



Impact of the Career Coach Program

2008-2009

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Summary

Career Coaches work in local high schools to help students explore careers and identify postsecondary programs and services to reach their goals. Since the inception of the career coach program in December 2004, the program has increased dramatically from 11 coaches in 13 high schools to approximately 107 coaches in over 150 high schools. Analysis of data indicate that the career coach program positively impacts short and long term education goals of students and the high schools that coaches work in. Some of the impacts of the program in 2008-09 include:

- 81% or greater satisfaction rate of students receiving coaching services based on the coaches interest in student career needs, knowledge of career information, and assistance in making career and college plans
- 49% change in students without plans to continue to postsecondary education prior to meeting with the coach to having plans to continue to postsecondary education after meeting with a coach
- 89% of high schools principals indicating that the coach program met or exceeded overall expectations
- 5% increase over three years in the number of recent graduates from high schools with a career coach that enroll in community college, as compared to enrollments before the high school had a career coach
- 4% increase over three years in the number of recent graduates from high schools with a career coach that enroll in CTE Programs at the community college, as compared to CTE enrollments before the high school had a career coach
- 4% increase over three years in the number of Dual Enrollment students from high schools with a career coach, as compared to Dual Enrollment Students before the high school had a career coach

The following report provides detailed information on the impact of the career coach program and includes a brief background on the program, a description of the measurements of program success, and the results of the analysis of data for 2008-09.

Background

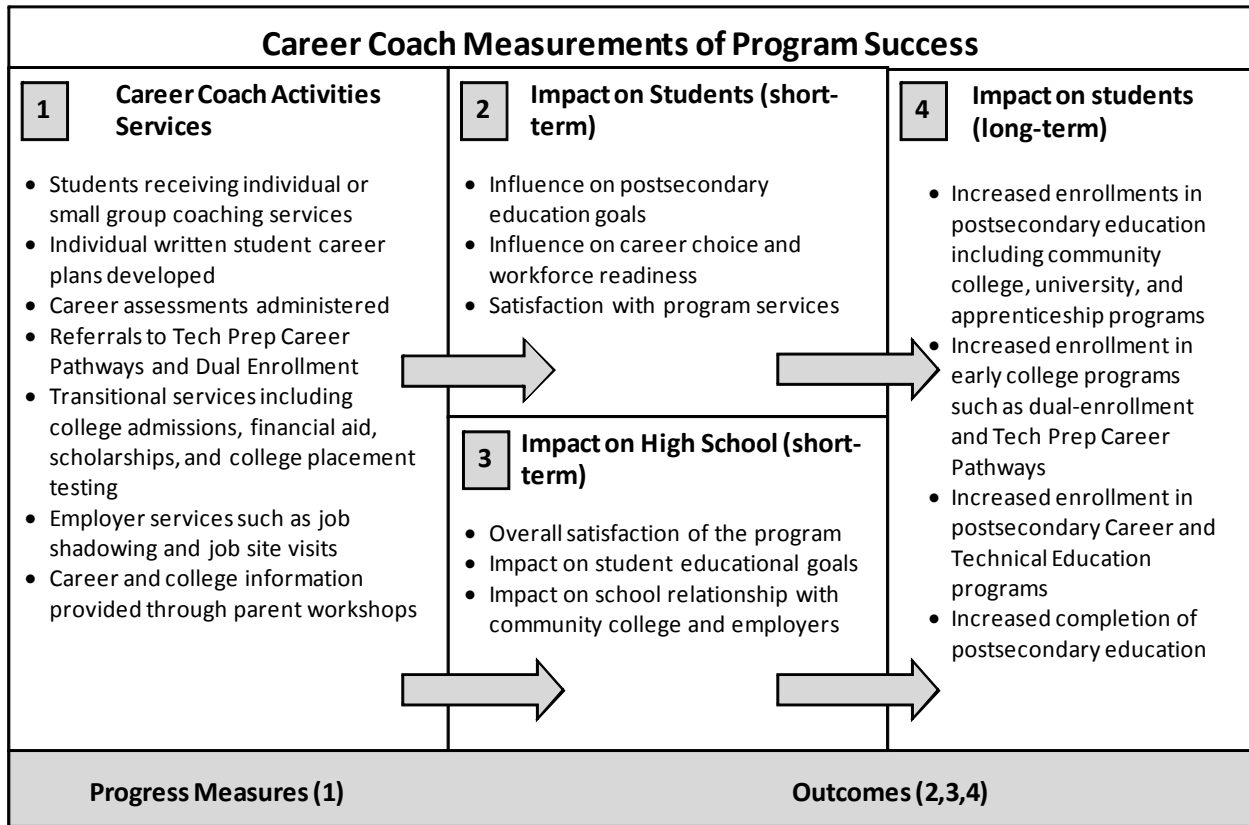
Career coaches are community college employees based in local high schools with the mission to help high school students define their career aspirations and recognize postsecondary programs and services that can help students achieve their goals. Career coaches target high school students who most need career planning services: middle majority students who are poised to become the mainstay of Virginia's workforce but who, conversely, often graduate from high school without a definitive plan or resources for postsecondary education and training. Beginning in January 2005 with 11 career coaches based in 13 high schools throughout the Commonwealth, the Virginia Community Colleges (VCCS) Career Coach program has dramatically expanded so that, in Academic Year 2009-10, approximately 120 career coaches will be based in over 170 high schools. While day to day functions of a career coach may vary according to local needs, major responsibilities of all coaches include:

- Facilitating the development of individual career plans and portfolios
- Sharing information on careers and career pathways
- Connecting students to early college programs such as dual-enrollment
- Assisting in the successful transition of students from high school to postsecondary education or training including assistance with college admissions and financial aid processes
- Connecting students, parents, teachers, and counselors with local and regional workforce needs and business and industry mentors

Career Coaches Measurements of Program Success

The VCCS assesses the career coach program through four key areas: (1) career coach activities, (2) influence of the services provided to students, (3) influence of the program on high schools, and (4) impact on enrollment in postsecondary education. The diagram below outlines the activities within each measurement area. The activities focus on the mission of the program, which is listed above. The first measurement area, career coach activities, is categorized as a progress measure, while the remaining areas are categorized as outcomes of the program. Progress measures provide an interim assessment of the program, but do not ensure program success. For example, the number of students provided individual/group coaching services does not measure the quality of the service, it only measures the quantity. Conversely, student satisfaction with individual/small group coaching services and the ability of coaches to influence a student's decisions on postsecondary education (measurements described in area two) provide a more qualitative assessment of whether or not coaches are achieving the outcomes of the program.

In 2008-2009, it appears that coaches had a positive impact on the four measurement areas of the program. The table below provides the status of the measurement areas. The remaining sections of the report provide detailed information of the measurements for 2008-2009.



Measurement Area One: Career Coach Activities

Career coaches are located across the state in high schools and career and technical centers. Currently, coaches are located in all community college service areas. The types of services provided align with the VCCS career coaching model and include: contacting students, providing individual/small group coaching, administering career assessments, developing career plans, providing assistance with college placement, and referring students to early college placement programs, such as dual enrollment or Tech Prep. Coaches also connect students to local employers who serve as career advisors and mentors to students.

In 2008-09, career coach activities increased in the majority of service areas. This is largely due to the increase in the number of coaches and the number of high schools with a coach presence. In 2008-09, the number of coaches increased 27 percent to 107 and the number of high schools increased 29 percent to 154. As a result, the number of students contacted rose by 33 percent to 82,537. Referrals to Tech Prep and Dual Enrollment also increased. The table below provides summary data by service area for the past three academic years.

