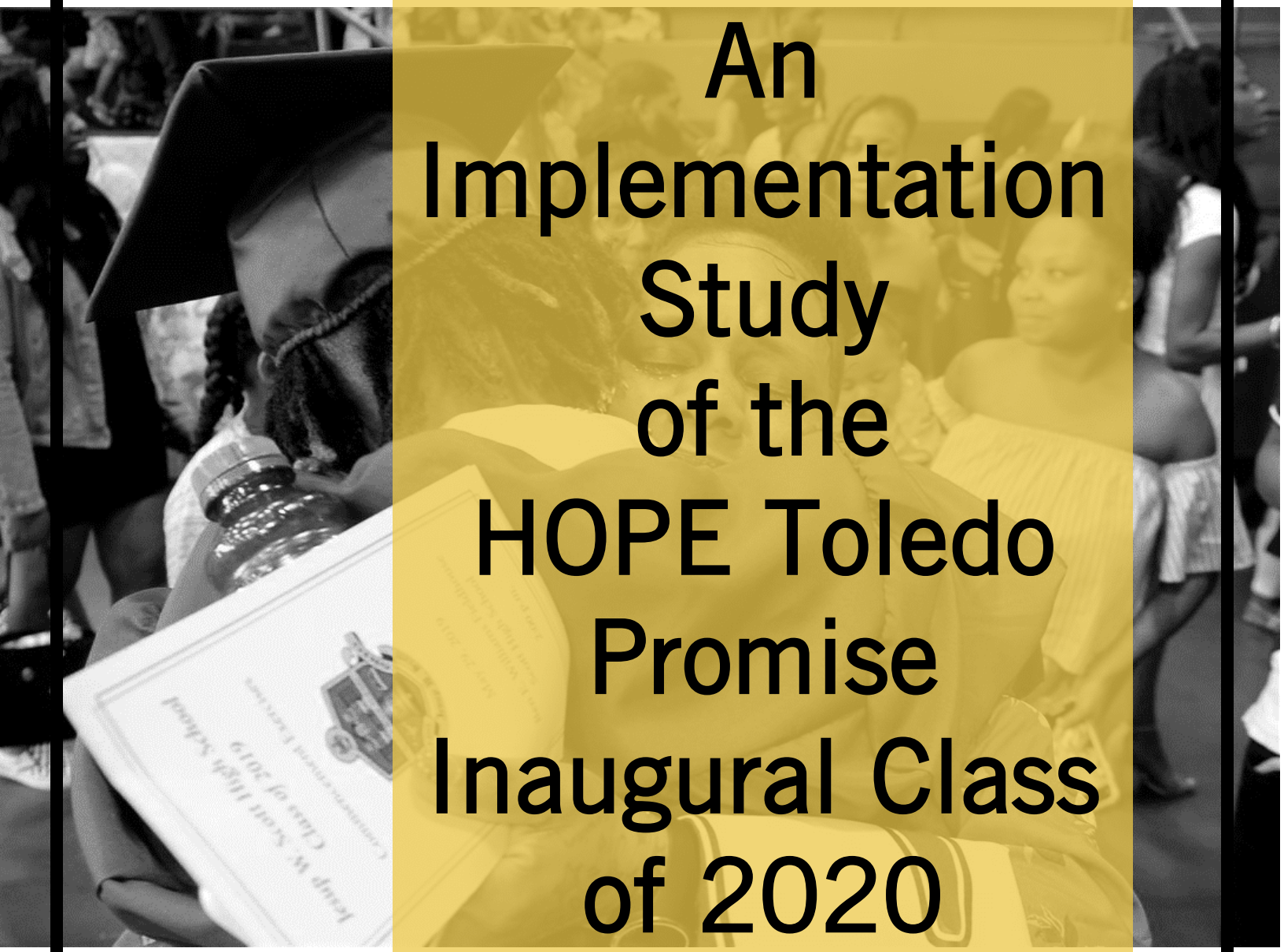

An Implementation Study of the HOPE Toledo Promise Inaugural Class of 2020

An Implementation Study of the HOPE Toledo Promise Inaugural Class of 2020

August 5, 2021

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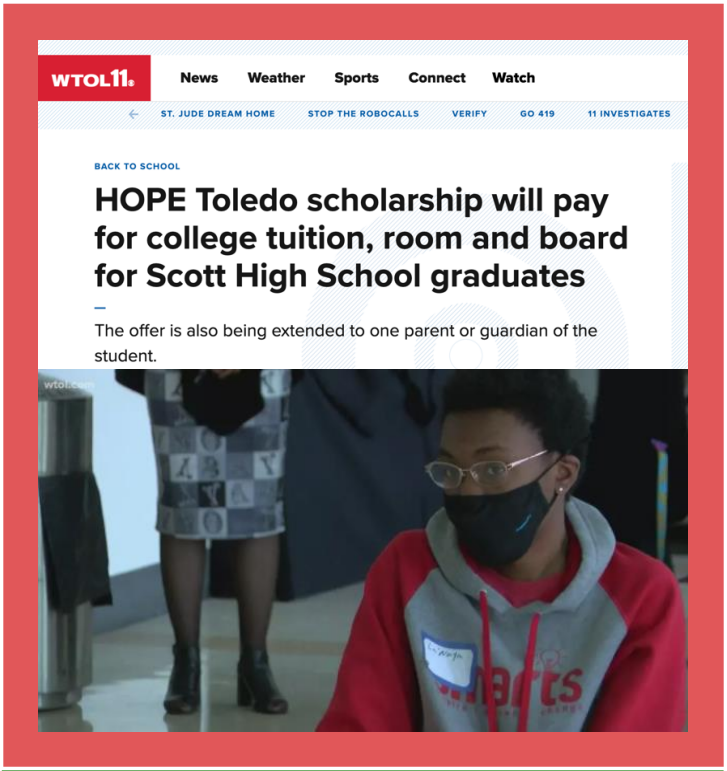
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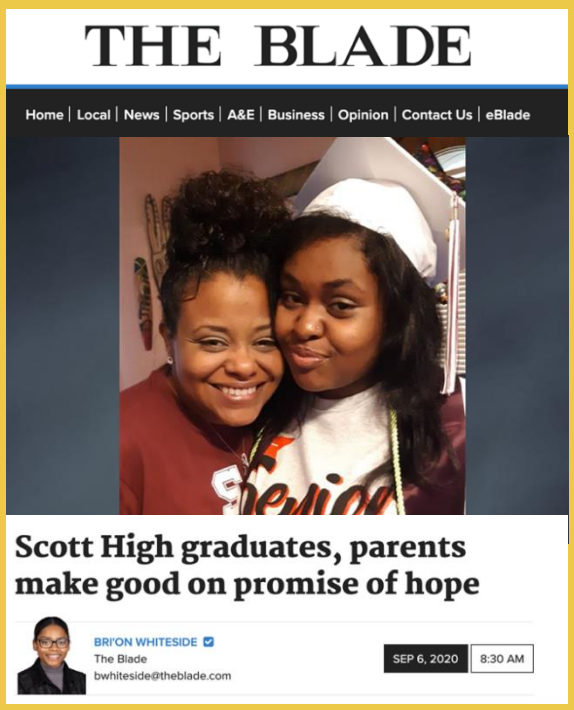
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HOPE Toledo Promise aims to create generational change through access to education.

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by Bri Malaska | Wednesday, March 10th 2021

Table of Contents

Overview 1
Executive Summary 2
Introduction 2
What is HOPE Toledo Promise? 5
Why Study HOPE Toledo Promise? 5
Background 8
Two-Generation Education Programs 8
Two-Generation College Promise Programs 8
HOPE Toledo Promise 11
Findings 12
(1) What are the demographic characteristics of the city of Toledo and Scott High School? 12
(2) What are the characteristics of Youth and Parent Scholars who select into the program and those who do not, and what are key descriptive differences among them? 15
(3) What do we know about Youth Scholars and Parent Scholars in the program? 17
(4) What are the main barriers Youth and Parent Scholars faced in attending college, and in what ways did the scholarship influence their college going? 25
(5) What experiences, positive and negative, are currently enrolled Youth Scholars having in college? 28
(6) What experiences, positive and negative, are Parent Scholars having in college? 31
(7) For families with both generation in the program, what interpersonal dynamics were taking place? In what ways were these dynamics promoting/not promoting the educational success of either or both generations? 33
(8) What are the recommendations as identified by HOPE Toledo youth, parents, and leaders? 35
Conclusions and Considerations 42
Looking Ahead: The Future of HOPE Toledo Promise 47
Appendices 50
Method 51
Overview 51
Census Data 52
Administrative Data 52
Survey of Youth Scholars 53
Focus Groups of Youth and Parent Scholars 55
Interviews with Community and Program Leaders 57
Analytic Strategy 58
References 59

Overview

Less than 20% of the city of Toledo's adults have a college degree (or higher) even though postsecondary education and skills training are essential in the 21st century economy. For example, students with a college degree or postsecondary certificate, on average, earn 66% more than students who only complete a high school degree (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Yet, many students from low-income families, such as those attending Jesup W. Scott High School in Toledo, simply cannot afford the cost of a postsecondary education.

In addition to the financial circumstances that influence low-income youth's ability to succeed in postsecondary education, their familial environment is also paramount. Parenting is the primary engine of healthy or unhealthy youth development yet is rarely addressed or considered in the postsecondary education narrative. HOPE Toledo Promise seeks to address intergenerational social and economic mobility by drawing on the strengths of families—youth and parents together.

HOPE Toledo Promise is a family-centered, two-generation strategy that purposefully and systematically integrates scholarships and services for youth and parents with the goal of promoting postsecondary education success for two generations at the same time. HOPE Toledo Promise offers a cost-free postsecondary education to graduating high school seniors of Scott High School and one parent or guardian.

This report presents findings from the first implementation study of HOPE Toledo Promise, and it draws upon quantitative administrative and survey data in addition to qualitative focus group and interview data. It emphasizes the voices of all those who participated in the program, including Parent and Youth Scholars and community leaders, as well as some who chose not to get involved. The report presents a nuanced and complex portrait of the program and the experiences of its inaugural class of 2020 and explores ways to strengthen HOPE Toledo Promise in the future.

Executive Summary

What are the demographic characteristics of the city of Toledo and Scott High School?

- Toledo is a mid-sized city consisting of primarily White (59%) and Black (27%) residents with a smaller Latinx population (9%). Most residents of Toledo have a high school degree (86%) but only 18% have a college degree. Over 60% of residents are working but living in households with a median income of approximately $38,000.
- During the 2019-2020 school year, Jesup W. Scott High School served 596 students who primarily identified as Black. Graduating seniors had an average grade point average of 2.30 and SAT score of 795.

What are the characteristics of Youth and Parent Scholars who select into the program and those who do not, and what are key descriptive differences among them?

- HOPE Toledo Promise was offered to the 116 graduates of the 2020 Scott High School class, and almost 55% participated in the program while another 18% expressed interest, with almost three-fourths of eligible students demonstrating program engagement.
- The average GPA (2.53) and SAT score (814) of Scott High School graduates who participated in HOPE Toledo Promise ("Youth Scholars") were notably higher than the average GPA (2.05) and SAT score (766) of those who did not participate.
- Although only 16% of eligible parents participated in HOPE Toledo Promise ("Parent Scholars"), those who entered stayed in the program. Moreover, some potential Parent Scholars could not participate because they were either too educated (already received a BA or above) or not educated enough (needed a GED to enroll in college).

What do we know about Youth Scholars and Parent Scholars in the program?

- Most Youth Scholars participated in the program with the goal of receiving a free college education (76%), seeking the college experience (56%), and linking their college education to better employment and earnings prospects (52%).
- A large majority of Youth Scholars sought (85%) and enrolled in (65%) four-year schools, primarily around the Toledo area, while a smaller proportion of Youth Scholars sought (43%) and enrolled in (29%) two-year schools.
- In contrast, most parents enrolled in two-year schools (60%) followed by four-year schools (40%).

- Compared to other college students around the country, Youth Scholars, on average, lacked the learning and study skills needed to be academically successful, including effective time management, low anxiety, high concentration, and high motivation.
- Most Youth Scholars were employed (67%) and working part-time in low wage jobs, yet over one-third of scholars placed high importance on a career over simply working (38%).
- Almost all Youth Scholars expressed worries over finances including having enough money to buy food (84%) and affording medical care (76%).
- Over half of Youth Scholars reported high self-efficacy (52%) but at the same time had much lower rates of emotional support (19%) and optimism (14%). Almost two-thirds of Youth Scholars reported feeling lonely (62%) with some reporting significant psychological distress (44%).

What are the main barriers Youth and Parent Scholars faced in attending college, and in what ways did the scholarship influence their college going?

- The main barrier that Youth and Parent Scholars faced in attending college was the idea and reality of paying for college. Although many Youth Scholars already planned to go to college, the scholarship led them to decide to go to college over working.
- Other key influences on Youth Scholar's enrollment in college included: early college preparation, parents' college experiences, and self-identification.

What experiences, positive and negative, are currently enrolled Youth Scholars having in college?

- Many Youth Scholars seemed to enter the program with a limited understanding of college expectations and requirements, needing to adjust their expectations and approach as they grew in the experience.
- The scholars were faced with the unique challenge of attending their first year of college during a global pandemic and thus did not feel they had the full college experience.
- Youth Scholars received numerous supportive services from their universities and colleges including mentors and advisors who helped them navigate their college experience, choose courses and majors, and structure their time.
- Reverend John Jones offered an effective core foundation for the college scholarship experience yet was in limited supply.
- HOPE Toledo Promise seemed to reinforce the high school and college peer connections that many students had made and created a sense of family among Youth Scholars (and some parents).

What experiences, positive and negative, are Parent Scholars having in college?

- For many Parent Scholars, the idea of attending college at this stage in their lives felt challenging and even overwhelming, given many life demands including work and family.
- Many parents experienced difficulties in adjusting to online learning and the impact of attending college during a global pandemic.
- At the same time, Parent Scholars, like Youth Scholars, also reported receiving academic supports from their colleges and universities.
- Parent Scholars, in general, felt that they did not have enough time to consider the scholarship opportunity and better understand how college related to their career goals and current life circumstances.
- Youth and Parent Scholars often seemed to feel that their knowledge and preparation for college were limited, and both generations shared a sense of frustration and challenge.

