5
Academic Change Score for Elementary and Middle School Students
Grades 3-8 Mathematics, 2007-08



Note: Wider boxes indicate more students in the group.
 Data Source: 2007-08 End-of-Year Elementary and Middle School Student Rosters

Question 6: Has Helping Hands decreased suspensions among participants?

Another goal of the Helping Hands program is to impact student behavior by reducing the number of discipline referrals. Suspension data were examined to capture behavioral changes. Short-term suspensions are suspensions of one to nine days, and long-term suspensions are suspensions of 10 or more days. Students may have multiple suspensions. Changes in short-term suspension patterns are generally more sensitive to program impact than are changes in long-term suspensions.

The Helping Hands program appeared to have a positive impact on suspension trends relative to Black/African American male students. Overall, across all groups considered, the percentage of students with short-term suspensions increased between 2006-07 and 2007-08. Although short-term suspensions increased, patterns were more favorable for Helping Hands participants than for all Black/African American male students.

Short-Term Suspensions

The Helping Hands program appeared to target students with suspension issues, with nearly 25% of the elementary and nearly 40% of the middle school students having one or more suspensions in 2006-07 (before 2007-08 service). These percentages are two times higher than for Black/African American males overall at the elementary level, and 12 percentage points higher at the middle school level. Table 4 shows the change in the percentage of students with a short-term suspension from 2006-07 to 2007-08. Helping Hands participants, Black/African American male students, and the overall WCPSS K-8 student population all experienced increases in the percentage of students with short-term suspensions between 2006-07 and 2007-08.

- Black/African American male students experienced a statistically significant percentage-point increase in students with one or more short-term suspension.
- The percentage-point increase in Helping Hands participants with short-term suspensions was not statistically significant, which is a more favorable pattern than for Black/African American male students.
- Among elementary school students, the percentage-point increase for Helping Hands students was more similar to that of WCPSS overall than to Black/African American male students in WCPSS.
- Among middle school students, the percentage-point increase for Black/African American male students was nearly three times higher than for Helping Hands students. Helping Hands students also had a smaller percentage-point increase than WCPSS overall (2.7% and 4.0% respectively).

Table 4
Percentage of Students with Short-Term Suspensions, Grades 3-8

	2006-07	2007-08	Change in % 06-07 to 07-08
Elementary			
Helping Hands (n=166)	22.9%	24.1%	1.2%
Black Males (n=4,160)	10.6%	13.7%	3.1%**
WCPSS (N=31,876)	2.8%	3.8%	1.0%
Middle			
Helping Hands (n=219)	37.9%	40.6%	2.7%
Black Males (n=4,343)	26.6%	34.6%	8.0%**
WCPSS (N=29,951)	9.0%	13.0%	4.0%

Note: 1. z statistic was computed to test for significance. * indicates significance at the 0.05 level. ** indicates significance at the 0.01 level.
 2. Significance not tested for WCPSS percentage-point change, because it represents the population of WCPSS middle school students.
 3. Statistical significance should be considered with caution, due to large differences in the n size of Helping Hands students compared to Black/African American male students.