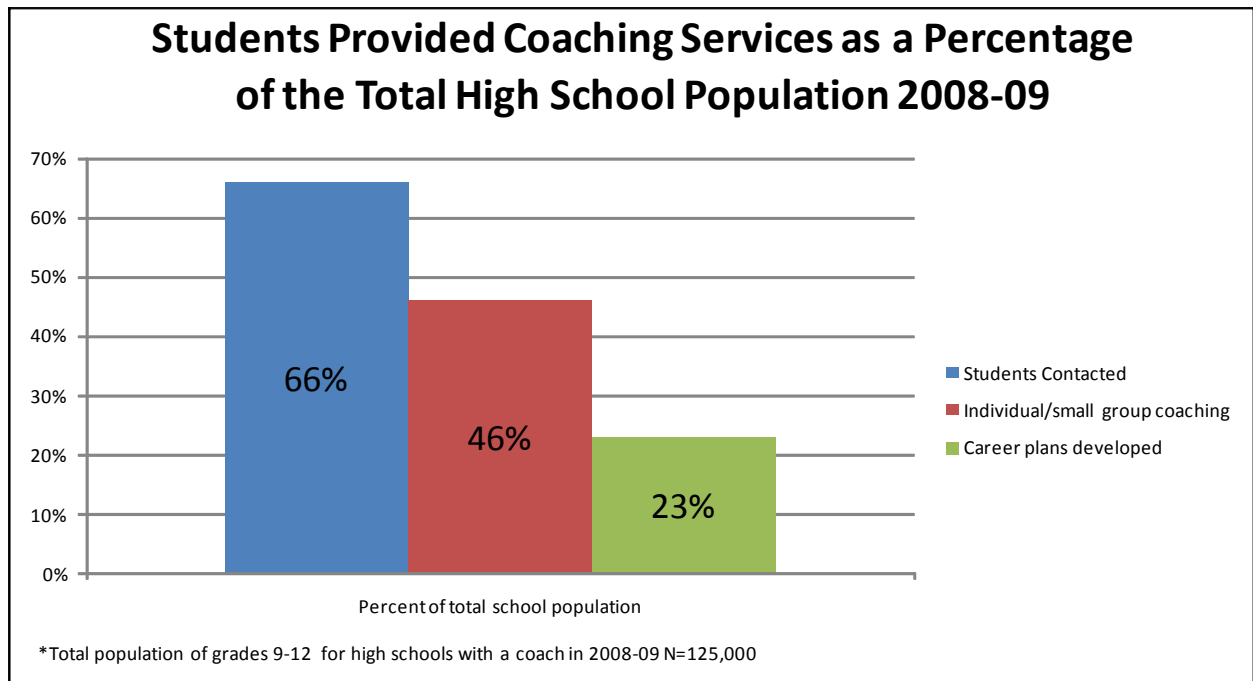
Career Coach Activities and Services for 2006-07 to 2008-09 Academic Year				
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Avg. Annual Increase
Activities				
Number of coaches	66	86	107	27%
Number of high schools	93	130	154	29%
Students contacted	46,946	67,783	82,537	33%
Students provided individual/small group coaching services	34,551	41,742	57,549	29%
Career plans developed	14,978	15,350	28,175	43%
Referrals to Tech Prep	11,677	21,145	20,842	40%
Referrals to Dual Enrollment	14,856	25,534	30,546	46%
College placement assistance	9,206	12,271	17,875	39%
Averages per coach				
Students contacted	711	788	771	4%
Students provided individual/small group coaching services	524	485	538	2%
Career plans developed	227	178	263	13%
Source: Activity reports submitted by career coaches annually.				

One area that grew significantly is the number of career plans developed. In 2008-09 coaches assisted 28,175 students with the development of individual career plans-an increase of 84 percent over the prior year. On average, coaches work with 263 students during the school year on these plans. The large increase is likely due to several factors. First, after a low number of career plan development in 2007-08, VCCS set goals for coaches to increase the number of plans. Second, in 2008-09 VCCS introduced the Virginia Education Wizard, which is an online program that assists students with career plan development.

Career Coach Performance for 2008-2009	Performance
1. Career Coach Activities	
Students receiving individual /small group coaching services	57,549
Individual written student career plans developed	28,175
Referrals to Tech Prep Career Pathways programs or Dual Enrollment	30,546
College placement assistance	25,534
Students provided services through employers, such as job shadowing, mentoring, etc.	21,298
2. Impact on Students (short-term)	
Influence on postsecondary education goals	
-Change in students indicating no postsecondary plans prior to coach to indicated postsecondary plans after a meeting with a coach	49%
-Change in students indicating plans to attend community college prior to a meeting with a coach to indicating either to go directly to four-year university or to community college and then transferring to a four-year university after meeting with a coach	28%
Satisfaction with program services	>81%
3. Impact on High School (short-term)	
Overall satisfaction with the program	89%
Impact on student educational goals	89%
Impact on school relationships with community college and employers	90%
4. Impact on Students (long-term)	
Increase in enrollments in postsecondary education	
-at community college as a percentage of recent high school graduates (over 3 yrs)	5%
-at four year institution	TBD (2009-10)
-in apprenticeship related instruction	TBD (2009-10)
Increase in enrollment in postsecondary career and technical programs as a percentage of recent high school graduates (over 3 yrs)	4%
Increase in enrollment in early college programs (dual enrollment) as a percentage of the 9-12 grade high school population (over 3 yrs)	5%

