

Nenana, Alaska

(2002 Grantee)

Nenana is one of 42 Athabascan (Native Alaskan) villages located in the interior of Alaska. It has a population of 550, that is approximately 50% Alaskan Native and 50% non-Native. Most of the Alaska Native people are subsistence fisherman and hunters. Many of the non-Natives work in civilian jobs with the military, travel to Fairbanks for employment, or work in local industries. In order to visit a dentist or doctor, residents must travel 120 miles roundtrip to Fairbanks over a winding, mountainous highway, a treacherous journey over the winter months. Nenana City Schools is a K–12 district with approximately 150 students enrolled from the community as well as from rural areas in the region. In addition to the in-district students, Nenana also enrolls approximately 100 students in grades 9–12 from rural Alaskan villages, who live in the Nenana Living Center, a boarding facility, making student enrollment 80% Native Alaskan. In 2001, 55% of Alaskan Native students enrolled in Nenana City Schools dropped out before graduating. It is estimated that another 50% of Native students in the community never enrolled in high school and were therefore not counted as a part of the dropout statistics. In fact, only two Alaskan Native males had graduated from high school in the last twelve years before the grant was implemented. Nearly 50% of Alaska Native students suffer from mild to severe depression. Child abuse, neglect, and family problems have been reported in 20% of Nenana Living Center residents. Nearly 50% of Nenana Alaska native students suffer from mild to severe depression and nearly 20% of the boarding students reported child abuse, neglect, and family problems.

Project Title

Nenana City School's Alaska Native Safe Schools and Healthy Students Initiative

Project Director

Teresa G. Mayrand

Primary Partners

Nenana City School
Railbelt Mental Health Association
Nenana Native Council
Nenana City Police Department

Program Focus

- Improve school attendance and graduation rates
- Ensure that the school is a safe environment
- Decrease in number of violent incidents among students
- Reduce the use/abuse and/or experimentation with drugs and alcohol among students
- Improve student self-image as measured by the Childhood Depression Inventory
- Decrease anti-social behaviors in students

Examples of Program Outcomes

- District attendance rate increased from 89% to 98%; graduation rate increased from 81% to 95% over the grant period
- 47% increase in grade 6–12 students reporting feeling safe at school over the grant period, so that 91% of students reported feeling safe at school in the final year
- 39% decrease in students reporting being bullied a “few times” and 50% decrease in students reporting being bullied “often” over grant period
- 11% (from 75% to 80%) increase in students reporting not using marijuana during the past 30 days over the grant period
- 19% decrease of students scoring in the mildly depressed range as measured by the Childhood Depression Inventory over the grant period

Lessons Learned

- To meet the needs of students, the school and their partners, the police department, and Railbelt Mental Health Service, moved from a “territorial perspective” to equal partnership with the school district. This was a major change for all three organizations that heretofore had been very protective of their areas of service. These partnerships are expected to continue without the Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant.

Hanford, California

(2002 Grantee)

The City of Hanford, located in Kings County in the heart of California's central valley, is a rural community of approximately 41,000 residents. Hanford, the county seat and largest city in Kings County, has grown dramatically in the last decade which has had a significant impact on the community's schools and social service agencies. Hanford Elementary School District (HESD) services a population of over 5,000 K-8 students in its eight elementary schools, two junior highs, and one alternative education site. The majority of the districts' students live in poverty (73%) and qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch. Over 25% of students live in single parent households with parents who work full-time and are limited in their ability to supervise their children, particularly during after school hours. Over 55% of students are Hispanic or Latino, 34% are White, 8% are African-American, 1.5% are Asian, and the remainder represent a variety of other ethnic groups. Like many school districts in California, HESD services a significant population of limited-English-proficient students (known in California as English Learners). While 17% of the total student population are English learners, at some sites a third or more of the students are not proficient in English. In addition, the transiency rate at HESD is very high. When compared directly with schools throughout California, the data reveal that the incidence of property crimes, weapons possession, sex offenses, robbery/extortion, and battery are higher in HESD than the state average.

Project Title

Hanford Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

Project Director

Sylvia Robinson

Primary Partners

Hanford Elementary School District
Kings View Counseling Services of Kings County
Hanford Police Department

Program Focus

- Decrease in violent criminal incidents on campus
- Increase in perception of the harmfulness of alcohol and drug use
- Increase in academic performance, as measured by the Academic Performance Index

Examples of Program Outcomes

- 46% decline in suspensions for weapon possession and 40% decrease in suspensions for drug/alcohol incidents over the grant period
- 27% increase in the percentage of seventh graders who think that frequent use of alcohol is harmful; 16% increase in the percentage of seventh graders who perceive frequent use of marijuana as harmful over the grant period

- 60% increase in mathematics scores; 35% increase in English/Language Arts scores as measured by the Academic Performance Index over the grant period

Lessons Learned

- The student advocate position was found to be a critical part of the Safe Schools/ Healthy Students program. Student advocates were placed at each elementary school and were charged with the task of working closely with teachers, administrators, and other support personnel at each site to identify at-risk students, provide referrals to partner agencies when appropriate, and provide case management services for students. These positions have been sustained and have been key to the success of the Initiative.
- HESD Today (the district's newspaper) and the SS/HS website were key in keeping parents and other community members informed about SAFE Safe Schools/ Healthy Students activities in the district.

Louisville, Georgia

(2002 Grantee)

Jefferson County is a large, rural county encompassing 528 square miles in the eastern part of middle Georgia. The county has three major municipalities which include Louisville, Wadley, and Wrens, none of which have more than 3,000 residents. The majority of the county's estimated 17,266 residents live scattered throughout the county in unincorporated areas or in townships composed of less than 400 people. In 2002, at the time of Safe Schools/Healthy Students funding, approximately one out of every five (19%) of Jefferson County residents were living below the poverty level. Over half (56%) of the babies born in 2003 were born to unwed mothers and almost one out of every three (28%) of children, age 0–17, are currently living in poverty. Due to the rural location, the employment prospects for local residents are relatively limited. The county's 2004 unemployment rate was 7.7%. The enrollment of Jefferson County Schools is 3,098 students. The school system is comprised of 74% African American students, 25% White, and 1% Hispanic. The system has six schools (3 elementary, 2 middle, and 1 high school). System-wide, 84% of the students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price school lunch.

Project Title

Jefferson County Community SHIPS for YOUTH

Project Director

Carolyn Swint

Primary Partners

Jefferson County Board of Education
Jefferson County Sheriff's Department
Ogeechee Behavioral Health

Program Focus

- Reduce the number of students involved in violent behavior incidents
- Reduce the percentage of students not meeting the standard on the English/Language Arts (ELA) state competency test
- Encourage the development of healthier students and families

Examples of Program Outcomes

- 38% decrease in the number of violent incidents from 236 during baseline year to 147 at the end of the grant period.
- 39% decrease of students not meeting the standard on the ELA state competency test, from 31% to 19% over the four years of the grant; the collaborative was able to document 1,656 instances of a student improving his/her grade by a letter grade and 139 instances of a student's grade increasing by at least two letter grades.

- 49% decrease in bullying other students, a 53% decrease in being bullied by others, and a 55% decrease in disciplinary problems over the four-year grant period among students participating in the Family Literacy Initiative
- 44% increase (from 53% to 76%) in the high school graduation rate during the four-year grant period

Lessons Learned

- The local Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative has served as a catalyst for systems change in Jefferson County. Individual organizations and program personnel now realize they are part of a "bigger picture" or a "mosaic of services" and welcome the opportunity to collaboratively plan, implement, provide, monitor, and sustain essential local services.
- The after-school resources provided by the Jefferson County SHIPS for Youth were instrumental in helping the students achieve academic success. Having a bus for the after-school tutorial program was a great asset and allowed more children to participate.

Lawrence, Massachusetts

(2002 Grantee)

Lawrence is a small, urban community of 72,043 residents living in a 6.7 square mile area, making it one of the most densely populated communities in the state. Lawrence's overall population grew by 2.4% since 1990; however, the minority population grew by nearly 18% during the same time period. Lawrence now has the highest Latino population in the state (60%). These demographic changes combined with economic recession, have resulted in housing shortages and high unemployment rates. At the time of grant application, both the rate of unemployment (8.8%) and poverty (27.5%) were double the national average. With a medium family income of \$28,000, Lawrence is the 4th poorest community in Massachusetts and the 23rd poorest city in the country. In 2000, 42% of children were living in poverty and 65% lived in single parent households where they need to help support their families as soon as they are able to, often contributing to school dropout. At the time of grant application, there were 13,034 students enrolled in the Lawrence Public Schools. The school system is configured into six early childhood centers (Preschool–Kindergarten), 11 elementary schools (grades 1–8), one comprehensive high school, one alternative program (grades 6–12), and one special education alternative program (grades 1–8). The student population is 88% minority, primarily Latino. English is the second language spoken in 80% of students' homes and 78% of students come from low-income families, based on free or reduced-price school lunch participation. Attendance, dropout, substance abuse, violence, discipline, safety, and mental health/behavioral issues are problems that the school system struggles to address on a daily basis.

Project Title

Lawrence Public Schools Safe Schools Healthy Students Initiative program

Project Director

Carl Derubeis

Partners

Lawrence Public Schools
Lawrence Police Department
Greater Lawrence Mental Health Center

Program Focus

- Reduce the incidence of weapon/violence-related disciplinary actions
- Reduce the incidence of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use among students
- Increase school attendance
- Reduce the waiting time between a referral of mental health services and service delivery from six weeks to under two weeks by the end of project
- Demonstrate a decrease in the number of children seen by the Greater Lawrence Mental Health's Crisis Team for behavioral and/or psychiatric crises

Examples of Program Outcomes

- 29% decrease in discipline referrals for weapons/violence-related issues over the four-year grant period
- 11% decrease in the incidence of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use according to self-reported data over the grant period
- Achieved historically high attendance rate of 94%
- Reduced to an average of 1 to 2 weeks (a quarter of the original level) the waiting time between a referral for mental health services and service delivery
- 36% decrease in reported behavioral or psychological crises over two-year period

Lessons Learned

- There are cross-promotional benefits between the parent programs; as parents indicate having experienced benefits from one program, they are motivated to participate further in other programs.

