

# Evaluation Report



**NALP/Street Law**

**Legal Diversity Pipeline Program**

***November 2011***



## **NALP/Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program: Evaluation Report, November 2011**



Prepared by Street Law, Inc. and NALP.  
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Thanks to Dr. Wendy Richardson for providing correlation analyses, advice, and review of this report.

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# Executive Summary

The NALP/Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program provides a framework, training, and curriculum for law firm volunteers to teach high school students about law and the legal profession and encourage the students to pursue legal careers. After the third year of the program, NALP and Street Law implemented an outcomes-based program evaluation to measure progress toward several short-term program goals. These goals include increasing student interest in legal careers, expanding student knowledge about legal careers and pathways to the legal profession, and providing social support and professional role models. Students responded to pre- and post-surveys designed to gather information about these outcomes.

The results show important progress in students' interest levels and high marks for the social support provided by volunteers. Results for students' knowledge about legal careers and pathways are mixed.

## **Students' interest in legal careers increased.**

- ◆ Before the program, 46% of students said they had considered becoming a lawyer; afterwards 65% said they had considered becoming a lawyer.
- ◆ 67% of the students said they were more interested in legal careers, "now that they had finished the program."

## **While students' understanding of the legal profession and pathways to legal careers improved in some regards, we did not see across-the-board growth.**

- ◆ Before the program, about a third of students knew how long law school takes and whether a pre-law major is needed to go to law school. Afterwards, 58% knew law school typically takes three years, and 50% knew that you can go to law school with out majoring in "pre-law."
- ◆ Many of the students (73%) knew that lawyers don't spend most of their time in court before the program, and the number rose slightly, to 83% after the program. Students' ability to identify lawyering skills improved slightly, from a score of 3.19 out of 4 before the program to 3.3 afterwards.
- ◆ Students were less able to articulate what they could do now to prepare for law school, and we saw no change in their scores in this area from the pre- to post-surveys.
- ◆ Students gave high rankings when asked how much they learned about legal careers and becoming a lawyer – an average score of more than 4 on a scale of 1 to 5.

## **Students are inspired by the lawyers as professional role models.**

- ◆ When asked how much the lawyers inspired them, the students' average score was 4.19 on a scale of 1 to 5. When asked how much the lawyers encouraged them to pursue legal careers, the students' average score was 3.86.
- ◆ 95% of the students chose a "4" or "5" (on a scale of 1 to 5) when asked how much they enjoyed the program.

While this evaluation represents only one method for measuring progress toward program goals, we feel that these results are indicative of substantial success in meeting these goals, while providing specific metrics on which to base future program improvements.

We offer our thanks to the nine law firms and more than 150 volunteers whose work and dedication make this program possible.



# Introduction

The NALP/Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program is an initiative designed to teach high school students of color about law and the legal profession, and encourage them to pursue legal careers. The Program partners law firms, law schools, and high schools, in order to provide the high school students with access to professional role models, opportunities to learn about the law, and practice using legal skills in an encouraging, interesting, and fun environment. This evaluation was designed and implemented during the third year of the Program, in order to investigate whether the Program is achieving its desired outcomes, as defined below.



## Diversity Pipeline Program Components

The NALP/Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program, which began in 2008, currently includes nine law firms, each of which is partnered with a local high school, and some of which also include a local law school in their activities. The Program includes four components:

- ◆ First, staff from NALP and Street Law train the law firm and law school volunteers to use Street Law's interactive teaching methods and work with the law firm to select activities for use with the students. Law firm volunteers have the option to select from among prepared Street Law lessons and activities, or develop a new lesson plan with the support of the Program staff.
- ◆ Second, the law firm volunteers (and in some cases, law school students) visit their partner classes to teach several substantive law lessons. These lessons are student-centered, interactive, and focus on encouraging students to develop and employ the types of analytical skills that lawyers need.
- ◆ Third, the law firm hosts a day-long field trip for the high school classes. The centerpiece of the field trip is a series of legal workshops that focus on the topics previously covered in the classroom and simulate real-world legal activities. These workshops differ at each site, but all involve extensive student participation and development of legal skills. Workshops have included mock contract negotiations, legislative hearings, moot court arguments, and school board hearings.
- ◆ Fourth, some Program sites offer additional activities to the entire group of high school students or to the most interested high school students, designed to provide additional information about the legal profession and pathways to a legal career. These activities have included field trips to partnering law schools, follow-up contact with the class, and a college admissions conference.

The participating law firms and NALP provide funding for the Program.



## Theoretical Grounding & Program Outcomes

Counseling psychologists and career choice researchers have found evidence of many factors that affect young people's career choice processes, from interests, abilities, and values, to personality, learning experiences, environmental resources and barriers, and opportunities and challenges. In recent decades, many researchers have pointed to self-efficacy beliefs—a person's belief that they can produce a desired outcome—as extremely important (more so than personality matches or traits) in determining what a person's career choices will be. In other words, a person's belief in his or her capacity to perform certain behaviors will determine the likelihood that they engage in those behaviors. Research shows that there are several ways to enhance a person's career self-efficacy beliefs:<sup>1</sup>

- ◆ Personal performance accomplishments: persons will tend to prefer an occupation if they have succeeded at tasks like those performed by members of that occupation.
- ◆ Role modeling: role models serve as a source of interest, inspiration, and skills. Observing a valued role model perform career-related tasks may influence an individual's occupational preferences.
- ◆ Social support and persuasion: support and persuasion encourage people to attempt new career-related tasks. Success in performing career-related tasks can then act as a motivational component in a feedback loop – reinforcing an individual's interests and preferences – and stimulate the individual to seek out similar learning experiences.

