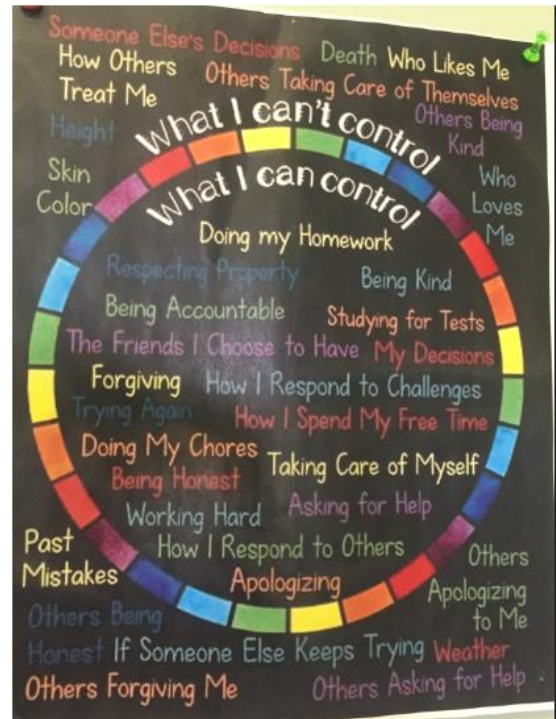


Crown Point Central School Student Study

I think they [Crown Point school staff] helped me a lot. Like, they've helped me keep interest in school while making it fun – providing amazing opportunities for a small school – where other schools like this wouldn't get half the opportunities we did. They do a really good job; they motivate you and keep you interested. They're always on you to do stuff and do better. It may be annoying, but in the long run it will help you. (Kyle¹)

The School Context

Crown Point Central School is located in New York's Essex County in what is referred to as the "North Country." This region of the state is primarily rural, dotted with small villages and towns and with a few cities like Plattsburgh and Albany within an hour or two drive away.



The school district, as reported in NYKids' College and Career Readiness Phase I Study, is home to a PK-12 building in the center of town that functions as the hub for community events and activities.

In this, Phase II of our College and Career Readiness Study, we investigated Crown Point 11th and 12th grade students' perspectives on their preparation for life beyond high school.

Of the 11 Crown Point students who participated in the study, we found agreement among them that roots to the community are strong. As Alex explained,

We have people come back who have gone here and then now they work here. We have a lot of students who come back for games and shows and stuff like that. You go away, do your own thing, but a lot of people come back and visit at least –

¹ To protect the identities of participants all student names are pseudonyms.

even if they don't stay . . . you're always going to be drawn back to your roots. It's hard to forget this place.

Lucas also shared a common theme among his peers by characterizing Crown Point as “a small out-of-the-way kind of town so there’s not stuff you have to worry about outside of school, like violence-wise you’d see on the news everywhere.” And while some students described a common desire for young people to leave the community to broaden their experiences after graduation, Cristy summed up a shared perspective on their close ties to their home town and the school,

Really it's a blessing to come here because even though it's a small town and school, you get to know everyone and it's kind of nice just being able to know everyone. It's just a different type of feeling than being in a bigger city and not knowing anyone. It's really nice to have a small school and town.

School Selection Criteria

Crown Point High School met the criteria of a positive outlier in Phase I of the College and Career Readiness Study because the difference between expected graduation rates for students entering 9th grade in 2010, 2011 and 2012 who are disadvantaged economically exceeded the average performance for similar students across the state. For this student study (Phase II), we chose to revisit Crown Point because it continues its positive outlier trend. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of Crown Point in the academic year 2018-19².

Table 1. Crown Point Demographics

	Crown Point Central School	Crown Point Central School District	New York State
Grades Served	K-12	K-12	K-12
Total Enrollment	75	274	2,598,921
Economically Disadvantaged	61%	64%	57%
English Language Learners	-	-	9%
Student Ethnic/Racial Distribution			
African-American	0%	0%	17%
Hispanic/Latino	0%	0%	27%
White	100%	100%	43%
Multiracial	0%	0%	3%
Other	0%	0%	10%

Since the completion of Phase I of our study, we noted that Crown Point Central School has maintained a higher graduation rate when compared to the New York State average. Figure 1 shows a comparison of Crown Point graduation rates over four cohorts of 9th graders who started high school from the years 2010 to 2015 in comparison to the New York state average.

