

What Works Clearinghouse



I Have A Dream

Effectiveness No studies of *I Have A Dream* that fall within the scope of the Dropout Prevention review protocol meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. The lack of studies meeting WWC evidence standards means that, at this time, the WWC is unable to draw any conclusions based on research about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of *I Have A Dream*.

Program Description¹

I Have A Dream is a program that encourages students in low-income communities to complete high school and go on to college. The program guarantees that tuition for higher education will be covered after high school graduation. In addition, it provides participants with tutoring and counseling from elementary school through high school. Each *I Have A Dream* program sponsors either an entire grade level of students at a low-income public elementary school or an entire cohort of same-age children in a public housing development. These students are tracked over

time and encouraged to participate in program activities, such as tutoring, mentoring, counseling, community service, and recreational opportunities. A full-time paid staff member coordinates program activities and serves as a mentor to program participants. A group of sponsors commits to working with the students throughout the life of the program and often provides the program with funding and other resources. The sponsors and other local donors ensure that participants who graduate from high school receive post-secondary education tuition assistance.

The WWC identified 14 studies of *I Have A Dream* that were published or released between 1988 and 2008.

Seven studies are within the scope of the review protocol and have an eligible design, but do not meet WWC evidence standards.

- Five studies do not establish that the comparison group was comparable to the treatment group prior to the start of the intervention.
- One study has only one grade level at a single school assigned to each research group, so that the effect of *I Have A Dream* cannot be separated from cohort effects.

- One study does not account for differences in pre-intervention characteristics while using a quasi-experimental design.

Seven studies are out of the scope of the review, as defined by the Dropout Prevention protocol. Two of these studies do not use a comparison group, two do not examine outcomes within a domain specified in the protocol, one does not use a sample within the grade range specified in the protocol, one is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of the intervention, and one does not examine the effectiveness of the intervention.

1. The descriptive information for this program was obtained from a publicly-available source: the program's website (<http://www.ihaveadreamfoundation.org>, downloaded December 2008). The WWC requests developers to review the program description sections for accuracy from their perspective. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this program is beyond the scope of this review.

References Studies that fall outside the Dropout Prevention protocol or do not meet evidence standards

Aron, L. Y., & Barnow, B. S. (1994, May). *Evaluation of New York City's class of 1992 I Have A Dream program*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute and Johns Hopkins University.

The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

Byrne, P. J. (2001). The educational effectiveness of the Albany *I Have A Dream* program (New York) (Doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Albany, 2001). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 62(04A), 73–1322. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.

Coons, C. A., & Petrick, E. W. (1992). A decade of making dreams into reality: Lessons from the *I Have A Dream* program. *Yale Law & Policy Review*, 10(1), 82–103. The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine the effectiveness of an intervention.

Davis, A. E., Hyatt, G., & Arrasmith, D. (1998). *I Have A Dream program—class one evaluation report*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.

Herman, J. L., & Muñoz, J. S. (1995). *Review and evaluation of I Have A Dream—Los Angeles group 8*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.

Higgins, C., Furano, K., Toso, C., & Branch, A. Y. (1992). *I Have A Dream in Washington, DC: Initial report*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.

Kahne, J., & Bailey, K. (1999). The role of social capital in youth development: The case of *I Have A Dream* programs. *Educational Evaluation & Policy Analysis*, 21(3), 321–343. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.

Additional Sources:

Kahne, J. (1999). Personalized philanthropy: Can it support youth and build civic commitments? *Youth & Society*, 30(3), 367–387.

Kuboyama, E. M. (2000). *East Palo Alto I Have A Dream program evaluation report*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University, School of Education. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.

Levine, A., & Nidiffer, J. (1996). *Beating the odds: How the poor get into college*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention.

Maria, K. (2001). *The I Have A Dream project, Mount Vernon, NY: 1987–1997*. Unpublished manuscript. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

McGrath, R., & Hayman, J. (1997). *The Paterson, New Jersey I Have A Dream program: Academic performance and outcomes*. Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University, School of Psychology. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effect cannot be attributed solely to the intervention—there was only one unit of assignment in one or both conditions.

Shoemaker, M. (1997). *Delivering on a promise: An evaluation of the I Have A Dream Foundation*. Pasadena, CA: “I Have A Dream” Foundation—Pasadena. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.

References *(continued)*

Strusinski, M. (1997, June). *Evaluation of the I Have A Dream project*. Miami, FL: Dade County Public Schools, ED 421 502.

The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample within the age or grade range specified in the protocol.

Torres, J. S., Weichun, W., & Blank, R. (1990). *Three years later: An evaluation and follow-up of the impact of the I Have A*

Dream program on participating students from 1986–1989. Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment, New York City Board of Education. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the estimates of effects did not account for differences in pre-intervention characteristics while using a quasi-experimental design.