For families with both generation in the program, what interpersonal dynamics were taking place? In what ways were these dynamics promoting/not promoting the educational success of either or both generations?

- Youth and Parent Scholars who were in the program together seemed to experience numerous opportunities for mutual learning and support in college which were often in both directions and appeared to foster healthy competition between generations.

What are the recommendations as identified by HOPE Toledo youth, parents, and leaders?

- The primary recommendation from stakeholders in HOPE Toledo Promise was to start the program earlier and offer a range of options.
    - Most community leaders believed it was critical to orient parents toward postsecondary education while their children were young.
    - Community leaders also seemed to support the notion that parents needed more time and supports to evaluate how school would help them in their careers.
- Additional recommendations for Youth and Parent Scholars included stipends for living expenses, more time to digest the scholarship opportunity, and increased exploration of career opportunities.
- Other strategic recommendations included improving collaboration with Toledo Public Schools, further promoting partnerships with postsecondary institutions, increasing staffing, and fostering a stronger network for these efforts in the community.

Introduction

What is HOPE Toledo Promise?

HOPE Toledo Promise is the only known two-generation college scholarship program of its kind in the United States. The program is designed to create intergenerational economic opportunity by providing a cost-free postsecondary education to graduating high school seniors in the most underserved high schools in Toledo, Ohio and one parent or legal guardian. HOPE Toledo Promise began with the 2020 graduating class of Jesup W. Scott High School and launched despite a worldwide pandemic. The program will expand to serve the Scott High School graduating class of 2021.

The HOPE (Helping Our Population Educate) model is the vision of Pete Kadens, a native of Greater Toledo and highly successful business entrepreneur. HOPE Toledo Promise is part of HOPE Toledo's broader cradle-to-career education initiative that is currently focusing on universal pre-K and college promise. Initial funding for HOPE Toledo Promise for the class of 2020 comes from the Kadens Family Foundation.

Why Study HOPE Toledo Promise?

HOPE Toledo's distinctive approach warrants a near-term study of its implementation, especially under the challenging circumstances of COVID-19 and the array of virtual and in-person learning approaches across educational institutions.

An early implementation study will both improve the program model as it expands and could lead to a full evaluation of its effectiveness in promoting the education and career success of youth (and their parents) from one of the most underserved schools in the country.

This research study has several goals:

- Describe the program and its participants for use by the HOPE Toledo team in promoting the program to future families and in fundraising.
- Better understand the experiences of eligible young adults and parents, including their successes, challenges, and what has helped them overcome roadblocks.
- Learn more about the dynamics of multigenerational education within the same family.
- Explore ways in which HOPE Toledo can be strengthened going forward.

The research involved six core data components that were collected and/or analyzed February through June 2021:

1. Census data on the city of Toledo from the U.S. Census Bureau
2. Administrative data from Toledo Public Schools on the 2020 graduating class of Scott High School ($N = 116$)
3. Administrative data from HOPE Toledo on Youth and Parent Scholars ($N = 72$)
4. Survey of Youth Scholars ($n = 25$)
5. Focus groups of Young Scholars ($n = 9$) and Parent Scholars ($n = 10$)
6. In-depth interviews with program leaders, staff, and partners ($n = 12$)

Toledo Public Schools provided administrative data on the 116 graduates of the Scott High School 2020 class, including grade point average (GPA), SAT score, and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) status. HOPE Toledo provided administrative data on the 62 youth and 10 parents who participated in the Promise program, including college application, admittance, and enrollment. A quantitative survey was sent electronically to the 62 Youth Scholars, with 25 Youth Scholars (40%) successfully completing the survey by June 2021.

At the end of the survey, youth indicated whether they would be interested in participating in a focus group. Youth also provided their parents' contact information, which was used to send parents an invitation to participate in a focus group. This process resulted in nine Youth Scholars participating in three youth-only focus groups and 10 parents (half whom were Parent Scholars and half who were not) participating in their choice of a parent-only focus group or one-on-one interview. We were unable to recruit Youth Scholars who were eligible for HOPE Toledo Promise but chose not to participate in the program. We believe that parents and youth who participated in focus groups and interviews were likely more motivated and engaged than the youth and parents who choose not to participate.

Reverend Jones provided a list of 12 community leaders with direct involvement in HOPE Toledo Promise. All leaders from the list participated in a Zoom interview lasting 45-120 minutes and included:

- President, HOPE Toledo
- Founder, HOPE Toledo
- Board Chair, HOPE Toledo
- Principal, Scott High School
- Superintendent, Toledo Public Schools
- Chief Philanthropic Officer, ProMedica
- President, Greater Toledo Community Foundation
- Business Executive, Plastic Technologies
- President, ProMedica Social Determinants of Health

- Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, University of Toledo
- Mayor, Toledo, OH
- Leader and Philanthropist, the Toledo Community

Using these data, we sought to answer the following eight questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the city of Toledo and Scott High School?
2. What are the characteristics of scholars who select into the program and those who do not, and what are key descriptive differences among them?
3. What experiences, positive and negative, are currently enrolled Youth Scholars, having in college?
4. What are the main barriers Youth and Parent Scholars faced in attending college, and in what ways did the scholarship influence their college going?
5. What experiences, positive and negative, are currently enrolled **Youth Scholars** having in college?
6. What experiences, positive and negative, are currently enrolled **Parent Scholars** having in college?
7. For families with both generations in the program, what interpersonal dynamics are taking place? In what ways were these dynamics promoting/not promoting the educational success of either or both generations?
8. What are the recommendations as identified by HOPE Toledo youth, parents, and community leaders?

Background

Two-Generation Education Programs

Two-generation education interventions have a long history, and they include many types of programming for parents and children alike. At the Northwestern Two-Generation Research Initiative, we think about two-generation programs in the 21st century in the following ways:

- A family-centered or two-generation strategy purposefully and systematically integrates services for parents and children with the goal of promoting the education and skills of both generations.
- Two-generation programs combine high quality, intensive educational programming for parents and children/youth in the same family at the same time.

Two-Generation College Promise Programs

- College promise, or free college, programs vary in their offerings but typically guarantee tuition coverage to students who meet certain requirements such as residing in a particular place or attending a specific school.
- Two-generation college promise programs are part of the larger field of two-generation education interventions and are designed to create intergenerational economic opportunity by providing a cost-free postsecondary education to a high school student and one parent (or legal guardian) at the same time.
- Current college promise programs typically focus solely on the youth, and promise programs centered only on the parent generation are rare. Notably, few college promise programs take a family focus.
- Figure 1 demonstrates the characteristics of two-generation college promise programs for youth and parents in the same family.
    - On one end of the continuum, youth-focused approaches typically center on college scholarships and supportive services for youth only or parents only (although these types of programs are rare).
    - There is some involvement of the other generation as youth- and parent- programs move toward the center of the continuum (e.g., FAFSA completion workshops for youth with parental involvement, parents increase their social capital translating to benefits for youth).
    - However, true two-generation education programs all recognize the interconnectedness of youth and parents and integrate services and supports for the whole family.

- In this instance, HOPE Toledo Promise employs a family-centered lens in its approach to a two-generation college promise program, with high-quality programming for both generations.

Figure 1

The Two-Generation College-Promise Continuum

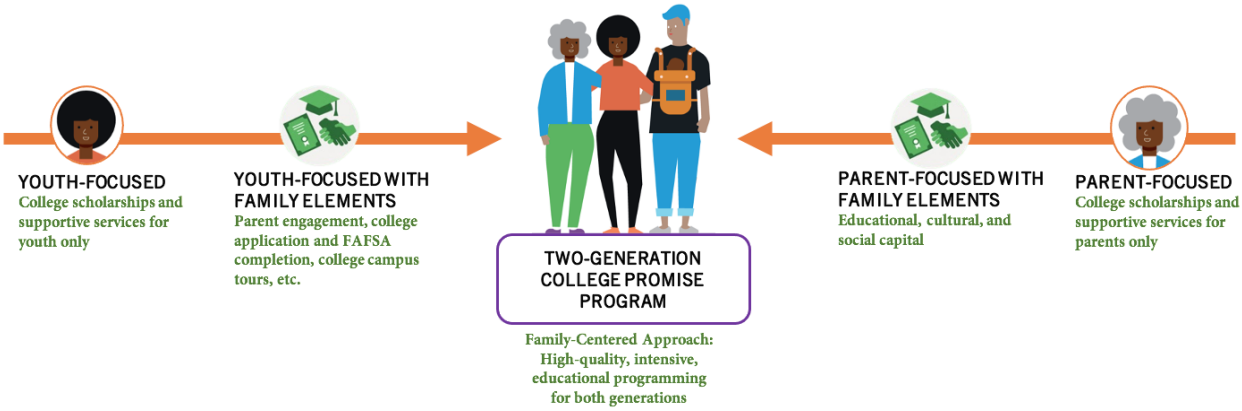


Figure 1 adapted from Ascend at the Aspen Institute (https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/resources/making-tomorrow-better-together).

Why do college and postsecondary education matter so much?

- Education is a central lever for advancement in the 21st century.
- Postsecondary education and skills training are essential in the 21st century economy.
- Students who attain a college degree are more likely to end up in the top 20% of the income distribution compared to students who only complete a high school degree, regardless of parent income.
- Students with a college degree or postsecondary certificate, on average, make 66% more than students who only complete a high school degree.

(Isaacs, Sawhill, & Haskins, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, n.d.)

What have we learned from the evidence on single-generation college scholarship programs, including promise programs?

- Fully-funded college scholarship programs are rare: Single-generation programs typically do not cover full tuition, room and board, and school-related costs.
- Few college scholarship programs have been studied rigorously: A 2020 meta-analysis identified only six college scholarship programs with experimental and quasi-experimental research designs.
- Impacts tend to be modest: Average impact across six programs: 10 percentage point increase in college enrollment among participants.

(Castillo, Collins, & Maynard, 2020)

Why would a family-centered approach be more successful than a program designed just for youth?

- Youth cannot be the only agents of change in their environment.
- For youth to change behavior, the context around them needs to change.
- The family is an environmental context that has a significant influence on youths' success.

(Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Davis-Kean et al., 2021; Sabol et al., 2021).

Parents and guardians have the greatest influence on youths' developmental trajectories over their lifetimes.

- Parenting is the primary engine of healthy or unhealthy youth development.
- Parents' educational attainment is linked to children's and adolescents' skill development and academic achievement, due to parents' beliefs and behaviors.
- Parents' education is also associated with their children's economic mobility through parents' careers, economic standing, and psychological wellbeing.
- Parents who have experienced educational and economic success may serve as educational role models and help youth develop strong academic and career identities.

(Akee et al., 2010; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn, 2014; Davis-Kean, 2005; Davis-Kean et al., 2021; Dubow et al., 2009; Duncan et al., 2014; Gennetian et al., 2008; Gardner et al., 2017; Felfe & Hsin, 2012; Heinrich, 2014; Liu, 2018; Magnuson et al., 2002, 2007, 2009; Sastry & Pebley, 2012).

Youth face many family-centered opportunities and challenges to their educational advancement.

- Low-income parents want to give their children more resources than they had, and they believe that a college education will improve their children's economic circumstances.
- Most parents seek to be good educational role models.
- Many parents do not directly connect their own educational success with their children's.
- As youth succeed in school, they may also inspire parents to meet their own educational goals.
- Many parents are not equipped to guide their college-going children on the best ways to succeed if they did not acquire higher education themselves. In turn, youth may be unable to rely on their parents for substantive support and counsel when in college.
- Youth may not experience a college-going culture at home or school, resulting in less motivation and preparedness for college.
- Youth from low-income families may feel more pressure to prioritize immediate employment and family care needs over education and/or provide financial support to their families.

(Sommer et al., 2012).

HOPE Toledo Promise

Core Programmatic Elements of HOPE Toledo Promise

High School Senior Scholarships: Every graduating senior at Scott High School is eligible for a fully funded scholarship to attend a postsecondary education program of their choice in Ohio, including career certification and AA and BA degree programs. The program covers tuition, room & board, books, and fees for up to 4.5 years after financial aid (excluding loans) is applied. Young Scholars also receive individual and group coaching.

Parent or Guardian Scholarships: For Young Scholars who are accepted into the program and who enroll in a postsecondary education program, one parent or legal guardian is also eligible to enroll in a postsecondary education program of their choice with the same financial benefits and supportive services.

HOPE Toledo Promise was recently offered to its first cohort of students: the 2020 graduating class of Scott High School in Toledo, Ohio and one of their parents or legal guardians. At this time, parents/guardians may only participate in the program if their child participates. Young adults ("Young Scholars") and parents/guardians ("Parent Scholars") in this cohort had the opportunity to enroll in a college, university, or technical school in the fall of 2020 and beyond. HOPE Toledo's innovative program has the potential to reframe how program and policy makers view college access and opportunities for a high-quality education.

Key Innovations of HOPE Toledo Promise

- Addresses the critical financial barrier to college enrollment and covers all college-related costs to complete a degree or career certification program.
- Takes a family-centered approach to economic mobility by financially supporting the education and career advancement of a disadvantaged youth and one parent (or guardian) at the same time.
- Puts youth and their families at the center of choosing an educational path forward and offers coaching to help HOPE Toledo Scholars make fully informed education and career choices that suit their skills, interests, and life circumstances.

Findings

What are the demographic characteristics of the city of Toledo and Scott High School?

The City of Toledo

Toledo is a mid-sized city of primarily White and Black residents with high school educations who are working but receiving low incomes.

The city of Toledo, where Jesup W. Scott High School is located, has a population of approximately 273,000 people living in 118,000 households. The city's residents are predominately White (59%) with a quarter of residents identifying as Black (27%) and less identifying as Latinx (9%). A large majority of residents aged 25 years or older have at least a high school degree (86%) but only 18% have attained a Bachelor's degree or higher. About a quarter of residents are living in poverty (26%) with the median household income of the city at approximately $38,000. Almost two-thirds of those aged 16 or older are in the labor force (62%).