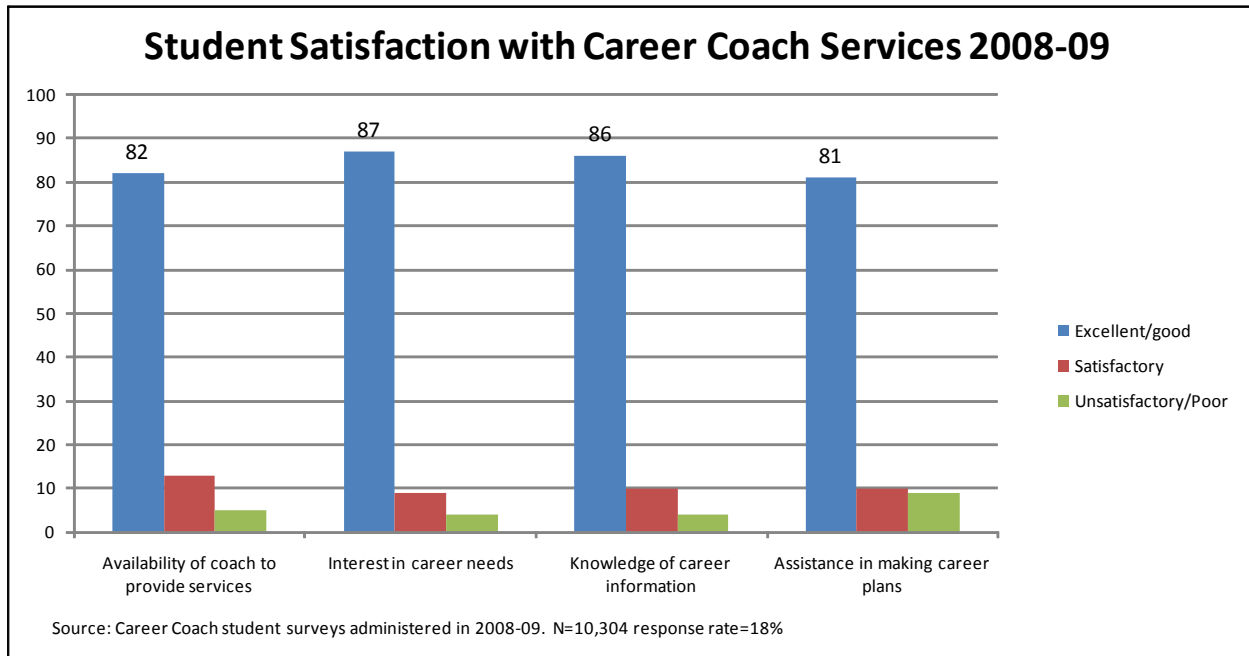
Coverage of Coaching Services

In 2008-09 coaches worked with students in approximately 154 of the 365 high schools and career and technical schools in Virginia (42 percent). In some college service regions, coaches are located in all the high schools while in others, colleges place coaches in target high schools based on the greatest need for services. Coaches contacted approximately 66 percent of the students in their high schools, provided individual/small group coaching to 46 percent, and career plan development to 23 percent. The graphic below illustrates the percentages by each service area.



Measurement Area Two: Impact on Students (Short-term)

In order to measure the short-term impact on students, coaches survey students who receive services to assess their satisfaction of the program and the influence of the career coach on the student's career plans. In 2008-09, coaches surveyed over 10,000 students (approximately 18 percent response rate of total students provided individual/small group coaching services) across 134 high schools. Over 81 percent rated their coach services as either excellent or good for the coach's availability to provide services, career plans. This is a slight increase over the prior year where coaches average 80 percent in the same areas. The graph below illustrates the student satisfaction of the coach program.



