

Study reveals job gains with JMG

By HP STAFF

BENTON HARBOR — A research study by the University of Michigan-Flint shows students who enrolled in the Jobs for Michigan's Graduates program have a higher graduation rate, higher weekly wages, and an increased likelihood of enrolling in college.

The JMG program was established 10 years ago to help at-risk youth graduate from high school and be prepared for the future.

The study cited several positive outcomes for the program participants who were observed across all three of the model types, which includes multi-year students, alternative education and out-of-

school youth.

"These successes were achieved despite significant academic, personal and family backgrounds that placed students at risk of not graduating, obtaining employment or enrolling in college," said Dr. Yener Kandogan, associate dean of the School of Management at the University of Michigan-Flint. "In fact, successful outcomes were observed across all racial-ethnic groups. The program was most successful in helping participants overcome barriers such as being economically disadvantaged, having dropped out of school, having a father that does not work, lacking motivation, trailing behind peers academically, and having a foster care or

runaway background."

The Jobs for Michigan's Graduates program started in 2008 at Benton Harbor High School and now serves more than 3,000 students across Michigan. The U-M study included 299 senior-year participants from the graduating class of 2015. Some of the findings of the report include:

■ JMG students had a 94 percent graduation rate – 14 percent higher than the Michigan average, and 27 percent higher for African American and economically disadvantaged students.

■ Participants in the program had an average of 7.4 barriers including being economically disadvantaged; trailing behind peers academically; having a foster

care background.

■ Time spent in JMG programming translated to an increase in the participants' weekly wages – \$1.09 more for every hour spent in leadership and employability skills training, and off-site career exploration and \$2.25 more for every hour spent in community service or academic remediation activities.

■ Of the study participants, 70 percent had planned to enter part- or full-time employment at the start of the program, although only 20 percent actually had a job. After the JMG program, 83 percent were employed – a 63 percent increase.

■ After completing the JMG program, 57 percent of participants had enrolled

in post-secondary education, an increase of 17,000 percent.

"The challenge in Michigan is building our youth talent pipeline," said Kristin Harrington, executive director of Youth Solutions, which provides JMG programming through partnerships across Michigan. "In Michigan, nearly 11,000 kids drop out of high school every year.

...This study proves we can turn this around and equip all of our young adults with the skills to overcome barriers and win in education, in employment, and in life."

For more information on Jobs for Michigan's Graduates programming or the Youth Solutions organization, visit the website www.ouryouthsolutions.org.