Flint, Michigan

(2002 Grantee)

Genesee County consists of an area of 640 square miles located in southeast lower Michigan. Genesee County Intermediate School District consists of 21 public school districts and 10 public school academies (charter schools). At the time of grant application, Genesee County Intermediate School District had an enrollment of 85,043 students. The racial makeup of students is approximately 25% African-American, 70% White, and 5% American Indian and Hispanic. In 2002, 31% of children living in Genesee County lived in poverty. County poverty levels are higher than the state, and the city of Flint, the county seat and population center, has a poverty rate over 2.5 times that of the state. Free or reduced-price school lunch rates ranged from 45% (in Atherton) to 87% (in Flint) at the time of grant application. The unemployment rate for Flint as of March 2002 was 9.2%, significantly higher than the state rate. In Flint, 68%, and in Mt. Morris, 69% of children are growing up in single parent homes, two of the highest rates in the state (only Detroit has higher rates). Teen pregnancy rates in Flint are among the highest in the nation at 20.5%. Genesee County has an extremely high crime rate. Many neighborhoods are considered unsafe for children and teens to spend time outdoors. Crime against family and children and child-abuse and neglect are on the rise and there is a high incidence of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Project Title

Genesee County Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

Project Director

Gloria Bourdon

Primary Partners

Genesee County Independent School District
Community Mental Health
Genesee County Sheriff's Department
Child Care Unlimited and Connexion, Inc.

Program Focus

- Reduction in the number of violent incidents in participating districts
- Participating students will show an increased desire to attend school and to stay in school
- Enhance family stability through Project SKIP to a Great Start
- Establish schools as life-long learning centers through the Bridges to the Future program
- Participating school districts will establish policies regarding tobacco, alcohol, and other drug prevention

Examples of Program Results

- 16% decline in witnessing violence and 45% decline in physical assault incidents at school over grant period

- 30% increase in students believing school work is important over grant period
- Parents who engaged in more home visits through Project SKIP to a Great Start were more emotionally and verbally responsive toward their child after receiving services and children demonstrated stronger pre-literacy skills
- After participating in Bridges to the Future, a before and after-school program, students reported having better study habits (52%), following directions better (50%), participating more in class (50%); Bridges students participating frequently in after-school activities at school were more empathetic and caring toward others, reported having more positive social problem-solving skills, and had higher levels of self-esteem
- 50% of the districts have adopted a 24/7 Tobacco Free policy for all school property and events, with additional districts currently considering this policy

Lessons Learned

- When quality programs that increase child assets and character traits are provided to children, parents will recognize the value of these program and advocate to keep programs running.
- Students who participate in before and after school programs receive better grades and are less likely to miss school.

St. Cloud, Minnesota

(2002 Grantee)

St. Cloud is located sixty miles northwest of the metropolitan area of Minneapolis/St. Paul. Home to approximately 250,000 residents, the St. Cloud tri-county area is the commercial and educational hub for North Central Minnesota. St. Cloud Area School District 742 is the tenth largest district in the state of Minnesota, serving nearly 11,000 students from nine area communities in a 250 square mile attendance area. There are eleven elementary buildings, two junior high buildings, two high schools, one early childhood center, and three alternative school settings. District demographics vary widely from urban neighborhood schools with free- and reduced-price lunch rates of 66%, to rural communities with free- and reduced-price lunch rates of 38%, to affluent suburban communities with free- and reduced-price lunch rates as low as 16%. The population of students for whom English is a second language more than doubled from 1998 to 2002. There was a 78% increase in reported assaults in St. Cloud schools over the 2000-2001 to 2001-2002 school year. The 2001 survey of over 1,700 St. Cloud area students indicated that compared to grade level peers across the state, St. Cloud students report feeling less safe at school, along with a higher incidence of illegal gang activity and a higher incidence of illegal drugs on school property. St. Cloud students also reported higher rates of combined drug and alcohol use, higher levels of alcohol consumption and marijuana use, and higher levels of substance use before, during and right after school. Other major areas of concern for local students include excessive absenteeism and meaningful and relevant alternatives to traditional classroom education.

Project Title

Coordinated Grants to local educational agencies for safe and drug-free learning environments in conjunction with Department of Justice and Health and Human Services

Project Director

Elisabeth Lodge Rogers, Ph.D.

Primary Partners

Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Minnesota
CentraCare Health System
St. Cloud Area School District 742
St. Cloud Police Department
Stearns County Human Services

Program Focus

- Decrease in number of truant students receiving a letter from the County Attorney for mediation or court action related to truancy
- Reduce drug and alcohol use in schools
- Increase in school and community mental health preventive and treatment intervention services
- Reduction in the number of student suspensions for violent behaviors
- Improvement of social skills for Healthy Start Preschool children

Examples of Program Outcomes

- 25% decline in truancy petitions (most severe intervention); 9% decline in truancy mediation referrals over the grant period; 41% of students had fewer discipline incidents for attendance after meeting with the truancy liaisons compared to before
- 16% decrease in discipline referrals for incidents of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs over the grant period
- 83% decline in emergency room visits due to mental health reasons; three-year average wait time for mental health visits was 26 days over the grant period, down from the reported 56 to 70 day wait prior to the grant
- 15% reduction in suspensions for violent, threatening, or harassing behaviors in students over the four-year grant period
- 88% of students who participated in the Home Visiting Project showed improvement in all five areas of assessment (speech development, listening skills, tantrums, ability to communicate needs, and eating habits)

Lessons Learned

- The success of this project was largely because of the excellence of the staff—their background and experience meant programs were able to get up to speed sooner and with increased effectiveness.
- One of the biggest challenges is getting schools to use systems thinking when planning interventions. One way to enhance this is to be sure your evaluation is looking for unintended consequences and not just measuring pre-determined outcomes.

Poplar Bluff, Missouri

(2002 Grantee)

Poplar Bluff is a city located in rural Butler County in the southeast corner of Missouri. As the county seat and only large town in the county, the schools in Poplar Bluff are city schools in a rural environment. Poplar Bluff has one public high school and one junior high, a 5th and 6th grade center, a kindergarten center, and four elementary schools. The rural poor flock to Poplar Bluff to receive social services as the farming industry in the surrounding area is stagnating, often clustering in high density, high crime areas in the older areas of town. Four elementary schools serve high crime neighborhoods where staff and students endure frequent thefts and vandalism. There have been three murders and several drive-by shootings in close proximity to these schools. Fifty-one percent of the school's 5,000 students receive free or reduced-price school lunch. Poplar Bluff Schools serve 73% of Butler County's children. At the time of grant application, 22% of children lived in a single parent home in Butler County, 56% of the county's adults had a high school diploma, 40% of children lived in poverty, and the unemployment rate was 4%.

Project Title

Poplar Bluff Safe Schools/Healthy Students

Project Director

Brenda Allen

Primary Partners

Poplar Bluff R-I School District
Poplar Bluff Police Department
Department of Mental Health Division of
Comprehensive Psychiatric Service

Program Focus

- Number of retentions in third and eighth grade will decrease
- Number of students who score at or above grade level in grades 3 and 7 will increase
- Decrease in drug and alcohol use by all students
- Out of school suspension rate for grades 7–12 will decrease
- Percent of students at-risk will decrease
- Drop in referrals to the juvenile office for violence and drug crimes
- Increase parent participation in school-sponsored events
- Students in intervention services will show an improved attitude toward school

Examples of Program Outcomes

- 55% decrease in the number of retentions in third and eighth grade
- Increase by 28% in grade 3 and by 43% in grade 7 of number of students scoring at or above grade level

- 19% decrease in drug use; 24% decrease in alcohol use by students over grant period
- 45% decrease in out of school suspension rate for grades 7–12 over grant period
- 49% decrease in percent of students deemed highly at-risk
- 30% drop in violent offences; 33% drop in drug charges
- 14% increase in parent participation in school-sponsored events
- 48% improvement in student attitude toward school for students in intervention services

Lessons Learned

- Before Safe Schools/Healthy Students funding there was no infrastructure in the school district for accessing community resources. There were many agencies whose missions were similar or complementary to each other, but there was no individual responsible to make those connections. These relationships have become so important to the school district and its students that the district maintains a half-time administrative position to ensure that they continue.
- Intervention programs must be designed to target developmentally related at-risk behavior. It's quite likely students identified at seventh grade need different interventions than those students identified in the elementary schools.

Beatrice, Nebraska

(2002 Grantee)

Gage County has a population of 22,993 in southeastern Nebraska. Beatrice, the centrally located county seat, is the largest community in the county with a population of 12,496. At the time of the grant application, the enrollment in Beatrice Public Schools along with three countywide consolidated elementary and high school districts, was 3,631 students. Twenty-nine percent of Beatrice Public School youth are in the special education program. With the decline of the family farm, the economy has diversified in this rural region, resulting in a concentration of low-paying, blue collar manufacturing jobs. Even with a high incidence of both parents being employed outside the home, census data reports that 12% of the children in Gage County live in households with incomes below 100% of the federally defined poverty level. The rates of free or reduced-price lunch range from 13% to 43%. Another contributing factor to youth living in poverty is that one in every nine first births in Gage County is delivered to mothers under the age of 20 who possess less than a high school diploma. In addition, 26% of residents 25 or older have less than a high school diploma. Alcohol and drug abuse is rampant throughout all age ranges in the community. Many of the county youth are participating in drug and alcohol use, violence, and other destructive behaviors. The number of Gage County youth becoming involved in the justice system has escalated substantially, 53% in just the last three years. The county also has high rates of domestic violence and suicide.

Project Title

Gage County Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative Project

Project Director

Doug Swanson

Partners

Beatrice Public Schools
Diller/Odell Public Schools
Freeman Public Schools
Tri-County Public Schools
Southern Public Schools
Blue Valley Mental Health
Regional 5 Behavioral Healthcare
Beatrice Community Hospital
Family Resource Center
District Probation
AIM Institute
Beatrice Police Department

Program Focus

- Decrease the suicide rate for Gage County youth
- Decrease the frequency of violent and disruptive behavior resulting in school suspensions
- Decrease the number of Gage County students reading below the national average as measured by standardized reading tests
- Provide mental health prevention and treatment intervention opportunities for all students

Examples of Program Outcomes

- 57% decrease in suicide rate over the grant period
- 48% decrease in the number of students suspended from Gage County over the grant period
- 16% decrease in percentage of students reading below the national average over the grant period
- For children who worked with 4 Kids Counselors, 72% reported improving their grades, 84% of parents of those children reported their child's attitude toward school is improved; 76% reported their child gets along better with family members

Lessons Learned

- The Gage County Safe Schools/Healthy Students advisory board worked in such a way that everyone was aware of the SS/HS initiative's elements. The prevention pieces and the mental health components worked hand in hand and almost all partners in the grant were involved in these two elements at some time, either in a supportive role or a lead role, which created opportunities for partnership and integration.
- The Safe Schools/Healthy Students efforts brought focus to the meaning of and need for true collaboration. The community partners, new and old, embraced the concept and created a new coalition by merging the existing ones and recruiting new sectors of the community. The community is now prepared to identify needs and challenges, prioritize goals, seek funding, and impact the community through strong coalition.

