



Date: July 14, 2006

To: CEI Funders and Board Members

Re: CEI Final Program Report for 2005-2006:

As Executive Director of Children's Empowerment, Inc., I am pleased to provide the enclosed Final Report for our programs in Daly City, California for the 2005-2006 school year. CEI is an independent non-profit working closely with the Jefferson Union High School District and the Jefferson Elementary School District to provide in-school and after-school academic assistance to underachieving students. The programs described are financed by generous grant awards of a number of local Foundations and are directed by CEI.

This year's activities included our School Within a School program for a select group of at-risk freshman and sophomore students, our after-school Grad Zone and Learning Zone centers for students at Jefferson High School, our after-school Learning Center at Pollicita Middle School, and our Summer School program for entering freshman to Jefferson High School. The enclosed report covers our activities from August 2005 to July 2006. Without your assistance, over 400 students would not have had the opportunity to experience and benefit from our successes this past year.

If I can answer any questions or provide any additional information, please feel free to contact me at anytime. We continue to appreciate your support and interest in our efforts.

Sincerely,

Spencer Holeman
Executive Director



Annual Program Report for 2005-2006

Spencer Holeman, Executive Director

Table of Contents

2005-2006 Annual Program Report	3
Policy Background.....	3
CEI's Academic Improvement Program.....	6
1. Learning Center Program at Thomas R. Pollicita Middle School, Daly City, California.....	6
Program Description.	6
Program Goals and Objectives.....	7
This Year's Program Outcomes.	7
2. Summer High School Transition Program at Jefferson High School, Daly City, California	8
Program Description.	8
Program Goals and Objectives.....	8
This Year's Program Outcomes.	9
3. Learning Center Program at Jefferson High School, Daly City, California	10
Program Description.	10
Program Goals and Objectives.....	11
Recent Program Developments.	11
4. School Within a School (SWAS) Program at Jefferson High School, Daly City, California	13
Program Description.	13
Program Goals and Objectives.....	13
This Year's Program Outcomes.	13
5. College Readiness Program at Jefferson High School, Daly City, California.....	16
Program Description.	16
Program Goals and Objectives.....	16
This Year's Program Outcomes.	16
Conclusion	17

2005-2006 Annual Program Report

Children's Empowerment, Inc. (CEI) is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation that provides in-school and after-school academic programs to at-risk middle and high school grade students in Daly City, California. Founded in 1999, we have been working in Daly City since 2000 in partnership with local school districts. CEI focuses on students in underperforming Daly City public schools who want to achieve but face formidable economic, cultural, and linguistic barriers to their educational success.

Policy Background

New research continues to offer strong support for CEI's program designs, goals, and objectives.

Failure to Complete High School is Expensive for Students as well as our Country. The extremely high cost of so many students failing to complete high school, not only to high school dropouts as individuals, but to society as a whole, is becoming increasingly clear. According to a study conducted by Henry Levin, professor of economics and education at Columbia University, a high school dropout earns \$260,000 less over a lifetime than a graduate and pays about \$60,000 less in taxes.¹ With 23 million dropouts between the ages of 18 and 67, the loss of tax revenues alone to the federal and state governments is more than \$50 billion a year. The lost income attributable to the failure to complete high school is \$192 billion or 1.6% of GNP for *each* cohort of 18 year olds that drops out. Because high school graduates are less likely to commit crime, increasing the high school completion rate by just 1% for all men ages 20 to 60 would reduce costs for the criminal justice system by \$1.4 billion *each* year. Moreover, life expectancy for high school dropouts is 9.2 years shorter than for graduates.

Commonly Reported Graduation Rates are Unreliable. It is also becoming clear that erratic record keeping from state to state makes it impossible to find out how schools in one area of the county compare to those in others.² In calculating graduation rates, some states simply write off students who drop out in grades 9, 10 or 11, allowing them to report a graduation rate based on the number of graduates who began the year in the senior class. Some also include subsequent GED recipients. A recent study, prepared with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is based on a more realistic calculation, comparing the number of 18 year olds with the number of high school diploma recipients in

¹ Henry Levin and Nigel Holmes, *New York Times*, November 7, 2005.

any given year.³ It reported California's actual graduation rate to be 71%. California reflects national trends with higher dropout rates among boys than girls, in urban school districts, and among African-American and Latino youngsters.

