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Jamesville-Dewitt High School Benchmarking Project : Year One report

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PART I: OVERVIEW

A high school benchmarking program was established to meet the increasing need for schools to continuously evaluate their performance and the need for students to acquire citizenship skills through hands-on learning. Jamesville-Dewitt (J-D) High School accepted an invitation from Dr. William Coplin, co-director of the Community Benchmarks Program (CBP) at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University, to participate in a year-long pilot project.

To help you understand the benchmarking process, two key concepts must be clearly defined: benchmark and policy. The best way to think about benchmarks is that they are precisely defined goals that you want to achieve. In other words, a benchmark is a goal that you work towards. An example of a good benchmark is "getting straight A's on your report card for the school year." An example of poorly defined benchmark is "getting better grades." The first one is a better benchmark because it is more precise and measurable. An example of a benchmark that a school may want to pursue is having "100% of seniors voting in student government elections."

A policy can be defined as something you do to achieve your benchmark. It isn't the goal itself, by how you plan on achieving the goal. Returning to the earlier example, a possible policy that would help you get straight A's is completing all your homework on time. A policy that school administrators could implement to have 100% of seniors voting in student government elections is holding the elections on days when there are no senior trips or field days.

With strong support from the district superintendent, school principal, and two social studies teachers, J-D seniors were recruited to work collaboratively with the J-D faculty and the staff of CBP to design and implement an ongoing benchmarking system for their school. During the 1997-98 school year, approximately 50 seniors from three government and two economics courses developed and collected data on benchmarks to be used to improve the performance of the high school. In the fall, participating students first conducted 24 focus groups consisting of teachers, administrators, parents, business groups, and other students to generate the list of benchmarks. In the spring, data were then collected from four sources: (1) a written senior exit survey, (2) a telephone survey of alumni, (3) records kept by the school, and (4) voter registration data. Student-generated reports and presentations of their results have created the background material required for collaborative planning among the stakeholders on programs and policies to improve the performance of the high school.

This report describes the work accomplished during the first and second semesters of the project, September 1997 through June 1998. Part II of this report describes the focus group methods and results from fall 1997. Over the spring semester, benchmark data was collected and the baseline results were presented to the community. Part III describes this data collection process and instruments used during the spring semester. Part IV outlines the plans for academic year 1998-99.

The data collection methods were adequate for a pilot study. However, over the long term, improved sampling for the alumni and senior surveys and better records provided by the school administration are essential. For 1998-1999, similar data will be collected using revised procedures. Students will also conduct focus groups exploring policies to improve the performance of the school.

The following table lists the benchmark on the left-most column, the result of the Spring 1998 data collection process for that benchmark in the center column, and the distance from the benchmark on the far-right column.