Exposure to accurate and age-appropriate career information is also a vital element in an individual's career decision process, as it helps facilitate the development of career goals and spurs career exploration.

The Legal Diversity Pipeline Program is designed to harness several of these research-based factors, by providing an opportunity for students to have personal performance accomplishments utilizing lawyer skills, exposure to occupational role models, support from these role models, and information about legal career pathways. A complete review of relevant research is available from Street Law.<sup>2</sup>

This evaluation was designed to assess the high school students' progress toward outcomes identified prior to the launch of the Program. These outcomes are informed by the research described above and include:

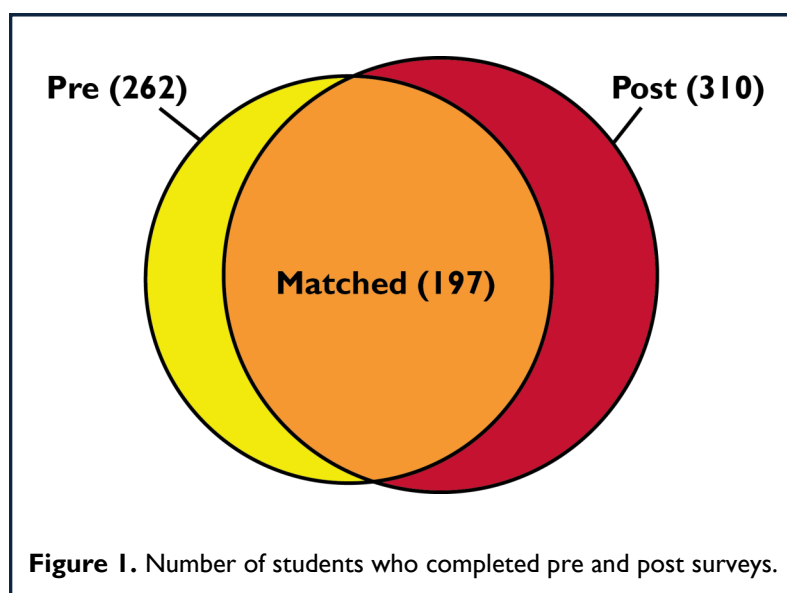
1. Are the high school students more interested in legal careers after the Program?
2. Do the high school students have more knowledge of legal careers and a better understanding of pathways to the legal profession after the Program?
3. Do the high school students perceive positive social support and persuasion from the law firm and law school volunteers?

## Evaluation Design

This program evaluation was implemented by Street Law and NALP staff during the 2010-11 school year. The participating high school students filled out a pre-survey before they had contact with the law firm or law school volunteers, and a post-survey after their field trip to the partner law firm. Some Program sites included a second field trip to a local law school; these activities were not included within the scope of this evaluation. Street Law and

NALP staff provided training sessions for each law firm before the Program began and observed the law firm field trip in each location. Program staff compiled the survey data and completed the analysis. This report was prepared by the Program staff and reviewed by Dr. Wendy Richardson, an independent evaluation consultant.

We received surveys from a total of 373 individual high school students at nine Program sites. Of that group, 197 students completed both pre- and post-surveys that could be matched. This data is represented in Figure 1. At two of the Program sites, we did not receive completed pre-surveys. We therefore present only results from the post-surveys from those sites. Street Law can provide additional information about the survey and methods upon request.



The results are presented herein, organized by the program outcomes detailed above. Unless otherwise noted, the results refer to the group of 197 students for whom we could match pre- and post-surveys.

## Participants

### Law Firm Site Descriptions

The nine law firm sites that currently participate in the Program are located in major cities across the United States. Program activities at each firm were developed jointly between the Program staff and the law firm. Each firm was partnered with a local high school. The participating schools included four traditional public high schools, four public charter schools, and one private Jesuit high school. The schools' sizes varied greatly with the smallest school comprised of approximately 100 students and the largest of approximately 3,300 students. Six schools are majority Black/African-American, (66% to 98% of the student body). Three of the schools are majority Hispanic/Latino (65% to 80% of the student body). At three schools, about half of the student body qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. At four schools, 65-80% of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch, and at two schools, almost 85% of the students qualified.

Table 1 describes the Program activities, duration, and frequency at each site.

### Student Demographics

This section includes data from the entire sample of 373 students from whom we received surveys. The students participating in the Program were primarily in ninth through twelfth grade. Participating students' grade levels are presented in Figure 2. Overall, more than 97% of students self-identified as non-white. The largest racial groups were Hispanic/ Latino (44% of students self-identifying) and Black/ African American (34% of students self-identifying). The racial breakdown of the participating high school students is presented in Figure 3. Male students comprised 44% of the group, and female students 56%.