² 2018-19 School Enrollment data are the most recent available from the New State Enrollment Database.

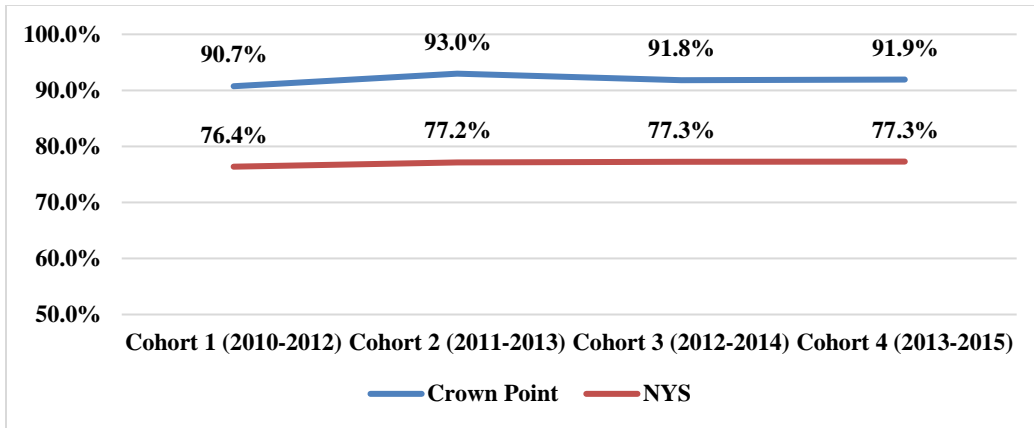


Figure 1. Overall Graduation Rates in Crown Point High School and New York State

This case studyⁱ reports on students’ perspectives on their high school experiences and their preparation for life beyond high school. The next section highlights major findings and is followed by details regarding the five lines of inquiry that framed this study.

Highlights

Students in this study shared perspectives that the following were important aspects of their preparation for life after high school:

- ✓ Close relationships with peers and adults in and outside of school built on a foundation of responsibility and respect
- ✓ Ample opportunities to explore different career and life paths post-graduation through coursework, internships, school and community service projects, extracurricular activities, and mentoring programs
- ✓ Encouragement to advocate for themselves, work hard, self-regulate, and explore their unique potentials

A Closer Look

The three highlights above are evident throughout the five lines of inquiry that frame the study of which this case is one part.

Voice, Choice, and Leadership

To varying degrees, all Crown Point students in the study provided examples of opportunities they were offered to exercise voice and choice and lead some activity or project in or outside of school.

Voice-Inviting and Choice-Making Opportunities

Students at Crown Point pointed to a number of opportunities they have to make choices both academic and non-academic. They associated these opportunities with helping prepare them for

adult life in that they would need to be able to make decisions and act responsibly in less structured environments of college or the workplace. They also pointed to the importance of choice in developing greater understandings of themselves as learners and as people. They reported that when teachers gave them opportunities to explore their likes and dislikes and their affinities more deeply, it accelerated their developing sense of what they can and want to do with their futures.

One of the most common responses to questions around opportunities to make choices was in regard to products to show as evidence of their learning. For example, Kyle described opportunities to choose journal entries versus chapter notes for homework assignments; in Alex's case, she decided craft a "playdoh brain" instead of taking a test. In this particular focus group, Alex, Kyle, and Mackenzie shared how they appreciate being given options to express what they know and can do in different ways, some choosing more hands-on activities versus writing papers or completing on-demand tests. Alex explained,

We had the choice whether we could make them [poster boards] online as a virtual vision board or we could make them by hand. So I liked that choice because I like the more hands-on, like putting paper to paper myself, than picking pictures online and doing it that way.