Table 1: Listing of Benchmarks and Year One Results

BENCHMARK	RESULT	DISTANCE FROM BENCHMARK
1. Civic Responsibility		**-54**
1.1. 100% of alumni are registered to vote according to election rolls.	53%	-47%
1.2. 100% of registered alumni have voted in at least one national, state, or local election.	63%	-37%
1.3. 100% of seniors voted in student government elections.	43%	-57%
1.4. 100% of 18-year old seniors voted on the most recent school budget vote / school board election.	25%	-75%
2. Financial Responsibility		**-42**
2.1. 100% of graduating seniors can answer specific questions about taxes.	23%	-77%
2.2. 100% of graduating seniors can answer specific questions about banking procedures.	68%	-32%
2.3. 100% of graduating seniors can answer specific questions about credit-worthiness.	84%	-16%
2.4. 100% of alumni say they have a manageable debt load.	57%	-43%
3. Preparation for and Success in College		**-20**
3.1. 100% of seniors applying for college meet J-D Guidance Counselor stipulated deadlines.	(n/a)	(n/a)
3.2. 50% of seniors applying to 4-year colleges have taken at least one college credit-bearing course while in high school.	(n/a)	(n/a)
3.3. 100% of alumni say that their preparation at J-D was at least as good as the preparation of the average students at their 2 or 4 year college.	87%	-13%
3.4. 100% of alumni say that they will graduate from their college when they initially planned to without having to do to summer school.	61%	-39%
3.5. For those alumni now in college, 100% say that they chose the correct college.	79%	-21%
4. Interpersonal Skills		**-20**
4.1. 100% of seniors indicate that they can work well in team projects.	96%	-4%
4.2. 100% of seniors indicate that they can speak effectively in front of a group of more than 20 people.	63%	-37%
4.3. 100% of seniors indicate that they communicate well with their friends, family, teachers, and others.	88%	-12%
4.4. 100% of students work on at least 3 major team projects prior to graduating from J-D.	72%	-28%
5. Job Satisfaction and Success		**-8**
5.1. 100% of alumni say they are either in a full-time job, are enrolled full-time in college, or are working and studying part-time.	100%	0%
5.2. For those now in a full-time or part-time job, 100% say they see a viable future in that job or have a plan to move to a job where they do see a viable future.	75%	-25%
5.3. For those alumni not enrolled full-time in college, 100% say that they made the correct decision as far as they can tell.	75%	-25%
5.4. 100% of alumni say they feel they can request a letter of reference from their last job supervisor.	96%	-4%
5.5. 50% of seniors have had at least one job-shadowing or internship experience prior to graduation.	57%	+7%
5.6. 100% of graduating seniors have a resume / activity sheet.	69%	-31%
6. Law-Abiding Behavior		**-19**
6.1. Less than 10% of the seniors have received formal disciplinary action for breaking school rules.	Not available	--
6.2. 80% or more of the seniors say they would **not** participate in underage drinking, smoking, or the use of illicit drugs	**Illegal drugs**: 70% **Drinking**: 42% **Smoking**: 70%	**Illegal drugs:** -10% **Drinking:** -38% **Smoking:** -10%
7. Family / Domestic Skills		**0**
7.1. 100% of alumni have established healthy relationships with those they live with.	100%	--
8. Volunteerism		**-39**
8.1. Number of volunteer hours per student increases by 10% over the previous year.	7.42 hours per month this year	--
8.2. Number of students who are active members in public and community service student organizations (NHS and Key Club) increases by 10% each year over the previous year.	28.3% of the seniors this year	--
8.3. Dollars raised for outside organizations by student activities increases 10% over the previous year.	$1,800 this year	--
8.4. 100% of alumni report that they are volunteering at least 20 hours per year to community service.	61%	-39%

APPENDIX D: NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

PART II: FOCUS GROUP STUDY

Introduction

The first step in the benchmarking process is to identify relevant benchmarks that are established through collecting input from all stakeholders. To insure widespread community input, focus groups were conducted by the participating Jamesville-Dewitt High School (JD) students. During the fall semester, 24 stakeholder groups consisting of 311 students, parents, educators and community members were asked the following question:

What areas can we collect information on to assess how JD prepares students to be successful in:

- *Post-Secondary Education*
- *Full-Time, Part-Time, and Intern positions*
- *Personal Survival Skills and Enrichment Interests*
- *Responsible Citizenship*

Methods

With the advice of Dr. Judy Mower, adjunct professor of Public Administration and FOCUS Greater Syracuse facilitator, CBP staff provided focus group training for all participants that included modeling, practice sessions, and a packet containing a moderator manual and all necessary focus group supplies. Participating students practiced their facilitation skills on their classmates as part of the training.

In consultation with the teachers and CBP staff, students decided on a sampling of groups that they felt should be interviewed. Table 2 contains listing of the number of focus groups in each category:

Table 2: Listing of Focus Group Categories

Type of Focus Group	Number of Groups in this Category
Student (3 from each high school grade)	15
Teacher	4
Outside groups *(Business, Board of Education, Community Groups, etc.)*	5
Total	**24**

At the end of each focus group session, participants were asked to complete an anonymous demographic form that was later tabulated to ensure adequate representation.

For each focus group, students:

(1) Provided a brief summary on the purpose of the benchmarks project.
(2) Distributed bi-fold handouts and participant demographics forms.
(3) Conducted a warm-up session in which focus group members were asked to imagine that J-D is ranked among the ten premier schools in the country five to ten years from now. They then brainstormed a list of the characteristics of the school that would help it attain such a ranking.
(4) Introduced the four focus group topics – post-secondary education, full- and part-time work and internship positions, personal survival skills and enrichment interests, and responsible citizenship – and facilitated discussions on each.
(5) Recorded all respondent suggestions and comments.

Students entered the raw data into a spreadsheet and met to categorize the raw data. Response categories were created and each response was assigned to the appropriate category, 27 in all. Students also ranked the response groups and created a prioritized listing of the categories.