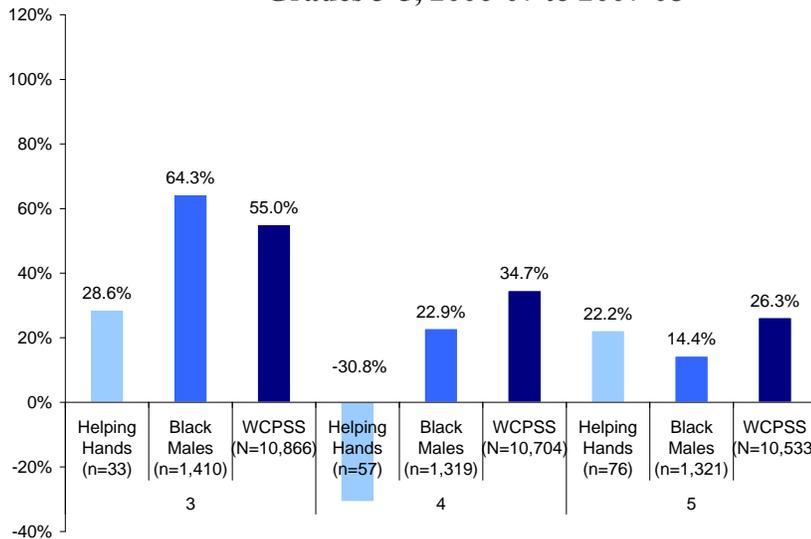
Data Source: WCPSS Mainframe Reports

Another measure of the impact of Helping Hands is whether it effected the frequency of suspensions for participants.¹ Figures 6 and 7 suggest that patterns were indeed more positive for Helping Hands

¹ Students may have been suspended more than once during 2007-08; thus, the number of incidents represents the number of suspensions rather than the number of students who were suspended.

participants than for Black/African American males or WCPSS overall in grades 3-8, grade 5 being the exception. In addition, suspension incidents increased for Black/African American male students and WCPSS overall between 2006-07 and 2007-08 at all grades, while it increased for Helping Hands at half of the grade levels (3, 5, and 6 but not 4, 7, and 8).

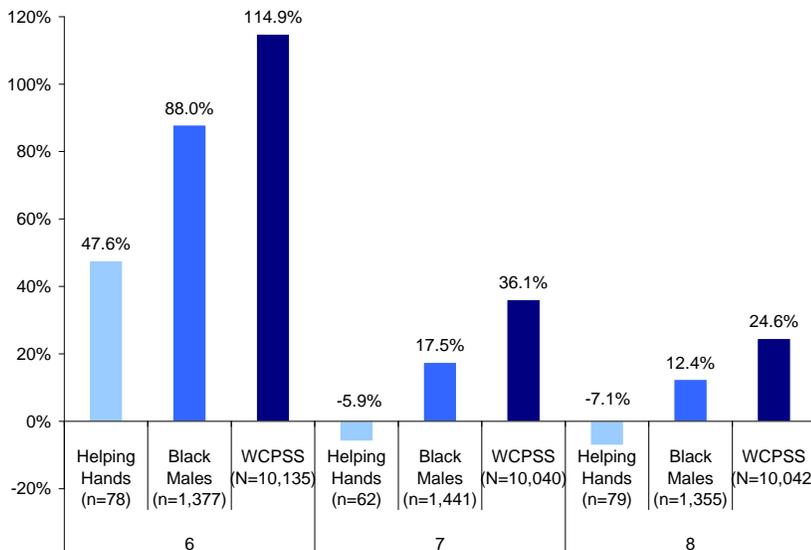
Figure 6
Change in Short-Term Suspension Incidents by Grade Level
Grades 3-5, 2006-07 to 2007-08



Data Source: WCPSS Mainframe Reports

Interpretation Example: The percentage of suspensions among Helping Hands participants in grade 3 increased 28.6% between 2006-07 and 2007-08.

Figure 7
Change in Short-Term Suspension Incidents by Grade Level
Grades 6-8, 2006-07 to 2007-08



Data Source: WCPSS Mainframe Reports

Long-Term Suspensions

Overall, all groups experienced a percentage-point increase in students with long-term suspensions between 2006-07 and 2007-08 (see Table 5). Elementary school data are not included in Table 5 due to the small number of elementary students with long-term suspensions.

- Black/African American male students experienced a statistically significant percentage-point increase in long-term suspensions.
- The percentage-point increase of Helping Hands participants with long-term suspensions was not statistically significant.