Jefferson High School, home to most of CEI's programs, follows state policy in calculating the graduation rate as "the number of graduates divided by the sum of 9-12 dropouts in consecutive years, plus the number of graduates," yielding rates of 97% in 2002, 95.3% in 2003, and 96.3% in 2004.⁴ Jefferson's registrar has offered a more realistic calculation, specifically that of the senior class of 246 in academic year 2005-06, 47 failed to graduate (19%) on June 16, 2006.

By continuing to build a vertical system of support for underachieving, at-risk Daly City students throughout their academic careers, CEI seeks rapid improvement in the graduation rate at Jefferson High School as student cohorts we are assisting move towards graduation.

Lack of Fluency in English Depresses Academic Achievement. Locally, one reason for the unacceptably high dropout rate is the large number of English Language Learners (ELLs) in our high schools.

Although California has about 12% of the nation's population, its schools are responsible for educating more than 40% of the nation's ELLs.⁵ Most (85%) speak Spanish, but ELL students speak more than 50 other languages. Not surprisingly, ELL students' test scores in academic subjects consistently fall below those of students who are native speakers of English. In Academic Year 2003-04, 206,573 of students in the Bay Area (21.2% of total enrollment) were ELLs. More than a third of all students below the fifth grade in California schools lack English proficiency.

In the 2005-06 school year, Jefferson High School's student body was 44.7% Hispanic, 35.1% Filipino, 7.7% African American, 4.9% Caucasian, 4.1% Asian, 2.9% Pacific Islander, and 0.6% American Indian/Alaska Native.⁶ Approximately 70% of the school's students come from families where English is not the first language. Many students are not natives of this country, having arrived here as children from over 32 different nations. ELLs comprise approximately a fifth of all students. Of the ELL students, 46.8 % are native speakers of Spanish; 31.6 % of Filipino languages; and 5.4 % of Cantonese Chinese.

² Graduation in the Eye of the Beholder, *New York Times* Editorial, June 24, 2006.

³ Daniel Losen (Harvard University Civil Rights Project), Diplomas Count: An Essential Guide to Graduation Policy and Rates, *Education Week* Vol. 25, June 22, 2006.

⁴ *School Accountability Report Card for the School Year 2004-05*, published during 2005-06.

⁵ Public Policy Institute of California, *Research Brief*, Issue #99, April 2005.

⁶ *School Accountability Report Card*.

School data summarized below shows the percentage of racial, ethnic, and other subgroups achieving at one or more levels below proficiency for the California State Standards tests during the most recent testing period:

California State Standards Testing	African American	Asian	Filipino	Hispanic or Latino	Pacific Islander	White (non-Hisp.)
English-Language Arts	83%	75%	70%	77%	87%	68%
Mathematics	89%	80%	93%	96%	93%	90%

California State Standards Testing	Male	Female	English Learners	Economically Disadvantaged	Students With Disabilities
English-Language Arts	75%	74%	94%	80%	96%
Mathematics	93%	95%	95%	94%	100%

Analysis at the subgroup level shows that certain groups such as ELL students and students with disabilities are lagging in language based skills, while these and other groups such as Hispanics, are lagging in mathematics.

CEI has been making and will continue to make these groups the targets of special focus in its programs.

After School Programs Yield Pro-social Dividends. According to a recently-released After School Teen Survey, conducted by the California Afterschool Network, students who are left unsupervised three or more days per week after school are more than twice as likely to hang out with gang members and more than three times as likely to use illegal drugs.⁷ These results were confirmed in the same study by 86% of students surveyed who believed after-school activities help teens stay safe and out of trouble.

These results also confirm what Daly City school administrators and students in our after school Learning Centers have told us, and we will continue to offer and make continuous improvements in these programs. CEI has recently submitted a proposal for a Carol M. White Physical Education Program to the U.S. Department of Education which, if funded, will expand the scope of our after school program to include a comprehensive fitness for life program, emphasizing good nutrition and healthy living habits as well as physical exercise. This kind of a program is very much needed given the problems obesity poses for many of our school-age children.

