Federal Context of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

New Grantee Evaluation Training and Technical Assistance Conference

January 14 -15, 2010

The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative is a joint effort of the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice

Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

- Intent of the SS/HS Initiative is to help communities collaborate across systems to build safer, healthier environments for youth

- About $2 billion in grants awarded to 365 grantees since 1999 to support effective partnerships among schools and local mental health, law enforcement, and juvenile justice agencies

Multiple Levels
of Coordination

🏫 Local educational agency level

🏫 Program level

🏫 Federal level

Coordination at Local Educational Agency Level

- Working with local educational agencies
  - Single versus multiple school district sites
  - Variations in size and urbanicity
  - Unique cultural differences

- Local evaluation
  - Local evaluations receive at least 7 percent of overall budget
  - Ensuring local evaluation efforts meet Federal requirements
  - Involving local evaluators in meetings and communication to grantees

Coordination at Program Level

Various resources

- National Evaluation Team

- Technical Assistance Providers

- Communication Specialists

Coordination at Federal Level

- Federal Project Officers

  - Department of Education

  - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

- Varying outcome data requirements

Coordination Among All Groups

🏫 Joint participation in grantee meetings and events

🏫 Coordinating and planning team conference calls

🏫 Biweekly meetings

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Evaluation of a Complex, Multisite Grant Initiative

National Evaluation Team

- MANILA Consulting Group, Inc.

- RMC Research Corporation

- Battelle Centers for Public Health Research and Evaluation

National Evaluation Team

- Contracted by SAMHSA to design and implement 5-year national cross-site evaluation of the SS/HS Initiative

- Responsible for:
  - Developing evaluation design
  - Specifying and implementing sampling plans
  - Proposing and developing new instrumentation and data collection protocols
  - Coordinating with other providers and local evaluations
  - Developing appropriate data analysis plans
  - Preparing technical reports and documents for widespread distribution to diverse audiences

Grantees Included in National Evaluation

Current Grantees			
Cohort	Number of Grantees	Total Targeted Schools	Total Targeted Students
2005	40	1,157	815,316
2006	19	321	193,154
2007	27	869	594,588
2008	60	1,324	~1,892,860
2009	29	~544	~265,943
TOTAL	175	~4,215	~3,761,861