Table 1

Statistics for the City of Toledo from the U.S. Census Bureau

Demographic Characteristics	
Population	272,779
Households	118,365
Race/ethnicity	
White	58.7%
Black or African American	27.4%
Hispanic or Latinx	8.6%
Asian	1.3%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.3%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.0%
Two or More Races	5.4%
Education[a]	
High school degree or higher	86.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	18.3%
Income and Poverty[b]	
Median household income	$37,752
Persons per household	2.3
In poverty	25.5%
In Labor Force	61.7%

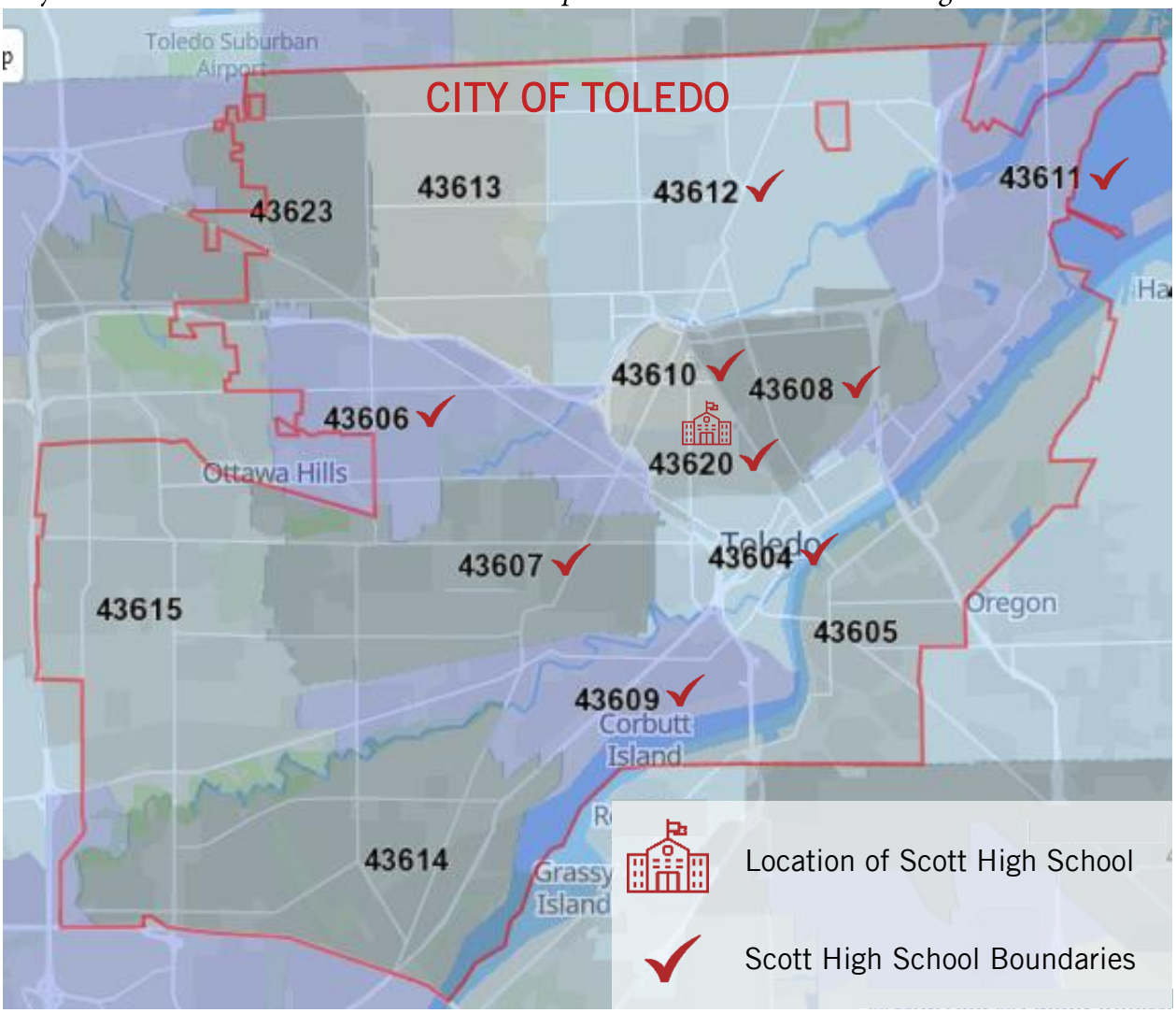
Note. City of Toledo statistics from the U.S. Census, 2019 estimates (www.census.gov/quickfacts/toledocityohio).

[a] Percent of persons age 25 years+; [b] Percent of persons age 16 years+

Scott High School is located in the Old West End neighborhood of Toledo (see school building icon in Figure 2). The boundaries for Scott cross multiple zip codes including 43620, 43610, 43612, 43608, 43611, 43604, 43609, 43607, and 43606 as depicted by the check marks in Figure 2. Toledo Public Schools offers intra-district open enrollment.

Figure 2

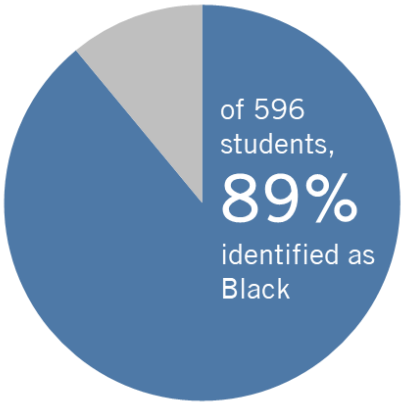
City of Toledo Borders Outlined in Red and Zip Code Boundaries for Scott High School



Jesup W. Scott High School

Scott High School serves around 600 students who primarily identify as Black. Graduating seniors had an average GPA of 2.30 and SAT score of 795.

Jesup W. Scott High School is one of 11 high schools in the Toledo Public Schools District. This mid-sized school is allocated Title I funding and implements a school-wide Title I program, suggesting that most, if not all, students come from low-income families[1]. During the 2019-20 school year, Scott High School enrolled 596 total students and employed 86 teachers resulting in a student-teacher ratio of 6.93. Students at the school identified predominately as Black (89%), followed by White (4%), multiracial (4%), Hispanic (2%), American Indian/Alaska Native (>1%), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (>1%). The average grade point average of the 2020 graduating class was 2.30 (out of 4.31[2]) and the average SAT score was 795 (out of 1600).



2.30 GPA

795 SAT

[1] Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides supplemental federal funding to state and local education agencies to help schools with high concentrations of students from low-income homes acquire additional education resources. A school-wide program uses its Title allocation to upgrade the entire educational program of the school in order to raise academic achievement for all students at the school.

[2] 4.31 represents the highest grade point average earned in the 2020 graduating class of Scott High School.

What are the characteristics of Youth and Parent Scholars who select into the program and those who do not, and what are key descriptive differences among them?

Scott High School Graduates and HOPE Toledo Promise Participation

Of the 116 Scott High School 2020 graduates, 54% participated in HOPE Toledo Promise and were noticeably distinct from non-participants.

Of the 116 graduates of the Scott High School class of 2020, almost 55% participated to some degree in HOPE Toledo Promise. This includes students who are currently participating and actively enrolled in a college, university, or school (38%) and those who started the program but dropped out or decided to stop for a short time with plans to return to school (16%). Some students initially expressed interest in HOPE Toledo Promise but did not commit to the program (18%). Approximately 28% of eligible students did not participate at all.

Table 2

Participation in HOPE Toledo Promise Among Scott High School Graduates

Group	Size	Proportion	
Currently Participating	44	38%	"Ever Participated"
Dropped/Stopped Out	18	16%	*n* = 62, 54%
Expressed Interest	21	18%	"Never Participated"
Never Participated	33	28%	*n* = 54, 46%
TOTAL	116	100%	

Noteworthy differences exist among students in the Scott High School 2020 graduating class, reflecting their participation in HOPE Toledo Promise. On average, students who ever participated in HOPE Toledo Promise (i.e., currently participating or dropped/stopped out) had a grade point average (GPA) approximately 0.50 points higher than students who never participated (i.e., expressed interest but did not commit or never participated). Further, those who had ever participated in the program scored, on average, 48 points higher on the SAT standardized assessment. Lastly, the likelihood of having an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for those who never participated in the program is more than double that of those who ever participated.

Table 3

Educational Status of Scott HS Graduates in HOPE Toledo Promise

Group	GPA avg	SAT avg	IEP status %
Ever Participated	2.53	814	19%
Never Participated	2.05	766	41%

Of the 62 eligible parents, 16% participated in HOPE Toledo Promise.

Parent eligibility for HOPE Toledo Promise was contingent on their young adult child's participation in the program (i.e., those currently participating or dropped/stopped out). Thus, 54 parents of the class of 2020 graduates were never eligible for the program. Of the 62 eligible parents with Youth Scholars who ever participated in HOPE Toledo Promise, a relatively small number (16%) actually participated, although additional program requirements were likely a limiting factor (i.e., parents who had yet to attain a GED or had already received a Bachelor's degree could not participate). Thus far, no Parent Scholars dropped or stopped out of the program once enrolled. Approximately 21% of eligible parents expressed interest but did not commit to HOPE Toledo Promise.

Table 4

Participation in HOPE Toledo Promise Among Eligible Parents of Scott HS Graduates

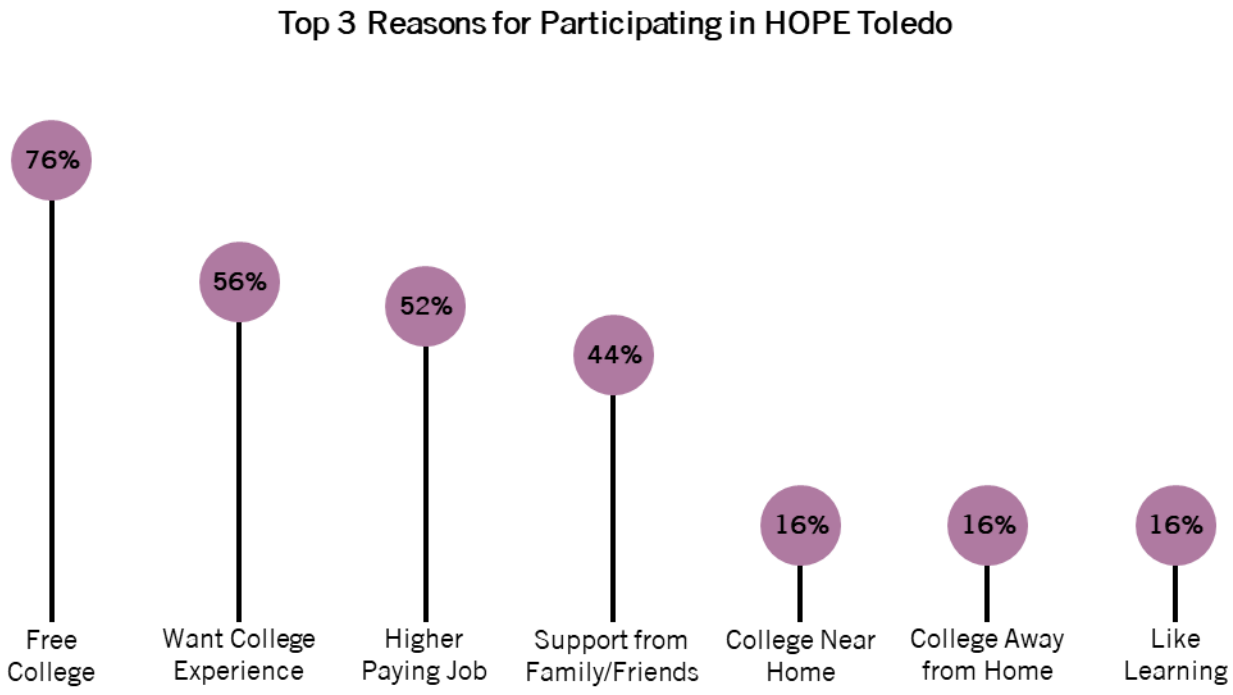
Group	Size	Proportion
Currently Participating	10	16%
Dropped/Stopped Out	0	0%
Expressed Interest	13	21%
Never Participated	39	63%
TOTAL	**62**	**100%**

What do we know about Youth Scholars and Parent Scholars in the program?

HOPE Toledo Promise Participation

Reasons for participating in HOPE Toledo Promise:
(1) Free college education,
(2) Wanting the college experience, and
(3) Opportunity for a higher paying job in the future.

Approximately three-quarters of Youth Scholars ranked the opportunity for a free college education or career certification among their top three reasons for participating in the program (76%). More than half of Youth Scholars identified with wanting the college experience (56%) and an opportunity for a higher paying job in the future (52%) as top reasons for participating. Slightly more than 40% of Youth Scholars ranked encouragement and support from family and friends as a chief motive for participation. Less than one-fifth of Youth Scholars ranked the opportunity to go to college near home (16%), the opportunity to go to college away from home (16%), and the fact they enjoy learning (16%) among their top three reasons.



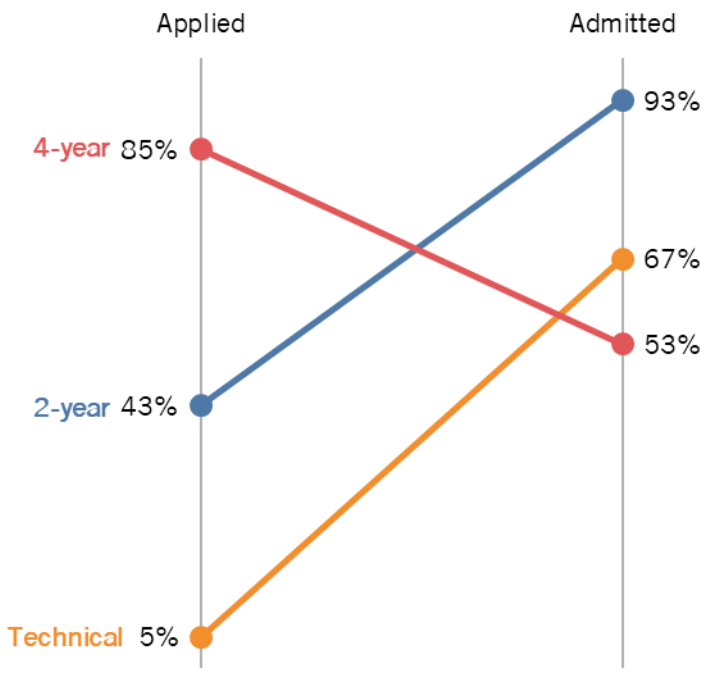
College Applications, Admittances, and Enrollment

Most Youth Scholars sought and enrolled in a four-year school.

