

# Addressing Education Deficits: LaGuardia Community College's Bridge to College and Careers Program

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# Overview

- **Background and context**
- **The reform landscape**
- **Program spotlight**
  - LaGuardia CC's GED Bridge program
- **Discussion**

# BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

# Why focus on the GED?

- 21% of U.S. adults lack a high school diploma, barring most of them from college entry
- Adult education and the GED: Second chance pathways
- But critical challenges
  - Few students in adult education achieving GED
  - GED found to have few labor market effects
  - 2/3rds of jobs in 2018 require some college

## OUTCOMES FOR GED RECIPIENTS vs. HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

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Average  
monthly  
income

GED

\$3,149

HS

\$4,690

Have  
bachelor's  
degree or  
higher

GED

5%

HS

33%

Source: Census Bureau, 2009

# THE REFORM LANDSCAPE

# Challenges to moving forward

- Students face multiple barriers
  - Low basic skills
  - At-risk population
  - Inconsistent program participation
- Teaching and instruction
  - Teacher preparation and training
  - Content and pedagogy
- Programs and policies
  - Financial constraints
  - Open enrollment
  - Fragmented administration

# Transforming the GED

## Strategy #1: Revise the standards

- Instructional standards
- New credentialing standards

## Strategy #2: Improve the preparation and transition

- College-prep curriculum
- Transition supports entry into college and training

## Strategy #3: Integrate basic and occupational skills

- Dual enrollment GED and college programs
  - Noncredit courses
  - Credit courses
  - Credentialing pathways



A map of New York City showing the five boroughs: Manhattan, Bronx, Queens, Richmond, and Staten Island. The map is color-coded by borough and shows major roads and water bodies.

# NEW-YORK

## **Amy Dalsimer, Executive Director Pre College Academic Programming**



- Large, urban campus in the most diverse US county
- Students from 160 countries and speak 125 languages
- 80% of students report annual incomes of \$25,000 or less
- 20% of nearby residents lack a high school diploma