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Map of Current Grantees
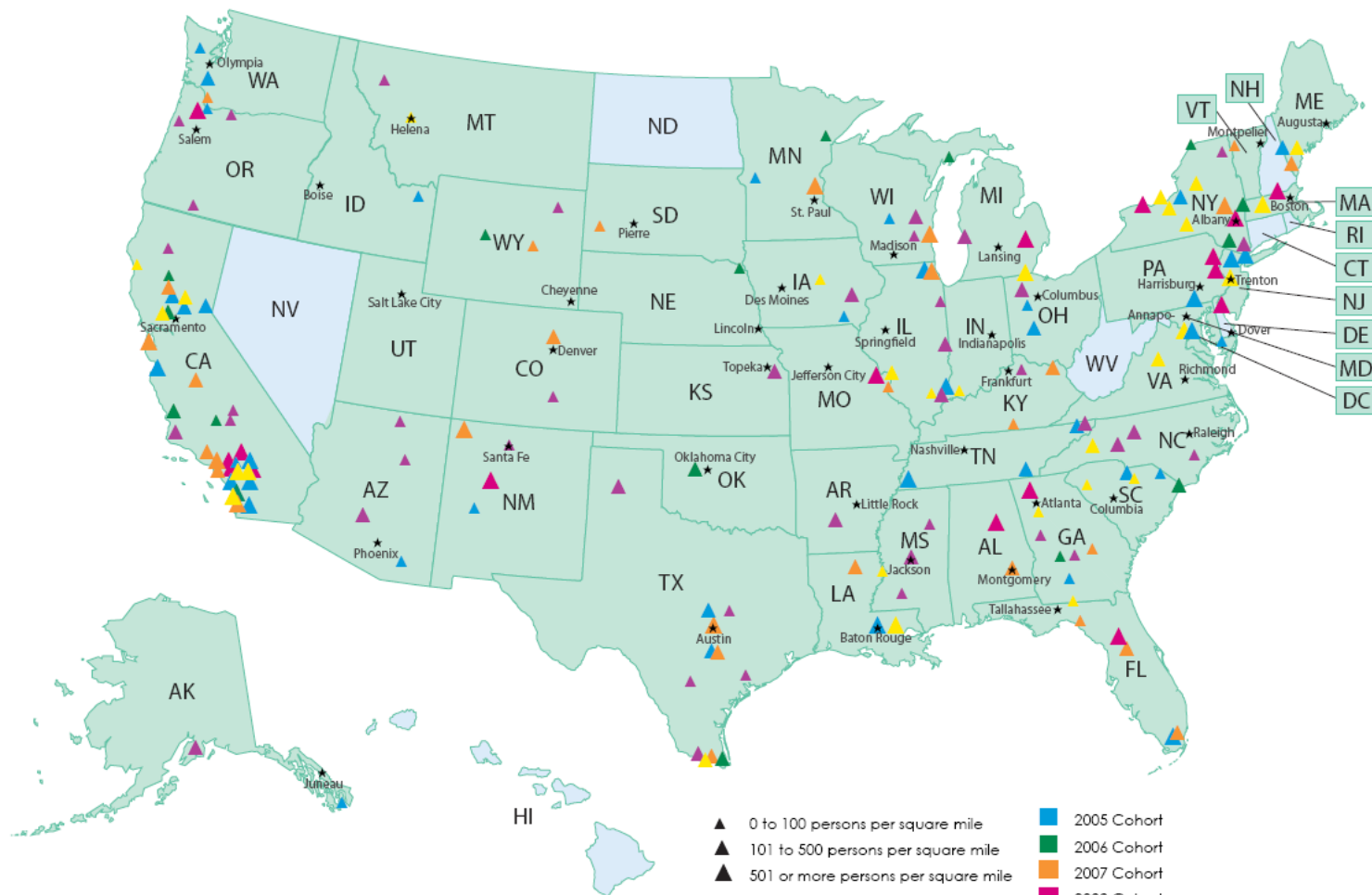
Grantee Characteristics

- Targeted students
  - Range: 313 to 342,395
  - Median: 7,664

- Targeted schools
  - Range: 1 to 308
  - Median: 16

- Grant funding per targeted capita
  - Range: $5.25 to $2,771.87
  - Median: $196.09

N = 86

Various Outcome Levels

- Program level
  - Does the SS/HS Initiative meet Federal expectations?

- Project level
  - Are positive near-term outcomes being achieved?

- School level
  - Are schools being positively affected by the SS/HS Initiative?

- Student level
  - Are students safer and healthier?

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Data Sources

- Site Visits (Year 1)

- Surveys (Annual, Online)
  - Project Level
  - School Level
  - School Climate

- Telephone Interviews
  - Project Director Interview (Annual)
  - Group Telephone Interviews, Partnership Inventory (Years 2, 3, and 4)

- GPRA

- Other Sources
  - Focus Groups
  - Grant Applications, Performance Reports
  - Public Information (e.g., Census Data)

Use of Existing Data

- Rather than using student surveys, we use Federal performance reports to capture student-level data from grantees

- For semicomparison data, we use national youth surveys to examine potential trends

- We use census data from the National Center for Education Statistics for standardized data across grantees

Data Collection Challenges

- Timing
  - School calendar year
  - State testing requirements

- Existing demands on grantees
  - Project implementation
  - Reporting requirements