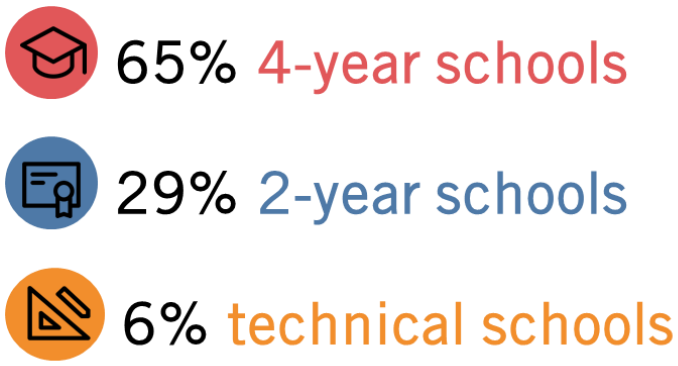
Of the 62 Youth Scholars who participated in HOPE Toledo Promise, a large majority applied to at least one four-year school (85%). Less than half of Youth Scholars applied to at least one two-year school (43%) and a very small number applied to at least one technical school (5%). Of the Youth Scholars who applied a four-year school, only about half were admitted (53%). Although most Youth Scholars did not apply to a two-year school, those who did saw very high rates of admittance (93%). This pattern was similar for technical schools (67%).

In the end, 65% of Youth Scholars chose to enroll in a four-year school. About 30% enrolled in a two-year school. Technical schools saw the lowest rate of enrollment (6%).

College Application and Admittance



College Enrollment



The majority of Parent Scholars enrolled in two-year schools.

Parents could only participate in HOPE Toledo Promise if their young adult child also participated. Of the 62 eligible parents, 10 parents participated in the program and enrolled in colleges, universities, and schools. Most parents (60%) attended a two-year school while less than half attended a four-year school (40%).

College Enrollment

40% 4-year schools

60% 2-year schools

Most Youth and Parent Scholars enrolled in schools near Toledo.

Youth Scholars enrolled in 11 different colleges, universities, and schools around the state of Ohio (with one Youth Scholar attending school in Michigan; see Figure 3). The school with the highest number of Youth Scholars was the University of Toledo (29%, *n* = 18), followed by Owens Community College (18%, *n* = 11), Lourdes University (13%, *n* = 8) and Central State University (13%, *n* = 8). Five students or less enrolled in Hocking College, Bowling Green State University, Paul Mitchell The School, Terra State Community College, Ohio State University, Wright State University, and the Toledo Academy of Beauty.

Half of the Parent Scholars enrolled in Owens Community College (50%, *n* = 5), and the remaining parents enrolled in the University of Toledo (*n* = 3), Bowling Green State University (*n* = 1), and Stautzenberger College (*n* = 1).

Figure 3

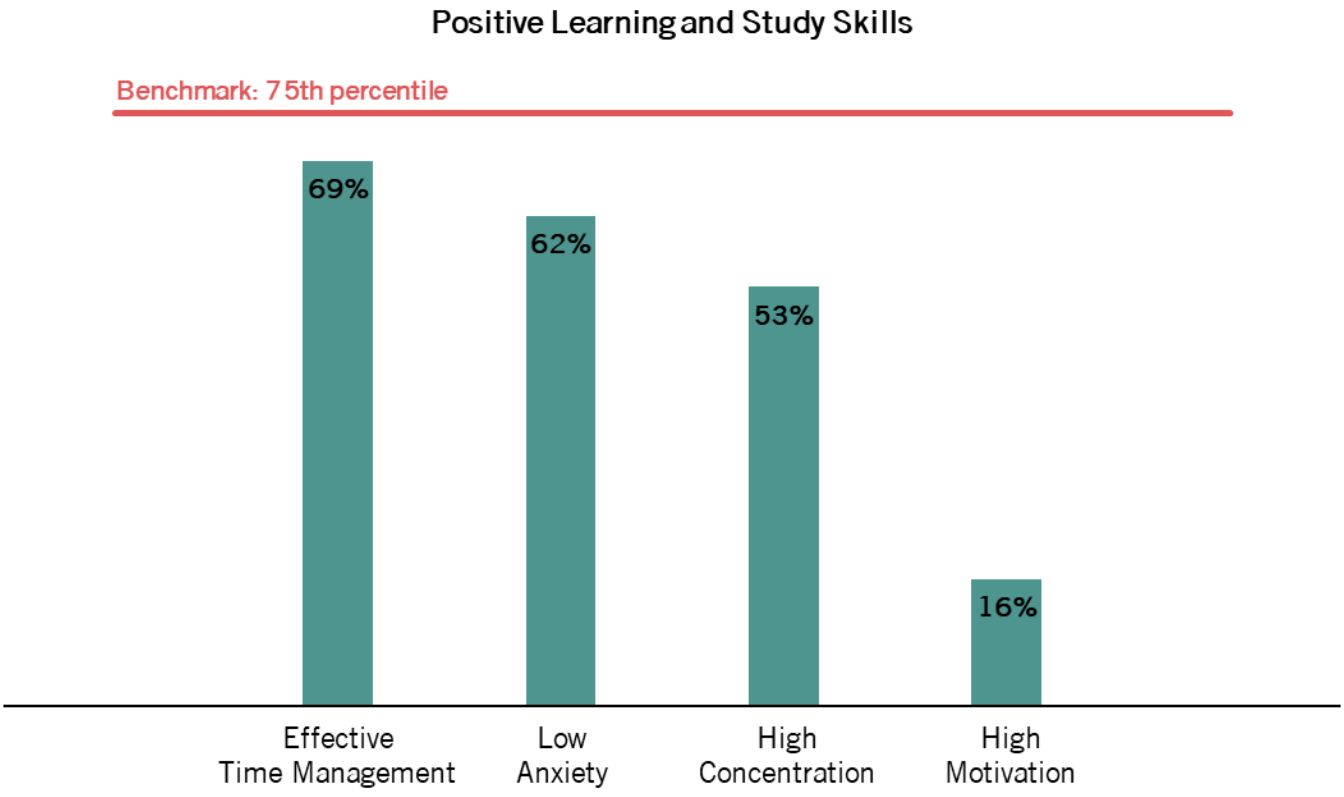
Colleges, Universities, and Schools Attended by Youth and Parent Scholars

Positive Learning and Study Skills

Most Youth Scholars need to improve their learning and study skills in college, especially academic motivation.

Learning and study skills were scored based on percentiles, or comparisons to a normed group of diverse college students across different institution types and various geographic settings. The 75th percentile serves as a benchmark to identify strengths and weaknesses of students' skills in relation to academic performance. Students who score below the 75th percentile on any domain should improve their relevant knowledge and skills to increase their chances of succeeding in a postsecondary setting, with particular attention paid to domains with scores below the 50th percentile.

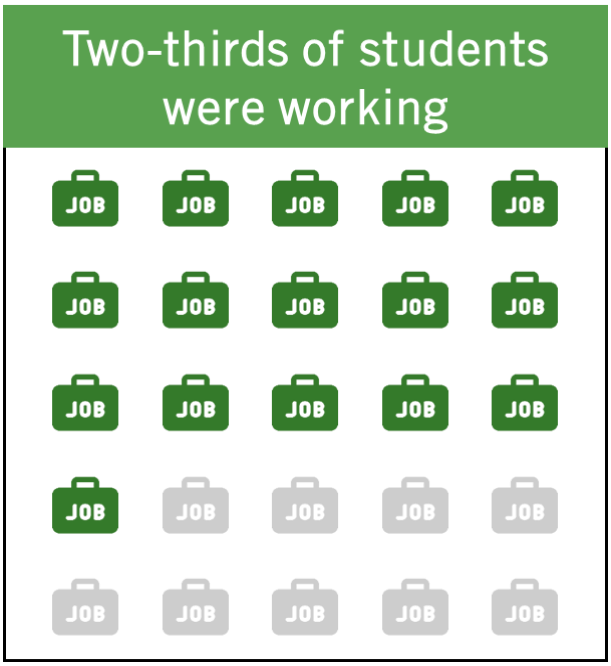
The average Youth Scholar percentile score on time management principles and practices for academic tasks (69%) came very close to meeting the 75th national percentile benchmark, and half of scholars scored higher than the 75th percentile in that domain. Slightly lower was the average Youth Scholar percentile score on the degree of anxiety and worry about school and academic performance (62%) and the ability to concentrate attention on academic tasks (53%). The average Youth Scholar percentile score on motivation and diligence to successfully complete academic requirements was extremely low (16%), and no scholars scored higher than the 75th percentile in that domain.



Employment and Career Identity

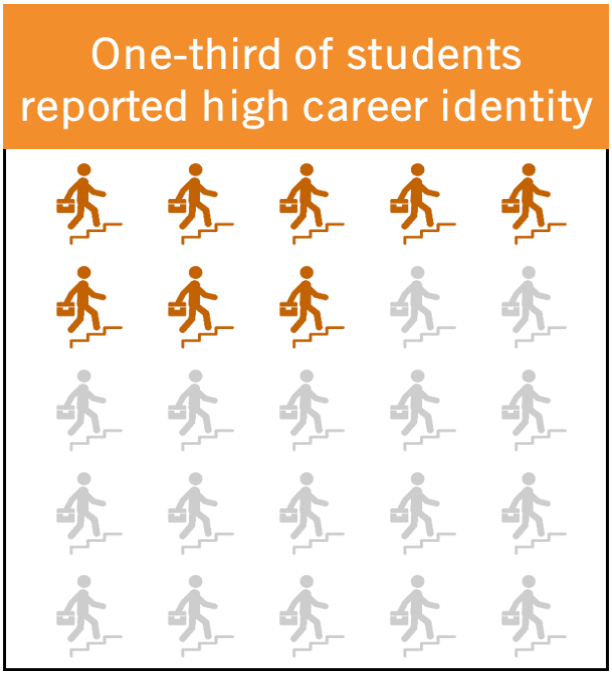
Most Youth Scholars were working part-time at entry-level service jobs.

Two-thirds of Youth Scholars were employed. Youth Scholars worked, on average, 24 hours per week with some students working as little as 6 hours and others working as much as 40 hours. Of the Youth Scholars working, almost 40% of them started their job within the first four months of school (i.e., September 2020 through December 2020). Youth Scholars worked at a range of places including fast food restaurants (e.g., Burger King, Krispy Kreme), supermarkets (e.g., Walmart, Meijer), and healthcare and assisted living facilities.



One-third of Youth Scholars reported a high sense of connection to their career.

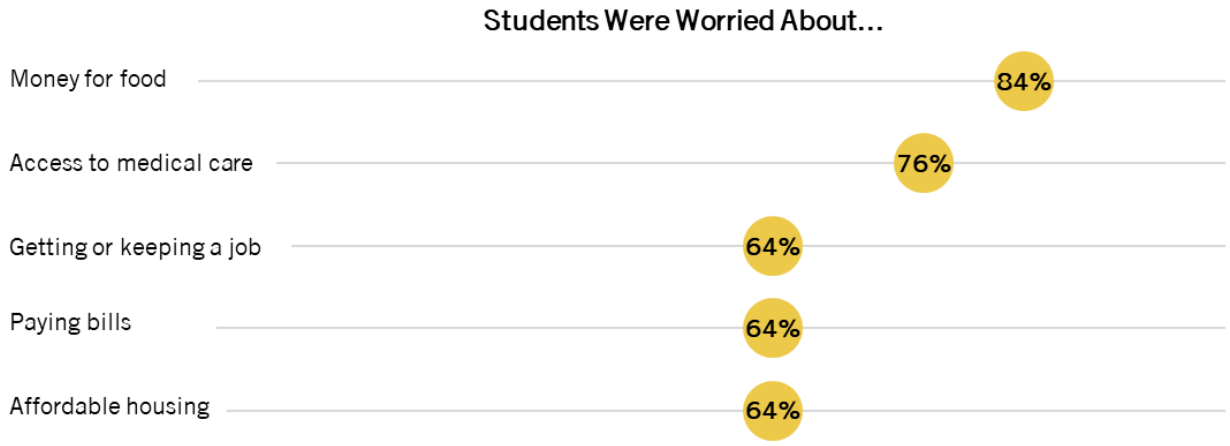
Almost 40% of Youth Scholars reported high career identity. Career identity reflects the importance of and commitment to career.



Financial Worries

**Youth Scholars had significant worries about finances,
with the highest concerns on money for food and access to medical care.**

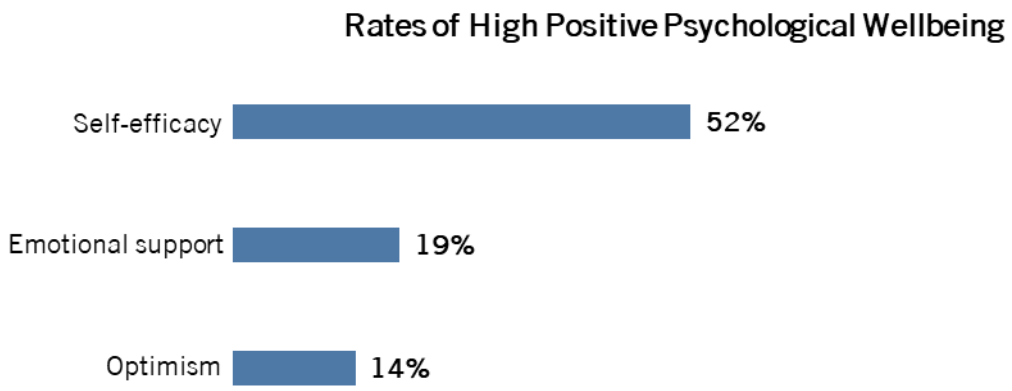
Almost all Youth Scholars reported being highly worried about having enough money for food (84%) and getting medical care if they or a family member became sick (76%). Approximately 65% of Youth Scholars were worried about getting or keeping a job, paying bills, and affording adequate housing.