In addition to providing a positive service to students, coaches also appear to have an influence on career plans for students with and without a plan to enter postsecondary education prior to meeting with the coach. Based on the student survey, 49 percent of the students responding that they did not have plans for postsecondary education prior to meeting with the coach indicated an intent to attend postsecondary education after meeting with a coach either through attending a registered apprenticeship program, a technical school, community college, or four-year university (table below). In addition, students with postsecondary plans prior to meeting with a coach also appear to benefit, in terms of increasing educational aspirations, from the coaching process. Twenty-eight percent of students responding with the intent to attend community college prior to meeting with a coach indicated a desire to attend community college and then transfer to a four-year university or go directly to a four-year university after meeting with a coach.

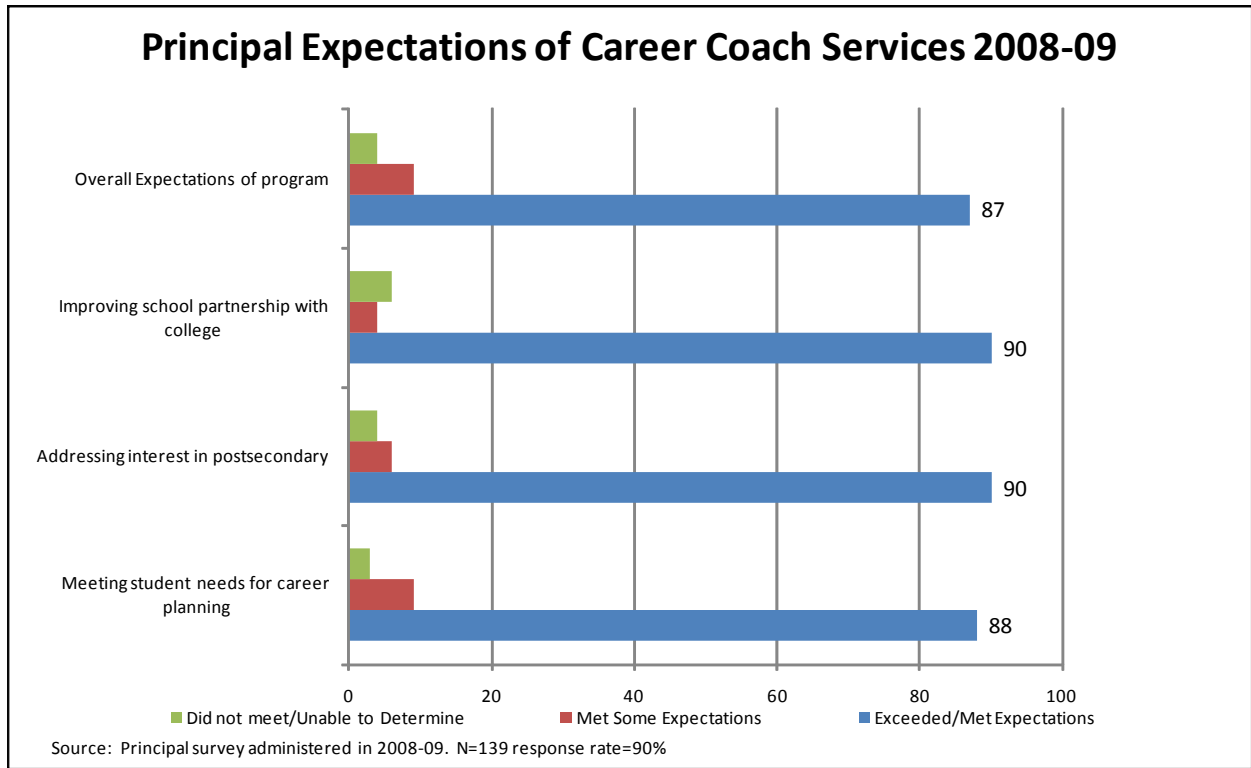
Influence of Career Coach Services on Students with and without Postsecondary Plans	
<p><i>Change in students with no postsecondary plan:</i> no postsecondary plan → postsecondary plan (Percent of students with no postsecondary plans prior to meeting with a coach indicating a plan to attend postsecondary education after meeting with a coach)</p>	49%
<p><i>Change in students with postsecondary plans:</i> community college (CC) plan → CC-4 Year or 4 Year plan (Percent of students with plans to attend community college prior to meeting with a coach indicating a plan to either attend a community college and then transfer to a four-year university or go directly to a four-year university after meeting with coach)</p>	28%
Source: Career coach student surveys administered in 2008-09. N=10,304 Response rate=18%	