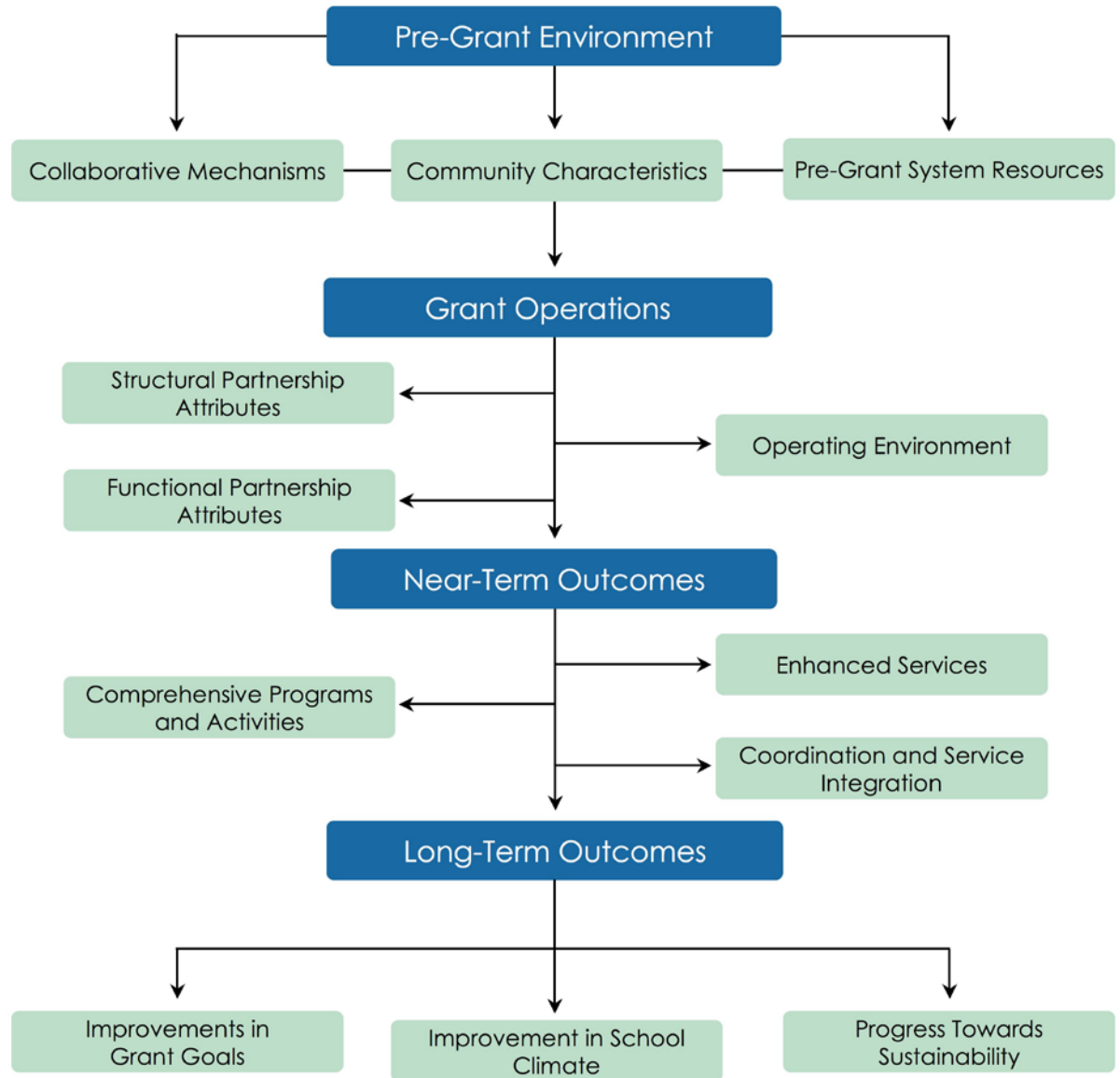- Lack of consistent or common local process and outcome metrics

Evaluation Challenges

- Lack of a comparison group

- Various local need areas, issues, and strengths

- Varying project scopes

- Adoption of different approaches, activities, and programs to address grant goals

- External factors such as project staff turnover

Program Theory Model

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Pre-Grant Environment
- Collaborative Mechanisms
- Community Characteristics
- Pre-Grant System Resources

Grant Operations
- Structural Partnership Attributes
- Functional Partnership Attributes
- Operating Environment

Near-Term Outcomes
- Comprehensive Programs and Activities
- Enhanced Services
- Coordination and Service Integration

Long-Term Outcomes
- Improvements in Grant Goals
- Improvement in School Climate
- Progress Towards Sustainability