Table 5
Percentage of Students with Long-Term Suspensions, Grades 6-8

	2006-07	2007-08	Change in % 06-07 to 07-08
Helping Hands (n=219)	1.8%	2.7%	0.9%
Black Males (n=4,343)	2.4%	3.4%	1.0%**
WCPSS (N=29,951)	0.6%	0.9%	0.3%

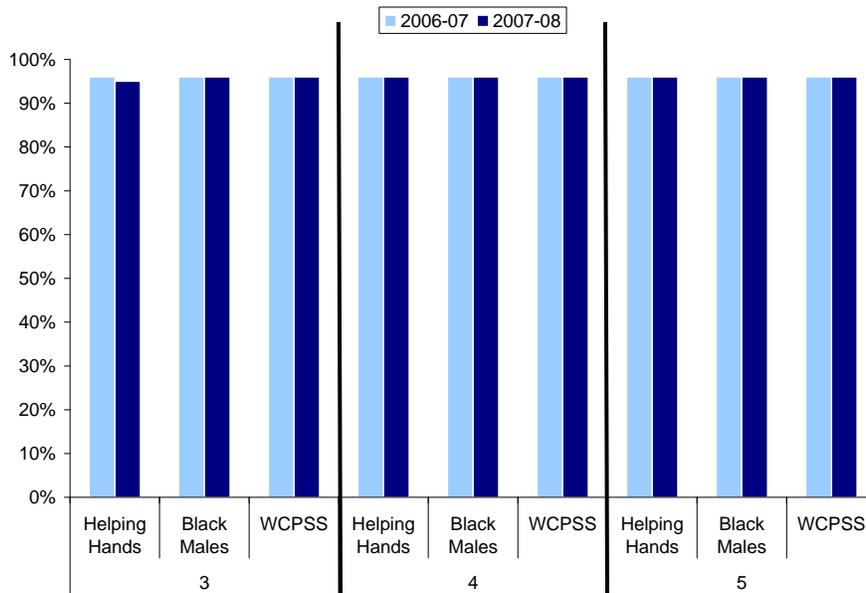
Note: 1. z statistic was computed to test for significance. * indicates significance at the 0.05 level. ** indicates significance at the 0.01 level.
 2. Significance not tested for WCPSS percentage point change since it represents the population of WCPSS middle school students.
 3. Statistical significance found on small differences between groups of students should be considered with caution due to the large differences in the n size of Helping Hands compared to Black/African American males.

Data Source: WCPSS Mainframe Reports

Question 7: Has Helping Hands improved attendance rates among participants?

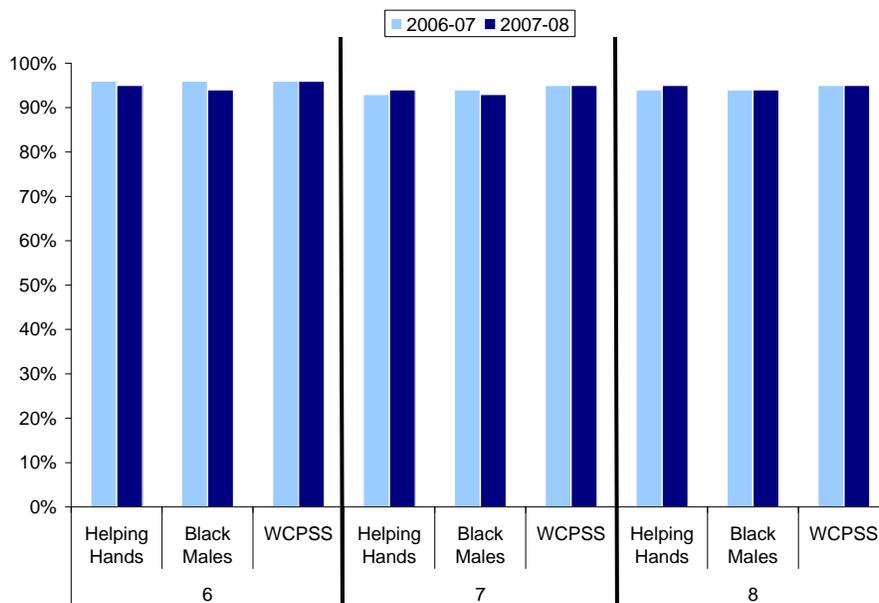
One of the primary goals of the Helping Hands program is an increase in daily attendance. Figures 8 and 9 display the attendance rates by grade level in 2006-07 and 2007-08. Helping Hands participants, Black/African American male students, and the overall WCPSS K-8 student population all experienced high rates of attendance (>93%), with little variation from year to year. Thus, the Helping Hands program did not impact overall attendance.