Millville, New Jersey

(2002 Grantee)

Millville Public Schools is a receiving district to four elementary school districts. The five districts together service over 8,000 pre-K through grade 12 students in sixteen schools, representing five separate political jurisdictions that comprise the regional collaborative. The 16 schools in the collaborative represent a complex mix of urban and rural populations with equally diverse demographic characteristics. Cumberland County is an isolated rural county located in southern New Jersey. Once a prosperous farming, fishing, and manufacturing county, Cumberland has seen a drastic drop in its standard of living over the past twenty years. It has the lowest per capita income and educational achievement and the highest rates of unemployment, teen pregnancy, teen suicide, and youth mental health hospital admissions. Roughly 30% of the population lacks a high school diploma and only 12% hold a Bachelor or higher degree. Unemployment in Millville is currently reported at 9.3%, while the statewide unemployment rate is 5.8%. Currently 22% of the Millville population under the age of 17 years lives below the poverty level, compared to 11% statewide. 52% of Millville students are eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch as compared to a state rate of 26%, while across the state 26% of students are eligible. In addition, the city is plagued by relatively high crime levels reflected in the violent crime rate of 8.7% per 1000 residents compared to the statewide rate of 3.6%. The combined effects of these conditions create a culture of despair and hopelessness, contributing to continuing patterns of excessive school absenteeism and lowered academic achievement.

Project Title

Safe and Drug-Free Learning Environments

Project Director

Nancy Laurelli

Partners

Millville Police Department
Cumberland County Guidance Center
Communities In Schools
Millville, Commercial, Lawrence, Maurice River
and Woodbine Schools Districts

Program Focus

- Community juvenile crime rates will be reduced
- Incidence of violence and vandalism will be reduced
- Incidence of school alcohol and drug violations will be reduced
- Adopt policy that sets clear standards of student behavior, a discipline code, and penalties to reduce absenteeism
- Increase parent involvement

Examples of Program Outcomes

- 72% decrease in juvenile arrest rate in Port Norris State Police Barracks and 52% decrease in Woodbine State Police Barracks, two communities within the regional collaborative

- 46% decrease in violence and vandalism incidents over four-year grant period
- 50% decrease in substance abuse violations over the grant period
- 12% reduction in absenteeism in district high school over the grant period
- 92% increase in parents attending parent programs over the grant period
- 24% increase in Language Arts proficiency in grade 4; 59% increase in mathematics proficiency in grade 9 over the grant period

Lessons Learned

- Integrating outside agencies into existing organizational culture can be difficult and requires clarity of purpose and specificity of role definition at the outset. This clarity of role and purpose is essential if the integration and cooperation is to be successful.
- Providing services directly in the schools minimizes the impact of transportation needs, eliminates the delays in availability of services, and consolidates a variety of student services into a single location making for efficiency and coordination of student and family services.
- As the regional collaborative responds to issues within the schools that limit student academic and social success, serious discussions need to be conducted and new policies and procedures need to be recommended in order to stem the patterns of violence and vandalism moving forward.

Bronx, New York

(2002 Grantee)

Community School District 9 instituted Project CASE school and community-based organization services to provide comprehensive safe school programs and activities for 2,000 Grade K–5 and 1,400 Grade 6–8 students targeted as at-risk based on negative behaviors or poor academic performance at seven participant schools (Community Elementary Schools 22, 55, 126, and 132, and, Community Intermediate Schools 145, 219, and 232). The rate of free or reduced-price school lunch for District 9 is 92% for elementary schools and 87% for middle schools, which is generally higher than schools citywide. For the period of July 2001–April 2002, a total of 601 incident reports were filed for the seven Project CASE schools.

Project Title

Project CASE

Project Director

Stan Mims

Partners

Community School District 9
Woody Crest Center for Human Development
New York City Police Department

Program Focus

- Students will improve their English Language Arts and Mathematics scores
- Students will feel safer in their schools as a result of receiving Project CASE services
- Students will report less involvement in violent and undesirable behaviors

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Approximately 36% improvement in students meeting standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and 38% improvement in students meeting standards in Mathematics, with one school achieving a 70% improvement in students meeting standards in Mathematics; and a 63% improvement in students meeting standards in ELA over the four-year grant period
- 18% increase in students feeling safe in their schools as a result of receiving Project CASE services over the four-year grant period
- Decrease in negative behaviors, including a 50% decrease in gang fights, 38% decrease in acts of vandalism, 53% decrease in stealing things, 28% decrease in skipping classes; and 25% decrease in students fighting, hitting, or attacking someone

- Increase in positive classroom behaviors, including a 32% increase in students listening to their teachers and participating in classroom activities, 24% increase in students' respect for other students and the teacher; and 23% improvement in students sharing things and working cooperatively with other students
- 35% decrease in students being suspended over the grant period

Lessons Learned

- The most important lesson to be learned from Project CASE is the benefit and advantage of continuity. Providing the same services on a continuing basis over a period of four years has a greater impact on creating a positive, non-violent school environment than one-shot, short-term solutions. Even when the types of services were reduced, the continuity of the services that remained in place continued to have a positive impact on student behavior and achievement.
- The principal's buy-in and support for change is required to be able to adopt new approaches and methodologies for improving the school environment.
- Arts activities are an effective vehicle for motivating students to improve their behavior and academic performance. Exposure to different ways of learning and 'doing' increased students' self-esteem and confidence by providing awareness of skills and strengths they did not know they had.
- The essence of Project CASE, and primary source of the program's success over the four years of the grant, was the on-site staff—the Intervention Teacher and SAPIS counselor. When both of those positions were filled, the school environment was noticeably more positive and supportive, and there were fewer incidents of violence and disruption in the halls and classrooms, and more positive attitudes among students about academic achievement.

Blanding, Utah

(2002 Grantee)

The San Juan School District is located in Blanding, Utah and serves the entire San Juan County, which is located in the southeastern corner of the state with a population of only 13,500, or just 1.6 per square mile. The southern half of the county, which was the focus of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, serves mainly Native American youth and their families and has an even lower population density ratio. The district encompasses one of the poorest, most desolate regions of the United States, with pervasive poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, violent behavior, and depression characterizing the area. Of particular concern are the Navajo and Ute Native American students in the district, who comprise 60% of the district students and show the greatest substance abuse, violent behavior, and learning problems. Employment in the region consists primarily of sheep herding, small family-owned ranching operations, and tourist-related businesses. As a result, there is no local business or government infrastructure to support the level of services needed by families. Complicating the situation, is the fact that agencies of the county, state, Ute and Navajo tribes, and federal government all have some responsibility for providing services, yet their jurisdictions are unclear and often conflicting. The total district enrollment is 2,874 students, 55% of whom are American Indian/Native Alaskan, 41% are White, and 12% are Hispanic; and 72% qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch.

Project Title

The San Juan Safe Schools/Healthy Students Program

Project Director

Rob Jones

Partners

San Juan School District

The Navajo Nation

The School Resource Officer Program

Program Focus

- Reduce use of alcohol
- Reduce use of drugs
- Reduce the incidences of fighting and assaults
- Reduce hardcore gang activity
- Increase parent/community involvement

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Alcohol use among American Indian students declined from 25% to 0% and from 31% to .2% for the middle and high school population, respectively; for the entire San Juan County student population, alcohol use declined from 12% to 0% and from 44% to .1% for the middle and high school populations, respectively over the course of the grant
- Drug use among American Indian students declined from 42% to 0% at the middle school level and from 39% to .2% at the high school level
- For the American Indian student population, fighting and assaults declined from 52% to 0% at

the middle school level and from 38% to .2% at the high school level; for San Juan County, fighting and assaults have declined from 12% to 0% at the middle school level and from 19% to .2% at the high school level over the course of the grant

- 53% reduction in hard core gang membership over the baseline year
- For the American Indian student population, decrease in carrying a weapon from 28.5% to 0% at the middle school level and 21% to .1% at the high school level
- 168% increase in average number of parents attending Parent Teacher Association meetings
- 48% increase in grade 6 and 57% increase in grade 8 for students meeting state standards in Language Arts; 74% increase in grade 6 and 120% increase in grade 8 in meeting state standards in mathematics

Lessons Learned

- The Safe Schools/Healthy Students program works because each school has a counselor and/or Student Resource Officer (SRO) doing intervention on site. The counselors, SROs, and program personnel in the schools are accepted by the community and parents consider it user-friendly to have access to these professionals at school.
- Counseling services provided at schools allow parents to sidestep the financial bureaucracy of Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program, which has a limited yearly registration period. Children are treated and intervention is possible in a short period of time.

Pasco, Washington

(2002 Grantee)

Benton and Franklin counties, located in southeast Washington, are two of the most diverse counties in the state, encompassing distinct inner city, suburban, and rural communities. Over the past 50 years, the region has seen both extreme economic growth and widespread unemployment due to changes in the agricultural industry and in federal support of Hanford Nuclear Reservation. During this time the Tri-Cities of Kennewick, Richland, and Pasco, and the nearby rural communities have struggled to provide the infrastructure for an influx of highly educated, affluent Hanford families, while at the same time, addressing the needs of thousands of limited English speaking migrant families with limited education and minimal resources. These conflicting interests have produced a region coping with the risk factors of ongoing change, including family conflict, drug/alcohol usage, and juvenile crime. The 2001–2002 district enrollment was over 36,000 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The district operates 29 elementary, 14 middle, and 16 high schools. Free or reduced-price school lunch rates range from 20% to 60% within the school district. The bi-county area is highly diverse due to an influx of immigrants and refugees from Mexico, Central and South America, Asia, and Eastern Europe. Franklin County schools are 60% Hispanic with bilingual programs enrolling roughly one in three students who speak eleven different languages.

Project Title

Benton Franklin Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

Project Director

Diane Shepherd

Partners

Southeastern Washington Educational Service District 123
Kennewick, Pasco, and Richland Police Departments
Benton and Franklin County Sheriff Departments
Benton Franklin Counties Department of Human Services
Public Mental Health Authority

Program Focus

- Reduce the rate of school crime
- Reduce student usage of drugs and alcohol
- To create an environment of zero tolerance for youth involved in problem behaviors
- To improve student readiness to learn and commitment to school

Example of Program Outcomes

- 27% decrease in crime incidents in 2 out of 6 districts who reported data over grant period
- 42% decrease in the number of youth diagnosed with some type of substance dependence disorder (from 12 at intake to 7 at discharge)

- Percentage of youth reporting no alcohol use in the past 30 days increased from 78% in 2002 to 83% in 2004, which is significantly higher than the state average of 77%
- 17% increase in number of children who enter school ready to learn over the project period
- 66% increase in parents reporting family supportiveness, love, and care as “very strong”

Lessons Learned

- Mental health service agencies have developed strong relationships with school systems and now know how to navigate the school system. Schools are receptive to the services and have learned that the services provided throughout the grant period are services they cannot do without. Those partnerships are strong and working towards increasing mental health funds.
- The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative provided the Benton and Franklin communities an opportunity to create systems of care and increase skill and knowledge to better serve children and their families. There is now a mental health system that is working within Benton Franklin Juvenile Justice Center that immediately links those in need, either coming in or leaving the system, to help. The mental health counselor at the center collaborates with many agencies to help families deal with the complexities of navigating service systems.