Coaching services also help clarify career goals for students even for students planning to attend postsecondary education. When asked to identify the impact of the services provided by the coach, over two-thirds of the respondents indicated that it assisted in: (1) developing a plan to continue to postsecondary education, (2) setting a career goal, and (3) feeling more confident about the future.

Student Ranking of the Top Three Outcomes of the Services Provided by a Coach
<p>Develop a plan to continue to postsecondary education upon graduation</p> <p>Set a career goal</p> <p>Feel more confident about the future</p>

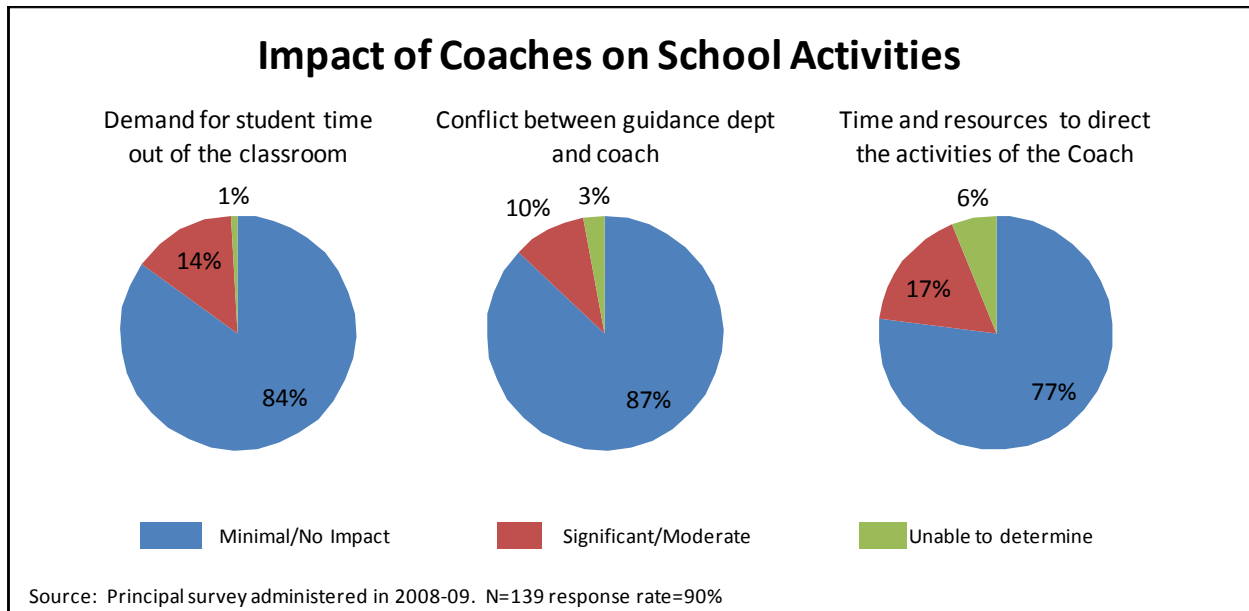
Measurement Area Three: Impact on High Schools with a Coach

The influence of the career coach in the high school is another critical element to the success of the program. In order to assess the impact of the program on the high school, VCCS staff administered a short survey to high school principals. One hundred and thirty nine principals responded to the survey (over 90 percent response rate). The survey asked questions related to expectations and impact of the program (graphic below).



Nearly 90 percent of principals surveyed responded that program met or exceeded expectations in the areas of overall expectations of the program, improving school partnerships with the community college, addressing interest in postsecondary education, and meeting student needs for career planning

The presence of career coaches does not appear to create an administrative burden for high schools (graphic below). Over 80 percent of the principals surveyed reported the impact of coaches on program as minimal, or as having no discernable impact on: (1) demands on student time, (2) conflicts between guidance department and coaches, and (3) time and resources required to direct the activities of the coach.