Figure 8
Attendance Rates for 2006-07 and 2007-08
By Grade Level, Grades 3-5



Note: Helping Hands n=166; Black Males n=4,160; WCPSS N=31,876
 Data Source: WCPSS Mainframe Reports

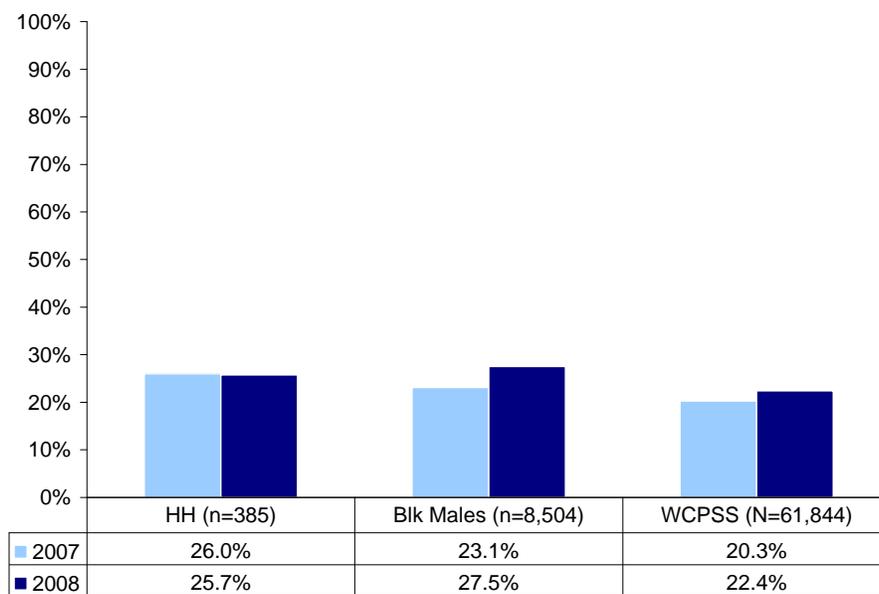
Figure 9
Attendance Rates for 2006-07 and 2007-08
By Grade Level, Grades 6-8



Note: Helping Hands n=219; Black Males n=4,343; WCPSS N=29,951
 Data Source: WCPSS Mainframe Reports

Programs are more likely to show an impact on chronic non-attendance (10 or more days absent per year) than overall attendance. About one fourth of the Helping Hands students had excessive absences in 2006-07, higher than for Black/African American students (by three percentage points) and WCPSS overall (by six percentage points). As Figure 10 illustrates, the percentage of Helping Hands students with 10 or more days absent decreased very slightly (0.3 of a percentage point), while among Black/African American male students in grades 3-8 there was a 4.4 percentage-point increase between 2006-07 and 2007-08². The WCPSS student population in grades 3-8 increased 2.1 percentage points. Thus, the absolute improvement was very small for the Helping Hands program, but patterns were more positive than for Black/African American male students or WCPSS overall.

Figure 10
Percentage of Students Absent 10 or More Days, 2006-07 and 2007-08, Grades 3-8



Note: Percentages do not include students with missing attendance data.
 Data Source: WCPSS Mainframe Reports

Question 8: Does multiple years of participation improve the impact on program goals?