When we asked questions about what value they placed on being given the opportunity to make choices, some, like Alex and Kyle, described what being given a choice does to prepare a person for the less-structured environments of adulthood and how they experienced this gradual opening up of choices as they progressed through high school:

Alex: Well in 11th and 12th grade especially, I think, it's getting you more prepared for the future because you're going to have a lot more freedom of how you want to do things, especially going onto college and after that. There's going to be a lot of situations where you have more choice. Instead of being told just what to do, you'll have to think out of the box and figure out something, a different way to do something or another way of expressing an idea. I think that kind of helps you prepare for that.

Kyle: Yeah, it helps you take responsibility for your own actions and make decisions for yourself.

Academic and Non-Academic Choices

In addition to opportunities to choose ways of expressing academic knowledge and skills, Crown Point students described being offered different options in what courses they would take and in what delivery mode, as well as opportunities to voice their preferences regarding scheduling, menu items, and even how they wanted their bathrooms to be painted. On the academic side, several dual enrollment classes with colleges in the region were offered to Crown Point students and, as Alex explained, this helped her with choosing colleges to apply to:

Like when they let us choose different dual-enrollment or things like that. It's not told which ones you have to really do, it's more of a choice of which ones interest

you. And that is definitely a thing for me because I know when I was coming to choosing my colleges, I really only looked at the colleges that had hands-on learning experiences because that's what I like to do – like actually be out in the field and doing the things, doing the experiments, and holding the information in my hands.

In addition to being offered opportunities to make choices about what types of classes and which mode of delivery to take them in, some students described opportunities to voice other preferences. One example Mark described was with regard to scheduling English 11 and an “SAT prep” class so that they could be taken consecutively in the fall and spring terms. Although, like some other student-driven proposals, this one “has fallen through,” Mark’s understanding is that when students don’t get what they want, as in this SAT prep scheduling example, it is often due to “state requirements . . . for seat time” or “school rules” that can’t be changed – at least, according to him and with a hopeful note, “not yet.”

Other choices were important to students as well, including what food or drink they were offered or even how their school facilities looked. In a focus group, Harold and Jessica discussed these opportunities:

Harold: In student council we're trying to bring athletic drinks to the vending machine down by the gym and to the teachers' room, actually.

Jessica: And, Student Council also did something – for a while we had pizza every Friday for lunch and they worked on it, and we got that changed to something else on Fridays, so we didn't have the same thing every Friday and . . . we could paint the bathroom, the girls' and boys' bathrooms, over again.



Figure 2. Crown Point student-painted bathroom

These kinds of choices were not by chance, but rather were offered by educators in a way that is respectful of students' interests and concerns. Students mentioned programs such as "Panther Partners" that create the time and space for students to communicate with adults. Jessica described it this way: "[Panther Partners] is a group of kids and they go to one teacher and talk about how we can stop bullying or just traits of being a good student or a good person."

Self-Advocacy and Leading to Serve Others

Some Crown Point students pointed to ways their teachers promoted their abilities to advocate for themselves and how this was seen as important in helping them navigate their futures whether in college or the workplace or civic life. Alex provided an example,

One thing I always hear over and over from my Drama Director is the importance of confidence and advocating for yourself – being able to speak up for yourself and make sure you're getting what you need. And having an open line of communication with your professors and into the workforce with your boss. Always being able to advocate or network for yourself.

Beyond advocating for themselves, Crown Point students reported having a variety of opportunities to lead something, even if they are not in a traditional leading organization like Student Council or National Honor Society. For example, Crown Point has been a participant in the College for Every Student (CFES) program for several years, and as part of this partnership students work together in teams to take on different projects under the guidance of a teacher. As Kyle explained, students who participate in CFES activities are "expected to be the best-behaved students in the building" and they are expected to be "leaders and mentors throughout the school." One example of a student led project as part of CFES was "Honor Flight." Mark explained that students were in the driver's seat for inviting veterans to visit the school and engage in "a question and answer session and some different activities." Kyle remarked that "there are a lot of opportunities for everyone in our school [to lead activities or projects], and definitely there are a lot of opportunities with the CFES team." He went on to describe another opportunity to lead a project: "We did a program last year 'Adopt a College'," where we were given a college, and then we talked about it with a younger, elementary grade. And we just talked about the college with them and created a short video to present to the entire elementary school."