Smaller Learning Communities are the Wave of the Future. Research findings support the notion that high school students are more successful when they attend small schools. These schools foster student achievement, including grades, test scores, attendance, and graduation rates, as well as reduced drug and

alcohol use and improved school safety.⁸ Acknowledging these benefits, Jefferson Union High School District strongly backs the conversion of Jefferson High School, with a current enrollment of 1,267 students, into smaller learning communities.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges cited CEI's programs fifteen times in its accreditation report for Jefferson High School this spring as a "valuable partner and advocate for Jefferson High School parents and students" and as a motivator of positive changes in the school.

CEI has supported the school district's plans for creating smaller learning communities by lending key support recently to a Smaller Learning Communities proposal submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

CEI's Academic Improvement Program

CEI's Academic Improvement Program currently includes: (1) the Learning Center at Pollicita Middle School (assisting 59 students), (2) the Summer Transition Program for Pollicita graduates at Jefferson High School (40 students), (3) the Learning Center and Grad Zone at Jefferson (about 75 students daily), (4) the School Within a School (SWAS) Program at Jefferson (78 students), and (5) the College Readiness Program at Jefferson (180 students), which taken together serve a total of 432 unduplicated students. These programs provide a continuum of support for local at-risk students at Jefferson High School and at Pollicita, which is Jefferson's principal feeder school. Last year we served 29% of Jefferson's total student enrollment (1,267) and 8% of Pollicita's (740). We are pleased to provide you with this 2005-2006 Final Report on our programs.

1. Learning Center Program at Thomas R. Pollicita Middle School, Daly City, California

Program Description. This was the second full year of operations for CEI's Learning Center at the Thomas R. Pollicita Middle School in Daly City. The Learning Center offers underperforming students the only place they have after school that is a safe environment in which to learn. Besides tutoring, CEI challenges these younger students educational games that help develop their self-esteem and their ability

⁷ California Afterschool Network Update, June 27, 2006, based on reporting in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, June 22, 2006.

⁸ Michael Klonsky, *Small Schools: The Numbers Tell a Story* (Chicago, 1998).

to work with others. CEI also provides a variety of healthy sandwiches, snacks, fruits and drinks each day.

The tutoring program at Pollicita is carried out by a team of advanced placement and honors students from Jefferson High School, the destination school for most of the Pollicita Middle School Students. All of them are themselves ethnic minority students who have successfully overcome adversity in their pursuit of academic accomplishment. The tutoring takes place after school in four classrooms, overseen by supervisor tutors, who are now college students (from San Francisco State University, City College of San Francisco, and Skyline Junior College) and former tutors at Jefferson and students at Pollicita. They are ethnic minority students who serve as outstanding examples of academic success and are now eager to assist younger students who are attending the same schools they once attended themselves. This project structure makes it possible for the program to operate with a maximum of involvement by young people who know these schools, these neighborhoods, and these younger students well.

Program Goals and Objectives. The goals of this program were to provide one-on-one and group tutoring to at least 50 students per day and to provide all participants with a healthy, after-school snack. The program's desired quantitative outcomes were that (1) an average of 50 students or more will use the Learning Center each day, (2) at least 100 students will report using the Learning Center at least 4 times per month, (3) at least 50% of Pollicita's highest risk students (those with a GPA of 2.0 or lower) will access help at the Learning Center, and (4) at least 75% of students using the Learning Center will report that it has been useful to them.

This Year's Program Outcomes. Pollicita administrators recommended 93 students to the program this year, more than 12% of the school's total enrollment of 740 children. This year, administrators did not restrict their recommendations to students who simply were thought to be at-risk of failing (with GPAs under 2.0) but among them those who were motivated for and focused on improvement. We were also glad to accommodate some parents who specifically requested that their children be enrolled in the program. Approximately 59 students attended regularly (15 eighth graders, 14 seventh graders, and 30 sixth graders). Despite positive attitudes, these students have been far behind since elementary school and many have had to cope with family and gang-related problems at home. At the end of the year, 33 of the 59 regular attendees showed improvement in their GPAs while another 10 remained stable. Pollicita administrators told us that these students' GPAs would probably have gone down without their participation in the program. There were many cases of remarkable improvements by individual students. An eighth grader being raised by grandparents, on probation, and with a criminal record, improved a full grade level from 1.06 to 2.06. Another eighth grader being raised by a single mother who

