

An Evaluation of the Chess Challenge Program of ASAP/After School Activities Partnership (ASAP) by Dr. Joseph DuCette, Temple University (14 pages) (2009)

The ASAP/After School Activities Partnerships was created in 2002 in Philadelphia in response to an outcry in that city for help with activities for the city's youth during the critical unsupervised hours after school. The organization's core philosophy is reflected in the tag line which is prominently displayed on its website's homepage: **What Happens After Graduation Starts with what Happens After School** (see <http://www.phillyasap.org>).

ASAP has provided chess programming and other after school recreational and enrichment activities to Philadelphia kids in some of the poorest and most dangerous areas of the city. Since 2004, ASAP has organized over 200 chess clubs for 4,000 youth playing in schools, community and recreation centers, libraries, places of worship and homeless shelters across the city.

The study, conducted by Temple University's Joseph DuCette, compared approximately 150 students that participated in the ASAP Chess Challenge program with 150 non-participating 150 students from the general Philadelphia school population for academic achievement, school related behavior and attendance.

The real and tangible benefits of the ASAP Chess Challenge program are reflected in five of the study's central findings:

1. ASAP participating students scored higher on the PSSA standardized tests in both reading and math than the matched group that do not participate in the program.
2. ASAP participating students had higher rates of improvement in reading and math over two year period than the matched group.
3. ASAP participating students had significantly lower number of absences as compared to matched students.
4. ASAP participating students had higher school behavior ratings in comparison to the students in the Philadelphia School District as a whole.
5. ASAP participating students had higher rates of academic achievement as their years in the chess program increased.

In conclusion, the results of the DuCette study demonstrate a real testament to the power of chess as well as to the success of the ASAP Chess Challenge program.

Summary by Brad Rosen