The following formula was used to prioritize the categories:

A. Tabulate total numbers of focus sessions for each of the following three areas:
Student_____ Teacher_____ Outside_____

B. Figure the proportion of groups in each of three categories that offered a common response:
___ out of ___ student groups gave a response of _____ = ____ (keep to 2 decimal places)
+
___ out of ___ teacher groups gave a response of _____ = ____ (keep to 2 decimal places)
+
___ out of ___ outside groups gave a response of _____ = ____ (keep to 2 decimal places)

TOTAL SCORE = ____

C. For example:
Response = Financial Responsibility

Student__15_____ Teacher___4_____ Outside___5____

__12_out of _15___student groups = .80 (keep to 2 decimal places)
+
__3_out of __4___ teacher groups = .75 (keep to 2 decimal places)
+
__5__ out of __5___ outside groups = 1.00 (keep to 2 decimal places)

TOTAL SCORE = 2.55 (out of a possible 3.00)

D. Repeat procedure for each response.

Table 3 displays all 27 categories in ranked order:

Table 3: Distribution of Focus Group Responses in Ranked Order

Response	Score	Response	Score
Financial Responsibility	2.55	Civic Education	1.70
Volunteerism / Charity	2.35	Moral and Ethical Values / Religion	1.62
Students' and Graduates' Involvement in Extracurricular Activities	2.27	Study Habits / Time Management	1.58
Law-Abiding / Criminal Records	2.22	Quality of High School	1.58
Family Life / Domestic Skills	2.22	Job Awareness	1.45
Civic Participation	2.22	Survey JD Graduates	1.43
Work Ethic and Commitment	2.15	Stress Management / Ability to Cope with Life	1.37
Job Status / Work Performance	2.15	Academic Achievement in High School	1.37
Cultural Awareness	2.03	Material Success	1.17
Job-Related Education	2.03	Technology-Related Skills	0.98
Job Satisfaction	2.00	Number of Advanced placement/Honors Classes	0.78
Interpersonal Skills	1.92	Environmental Responsibility	0.78
College Preparation	1.83	Literacy	0.65
Attendance and Success in College	1.75		

Source: Focus Group Data analyzed by J-D senior work groups.

Of the 27 categories, each of the six participating student teams created a finalized list of 10 areas to benchmark. Students were given several choices how to create this list: they could select the top ten ranked items, further collapse the categories, devise some combination of both, or use any other method, as long as it is explained. Each team submitted a 1-2 page memorandum justifying their 10 category selections. Staff from the CBP reviewed the lists from each team and developed the final listing of benchmark categories and benchmarks which are included in the following section.

Finding

1. Eight benchmark categories were developed based upon the focus group results; they are listed in the order of importance to the community participants.

Table 4: Listing of Final Benchmarking Categories

1.) Civic Responsibility
2.) Financial Responsibility
3.) Preparation for and Success in College
4.) Interpersonal Skills
5.) Job Satisfaction and Success
6.) Law-Abiding/Criminal Records
7.) Family/Domestic Skills
8.) Volunteerism

Source: Focus Group Data analyzed by J-D senior work groups.

Comment: These are the eight areas in which benchmarks were developed. Part III identifies those benchmarks, how the benchmarks were developed, and the preliminary data collection results.

PART III: DEVELOPING BENCHMARKS AND COLLECTING DATA

Introduction

This section presents the results of data collected by a group of students during the spring of 1998 following a focus group study of 311 students, administrators and community representatives in the fall of 1997, described in Part II. The information in this section is presented in a form that will allow for comparing the results to the benchmarks. Eight areas of benchmarks were identified by the focus groups:

(1) Civic Responsibility
(2) Financial Responsibility
(3) Preparation for and Success in College
(4) Interpersonal Skills
(5) Job Satisfaction and Success
(6) Law-Abiding/Criminal Records
(7) Family/Domestic Skills
(8) Volunteerism

Benchmarks, ranging from 1-6 per category, were developed and data were collected for most. The data collection methods differed depending on the benchmark category. However, four basic sources of data were used: (1) senior survey; (2) alumni survey; (3) voting data from the Board of Elections; and (4) school records.