Alex and Mackenzie interpret part of their involvement in such organizations as CFES or the National Honor Society as coming with the expectation that they act as role models for their peers in what Mackenzie described as an intentional effort on the part of adults in the school to "start a chain reaction and have good behavior everywhere." They are cognizant that they are sharing a leadership role with the adults in their school and this arrangement is rooted in trust, as Alex explained,

They [adults] use the [student] leaders to help show the younger students or students who haven't experienced certain things how to act in a way. But they know that they can trust us to be that role model.

In some cases, students expressed an awareness that leadership opportunities were expected to go beyond role modeling and to also affect others as beneficiaries of whatever the event or project is. Lucas explained, in response to a question about the most important things he has learned in high school, “Leadership skills: I know that’s a big one because you have to be able to help people out when they need it.”

Cultural Responsiveness

Next we focused attention on ways in which young people experience recognition of their cultural, linguistic, or other unique characteristics, experiences, or affinities in school. Crown Point students articulated two main points in this regard.

Making Connections between Out of School (OSL) and In School (IS) Learning

All Crown Point students who participated in this study described some connections between out of school and in school learning and could provide examples of ways teachers tapped into their out of school learning experiences and interests even if it was not very often. For example, Elliott was invited to bring his knowledge of auto mechanics to bear in his Technology class, Mark was tapped as a math peer tutor because of his abilities in math and his affinity for teaching, and Jessica, one of whose family members was a veteran, helped lead an effort to bring a veteran’s event to the school. She explained what this experience meant to her personally and how adults in the school helped make it happen.

My great grandfather was in the Korean War, and sadly he passed away before we could bring him to experience these things. . . . They [veterans] came to our school a while ago when I was in 7th grade. Me and some other people decided we really wanted them to come again, so other kids can hear their story too. We got together with our history teacher. . . . We set up a whole day and they [the veterans] came. It was an all-day assembly. We watched a movie about just what ‘Honor Flight’ [a veteran’s event held yearly in Washington D.C.] is and we had an interview with other veterans that were not here. And then they did questions and answers with 6th grade through 12th grade. We had that all organized. We had questions that were already printed out for us to ask them.

Students also spoke to the importance of opportunities to connect to other young people outside of their school and experience visiting different communities in their preparation for post graduation. The Future Community and Career Leaders of America Club (FCCLA) activities were top on the list of things they pointed to for opening up their views of the world outside of Crown Point. In this club – of which Mark said “Everyone just kind of calls it the ‘Broadway Club’ because it’s the main thing we do” – students take a yearly trip to Broadway. Connections between these Broadway shows and course content are made through, for example, assignments in history class in the case of the musical *Hamilton*. In Cristy’s words, activities like these are meant to “make sure it’s not like a culture shock when we get out there,” as many students may never visit New York City or another metropolitan area otherwise.

While not something all students participate in, Cristy, Jake, and Lucas also described a program called Reconnecting Youth that brings kids from different schools together to tackle problems challenging young people. Lucas explained that he participated in this program and reported its benefits to others,

We did projects that were beneficial. I was able to bring some stuff back and ideas. They taught you what to do if your friends or you knew someone that was thinking about suicide and how you could help them.

In addition to these kinds of programs, events, and clubs, students described being offered other niche opportunities to explore interests, be recognized for accomplishments, and/or develop leadership skills through such avenues as the HOBY (Hugh O'Brian Youth) NY East Leadership Summit, The New Visions Program (competitions and internship opportunities for students interested in particular careers, especially in STEM fields), and college visits. We describe these programs and experiences in more detail in the last section of this report.

Instruction Adapted for Learner Engagement

As described earlier, Crown Point students provided many examples of choices they were given in how they wanted to present their understandings, what courses they took, and in some cases what topics they explored or activities they engaged in. In addition to these adaptations, students spoke to how important it was to be given hands-on and experiential learning opportunities to keep them engaged in school and described ways their teachers switched up the typical focus on teacher summative assessment and offered numerous formative and peer assessment opportunities.

