The Palm Beach County School Safety and Student Performance Partnership Research Project: Final Research Report

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Executive Summary

Statement of the Problem

In the 1980s, school districts around the country began to implement "get tough" responses to juvenile offending. Simultaneously, and consistent with the broader tough-on-crime movement, schools focused their attention on high-risk youth and on more punitive, and less rehabilitative, interventions. In more recent years, there has been recognition that a more balanced approach, one that provides for accountability and for rehabilitation and support, may be a more effective way to promote student and school success. To this end, schools have sought to develop interventions that reduce offending, juvenile court referrals, and school-based behavioral problems, and, at the same time, improve academic outcomes such as attendance, academic promotion, and grades. There is a need not only to develop such interventions but also to evaluate their effectiveness and to examine factors that influence their implementation.

This project responded to this need through the expansion of a pilot initiative in Florida's School District of Palm Beach County (SDPBC) and an evaluation of it, in collaboration with Florida State University (FSU), using an experimental design. A central premise of the intervention is that improved school safety requires systematic attention to law enforcement- and court-involved youth. It therefore focuses on youth who have had contact with the police, been arrested, received a law enforcement sanction, or received a court-ordered sanction. The implementation of the program and study involved a collaboration among the SDPBC, FSU, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), the SDPBC Police Department, the Parent-Child Center (PCC), and the Drug Abuse Treatment Association (DATA). This collaborative partnership afforded a unique opportunity to develop a promising initiative for promoting school safety not only in SDPBC but also in other districts.

Research Goals and Objectives

The purpose of this project was to implement and evaluate a school-based intervention that aimed to improve school safety, reduce school misconduct and referrals to juvenile court, and improve students' behavioral and academic outcomes. To assess the effect of the intervention on students and schools, respectively, the evaluation employed a mixed methods approach that included (1) an experimental design in which students were randomly assigned to the program or a control group, (2) a longitudinal analysis of intervention and comparison schools to assess school-level effects, and (3) a process evaluation that documented how well the program implementation conformed with the program's design, barriers and facilitators to effective implementation, and strategies other schools and districts might use to implement the intervention successfully. The reliance on an experimental design is a central strength of this study. Despite the fact that randomized trials are generally considered the "gold standard" for assessing internal validity, they continue to be the exception rather than the rule in criminological research (Weisburd 2010; Welsh et al. 2013). An additional strength of the study

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is the incorporation of a process evaluation, which was used to monitor implementation, identify strategies for improving implementation, and glean lessons about how other districts might successfully implement similar interventions (Laub 2012). Three goals guided the evaluation.

Goal 1. Test the impact of targeted wraparound services on the delinquency and educational outcomes of law enforcement- and court-sanctioned youth through an experimental design in which eligible youth are randomly assigned to the intervention (treatment) or to "business as usual" (control). In this study, "business as usual" constituted the typical approach used with youth who had police- or court-contact. Youth in the control group did not receive the school-based wraparound services and treatment. This approach was justified by the fact that at the outset it was unknown whether the intervention was more effective at improving youth outcomes and by the fact that the intervention did not remove services for students but rather augmented them to determine if doing so improved outcomes.

Objectives related to goal 1 included assessing the impact of wraparound services and, for youth on probation, school-based probation on future delinquency, school attendance, and academic performance for both law enforcement- and court-involved youth. To achieve these objectives, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Does the intervention reduce at-risk youths' likelihood of future police contact?

2. Does it reduce at-risk youths' likelihood of misconduct at school?

3. Does it improve school attendance among at-risk youth?

4. Does it increase grade advancement among at-risk youth?

5. Does it improve academic performance among at-risk youth?

Goal 2. Test the impact of the intervention on overall school safety and student performance through analyses of matched samples of schools. Objectives related to goal 2 included assessing the effects of the intervention on school disciplinary infractions, delinquency, student performance, and climate. The research questions were as follows:

1. Does the intervention reduce schools' rates of disciplinary infractions?

2. Does it reduce school suspensions and improve student academic performance?

3. Does it improve school climate, as assessed through school climate surveys?

Goal 3. Assess how well the intervention is implemented, document barriers and facilitators to effective implementation of the intervention, and identify strategies that other school districts could use to successfully adopt a similar intervention. Objectives related to goal 3 included assessing the intervention's implementation, documenting barriers and facilitators to successful implementation, and identifying how the intervention might be successfully transferred to or adopted by other schools or school districts. Here, the research questions included:

1. What intervention activities were fully implemented with fidelity to program design?

2. What activities were viewed by program staff as most effective in improving outcomes?

3. What factors inhibit or facilitate full and quality implementation of program activities?

4. What approaches would contribute to successful adoption of the intervention?

The School-Based Delinquency Prevention Intervention

The School Safety and Student Performance Program was implemented in the School District of Palm Beach County from 2015 to 2018 and was based on a pilot initiative, at one school, that the district had developed in the preceding years. Funding for this project supported a targeted intervention in four high schools, each of which had a high concentration of youth at risk of delinquency, as well as an evaluation of the intervention. The intervention aimed to improve at-risk students' behavior and academic performance and to improve schoolwide safety and academic performance. A description of the program's components and the theoretical logic guiding its development can be found in this study's accompanying report, *The Causal Logic Model of the Palm Beach County School Safety and Student Performance Program*.