Program Theory Model

- Model describes:
  - Domains
  - Constructs
  - Elements
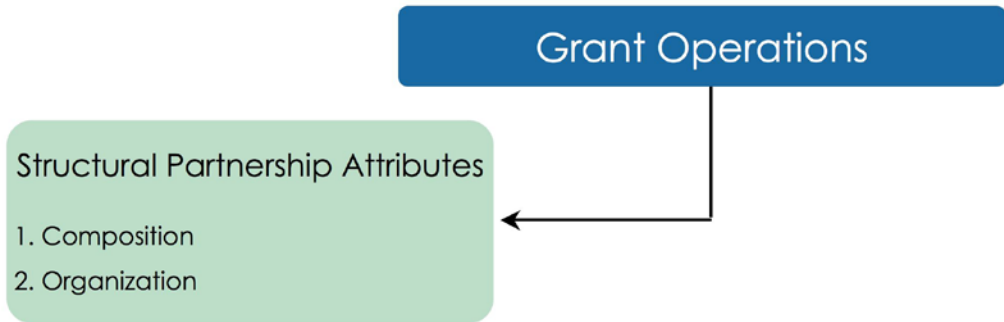
- Each element is mapped to specific measures that the National Evaluation Team collects through one or more data sources

Benefits of
Program Theory Model

- Provides organization to complex evaluation

- Robust theory to explain variations in grant operations and outcomes

- Useful in prioritizing variables

- Guides quantitative and qualitative analyses

Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative
Data in the Safe Schools/Healthy Students National Evaluation

Partnership Structure and Functioning

- Partnerships can allow partnerships to:
  - Reduce duplication of services (Butterfoss et al., 1993)
  - Improve delivery of needed school and community services (e.g., Florin et al., 2000)
  - Promote positive behavioral outcomes for youth (e.g., Wagenaar et al., 2006)
- Attributes presented in the literature include:
  - Partnership structure (e.g., coalitions with a steering board, Jasuja et al., 2005)
  - Partner involvement (e.g., Lasker et al., 2001)
  - Leadership
  - Governance (e.g., Weiss et al., 2002)

Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Data

- Do partnerships that score high on the partnership functioning scale have qualitatively similar characteristics?

- Conversely, do partnerships that score low on the partnership functioning scale have qualitatively similar characteristics?

Methods

- Partners completed a 12-item scale derived from the Partnership Inventory that measures partner functioning ($N = 40$)

- Items include established constructs in coalition effectiveness literature

- Three high-functioning and three low-functioning sites were identified for further qualitative analyses

- Year 1 site visit notes and Year 2 telephone interview notes were qualitatively coded

- Two analysts independently coded and identified key themes and came to agreement

Qualitative Trends

Themes	Highest-Scoring Sites	Lowest-Scoring Sites
Barriers	▪ Reported few barriers ▪ Articulated proactive steps to address identified barriers	▪ Reported multiple unresolved barriers ▪ Did not articulate strategies to address barriers
Partnership Structure	▪ Articulated a clearly organized partnership structure with clearly defined roles ▪ Reported engaging all level of personnel in the decisionmaking process	▪ Described a partnership that is loosely defined, not highly structured or organized ▪ Did not clearly articulate or define partners' roles
Sustainability	▪ Reported focusing on sustainability from the very beginning ▪ Articulated a long-term goal and vision for the project	▪ Did not articulate a plan for sustainability in Year 1 ▪ Did not articulate a long-term plan or vision for the project

Transforming Qualitative Themes Into Quantitative Frequencies: Partnership Structure

🏫 Research Questions

- Was there a typical structure among SS/HS sites?

- Does structure vary by cohort?

- Does structure change over time?

- Are there common patterns of changes?