They also spoke of rotating peer leadership roles for different activities and projects with attention to building from their strengths and interests. The value students ascribed to these experiences vis-à-vis their development and success beyond high school was captured in Elliot's example. When asked to describe his experience in school Elliott said, "I've always been lazy, I hate school, so I'm lazy in school," and then he described how he found his way back to engaging in school with a teacher's help:

I never really did much, so now that I'm actually trying, I guess he [Technology teacher] holds me to a higher standard just because he knows what I can do in that aspect because I've had him for so long and I've done so much with him and for him.

Elliot's interests and skills in Technology class were valued and developed through activities that kept him engaged and gave him opportunities to lead in an area where he could excel. Each student spoke of the pivotal role of teachers in offering different opportunities for them to develop their talents in some area and relating to them on a personal level, which propelled them toward graduation and gave them confidence in stepping outside their comfort zone to develop new skills.

School Culture, Climate, and Management

We also asked students about the school's culture (e.g., norms, values, and beliefs), the climate (e.g., safety, atmosphere), and how these are managed (e.g., policies, practices, routines/operations) and what value they ascribe to these school characteristics with regard to their development and success beyond high school.

Prioritizing Hard Work, Self-Regulation, and a Positive Mindset

In terms of what values are expressed and modeled in practice, Crown Point students in this study were unanimous in articulating that work ethic or what they termed "hard work" or "effort," self-regulation or what some termed "time management" or "focus," and a positive attitude or what they termed "mindset" are the most important avenues to a successful life. In a focus group, they described their views in response to a question about what their teachers value.

Janelle: I said "hard work," "effort," and "focus." I feel like if you just focus in class and give the teacher your time, they're going to help you.

Cristy: I said "hard work" and "putting in the time." So like if you're really struggling with something, you need to show them [teachers] that you're trying to work hard and then practicing a lot. Then the teachers will see that and they'll see that you're really trying and they can help you with it.

Jake: I said "time management" and "mindset." So it's like if you have a paper that's due a week in advance, you want to make sure you get at least some of it done so you're not doing it at the last minute. And mindset – you want to have a positive mindset in school when you're doing things so you're going to get everything done.

Lucas: I said "hard work" and "time management." Nobody gets anywhere without hard work no matter where you are in life. And time management because, like he said, if you have different assignments – say you have four assignments at once, you have to figure out how much time you're going to spend on one and when you're going to do it so you can get them all done.

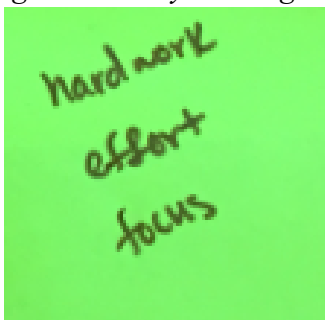


Figure 3. Janelle's post-it note response to the question "What is valued here?"

Instilling Beliefs in the Importance of Responsibility and Respect

Students also expressed that their teachers were not only focused on their achievements, but also on developing behavioral and social competencies that are part of being a responsible adult and good citizen. In one focus group Alex and Mackenzie explained that experiences that took them outside of Crown Point made evident how adults in Crown Point were instilling these beliefs in them and backing them up with guidance in their behaviors.

Alex: Behavior-wise, I know when we go on field trips we're always expected to be like the better-behaved kids. Because when we go places, the feedback we get from the places about having Crown Point kids being the best-behaved kids they had all day . . . and we see that in other places. Like when we go to shows, we see other groups of kids and we look at them and we look at our teachers and think, "If we ever acted like that. . . ." But behavior-wise, we're definitely one of the better ones. We're probably not the best, but I think we're definitely better than a lot of other schools that you've seen. We'll see other kids like going crazy and we'll think, "Wow where are their teachers? Do their teachers not teach them? Do their teachers not teach them how to sit in a theater quietly? Because ours did."

Mackenzie: You also have to think that they don't really have the same opportunities that we have to go to Broadway shows. So a lot of the time, it's their first time going and they don't know.

Alex: Yeah, but a lot of kids have been in movie theaters and it's the same. It's just like a respect thing.

