

The **Harvard Extension School *Poetry in America* National Pilot** — provided talented, high-striving 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in Title 1, underserved high schools the opportunity to take a Harvard Extension School online college credit-bearing course in their high school classrooms (including as a dual enrollment option).

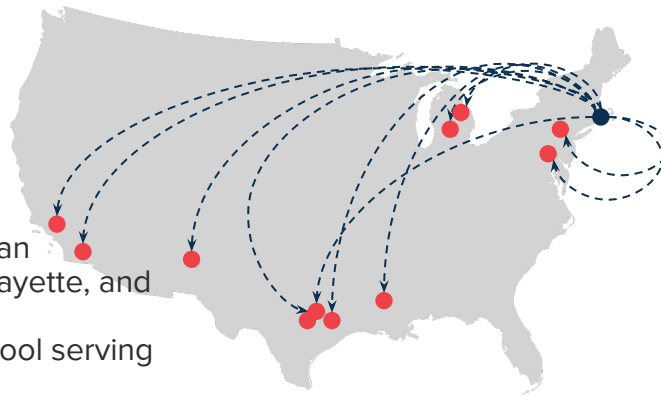
*“Democratizing access to higher education in our nation has never been more critical. Harvard’s leadership in offering a college credit-bearing course to talented students in Title 1 high school classrooms is game-changing.”*

– Arne Duncan, Former U.S. Secretary of Education; *National Education Equity Lab* Advisory Board member

## PILOT PHASE 1: PROOF OF CONCEPT DEMONSTRATED

### 11 CITIES

- New York City
- Los Angeles
- San Diego
- Meriden, Connecticut
- Flint and Pontiac, Michigan
- Baton Rouge, Lafitte, Lafayette, and Opelousas, Louisiana
- Gallup, New Mexico (school serving Navajo students)



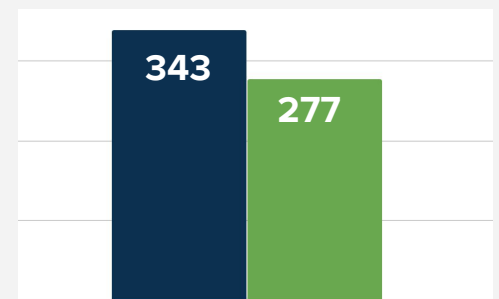
### 25 TITLE I HIGH SCHOOLS

Collectively serving over **92%** students of color & **84%** students eligible for reduced or free lunch.

*Source: CCD Public school data 2016-2017.*

**89%** of the 277 students who completed the course **PASSED** and received **4 Harvard Extension School COLLEGE CREDITS** — providing the opportunity to make college more affordable and accessible.

- **476 students initially enrolled** in summer 2019, 133 students were prevented from starting due to systems and logistics challenges<sup>1</sup>. **343 were able to start the course.**
- **Twenty-five percent (25%)** of students earned an **A range grade** and **(38%)** earned a **B range grade**, as graded by Harvard Teaching Fellows<sup>2</sup>.
- **Ninety-six percent (96%)** of students indicated that the course **should be offered to students like them at their school**<sup>3</sup>.
- **One-hundred percent (100%)** of participating districts **asked to participate in future course offerings.**



**81% Retention Rate**

Of the 343 who started, 23 students dropped the course and 43 students were counseled to withdraw.

<sup>1</sup>The three primary reasons students could not start were: scheduling conflicts (58), Grade breakdown: C:21%; D:7%; F: 10% -- 40% of grades system login issues (16), and school administration-level decisions by four schools were machine graded.  
<sup>2</sup>Response rate on exit surveys: 65%.  
<sup>3</sup>Response rate on exit surveys: 65%.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF THE PILOT

- 1 Rigorous & Engaging College Credit-Bearing Course** — *Poetry in America The City: From Whitman to Hip Hop* developed and delivered by Harvard Professor Elisa New.
- 2 University Teaching Fellows (TF)** — TFs were hired by the Harvard Extension School, and selected by the Harvard Professor. Pilot TFs all hold, or are currently pursuing, a graduate degree or similar certification, or have requisite teaching experience in the course subject area. The TFs provided consistency and reliability to the grading process. There is a substantial pool of qualified candidates interested in being TFs, and 40% of grading was automated.
- 3 Classroom Supervising Teachers** — Schools selected teachers to lead classroom discussions, remind students of deadlines, and communicate with TFs regarding student progress. Supervising Teachers had no access to grades.
- 4 One-on-one College Mentors** — 100% of students were offered a one-on-one college mentor (through the Equity Lab's partnership with the Common Application) to support students in navigating the application and financial aid process.
- 5 Funding from School Districts & Others** — School districts and states provided funds to cover student enrollment at the Extension School's reduced price for pilot students. Philanthropic partners provided additional funds where needed.
- 6 Open Feedback Channels & Continuous Improvement** — Students, Supervising Teachers, Principals, and Teaching Fellows were continually engaged in feedback sessions to share their experience to improve the model.

## ADDITIONAL OUTCOMES

Of students who responded to the exit survey (65%),

- **Eighty-one (81%)** stated that this course **helped them better prepare for college**.
- **One-hundred (100%)** who received Ds and 56% who failed also stated this course **helped them better prepare for college**. *Primary reasons cited: better understanding the effort required to succeed in college, improved writing skills, and learning the importance of asking for/getting help.*

### KEY ELEMENT:

#### **The opportunity to earn college credit is important.**

Students and district leaders expressed that a primary reason for providing and taking this course is the opportunity for students to receive college credit.

### IMPORTANT FINDING:

#### **Tech access was not a barrier to entry for students.**

All schools were able to provide students with adequate Internet and computer access during the school day. Almost all students were able to access the course outside of school; for those who could not, the National Education Equity Lab provided computers and/or hotspot devices to students.

*"I learned how to push myself, and work and think, in ways I never had to before...and I learned that I **can do college-level work**. Teachers had told me that, but now I see it and believe it and want more. **In that way, this class probably changed my life.**"*

- Pilot Student from Gallup, New Mexico

*"I'm not exaggerating when I say that this has been **one of the best experiences of my teaching career**, and I've been teaching for twenty-three years. I drove home in tears (happy tears) more than once because **I was so proud of what my students had accomplished** and so inspired by how well things had gone that day in our class."*

- Supervising Teacher from Flint, Michigan