Staten Island

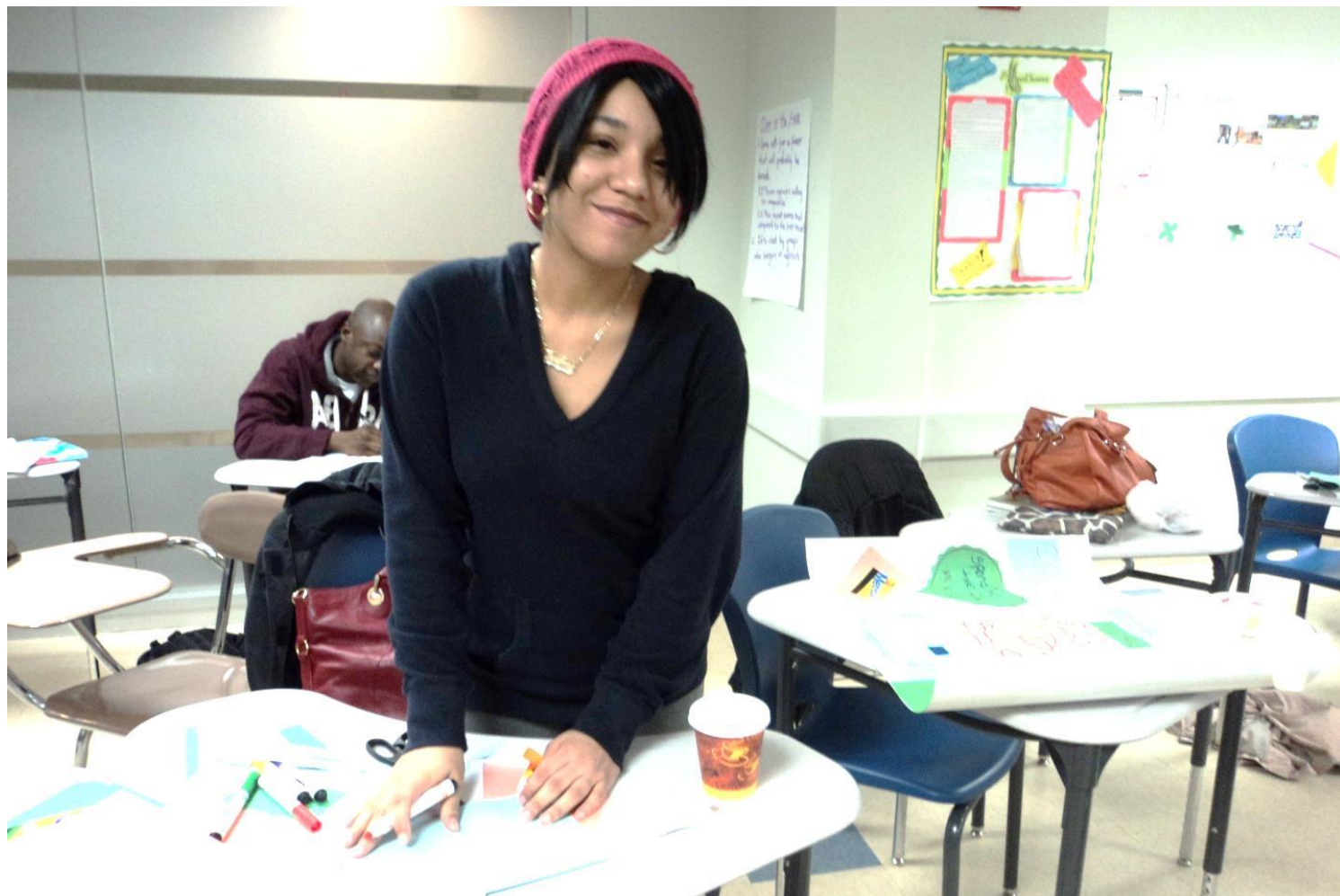
Ocean

# Bridge to College and Careers Program at LaGuardia Community College





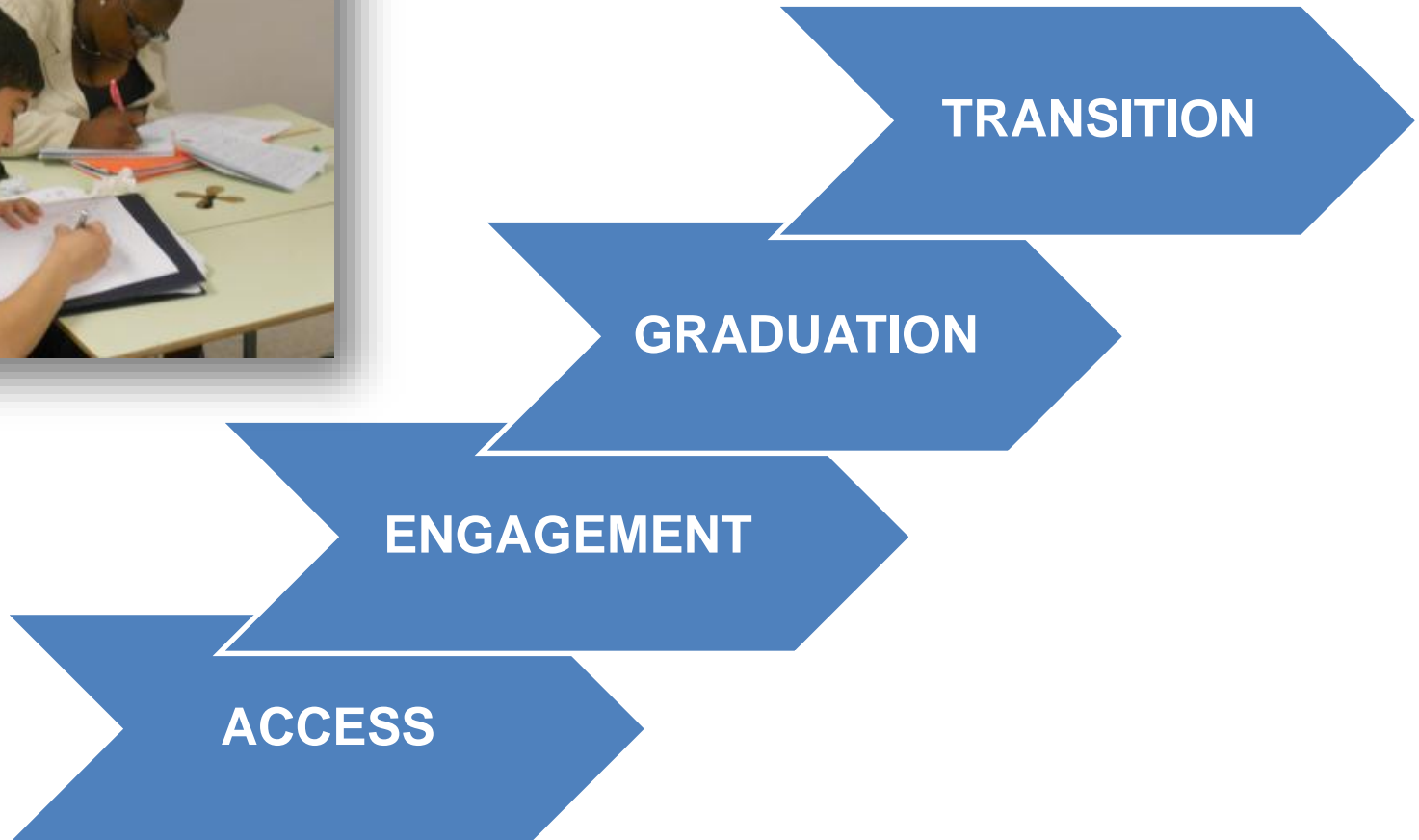
# Geraldine



# Kabhir



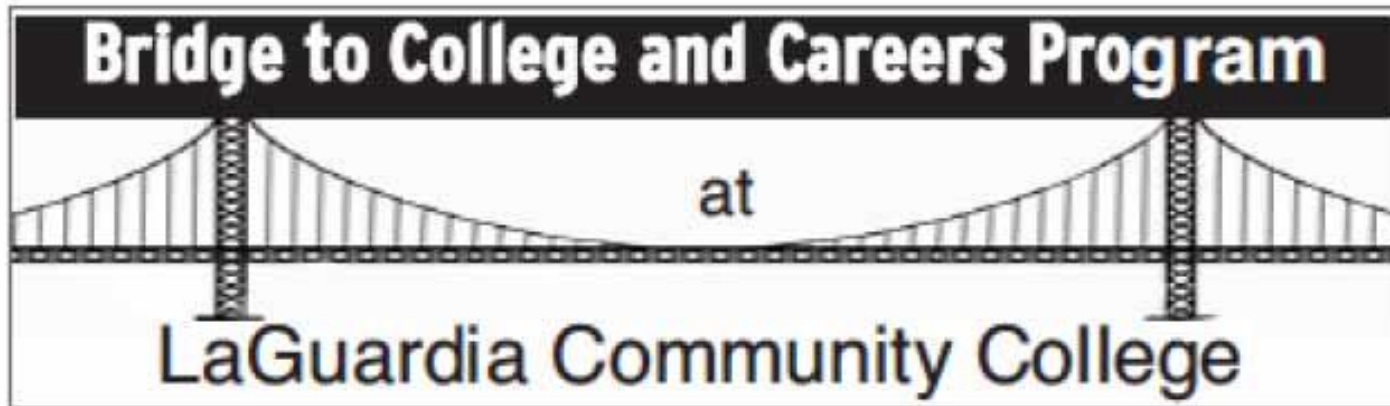
# LaGuardia's Bridge Program Goals



# Bridge Program Model

- Managed enrollment vs. open enrollment
- Comprehensive admissions process
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading level and above (TABE)
- 14 week cycle with a year-long model
- 110 hours of in-class instruction over 12 weeks; 9 class hours per week
- Part time program for students 19 and over
- Career focused contextualized curriculum





Bridge to  
Healthcare  
Careers

Bridge to  
Business  
Careers

Bridge to  
Science  
Careers

**1000+ students served since 2007**

[www.laguardia.edu/pcap](http://www.laguardia.edu/pcap)



# Contextualized Curriculum: Moving Beyond Test Prep

- Build college & career readiness skills that support effective transitions
- Explore key concepts in a career sector
- Support academic persistence
- Develop aspirational culture





# What does contextualized instruction look like in the Bridge classroom?

## Teachers are...

- Linking scaffolded instruction across disciplines
- Choosing authentic and appropriate materials
- Facilitating, not lecturing
- Creating opportunities for self-assessment
- Providing summative and formative assessment
- Aligning instruction to college and career readiness standards
- Making explicit connections to the HSE exams
- Leading exploration of sector specific issues and ideas

## Students are...

- Learning collaboratively
- Completing authentic assessments
- Reading closely and critically
- Practicing academic persistence
- Documenting progress & skill development
- Completing project-based math assignments using real world data
- Exploring college and career options
- Building deep conceptual knowledge and analytical skills across the curriculum



# What does the Bridge curriculum look like?

## Bridge to Health

- College and Career Exploration
- Nutrition
- Patient Care
- Epidemics and Infection Control