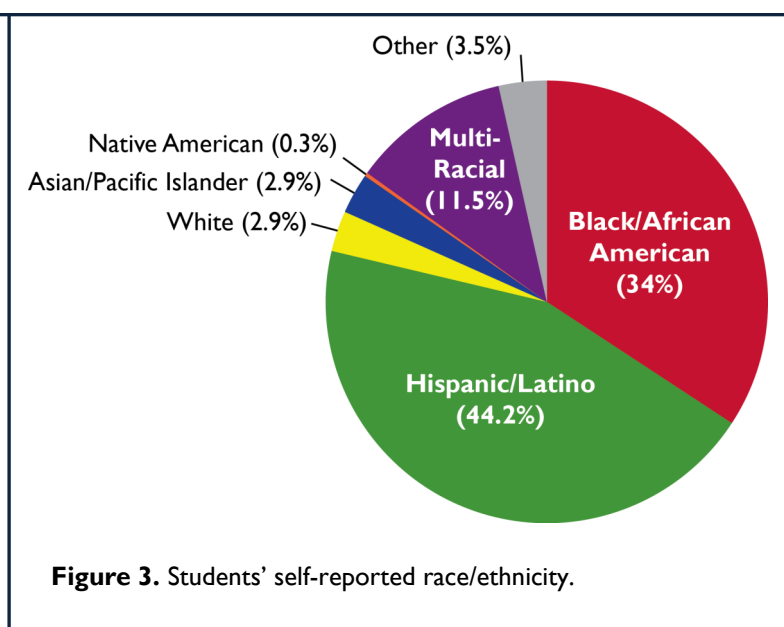
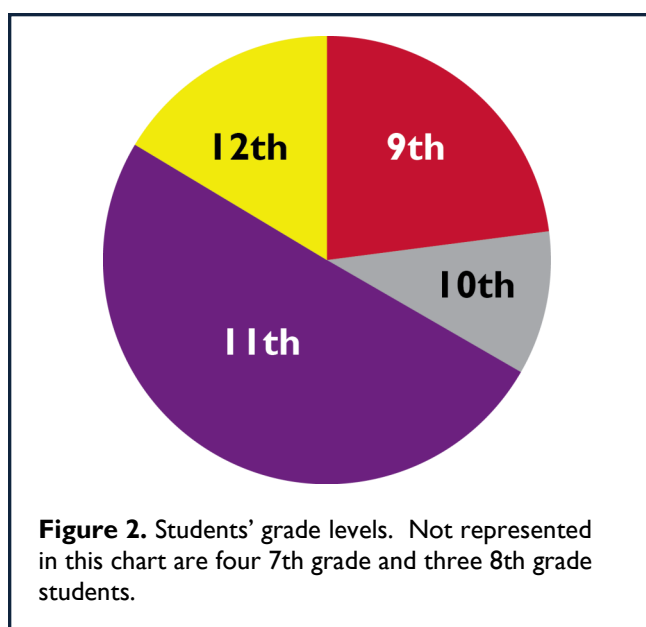


**Table 1.** Program Site Descriptions

Site	Number of Students	Partner Course at High School	Length of Program	Classroom Hours	Activities included at law firm field trip	Law Firm Field Trip Hours
Site A	52	Law	January—April	4 visits totaling 6 hours	2 legal workshops Office tour Lunch with legal professionals	5
Site B	75	U.S. History	January—March	3 visits totaling 3-4 hours	2 legal workshops Business Card Exchange** Lunch with legal professionals	4.5
Site C	50	History and Government	October—April	3 visits totaling 4.5 hours	2 legal workshops Special guest speaker Legal career video Career Bingo**	4.5
Site D	20	American History	April—May	2 visits totaling 2.5 hours	2 legal workshops Networking activity** Lunch with legal professions	4
Site E	56	AP American Gov't	February—April	4 visits totaling 4 hours	2 legal workshops Lunch with legal professionals Special guest speakers	5
Site F	25	Law	April—May	3 visits totaling 3 hours	2 legal workshops Office tour Career fair with several depts Special guest speaker	6
Site G	95	U.S. History	March—April	4 visits totaling 3 hours	3 legal workshops Lunch with legal professionals Office tour with career discussions for various depts.	6
Site H	30	Government	February—April	3 visits totaling 4.5 hours	2 legal workshops Special guest speaker Networking activity**	4.5
Site I	20	Student Government Elective	December—February	3 visits totaling 2 hours	3 legal workshops Lunch with legal professionals	7

\*\* Business card exchange, career bingo, and networking activities are all activities designed to allow students to interact with the legal professionals, learn about their careers and educational pathways, and practice business conversation skills.

The high school students, as a group, overwhelmingly plan to attend college or a vocational school after high school. This reflects the Program’s intention to select partner schools where a large proportion of students both plan to attend college and are on track to be academically prepared for post-secondary education. Moreover, student responses to several questions indicate that more than half have taken at least one concrete step to prepare for college, including researching colleges, visiting colleges, researching financial aid and scholarships, or studying for or taking college entrance exams. Ninety percent of the students also report having discussed their future career plans with their parents, and more than 80% have discussed career plans with two or more of their teachers, friends, guidance counselors, or mentors.



## Findings

### Interest in Legal Careers

Our evaluation showed that students had markedly higher levels of interest in legal careers after the Program than they had before.