Psychological Wellbeing

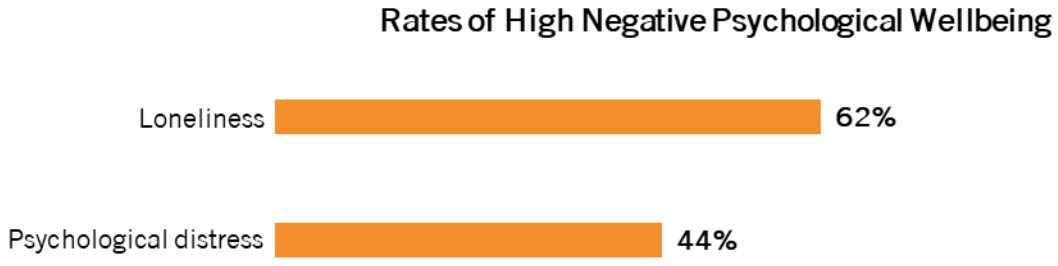
Half of Youth Scholars indicated high self-efficacy, but fewer reported high rates of emotional support and optimism.

Approximately half of students reported high rates of self-efficacy or feeling that they can reach their goals (52%). Less than one-fifth of Youth Scholars reported high rates of receiving emotional support from their support system (19%) and feeling optimistic and positive about the future (14%)



Most Youth Scholars reported high loneliness, while less than half reported high psychological distress.

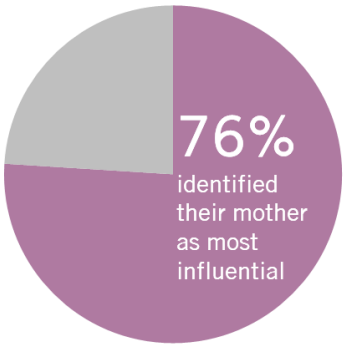
Many students reported feeling extremely lonely and disconnected from others (62%) but less than half reported high psychological distress stemming from depression or anxiety (44%).



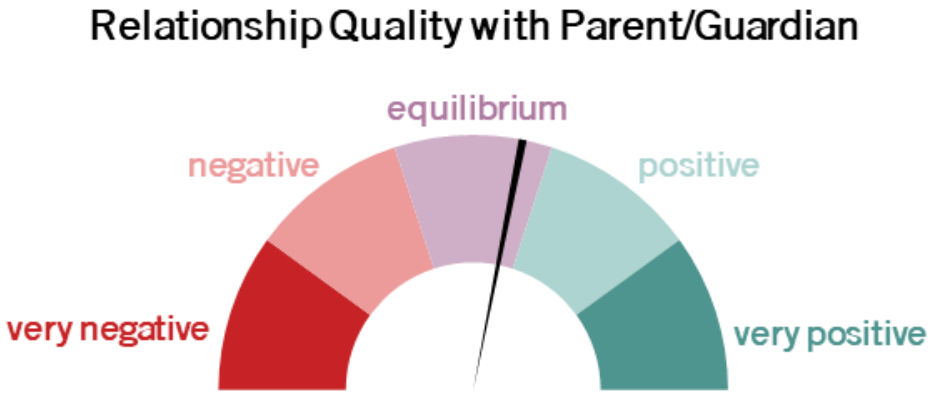
Relationship Quality

Most Youth Scholars selected their mother as the most influential person in their life and reported near-positive relationship quality.

Over three-quarters of Youth Scholars identified their mother as being the most influential parent or guardian in their lives (76%). Other Youth Scholars reported that they were most influenced by their father, grandmother, aunt, older sibling, or cousin.



On a scale of 1 (*very negative*) to 5 (*very positive*), Youth Scholars, on average, rated their relationship quality with their influential parent or guardian as 3.84 or very close to positive.



The following section summarizes the **voices and perspectives of youth, parents, and community leaders** who were involved in HOPE Toledo Promise during the 2020-2021 academic year. While they do not represent all points of view, especially among youth and parents, we believe that they represent the range of experiences of many of the program participants with a likely greater emphasis on the perspectives of more motivated and involved families.

What are the main barriers Youth and Parent Scholars faced in attending college, and in what ways did the scholarship influence their college going?

Paying for College: Primary Concern

Paying for college seemed to be the most significant barrier for Youth and Parent Scholars alike:

> "I just think about the weight that he lifted off my family's shoulders […] Now that all that is paid for, it lessens the burden of having to pay for college"
>
> –*Youth Scholar*

> "I think the organization has the right name, HOPE, because you can see, hope was instantly instilled […] And in not just in the kids, but the parents […] Kids didn't know how they were going to really pay for college […] But to know that higher education will be paid for, along with one parent or guardian. That is like a major relief for people."
>
> –*Community Leader*

Many Youth Scholars had already planned to go to college:

> "I was already going to college. I was already accepted into like four colleges before it happened […] So, I probably would still be in college"
>
> –*Youth Scholar*

For some Youth and Parent Scholars, the scholarship led them to decide to go to college over just working:

> "I'd probably work, like find a job if I didn't get the scholarship"
>
> —*Youth Scholar*

Free college seemed to be the highest priority among Youth Scholars, even if it may have meant deferring or denying their dream school:

> "It did change my original plans for what college I wanted to attend, but I'd rather not be in any debt than go to my dream school."
>
> —*Youth Scholar*

Yet for at least one Parent Scholar, the scholarship meant attending the school of their dreams:

> "I had a dream of going back […] But I couldn't juggle working and going to school full time […] So, I kind of gave up and I was so upset and disappointed with myself […] But that moment to realize I can go to UT [University of Toledo], which I have a son who just graduated from there, was like 'Wow, I can walk across that same stage as him' which is mind blowing."
>
> —*Parent Scholar*

Other Key Influences on Youth Scholars' Enrollment in College

Early college preparation, parents' college experiences, and self-identification seemed to influence Youth Scholars' decision to attend college. For some students, programs like Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) exposed them to the opportunity of college and helped prepare them for the experience:

> "At Scott, I was in this class called AVID, it was like a college preparatory class so everything that happens in college right now, I expected it to happen."
>
> —*Youth Scholar*

Youth Scholars also seemed to be influenced by the postsecondary education experiences of family members, including, for example, a mother and a sister:

> "She's been to college [Mom], so her and her friends was telling me about the college life saying, Just follow your dreams, this is your time, don't mess it up [...] She was telling me how fun it is to go out and experience and meet people, you know, experience life."
>
> —*Youth Scholar*

> "My sister, it's crazy because she got her master's two years ago in social work [...] So, it really did push me to achieve my goals and do bigger and better stuff with my life and with the scholarship as well."
>
> —*Youth Scholar*

At least one student saw themselves as no different from their peers, believing that their friends could also attend college like they did, despite the struggles they all faced:

> "For the ones who didn't partake in the scholarship, I know some of them [...] They are my friends [...] What I don't like is that they be telling me, You lucky. I'm like, how am I lucky, we had the same opportunity. [...] They just push me off as I'm this and I'm that, but the thing is we all had the same opportunity. So, don't be talking about I'm lucky—I don't want to hear it [...] Because I'm struggling just like y'all."
>
> —*Youth Scholar*

What experiences, positive and negative, are currently enrolled Youth Scholars having in college?

Transition to College

Many Youth Scholars seemed to enter the program with a limited understanding of college expectations and requirements, needing to adjust their expectations and approach as they grew in the experience.

> "Oh, my experience. I thought it was more like high school, but then I realized it was different. So, I've changed some things. Well, I learned some things from last semester and applied it to this semester, so now I'm doing better."
>
> –*Youth Scholar*

Current College Experience and COVID-19

HOPE Toledo Scholars were faced with the unique challenge of attending their first year of college during a global pandemic and did not have the full college experience. Adjusting to the online experience of learning was a challenge for many, although some thought grading was more lenient in this context. At the same time, students reported feeling that they did not have the typical college experience, including limited activities and opportunities to meet other students. The sense of isolation was clear and this isolation, combined with online learning, seemed to be tied to lower than usual motivation.

> "Well college, you know, at the moment isn't really all great […] You got the classes, you got everything else but, you're really lacking the experience. So for me, I was pretty much in my dorm all day, kids will try to go out and do something, but it was kind of dull. The seniors and juniors weren't there, and you know there's a lack of motivation too, honestly. So, right now, my experience is kind of like 'Meh'."
>
> –*Youth Scholar*

Supportive Services

Youth Scholars received supportive services from their universities and colleges, including mentors and advisors, who helped them navigate their college experience, choose courses and majors, and structure their time. There seemed to be variation in the level of support by the educational institution they attended.

> "My mentor we talk like every two weeks. He's helped me somewhat manage my time and figure out how to do separate things for these classes. So, that was very beneficial."
>
> –*Youth Scholar*

HOPE Toledo Promise's Core Foundation

HOPE Toledo President, Reverend John Jones, seemed to offer a core foundation for the college scholarship experience yet was in limited supply. He motivated students, helped organize their college application process, and provided advice where needed, whether concerning family, work, or school life. Reverend Jones was a one-person operation on the day-to-day and could not fully meet all student demands.

> "I know he handles the money [...] he's the HOPE Toledo guy [...] I'll say he's a role model, and everything. I feel like he's just a good organizer, for me at least, because like I don't know if I'd be able to get through a lot of things I'm getting through, if it weren't for him, like, in terms of letting me know when stuff is needed, know when we need meetings and everything."
>
> –*Youth Scholar*

> "John Jones is an overall good person. If you need any type of advice, life advice, family advice, school advice, he's one of the people that you can just call easily [...] you might have to call him a few times, you know, he's really busy but he's very understanding."
>
> –*Youth Scholar*

Peer Connections and Sense of Family

HOPE Toledo Promise seemed to reinforce high school and college peer connections students made and created a sense of family among Youth Scholars.

> "Like us, leaving high school, we would separate so Mr. Jones bring us together […] Those are pretty much like the only people I really talk to […] In my dorm building now. I got one, who went to Scott, he's on the floor above me and one is on the fourth floor. So, I do keep in contact with them all the time."
>
> –*Youth Scholar*

> "To me it feels like a family. For instance, I got scholarships outside of HOPE Toledo but it doesn't feel the same because we all know each other, and we meet often."
>
> –*Youth Scholar*

How Are Youth Scholars Doing?

Youth Scholars had a range of academic success in the program thus far. It appears that about a third were doing quite well academically while about 20% or more were doing poorly. The middle 50% seem to be performing around average. For at least a third of those top students, they likely would not have been able to attend college due to finanicial constraints.

> "Out of the 60-65 students, maybe 70 total participants that have been actively engaged […] at least 30% of them are flying pretty […] About 20% are flying really low […] the other 50% is somewhere on the bubble, somewhere between a 2.0-2.5 GPA […] Of the 30% that are flying high, half of them wouldn't have went […] Half of them wouldn't have gone at all because they wouldn't have had the resources to do so."
>
> –*Community Leader*

What experiences, positive and negative, are Parent Scholars having in college?

Transition to College

For many Parent Scholars, the idea of attending college at this stage in their life seemed challenging and even overwhelming given the many life demands including work and family. A lack of confidence in their ability to return or start college seemed to weigh heavily.

> "I just feel like, if us parents have been out of school for so long, it's kind of hard trying to balance, you know, 'Okay, I gotta go to school' [...] So, it's like work, school, Mom, amongst other things that I have to do."
>
> —*Parent Scholar*

> "So, it's been way over 20 years since I've been back, and then when doing an online class, I was really, really scared and really nervous [...] I quit probably 99 times before I even started. But with the help of my kids and my support team [...] I'm doing okay. I'm starting to really enjoy it."
>
> —*Parent Scholar*

Current College Experience and COVID-19

Many parents experienced difficulties in adjusting to on-line learning and the impact of attending college during a global pandemic. A lack of technological tools and skills seemed to hold parents back, although some felt they were able to catch up through this experience. Parents also reported that a lack of access to on-campus services due to COVID restrictions, which limited the level and type of support they sought out.

> "It was difficult for me because I'm not real computer savvy, and everything is online, so I had to learn. They told me the longer you keep practicing and messing with it, you'll learn it [...] So, I'm really learning and that's big [...] It's good to continually stimulate the mind and its really working."
>
> —*Parent Scholar*

> "If we wasn't going through this COVID, I probably wouldn't have had no issues because if I was on campus, I could go see a tutor or something right then and there. It would've been easier for me to access that support [...] But being that a lot of things were closed and all I could do is reach out on emails and try to do a Zoom chat; it was hard."
>
> —*Parent Scholar*

Supportive Services

At the same time, Parent Scholars also reported receiving academic supports from their colleges and universities including academic advisors, coaches, and tutors, which were mostly available online.

> "So, the classes that I took, I thought they were what I needed until I actually sat down with my academic advisor and coach, and they told me 'Here's the classes you're in now, and here is what you need.'"
>
> —*Parent Scholar*

Time Needed to Understand the Opportunity

Parent Scholars in general felt that they did not have enough time to consider and understand the scholarship opportunity and better understand how college related to their career goals and current life circumstances. Connections between educational programs available to them and their career goals were often vague, and most parents felt they needed additional time to reflect, digest, and plan.

> "I do not know what I want to be when I grow up, I still do not know. No, I'm teasing […] I did hospitality for 15 years and basically, I have a customer service base. I could move up into management, and eventually into the financial field but I kind of want to go towards education more […] I don't know exactly where I want to take it."
>
> —*Parent Scholar*

> "The stakes are higher [for parents] because you just don't have the latitude to find yourself at that age in life"
>
> —*Community Leader*

For families with both generation in the program, what interpersonal dynamics were taking place? In what ways were these dynamics promoting/not promoting the educational success of either or both generations?

Youth and Parent Scholars Face Similar Educational Challenges

Youth and Parent Scholars often seemed to feel that their knowledge and preparation for college were limited, and parent and child alike shared a sense of frustration and challenge. For some parent-youth pairs, this experience brought them closer together while for others, the conversation about a parent's interest in college were limited or non-existent.