Jonesboro, Arkansas

(1999 Grantee)

Located in the heartland of the United States, Jonesboro, Arkansas, is an example of an “all-American” community facing escalating social risk factors. In March 1998, two middle school students shot numerous people, killing four students and a teacher. In addition, crime rates for juveniles (e.g., use of alcohol and other drugs, physical force, and weapons) have increased by 41% since 1990. At the beginning of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, the local education agency was serving 20,460 young people under the age of 18 in Craighead County, an area that includes four school districts: Jonesboro, Westside, Nettleton, and Valley View. While the county historically has been primarily homogeneous, 21% of the young people in the Jonesboro School District were minority students (primarily African American) at the time of funding. Annually, approximately 5,500 families received food stamps and 1,750 received public assistance. Thirty-five percent of the children in Craighead County schools participated in the free or reduced-price lunch program, with several schools qualifying as many as 80% of their students.

Project Title

Jonesboro Safe Schools/Healthy Students Grant Initiative

Project Director

Marilyn Copeland

Primary Partners

Jonesboro Public Schools LEA
Rivendell Behavioral Health Services
Jonesboro Police Department

Program Focus

- Decrease the risk and incidence of drug use and violence
- Improve the mental health of students through expansion of mental health services
- Create an alternative school for students needing behavioral management
- Improve the school climate

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Conducted more than 15,000 individual contacts by case managers to at-risk students and over 4,900 individual therapy sessions
- Established Rivendell Day School as an alternative school for students needing intensive, focused behavioral management
- Sustained Schools United in Craighead County Educating and Serving Students to continue the work of the Rivendell Day School
- Increased teachers’ positive perception of school climate over the grant period

Lessons Learned

- When attempting to change something about a school, one needs to recognize that a lot of variables affect what is being measured. For example, in Jonesboro, the high mobility rate among students may have played an unanticipated negative role in students’ assessment of school climate.
- Developing a link between the community and school was critical to sustaining the majority of Jonesboro’s programs. Partnerships provided students with enhanced opportunities to succeed, as well as the “developmental assets” needed to help them make the right decisions about drugs, alcohol, violence, and other crucial issues they face.

Brooklyn, New York

(2001 Grantee)

Community School District 18 is located in Brooklyn, the most populated of the five boroughs of New York City, with about 2.5 million people. Brooklyn is a collection of ethnic and multi-ethnic neighborhoods, with a continual influx of new immigrant groups that contribute to the vitality of Brooklyn neighborhoods. The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative in District 18 served about 18,000 urban students in 17 elementary and intermediate schools. The large majority (90%) of students in the district were Black, 6% were Hispanic, and about 2% each were White and Asian. Close to 80% of the district's students were eligible for free lunch and about 3% identified as English language learners. During the three years of the Initiative, Community School District 18 faced many challenges as the New York City schools underwent a major reorganization and significant leadership changes.

Project Title

Safe Schools/Healthy Students: The Century Project

Project Director

Barbara Berg

Primary Partners

Kings County Hospital Center Behavioral Health
Child Psychiatry Services
Brooklyn Center for Psychotherapy
Caribbean Community Mental Health Program
of Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center
Infant and Child Learning Center
of SUNY/Downstate Medical Center
Kings County District Attorney's Office
New York City Police Department

Program Focus

- Ensure the physical safety of children and staff
- Reduce risk factors that impede students from fulfilling their personal and academic potential
- Promote resiliency of students to resist negative peer and societal pressure; create positive role models in schools and community
- Forge a community-wide effort to maximize the impact of educational, social, and mental health services available to children and families

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Parents and teachers reported that students' feelings of safety increased by as much as 29%
- 31% decrease in the number of truant students processed by the Truancy Reduction Alliance to Contact Kids Center
- 42% decrease in student suspensions
- Thirty-day use of marijuana declined by 8% among 8th grade boys and girls, and 30-day use of alcohol decreased by 8% for 8th grade girls
- 14% decrease in lifetime marijuana use for 8th grade girls
- More than 50% of teachers reported that students serving as peer leaders demonstrated improved academic performance and behavior in school
- 70% of principals reported improved relationships with service providers and an intent to continue working with these providers after the grant ended

Lessons Learned

- Changes in school leadership and organization create major challenges to an initiative's ability to get started and to implement programs and services. During the grant, New York City's community school districts were reorganized, and a new district superintendent was hired. Four schools appointed new principals, and the intermediate schools were restructured. However, the team kept its "eyes on the prize" and persevered to generate positive outcomes for students and the school community.

Tyrone, Pennsylvania

(2000 Grantee)

The Tyrone Area School District is located in rural Blair County in southwestern Pennsylvania. According to the 2000 census, the majority (99%) of Tyrone's 6,500 residents are Caucasian, low-income to working class individuals. Residents experience isolation due to low income, lack of public transportation, and lack of social services. No after-school programs exist in the Tyrone area, and recreational opportunities are limited. In 1996–97, 68% of elementary school students in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. By the time they enter high school, two-thirds of students report initiating alcohol use, and one-third report regular alcohol use by age 15; a large proportion also report inhalant abuse. About 70% of students were involved in disciplinary actions in 1996–97. Economic disparity has fostered a high degree of social tension in the schools; almost 30% of high school students reported being in trouble with police. Early childhood resources are scarce; the closest community mental health services are located 20 miles from Tyrone.

Project Title

Tyrone Area School District Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

Project Director

Joann Lang

Primary Partners

Tyrone Community Family Center
Head Start
County of Blair Juvenile Probation Office
Pennsylvania State University

Program Focus

- Reduce violence and problem behavior
- Promote positive family-school partnerships
- Improve school safety and prevent delinquency
- Increase school-community collaboration to serve at-risk students

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Substantial decline in rates of violent, aggressive, and problematic behavior
- “Write ups” for behavioral infractions on the playground dropped from an average of two to three per day to virtually zero after implementation of the Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers playground program
- 61% reduction in out-of-school suspensions for middle and high school students in the six months following the implementation of the Motivational Resource Room (MRR); and, since the MRR had

an academic component, participating youth were able to keep up with their academic work instead of falling further behind

- The early childhood outreach program for infants and toddlers ages 0–3 was successful at identifying children at risk and making their parents aware of available services
- School Resource Officers (SROs) were consistently regarded as supportive figures by students, and, many, particularly high-risk students, felt more connected to the SROs than to other staff

Lessons Learned

- One of the great challenges to schools of working with high-risk children is the complexity of their needs. Children and youth with chronic behavioral problems are also likely to have academic and emotional difficulties. Therefore, programs selected for Tyrone's Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative were designed to address the complex needs of at-risk students along the prevention-to-treatment continuum.
- Challenges to collaboration between school, law enforcement, and mental health staff can arise due to cultural differences in perspectives and priorities.

Spokane, Washington

(2000 Grantee)

Pend Oreille County is a rural, almost frontier area located in the extreme northeast section of the state of Washington. The Safe Schools/Healthy Students program includes three school districts—Newport, Selkirk, and Cusick—and the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, serving 1,880 students (K–12), 830 preschool youngsters (ages 0–4), and approximately 300 out-of-school and home-schooled youth. Approximately 60% of students qualify for subsidized lunches. In this remote corner of the state, isolation, unemployment, poverty, low academic achievement, and exposure to drug use and violence pose serious threats to youth safety. The area also experiences high rates of child abuse, school drop-out, juvenile crime, violence, and victimization, and low rates of academic achievement. In 1997, the Pend Oreille area exceeded regional and national rates for stimulant, alcohol, and marijuana use.

Project Title

Educational Service District 101 Safe Schools/
Healthy Students Program

Project Director

Fabian Napolsky

Primary Partners

Pend Oreille County Counseling Services
Pend Oreille County Sheriff's Department
Newport Police Department
Cusick Police Department
CREATE (an alternative education program)

Program Focus

- Ensure a safe school environment
- Create a school environment of zero tolerance for substance abuse and violence
- Increase collaboration between countywide service providers
- Help prepare young children for success in school

Examples of Program Outcomes

- 27% decrease in countywide suspensions for weapons violations
- 71% decrease in teacher reports of being verbally abused by a student 5 or more times, and a 16% reduction in classroom fighting
- Increased from 71% to 91% the number of teachers reporting that mental health services
- 25% increase in teacher reports of timely services being made available for student referrals for “threats to harm self”

- 58% increase in countywide mental health referrals
- 302 students, who in the past would not have received services at all, referred to Prevention/Intervention Specialists
- 266 preschoolers and 245 parents served in the Sequenced Transition in Education in Public Schools program, and almost 500 elementary and preschoolers provided with the Read Aloud at Home program, which helps prepare young children with the intellectual, emotional, and social readiness skills necessary for success in school

Lessons Learned

- Prior to the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, students were referred to outside agencies for mental health concerns, resulting in “no shows,” poor follow-through, and unsuccessful results. In sharp contrast, in-school counseling services yielded increased student acceptance and utilization of services that led to improved outcomes and perceptions of school safety.
- Safety surveys indicated that student and staff concerns moved from physical to emotional safety, and that these concerns were significantly reduced as system-wide changes took place.

Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida

(2000 Grantee)

Leon County is a small, highly populated metropolitan area in the center of Florida's more rural "Panhandle" region. The county has a high degree of racial heterogeneity; 74% of the population is White and 24% is Black. The area has seen a growth in socioeconomic disparity between the high- and low-income neighborhoods. In recent years, the county was rated as having the highest per capita crime rate in all of Florida's 67 counties. There is also a lack of a coordinated system for early identification and referral of young children with behavioral and mental health problems. The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative targeted students in five elementary schools, five middle schools, and two high schools.

Project Title

Safe Schools/Healthy Students Program

Project Directors

Beverly Owens
Forrest VanCamp

Primary Partners

Florida Department of Children and Families
Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health
Disc Village (Juvenile Assessment and
Receiving Center)
Leon County Court Administrator's Office
Leon County Youth Development Council
(was renamed from Juvenile Justice Council)
Tallahassee Police Department
Leon County Sheriff's Department
Tallahassee Parks and Recreation Department

Program Focus

- Emphasize and promote safe and drug-free environments
- Emphasize and promote building resiliency and prosocial skills
- Expand and coordinate services to increase community access to early intervention

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Decreased from 15.1% to 8.5% the number of students who reportedly attacked someone with the intent to harm
- An increase of up to 9% in middle school students who feel safer at school

- More than 75 high school students were served through the Sheriff's Office's "Youth Adventure Camps," which provided prosocial activities, including outdoor recreation, a ROPES course, and a SWAT demo, with prevention messages woven throughout the program
- The percentage of youth ages 10–17 referred for delinquent acts declined to only 5%, lower than the statewide rate
- 10% decline in the number of students who reported ever experimenting with alcohol or any illicit drug, while the state average dropped only 2%
- Reading and mathematics scores for Leon County increased to above the state average
- Created the Community Assessment and Intervention Center to provide a single point of entry into the service system for youth at risk of substance abuse, mental health, and behavioral problems

Lessons Learned

- The Leon County Juvenile Justice Council voted to change its name to the Leon County Youth Development Council. This change in name is significant, as it represents a shift to an increased focus on prevention and positive youth development. This more positive focus has encouraged local youth to become more actively involved in the Council. The Council has identified two major projects for action in the coming year: the creation of a local teen center and the publication of a local service/resource directory.