We asked the students several questions to explore their interest in legal careers. We first asked if they knew what career they would like to pursue after finishing school. If a student responded “yes,” we asked them to name the preferred career. Approximately three quarters of the students on both pre- and post-surveys said that they did know what career they would like to pursue. Of the students who reported knowing what career they wanted, 32% listed a legal career (professions including attorney, lawyer, paralegal, law enforcement, or other work having to do with the law) on the pre-survey. That percentage rose to 42% on the post survey. All sites but one demonstrated this upward trend in the number of students who listed a legal career as their preference, and the one site that did not increase maintained the same number of students listing legal careers before and after (3 of 10 students).

We also asked students “Have you considered becoming a lawyer?” On the pre-survey, 46% of the students



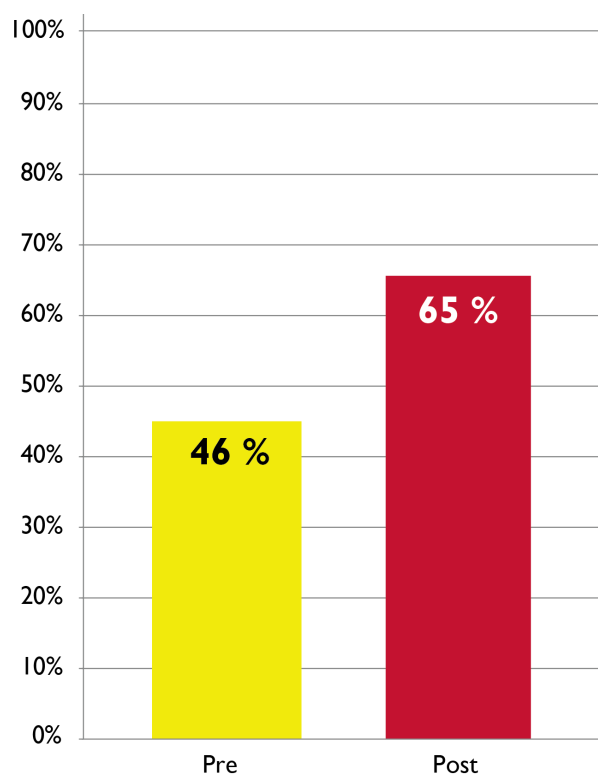
answered “yes,” and on the post survey, 65% of the students reported that they have considered becoming a lawyer. These results are presented in Figure 4. At each Program site, more students reported considering a career as a lawyer after the Program than before. Several sites had particularly noteworthy increases, including sites F (an increase from 47% to 84%) and E (31% to 62%). These individual site results are presented in Figure 5.

Finally, on the post-survey only, we asked the students “Now that you have finished the Program, are you more interested in pursuing a legal career than you were before the Program?” Sixty-seven percent of the students responded “yes.”

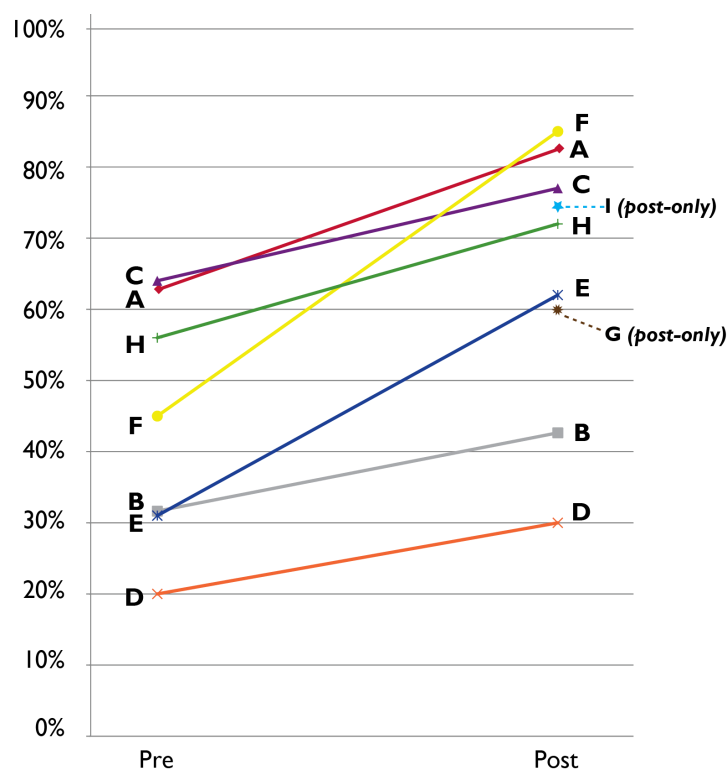
## Knowledge about Legal Careers & Pathways

Our evaluation showed mixed results about students’ knowledge of legal careers and pathways to the legal profession—responses to some questions showed gains, while others did not yield positive measurements.