> "I beat myself up for the lack of education that I have because, as he's coming in not really knowing anything, it's almost like both of us not knowing anything [...] Sometimes it's like they're speaking another language, but I'm learning to ask questions."
>
> —*Parent Scholar*

Mutual Learning and Support

Youth and Parent Scholars who were in the program together seemed to experience numerous opportunities for mutual learning and support in college, which were often in both directions. These included help with technology support, academic advice, and academic accountability.

> "My son has been helpful. And he has a best friend who is also part of the program, they assist me in things that are hard for me [...] Sometimes, if they need a little advice on something that they may be doing or an assignment we just kind of bounce ideas off of each other—motivation."
>
> —*Parent Scholar*

> "She was a support system. She would remind me 'Mom, did you do your homework? [...] She actually showed me how to navigate through Blackboard because I had no idea how to get to any of it without her."
>
> —*Parent Scholar*

Healthy Competition Across Generations

Two generations in college at the same time also seemed to foster healthy competition and motivation to achieve and persist among the pairs that were in college together. Some youth and parents even found humor in their shared experiences.

> "My daughter, me and her, we like to compete. So, my first semester I was like 'Let's make a bet. Whoever gets the best grades, we got to treat the other one out' [...] We just do a lot of competitions but it's all fun and games because it's basically uplifting each other, she's uplifting me to go back to school. I'm lifting her up to go, you know, follow her dreams and be whoever she wants to be. And it's kind of fun having a kid in college and I'm in college."
>
> —*Parent Scholar*

> "Competition for our grades. We be making like bets and stuff like who's going to have the best grades and stuff like for a reward."
>
> —*Youth Scholar*

> "I think it may be the little bit of motivation that's keeping him there, because he's watching me press through. [...] he's watching me still go and it is encouraging him to fight."
>
> —*Parent Scholar*

This section summarizes **program recommendations as identified by HOPE Toledo students, parents, and community leaders.** They represent the collective voices across participants and emphasize recommendations that were most discussed across all groups.

What are the recommendations as identified by HOPE Toledo youth, parents, and leaders?

Start the Program Earlier in the Lives of Youth

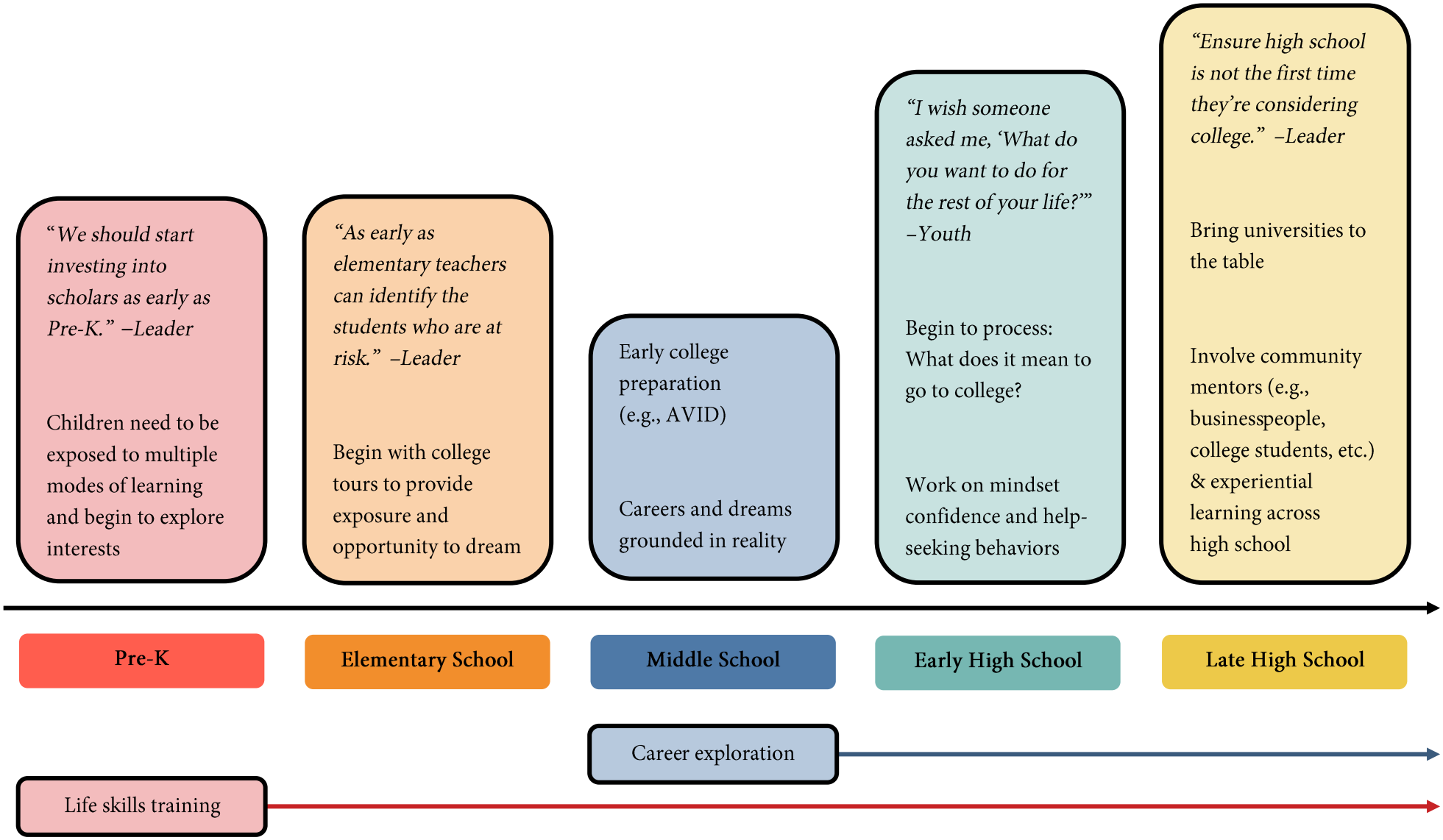
Youth Scholars, Parent Scholars, and community leaders universally agreed that HOPE Toledo Promise should start earlier and offer a range of options. The following timeline (p. 36) depicts the continuum of responses.

For some community leaders, investing as early as pre-K was essential, as they believed that children needed the educational foundation early in life to prepare for college in the long-term. Starting this early was the only realistic and viable option for a few leaders. For others, elementary school was the time to identify children who may be at-risk and begin intensive academic supports. These leaders also believed that elementary children could also begin early career exploration to "ground their dreams in reality." For some Youth Scholars in the program, they also expressed a desire to begin college preparation in middle school and believed that their early preparation (e.g., the AVID college prep course at Scott High School) was the key to their current preparedness for college. Others who heard about this type of program wished that they had been exposed to similar programming.

All participants agreed that senior year in high school was too late to begin thinking about college. Many believed that the first year of high school was the logical place to start, and that this process should involve questions for students such as "What do you want to do for the rest of your life?" and "What does it mean to go to college?" In this process, students would develop a college mindset and appropriate help-seeking behaviors. At the high school level, participants also believed that students would benefit from intensive mentorship and experiential learning opportunities (e.g., internship, apprenticeship) as well as direct exposure to universities and colleges.

If students were to be properly prepared for college, most leaders and scholars believed that students needed to develop education and skills training across all years of schooling. Most also thought that in-depth career exploration and exposure to the connections between education and careers should begin in middle school and continue throughout adulthood.

Qualitative Data from Youth, Parents, and Leaders on When and How to Invest in a Two-Generation College Scholarship Program



Invest in Parents When Children Are Young

Most community leaders believed it was critical to condition parents for postsecondary education while their children were young, supporting both generations at the same time. There seemed to be a view that it was never too early in a child's life to start supporting parents' education and career.

> "I would start in early childhood [...] I would start with focusing on the parenting and conditioning the parenting, giving parenting classes and education opportunities [...] Maybe you have parents who had not graduated high school [...] Provide mentors and caseworkers to work with these parents. Many parents lack the confidence as well [...] A lot of them didn't have experiences in school and so, that can be still a little intimidating today [...] And it may have been no fault of their own."
>
> *–Community Leader*

Also Invest in Parents When Children Are Older

Community leaders also seemed to support the notion that parents at any stage needed more time and supports to evaluate how school would help them in their careers at the present juncture in their lives. As parents increase their family care and financial responsibilities over time, the decision to return to school has more weight and consequence. It takes time and careful consideration across all aspects of life to add school.

> "I would tell parents, if you are interested at all in pursuing something, figure out what do you want to do, then come visit with us over the period of the next year or two and we will start you on a pathway. [...] And I'm not going to put a time limit on you like I did on your kid [...] Because I think the struggle is that a lot of these parents, with the opportunity being presented, they have no idea what they want to do. Secondly, the fear factor is immense."
>
> *–Community Leader*

> "Somewhere along the line parents start preparing themselves [...] Somewhere along the line, meaning when they recognize, 'If I attended school, there's an opportunity for me' they start preparing themselves as well [...] And I think that kind of gets locked out when it's the first year [...] You came here to support and find out what this great news was, then all of a sudden, now it's in your lap, and now I gotta make a decision and I really haven't sought out enough to make the best decision [...] And so, what you'll find is, two years from now, they'll be the ones who wish they would have, possibly, or are happy with their decision."
>
> *–Community Leader*

Promote School and Work Balance

Youth Scholars differed in their perceptions as to whether students should be expected to work while in school or receive a stipend for living expenses. Many felt receiving a living stipend would be useful to them, while some believed they would still work regardless as financial agency and autonomy was viewed as either absolutely necessary or highly desirable.

> "If I could get a stipend, I would not have this job. So yeah, I feel like the stipend would be beneficial if a program were to do that."
>
> –*Youth Scholar*

> "I would still work because it's something to do. So, if I'm not going to classes or doing homework or something. I can easily go to work and get quick money and not just be sitting in the house bored or just hanging out with my friends all the time. I'd just have something productive to do."
>
> –*Youth Scholar*

Provide Time to Familiarize with the Opportunity

Another universal tenet among scholars and leaders alike was that Youth and Parent Scholars needed more time to digest the scholarship opportunity and decide how it fit with their goals and circumstances. A subset also believed that Youth and Parent Scholars needed to have the message that they could start and stop as needed and that "failure" and in turn "second chances" were an option.

> "Of course, if you tell a group of kids that, 'You got free college' that they're going to want to go to college […] But they went through four years of high school thinking 'I'm not going to college' […] So, they prepared for four years not going to college […] And then for one day they just decided to go to college? […] Their minds just wasn't set on that, they had other things to worry about."
>
> –*Youth Scholar*

> "Some people just taking a major just because they friends are doing it […] I want to ask them 'What do y'all want to do? What do y'all want to be?' […] So, they can already know instead of getting here undecided and just doing what other people are doing or whatever they say because that's something that I've seen."
>
> –*Youth Scholar*

Increase Opportunities for Career Exploration

Again, almost all interviewees believed that both generations needed more time and knowledge to explore career opportunities and ground their dreams in reality no matter when the scholarship began, although the earlier the better to give sufficient lead time.

> "I really wish somebody would have told me, think about what you want to do for the rest of your life, you know, think about a career that you want to achieve [...] Make sure you know if that's something that you enjoy doing and start doing your research now."
>
> –*Youth Scholar*

> "Some of our students are young parents, some feel as though that they need to work right now to get things to provide for themselves and their families [...] and some maybe just not ready right now. [...] Some may be a little afraid of the unknown [...] College or a trade school may not have been on the forefront of their mind. And then when this opportunity came, it's like, Okay, I don't know if I want to jump right in right now."
>
> –*Community Leader*

Other Strategic Recommendations

Many community leaders believed in the importance of having TPS (Toledo Public Schools) and all school districts at the table as part of HOPE Toledo.

> "So, you know, ensuring that our school districts here in Toledo have a place at the table matters."
>
> –*Community Leader*

Community leaders also emphasize the importance of working in close partnership with post-secondary institutions to strengthen wraparound services including mentorship.

> "And wraparound services were very important. That's what that's why we continue to fundraise in behind Pete, to assure that we could fund some wraparound services. And again, to me, I'm going to go back to equity. It's one thing to say well fund your college, but I think some of those kids are gonna encounter some unique experiences, they haven't had the same opportunities and chances from a zip code over. And so, to me, the wraparound was very important, and it was always, because we want these kids to be highly successful."
>
> —*Community Leader*

> "I would have a much more robust ongoing mentorship program akin to THREAD. Every kid after freshman year, who has under a 2.0 GPA gets five mentors […] that's their thread to the community […] They meet every month from the age of 15 to 25. And that is their family, that is their structure, that is their network, that is the group who says 'You might be first generation, your parents might not have a lot of information, but we do […] We're your THREAD family' […] I wanted to set up something like that in Toledo, we just didn't have the bandwidth or the funding. But to me, if we could do that, and layer that onto what we're doing, our system or platform would be a lot more productive there and a lot more results oriented."
>
> —*Community Leader*

Community leaders agreed that promise programs like HOPE Toledo must have more robust staffing, including those who support students while in secondary school and those that help build a coalition of support in the community.

> "Making sure that we're doing what John does which is interacting with our counselors at the college levels and universities [...] But also interacting with our counselors at the high school levels to make sure that they're making sure that the kids and their parents know 'How do I apply for FAFSA dollars? How do I apply for other grant funding that might be available to help me go to college? How do I determine if I want to go to college?' [...] On the opposite end of the spectrum having someone that can really focus on building coalition, building collaboration, and building that culture in our community [...] Help everyone understand that it's going to take everyone—every corner of our community."
>
> —*Community Leader*

> "Hire a team to do career exploration, mentoring, advising, and peer support which includes a scholarship coordinator to process scholarships with the universities including fees and due dates [...] Also, a graduation success coach/post-secondary navigator to help students navigate through post-secondary culture, careers, and requirements as well as life issues that may come up with about 20-25 kids each."
>
> —*Community Leader*

Conclusions and Considerations

HOPE Toledo Promise is a college-scholarship promise program for graduating high school seniors of Jesup W. Scott High School and one parent or guardian in Toledo, Ohio. Toledo is a mid-sized, low-income city with a high proportion of White and Black families, most of whom do not have a college education. Scott High School, one of 11 high schools in the Toledo Public School system, serves mostly Black students from low-income families who are striving to improve their schooling and academic achievement. The program was offered in January 2020 to the 116 members of the 2020 graduating class for the following academic year, and most graduates either participated or expressed interest in the program. A small group of eligible parents also participated.