Dayton, Ohio

(2001 Grantee)

The 89th largest city in the United States, Dayton has the nation's 6th highest poverty rate among children. Dayton's violent crime rate is disproportionate to its size, and the city is affected by an escalation in drug related and violent offenses by young people. Dayton Public Schools serves a majority of inner-city minority students who come to the school system with multiple problems, including developmental delays, emotional problems, no preparation for learning, aggressive behavior, and physical handicaps. From 2001 to 2005, approximately 12,000 pre-K to grade 6 students received services through the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, Project Well-Being.

Project Title

Project Well-Being

Project Director

Margaret Sandberg

Primary Partners

Daybreak

Dayton Urban League

Montgomery County Sheriff's Office

Project Impact

Good Samaritan Behavioral Health Care

South Community Mental Health Center

Unified Health Solutions

Wesley Community Center

Wright State University

Program Focus

- Provide a safe and positive learning environment
- Intervene early in the treatment and prevention of at-risk behaviors
- Help high-risk students function effectively in the school setting

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Target schools had a significant increase in students' perceived sense of safety in the classroom, at lunch, and at recess (5-7%), while non-target schools had a significant decrease in students' perceived sense of safety (up to 6%)
- School Resource Officer presence had a positive impact on school climate and environment, particularly in the classroom and during recess and lunch
- Significantly increased reading and math standardized test scores at target schools

- Significant drop in teacher perceptions of the severity of physical attacks on teachers (16%), vandalism (13%), use and possession of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (16%), and possession of weapons (14%) after participation in Project Well-Being at target schools, as compared to non-target schools
- Alternative Learning Centers were shown to improve attendance; students who would otherwise be suspended or expelled remained in school while receiving intervention for their classroom self-control and behavior problems

Lessons Learned

- Developing partnerships between schools and agency service providers requires understanding the professional cultures of both groups, coordinating services at the school level with principal involvement, developing a common commitment to student well-being, and both expecting conflict and demonstrating a willingness to work through it.
- The most valued support services in the schools are the ones that serve immediate problems. Services (such as recreation, self-esteem-building, home visiting, homework help, and informal tutoring) that might make a long-term impact and have long-term positive outcomes (such as high school graduation, employment status, and family stability) are more difficult to track. Longitudinal evaluation is needed to measure the impact of these services over time.

Ohio

SAFE schools
HEALTHY students

Utica, New York

(2001 Grantee)

Utica is a small city in Oneida County, part of the Mohawk River Valley in Central New York. Utica has been severely burdened by long-term decay of its infrastructure, population decline, and loss of its major economic mainstays. The Utica City School District serves 289 pre-kindergarteners and 9,035 students enrolled in K–12, with 1 high school, 2 middle schools, and 9 elementary schools. The student population is 56% White and 44% minority, primarily Black, Asian, and Hispanic students. English-as-second-language students comprise 14% of the student population and 15% of the student population receive special education services. According to 2000 Census data, Utica is the second most impoverished city in New York State. The poverty rate is more than 87% in four of the nine elementary schools and more than 65% in the other five. Seventy-one percent of students in the district qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Utica students also face societal challenges and stresses related to diverse cultures living, learning, and working together, as Utica is the third largest refugee relocation center in the United States.

Project Title

Utica Safe Schools/Healthy Students Partnership

Project Director

Nancy Kelly
Anne Lansing

Primary Partners

Oneida County Mental Health, Social Services,
Health, and Probation Departments
Utica Police Department
Family Services of the Mohawk Valley
Thea Beauman Center
North Utica Senior Center
Utica College

Program Focus

- Create safe learning environments
- Improve social and behavioral skills
- Reduce behaviors that contribute to violence
- Improve academic achievement

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Incidents of bullying and fighting behavior declined significantly (with 24% fewer students reporting fighting behavior in 2005 than in 2003)
- Students in schools/classrooms with full-time School Resource Officers used drugs less frequently; reported less alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevalence at school; and reported higher peer disapproval of smoking, drinking, and marijuana use

- 17-18% increase in reading and math performance for students identified as struggling readers who participated in the summer Opportunities for Academic Success in School intervention program, as measured on a standardized achievement tool
- Math performance scores for all 4th and 8th grade students went up 13% and 19%, respectively
- 31 out of 32 programs implemented through SS/HS are still actively running in one or more schools

Lessons Learned

- Conducting and analyzing risk assessments of Utica students at key points during the implementation process provided an understanding of how students' risk behaviors changed over time and how the Initiative's programs and services contributed to these changes.
- As students get older, they tend to engage in riskier behaviors. Thus, it is important to compare the percentage increase in risk behaviors among the Initiative's youth with other New York State students at the same grade levels.

Seattle, Washington

(2001 Grantee)

Seattle, with a population of 563,374 in the city and almost 3.8 million in the Greater Puget Sound metropolitan area, is the largest city in the Pacific Northwest. The Seattle School District, the largest school district in Washington State, has a diverse student population from multiple social, economic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. The district serves approximately 47,000 students and is predominantly minority in racial/ethnic make-up. Bilingual students compose 20.8% of the total student population and speak 47 different languages. Approximately 40% of the students receive free or reduced-price lunch. It is estimated that up to 14% of Seattle's homeless are children and young adults. The latest standardized tests indicate that less than 50% of students meet academic standards.

Project Title

Safe Schools/Healthy Students Communities that Care Project

Project Director

Margaret Kihara

Primary Partners

Seattle Police Department
Seattle-King County Department of Public Health
Seattle-King County Mental Health Agency
King County Prosecutor's Office

Program Focus

- Enhance school security
- Provide prevention and early intervention for aggression and drug and alcohol use
- Enhance school and community mental health services
- Provide early childhood psychosocial and emotional development services
- Strengthen site-based educational reform through systematic analysis of school and community risk and protective factors and implementation of research-based effective programs
- Establish clear and consistent school and community policies, procedures, and protocols that enhance student achievement and safety

Examples of Program Outcomes

- A multi-disciplinary School Threat Assessment Team (STAT) assisted schools with students making lethal threats or exhibiting seriously threatening behavior—more than 300 students were referred; 140 were found to be credible threats and were provided with case

management services; none of the students referred to the STAT program made any further threats of violence or followed through on their initial threats

- 12% decrease in problem behaviors, 10% increase in social skills, and 7% increase in academic competence for participants who completed the STAT program
- Schools with anti-aggression training showed greater decreases in bullying behavior (3.5%) than schools without anti-aggression training (1.1%); these schools also showed positive changes in school safety and school attachment, while schools without anti-aggression training showed negative changes
- 140 first-time teen mothers were enrolled in the Best Beginnings program designed to increase the health and well-being of mothers and children, well exceeding the initial program goal of 25
- Nearly 30% decline in overall truancy

Lessons Learned

- The Safety and Security Department became the central coordination point for disseminating information to the officers. This increased the information flow, reduced the time officers spent trying to locate individual students, provided access to the students' schedules to allow a minimum loss of class time, and increased the positive interaction between the probation and parole officers and the Seattle Public Schools.

Flandreau, South Dakota

(2001 Grantee)

Flandreau Indian School, located in Flandreau, South Dakota, has a rich history of educating Native American students from its inception in 1871 as a mission church. In 1883, the United States government began providing support for the school. In 1892, the school transitioned to a boarding school. Today, the Flandreau Indian School remains as the oldest continuously operating Federal Indian boarding school maintained by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, serving 52 U.S. Federally Recognized Tribes. In 2001, the Flandreau Indian School had an enrollment of 375 grade 9–12 students, 78 of whom were special education students and 76% of whom received free or reduced-price lunch. Flandreau students have multiple environmental and biological health risk factors, including youth violence and substance abuse.

Project Title

Flandreau Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

Project Director

Nicole Lounsbery

Primary Partners

Indian Health Services
South Dakota State University

Program Focus

- Implement a therapeutic model residential alternative high school (a Transition Dormitory, or T-Dorm)
- Create a comprehensive substance-free environment
- Create student-centered coping and behavior interventions
- Implement a comprehensive after-hours program to build resilience

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Over the three years of the grant, the T-Dorm housed 623 students who would otherwise have been suspended or expelled; these students were able to continue at Flandreau Indian School and received supervision and help in the form of counseling, tutoring, wellness, aftercare, and referral services
- 68% decrease in the number of students who required a second T-Dorm stay; 72% of second-stay T-Dorm students remained in school

- 75% decrease in alcohol use due to implementation of Aggression Replacement Training
- 41% decrease in drug violations and 75% reduction in alcohol violations
- Service-learning activities gave students opportunities to engage in positive activities and relationships with Native American elders, as well as community members from various cultures

Lessons Learned

- At-risk students can be helped to be safe, drug-free, and healthier physically and mentally when they are given a second chance and the opportunity to have close supervision and the services and support they need to succeed.

Covington, Kentucky

(2001 Grantee)

Covington, Kentucky, is a small city located directly across the Ohio River from Cincinnati, Ohio. Covington is an older urban area with many of the problems facing an inner city. Covington Independent Public Schools is the largest independent school district in Kentucky, serving 4,500 students. Covington has six elementary schools, a junior high school, a senior high school, an early childhood education center, and an alternative school. The student population is 75% White and 23% African American, with the remaining students distributed among other ethnicities. Slightly more than 31% of Covington school children live below the poverty level, but 75% of Covington Independent Public School students are eligible for free lunch, and about 10% are homeless.

Project Title

Ready to Learn

Project Director

Janice M. Wilkerson

Primary Partners

Catholic Social Services
Covington Community Center
Covington Police Department
Northkey Community Care

Program Focus

- Enforce school behavior, substance abuse, violence, and weapons policies
- Increase academic skills, decrease absenteeism, and improve school behavior
- Increase social competence among adolescents
- Improve family functioning, cohesion, and communication
- Create an environment conducive to learning
- Ensure sustainability of Ready to Learn programs

Examples of Program Outcomes

- 40% decline in alcohol use and 21% decrease in marijuana use among eighth graders
- 10-point improvement in academic achievement averages for at-risk youth who participated in a program with adult mentors; this progress was sustained in the following school year
- 60% reduction in office referrals over a two-year period

- Test scores improved in every subject (reading, math, science, social studies, arts/humanities, practical living, and writing)
- Reversal and significant decrease in escalating trends for negative school behaviors, including skipping class (23%), tardiness (51%), and inciting disorder (17%)
- 11 out of 16 of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Ready To Learn programs were sustained

Lessons Learned

- Adding a Resource Development Coordinator to program staff greatly enhanced the communication efforts within the school district, city, and region. Key to program sustainability is the community's understanding of both the services provided and the impact of these services. The Coordinator developed print materials and obtained media coverage of programs and events, which greatly increased community support.
- Community service activities provided students with an opportunity to "give back." The activities established and strengthened partnerships between the school district and community agencies, and provided an added bonus of media coverage, resulting in a number of articles in both local and regional newspapers.