Our past experience has shown that many high school students are uninformed about the education needed and the process to become a lawyer, and lack a comprehensive understanding of the many types of work lawyers and other legal professionals do. Some students’ ideas about lawyers’ work come from the portrayal of the legal profession in popular culture. However, a number of researchers have stressed the importance of clear outcome expectations and accurate perceptions of career pathways in the decisions young people make about their future careers. We therefore encouraged the participating law firms to integrate age-appropriate information about the legal profession and pathways to legal careers into their programming. We determined that it was important for the



**Figure 4.** Overall percent of students who answered “yes” to “Have you considered becoming a lawyer?”



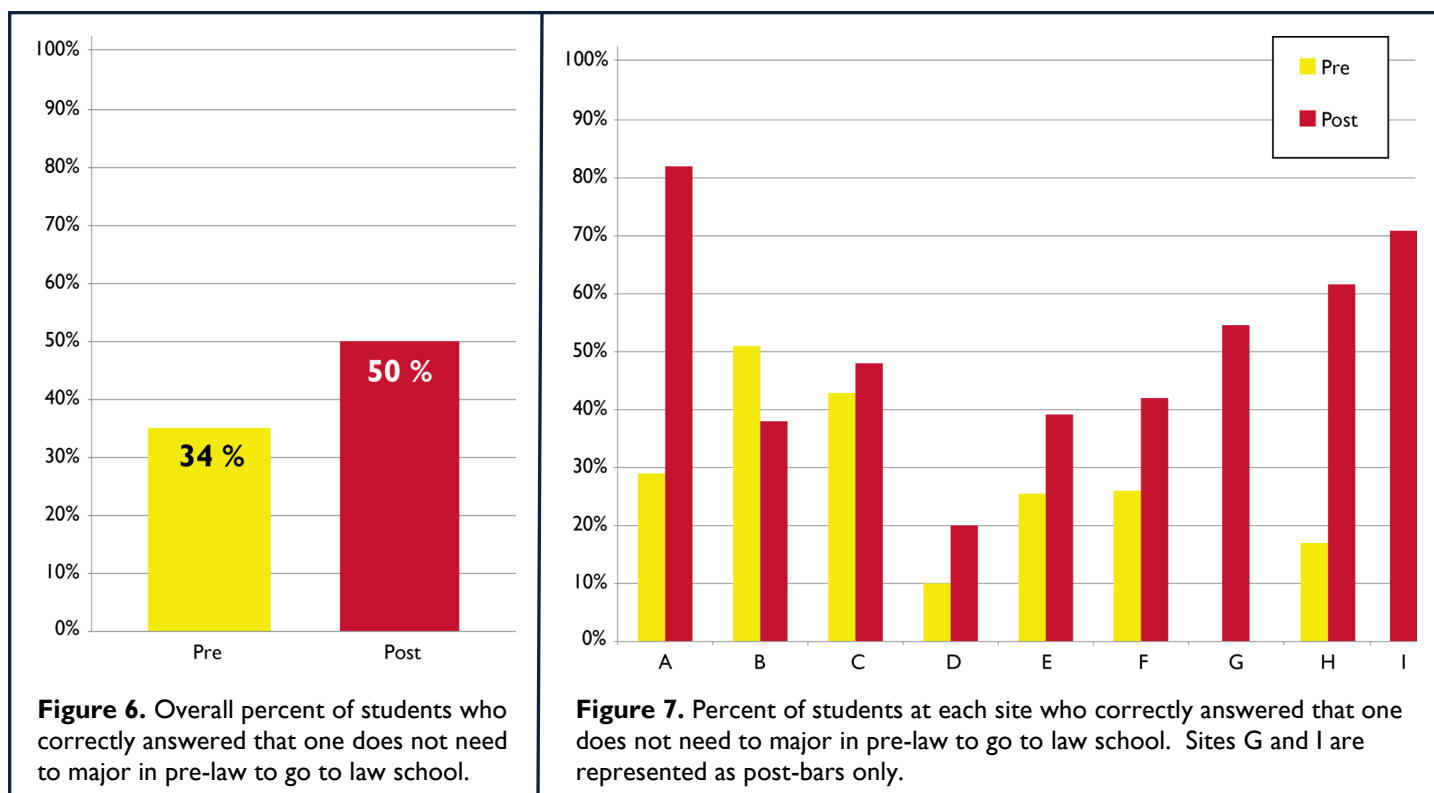
**Figure 5.** Percent of students at each site who answered “yes” to “Have you considered becoming a lawyer?” Sites G and I, which had no pre-survey data, are show as post-points only.

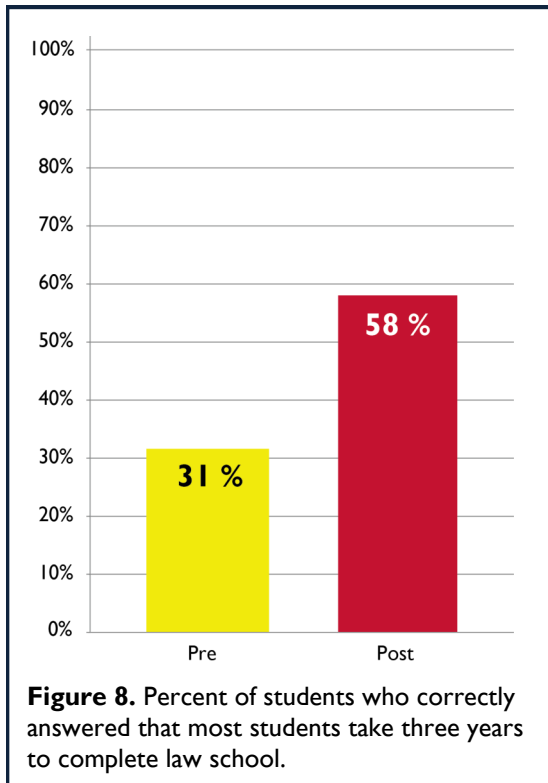
high school students to have a basic understanding of the steps to get to law school, the length of time necessary to complete law school, the variety of lawyers' functions, and important skills for lawyers to possess or develop. All sites were given a document detailing these focus areas and including suggestions for incorporating this information into lessons, the debrief of activities in the classroom and field trip, informal conversations, speakers' remarks, career fair activities, or literature provided to students. We asked students several questions to evaluate the extent to which their understanding of these two areas improved over the course of the Program.