Methods

Creation of Benchmarks

The proposed benchmarks were organized around the 8 areas identified by the focus group study and reflect questionnaire items from the alumni survey and senior exit survey. The list provided below was informed by the suggestions of the student teams, but was ultimately determined by the CBP. They were based on the following guidelines:

1. No more than 4 benchmarks per topic area[1]
2. Reasonable chance of collecting data on an annual basis
3. Easily understood by all stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, officials, other community members)
4. Related directly to goals implicit in the eight areas
5. Can be stated as a standard

Senior Exit Survey

Students designed the survey with the advice of Dr. William D. Coplin and Stephanie Pasquale from Syracuse University, Tom Bennett and Kathy Hysick, two social studies teachers at J-D, and Dr. Barbara Goessling, J-D's principal. Eileen Mulich, from Consumer Creidt Counseling Services, also reviewed the survey. Each question on the survey was used to measure whether or not the respondent fulfills a given benchmark. For some benchmarks, groups of questions were examined to determine whether a given benchmark was met; other benchmarks were based on individual responses.

Of the 187 seniors at J-D, 108 participated in the survey. Those who did not complete the survey were either absent the day the surveys were conducted or were members of the pilot group. See Appendix B for a copy of the Senior Exit Survey and the frequency distribution of responses.

[1] Exceptions were made for *Preparation for and Success in College* and *Job Satisfaction and Success.*

Alumni Survey
Alumni are defined as those who graduated three years previous. For example, studies conducted in the spring of 1998 will draw from the experiences and opinions of the class of 1995. A complete listing of the benchmarks can be found in the Findings section.

Several students designed this telephone survey with the advice of Dr. William D. Coplin, Stephanie Pasquale, Tom Bennett, Kathy Hysick, and Dr. Barbara Goessling. Students interviewed 23 of the 128 alumni who graduated in June 1995. Of the 105 who did not respond, 35 had no current telephone number and 70 could not be reached during the given timeframe. All of those who were reached were willing to participate in the survey. Before contacting alumni, students used a list of alumni home phone numbers obtained though the principal's office. Students then contacted alumni's parents for the current telephone number of the son or daughter. The J-D Alumni Telephone Survey along with a list of frequency responses is included as Appendix C.

The small size of the response raises serious questions about the representativeness of the sample. We believe a higher response rate can be achieved in subsequent years by contacting alumni in the fall.

Election Data
The students' decision to analyze voting behavior of seniors and alumni was based on two factors. First, they assumed that the willingness to vote represents at least one measure of civic responsibility. Second, the data could be obtained fairly easily and standards could be applied. Alternative measures of civic responsibility would require survey responses or measures of direct observation, both of which would be subject to questions about reliability and validity.

There were three different sources used in this section:

(1) In-school elections
- By reviewing the voting records from student government elections on J-D Day (May 22nd), the students determined that 81 out of the 187 seniors **(43.4%)** participated in elections.

(2) School Board election and budget vote held on May 19, 1998, obtained by reviewing a written record of the voters.
- The audit of the voter participation records for the 1998 JD school budget vote and school board election (5/19/98) revealed that 46 out of 187 seniors voted **(25%)**.

(3) Local, state and national voter history data obtained from the local Board of Elections.
- In order to determine how many alumni registered, students requested an electronic database (in the form of a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet) from the Board of Elections that included data on all registered voters in Onondaga County between 18 and 23 years of age. They then used a list of alumni from the Class of 1995 to search for the name of each alumnus in the database. Upon finding their name (thereby satisfying Benchmark 1.1), they checked to see if they had voted in any local, state, or national elections, in fulfillment of Benchmark 1.2.

  This search yielded that 68 out of the 128 students who graduated in 1995 **(53%)** have registered to vote in Onondaga County. Of the 68 students who are registered, 43 **(63%)** have actually exercised their right to vote in an election. This data does not take into account alumni who have left Onondaga County or who have registered to vote where they attend college.

Data from School Sources
Data for some benchmarks were collected from school records provided by the Principal's Office, the Guidance Office, and the officers involved with various school clubs. In this section, each source of data will be described, including any discussion concerning the source of inaccuracies, and results for each of these benchmarks will be provided.

(1) Disciplinary Action: There were 70 instances of disciplinary action (37 Saturday detentions, 24 in-school suspensions, and 9 out-of-school suspensions) during the 1997-98 academic year. Unfortunately, the number of repeat offenders makes the data inconclusive because of the likelihood that some students have been disciplined on more than one occasion.