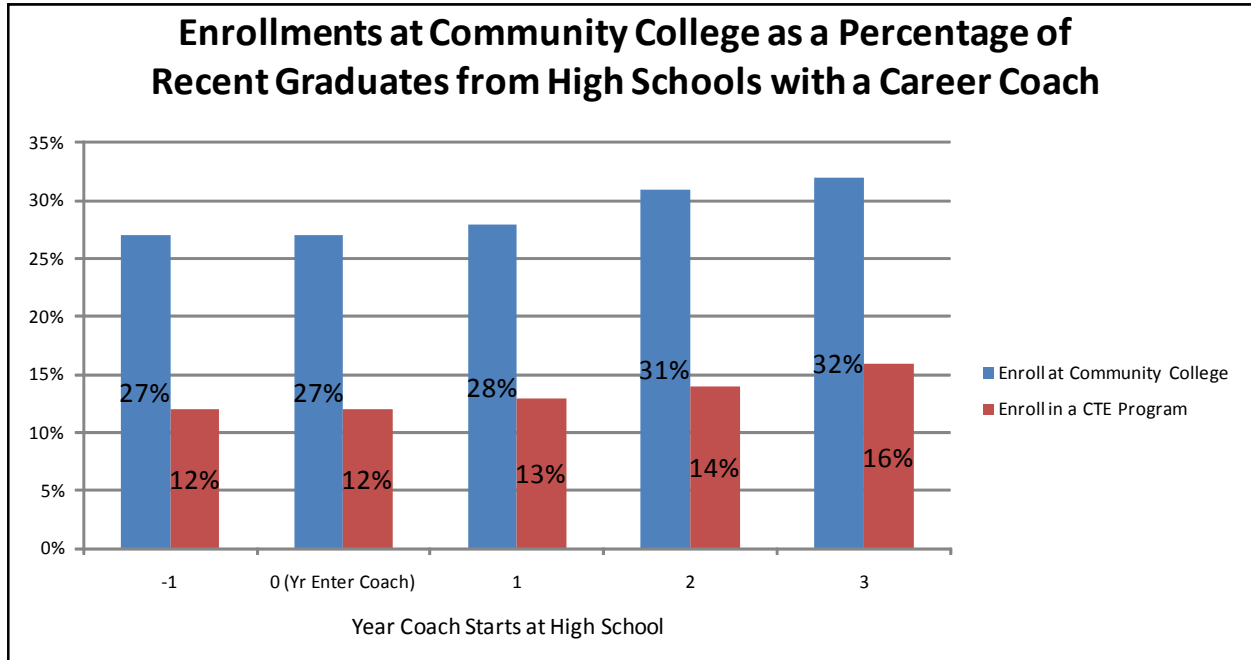


Measurement Area Four: Impact on Student Enrollments in Postsecondary Education

The area of measurement, and a key goal of the career coach program, is to increase student enrollment in postsecondary education, whether it is at a four-year university, a registered apprentice program, a community college, or a technical school. Currently, data is only available for enrollments related to community colleges. VCCS staff are currently working with State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) and Virginia Department of Education officials to identify methods to track enrollments to four-year universities and also are planning to track enrollments in registered apprentice programs in the coming year.

Analysis of data indicates that high schools with a coach increase the percentage of recent high school graduates that enroll at a community college and in career and technical (CTE) programs at the college within a year of graduation (graphic on following page). In addition, enrollments of high school students in community college courses (dual enrollment) as a percentage of the total high school population also increase. High Schools with a career coach averaged 27 percent of students enrolling in community college for the two years prior to a coach entering the high school. After the coach entered the high school, enrollments increased 5 percentage points for the three years after the coach remained in the high school. Similarly, the percent of recent

high school graduates enrolling in CTE programs average 12 percent for the two years prior to the coach entering the high school and increased four percentage points in the three years after.



Dual enrollments also demonstrated an increase with a presence of a coach. In the year prior to a coach entering the high school, dual enrollments averaged 10 percent of the 9-12 grade population in the high school. After the coach entered, dual enrollments increased up to 15 percent of the high school population (graphic below).

