

## U.S. Dept. of Education Study.

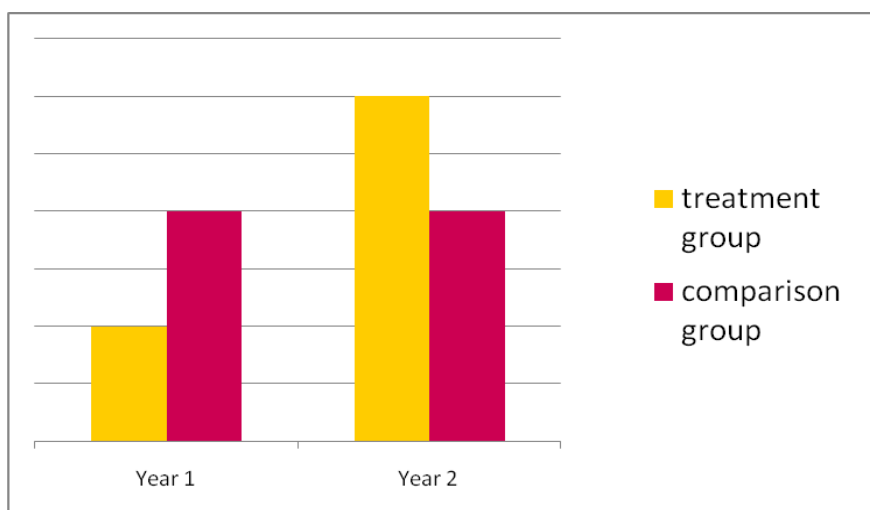
ALAS was developed, implemented and evaluated from 1990 to 1996 as a U.S. Department of Education study, evaluating dropout prevention in low-income, urban, predominantly Latino 7th, 8th and 9th grade students residing in Los Angeles.

The program focused on at-risk youth and youth with disabilities using a comprehensive intervention model addressing all spheres of influence on a youth's performance: parents, school, community and the student's personal assets.

ALAS students participated concurrently in the intervention program and their regular school program for three years of junior high school. Control students received the regular school program.

ALAS was founded on the premise that the youth and school, family and community contexts must be addressed simultaneously if dropout prevention efforts are to be successful.

Each student was assigned a mentor/guide who worked directly with the student and also with school personnel, parents, and individuals and agencies from the community to build comprehensive support and cohesion across school, family, and community settings.



Students in the ALAS Study. The middle school where the program was implemented served about 2,220 students in grades 7, 8, and 9. Approximately 96 percent of the students were Latino, 2 percent were Anglo, and 2% were African American. Seventy percent of the students participated in the federal school lunch program. Sixty-two percent of the students spoke Spanish as a first language. Only 65 percent accrued all possible high school credits during the 9th grade. In fact, 16 percent of the boys and 7 percent of the girls in the first cohort failed more than half their classes during the 9th grade. When controlling for such demographic factors as SES, student transience, race and parent education level, according to California Assessment Program data of student reading achievement, the target school



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ranked only in the 17th percentile of all California schools. Not taking these demographic factors into account, the target school student reading achievement scores ranked in the 4th percentile of all California schools.

Results of the ALAS Study. One cohort of 77 students, identified by the school district as having learning disabilities or severe emotional disabilities, and another cohort of 94 students, identified as "comprehensively at risk" students, based on poor academic performance, behavioral problems, were randomly assigned to intervention or control groups.

A rigorous evaluation of ALAS showed dramatic, positive results for enhancing educational achievement during the intervention and two years after the intervention.

Beyond merely keeping students in school, ALAS had a statistically significant impact on keeping students on track, improving their academic success and progress toward graduation. In fact, in the What Works Clearinghouse analysis, ALAS had the largest effect size on participants' "staying in school" than any other program evaluated.

Findings also suggest that ALAS students benefited psychologically, socially and attitudinally from the interventions, "increasing persistence and commitment to educational attainment."