was recovering from the trauma of many deaths in his family raised his GPA from 1.28 to 2.0. An eighth grader on Pollicita's basketball team improved from 1.56 to 2.96. A shy, underachieving eighth grade special education student improved from 1.87 to 3.0. He is an award-winning trumpet player in the school band. Two other special ed students were able to raise their GPAs from the C level to the B level. Even students who made modest gains benefited from the program. A Yemeni immigrant student, a seventh grader who was picked on and involved in fights with fellow students last year, really settled down and is "out of harm's way" this year, improving his GPA from 1.78 to 2.2.

Pollicita's administrators thought that this year's focus on students who "wanted help and were willing to make the effort" worked out well. They praised the calm, learning-oriented environment promoted by CEI's well-trained tutors and noted that Pollicita's teachers have said they can "see a difference" among students assisted, that they "do the right thing, they get their homework done." Our tutors stressed the importance beginning by teaching the students basic rules, like respect for fellow classmates and raising hands before speaking, and then moving on getting equipped for school (CEI provided supplies like pencils, pens, notebooks, and rulers) and acquiring good study habits. They were particularly proud of a seventh grade student who started off with poor math and science grades and a GPA below 2.0 who went on to become an honor roll student with straight As.

2. Summer High School Transition Program at Jefferson High School, Daly City, California

Program Description. The Summer High School Transition program, which CEI offered for the first time last summer, is designed to assist middle school students in making a positive transition, both socially and academically, to high school. The program aims to provide 40 eighth graders at the Pollicita Middle School with vital connections to their new school, Jefferson High School, using the power of peers helping peers, to insure academic and social success in a safe and caring community.

Program Goals and Objectives. The Transition Program's objectives were: 1) make students aware of the rigorous reading and writing demands of a high school curriculum, (2) assess and improve students' abilities in the areas of reading, writing, and comprehension, (3) train students in strategic reading by developing a toolkit of reading strategies that students can utilize to access information across the curriculum, especially in English and science, (4) lay a positive foundation for reading, writing, and academic attitudes and behaviors, and (5) sustain academic growth from the previous year by keeping students engaged in academics during the summer.

This Year's Program Outcomes. CEI's first summer school program took place June 22 through July 29, 2005, concurrent with Jefferson High School's regular summer school program schedule. Forty students destined for Jefferson High School were selected for the program by Pollicita Middle School administrators. They were all at-risk youth, some very introverted and child-like, while others were extroverts with behavioral problems. Pollicita Middle School administrators have told us that 10-15 of the students we are assisting were "likely to fail" in high school without the addition help our program provided, and all had the potential to benefit. For various reasons, all these students were all poorly prepared for success as incoming ninth graders in high school. Fundamentally, they "didn't know how to be students." They had little experience completing homework. Many saw school primarily as a social rather than a learning experience. Two courses taught by CEI teachers were offered: *Introduction to Science* and *Introduction to Literacy*.

The curriculum for the science class focused on community environmental science. The purpose was to show students how local actions affect broader environmental problems. We brought in a guest speaker from the San Francisco Water District and took the students on a field trip to a local waste water treatment plant where they learned how tests were done to assess community water quality. Students learned basic science skills like making measurements of atmospheric ozone and using a microscope (more than half the class had never used one before). With new lab skills, the young people were able to conduct tests to measure their lung capacity. Students were required to cooperate in group environmental projects and present their findings in at least two different media, e.g., a survey of littering in the community presented orally and with pictures. These assignments turned out really well. Students were required to provide a bibliography for their projects, a new and difficult challenge for them. In preparation, CEI completed the paperwork for students to acquire a library card and CEI took them on a field trip to the Daly City Public Library.

The curriculum for the English class focused on academic literacy, using reading techniques like "chunking" and "talking to the text" proven to raise reading comprehension levels. Students kept an ABC Journal, in which they described their lives alphabetically, e.g., athletics in "A," breakfast in "B," clothes in "C," etc. Students in the English class joined those in the science class for the field trip to the Daly City Public Library, where the librarian organized a "book tasting" in which the students were introduced one of many different kinds of book—reference, non-fiction, mystery, romance, etc. Students were required to select a book of their own choice (e.g., a Harry Potter novel or Michael Jordan's autobiography) for an expository writing assignment.