This report of findings from the implementation study of the HOPE Toledo Promise inaugural class draws upon a combination of quantitative and qualitative data on Youth Scholars, Parent Scholars, and community leaders. A central conclusion is that HOPE Toledo Promise seems to be working effectively in important ways for the Scott High School graduates and their parents. Yet, there is also room for improvement.

Youth and Parent Scholars Were Motivated to Participate but Many Were Underprepared for the Rigors of College

HOPE Toledo Promise provided an unprecedented opportunity for a Youth Scholar and one parent to attend college free of cost. The program addressed this number one concern for youth and parents alike. At the same time, the late nature of the announcement is one reason that some students were often not well prepared psychologically or academically, as indicated by low grade point averages and SAT scores, to attend college. Other Youth Scholars had already been actively planning for college and the scholarship supported their plans, although some students switched from their dream school to the debt-free option afforded by HOPE Toledo Promise. For some Parent Scholars, the program provided the opportunity to pursue an unfulfilled dream or finish what they had started in the past. In addition, approximately one-quarter of the 2020 Scott graduates never participated or expressed interest in the program. We hypothesize that this may be due to lower academic performance, but other reasons may also exist that warrant attention.

Although the students who participated in HOPE Toledo Promise were more academically prepared than their non-participating counterparts, they still needed improvement in their learning and study skills. As a group, Youth Scholars did not report key positive markers of learning success, including effective time management, low anxiety, high concentration, and high motivation as compared to other college students in the country, although some individual scholars did meet or exceed these indicators. The low motivation among Youth Scholars was

particularly concerning given its relation to academic achievement and the fact that no individual scholars scored highly in this domain. This may be a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and a yearlong virtual learning environment with social distancing that lacked the true college experience Youth Scholars sought. Future study of the program during a more normalized, non-pandemic year will illuminate these issues further.

HOPE Toledo Program Design Fosters Connection and Support Among Youth Scholars, although Parent Participation was Lower Than Expected

HOPE Toledo's program structure seemed to foster connection that supported Youth Scholars' success while in college. Reverend Jones and his monthly meetings created a family-like atmosphere for participants that also included strategic and instrumental guidance. Youth Scholars also seemed to benefit from having high school peers in the program and at college, as well as from the mentors and advisors they experienced in college.

Parent Scholars were only able to enter HOPE Toledo Promise if their young adult child participated. Further eligibility criteria required that parents had already attained a GED while not yet obtaining a Bachelor's degree. Although understandable, these requirements may have seriously limited the number of parents who could participate in the program. At the same time, parents who entered the program were persistent and remained in it. Future research would examine the restrictive criteria for parents as a possible reason for the higher rates of nonparticipation.

Youth Scholars Pursued Four-Year Schools While Parent Scholars Pursued Two-Year Schools, Both with the Goal of Improved Education and Careers

While Scott High School graduates may not have been fully academically prepared for college, they appeared to understand the benefits of a postsecondary degree in the current economy and for their future. To that end, most Youth Scholars sought and enrolled in four-year schools with a smaller proportion who sought and enrolled in two-year schools. Youth Scholars may have felt pressure to attend four-year schools, the type of institution that traditionally defines "college", rather than two-year schools which often suffer from negative stereotypes (e.g., not academically rigorous, "second rate"). Furthermore, the four- and two-year schools generally chosen by the Youth Scholars were in Toledo and the surrounding area. Youth may have felt more comfortable and secure going to a school close to home, particularly if they were uncertain about college or felt unprepared. Interest and enrollment in technical schools was very small. It remains an open question whether there should be a greater focus on career training and higher enrollment in technical or career schools.

In contrast, Parent Scholars were more interested in two-year schools, rather than four-year schools. Parents may have decided on two-year schools for several reasons: smaller class sizes, increased access to faculty, more flexible schedules, and an older and more relatable student population. It is also possible that parents had a better understanding of the connection among career certification, employment, and earnings. Like the Youth Scholars, Parent Scholars enrolled in colleges close to Toledo, which was likely due to their inability to move given their responsibilities at home, work, or in the community.

Youth Scholars Had High Rates of Employment Yet Significant Financial and Other Worries Remained

Most Youth Scholars reported very high concerns about their finances, many of which were fundamental to survival such as money for food and medical care. These concerns were evident despite that most Youth Scholars were employed and working part-time in low wage jobs. Interestingly, a third of scholars reported a high sense of connection to career even though they were still quite young. It is possible that exposure in college and exploring majors and careers led to higher levels of career identity. HOPE Toledo Promise addresses many financial barriers for participants but clearly, youth have additional needs and concerns that were and likely remain unfulfilled.

Youth Scholars Are Making Progress Toward Their Goals with Mostly Close Familial Relationships Despite Low Psychological Wellbeing

Over half of Youth Scholars reported high self-efficacy or the ability to achieve their goals, which suggests HOPE Toledo Promise was effective in advancing educational goals among participants. Additionally, many students seemed to have near positive and close relationships with their influential parent or guardian, who was most often their mother. However, the apparent loneliness and lack of emotional support and optimism reported by Youth Scholars suggests that they need more explicit opportunities for connection. This may be somewhat alleviated as colleges, universities, and schools return to in-person learning and social gatherings and youth feel less isolated. Youth Scholars may also benefit from more intensive mentoring and increased peer connection through HOPE Toledo Promise meetings. In addition, some Youth Scholars reported high psychological distress, which may be related to the unique experiences of the past year.

COVID-19 seemed to have a largely detrimental impact on Youth Scholars. Online learning seemed to decrease motivation and limit connection, possibly explaining the high levels of loneliness and somewhat less common psychological distress. Students who lived on campus in dorms reported feeling isolated and lacking the typical college experience of activities, parties, and regular, in-person engagement with peers, faculty, and administration. Future research

during a more normal period will help disentangle the effects of COVID-19 and general life stress.

HOPE Toledo Promise Experienced Two-Generation Success, Mixed Academic Performance, and Some Participation Challenges in its Inaugural Year

The two-generation approach seemed to work as intended: Youth and Parent Scholars were largely positive about the motivational and instrumental support they received from one another and felt camaraderie in facing school-related and life challenges together. Nevertheless, Youth Scholars' academic achievement was mixed: some were thriving, some were deeply struggling, and most were somewhere in between. Among the Parent Scholars who enrolled in the program, they seemed to have positive experiences, especially in engagement with their own Youth Scholars through healthy competition and guidance in study habits and technology use.

While participation among youth was reasonably high, participation among parents was relatively low. Some parents were faced with program barriers (e.g., already achieved a BA or needing to obtain a GED), while others had to confront their own fears and lack of clear direction as to how apply the scholarship to fit their goals and life circumstances. Parents seemed to need more time and direct support to help understand the educational opportunities available to them and how these opportunities related to their career goals. At the same time, some parents wanted to focus their energies primarily on their own Youth Scholar, not themselves. Other barriers faced by parents included the care needs of younger children, the demands of a current job, and the necessity of both generations working to support the family.

Students and Leaders Recommend Improvements to HOPE Toledo's Design, Partnerships, and Staffing

Youth, parents, and community leaders offered a range of recommendations for HOPE Toledo Promise program improvements. These included:

- Start the program earlier in the lives of youth.
- Invest in parents' education when children are younger (even as early as pre-K).
- Offer more flexibility and time for youth and parents to process and learn about how the scholarship opportunity and how it benefits their families.
- Provide relevant supportive programs at an earlier phase that are oriented toward career exploration, the local employment opportunities, and the chance to ground dreams in reality and develop a deeper understanding of steps toward career goals.

Other strategic recommendations included:

- Increased collaboration and involvement with Toledo Public Schools to prepare students for success in college (*Note:* TPS superintendent is on the board of HOPE Toledo).
- Improved partnerships with postsecondary institutions, including more extensive mentorship and wraparound services.
- More robust staff of HOPE Toledo Promise, including the following additional staff:
    - Scholarship coordinator to process the scholarships in collaboration with postsecondary institutions.
    - Postsecondary navigator to help students link education, careers, and employment while in college.

Looking Ahead: The Future of HOPE Toledo Promise

In this section, we draw from all data in this implementation study to consider possible future directions of HOPE Toledo Promise.

Impacts of COVID-19 on this Cohort of Scholars

The first year of HOPE Toledo Promise occurred during a worldwide pandemic leaving many students without extracurricular activities and in virtual learning environments that hindered social connection, increased boredom, and left students often feeling isolated and unmotivated. Future study of the next cohort of Promise scholars is needed to better understand experiences in times that are more normal. The program has undoubtedly provided a key financial asset for students to pursue their educational dreams. Yet the pandemic dramatically changed the educational, economic, and social contexts under which students were studying and working.

Support for a Two-Generation, Family-Centered Approach

The true innovation of HOPE Toledo Promise is that it takes an intensive, family-centered educational approach. Extensive theory and empirical evidence from developmental science theory supports this innovation. Youth cannot be the only agents of change in their environments, and parents have greatest influence on youth's developmental trajectories over their lifetimes. Parents' education is associated with children's economic mobility, and parents who have experienced education and economic success may serve as educational role models, helping children and youth develop strong academic and career identities.

Overall, there was a high degree of support in the community and among families for HOPE Toledo Promise's novel two-generation strategy. As one leader expressed, centuries of structural racism cannot be solved in one generation. So far, the program has shown some initial benefits to simultaneous investment in youth and parents. Among those with both a Youth and Parent Scholar, families experienced mutual motivation and support and even healthy competition. Notably, youth, parents, and community leaders did not express downsides for the two-generation approach, but more research is essential.

How Early to Invest in Youth and Parent Scholars?

It was universally agreed that the HOPE Toledo Promise scholarship should be offered earlier in the lives of youth and parents. For example, everyone involved in this program believes that youth should learn about the scholarship opportunity much sooner—at least as early as the first year of high school. Additionally, when the college scholarship is offered, parents especially need

plenty of time to explore how the program would benefit them while also addressing familial and work needs and fears about school at an older age.

Some leaders have stated that support for the education, workforce, and career training for parents could also begin much earlier with at least some initial educational engagement and career exploration when children are in preschool. This suggestion augurs well for much closer ties between the Promise program and the Pre-K investments of HOPE Toledo at present. A cutting-edge strategy that could connect Pre-K and Promise would be to offer parents who enroll their children in the Pre-K program the opportunity to also enter an intensive career training program in a high-demand field in the local economy (e.g., healthcare or teacher education, including early childhood education). No matter what strategy is chosen, most agree that parents and children need opportunities for career exploration and skill development across the life span. It is never too early to invest in the education and careers of either generation.

How Much is Enough?

There was also healthy debate about how extensive of supports a two-generation college scholarship should provide. Youth Scholars expressed extreme gratitude for the scholarship itself, and some felt they should not ask for further assistance, such as stipends for living expenses. Work for many was helpful in structuring their time and developing a sense of economic independence, yet youth expressed high financial worry for basic needs (e.g., food, healthcare). Were any students successfully making it financially? Is coverage of only school-related costs enough? What were the material and psychological costs and benefits of additional financial assistance? These issues may be elucidating a fundamental dichotomy for students: the need for agency and independence in the face of many structural, racial, and financial barriers.

College versus Career Focus?

Youth and Parent Scholars all seemed to struggle with the connection between what they pursued in school and how it related to careers and income. We know that some Youth Scholars started to develop a career identity, yet it is unknown whether their course of study will ultimately lead to career employment and earnings. Most Youth Scholars applied to and attended four-year educational institutions while most Parent Scholars applied to and attended two-year colleges. Currently, there is an increasing focus on training for specific industries in the 21st century marketplace over college per se. HOPE Toledo Promise should seriously consider the tradeoffs between these approaches for its Youth and Parent Scholars. Should there be a greater focus on career training and certification? Who would benefit most from this approach? What types of supports are needed before, during, and after college to make this approach viable and successful?

Will HOPE Toledo and its Novel Two-Generation Approach Continue?

HOPE Toledo Promise is a novel strategy for promoting intergenerational economic opportunity within low-income families. This one-of-a-kind program has not only changed the lives of Scott High School graduates and their parents, but it has also influenced what was thought possible for college scholarships by purposefully targeting two generations.

> "If you keep asking the question 'Why? […] Why are people living in inappropriate housing? Why do they have food issues?' […] You'll eventually have to arrive and understand it is the outcome of 400 years of systemic racism in this country [..] And if you understand that, then the need is not limited to one age group […] And I think what Pete was able to do is help tear down some barriers, some inequities, some disparities, and do it not just for a younger generation, but for that parent group […] I thought that was powerful recognition that 'Look, the need doesn't stop at a certain age'"
>
> *–Community Leader*

Even so, whether program funding for HOPE Toledo Promise will continue is a major concern among community leaders. Leaders are grateful for the early investment of Pete Kadens and the Kadens Family Foundation, yet the future is highly uncertain. Community leaders do not want to be part of a well-intentioned effort that began with strong investment and then fades away.

> "I think it's gone much slower than we thought. But when you're pushing a marble up the hill, it's gonna take a lot of steam to get there and a lot of folks […] And people are coming along slowly but surely […] I know there's some frustration on Pete's side a little bit. If I had one big question is what happens in two years to the scholarship side, I just don't know. Because I know he is not looking to continue to do this forever. And ProMedica can't. Although ProMedica put some big money in, but I don't see any of the other corporations stepping up to put big nickels in."
>
> *–Community Leader*

Conclusion

Despite difficult circumstances, HOPE Toledo Promise has begun to achieve its family-centered vision as the first comprehensive two-generation scholarship program in the country. The program overcame a late announcement, little time for planning and designing the program, too small a staff, and, most importantly, implementation during a global pandemic. HOPE Toledo Promise has met many hopes, ambitions, and needs of the families it was designed to serve. HOPE Toledo Promise could stand as a model for the nation but only if there is expanded community engagement and new sources of funding in and beyond Toledo.