Students are encouraged to participate in Helping Hands more than one year, because program staff believes that the impact is likely to grow with long-term participation. Table 6 depicts the achievement, suspensions, and attendance of students participating in Helping Hands by the number of years of participation. It is important to note the small number of students in Helping Hands for three years who had appropriate data for achievement and suspension analyses. The change from 2006-07 to 2007-08 is examined for each indicator, thus representing a one-year change: after one year of service (Year 1), after two years of service (Year 2), or after three years of service (Year 3). For students participating in the program two years the percentage at or above grade level in 2005-06 was also examined and indicated more than 50% of those students

² The 4.4 percentage-point increase between 2006-07 and 2007-08 among Black/African American male students was statistically significant at a .01 level.

began the program at or above grade level. Due to a change in standards, the mathematics EOG results were not examined prior to 2005-06.

Patterns were mixed for achievement and absences, but suspension results clearly favored Helping Hands students who participated for more than one year.

- Achievement proficiency patterns for Helping Hands students participating for two or three years were more positive than for those in Helping Hands for one year, in four of six comparisons (i.e., those in Helping Hands two or three years met mathematics growth at higher rates than those in Helping Hands one year, but patterns were mixed for proficiency improvement and reading growth).
- Short-term suspension patterns were more positive for those in Helping Hands two or three years (with decreases) versus one year (with an increase).
- Excessive absences (over 10 days) decreased for those in Helping Hands one or three years but not for those in Helping Hands two years (changes were all small—within 3 percentage points).

Table 6
Helping Hands Participants by Number of Years Served, Grades 3-8

Achievement										
	Mathematics Level III or IV 2006-07		Mathematics Level III or IV 2007-08		Met Reading Growth 2007-08		Met Math Growth 2007-08			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Year 1	114	50.2%	127	50.6%	70	31.0%	117	45.2%		
Year 2	43	48.9%	48	53.9%	26	28.3%	46	50.0%		
Year 3	13	39.4%	11	33.3%	11	32.4%	18	52.9%		
Short-Term Suspensions										
	2006-07		2007-08		Difference 2006-07 to 2007-08					
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Direction	Percent Point				
Year 1	80	30.9%	95	36.7%	↑	+5.8%				
Year 2	32	34.8%	26	28.3%	↓	-6.5%				
Year 3	9	26.5%	8	23.5%	↓	-3.0%				
Attendance										
	2006-07		2007-08		Difference 2006-07 to 2007-08		Absent 10 or More Days			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Direction	Percent Point	2006-07	2007-08	Direction	Percent Point
Year 1	229	94.9%	259	95.4%	↑	0.5%	24.7%	23.9%	↓	-0.8%
Year 2	92	95.3%	92	95.1%	↓	-0.2%	30.4%	32.6%	↑	+2.2%
Year 3	34	95.6%	34	95.9%	↑	0.3%	23.5%	20.6%	↓	-2.9%

Note: 1. Long-term suspensions are not included due to small n sizes.
2. Reading standards were revised in 2007-08; thus, comparisons to 2006-07 are not appropriate.

Data Source: 2007-08 End-of-Year Elementary & Middle School Student Rosters and June 2008 WCPSS Student Locator.

DISCUSSION

The three primary goals of the Helping Hands program relate to improved academic performance, behavior (discipline referrals), and daily attendance. Personal development is another program goal, which is not addressed in this report. This report focused on academics, behavior, and attendance outcomes for Helping Hands, with mixed results.

- Achievement assistance is currently individualized by giving students a pre-assessment, designing lessons based on this information, and offering instruction (either one-on-one or in small groups). Despite these efforts, the findings of this impact evaluation suggest that the academic goal was not met.
- The behavioral goal was measured by the percentage of students with short- and long-term suspensions. Although Helping Hands participants increased 1.2 percentage points at the elementary level and 2.7 percentage points at the middle school level in the number of students suspended, Helping Hands was able to slow the increase in suspensions when the results of Helping Hands participants were compared to results of Black/African American male students. Also, students receiving support from Helping Hands for two or three years experienced percentage-point decreases in the number of students with short-term suspensions. These results suggest that the behavior goal was met.
- Attendance, the third goal, was high for all groups considered, including Helping Hands participants. Given the large number of participants with high attendance, it is not surprising that the findings do not indicate that the goal of improved overall attendance was met. However, there was a statistically significant percentage-point increase among Black/African American male students with 10 or more days of absence from 2006-07 to 2007-08; this was not seen among Helping Hands students.