Since many of our summer school graduates moved on to participate in CEI's Freshman School-Within-A-School program (see description below), we have had opportunities to see how the experience has benefited them. Many are doing well, though some still struggle. One Summer School student who found it very difficult to concentrate long enough to take a test has passed all his courses in the spring semester this year. Another Summer School student got all B's and C's this year. The greatest surprise was a student who had a long history in middle school of discipline problems and had been sent to detention on the first day of Summer School, who this year was passing all his classes, with some C's and B's, and "acting like a student" for the first time. Though many still have academic problems, they have "moved to the next level" and can now focus on thinking and learning.

We are pleased with this success, and hope to match and even exceed it in our 2006 Summer School program, which has just begun on June 20 and will run through July 27. We are offering the same two courses, once again for 40 at-risk students entering Jefferson from Pollicita, but this year we are enhancing our program by paying for four tutors to assist our teachers. These tutors are Jefferson High School graduates who are now in college. They are our finest tutors, having served as supervisors of other tutors – such as AP and honors students at Jefferson – in other CEI programs. They will make it possible for our teachers to break classes down into smaller study and work groups which is important for maintaining student motivation and instructional effectiveness. The tutors themselves will have a chance to work with certified teachers, an important opportunity for learning skills they can apply when they work in our Pollicita Learning Center next fall. We will also be calling upon San Francisco State University's Pacific Leadership Institute, which offers programs offering experiential learning to teach self-esteem, teamwork, leadership, and life skills. Institute personnel will offer our students an Orienteering Course designed to teach basic map and compass skills and a Health Trek hike with backpacks through Golden Gate Park.

3. Learning Center Program at Jefferson High School, Daly City, California

Program Description. This was the third year of operations for CEI's after school Learning Center at Jefferson High School. The mission of the center is to assist all of Jefferson High School's students in all academic classes with homework assistance, tutoring, a place to study and all the support needed in order for students to succeed in the classroom. Jefferson High School has provided the school's cafeteria for the operation of the Homework Center. The room is very large with sufficient seating for students to spread out and sufficient lighting for studying. The center was open from Monday through Thursday,

from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., providing a good, safe environment to learn and offering a variety of healthful sandwiches, snacks, fruit and drinks each day at no cost to the students.

This year, we moved even more aggressively to address the needs of two groups of students facing special challenges in order to assure that they graduate from high school. We enhanced our after school Learning Center program at Jefferson High School to provide specially tailored assistance to students who are experiencing difficulty passing the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) (estimated at 200 students, over a third of the school's juniors and seniors) and those who are ELLs (estimated at 285 students). The CAHSEE students were served in the school library, a new program location for the Learning Center we're calling the Grad Zone. The ELL students are being served in a special location in the school cafeteria, the original Learning Center location. We're calling the after-school cafeteria location the Learning Zone.

Program Goals and Objectives. The overall goals for the Learning Center at Jefferson High School were to provide one-on-one and group tutoring to at least 50 students per day and a healthy after-school snack to all participants. The program's desired quantitative outcomes were that (1) an average of 50 students or more will use the Learning Center each day, (2) at least 100 students will report using the Learning Center at least 4 times per month, (3) at least 50% of Jefferson's highest risk students (those with a GPA of 2.0 or lower) will access help at the Learning Center, and (4) at least 75% of students using the Learning Center will report that it has been useful to them.

We also set goals and desired outcomes for the two special student groups we're assisting. For the CAHSEE students, our goal was to serve at least 50 juniors and seniors who have not yet passed one or both parts of the state test. Our desired outcomes were that (1) 50 students needing assistance will attend the Grad Zone regularly and (2) all 50 students will be able to pass the CAHSEE. For the ELL students, our goal was to offer tutorial and homework assistance to at least 25 students in the Learning Zone. Our desired outcomes were that (1) 25 ELL students attend regularly, (2) 50% demonstrate improvement in reading skills as evidenced by comparison of 2005 and 2006 achievement test scores, and (3) at least 50% of these students pass all of their classes this year.