(2) Enrollment in advanced placement and SUPA courses: Of the 187 students in the senior class, 83 **(44%)** have taken at least one of the following courses at J-D High School: AP English, SUPA Psychology, SUPA English, AP Calculus, and AP U.S. History

(3) The number of seniors active in community service organizations: (National Honor Society or Key Club) is 53 out of a total of 187 (28.3%). As such, **28.3%** of the seniors are active in charitable fund-raising. The amounts donated to charity by Key Club and National Honor Society were $1,750.00 and $50.00, respectively.

In the Findings section, we have indicated several limitations of the data resulting from the collection methods described above. Where appropriate, we have illustrated improvements to the processes that are planned for implementation during academic year, 1998-99. Built into the benchmarking process is continuous improvement, and it is our goal to revise the methods in which data are collected to provide the most valid data as possible.

Findings

This section represents the results of the benchmarking study. For each of the eight benchmark areas, corresponding benchmarks are listed along with the preliminary findings and distance from the benchmark.

1. The average distance from the benchmarks for "civic responsibility" is –54.

Table 5: Civic Responsibility Benchmarks and Results

Benchmark	Data Source(s)	Result	Distance from Benchmark
1.1) 100% of alumni are registered to vote according to election rolls.	Voter registration and election rolls obtained from _____.	53%	-47%
1.2) 100% of registered alumni have voted in at least one national, state, or local election.	Voter registration and election rolls obtained from _____.	63%	-37%
1.3) 100% of seniors voted in student government elections.	Class list with names checked off as written votes are returned.	43%	-57%
1.4) 100% of seniors 18 and older voted on the most recent school budget vote / school board election.	Class list with date of birth for each student and voter registration logs from board and tax election.	25%	-75%

2. The average distance from the benchmarks for "financial responsibility" is -42.

Table 6: Financial Responsibility Benchmarks and Results

Benchmark	Data Source(s)	Result	Distance from Benchmark
2.1) 100% of graduating seniors can answer specific questions about taxes.	Respondents had to correctly answer 3 of 5 of questions (numbers 2,3,6,7, and 8) on senior exit survey.	23%	-77%
2.2) 100% of graduating seniors can answer specific questions about banking procedures.	Respondents had to correctly answer questions 1, 5, and the hypothetical check on senior exit survey.	68%	-32%
2.3) 100% of graduating seniors can answer specific questions about credit-worthiness.	Respondents had to answer question 4 correctly on the senior exit survey.	84%	-16%
2.4) 100% of alumni say they have a manageable debt load.	Question 1 on Alumni Telephone Survey.	57%	-43%

3. The average distance from the benchmarks for "preparation for and success in college" is -20.

Table 7: Preparation for and Success in College Benchmarks and Results

Benchmark	Data Source(s)	Result	Distance from Benchmark
3.1) 100% of seniors applying for college meet J-D Guidance Counselor stipulated deadlines.	Relevant data was not available.	(n/a)	(n/a)
3.2) 50% of seniors applying to 4-year colleges have taken at least one college credit-bearing course while in high school.	Guidance counselor reviewed the transcripts of those seniors applying to 4-year colleges and tabulated results.	44%	-6%
3.3) 100% of alumni say that their preparation at J-D was at least as good as the preparation of the average students at their 2 or 4 year college.	Question 11 on the alumni telephone survey.	87%	-13%
3.4) 100% of alumni say that they will graduate from their college when they initially planned to without having to do to summer school.	Question 12 on the alumni telephone survey.	61%	-39%
3.5 For those alumni now in college, 100% say that they chose the correct college.	Questions 9 and 10 of alumni telephone survey.	79%	-21%

4. The average distance from the benchmarks for "interpersonal skills" is -20.

Table 8: Interpersonal Skills Benchmarks and Results

Benchmark	Data Source(s)	Result	Distance from Benchmark
4.1) 100% of seniors indicate that they can work well in team projects.	Question 1 under "Miscellaneous Questions" on senior exit survey.	96%	-4%
4.2) 100% of seniors indicate that they can speak effectively in front of a group of more than 20 people.	Question 2 under "Miscellaneous Questions" on senior exit survey.	63%	-37%
4.3) 100% of seniors indicate that they communicate well with their friends, family, teachers, and others.	Question 3 under "Miscellaneous Questions" on senior exit survey.	88%	-12%
4.4) 100% of students work on at least 3 major team projects prior to graduating from J-D.	Question 4 under "Miscellaneous Questions" on senior exit survey.	72%	-28%