Briefly, as discussed in that report and as noted above, the intervention evaluated in this report was designed as follows. *First*, it entailed a collaboration between the schools, the school's police department, the juvenile court, and several service providers. *Second*, the intervention focused on at-risk youth, including those who had some type of police contact or were involved in the juvenile justice system through probation or diversion programs. *Third*, the intervention placed juvenile probation officers (JPOs) in schools along with family counselors and case managers. The JPOs provided school-based supervision only for youth who were on probation. *Fourth*, intervention plans were developed by the intervention team for youth who were randomly assigned to the intervention group. *Fifth*, all students participated voluntarily; participation only occurred after assent and consent protocols were followed. *Sixth*, the intervention consisted of identifying services that could assist the youth and that would go beyond other interventions or supervision to which they were subject to as part of the conditions of school sanctions, probation, or diversion or juvenile first-time offender program requirements. *Finally*, the express goal of the intervention was not to be punitive but instead to identify ways to help youth refrain from delinquency or misconduct and to succeed academically. An additional goal was to help improve schoolwide safety and academic performance.

Research Design and Methods

To assess the effect of the intervention on students and schools, respectively, the evaluation employed a mixed methods approach that included (1) an experimental design in which youth were randomly assigned to the program or a control group, (2) a longitudinal analysis of intervention and comparison schools to assess school-level effects, and (3) a process evaluation that documented how well the program implementation conformed with the program's design, barriers and facilitators to effective implementation, and strategies other schools and districts might use to implement the intervention successfully. The SDPBC was responsible for implementing the program and recruiting eligible youth. In addition, the SDPBC took responsibility for creating some of the data for the study and for providing administrative data for analysis. DJJ was responsible for hiring and training the JPOs and for providing juvenile justice system data on students in the study. FSU was responsible for the random assignment of assented and consented youth to the intervention and control groups, conducting site visits, and all analyses. The random assignment of youth and the examination of data files from the SDPBC and DJJ was done with deidentified information. Thus, the FSU researchers had no information that could be used to identify specific youth.

This project entailed a range of research activities. *For the evaluation as a whole*, the research team, before undertaking any data collection or analyses, secured clearance from FSU's Institutional Review Board. This clearance entailed approval for the project as well as approval of protocols for assenting and consenting youth and their parents. FSU then worked with SDPBC to identify the program's causal logic—that is, the various components of the program and how each of them were anticipated to contribute to student- and school-level effects. The causal logic is discussed in a separate report (*The Causal Logic Model of the Palm Beach County School Safety and Student Performance Program*).

For the student-level impact evaluation, the research team consulted with the SDPBC about practices for identifying and recruiting eligible students. The SDPBC undertook the recruitment, assent, and consent processes. Once students and their parents assented and consented to participate, youth were randomly assigned to the intervention or control group following the randomization protocols developed by the FSU research team. Separately, the researchers built a data collection instrument for SDPBC program staff to complete for each youth. The SDPBC and DJJ created data files that included information from SDPBC administrative records, the researcher-built data collection instrument, and DJJ records on delinquency.

This program and study focused on five groups of youth, all of whom had had some form of contact with law enforcement or the juvenile court. The first group, *school-referred youth* (i.e., youth referred to school administrators by police), allegedly engaged in delinquent behavior, but, in lieu of arrest, were referred by school police to school administrators for disciplinary action. These youth may have received school-based sanctions but did not receive arrest records or police-ordered sanctions for these offenses. This group was added in year two of the study. The second group, *intake youth*, had police contact and were awaiting dispositions from the juvenile court. Their eventual outcomes could range from dismissal of their cases to placement in a residential facility. The third group, *juvenile first-time offenders (JFO)*, had police contact after engaging in delinquent behavior. The police, instead of arresting the youth, issued a civil citation (a mechanism for sanctioning youth in a manner that can avoid an arrest or conviction) or referred them to a youth court for JFOs. Youth who successfully completed their JFO sanctions did not receive arrest records for these offenses. The fourth group, *diverted youth*, were arrested, referred to the juvenile court, and required to complete programming or informal sanctions (e.g., community service hours). The youth who successfully completed the programing or sanctions did not receive an official juvenile court record of delinquency. They did, however, have an arrest record. The fifth group, *probationers*, engaged in delinquency that resulted in the juvenile court placing them on probation. Youth who had previously been committed to a juvenile residential facility were not eligible to participate in this program or study.

The student-level impact evaluation included 863 youth who assented and consented to participate in the evaluation. Of these youth, 39% were school-referred youth, 5% were intake youth, 14% were JFOs, 25% were diverted youth, and 17% were probationers. Overall, 436 were assigned to the intervention condition and 427 to the control condition.