Recent Program Developments. Attendance in the Learning Zone exceeded expectations even in the fall semester, averaging 75 students daily, and in the spring semester an even greater number of students dropped in to take advantage of the services the Learning Center offers. One hundred and sixty-seven Jefferson students needed to take the CAHSEE this year either because they had not done so previously or had failed one or both (Math or English) of the test. We served 55 of these students (about a third of

the total) in the Learning Center this year. Thirty-one of these students passed either one or both (Math or English) parts of the test this year (a success ratio of 56%). Excluding those students we assisted, just 51 other Jefferson students were able to do the same (a success ratio of 45%). We were able to dedicate five new laptop computers to the Learning Zone, bringing the total number of laptops available there to ten. Students used the computers to work on essays, create PowerPoint presentations, and put the finishing touches on homework assignments they need to turn in the next day to their teachers. Many of our students do not have access to computers at home.

The CAHSEE students in the Grad Zone in the school library worked on 25 computers that were also equipped with Plato, an award-winning self-instructional software program designed to help students pass high school exit exams. Over the course of the year, more than a hundred students benefited from the Grad Zone's program. Many of the young people we assisted were special education students. CEI tutors with training in special education provided these students one-on-one assistance. During the year, students were able to build strong relationships with the tutors. The CEI teacher worked with Jefferson's Special Education teachers to structure attendance schedules for the Grad Zone that were clearly defined and reinforced through follow-up with students, teachers and parents. The CAHSEE results were also encouraging for the Grad Zone's students. Among our attendees—most of whom were special education students—two students passed both parts of the CAHSEE and were able to graduate, five passed at least one part, three scored within five points of passing, and two were within ten points of passing. We identified the 20 students who attended the Grad Zone regularly enough to earn school credits towards high school graduation as our core group of beneficiaries. All saw improvement in their classroom and CAHSEE test performance.

CEI also funded an extension of the Grad Zone program conducted by Jefferson's Resource Specialist and Department Chair for Special Education that benefited a smaller number of additional special education students. An additional seven students each day benefited, including three seniors who were at risk of not graduating this year. We are happy to report that all of them were able to graduate successfully.

Our ELL students in the Learning Zone were assisted by a CEI teacher who is an expert in literacy skills enhancement and tutors who are Spanish or Tagalog-speaking.

4. School Within a School (SWAS) Program at Jefferson High School, Daly City, California

Program Description. The 2005-06 school year was the third time CEI has offered the SWAS program at Jefferson High School. Each year, the program has focused on equipping 40 at-risk sophomore students with the personal and academic tools they need to successfully complete high school and pursue higher education. To do this, SWAS utilizes the school district's Title I funding to hire four teachers to provide personalized but challenging instruction in the core curriculum (English, mathematics, social studies, and science) in small classes (maximum of 20 students each) four times daily throughout the school year. For the first time this year, CEI also offered the SWAS program for freshmen at Jefferson High School. Incoming freshmen at Jefferson have a median reading level of sixth grade, exacerbated by large numbers of students who are not proficient in English. The Freshmen SWAS program was closely modeled on CEI's existing program for sophomores at Jefferson and, like that program, serves 40 students.

Program Goals and Objectives. Our goals for the SWAS program were enrolling 80 high-risk freshmen and sophomores in the program, providing reduced-size classes in four core subjects, coordinating with the after school homework assistance available in CEI's Learning Center) available to all students, and providing team building and enrichment services throughout the year. Our desired outcomes were: (1) at least 75% of SWAS students will complete the program with 10 or fewer unexcused absences, (2) at least two-thirds will demonstrate improved GPA's, with at least 10% at a 3.0 GPA or higher, (3) at least 50% of SWAS students will complete the credits needed to advance to the 10th grade, and (4) standardized test scores for at least 50% of SWAS students will be at or above the school average.