An important aspect of how responsible and respectful behaviors were reinforced came from how adults approached working with students on getting to the root cause of an issue. As Alex explained, if a problem arises, adults reciprocated respect by delving into what caused a problem rather than doling out punishments,

It's not always like directly, "Oh you did this, punishment done." It's more like "Why is this happening? Why did this occur?" They [the principal and teachers] do want to know; most of the time they do want to know both sides of the story, too. They want to get to the root of what happened instead of straight to the punishment."

Climate of Care

All students described forming caring relationships with one or more adults in the school and expressed the feeling that adults were looking out for their well-being. They reported that they were comfortable talking with adults in the school about academic and non-academic concerns and in most cases felt that school rules were fair with a few exceptions. Those exceptions were associated with a perceived or real bias based on gender or students' own or their families' reputations, or some other consideration. For example, Jessica pointed to what she and other girls perceived as biases in the dress code at the school and what they did to voice their opinions and get the rules changed.

We, a couple of years ago, had a movement about the dress code, because they . . . a lot of teachers voiced their opinions that they did not think that leggings were proper pants, I guess. Pretty much every girl in the high school wore leggings to school the next day just to make a movement that we should be able to wear them. If they are black and they're covered all the way to my shoes, we should be able to wear them. We just feel that the dress code is not always fair when it comes to boys and girls; guys could be wearing a cut-off shirt that pretty much wasn't even there and not get in trouble for it, but if you are wearing leggings, you are going to get something said to you about it. It was not fair. We did that, and now it's perfectly fine to wear them.

Overall, when inconsistencies in treatment occurred, students reported a mild effect on access to some opportunities that could affect their personal development or post-secondary opportunities, although these situations did not seem pervasive or apparently consequential.

Relationships among Peers, Educators, Families, and Community Members

Within this climate of care, Crown Point students shared the perception that relationships with their peers and other adults in the school, their families, and with other community members have helped them prepare for life beyond high school.

Peers Supporting Peers

When asked about important experiences throughout their high school years students in this study all described the importance of their peers in helping them navigate academic and non-academic challenges. With regard to academics, students described instances where they reached out to help each other as needs arose. Lucas provided just one of many examples:

Well actually last year, we had Geometry for math class, and going into the Regents [Exams], there was a girl in the class who didn't know what she was doing on her homework, and she was asking for help, so I went and sat with her in study hall and helped her figure out her math problems and showed her the different steps to complete them. I helped her through her math assignments so she got to the point of it, so she wasn't just trying to throw something onto a piece of paper and get a bad grade. I wanted her to understand it for the Regents.

On the social front, while some described cliques in the school, most noted that their peers generally helped them find their way, encouraged them to be themselves, and all students reported that bullying was not a problem. Even though Crown Point is primarily a white community, one student participant who comes from a mixed ethnicity background explained that she was made to “feel like I was included and was one of them. They never made me feel like I was out of place.”

Several students also described the importance of alumni/ae in providing insight into what comes after graduation. Mark, for example, spoke to the value of getting a peer's perspective on college

versus an adult’s view in response to a question about what is helping prepare him for what’s next:

A lot of my friends graduated last year, so talking to them about college and seeing what it’s like from like an unprofessional perspective – not talking to a professional from the college, but someone who’s at college talking about what it’s really like.

While Mark’s conversations with alumni came from his established friendships, Cristy explained that the school helps make this alumni-student connection happen through a yearly alumni assembly where “past kids who have graduated who are either in college, graduated college, or are in the workforce talk about what to expect and if we have questions for them – and they’ll answer them.”

“Close-Knit” Connections with Teachers, Counselors, and Mentors

As described earlier, teachers, counselors, and mentors (through programs like CFES as well as others) reinforced the import of responsibility and respect, and students affirmed that their relationships with these adults are built on that foundation. Almost all students identified a few specific adults in school that they were close to and felt played a significant role in supporting them to explore their interests. Alex described these student-teacher (or other school staff members like guidance counselors, coaches, etc.) relationships as “definitely different from bigger schools.” She went on to explain,

My friends who go to different schools don’t have as good relationships as we do with our teachers. Because most of these teachers we’ve spent time with outside of school. We’ve gone on five-hour bus rides with them to see shows and stuff -- and sports. We just spend a lot of time with them, and they start to become really close. Not on a friend basis, because there’s still that level of respect for teachers and students.

