



# JA ACADEMY EVALUATION 2014

## PUBLIC INFORMATION BRIEF

*This brief presents selected findings from the RMC Research Evaluation of JA Academy based on a secondary analysis of student outcome data from Orange County Public Schools (OCPS).*

### Program Overview

Junior Achievement (JA) created Academy for Entrepreneurship and Business to help high school students develop the leadership and entrepreneurial skill needed for success in the global economy. The mission of JA Academy is to develop learners with “outstanding character, exalted purposes, transforming leadership talents, economic acumen and an entrepreneurial approach to enhancing business and community services whenever and wherever they serve.” Courses are designed to connect the students with Central Florida's top business leaders and entrepreneurs to stimulate students’ imaginations and prepare them for a successful future in the free enterprise system. The Academy is intended to become a national model that exemplifies the synergies that may be realized when schools and businesses come together to deliver effective high school experiences.

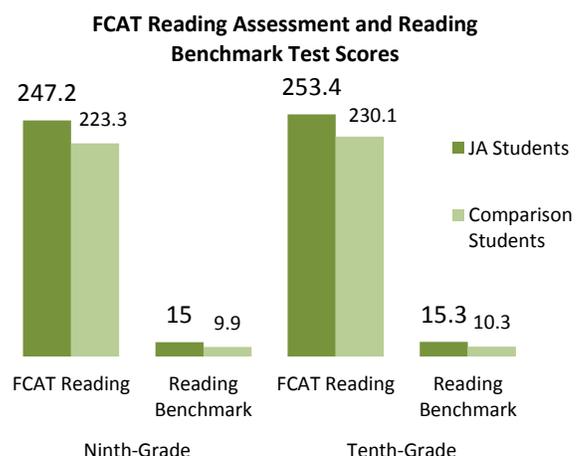
### The Study

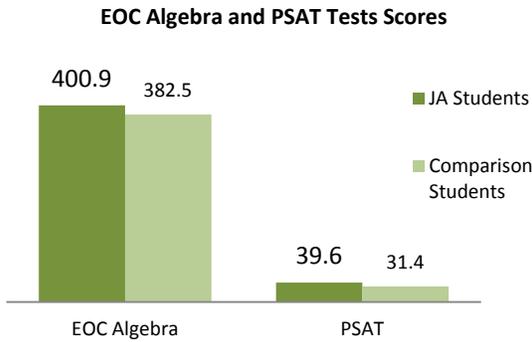
In 2014, RMC Research conducted an evaluation of JA Academy and its impact on participating students’ knowledge and skills. The sample for this evaluation included a treatment group of ninth-grade and tenth-grade students who participated in JA Academy and a comparison group that consisted of business-as-usual students (non-participants) who were randomly selected from the same school. In total, 227 JA students and 227 comparison students were included in the study. Achievement data were provided by the Orange County Public Schools (OCPS). The evaluation answered the following questions:

- 1. What is the impact of participating in the JA Academy on student performance as measured by Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) scores, Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude test (PSAT) scores, End of Course (EOC) test scores, benchmark assessment scores, attendance, behavior, grades received, and course failure?**
- 2. To what extent are impacts different by student demographic characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status)?**

### Findings

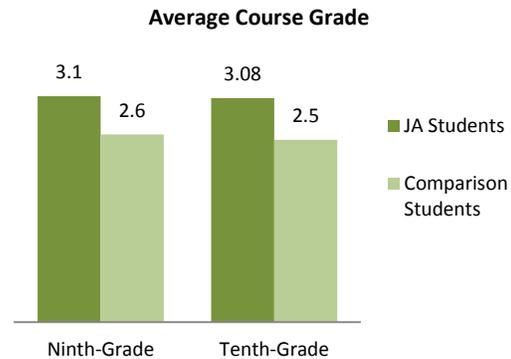
- On average, ninth-grade JA students scored 24 points higher and tenth-grade JA students scored 23 points higher than comparison students on the FCAT Reading Assessment.**
- Both ninth- and tenth-grade JA students outperformed the comparison students in the Reading Benchmark Assessment by 5 points.**



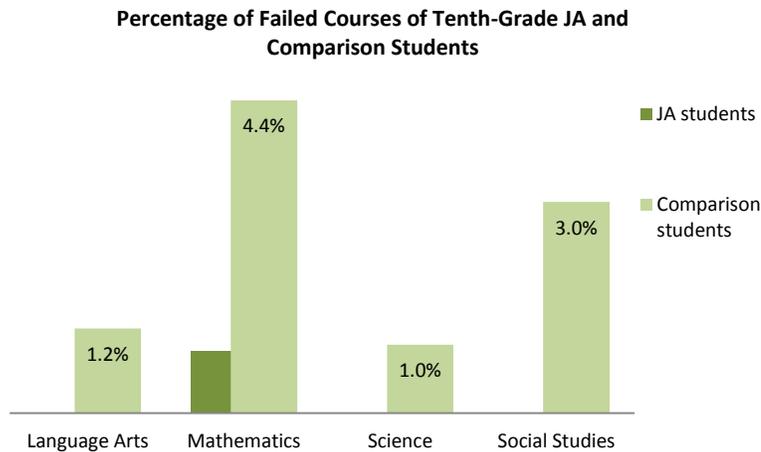


- **JA Academy nine-grade students outperformed comparison students by an average of 18 points on the EOC Algebra test.**
- **On average, the ninth-grade JA students scored 8 points higher than the comparison students in the PSAT assessments.**

- **JA Academy had a significant impact on student’s final course grade. The JA students’ average grade is 0.5 point higher than the comparison students in the ninth grade and 0.6 point higher in the tenth grade.**



- **Tenth-grade JA Academy students failed fewer courses in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.**



- **After controlling for the effect of previous academic history and demographic difference, analysis showed the JA Academy curriculum significantly improved ninth-grade students’ PSAT mathematics scores and tenth-grade students’ FCAT writing assessment scores, reading benchmark test scores, and course grades for science.**
- **Students’ gender and special education status moderated the program impact on academic performance. Female students had higher course grades in literacy art and social studies than male students. Gifted students in ninth grade outperformed their peers in FCAT reading assessment and three PSAT assessments.**