This Year's Program Outcomes. Our freshmen SWAS students were recommended for the program by their teachers at Pollicita Middle School because they were considered to be most at risk for failure in high school. Thirty-eight students were enrolled in the program during the fall semester. There was some attrition—four students who left the program for various reasons such as family relocations and four who were asked to leave due to behavioral problems—but they were replaced in the spring semester with ten new students who continued on to complete the program. One student who began the program in the fall moved to Chicago to live with her father. Of the 39 students who finished in the spring, 13 (33%) passed all six of their classes, 7 passed five of six classes, and 5 passed four of six classes. Overall, 25 students (64%) passed most of their classes in the spring semester with a C or better grade. Thirteen of

the 39 freshmen (33%) improved their GPAs in the course of the year. As a group, the at-risk freshmen SWAS students' average GPA, 1.65, lagged behind that of all freshmen at Jefferson, which was 2.2, but not by much, which is encouraging, given that D's are not awarded to SWAS students (only A's, B's, C's, and F's) and the fact that the overall student body does contain high-achieving honors students who pull up the overall average GPA. Five of our freshmen SWAS students dramatically improved their APIs this year (by more than a letter grade), in one case from a 0.3 (failing) to a 3.3 (A). Nine (23%) earned a GPA of 2.5 (B) or higher. All 39 students were promoted to the tenth grade, and 75% of them will be continuing on in CEI's sophomore SWAS program next year. This is important, because, despite their admirable accomplishments, these students remain vulnerable to future setbacks without consistent support.

Many of our students, some of whom were graduates of our Summer School program, seemed to mature this year and "buy in" to school. It clearly was helpful for the students to have four adults, the CEI SWAS teachers, working in collaboration and continually comparing notes, to be constantly "on their case" year-round. Most of the discipline problems went away, and students started actively participating in class. Two students who were constant discipline problems at the beginning of the year not only reformed but became positive leaders in class. Beginning in the second semester, students began to actively seek to improve their grades by talking to their teachers and figuring exactly what work they needed to complete or do in order to keep their grades up. Students generally seemed more aware of their grades and desirous of being successful in school. SWAS students whose grades showed signs of slipping during the year (in danger of failing one or more courses) were referred to the Learning Center for extra assistance. An aggressive round of communication with parents motivated many of these students to attend more regularly. We formed a partnership with Christian Alzubi, Jefferson's Latino Parent Partnership liaison, to organize meetings of the SWAS teaching team with parents and students. About a quarter of the parents asked for and received weekly progress reports on their children's progress. This made a big difference in the academic performance of some students. Whenever possible, SWAS teachers sought to increase academic rigor, e.g., by assigning more difficult readings and requiring more extensive writing exercises. Students really enjoyed a Greek mythology project in which they read chapters from Homer's *Odyssey* and conducted internet research for posters on figures like Aphrodite and Apollo. As an extracurricular activity, we took the entire group of freshmen to the Ropes Course where they worked enthusiastically to help each other face some seriously challenging physical tasks. We also took them to a local Barnes & Noble bookstore – the first such visit to a bookstore for most of them – as well as campus visits to San Francisco State University and Skyline Junior College.

There was even more encouraging news for our SWAS sophomores. Twenty-one out of the thirty-nine students (54%) who started the program in the fall improved their GPAs by the end of the semester. Seven students left the program between the fall and spring semesters, three voluntarily because of family relocations and four were asked to leave because of behavioral problems or lack of commitment. Of the 32 students who completed the spring semester, 26 (81%) raised their GPAs, an impressive achievement, given that the sophomore year is more demanding than the freshman year and SWAS especially so, since more homework is assigned and standards are higher. Thirteen students (41%) passed all six of their classes, 10 passed five of six classes, and 5 passed four of six classes. Overall, 28 students (88%) passed most of their classes in the spring semester. As a group, the sophomore SWAS students' average GPA, 2.26, was actually *higher than* that of all sophomores at Jefferson, 2.18, which is especially encouraging given that, again, D's are not awarded to SWAS students and the fact that there are high-achieving honors students who pull up the overall average GPA.

Like their younger freshman counterparts, some sophomore SWAS students really turned around their attitude about school this year. Starting off, they didn't see being a student as an important part of their identity nor consider excelling in school as a personal achievement worth striving for. Too many have never excelled so school, which instead has simply been a source of failure for them. The best results were evident in 7 students who began to care about their grades for the first time. They wanted to do better and better, even get A's. One of them had gone through school with C's, D's, and F's, never having received a grade higher than a C. This year, he earned a B in English at the end of the first semester. Soon thereafter, he was doing homework regularly and asking his teachers to check on his grade regularly. It became his personal goal to get an A in English, and he began to care about his other subjects as well, even math which he typically failed over and over each year. In the end, he received an A- in English.

