INTERVENTION BRIEF
Topic Area: Transition to College

:ies INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

Facilitating Long-term Improvements in Graduation and Higher Education for Tomorrow (FLIGHT)

Large numbers of qualified students do not apply to and enroll in college. Yet, earning a college degree is one of the primary pathways for economic success and is increasingly required for good jobs and high wages.[1] A number of programs and practices aim to improve college readiness and enrollment, including *Take Stock in Children's® (TSIC's®) Facilitating Long-term Improvements in Graduation and Higher Education for Tomorrow (FLIGHT)* program. *FLIGHT* provides mentoring, scholarships, and additional support services to help disadvantaged middle and high school students stay on track for graduation, apply to college, and enroll in college. *FLIGHT* students also have access to college transition and retention services in their first three semesters of college. This What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) report, part of the WWC's Transition to College topic area, explores the effects of the *FLIGHT* program on student success. The WWC identified six studies of *FLIGHT*, and one study met WWC standards.

What Happens When Students Participate in *FLIGHT*?

The evidence indicates that implementing *FLIGHT*:

- **may increase the number of students who enroll in college**
- **may result in little or no increase in high school students' attendance**
- **may result in little or no increase in high school students' GPA**

Findings on *FLIGHT* from the available research that met WWC standards are shown in Table 1. For each student outcome reviewed by the WWC, an effectiveness rating, the performance of the *FLIGHT* intervention group relative to the comparison group, and the number of studies and students that contributed to the findings is presented.

Table 1. Summary of findings on *FLIGHT*

| Outcome | Effectiveness rating | Average performance (study findings) | | Evidence meeting WWC standards (version 3.0) | |
		Intervention group	Comparison group	Number of studies	Number of students
College access and enrollment	Potentially positive effects	97% enrolled	83% enrolled	1	180
High school attendance	No discernible effects	12.37 absences	12.45 absences	1	241
General high school academic achievement	No discernible effects	3.90 GPA	3.95 GPA	1	240

Table Note: Average performance values (study findings) are generated by one analysis conducted for each outcome, as reported by Philp (2005). These outcomes include enrollment in college the first semester after graduating high school (college access and enrollment), number of absences in the third year of the intervention (high school attendance), and weighted grade point average (GPA) in the third year of the intervention (general high school academic achievement). See the Intervention Report for details on the study results that contributed to these findings. The effects of *FLIGHT* are not known for academic achievement or attendance in middle school; college readiness; staying in, progressing in, or completing high school; attendance, credit accumulation, or academic achievement in college; college degree attainment; and, labor market participation/success.

Based on findings from one study that met WWC evidence standards, the effectiveness rating for the college access and enrollment outcome is *potentially positive effects*, indicating that there is evidence of a positive effect with no overriding contrary evidence. The percentage of students enrolling in college in the fall following high school graduation was 97 for the *FLIGHT* group and 83 for the comparison group. This finding is based on 180 students. The effectiveness rating for the high school attendance and general high school academic achievement outcomes is *no discernible effects*. These findings are based on 241 and 240 students, respectively.

HOW THE WWC REVIEWS AND DESCRIBES EVIDENCE

The WWC evaluates evidence based on the quality and results of reviewed studies. The criteria that the WWC uses for evaluating evidence are defined in the **Procedures and Standards Handbooks** and the **Review Protocols**. The studies summarized in this report were reviewed under WWC Standards (version 3.0) and the Transition to College topic area protocol (version 3.2).

To determine the effectiveness rating, the WWC considers what methods each study used, the direction of the effects, and how many studies tested the intervention. The higher the effectiveness rating, the more certain the WWC is about the reported results and about what will happen if the same intervention is implemented again. The following key provides a link between effectiveness ratings and the statements used in this report:

Effectiveness Rating	*What Happened* Statement	Description of the Evidence
Positive (or Negative) Effects	The intervention is *likely* to change an outcome	Strong evidence of a positive effect, with no overriding contrary evidence
Potentially Positive (or Negative) Effects	The intervention *may* change an outcome	Evidence of a positive effect with no overriding contrary evidence
No Discernible Effects	The intervention *may result in little to no change* in an outcome	No affirmative evidence of effects
Mixed Effects	The intervention *may result in positive or negative change* in an outcome	Evidence of inconsistent effects

How is *FLIGHT* Implemented?

The following section provides details of how *FLIGHT* was implemented. This information can help educators identify the requirements for implementing *FLIGHT*, and determine whether those implementation requirements would be feasible in their districts. Information on *FLIGHT* presented in this section comes from the study that met WWC evidence standards (Philp, 2015) and from correspondence with the developer. Information on *TSIC*® was gathered from *TSIC*®'s website.

- **Goal:** To help low-income middle school and high school students stay on track for graduation, apply to college, and enroll and succeed in college.

- **Target Population:** To be eligible for *FLIGHT*, a student must (1) be in middle or high school grades; (2) be eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; (3) have a minimum 2.0 GPA and no Ds or Fs for the previous year; (4) be performing at grade level or above in reading and math as indicated by standardized testing; (5) have no out-of-school suspensions for the prior year and no more than six incidents of in-school suspensions for the prior year; (6) have no more than 10 unexcused absences in the previous year; and (7) be attending a public school. Students' parents also must agree to adhere to *TSIC*'s® policies.