## Bridge to Business

- College and Career Exploration
- Entrepreneurship
- Professional Ethics
- Basic Economic Principles

# How does contextualized instruction address the College and Career Readiness Standards and Engage Students?

- Connect basic academic skills to students' aspirations
- Sustained content engagement
- Depth vs. Breadth



# How Does Contextualized Curriculum Build College and Career Readiness?

- Emphasis on authentic materials (not test prep)
- Practice thinking in the disciplines
- Increased professional awareness and academic persistence
- Exposure to key vocabulary
- College knowledge



# College and Career Transitions

- Integrated College and career exploration curriculum
- Group and individualized advisement
- Financial aid and application support
- Alumni speakers & mentors



# What are the key design elements?

- Full time instructor and advisement support model
- Intensive teacher training & ongoing professional development
- Subject matter expert input for curriculum design
- Build strong partnerships to promote successful transitions



# Bringing it to Scale

- College and Career Pathways Institute: evidence based professional development
- Focus on standards based instruction vs. test preparation
- Implementation of common high impact learning strategies
- Ongoing professionalization of the field



# The College and Career Pathways Institute

## Professional Development Led By Practitioners

Teacher Preparation & Curriculum Development	Program Redesign
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interactive Workshops</li><li>• Curriculum Coaching</li><li>• Webinars</li><li>• Instructional Resources</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Team Building</li><li>• Mission Development</li><li>• Goal Setting</li><li>• Leadership Training</li></ul>

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# *The Evaluation Design*

- Small scale study that began in summer 2010
- Uses a random assignment research design
  - GED Bridge program, either to the Business or Health class
  - GED Prep class
- Studying the implementation and impacts of the GED Bridge program
- Evaluation and program funded by the Robin Hood Foundation and MetLife Foundation

# ***What is GED Bridge being compared to?***

	<b>GED Prep</b>	<b>GED Bridge</b>
<b>CURRICULUM</b>	GED textbooks, standard practice tests	Contextualized curriculum with original lessons
<b>CLASS TIME</b>	60 hours over 9 weeks	108 hours over 12 weeks
<b>TRANSITION COUNSELING</b>	None beyond general college resources	In-class and individualized counseling

# *Target Population*

- 7th grade level or above on the TABE (Test for Adult Basic Education)
- Income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level
- 18 years of age or older

# *Recruitment and Enrollment*

- Recruitment through various GED and ABE providers
- Intensive, 3-day recruitment and enrollment process:
  - Day 1: TABE and written application
  - Day 2: Writing Sample and one-on-one interview
  - Day 3: Random Assignment

Process usually takes about 3-5 weeks to complete

# *Research Sample*

- Enrolled four full cohorts of participants into the study: fall 2010, spring 2011, fall 2011, and spring 2012
- The total sample size is 369 (201 in Bridge group and 168 in Prep group)

# *Findings*

- **Characteristics of participants**
- **Findings from the field**
- **Early impacts**

# *Characteristics of Study Participants*

Background Characteristic	Full Sample
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	
Hispanic / Latino	50.1
Black, non-Hispanic	34.5
Other	15.4
<b>Female</b>	67.2
<b>Average Age</b>	26.6
<b>Receiving public assistance</b>	53.4
<b>Employed at enrollment</b>	38.4

# *Characteristics of Study Participants*

Background Characteristic	Full Sample
<b>Entering TABE scores</b>	
7 <sup>th</sup> grade level	24.9
8 <sup>th</sup> grade level	25.2
9 <sup>th</sup> grade level	16.3
10 <sup>th</sup> grade level or above	33.6
<b>Highest grade attained (%)</b>	
9 <sup>th</sup> or below	15.2
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	30.1
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	36.3
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	8.9
Missing	9.5
<b>Sample size</b>	369