The CEI Learning Center proved to be an important resource for SWAS sophomores just as for the freshmen. For 4 regular attendees, it was the reason they were able to turn around their attitudes towards and performance in school. It was also important for others, particularly when there were tests to study for or big assignments were due.

We continue to accumulate evidence that enlisting strong support from parents for their children's education is one of the keys to improving academic performance. CEI used an outreach coordinator again this year to elicit this support from parents of freshmen and sophomores in our SWAS program. She contacted an average of 352 parents each month from October 2005 through May 2006 in more than 2,000 telephone calls.

Overall, 90% of CEI's SWAS students passed the English section of the CAHSEE this year, compared to 68% of the entire student body taking the test. SWAS students also did better than the school overall in the math section of the CAHSEE.

5. College Readiness Program at Jefferson High School, Daly City, California

Program Description. CEI is offering the College Readiness Program for 60 academically promising freshmen at Jefferson High School. Although many of Jefferson's honors students enter high school with a plan to go to college, the number of students who actually attend 4-year schools directly out of high school is very low. Somewhere along the way, personal, cultural, and academic obstacles get in the way of college. From 40 to 50% of freshman honors students are dropped from the program by their senior year. There have been many cases in which students who have competitive academic records do not even apply to college despite Jefferson High School's encouragement. These students need more than our encouragement. They need to see that college is within their reach and practical. Most of our students will be the first in their families to attend college, some to even graduate from high school. College (higher education in general) is not the comfortable and logical next step as it is for so many students in the country who grow up with it as a reality in their families.

Program Goals and Objectives. The overall goal of this program is to promote awareness of college options among honors students at Jefferson High School and increase their motivation by making the goal of college realistic, desirable, and attainable. Specific objectives for our program are to: (1) make students aware of the rigorous reading and writing demands of a collegiate environment, (2) help students become more competitive when applying to college by providing support for AP/Honors classes such as English, U.S. History, Biology and Calculus, and (3) encourage students to sign up to take SAT, ACT, AP, and Subject A exams.

This Year's Program Outcomes. We offered a number of activities this year, all designed to raise students' horizons beyond Daly City to see some of the rest of the country – and even the world – while also thinking seriously about higher education. All honors and advanced placement (AP) students in Jefferson's freshmen, sophomore and junior classes visited at least one University of California campus as part of this program. The schools visited were U.C. Berkeley, U.C. Davis and U.C. Santa Cruz. In December 2005, CEI paid \$1,092 for SAT fees for those honor and AP students who could not afford to pay for the test. As of this date, 175 of 178 Jefferson honors students (98%) will be returning to the honors program next year. CEI also worked to create an environment of respect for achievement at Jefferson by

recognizing and rewarding students for their outstanding academic accomplishments. To promote this, CEI set up four awards for academic achievement. One was for an AP/honors student to attend a summer program at a school of his/her choice. This year's choice for the award chose to attend a summer program at Boston University at a cost of \$2,750. A second award, provided in collaboration with another non-profit organization, Experiment in International Living (EIL), was to allow a student to visit any foreign country during the summer. This year's choice for the award selected Australia, with the cost split between CEI (\$1,100) and EIL (\$4,000). A third award, provided in conjunction with the Close Up Foundation, sent an honors student to Washington, D.C. to visit the U.S. Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, and meet their elected representatives, at a cost of \$1,500 to CEI. A fourth award, funded an honors student who participated in a sojourner visit to sites in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee associated with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, which was funded by a CEI grant of \$1,500. The effort to promote respect for achievement culminated with Jefferson's first-ever Academic Awards Dinner for freshman, sophomore and junior students (previously the school only held an awards dinner for graduating seniors). Over 300 students, parents, family members attended this program.

Conclusion

We are keeping our fingers crossed as we await the outcomes of our federal proposals to bring an after school Carol M. White Physical Education Program to Jefferson and to spread the Smaller Learning Community concept exemplified by our SWAS program school-wide.

Finally, CEI would like to thank you for your interest in and invaluable financial support of our programs. Thank you!

Spencer Holeman
Executive Director