Appendices

Method

Overview

The Implementation Study involved six core data components that were collected and/or analyzed February through June 2021:

1. Census data on the city of Toledo from the U.S. Census Bureau
2. Administrative data from Toledo Public Schools on the 2020 graduating class of Scott High School ($N = 116$)
3. Administrative data from HOPE Toledo on Youth and Parent Scholars ($N = 72$)
4. Survey of Youth Scholars ($n = 25$)
5. Focus groups of Young Scholars ($n = 9$) and Parent Scholars ($n = 10$)
6. In-depth interviews with program leaders, staff, and partners ($n = 12$)

A researcher's positionality—their identity, experiences, and worldview—influences all aspects of the research process including how research is conducted, interpreted, and presented (Holmes, 2020; Rowe, 2014). It is impossible for researchers to "escape the social world we live in to study it" (Holmes, 2020, p. 3). Thus, it is critical to make transparent how the identities of researchers relate to the research topic and to the identity of participants (Roberts et al., 2020). To that end, the Northwestern research team consisted of six racially and ethnically diverse women: three members self-identified as multiracial, two members self-identified as White, and one member self-identified as Black. Two of the team members were parents and two members were undergraduate college students. One group of four research team members were first-generation college students and another group of four members had their own direct experience with a college scholarship program, whose eligibility requirements included family income level and prior academic achievement. The diversity of the Northwestern team allowed for a unique opportunity to collaborate and incorporate team members' insider-outsider perspectives during the research process. However, "academic researchers represent centers of power, privilege, and status" within and beyond their institutions of higher education, which can lead to an inherent power differential in the researcher-researched relationship (Muhammed et al., 2016, p. 2). The data collection team consisted of one Northwestern team member and three current HOPE Toledo Youth Scholars, all of whom self-identified as Black. The positionality and experiences of the data collection team likely facilitated their ability to recruit and establish rapport and trust with study participants, most of whom were Black and were part of the HOPE Toledo program.

Census Data

Information on the city of Toledo was drawn from publicly available data ("QuickFacts") from the United States Census Bureau (https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/toledocityohio). QuickFacts presents frequently requested statistics from many Census Bureau censuses, surveys, and programs using data from 2010 to 2019.

Administrative Data

Scott High School and the 2020 Graduating Class

Information on Jesup W. Scott High School, such as total number of students and teachers, student-teacher ratio, and the racial/ethnic composition of the student body was compiled from publicly available data from the National Center for Education Statistics (https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/school_detail.asp?ID=390449005361). Toledo Public Schools provided administrative data on the 116 graduates of the Scott High School 2020 class, including grade point average, SAT score, and Individualized Education Plan (an IEP documents the special education instruction, supports, and services for a student) status.

Youth and Parent Scholars Participation in HOPE Toledo Promise

HOPE Toledo provided administrative data categorizing the 116 graduates of Scott High School into different program participation groups: currently participating (n = 44), dropped/stopped out (n = 18), expressed interest but did not enroll (n = 21), and never participated (n = 33). We conceptualized those who were currently participating and dropped/stopped out as having "ever participated" (n = 62) as these students at least started the program and enrolled in college. Meanwhile, those who expressed interest and never participated were conceptualized as "never participated" (n = 54) as they never truly began the program by enrolling in college. HOPE Toledo's administrative data was then merged with data from the Toledo Public Schools to understand the academic preparation of those who did and did not participate in the program. HOPE Toledo also categorized *eligible* parents (n = 62) into the four program participation groups previously described: currently participating (n = 10), dropped/stopped out (n = 0), expressed interest (n = 13), and never participated (n = 39).

HOPE Toledo provided information on the 62 youth and 10 parents who ever participated in the Promise program, including the specific colleges Youth and Parent Scholars applied to, were admitted, and ultimately enrolled in. Colleges were coded into three categories: four-year (e.g., University of Toledo), two-year (e.g., Owens Community College), and technical/vocational schools (e.g., Paul Mitchell The School).

Survey of Youth Scholars

A 20-minute online survey was sent electronically to the 62 Youth Scholars, with 25 Youth Scholars (40%) successfully completing the survey by June 2021. The survey encompassed four domains: (1) demographic characteristics, (2) learning and study skills, (3) psychological wellbeing and career identity, and (4) home life and family functioning. Many measures included in the survey are well established in the research literature.

Demographic Characteristics

Youth Scholars provided basic demographics such as age, gender, race and ethnicity, and employment information. Youth Scholars ranked their top three reasons for deciding to participate in HOPE Toledo Promise from a list of eight options: (1) opportunity for free college education or career certification, (2) opportunity for a higher paying job in the future, (3) encouragement and support from my family/friends, (4) opportunity to go to college near home, (5) opportunity to go to college away from home, (6) I like learning, (7) I want the college experience, and (8) other (an option to fill in their own reason not previously listed).

Learning and Study Skills

Youth Scholars completed the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI, Weinberg et al., 2016), an assessment encompassing positive learning and study skills over four domains: (1) time management, (2) anxiety, (3) concentration, and (4) motivation. Youth Scholars answered six questions on a 5-point scale from 1 = *not at all typical of me* to 5 = *very much typical of me* for each domain. Example items include:

- Time management: "I end up 'cramming' for every test."
- Anxiety: "Even when I am well prepared for a test, I feel very anxious."
- Concentration: "If I get distracted during class, I am able to refocus my attention."
- Motivation: "I do not put a lot of effort into doing well in my courses."

Once completed, scores on the LASSI were compared to the scores of a diverse group of college students (e.g., age, gender, race/ethnicity) across the United States at different types of institutions (e.g., community college, four-year college) in various geographic locations (e.g., New England, Mountain, Pacific, Mid-Atlantic). The 75th percentile serves as a benchmark to identify strengths and weaknesses of skills in relation to academic performance. For example, students who score above the 75th percentile often do not need to work on the skills or strategies for that domain. Students who score below the 75th percentile on any domain should improve their relevant knowledge and skills to increase their chances of succeeding in a postsecondary setting, with particular attention paid to domains with scores below the 50th percentile.

Psychological Wellbeing and Career Identity

Youth Scholars completed well-established assessments of positive psychological wellbeing in three domains: self-efficacy (6-item State Hope Scale; Snyder et al., 1996), emotional support (8-item Emotion Battery: Emotional Support FF Age 18+, Gershon et al., 2013), and optimism (10-item Revised Life Orientation Test; Scheier et al., 1994). In addition to answering questions on positive aspects of their psychological wellbeing, Youth Scholars completed two assessments of negative psychological wellbeing regarding loneliness (5-item Emotion Battery: Loneliness FF Age 18+; Gershon et al., 2013) and psychological distress (6-item Kessler 6; Kessler et al., 2002). Example items include:

- Self-efficacy:
    - "Right now, I see myself as being pretty successful." 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*
    - Raw mean scores of 1-4 were dichotomized to show the percent of students who responded, "Strongly agree" or "Agree" to most items (i.e., have a mean of 3 or more on the scale), which we consider highly self-efficacious.
- Emotional support:
    - "I feel there are people I can talk to if I am upset." 1 = *never* to 5 = *always*
    - Raw scores were converted to standard scores (or "T-scores"), in which a T-score of 50 represents the mean of the US general population (based on the 2010 Census) and 10 T-score units represents one standard deviation. T-scores above 60 suggest high levels of emotional support.
- Optimism:
    - "I'm always optimistic about my future." 0 = *strong disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*
    - Raw mean scores of 0-4 were dichotomized to show the percent of students who responded, "Strongly agree" or "Agree" to most items (i.e., have a mean of 3 or more on the scale), which we consider highly optimistic.
- Loneliness:
    - "I feel alone and apart from others." 1 = *never* to 5 = *always*
    - Raw scores were converted to standard scores (or "T-scores"), in which a T-score of 50 represents the mean of the US general population (based on the 2010 Census) and 10 T-score units represents one standard deviation. T-scores above 60 suggest high levels of loneliness.
- Psychological distress:
    - "During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel that everything was an effort?" 0 = *none of the time* to 4 = *all of the time*
    - Sum scores of 13 or more represent high psychological distress (https://www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/ncs/k6_scales.php).

Youth Scholars answered 10 questions relating to their commitment to careers using the Work Role Salience Questionnaire (Greenhaus, 1971). An example item includes "I enjoy thinking about and making plans about my future career" rated from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. Raw mean scores of 1-5 were dichotomized to show the percent of students who responded, "Strongly agree" or "Agree" to most items (i.e., have a mean of 4 or more on the scale), which we consider high career identity.

Home Life and Family Functioning

On a scale of 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *a great deal*, Youth Scholars indicated how worried they were regarding five financial domains: paying bills, getting or keeping a job, getting medical care if they or a family member became sick, having enough money for food, and affording adequate housing (derived from the New Hope Project). Raw mean scores of 1-5 were dichotomized to show the percent of students who responded "Great deal" or "Quite a bit" to most items (i.e., have a mean of 4 or more on the scale), which we consider high financial worry.

Youth Scholars were asked to identify the parent or guardian who most influenced them. Youth Scholars then answered 14 questions regarding their relationship quality with this influential parent or guardian using the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Adam & Chase-Lansdale, 2002; Armsden & Greenburg, 1987). An example item includes "I depend on my {parent/guardian} for help with my problems" rated from 1 = *never true* to 5 = *always true*. Raw mean scores of 1-5 were dichotomized to show the percent of students who responded "Always true" or "Often true" to most items (i.e., have a mean of 4 or more on the scale), which we consider positive parent/guardian-child relationship quality.

Focus Groups of Youth and Parent Scholars

Focus groups with Youth and Parent Scholars lasted approximately 75 minutes and were conducted over Zoom Video Conferencing by two members of the Northwestern team. We asked youth about their decision to enroll, current experiences in and out of college and with the program, and employment. We asked parents about their own educational experiences, connections between child's education and their own, and important program components. Sample questions include:

- HOPE Toledo Reactions
    - What was your reaction when you first learned about the HOPE Toledo Scholarship?
- HOPE Toledo Scholarship Influence on College-going
    - In what ways did learning about the HOPE Scholarship program influence your decision as to whether to go to college? In what ways did it influence where you

decided to go to college? What do you think you would be doing right now if you were not part of the HOPE Scholarship Class of 2020?

- Current College Experience
    - What are your current college experiences like? What social interactions have you had with other students in school? What interactions have you had with other HOPE Toledo Scholars?
- Current College Support
    - What supports or programs are you currently receiving to help you succeed in college? What supports have been the most helpful? What supports (including financial) or services would you like going forward?
- Current Employment
    - What kinds of work for pay are you currently doing? In what ways does working benefit/challenge you in going to college and studying? What are some reasons you decided not to work?
- HOPE Toledo Strengths and Improvements
    - If you were going to tell a friend about what you like the most/the least about this program, what would you say? What are some recommendations you have for strengthening the program going forward?
- Two-Generation College-Going
    - What is it like to be in college at the same time as your parent/child? In what ways does having both generations in college at the same time make school easier/harder? Does having both generations in college at the same time change your family dynamics at home? If so, in what ways?
- Ideal Program Design for College and Career Success
    - If you could design a program to help other students/parents succeed in college and careers, what would that program involve?

At the end of the survey, youth indicated whether they would be interested in participating in a focus group. Youth also provided their parents' contact information, which was used to send parents an invitation to participate in a focus group. This process resulted in nine Youth Scholars participating in three youth-only focus groups and 10 parents, half who were Parent Scholars and half who were not, participating in their choice of a parent-only focus group or one-on-one interview. We were unable to recruit Youth Scholars who were eligible for HOPE Toledo Promise but chose not to participate. We believe that parents and youth who participated in focus groups and interviews were likely more motivated and engaged than the youth and parents who choose not to participate.

Interviews with Community and Program Leaders

Revered Jones provided a list of 12 community leaders with direct involvement in HOPE Toledo Promise. All leaders from the list participated in a Zoom interview lasting 45-120 minutes. Interviews were conducted over Zoom Video Conferencing by two members of the Northwestern team. We asked leaders and partners about current experiences, expected benefits and challenges of the program, and ideas for program improvement. Sample questions include:

- HOPE Toledo Partnership
    - Please describe the partnership you and your organization have with HOPE Toledo. What aspects of the partnership are working well? What are some areas for improvement and what needs to happen in your organization/HOPE Toledo for these improvements to occur?
- Key Challenges
    - What are some key challenges you see facing low-income young adults in Toledo are planning for and going to college?
- Addressing Challenges
    - In what ways are HOPE Toledo addressing these challenges? What are some areas for improvement with the program?
- Benefit of Two-Generation Scholarship Program
    - What are the benefits of offering a college scholarship program that supports a youth and parent in the same family at the same time? What dynamics have you seen occurring between the youth and parent? What are some drawbacks to this approach?
- HOPE Toledo Strengths and Improvements
    - If you were going to tell a colleague about what you like the most/least about the HOPE Toledo program, what would you tell them? What are some recommendation you have for strengthening the program moving forward?
- Ideal Program and Design for College and Career Success
    - If you could design a family-centered college scholarship program for low-income families in Toledo, what would the program ideally involve? In what ways would it be similar/different to HOPE Toledo?

Analytic Strategy

Quantitative Data (Census, Administrative, and Survey Data)

The Northwestern Quantitative Team included an early career researcher working with one undergraduate research assistant. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau and National Center for Education Statistics were not manipulated but simply identified and transposed into this report. Quantitative data analysis of administrative and survey data consisted of descriptive statistics using frequencies (i.e., percentages) and means (i.e., averages).

Qualitative Data (Focus Groups and Interviews)

The Northwestern Qualitative Team included a long-term experienced researcher working in conjunction with three other research assistants. These research assistants were trained in qualitative methods and had their own direct experience with a college scholarship program. The team meet regularly over several months to thematically code the data, develop memos on themes and subthemes, and to write up the results together. The team first analyzed the data by separate subgroups (Youth Scholars, Parent Scholars, and community leaders) and then across all data sources. Team members debated how to best to use qualitative evidence including direct quotes and descriptions to frame themes and subthemes, involving an interactive group process that helped to reduce bias and produce the most objective results possible.

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