Transforming Qualitative Themes Into Quantitative Frequencies: Partnership Structure

- Initial coding scheme inductively created

- Scheme compared with those used in extant research to simplify the scheme

- Modifications made to Jasuja et al. (2005) model

  - Single group

  - Single group with an executive/management team

  - Single group with committees or subcommittees

  - Single group with an executive/management team and committees or subcommittees

Transforming Qualitative Themes Into Quantitative Frequencies: Partnership Structure

- In Year 1 the most common partnership structure was:
  - 2005 cohort—single group or single group with executive team and committees/subcommittees
  - 2006 cohort—single group
  - 2007 cohort—single group with executive team and committees/subcommittees or single group with executive team

- Most 2005 (Y1-3) and 2006 (Y1-2) sites did not change their partnership organization over time.

- Those that did tended to expand their organization between Year 1 and Year 2.

Limitations

- Responses are dependent on the participants' recall and missing data may ensue

- Data include varying level of detail

- Partnership structure used very broad categories; loses some of the nuances or qualitatively interesting differences

- Partnership functioning examined atypical sites
  - *N* too small to draw firm conclusions
  - Only analyzed one cohort

Next Steps

- Examination of the relationship of these constructs with other constructs in the program theory model
  - Pre-grant environment (e.g., history, community type)
  - Near-term outcomes
    - Comprehensive programs and activities
    - Enhanced services
    - Coordination and service integration outcomes
  - Long-term outcomes
    - Improvements in grant goals
    - Improvement in school climate
    - Progress toward sustainability

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Innovative Use of Meta-Analysis to Evaluate Large-Scale Multisite Federal Prevention Initiatives

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Center for Mental Health Services
www.samhsa.gov

Review of Evaluation Objectives

The current SS/HS National Evaluation focuses on 175 grantees in 5 successive cohorts beginning in 2005

- To understand and document the process through which the SS/HS Initiative was implemented across sites.

- To determine the extent to which the SS/HS Initiative has produced changes in the targeted outcomes across sites.

- Overall, are schools safer and students healthier over time?

Challenges Confronting the National Evaluation

- Prior to 2007 cohort, wide variety of sources used by the grantees to collect outcome data (surveys, incident reports, service delivery logs, etc.)

- Data submitted were aggregated at different levels (district-wide, school, school type, grade level, etc.)

- Significant variation in interval between measurement periods

- No comparison group data

Addressing the Challenges Through the Use of Meta-Analysis

- Defining outcomes to be collected

- Collecting, processing, and preparing outcome data file for meta-analysis

- Summarizing evidence across grantees

- Meta-regression analysis

Defining Outcome Data To Be Collected

- Prepare data collection templates for grantees to organize and submit data on the 12 outcome measures

- Provide technical support to answer or clarify grantees' questions about collecting and submitting outcome data

- Grantees are able to use the definitions and templates to collect and submit data on measures

Collecting, Processing, and Preparing Outcome Data File for Analysis

🏫 Collecting outcome data

🏫 Processing data (reviewing, conducting quality assurance, and extracting data from GPRA templates and grantees' annual reports)

🏫 Transforming data for statistical analysis

Summary of Meta-Analytic Results, 2005 Cohort

Outcome Variable	2005 Cohort (40) Year 3 Versus Year 1
Past 30-Day Alcohol Use	+ (25)
Past 30-Day Tobacco Use	+ (22)
Past 30-Day Marijuana Use	- (22)
Perceived Risk of Alcohol Use	- (22)
Perceived Risk of Tobacco Use	- (21)
Perceived Risk of Marijuana Use	- (19)
Experienced Violence	+ (32)
Perceived Violence	- (20)
Witnessed Violence	+ (13)
Received School Mental Health Services	+ (20)
Received Community Mental Health Services	+ (16)
School Attendance	+ (37)

+ indicates positive change
- indicates negative change
Shading indicates statistical significance at p≤ 0.05
Number of sites contributing data is shown in parentheses

Safe Schools Healthy Students

Benefits of Meta-Analysis

🏫 Burden of data collection on grantees is minimized

🏫 Significant savings in money and time compared to conventional surveys

🏫 Meta-analysis provides a structured way to sort, code, assemble, and store a large amount of data from varied sources for summarizing evidence across sites

🏫 Systematic coding and a computerized meta-analytic database allow effective management of data from diverse sources

🏫 Meta-regression analysis assesses the effects of programs, partnership, grant operations, community, and pre-grant conditions