Toledo, Ohio

(2001 Grantee)

Toledo, Ohio, is an urban center in a 10-county region with a population of approximately 340,000. The Toledo Public Schools serve 38,000 ethnically diverse students in 44 elementary schools, 8 junior high schools, 7 senior high schools, 1 alternative school, and 13 special learning centers. Seventy-two percent of students receive free or reduced-price lunch. Prior to the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, the school system recorded almost 13,000 suspensions for behavioral problems, 1,086 fight/assaults, and 91 weapons violations. A total of 81% of fourth grade students and 69% of ninth grade students failed to pass all state academic proficiency tests.

Project Title

Toledo Public Schools Safe Schools/Healthy Students Program

Project Director

Al Stephens

Primary Partners

Harbor Behavioral Health Care
Big Brothers/Big Sisters
University of Toledo
New Connecting Point
Lucas County Department of Human Services
Toledo Police Department
Juvenile Justice System

Program Focus

- Establish an integrated community-wide system of care to meet the challenges of developing safe, drug-free, and emotionally and physically healthy students, families, and learning environments
- Boost skills to prevent substance abuse and violence
- Connect and integrate health and mental health services for students identified through screening and referral sources
- Increase the capacity of teachers, parents, and other providers to identify and prevent problem behaviors

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Fifth and sixth graders participating in the Family and Schools Together (FAST) program showed a decrease in past-30-day alcohol use by 39%, past-year alcohol use by 33%, past-year inhalant use by 38%, and past-year marijuana use by 85%; they also showed a 33.7% increase in never using alcohol and a 10.4% increase in never using marijuana

- Elementary school nurses referred 1,672 students with behavior and mental health needs to community agencies during the 2001–2002 school year
- 60% decrease in expulsion rate for schools with mental health professionals
- 73% increase in the number of students passing all fourth grade proficiency tests; 51.5% increase for sixth grade proficiency tests in schools receiving all interventions
- 69.9% decrease in safety-related concerns for intervention schools with on-site mental health professionals, and 75.6% decrease in safety-related concerns for schools implementing FAST

Lessons Learned

- Evaluators noted that elementary schools with full-time nurses were beginning to show a statistically significant positive impact on student attendance, reduced suspensions and expulsions, and increases in test scores. Because of this, district officials agreed to pick up the cost for all 14 nurses through the general fund, even in the face of layoffs in other areas.

Ohio

SAFE schools
HEALTHY students

Poway, California

(2001 Grantee)

Poway Unified School District (PUSD) is located in northern San Diego County, California. Encompassing an area of 99.1 square miles, district schools are situated in suburban San Diego City and throughout the city of Poway. PUSD operates 22 elementary schools (grades K–5), 6 middle schools (grades 6–8), 4 comprehensive high schools (grades 9–12), and 1 alternative continuation high school. The district serves 32,797 students and is the third largest school district in the county. PUSD has experienced tremendous growth and has been designated one of the fastest growing districts in California. An additional 8,000 students are expected by 2010. The ethnic distribution of PUSD is 86% White, 6% Hispanic, 1% Black, 6% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% other.

Project Title

Safe Schools/Healthy Students: Safe and Caring Connections Project

Project Director

Elaine Cofrancesco
Sharon Jahn

Primary Partners

The Clean Foundation
Safety Wellness Advocacy Coalition
Palomar Family Counseling
Palomar/Pomerado Health Systems
San Diego County Sheriff's Department
San Diego County Police Force

Program Focus

- Improve school safety by increasing effectiveness of PUSD Crisis Management
- Improve overall alcohol and other drug and violence prevention and intervention programs, including creating more community linkages and ownership to enhance safety and well-being
- Support improved mental illness prevention and treatment intervention services for students who are at risk due to violence and negative health outcomes
- Expand current educational reform efforts

Examples of Program Outcomes

- 70% decrease in the percentage of middle school students reporting that they feel “unsafe” or “very unsafe” at school, with an 81% decrease for high school students

- Alcohol, tobacco, and other 30-day drug use decreased overall (by as much as 76% for inhalants) and on school property (by as much as 71% for marijuana)
- 11% decrease in suspensions overall, with 27.1% decrease in suspensions for alcohol and other drugs, violence, and vandalism
- Students at the alternative continuation school showed a 76% decrease in disciplinary referrals, a 27% reduction in alcohol use, and a 22% decrease in being bullied at school
- 540 families participated in short-term counseling, well surpassing the initial program goal of 100 families

Lessons Learned

- District staff responsible for student data (e.g., archival achievement, attendance, disciplinary data) should be included in discussions about grant requirements from the very beginning. Failure to do so can result in delays and challenges, especially around collecting appropriate baseline data.

Washington, D.C.

D.C. Public Schools (2001 Grantee)

The District of Columbia Public Schools serve a racially and linguistically diverse population of nearly 71,000 students. The district has 104 elementary schools, 21 middle/junior high schools, 15 high schools, and 3 educational centers serving children and adults, with 2,725 students served through alternative programs and tuition grants. Additionally, more than 11,000 students have diagnosed disabilities, and more than 8,000 students are English language learners. In addition to its ethnic and cultural diversity, Washington, D.C., is unique in its economic diversity. Differences in the incomes of D.C.'s wealthy and poor residents are greater than in any other city in the nation. Almost three-fourths of the children in the D.C. schools are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Many reside in neighborhoods with high unemployment and easily available weapons and drugs.

Project Title

Safe Schools/Healthy Students

Project Director

Anne Gay
Rosemary O'Rourke

Primary Partners

D.C. Department of Mental Health
Juvenile Justice System Family Court
Child and Family Services of D.C.
Latin American Youth Center
D.C. Metropolitan Police Department

Program Focus

- Expand current safety and education reform initiatives to facilitate integration of principles throughout the D.C. Public School system and the D.C. community
- Improve access by students and families to age-appropriate, culturally competent services to reduce risk behaviors and increase youth and family resiliency
- Improve school climate by addressing critical student behavior patterns, including truancy, attrition, disciplinary infractions, academic performance, and completion rates

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Most parents who participated in parent training classes indicated they learned key skills and techniques (behavior management, alternatives to aggression, conflict resolution) that would help them improve interactions with their children

- Students who participated fully in the Aggression Replacement Training Program showed a significant reduction in negative behaviors, for example, a decrease of 31% in fighting, 19% in bullying others, 28% in getting angry easily, 34% in acting impulsively, 29% in being aggressive, and 36% in disobeying rules or requests
- Children who participated in the Early Childhood Program showed more positive behaviors (such as independent thought, self-control, cooperation, and positive relationship building) and fewer negative behaviors (such as hostility and aggression) that are likely to lead to rejection and negative social consequences
- One D.C. elementary school set a new record: 88% of all classrooms achieved at least a 90% attendance record; this school had one of the highest percentages of truancy, with approximately 20% of all children experiencing 15+ days of absenteeism in the school year
- 2,478 youth participated in culturally competent behavioral health, aggression replacement, and life skills training programs in which services were easily accessible (e.g., at school sites, summer day camps, or family homes)

Lessons Learned

- Interventions such as the Aggression Replacement Training Program need further study to determine the “dosage” levels of services required to sustain positive behaviors.
- Principals believed that the Initiative was very responsive and that management was sensitive to the unique needs of the community, particularly because the Initiative provided bilingual personnel, which was seen as very important.

Houston, Texas

(1999 Grantee)

Houston Independent School District is the largest school district in Texas, made up of two school feeder patterns. Prior to Safe Schools/Healthy Students funding, the district was serving 212,000 students from 90 countries, of whom 53% were Hispanic, 34% were African American, 11% were Caucasian, and 2% were Asian American. There were 59,000 limited-English-proficient students. The grant was carried out in 24 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, and 3 high schools in the Austin and Yates feeder patterns. Approximately 14,000 students attended school in the Austin area, where 90% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. In the Yates area, 80% of students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The district was burdened by poverty, juvenile crime, violent behavior, delinquency, truancy, alcohol and drug use, and other adverse social conditions. Student involvement with alcohol and drugs was over-represented at every grade level. Even at the elementary school, rates of marijuana use doubled from 2% in 1996 to 4% in 1998. The school district had high rates of violence suspensions, dropout, truancy, and expulsions.

Project Title

Houston Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

Project Director

Harriet Arvey
Debora Walker

Primary Partners

Houston Independent School District
Communities in Schools, Houston
Families Services of Greater Houston
Harris County Juvenile Probation Department

Program Focus

- Reduce violence and other delinquent behaviors
- Improve positive mental health and pro-social behaviors
- Improve perceptions of school safety among students and school staff
- Reduce substance use

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Decreased negative behaviors by middle school students, including hitting a teacher/parent (7% decrease), stealing (4% decrease), damaging school property (9% decrease), gang fights (4% decrease), trespassing (6% decrease), arson (7% decrease), and trouble with police (4% decrease), between baseline evaluation and third-year follow-up

- Decreased proportion of high school students reporting participation in stealing (8% decrease), arguing with parents (9% decrease, Austin only), gang fighting (5% decrease), and lying (13% decrease) from baseline to third-year follow-up
- Decreased by 11% elementary school students who reported missing school one or more days in the past month because of safety concerns, from baseline to all three follow-up years
- Decreased substance use by elementary school students, including cigarettes (4% decrease), alcohol (4% decrease), marijuana (2% decrease) from baseline to third-year follow-up

Lessons Learned

- Effectiveness of services and strategies is enhanced by participation in a comprehensive and coordinated plan of action where expectations and outcomes are clearly articulated.

Springfield, Oregon

(1999 Grantee)

Eugene-Springfield-Bethel is the urban core of Lane County, Oregon, an area roughly the size of Connecticut. Even though the metropolitan area is separated into three school districts and two municipalities, it is effectively one city. In the spring of 1998, Springfield was the site of a tragic event in which a student shot and killed fellow students and his parents. At the time of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, more than 14% of families with children under 18 were living below the poverty line. The percentages of students on free or reduced-price lunch were near 27% in Eugene, 36% in Bethel, and 33% in Springfield. Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use by youth was a persistent problem in Lane County, as was juvenile problem behavior. Risk factors for youth included child abuse and neglect, poor academic performance, and economic deprivation.