5. The average distance from the benchmarks for "job satisfaction and success" is -8.

Table 9: Job Satisfaction and Success Benchmarks and Results

Benchmark	Data Source(s)	Result	Distance from Benchmark
5.1) 100% of alumni say they are either in a full-time job, are enrolled full-time in college, or are working and studying part-time.	Questions 4b and 5 of alumni telephone survey.	100%	0%
5.2) For those now in a full-time or part-time job, 100% say they see a viable future in that job or have a plan to move to a job where they do see a viable future.	Question 7a of alumni telephone survey.	75%	-25%
5.3) For those alumni not enrolled full-time in college, 100% say that they made the correct decision as far as they can tell.	Question 7b of alumni telephone survey.	75%	-25%
5.4) 100% of alumni say they feel they can request a letter of reference from their last job supervisor.	Question 2 of the alumni telephone survey.	96%	-4%
5.5) 50% of seniors have had at least one job-shadowing or internship experience prior to graduation.	Question 5 under "Miscellaneous Questions" on senior exit survey.	57%	+7%
5.6) 100% of graduating seniors have a resume / activity sheet.	Guidance counselor's records.	69%	-31%

6. The average distance from the benchmarks for "law-abiding behavior" is -19.

Table 10: Law-Abiding Behavior Benchmarks and Results

Benchmark	Data Source(s)	Result	Distance from Benchmark
6.1) Less than 10% of the seniors have received formal disciplinary action for breaking school rules.	Data received from guidance office did not account for repeat offenders.	No Conclusion	(n/a)
*6.2) Less than 80% of the seniors say they would **not** participate in underage drinking, smoking, or the use of illicit drugs*	Question 8 on senior exit survey.	**Illegal drugs**: 70% **Drinking**: 42% **Smoking**: 70%	**Illegal drugs:** -10% **Drinking:** -38% **Smoking:** -10%

7. The average distance from the benchmarks for "family-domestic skills" is zero (0).

Table 11: Family-Domestic Skills Benchmarks and Results

Benchmark	Data Source(s)	Result	Distance from Benchmark
7.1) 100% of alumni have established healthy relationships with those they live with.	Question 3 on alumni telephone survey.	100%	0%

8. The average distance from the benchmarks for "volunteerism" is -39.

Table 12: Family-Domestic Skills Benchmarks and Results

Benchmark	Data Source(s)	Result	Distance from Benchmark
8.1) Number of volunteer hours per student increases by 10% over the previous year.	School records.	7.42 hours per month this year	--
8.2) Number of students who are active members in public and community service student organizations (NHS and Key Club) increases by 10% each year over the previous year.	School records.	28.3% of the seniors this year	--
8.3) Dollars raised for outside organizations by student activities increases 10% over the previous year.	School records.	$1,800 this year	--
8.4) 100% of alumni report that they are volunteering at least 20 hours per year to community service.	Question 4 on alumni telephone survey.	61%	-39%

PART IV: PLANS FOR NEXT YEAR

APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR ONE

Phase 1: Establishing Benchmarks and Data Collection Processes
August 1997 - December 1997

8/19	Project proposal sent to Jamesville-Dewitt High School (JD).
8/27	Initial planning meeting between Community Benchmarks Program (CBP) staff and JD administration.
9/18	Student recruitment: CBP staff and JD administration present idea to students. (70 students sign interest form)
9/25	1.) All interested students are invited to attend assembly to hear more about project requirements. (About 50 students sign up) 2.) CBP staff and teachers meet. 3.) Project Planning Session: Creation of Timeline.
10/8-9	Focus group training session for students.
10/10-11/14	Students conduct focus groups.
11/14-11/30	Students tabulate focus group responses and prioritize list of response categories.
11/30	Student Focus Group Draft Report due.
11/30-12/16	Revise Focus Group Report
12/4	CBP staff meeting with teachers to discuss plans for remainder of pilot project for the spring semester.
12/5	Focus reports by student teams are due.
12/8	CBP staff meeting with managers to review upcoming assignments.
12/8-12/12	Create listing of final categories for benchmarks.
12/15	Meeting between CBP staff, JD managers, and teachers to discuss future steps.
12/16	Final Focus Group Report completed.
12/19-1/10/98	Students develop drafts of alumni and senior surveys.
1/13/98	Press Release detailing the project's first phase is issued.
1/23/98	Final Report on Benchmarking Methods completed.