In one example, Mark described the transition from middle school to high school, which challenged him in a number of ways. He pointed to a combination of his parents, teachers, and friends helping him through that time:

My parents and my teachers – like my parents were pushing me to still do my best, and my teachers were helping me in my classes when I was over-stressed and couldn’t process things. And then I had friends helping me with more trivial stuff like opening the locker and learning to do all that. I just learned how to handle stress better and how to handle my emotions better that wasn’t just bottling them up until I exploded and couldn’t handle anything.

Family and Community Members as Complementary Guides and Mentors

Students described how their family and community members acted as a mutually reinforcing support system along with school staff. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and others served as role models and guides in planning for and pursuing different paths. For Kyle, “My dad, he’s my role model . . . and my grandma – she’s basically a mother figure, a role model”;

for Mark, “My parents just keep me on task – even if they were the ones applying some of the stress, they were also applying it so it would be relieved”; and Cristy, whose mom “works in a hospital” was encouraged to pursue that avenue by her guidance counselor:

I went to her [guidance counselor] because I was like, “I like hands-on work, I’m not the strongest in English, but I’m really good at that [hands-on work]”. She’s like, “Well, have you ever thought about going into the medical field?” So then that kind of showed me, and then I actually went with my mom because she works in a hospital and I shadowed in the O.R. my 10th grade year.

While school-family connections were not necessarily formal or frequent, students reported that they were an outgrowth of the close-knit nature of the community (“Everyone knows each other” [Elliott]) and were reinforced through school sports, shows, and other events.

Academic and Non-Academic Skills, Competencies, and Knowledge

With regard to the skills, competencies, and knowledge students indicated as being prioritized and learned during their high school years and what value they attribute to them, students in this study indicated that out of school hands-on learning opportunities accelerated their in-school learning and vice-versa. They also reported that explicit guidance in how to interact with adults and others outside of their community as well as visits outside the community helped prepare them for life beyond high school.

Hands-on Experiences and Their Place in Exploring Potential Professional Identities

As discussed earlier, Crown Point students experienced mutually beneficial out of school learning (OSL) and in school (IS) experiences, and some OSL experiences were offered through school clubs (e.g., Drama Club visits to shows) or school partnerships (e.g., College for Every Student, New Visions) and unique opportunities and activities (e.g., the HOBY Leadership Summit); still others emerged from families or friends or through community agencies or organizations. In the many examples provided, students pointed to how OSL experiences gave them valuable “hands-on” (Kyle) knowledge that allowed them to explore their affinities, knowledge, and skills, with a longer view toward testing out potential professional identities. Kyle described what he and others learned about their interests and knowledge in the medical and engineering fields through their involvement with New Visions as just one example:

Last week the juniors got to go to New Visions for Engineering. It’s a program that you could be interested in and we just did a group project. We did it with random students from other schools. My team placed second out of like 48 students. It’s more of a hands-on learning experience for people who are interested in the medical and engineering field.

For other students, like Elliott and Cristy, as mentioned earlier, a family member’s career or interests provided opportunities to gain hands-on skill and knowledge necessary for a particular line of work. In both of these cases, adults in the school, whether teacher or guidance counselor

or principal, supported this interest by offering opportunities for them to share with others and explore that career avenue through a project or guidance on internship or college options.

Guidance in Developing Communication, Practical and “Soft” Skills, Knowledge, and Competencies

For all Crown Point students, knowing how to interact and get along with others was seen as a top priority expressed by the school staff and key to a successful life. Becoming comfortable communicating with adults and others outside of the Crown Point community and knowing how to behave in different situations, including in interviews, were skills and competencies explored in different classes and activities. For example, Alex described how the HOBY NY East Leadership Summit gave her opportunities to learn about herself outside of her family and community environment, how to interact with others, and what she can do with and for others in a leadership position.