Project Title

Springfield, Eugene, and Bethel Safe Schools/
Healthy Students Project

Project Director

Brooke Marshall
Sheryl Ott

Primary Partners

Springfield School District 19
Lane County Health and Human Services
Department, Mental Health Division
City of Springfield Police Department

Program Focus

- Reduce the incidence of violence in local schools and communities
- Increase academic, behavioral support, mental health, and health service access for all students
- Improve the safety of the school environment
- Establish and enhance partnerships with local law enforcement

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Decreased incidence of office discipline referrals for violent and aggressive behavior—there was a reduction in general office discipline referrals, out-of-school suspensions, and the percentage of students suspended out of school
- 11% increase in number of students receiving school-based mental health services—overall, 399 students received mental health services, and 1,782 visits to mental health clinicians occurred

- Decreased the perception of overall risk (−9.69%) and increased the perception of the presence of overall protective factors (+4.63%) in schools during the Initiative
- Reduced illegal weapons (−35.6%), gang activity (−35.9%), illegal drugs and alcohol (−9%), and bullying and harassment (−4.2%)
- Decreased major discipline referrals by 24%, including a 24% decrease in fighting and physical aggression
- Increased staff satisfaction with school facilities improvements as measured by the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Program—staff reported that the improvements felt safer and were worth the cost

Lessons Learned

- The Initiative provided a unique model by placing mental health therapists within school-based health clinics. One advantage of this is reducing stigma for the student, as “going to the health center” is more innocuous than “going to the office.”

Portland, Oregon

(1999 Grantee)

Portland Public Schools, the largest district in the Pacific Northwest, serves students from inner-city, suburban, and rural communities. The 1998–99 enrollment at the start of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative was 55,831 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The district operated 90 elementary, middle, and high schools, 11 special focus and alternative schools, and 24 support facilities. Minority students comprised 35% of the enrollment, and 38% of this population qualified for the federal free or reduced-price meals program. This area is home to Oregon's largest concentration of African American families, with a significant influx of students from Latin America, southeast Asia, and the former Soviet Union. More than 60 different languages are spoken in the district, and students whose home language is not English represent 8% of the enrollment.

Project Title

Portland Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

Project Director

Tammy Jackson

Primary Partners

Portland Public Schools, District 1
Multnomah County Community and Family Services
Multnomah County Juvenile and Adult
Community Justice

Program Focus

- Reduce the incidence of major discipline referrals in the district
- Increase school performance (e.g., attendance, credits earned) through the Reconnecting Youth program
- Decrease drug involvement through the Reconnecting Youth program
- Decrease suicide risk by decreasing related risk factors (e.g., depression, anger control) and increasing protective factors (e.g., personal control, social support) through the Reconnecting Youth program
- Increase parent involvement in the school and community through the Families and Schools Together (FAST) program
- Increase service integration among partners

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Reduced major discipline referrals in each year of funding with 35.8% total reduction over the five-year period
- Doubled the amount of academic credits earned by Reconnecting Youth program participants during the school year in which they began the program, compared to their performance prior to the program
- Reduced 30-day use of a variety of substances, with significant reductions in the use of beer or wine and hallucinogens for high school students participating in the Reconnecting Youth program
- Improved behaviors related to conduct disorder (a 21% decrease), socialized aggression (a 40% decrease), anxiety and withdrawal (a 27% decrease), motor excess (a 28% decrease), and attention problems (a 27% decrease) demonstrated by middle school students participating in the FAST program
- A 13% increase in parental involvement in middle school as a result of the FAST program
- Established the Portland Partnership to increase service integration, resource sharing, and communication

Lessons Learned

- The greatest obstacle to sustainability is providing time in the instructional day for “non-academic” programming.

Deschutes County, Oregon

(1999 Grantee)

The Crook Deschutes High Desert Education Service District, located in rural central Oregon, is composed of three school districts (Bend/LaPine School District 1, Redmond School District 2J, and Sisters School District 6), which at the beginning of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative served 20,000 students in grades K–12. The county was projected to have the fastest growing youth population in Oregon. The youth population is predominantly White; with 4.5% Hispanic, 1% Asian American, 1% Native American, and .3% African American students. Deschutes County was fraught with social problems, including homelessness, poverty, crime, and substance abuse. During the 1997–98 school year, there were more than 15,350 behavior-related incidents of serious and violent crime. Total juvenile crime soared by 38% between 1987 and 1996. The overall suspension and expulsion rate was alarming and consistent. Other serious indicators included a 134% increase in students referred to probation from 1990 to 1998, and a rise in the number of students in juvenile justice placements and in child abuse and neglect cases.

Project Title

Deschutes County Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

Project Director

Judy Scales

Primary Partners

Crook Deschutes High Desert Education Service District
Deschutes County Commission on Children and Families
District Attorney's Office

Program Focus

- Reduce violence and juvenile crime in schools and the community
- Increase the mental health of and health access for all students and families
- Decrease high school drop-out rates

Examples of Program Outcomes

- 48% decrease in drop-out rate during the three-year project
- Increased mental health access for all students, from 56 students receiving mental health services prior to project implementation to 1,713 students receiving services during the four years of the project
- 33% decrease in juvenile arrest rate for person and property crimes

- Increased collaboration between schools and the local mental health agency—all Family Access Network sites continue to operate and the Safe School Alliance (a collaboration among schools; mental health, juvenile justice, and law enforcement agencies; and the district attorney) which responds to serious threats and/or school violence incidents, continues to meet

Lessons Learned

- Training staff in each agency about the philosophy of the project and each agency's roles and functions is an important step toward building partnerships.
- The development of a coordinated data system is critical for self-evaluation and providing feedback to oversight committees.
- Prior to this project, county mental health administrators saw school-based mental health services as prevention and would not commit Oregon Health Plan dollars and resources to school-based services. The results of the final project year convinced officials that school-based mental health therapists served students with diagnosable and, in some cases, severe mental health disorders.

Nassau County, New York

(1999 Grantee)

The Freeport and Westbury school districts, both located in urban Nassau County, Long Island, New York, serve more than 10,000 students, representing diverse cultures, interests, abilities, and educational experiences. At the time of funding, the student population was 42% Black, 39% Hispanic, and 19% White, and 44% of all Freeport students received free or reduced-price lunch. In Westbury, the student population was 58% Black, 29% Hispanic, and 9% White, and 72% of all Westbury students were eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch. In 1990, single mothers under 18 years old comprised 25% of households in Freeport and 13% of households in Westbury. Rates of alcohol and drug use, school violence and threatening behaviors, gang involvement, school suspensions, suicide ideation, and other emotional and behavioral disorders had been increasing until 1998, the year before the Initiative began.

Project Title

Nassau County Safe Schools/Healthy Students Project

Project Director

Laura Lustbader

Primary Partners

Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Nassau County
South Shore Child Guidance Center and North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center
Freeport and Westbury Police Departments

Program Focus

- Decrease risk factors for students through implementation of an after-school mentoring program in grades 3–5
- Improve student school achievement and attendance records through implementation of a mentoring program

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Fifth graders mentored for three consecutive years showed statistically significant improvements in almost all aspects of their academic achievement and behavior
- Decreased suspension rates in Freeport Schools by as much as 50%
- Reduction of student infractions in participating schools

Lessons Learned

- Implementing an existing evidence-based program saved a great deal of time and money that might have been spent on curriculum development.
- Mentor qualification was an important factor for success of the after-school mentoring program.
- Mentors who spent the day in the same school in which they mentored, and improved their mentoring skills through staff development, achieved the best results with students.
- The commitment made by district-level school administrators to the Safe Schools/Healthy Students program facilitated program implementation. Not only did they convey the importance of the program by their presence at meetings, they took necessary steps to provide the program with the necessary administrative support at every juncture.

New York

SAFE schools
HEALTHY students

Lansing, Michigan

(1999 Grantee)

Lansing, the capital of Michigan, is a mid-sized city located in the Lower Peninsula. Prior to Safe Schools/Healthy Students funding, the school district served students in 34 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 3 high schools. The student population was 44% non-Hispanic White, 36% African American, 13% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and 1% Native American. More than a quarter of the district's students lived at or below poverty level. Lansing school children were at an elevated risk for nearly every negative social indicator, including high rates of alcohol and illicit drug use, school violence, truancy, suspension, expulsion, dropout, and teen pregnancy.

Project Title

Lansing Safe Schools/Healthy Students Project

Project Director

Suzanne Brook

Primary Partners

Lansing School District
Clington-Eaton-Ingham Community
Mental Health Board
Ingham County Sheriff's Department

Program Focus

- Increase student academic achievement
- Improve school attendance
- Improve student behavior
- Reduce criminal activity in common areas of the school
- Increase parental knowledge of child development, parenting, and child-family functioning
- Improve school climate
- Increase personal attitudes against cigarette use, marijuana use, and violent behaviors

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Improved student behavior led to improved academic achievement—most notably the Student and Family Empowerment program improved student behavior and students who participated were also more likely post-treatment to receive A's and B's
- Two-thirds of the high-risk and more than three-quarters of low-risk students achieved an acceptable attendance record within a year of receiving services through the Attendance Advocacy Program

- Increased involvement by students in peer mediation—over the two years of the intervention, they were more likely to request peer mediations and the resolve rate hovered around 85%
- 100% of the families enrolled in the Jump Start program were connected with a primary health care provider—rates of up-to-date immunizations ranged from 72% to 98% over four years
- Decreased reports of arson, malicious destruction of property, and physical assault cases
- A 50% reduction in criminal activity, which resulted from funding of an additional School Resource Officer and the purchase of closed-circuit televisions in schools

Lessons Learned

- Problems such as school violence and substance abuse cannot be completely addressed during a single three-year grant.
- Sustainability should have focused on programs showing results, but it was difficult to document good results by the end of the second year, when sustainability efforts were initiated.

Jefferson County, Kentucky

(1999 Grantee)

Located in an urban area that includes inner-city Louisville, the Jefferson County Public School District is the largest school district in Kentucky and the 27th largest school district in the nation. At the beginning of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, the district served more than 98,000 students in 87 elementary schools, 24 middle schools, 21 high schools, and 23 other learning environments. Approximately 30% of the students were African American, and more than 50% of students participated in the free or reduced-price lunch program. The Initiative, called Project SHIELD, was implemented in 12 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 2 high schools, serving approximately 19,000 students. One-third of the selected schools were located in the Enterprise Community, in which more than half the students were economically disadvantaged, and 60% of elementary school, 70% of middle school, and 80% of high school students received free or reduced-price lunches. Truancy, low academic performance, and disciplinary problems were all concerns in this community.

