



## Results & Recognition

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Since its founding in 1992, Overcoming Obstacles has been used by over 160,000 educators from around the world and in all 50 states to help more than 40 million students improve their academic achievement, graduate from high school, prepare for college and careers, and more.

In December 2017, a survey was conducted among educators on the effectiveness of the curricula. Results include:

- 99% said they would recommend Overcoming Obstacles to a fellow educator
- 98% said that Overcoming Obstacles benefitted their students overall
- 96% said it helped students cope with stress
- 96% stated Overcoming Obstacles improved student-to-student interaction
- 92% stated Overcoming Obstacles helped with classroom management
- 80% noted Overcoming Obstacles resulted in improved grades

In October 2016, the Riley Institute at Furman University conducted a survey among educators on how the Overcoming Obstacles curricula impacts student development. Results include:

- 90% reported that it helps students develop decision making skills
- 89% reported that it helps students experience improved life opportunities
- 89% reported that it helps students contribute positively to their communities
- 88% reported that it helps students develop communication skills
- 88% reported that it improves students' problem-solving skills
- 86% reported that it helps students with setting goals
- 85% reported that it engages students in their classroom
- 84% reported that it helps students resolve conflicts
- 81% reported that it helps students remain in school

The full report is available online at [The Riley Institute website](#).

In 2013, the National Dropout Prevention Center awarded Overcoming Obstacles with its Crystal Star Award of Excellence in Dropout Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery.

During the 2010–2011 school year, Charleston County School District in South Carolina implemented Overcoming Obstacles in a district-wide high school advisory period. The district reported that Overcoming Obstacles helped students experience many improvements, including stronger leadership skills, increased self-confidence, and better time-management skills. Based on the success of its high school advisory program, Charleston County School District expanded its use of Overcoming Obstacles into its middle schools in 2011. In a 2012 interview with NBC, the superintendent of Charleston County School District named Overcoming Obstacles as one of the primary strategies for bringing positive change to two of the county's priority schools.

Because of Charleston County School District's success with Overcoming Obstacles, schools from twelve additional districts in South Carolina began implementing Overcoming Obstacles in 2012.

In 2010, the New York City Department of Education introduced the Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills Program to all of its 850 public middle schools and high schools. In a press release issued in 2011, the schools chancellor expressed his gratitude for the Overcoming Obstacles program, praising it for helping New York City's educators address bullying, create supportive learning environments, and prepare their students for college and careers. By 2017, more than seven hundred schools report implementing Overcoming Obstacles in their classrooms.

In 2008, the Children's Aid Society of New York City reported that academic achievement improved markedly at the Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics as a result of the Overcoming Obstacles program.

In 2007, the Transitional Road to Attending College (TRAC) program in Jersey City, New Jersey, used Overcoming Obstacles to improve their high school retention. TRAC focused on teaching the city's incoming freshmen the communication, decision making, goal setting, teamwork, and conflict resolution skills they would need to excel in high school. Data on the program's implementation of Overcoming Obstacles was based on students' responses to pre- and post-program tests and sorted by classroom. The following is a sampling of one classroom's results:

- 85% of students reported that they found it easier to keep commitments (an increase of 65% from the time of the pre-program test)
- 76% of students said that they were excited about their studies (an increase of 20% from the time of the pre-program test)
- 86% of students said that they had a clear picture of what they wanted to do in the future (an increase of 19% from the time of the pre-program test)

In 2003, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) listed Overcoming Obstacles as a recommended classroom-based social and emotional learning program in its US Department of Education-funded report, *Safe and Sound: An Educational Leader's Guide to Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs*.

In 2003, Overcoming Obstacles was the recipient of the Superintendent's Conflict Resolution Award for helping Brooklyn and Staten Island high school students succeed academically.

In 2001, the New York City Department of Education reported the following benefits from its implementation of the Overcoming Obstacles program: increased student punctuality, emergence of student leaders, student camaraderie, longer student attention spans, greater work completion, and recognition of self-defeating behaviors.

In 2000, the New York City Department of Education chose Overcoming Obstacles as a leading substance abuse prevention program and recognized it as a leading school-to-career program

In 1998, the California State Senate passed a resolution to commend Overcoming Obstacles for its positive impact on Los Angeles's students. That same year, the mayor of Los Angeles issued a commendation to Overcoming Obstacles for its work.

In 1998, John Muir Middle School in Los Angeles implemented Overcoming Obstacles in its seventh grade English class. Because of the program, 57% of students improved their grades, 42% improved their class attendance, and 57% had less reported tardiness than the previous semester.

In 1997, Overcoming Obstacles worked with a population of students with severe academic and social deficiencies in the Atlanta Public Schools system. At least 10% were one or more grades below what is normal for their age. Approximately 30—40% read well below the standard for their age, and at least 10% were illiterate. The course focused on job preparedness, résumé writing, and financial planning. After completing the course, 95% of the students were employed with good ratings from their employers and/or were entering programs of higher education. One hundred percent were promoted to the next grade. Because of this work, the Georgia State Department of Labor recognized Overcoming Obstacles as the leading program for breaking the cycle of welfare dependency.

In 1997, Markham Middle School in Los Angeles infused Overcoming Obstacles with an eighth-grade English class. After participating in the program, 68% of the students improved their grades and class attendance, 60% improved their tardiness, and 60% improved their level of cooperation.

In 1997, Elizabeth High School in New Jersey implemented Overcoming Obstacles as a stand-alone class for repeat ninth graders. Low attendance was a significant factor in the poor school performance of these students: over 40% exhibited a history of acute absenteeism. At the conclusion of the class, 80% of the students were promoted to the tenth grade and more than half improved their attendance by over 50%.

In 1995, Overcoming Obstacles received a grant from the Community Development Department in Los Angeles to improve the lives of the city's youth through life skills education. Study of the program's effectiveness included parent interviews and examinations of 266 students' school attendance records, discipline records, grades, police records, and pre- and post-program surveys. Monitoring by the city consistently showed Overcoming Obstacles students moving from high-risk stages classified as "in crisis" and "at risk" to more self-sufficient stages such as "stable," "safe," and "thriving." Overcoming Obstacles students at Manual Arts High School improved their grade point averages by 37%, reduced their use of violence by 75%, reduced their tardiness by 89%, and improved their school and family relationships. Of the programs administered through the grant, Overcoming Obstacles was ranked the highest.