Every year our school hosts one student to go to the HOBY [Hugh O'Brian Youth] Leadership Summit. It's like an interview with all the teachers, and then they get together and pick one. And I was chosen to go to the Leadership Summit, so the HOBY [Leadership Summit] definitely helped me because it was the first time that I really was out and away from, not with, my family somewhere. We had to go stay over two nights at SUNY Oneonta at the college. And it was like a community service-type deal, so we did a lot of – there were a lot of workshops on community service, how to get more involved in your community, and just basically how to be more of a leader in your school community. And into the professional world, how it would translate, all of these things going into a professional sense. I think that definitely helped me, too, because it was a big eye-opener because I had never really gone away like that. It threw me right into the middle – I was the only one from my school, but some schools sent a couple from their schools, like the bigger ones. But my school just sent one, and it was me and about 300 other kids from around the state that I'd never met before, from all over the eastern side of the state. It definitely helped me with the future because eventually you're going to probably be thrown into a spot where you don't know anyone and you have to make relationships to be able to work with everyone.

Jessica expressed seeing a clear link between opportunities to engage in Students for Educational Success program and gaining skills and knowledge needed to prepare for college because she was able to talk with college graduates and students and visit campuses. She shared how in CFES she was offered “etiquette” guidance, explaining that at one of their summits, “We all dressed fancy, and we have lunch there, and we were taught like when you have company over, how you set up a table, and what appropriate etiquette is when you eat in a fancy restaurant. Just all that stuff.”

In addition to developing time management and self-regulation, students also indicated that they gained a number of practical skills in their coursework and interactions in school, including in extracurriculars that they felt prepared them for adulthood and life outside of school. For example, Elliott pointed to Government class providing opportunities to learn practical skills

needed as an adult. He explained, “We talk about money and how to deal with it in the future. We were talking about stocks in the first half of the year, and now we’re getting into day-to-day stuff. He gives us good tips for the future about credit cards and stuff like that.”

In a Nutshell

Crown Point students who participated in this study indicated that close relationships with peers and adults in and outside of school are built on a foundation of responsibility and respect. Within this environment, they reported ample opportunities to explore different career and life paths post-graduation through coursework, internships, school and community service projects, extracurricular activities, and mentoring programs. They spoke to the important encouragement they received from school staff as well as peers, family, and community members to advocate for themselves, work hard, self-regulate, and explore their unique potentials. While students reported that achieving academically is encouraged through a variety of course offerings and what they described as inspired and caring teaching, social and emotional supports from their peers and adults was on equal footing in their assessment of what was most important in their high school experience in preparing them for life beyond graduation.

Crown Point Central School
Tara Celotti, Principal
2758 Main Street
Crown Point, NY 12928
tspaulding@cpcsteam.org

ⁱ This case study is one of a series of studies conducted by Know Your Schools~for NY Kids since 2005. In 2019-20, research teams investigated two high schools that we identified as positive outlier schools (with graduation rates above-predicted for the student population served). For the purposes of this study, expected graduation rates were estimated using regression analysis for two types of outcomes – proportions of cohorts earning any New York State Regents diploma and proportions of cohorts receiving an Advanced Regents diploma – using three demographic characteristics – proportions of students who are classified as economically disadvantaged, English language learners, and either African-American or Latino/Hispanic. These estimates were calculated for three successive cohorts of 9th graders – 2010, 2011 and 2012 – with separate analyses for all students and four subgroups – economically disadvantaged, English language learners, African-American, and Latino/Hispanics. For each of the 30 analyses, gaps between actual and expected rates were standardized to have a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1 (i.e., z-score) before calculating an overall actual-expected gap by averaging these z-scores. Next, purposive sampling was used to reflect geographic and community variation around the state, with equal representation of rural, suburban and urban locales. In the Phase II study, we also compared the trajectory of graduation outcomes in Crown Point to the New York State average of four cohorts of 9th graders who started high school from the years of 2010 to 2015. Researchers collected interview and focus group data as well as timelines and ecological maps for this study. Results of the cross-site analysis and details regarding the project’s other studies, staff, and publications can be found at <https://ny-kids.org/>