Project Title

Project SHIELD (Supporting Healthy Individuals and Environments for Life Development)

Project Director

Romey Peavler

Primary Partners

Jefferson County Public Schools
Seven Counties Services, Inc.
Louisville Police Department

Program Focus

- Increase school attendance
- Decrease disciplinary referrals and other disruptive behaviors
- Strengthen community partnerships that support safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Decreased unexcused absences by 65.4% in students participating in the Louisville Education and Employment Partnership relative to controls
- Decreased number of days suspended by 75.5%, total number of suspensions by 67.4%, and unexcused absences by 38.4% for students participating in Multi-Systemic Therapy
- Increased infrastructure development (e.g., increased resource allocation, formal linkages) and sustainability actions (e.g., planning, fund-seeking) for participating partners in the Initiative

Lessons Learned

- Strong district administration leadership is a key element of building capacity and sustaining infrastructure needed for school-based interventions.
- Policy-relevant outcomes are important to stakeholders in high-stakes accountability environments, and can be used to decide which interventions to sustain.
- Getting school personnel focused on building and sustaining infrastructure was a major challenge.
- Potent collaboration between external and internal evaluators can enrich all facets of the evaluation research process, such as defining research questions, measures, and reporting.

Hays, Kansas

(1999 Grantee)

Ellis County is a rural community in western Kansas. The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative in Ellis County served 5,500 students, the majority of whom attended school in Hays Unified School District, which served 3,630 students (96% non-Hispanic White). Of county residents, 11% were living in poverty. Since 1989, the number of economically disadvantaged students in the Hays School District had increased by 27%; the number of juvenile court filings had also increased substantially. Risk factors in the community included births to single teens (an 81% increase since 1990) and out-of-home placements of children age 18 or under (a 51% increase since 1996). Twenty-nine percent of DUI (driving under the influence of alcohol) arrests in 1998 were of minors. The graduation rate in the school district fell from 95% in 1994 to 85% in 1998, and the drop-out rate increased from 1.5% in 1994 to 3.3% in 1998.

Project Title

Rural Underpinnings for Resiliency and Linkages (RURAL)

Project Director

Leslie Paige

Primary Partners

Hays Unified Schools District #489
High Plains Mental Health
Ellis County Law Enforcement

Program Focus

- Improve student academic performance
- Improve student social and emotional skills
- Decrease juvenile substance abuse, violence, and crime rates

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Increased algebra mastery rates and advanced math passing rates by 7% and 3%
- 25% of parents and teachers reported increased awareness of and willingness to utilize school-based social workers, Functional Family Therapy, and the Learning Center
- Approximately 10% of Ellis County families (about 400) received some form of RURAL intervention services by the end of the Initiative
- A decrease in positive attitudes toward unhealthy behaviors in Ellis County students, as measured by responses to the Kansas Communities That Care survey questions: ease of getting cigarettes (from 47% to 41%), getting alcohol (from 37% to 33%), chances of not getting caught by police for drinking (from 73% to 68%), and peer approval of drinking (from 17% to 15%)

Lessons Learned

- The number of programs implemented in a school seemed to be associated with trends in school climate—the more programs, the more positive the school climate.
- Prevention programs need time for their effects to accumulate, and systemic change rarely occurs quickly. More emphasis probably should be placed on qualitative evaluation and cataloguing impacts on individuals and organizations rather than looking for community-wide outcomes in relatively short time periods.
- There is often stigma associated with receiving mental health services within a rural community, and this makes it difficult to achieve full cooperation from all clients. Clients who recognized that change needed to occur were much more successful than those who did not.

Cicero, Illinois

(1999 Grantee)

The J. Sterling Morton High School District is one of Illinois State's largest districts, serving the Chicago border communities of Berwyn, Cicero, Lyons, McCook, and Stickney in Cook County, Illinois. This suburban district has two main high school campuses—Morton East in Cicero and Morton West in Berwyn—that serve more than 6,000 of the district's students. Prior to the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, the Morton East district was 91.5% Latino (predominantly Mexican), and 23.9% of the students had limited English proficiency. At Morton West, 39% of students were Hispanic, and 4.5% had limited English proficiency. More than 38% of the students in the district qualified for free or reduced-price school lunch. The truancy and drop-out rates for the area were higher than the state average. During the 10 years prior to Safe Schools/Healthy Students funding, there was a 70% increase in the number of persons living below the poverty level in Cicero, and the number of families qualifying for public assistance in Cicero increased by 80%.

Project Title

Cook County Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

Project Director

Rosario Pesce

Primary Partners

J.S. Morton High School District
Filmore Center for Human Services
Berwyn and Cicero Police Departments

Program Focus

- Reduce angry and disruptive student behavior
- Strengthen connections between families, youth, and schools
- Decrease violent incidents at school
- Improve the average daily attendance and overall drop-out rates by 2%

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Significantly decreased the mean number of aggressive behaviors in children through implementation of family case management—
anxious and depressed behaviors exhibited by children also significantly decreased
- Decreased the number of early elementary classroom (grades 1–3) disruptions by more than 60% while using a classroom intervention called the PAX Game—a game designed to promote good behavior

- Decreased gang-related school violence incidents from a high of 81 to fewer than 9 over the three-year period of the Initiative
- Increased average daily attendance from 87% to 90% over the three-year period of the Initiative
- Reduced the drop-out rate from 10.8% to 5.3% over the three-year period of the Initiative

Lessons Learned

- Implementing and sustaining school-wide interventions is difficult, due to the large number of teachers and school personnel needed to implement such interventions. This was further complicated by the high turnover in principals and teachers, which also meant the loss of trained personnel and “institutional memory.”
- Classroom interventions were less difficult to sustain. However, they did require commitment from the principal and staffing support for continual training of new teachers.

Largo, Pinellas County, Florida

(1999 Grantee)

With a population of about one million, Pinellas County ranks highest in the state in population density. At the beginning of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, approximately 107,000 students were enrolled in 149 schools in the 7th largest school district in Florida and the 22nd largest in the United States. Minority students comprised 30% of the school population. Forty-eight percent of the elementary students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and one-third of Pinellas County youth were living in single-parent homes. The school district was concerned about high rates of student violence, juvenile crime, gang-related issues, and alcohol and other drug use. Additional issues of concern include suicide, runaways, and suspension or expulsion from school.

Project Title

Pinellas County Safe Schools/Healthy Students Grant Initiative

Project Director

Nancy Deane

Primary Partners

Pinellas County Schools
Juvenile Welfare Board
Pinellas County Health Department
Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
Local Mental Health Providers
University of South Florida

Program Focus

- Provide prevention and intervention programs to support school safety and healthy students
- Reduce disciplinary problems and school drop-out rates
- Sustain effective programs funded by the initiative after grant funds are exhausted

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Drop-out rates for participants of the On-Campus Intervention Program were reduced to roughly half the drop-out rates of the comparison group at the end of the 18-month study
- Teachers who were trained in delivering the social skills curriculum and collecting data were better able to address the behavioral problems of their students, and they reported student progress in a consistent and accurate way

Lessons Learned

- The earlier that school and community professionals are actively engaged in the process of program development and implementation, the more likely they are to invest time and effort in the sustainability of the program once grant funding ends.
- Evaluation plays a critical role in sustainability efforts, not only by providing evidence of the acceptability, appropriateness, and effectiveness of programs, but also by providing practical assistance in instrumentation, organization, and formative feedback.

Washington, D.C.

Maya Angelou Public Charter School (1999 Grantee)

Washington, D.C., is a large metropolitan city hindered by environmental and societal realities, such as poverty, drugs, gangs, and child abuse. At the start of Safe Schools/Healthy Students funding, the public school population was 65,099, of whom 84% were African American, 9.4% were Hispanic, and 4.6% were White. Sixty-one percent of D.C. students were eligible for free school lunch, and only 63% of D.C. youth graduated from high school. In 1999, 41% of district children were living below the poverty level, 21% under extreme economic deprivation, and 39% in high-risk families. The D.C. Charter Schools were created out of widespread frustration with the public school system's ability to address the social, economic, and behavioral challenges facing D.C. youth. At the beginning of the Initiative, D.C. Charter Schools served 8,400 high-risk students, most of whom were two or more years below grade level.

Project Title

Charter School Center for Student Support Services

Project Directors

Eve Brooks

Primary Partners

Maya Angelou Public Charter School
District of Columbia Commission
on Mental Health Services
Metropolitan Police Department

Lessons Learned

- Improved academic performance proved to be a corollary factor and potential outcome of youth resiliency. Therefore, program components designed to target student academic performance (e.g., mental health services, after-school programs) combined with effective Early Intervention Teams are likely to create an environment in which children grow academically.

Program Focus

- Improve academic achievement in students
- Promote positive mental health and minimize violent behavior and drug use by students
- Establish safe, disciplined, and drug-free learning environments
- Establish and sustain a comprehensive integrated service system infrastructure

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Improved Student National Curve Equivalent reading and math mean gain scores; students scored highest during the final year of the Initiative
- Decreased trend in alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, especially among elementary and middle school students
- Dramatically reduced school noise, school fighting, and school suspensions for elementary and middle school students during year 2 of the Initiative

Los Angeles, California

(1999 Grantee)

If the Belmont Family of Schools were an independent school district, it would be one of the largest districts in the state of California. At the beginning of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, the Belmont Family of Schools served approximately 37,000 children, from age 2 through age 18, at 34 schools and children's centers within its 19 square miles. Almost all of the students received free or reduced-price lunch (97%), and most were Hispanic (87%) and English-language learners (76%). Belmont Family of Schools students reside in an area just west of downtown Los Angeles. The population of this area comprises many diverse ethnic groups (63% Hispanic, 18% Asian, 14% White, 2% African American), more than half of whom are new immigrants.

Project Title

Project SECURE (Safe, Empowered Communities Using Resources and Education)

Project Director

Maxine Donadelle

Primary Partners

Belmont Cluster, Los Angeles Unified School District
Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
Los Angeles Unified School District
Police Department

Program Focus

- Improve students' sense of safety by increasing safety efforts on the school campuses
- Improve students', teachers', and schools' capacities to focus on learning
- Decrease problem behaviors on campus related to alcohol and drug use and violence
- Increase services aimed at promoting healthy development for at-risk children at early ages

Examples of Program Outcomes

- Improved students' sense of safety at school overall by 7%. As of Year 3, 82% of surveyed students indicated a high sense of safety at school
- Improved academic performance all four years of the grant—average scores on the Academic Performance Index (California's student performance test with scores ranging from 200 to 1000) improved from 472.9 in the year prior to the grant to 644.8 in year 4

- Reduced incidence of bullying—principals and teachers indicated that bullying had become a less serious problem between 2001 and 2002 (years 2 to 3)
- Reduced problem behaviors and increased positive behaviors through participation in Project SECURE—more than two-thirds of students surveyed indicated they learned to take responsibility for their actions (72%), get into less trouble at school (68%), and say “no” when someone pressed them to do something that is not safe or good (68%)
- Provided developmentally appropriate health and mental health prevention services to over 1,000 infants, toddlers, and pre-kindergartners

Lessons Learned

- The grant allowed for flexibility in service delivery and increased the focus on prevention services. These were considered some of the most helpful aspects of the grant, allowing providers to offer services that met the unique needs of schools and students and to spend time developing relationships with schools.