

# THE STEPPINGSTONE ACADEMY

TRANSPARENCY REPORT  
COLLEGE ACCESS AND SUCCESS

## SUMMARY OF INDEPENDENT PROGRAM ANALYSIS

This report summarizes the independent program analysis of The Steppingstone Academy, conducted by Root Cause in 2014. The program was analyzed in two categories, program performance and organizational health, and received a total of **26 points** out of 30, making it a **HIGH PERFORMING** program.



### SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

#### Strengths

- **Distinctive college access program model:** The Steppingstone Academy makes a long-term commitment to Scholars and their families, providing meaningful services for over 10 years. Its distinctive college access program model is characterized by a primary intervention in the middle grades.
- **Rigorous academic preparation:** The Steppingstone Academy offers rigorous academic preparation to remediate achievement gaps and prepare Scholars for a selection of middle and high schools with strong college preparatory curricula. The Steppingstone Academy provides additional college readiness support for all Scholars through middle and high school, and advising services through college.
- **Data-driven organization:** The Steppingstone Foundation (TSF) stands out with its strong performance measurement system and culture. The organization's commitment to performance measurement is evident in the systems and procedures throughout the organization that link individual staff performance with outcomes for participants.

#### Opportunities for Investment

- **Provide additional support to alumni:** In 2010, The Steppingstone Academy began offering formal support to Scholars in college. Since that time, the Academy has worked to develop programming to provide in-college support to Scholars. Additional financial support will allow the Academy to provide more high-touch advising and college integration and employment support, each of which is shown to positively impact college success.
- **Academic preparation and enrichment:** For over 20 years, The Steppingstone Academy has provided outstanding academic support and enrichment to Scholars. Additional funding will allow the Academy to enhance its academic preparation by including computer and software skills in its curriculum. Research demonstrates that basic computer and software skills are becoming increasingly more important as Scholars enter competitive, college preparatory middle and high schools. The Academy is also exploring opportunities to use technology to bring next generation teaching methods to Scholars.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Steppingstone Academy prepares motivated, underserved schoolchildren for acceptance to, and success at, top independent, Catholic, and public exam schools in the greater Boston area. Scholars, who are admitted the spring before their fifth- or sixth-grade year, participate in a rigorous course of academic preparation that spans two summers and one academic year.

The Scholars continue to receive sustained support throughout the middle and high school years to ensure their ongoing success. This support includes counseling, academic advising, tutoring, and college-readiness services. During their undergraduate years, Scholars are supported and advised by Steppingstone's College Services team.

AGE OF PROGRAM (YEARS)	24
SCHOLARS ENROLLED (2013)	1,442
TOTAL PROGRAM REVENUE (2013)	\$2.6 million
LENGTH OF PROGRAM	10+ years
PROGRAM COMPLETION RATE (2013)	83%

## WHAT PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

"Steppingstone changed my life. Without the additional support from Steppingstone, I wouldn't be at the same academic level and I definitely wouldn't be at Roxbury Latin. I'd be a totally different person."

"I don't think I'd be as in control of my future as I am now, without Steppingstone. This program gets you ready to be a leader and really engage in the community. Steppingstone changed my life and gave me the crucial skills I needed."

"I would have lacked a lot of skills if I hadn't gone through the program. I wouldn't have the support I have now and I wouldn't be as involved in my school and community. Steppingstone will be there to support me all through college and even for the rest of my life."



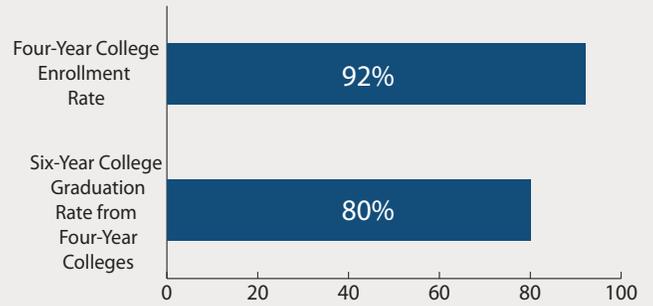
## PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

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## PROGRAM OUTCOME DATA

The Steppingstone Academy tracks the following two outcomes for Scholars, among many others. These two outcomes are important for the Academy because they demonstrate Scholars' long-term success.

- **Enrollment rate at four-year colleges:** The percentage of Scholars who have enrolled at a four-year college out of all the Scholars who completed the academic preparation component of the program. As of September 2013, 895 out of 975 Scholars had enrolled at a four-year college.
- **Six-year graduation rate from four-year colleges:** The percentage of Scholars who have graduated from a four-year college within six years out of the Scholars who enrolled at a four-year college at least four years ago. As of September 2013, 400 out of 501 have graduated.



## INDEPENDENT PROGRAM ANALYSIS DETAILS

- Key to Scoring:**
- 1 - program does not meet best practices
  - 3 - program meets all the critical best practices
  - 5 - program meets all the critical best practices and many of the advanced best practices

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE SUBCATEGORIES	DEFINITION	SCORE
COLLEGE ASPIRATION AND KNOWLEDGE	The program's ability to instill college aspirations, assist with college application and selection process, and help participants transition to college.	TSA  5
ACADEMIC PREPARATION AND ENRICHMENT	The program's ability to assist participants in developing academic and non-cognitive skills.	TSA  4
COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY	The program's ability to help participants overcome the financial barriers that often keep them from pursuing a college career.	TSA  5

ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH SUBCATEGORIES	DEFINITION	SCORE
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	The organization's ability to conduct its work in a fiscally responsible manner and to plan for future growth with reliable, recurring revenue streams.	TSA  4
MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE	The organization's ability to advance on the mission, the program staff's ability to deliver programming, and the board's ability to provide governance.	TSA  4
PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FOR IMPROVEMENT	The organization and program's ability to collect and use data to make decisions and commitment to transparency with external stakeholders.	TSA  4

## ABOUT ROOT CAUSE

Root Cause's services and programs individually and collectively bring together nonprofits, philanthropy, government, and business to advance solutions to today's toughest social issues by helping them understand and invest in what works. Our decade of work to accelerate performance shows that sustained change happens when resources flow to organizations committed to continuous improvement.

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