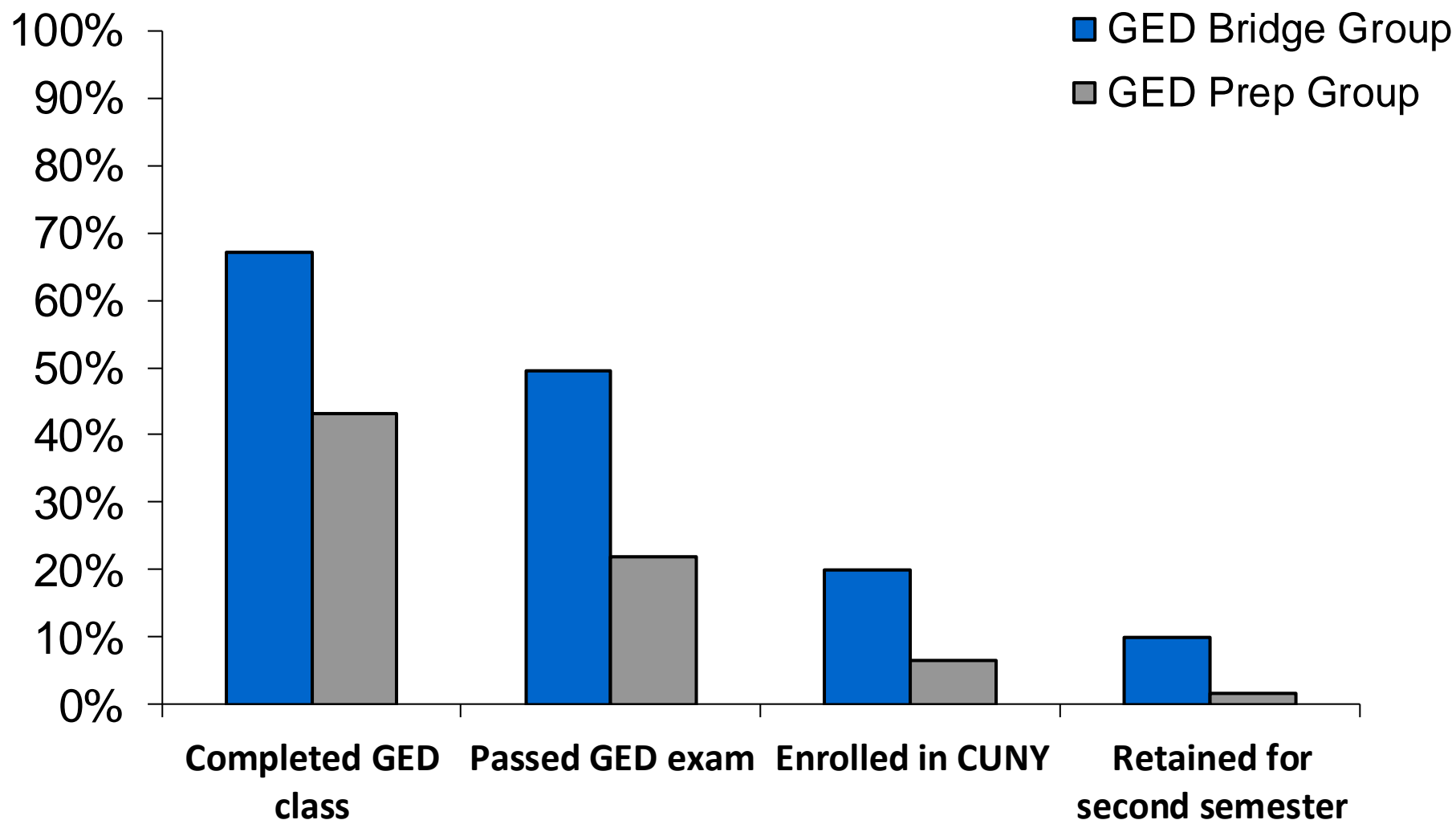
# ***GED Bridge has a well-designed curriculum, and strong instruction and student support***

- Strong and coordinated leadership and instruction
- Adherence to program goals in curriculum and assignments
  - Assignments are future-oriented with a focus on business and health fields
- Emphasis on student engagement, retention, and relationships
- Students from wide variety of backgrounds and experiences with prior GED classes

# ***GED Bridge students are more engaged and have a greater sense of direction***

- Differences in Bridge and Prep students' reported experiences:
  - Personal attention from teachers and staff
  - Understanding of financial aid, pre-requisites, and career/college options
  - Confidence about taking and passing the GED
  - Intention to enroll in post-secondary education

# *Higher GED pass rates and post-secondary enrollment rates for those in GED Bridge*



# *What's Next?*

- Findings indicate that there are ways to make the GED exam more relevant and a better conduit into college.
- LaGuardia's program is unique but colleges can adopt the approach and create their own program.
- Further rigorous testing of similar contextualized GED transition models is needed.
- Policy brief and video available at [www.mdrc.org](http://www.mdrc.org).

# Research and Professional Development

## Partner with MDRC

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## Partner with LaGuardia Community College

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Community College

**CONTINUING  
EDUCATION**  
*People, Changing*