In order to measure student understanding of legal education, we asked, "True or False?: If you want to go to law school, you must major in pre-law in college." Overall, 34% of the students answered the question correctly (False) on the pre-survey, and 50% answered correctly on the post-survey. All sites but one showed some gains on this question, and sites A and H made notable improvements over the course of the Program. These results are pictured in Figures 6 and 7.

A multiple-choice question asked students how long it takes most law students to finish law school. On the pre-survey, 31% of the students answered correctly (3 years). On the post-survey, 58% answered correctly. The most frequently chosen of the four possible answers (2, 3, 5, or 8 years) on the pre-survey was 8 years, and the most frequently chosen on the post-survey was 3 years. Again, all sites but one showed some gains, with sites A and F showing the most improvement. The overall results for this question are shown in Figure 8.

To measure their understanding of the steps one would take to pursue a career as a lawyer, we asked students to list two things they could do now to prepare for law school, and asked them a true/false and a multiple choice question about legal education. We first asked the students to pretend that they were interested in going to law school, and to list two things they could do now to achieve that goal. Student responses varied from less specific examples such as "strive," "research," "take tests," and "work hard" to more specific examples like "study," "get excellent grades," "go to college," to responses specifically related to law school such as "intern at a law firm" and

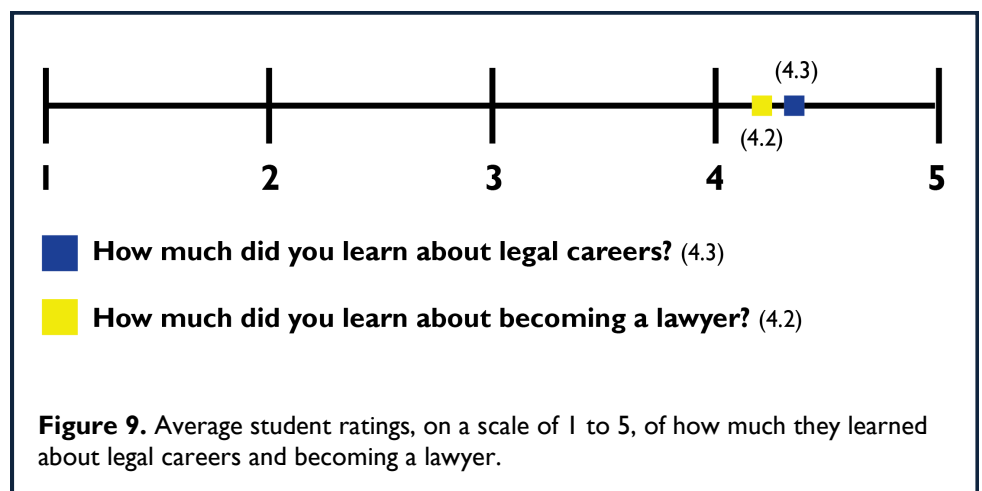




“attend a college fair and ask questions about law school.” After assigning each answer a score of 0 (poor), 1 (fair), or 2 (excellent), we computed each student’s total score on a scale of 0 to 4. The average student score saw no substantial change between the pre-test and the post-test (2.80 before, 2.76 after). Thirty-two percent of the students improved their score pre to post, and 29% had worse scores on the post-test. Most individual sites showed modest gains or losses on the question. Overall, 33 students did not answer this free-response question on both the pre- and post-surveys. It is likely that the low response rate and mixed results are the product of flaws in the question design.

Students’ responses to two questions about lawyers’ work and the skills lawyers use showed that they began the Program with a fairly accurate grasp of these concepts. As a result post-surveys tended to show little growth in these areas. On a true/false question about whether lawyers spend most of their time trying cases in court, 73% of students answered correctly on the pre-survey, and 82% answered correctly on the post-survey. Most sites improved slightly on this question, while one site had no change and one site showed a slight decline. Two sites showed an improvement of almost 20 percentage points. We also gave students a list of ten skills and asked them to select the four that they felt were the most important for lawyers to have. We scored answers on a scale of 0 to 4, and the students showed high marks and very minor gains – from an average of 3.19 on the pre-survey to 3.30 on the post-survey. Most sites improved very slightly or declined very slightly. Overall, students placed the most importance on the same four skills on both the pre- and post-survey (analyzing facts and applying the law to those facts, supporting viewpoints with reasons, critical thinking, and persuading people). “Reading” and “writing” were both selected more on the post survey than on the pre-survey, and “arguing” and “talking to juries” were selected by fewer students on the post-survey.