Phase II: Preliminary Data Collection and Preparation of Report
January – August 1998

2/3	Team meeting to discuss presentation of Benchmarks to community to be held on 2/10/98.
2/10	Preliminary list of benchmarks presented to community. They are revised and accepted.
2/24	Youth Round Table Presentation: J-D participants share experience with Syracuse City School District student leaders.
3/27	Senior exit survey is pilot tested in one class and is revised based upon suggestions.
4/3-5/15	All data collection instruments developed and pilot tested: 1.) Alumni Survey 2.) Senior Survey 3.) Data from school records (senior voting records, guidance office records, number of seniors active in community service organizations, and school disciplinary records) 4.) Election data from the local Board of Elections
4/7	J-D student presentation to SU Project Advance Teachers; presented preliminary results and described benchmarking process. Received feedback on process and students integrated the suggestions into their report.
5/20	CBP staff meeting with students and teachers to hear feedback on overall process and discuss plans for next semester. Student assignment: reflection on project and lessons learned.
6/4	Presentation to group of community leaders at Thursday Morning Roundtable.
6/22	CBP staff meeting with teachers to plan curriculum for fall and spring (1998-99).
8/10	CBP staff meeting with teachers to finalize curriculum for fall and spring (1998-99).

APPENDIX B: SENIOR EXIT SURVEY AND RESPONSE FREQUENCIES

This survey is part of an effort to determine how effectively J-D is preparing students for life in the real world. You will not receive a grade for this survey and your responses will remain totally anonymous. However, we do ask that you answer all questions honestly and to the best of your ability. Seniors at J-D will use the information that you provide to help determine what the school's strengths and weaknesses are. The aggregate results of this survey may influence school administrators to reform the J-D curriculum in an effort to better prepare future students for life after high school.

Assessment of Financial Responsibility

For questions 1 through 8, circle the best answer.

1. The present interest rate for a normal savings account is roughly:
   A) 1 – 4% B) 5 – 8% C) 8 – 11% D) > 11% E) Don't know

2. Approximately what percentage of a worker's paycheck is withheld for FICA and Medicare combined?
   A) 1 – 5% B) 5 – 11% C) 11 – 15% D) 15 – 20% E) Don't know

3. When you begin working for an employer, you are required to fill out which of the following forms?
   A) W-2 B) 1040 C) G-3 D) W-4 E) Don't know

4. Which of the following individuals is the most credit-worthy?
   A) John Doe, who pays all of his bills on time.
   B) Jack Doe, who uses his credit card to pay his bills and carries around a $100.00 balance of credit each month.
   C) George Doe, who waits until the end of the year and then writes a huge check to cover all of his accumulated bills.
   D) Don't know

5. Which of the following transactions is the ***most likely*** to incur a usage fee?
   A) Buying groceries with a check.
   B) Withdrawing money from an ATM.
   C) Buying clothes with a credit card.
   D) Don't know

6. When you file an income tax return, which if the following forms do you send back to the IRS along with the W-2?
   A) G - 3
   B) Mutual fund holdings form
   C) Bank account holdings form
   D) 1040
   E) Don't know

7. You are required to pay federal income tax on all of the following *except*:
   A) Capital gains from stocks, mutual funds, and other forms of speculation
   B) Inheritance
   C) Land owned by your family
   D) Wages and salaries paid by your employer
   E) Don't know

8. Employers issue this form to all workers at the end of the work year. It includes the total amount earned by the employee during the year as well as the amounts withheld for federal tax, FICA, Medicare, and state tax.

   A) 1040
   B) W-2
   C) W-4
   D) G-3
   E) Don't know

Please fill out the following check as though you were engaged in a hypothetical transaction at Wegmans. You, Pat Doe, are purchasing groceries worth $126.97.