While this report does not provide strong support for program effectiveness overall, some impact on suspension patterns as well as on excessive absences is encouraging. Given that the long-term goal of the Helping Hands program is to increase the number of Black/African American students' experiencing academic success, the findings in this study answer some questions but raises others. For example:

- Does Helping Hands improve student and parent attitudes towards school or student leadership skills, which could impact their motivation to stay in school?
- Do teachers perceive Helping Hands students to have more positive attitudes and work habits?
- Why are more students not staying involved with Helping Hands for multiple years? Are these students reassigned to a school where Helping Hands is not offered, leaving the system, or otherwise transient? Are Helping Hands participants more/less transient than Black/African American male students overall?
- Are students' grades impacted by participation in the Helping Hands program?
- Does Helping Hands impact retention rates, dropout rates, or graduation rates?

RECOMMENDATIONS

Helping Hands is a relatively small program with a small budget. However, improved cost effectiveness is possible and desirable. At this point, we have the following recommendations for improvement.

- The eligibility criteria could be more specific. For example, students could be initially eligible if they have issues related to academic performance (scoring below grade level or failing one or more courses), attendance (10 or more absences), or behavior (one or more suspensions). If the program staff want to keep students once they show improvement, or if it is preventative for some students, this could be reflected in the eligibility rules as well. In addition, eligibility should clearly state whether students must be in grades 3-8 to participate or K-12; some students in K-2 and 9-12 were served in 2007-08.

Approximately 20% of students new to the Helping Hands program in 2007-08 did not enter the program with issues related to the goals. One in five students new to Helping Hands in 2007-08 had no suspensions in 2006-07, were absent 10 or fewer days in 2006-07, and were at or above grade level on both their reading and mathematics EOGs in 2006-07.

- Given the EOG results, study materials and techniques should be examined to determine whether they are providing students with the best type of support to increase academic success in the classroom and on summative measures. Consultation and guidance from Curriculum and Instruction Department staff are recommended. Student performance on formative assessments and grades could also be examined as another measure of students' academic progress.

While academic support during the year was individualized, the ten 90-minute EOG tutoring sessions offered in the spring (five for reading and five for mathematics) were designed to meet the needs of the majority of students. These sessions should offer differentiation to meet the needs of individual students. Given nearly half of students were proficient on their mathematics EOG, differentiation should include enrichment where appropriate. Another option would be to provide students proficient on EOG tests with other types of specialized support as appropriate (e.g., related to attendance or behavior). While a blanket approach may be less costly, it is also less likely to affect student achievement.

- A vital program modification would be to increase specific strategies for students who have issues with behavior, attendance, or achievement. Make sure all activities are tightly linked to stated goals. For example, individual goals could be set for each student at the beginning of the year with more specific support in those areas. Attendance strategies should focus primarily on those with excessive absences. These strategies should include targeting students with high numbers of absences for participation in the program and/or increasing the program's focus on attendance specifically with those who have had excessive absences in the past.
- Apply multiple strategies designed to affect student outcomes such as those outlined in the Influencer training.

ATTACHMENT

School/Community Helping Hands Mentoring Program (S/CHHMP) Logic Model (2008-09)

The mission of the School/Community Helping Hands Program (S/CHHMP) is to provide academic and personal development support services to Black/African-American male students, while enabling their parents to effectively utilize educational and community resources, which will enhance positive student outcomes.

The S/CHHMP will provide support for student participants in the following areas: (1) academic, (2) behavior, and (3) daily school attendance.