Finally, we asked the students to rank their perceived learning during the Program. We asked the students to answer two questions on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represented “not much” and 5 represented “a lot”: How much did you learn about legal careers from the Program?, and How much did you learn about becoming a lawyer from the Program? The response averages, from among the 310 students who completed a post-survey, were quite high, at 4.30 and 4.20, respectively (Figure 9). These high scores make it apparent that the students felt they

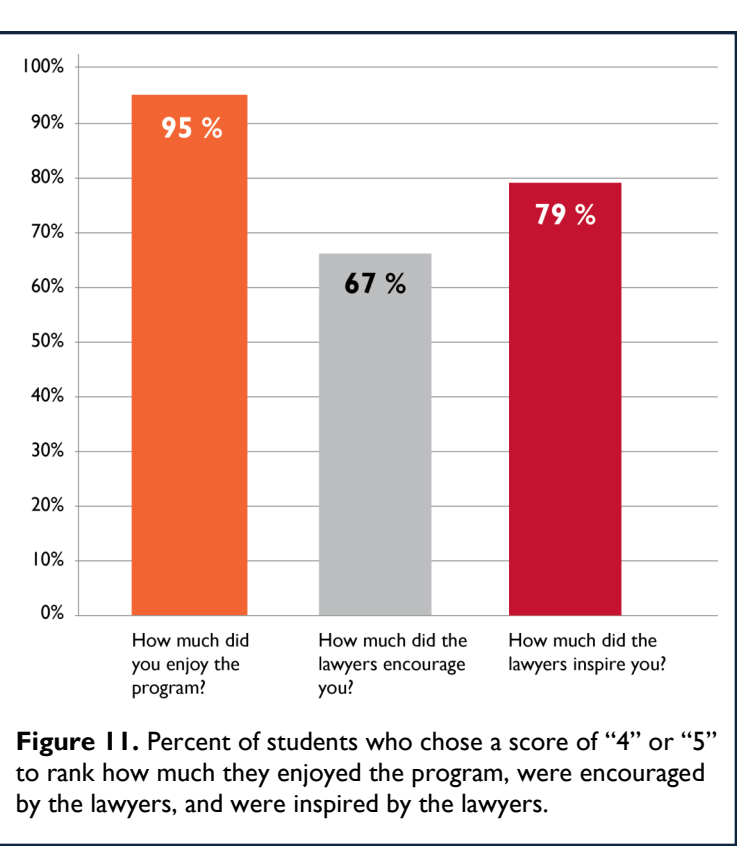
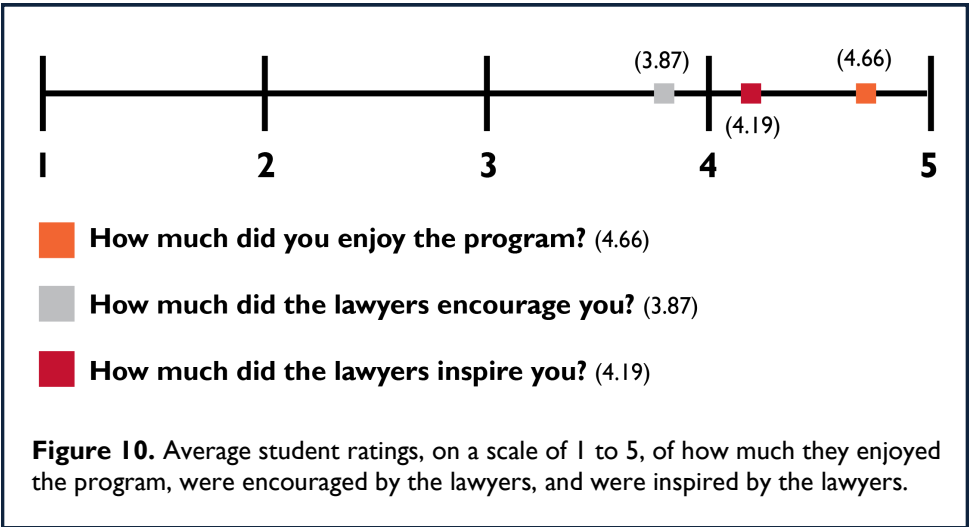


learned quite a lot, and it is highly likely that some of the information they include in their perceived learning about legal careers and becoming a lawyer goes beyond the few questions we asked about this content on our surveys.

## Social Support and Persuasion

Career-choice researchers have noted the importance of social support, role models, and persuasion in building young peoples’ sense that they can succeed in a particular career path. For this reason, we measured the degree to which our participating students perceived this support and encouragement. After students participated in the Program we asked them to rate how much they enjoyed participating in the Program, whether the lawyers encouraged them to consider a legal career, and how much the lawyers inspired them. Their answers were overwhelmingly

positive. All three questions were answered on a score of 1 to 5, where 1 represents “not much” and 5 represents “a lot.” When asked how much they enjoyed the Program, students’ average ranking was 4.66. More than 90% of students chose a score of “4” or “5” in responding to this question. In response to “How much did the lawyers inspire you?” students scores averaged 4.19, and to “How much did the lawyers encourage you to consider a legal



career?” student scores averaged 3.86. A sizeable majority of the students chose a score of “4” or “5” in response to each of these questions, as well – 79% for the question about inspiration, and 67% for the question about encouragement. Responses for each of these questions are shown in Figures 10 and 11.

A correlational analysis showed that students who gave high rankings to the question “how much did the lawyers inspire you” were more likely, on the post-survey, to also say they had considered becoming a lawyer and to report that they learned a lot about legal careers. Students who gave high scores to “How much did the lawyers encourage you” were more likely on the post-survey to also list a legal profession as their intended future career, and to report that they learned a lot about legal careers and becoming a lawyer.