Pat Doe
14 Main Street
Syracuse, NY 13210
555-1234

_____ 19 ____

Pay to the order of _____ **$** [ ]

_____ Dollars

ABC Bank
110 Oak Street
Syracuse, NY 13224

Note to the reader of this report: The financial assessment measured benchmarks 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3. Benchmark 2.1 was measured by observing whether a given respondent correctly answered 3 or more out of the 5 questions pertaining to taxes (Questions 2, 3, 6, 7, and 8. Benchmark 2.2 was fulfilled if the respondent correctly answered one of the two questions that concerned banking procedures (Questions 1 and 5) and correctly filled out the hypothetical check. *Benchmark 2.3 was determined solely by whether or not Question 4 was correctly answered. Benchmark 2.1 was fulfilled by 23% of the respondents, Benchmark 2.2 by 68% of the respondents, and Benchmark 2.3 by 84% of the respondents.*

Miscellaneous Questions

Please indicate whether or not you agree that the following statements are accurate descriptions of you.

A = Agree
N = No opinion / unsure
D = Disagree

1. In the past, I have worked effectively with other students in team projects.
   Agree: 96% Disagree: 2% No opinion: 2%

2. I am comfortable speaking in front of a group of 20 or more people.
   Agree: 63% Disagree: 24% No opinion: 13%

3. I generally communicate well with friends, family, teachers, and others.
   Agree: 88% Disagree: 5% No opinion: 7%

Please answer the following questions using short paragraphs.

4. In the past, have you participated in 3 major team projects as part of your high school coursework?
   Yes: 72% No: 28%
   If yes, list some of the projects you were involved with.

5. Have you ever participated in a job-shadowing or internship experience? **Yes: 57% No: 42%**
   If not, what specific exposure have you had to careers which interest you?

6. Please estimate the average number of hours per month that you have spent volunteering over the past year. Do not include volunteer work required for Participation in Government or any other mandatory course. You may, however, include volunteer hours completed for NHS, Key Club, or any other volunteer organization.

   Average number of hours per month spent volunteering: **7.42 hours**

7. Do you have a résumé or activity sheet you could send to a potential employer or intern supervisor
   Yes: 70% No: 28% No response: 2%

8. If given the opportunity, would you participate in A) the use of illegal drugs, B) underage drinking, or C) cigarette smoking?

   (Number or respondents answering in each of the following ways)

Drugs:	32 Yes	59 No	12 Not sure	2 No response
Alcohol:	63 Yes	31 No	12 Not sure	2 No response
Smoking:	32 Yes	68 No	6 Not sure	1 No response

APPENDIX C: J-D ALUMNI TELEPHONE SURVEY WITH FREQUENCIES

Section I

1. I have had no difficulty staying within a planned budget.
   Agree **Disagree** **No opinion**
2. I have a manageable debt load.
   Agree 57% **Disagree 39%** **No opinion 4%**
3. I feel comfortable that I can ask my last job supervisor for a positive letter of reference.
   Agree 96% **Disagree** **No opinion 4%**
4. I have a good relationship with those I live with.
   Agree 100% **Disagree** **No opinion**
5. I keep close to my immediate family and have a good relationship with them.
   Agree **Disagree** **No opinion**

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6. In a typical month, how many hours do you spend volunteering for a non-profit or community service organization?

   4.9 hours/month
   61% of alumni reported volunteering over 20 hours per year

7. Please list the organizations or activities you are active in.

   1. _____ 4. _____
   2. _____ 5. _____
   3. _____ 6. _____

Reflecting on your experience at J-D, which class, programs, or activities struck you as being particularly strong or as having made a positive difference in your life?

Class or activity:	Why strong or made a positive difference:

Which classes, programs, or activities did you consider to have been weak or deficient?

Class or activity:	Why weak or deficient:

Are you now enrolled full-time in college? *(If yes, go to Section III, if not, go on to Section II)*

Section II

8. What type of job do you now have?

9. Do you plan to stay in this job for more than a year? Why or why not? Are you involved with a company or a field that you like?

10. What are your career plans for the future?
    75% say they see a viable future for their present job
    75% say that not attending college was the correct choice

    100% of alumni are either enrolled in college, are employed full-time, or are studying and working part-time.

Section III

11. Where are you enrolled full-time in college?

12. Is this the college you started at? If not, when did you transfer to your present college?

13. Do you expect to transfer before completing the program?
    79% chose the correct college; ***21%*** transferred or will transfer

Statement	***Agree***	***Disagree***	***No opinion***
14. My preparation at J-D was at least as good as the preparation of the average student at the college I now attend.	87%	13%	
15. My studies at J-D adequately prepared me for the college program I am now in.			
16. I will graduate from college no later than I had initially planned without having to take makeup work during the summer.	61%	26%	9%