- **Method of Delivery:** *FLIGHT* offers students individualized assistance and group workshops during the school day from volunteer mentors, student advocates, and, in one study site, College Enrollment and Retention Specialists.

- **Frequency and Duration of Service:** Students who continue to meet eligibility requirements can participate in *FLIGHT* for up to eight years, from grade 6 through the first three semesters of college. See Table 2 for details on the frequency in which individual service components were delivered.

- **Intervention Components:** The *FLIGHT* intervention adds several components to the *TSIC*® model, as noted in Table 2.

Comparison Group: In the one study that contributes to this Intervention Report, students in the comparison group had access to college preparation support that was already available in their schools.

Table 2. Components of *FLIGHT*

Key component	*FLIGHT*
Volunteer mentors	Students meet with trained adult volunteer mentors in school for a minimum of 15 sessions per year for at least 30 minutes per session. These sessions typically focus on identifying needs, personal growth and development, educational planning, supporting academic success, and career planning.
Student advocates/case managers	Every student is assigned a student advocate, an adult *TSIC*® staff member that serves as a case manager. The student advocate works closely with volunteer mentors and school staff to make sure students are on track academically. *FLIGHT* includes more intensive academic, attendance, and behavioral monitoring than *TSIC*® and includes: • College Access and Success Meetings to review progress toward graduation and college enrollment, one to four times per year for 15-30 minutes each. • Advocacy Meetings to monitor students' grades, attendance, and satisfaction with his/her mentor, four times a year for 15 minutes each. Student advocates address any academic or behavioral issues that arise by organizing meetings among teachers, guidance counselors, parents, and mentors. One *FLIGHT* study site also includes a College Enrollment and Retention Specialist who coordinated workshops and college tours.
Florida Prepaid Scholarships	Students who fulfill *FLIGHT* requirements receive a two-year scholarship to college, or they may use their scholarship funding to attend vocational training.
Continued mentoring	Students have access to college transition and retention services in their freshman year of college. One *FLIGHT* study site includes a College Enrollment and Retention Specialist who coordinated post-graduation activities.
Workshops	*FLIGHT* adds workshops to the *TSIC*® model. Student advocates provide students (and parents) with workshops that cover a range of topics such as goal setting, study skills, and college preparation and applications. Students in grades 7-10 participate in three workshops per year, which last from one to four hours each. Students in grades 11-12 participate in six workshops per year, which last from one to four hours each.
Student detail reports	At the end of each school year, parents and teachers are provided a one-page snapshot of the student's grades, standardized test scores, attendance, office referrals, program participation, and whether the student is on track to graduate high school.

What Does *FLIGHT* Cost?

The cost of *FLIGHT* is not reported in the one study reviewed (Philp, 2015), and no cost information on *FLIGHT* was available on the *TSIC*® website. However, the WWC identified a number of cost components from the intervention description in the study's report. This preliminary list of costs is not designed to be exhaustive; rather, it is designed to provide educators an overview of the major cost components of implementing *FLIGHT*.

- **Personnel Costs:** Schools that implemented *FLIGHT* conducted one 2-hour mentor training, one 1-hour staff training, and nine hour-long workshops for staff each year. Student advocates/case managers were volunteers and required only training costs. Student advocates were hired by *TSIC*® and embedded within the school.

- **Facilities Costs:** Schools needed dedicated space to accommodate meetings between students and their mentors and student advocates/case managers during the school day. Space was also needed for workshops.

- **Equipment and Materials Costs:** Information on equipment and materials costs is not reported.

- **Costs Paid by Students or Parents:** Students and parents were responsible for transportation costs to workshops and for college costs not covered by the *FLIGHT* scholarship.

- **In-Kind Supports:** *FLIGHT* received in-kind services from volunteers and through private foundations and community agencies.

- **Sources of Funding:** College scholarships and student services were funded in a public-private funding model. *FLIGHT* received funding from corporate, foundation, and private donations, which were matched by the Florida Prepaid College Foundation funded by the Florida Legislature.

In What Context Was *FLIGHT* Studied?

The following section provides information on the setting and participants involved in the one study of *FLIGHT* that meets WWC evidence standards. This information can help educators understand the context in which the study of *FLIGHT* was conducted, and determine whether the program might be suitable for their setting.

WHERE THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

1 study, **241** students in **42** middle and high schools in **four districts** in **Florida**

1 urban district, **3** rural districts

RACE

80%	20%
Minority	**White**

ETHNICITY

47%	53%
Hispanic	**Non-Hispanic**

FREE & REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH: 100%

GENDER: 65% Female 35% Male

GRADES PK — K — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10 — 11 — 12 — PS

Grade 6–Postsecondary (PS)

┌ LEARN MORE ─────────────────────────────────

Read more about the *FLIGHT* intervention and the studies that are summarized here on the **Intervention Report webpage**.

ENDNOTE

[1] Avery, C. (2013). Evaluation of the College Possible Program: Results from a randomized controlled trial. NBER Working Paper 19562. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. *See also* Hoxby, C. & Turner, S. (2013). Expanding college opportunities for high-achieving, low income students. Stanford, CA: Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research.