# Conclusions & Recommendations



This evaluation was not designed to provide proof of the efficacy of this program. The effectiveness of this particular pipeline program might be measured in a number of ways, including longitudinal studies that would measure college entrance and completion, law school application and acceptance, and first career choice. This evaluation was designed to evaluate on a much more limited basis whether or not the program is having the intended short-term effects of increasing students' awareness about legal career pathways and their awareness of the steps necessary to obtain those careers. The results presented here show that students are making important progress over the course of the Program.

Notable gains in the numbers of students expressing interest in legal careers, as well as students' high marks for the degree to which they were inspired and encouraged by the lawyers, show that the we are meeting some key outcomes. Student knowledge about legal careers and pathways to the legal profession after participating in the program is promising, but still shows room for growth. We are encouraged to see sizeable increases in the

percentage of students correctly answering questions about the steps necessary for attending law school. We would like to see a larger portion of all students understand the pathway to law school and a legal career. We see some room for improvement in students' abilities to articulate what they could do now to prepare for a legal career or legal education. It is very important to note that the students felt that they learned a lot about legal careers and becoming a lawyer. They also enjoyed the programs immensely, and overwhelmingly see the volunteers as inspiring role models. In all, we believe these results show that the Program is succeeding in meeting its objectives, and the law firms and volunteers should be commended for the time they have dedicated to providing this opportunity to high school students. This evaluation will continue to inform our plans for implementing and growing the Program. With that in mind, we have outlined some recommendations for the participating volunteers going forward.

## Outcome 1: Increase student interest in legal careers.

- ◆ Continue to offer engaging, interactive legal simulations for students that allow them to step into a lawyer's or legal professional's shoes and experience the work legal professionals do.
- ◆ Allow students to utilize skills common to the legal profession, and point out instances where students successfully employ these skills. Make connections between their activities and a real-world legal career.
- ◆ Tell students about what makes legal work enjoyable.
- ◆ Encourage questions about individuals' career pathways.

## Outcome 2: Increase student knowledge about legal careers and pathways to the legal profession.

- ◆ Continue to designate time during the field trip for sharing information about legal careers, developing networking skills, and informing students about legal education.



- ◆ Take advantage of small group and one-on-one interactions to share information about individual volunteers' personal path to their legal career, including their education, course of study, and early jobs.
- ◆ Give students handouts and brochures about legal careers and legal education, focusing on age-appropriate information about legal career pathways.
- ◆ Expose students to a variety of law-related professions and practice areas. Make sure students have a chance to meet and interact with people from different career tracks. Provide information about what skills a law firm looks for when hiring for different positions (i.e. patent lawyers usually have a science background, tax attorneys studied tax law, litigators spend a lot of time writing and researching).
- ◆ Incorporate information about legal careers into classroom visits. Consider offering an additional class visit focused on career exploration, preparation, or planning. Street Law can provide ideas and materials for such sessions.<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ Include a law school field trip, a job shadowing event, mentoring group, or other enhancement activity as a component of your program. Street Law can provide materials and support to plan this type of event.<sup>4</sup>

### **Outcome 3: Provide social support, role modeling, and persuasion for students to consider legal careers.**

- ◆ Be welcoming and enthusiastic hosts.
- ◆ Continue to foster role-model relationships with students by allowing for small group and information interaction between students and volunteers. Engage in conversation with students during breaks, transition times, and lunch.
- ◆ Encourage students' questions about the firm, individual volunteers' work, and how they reached this career. Offer to follow up with interested students or serve as a classroom resource going forward.
- ◆ Take an interest in students' academic and professional goals; ask them questions about themselves and their interests.
- ◆ Encourage students by noting and commending them when they do well during classroom lessons and field trip workshops. Provide specific compliments when they succeed at using legal career-related skills.
- ◆ Keep the field trip and class lessons fun. Students who enjoy the experience are more likely to connect with volunteers and have a powerful, positive experience.

Effective pipeline work requires the deliberate intervention of many people and many different points in time. The literature supporting pipeline work is vast and growing. This program is designed to accomplish a very narrow but important set of goals, namely intervening with a select group of high school students of color to increase interest in legal careers, increase student knowledge about legal careers and pathways to the legal profession, and provide social support, role modeling, and persuasion for students to consider legal careers. These survey results after three years of work show that these goals are being met, at least on a modest basis, and provide necessary metrics for identifying areas where the program can be strengthened in the future. These evaluation results will help shape the future direction of the program, and also serve as validation for the many hours of volunteer and professional time that have been devoted to this program so far.



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<sup>1</sup> Full references available in Street Law's research review.

<sup>2</sup> To receive a copy of Street Law's research review, please contact Megan Hanson, [mhanson@streetlaw.org](mailto:mhanson@streetlaw.org)

<sup>3</sup> Ideas and lesson plans are available in the *Bridge to College Guide*, [www.streetlaw.org/nalpguide](http://www.streetlaw.org/nalpguide), or by speaking with Program staff.

<sup>4</sup> More information about these enhancement activities is available in the *Bridge to College Guide*, [www.streetlaw.org/nalpguide](http://www.streetlaw.org/nalpguide), or by speaking with Program staff.