For the school-level impact evaluation, FSU worked with the SDPBC to identify school-level data sources. The information and recommendations from SDPBC staff were used to help identify schools that were similar to the intervention schools with respect to pre-intervention trends on the school-level outcomes examined in the study. These schools thus could serve as a basis for comparison to identify potential schoolwide program benefits.

The examination of the program's impact on schools relied on data on the intervention schools, 4 comparison schools, and 12 other public high schools in the school district. The data spanned 2004-2018 and came from the Florida Department of Education's (DOE) Public School Data Reports, School Accountability Reports, and School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) System; the SDPBC's Gold Reports and Executive Summaries; and SDPBC's School Effectiveness Questionnaires (SEQ), which are school climate surveys administered to teachers, students, and parents at each school in the district. In total, the school-level impact analyses examined 29 different outcomes. The data analyzed included all school years from 2004-05 to 2017-18 for which a given outcome measure was available.

For the process evaluation, FSU developed data collection and coding procedures to be used for observation, interview, focus group, and survey data. The researchers conducted 13 site visits (5 visits in year 1, 4 visits in year 2, and 4 visits in year 3). During the visits, researchers met with program stakeholders, conducted focus groups with program administrators and staff, and interviewed program and school administrators and staff. The process evaluation also included the administration of 2 surveys of program and school administrators and staff (one survey at the end of year 1 and one survey at the end of year 2).

Research Findings

The results can be summarized briefly. *First, comparison of the intervention group youth and control group youth indicated that the experimental design was successful in creating equivalence between the groups.*

Second, the analyses suggested that, although the intervention was well-grounded in theory and research on adolescent behavior, there were no consistent beneficial or adverse effects of the intervention on either student or school outcomes.

Third, some of the analyses suggested that the intervention may have been partially effective for some of the participants. For example, the JFO intervention youth had improved delinquency-related outcomes relative to their control group counterparts; however, they also had more absences from school. Similarly, the probation intervention youth had improved justice system and misconduct outcomes.

Fourth, in the school-level analyses, the most consistent potential beneficial effects were found for teachers' and parents' perceptions of outcomes, such as youth absenteeism, youth truancy, and school climate. When all school-level outcomes were examined, however, the central conclusion from the study was that little clear schoolwide effect occurred.

Fifth, the process evaluation identified a number of potential intervention benefits that were not directly measured in the study. For example, program staff felt that the intervention provided improved advocacy for at-risk students. They also felt that it enabled schools to intervene earlier and more effectively with low-risk youth who otherwise might escalate into serious delinquency and have poor or worsening academic performance. Some staff indicated that the intervention led some youth, including those outside the intervention group, to be more likely to report planned crime or violence that they heard about from other students.

Sixth, the process evaluation also identified a range of factors that may have contributed to some of the null intervention effects. For example, there were significant challenges faced in implementing a new program at four schools and in coordinating efforts among the schools, the

juvenile court, and probation. When there was greater buy-in from principals and other school personnel, improved implementation was more likely. Obtaining such buy-in can, though, be difficult in settings where school personnel face many competing demands on their time.

Implications for Research

School safety remains a recurring subject of study for scholars and a social problem for society. Research on school safety interventions provides an opportunity to better understand the causes of delinquency. It also provides an opportunity to identify approaches that may help protect students and school personnel and that may improve students' academic performance. The results of the present evaluation suggest that, at least on theoretical grounds, schools may offer a unique setting in which to identify, support, and supervise youth populations at risk of delinquency, misconduct, mental health and drug abuse problems, and poor academic performance. The results suggest, too, that school-based strategies face many challenges that can interfere with the ability to produce beneficial outcomes.

Against that backdrop, several of the most prominent research implications that emerged from this study include the following:

First, there is a need for research on ways that school settings and school hours can be used to identify and assist youth who are at risk of delinquency and poor academic performance. Many studies have identified the characteristics of at-risk youth. More research is needed, however, on how best to intervene with them in school settings.

Second, there is a need to identify the conditions under which interventions like those that were the subject of this study may be effective, and to identify those groups who may most benefit from them. Interventions can be costly. Thus, it is imperative to undertake studies that identify the groups of youth who would most benefit from school-based interventions.

Third, research should investigate ways to improve collaborative efforts between schools and the juvenile justice system. Collaborations between these two institutions can be challenging because of their differing missions and legal mandates. The end result can be a resistance to collaboration. Research is therefore needed on the specific conditions that are necessary to create sustained and effective collaborations that best serve youth, schools, and communities.

Implications for Policy and Practice

In addition to implications for research, the study identified implications for policy and practice. Among the most direct policy implications of the study are the following:

First, promote school and court collaborations to intervene with at-risk youth. Such youth are likely to "fall through the cracks." Interventions thus are needed that can assist these youth and help ensure that they can follow prosocial trajectories and succeed academically.

Second, leverage existing school-based and community-based services. Schools typically operate with insufficient resources to achieve their central goal of educating youth. As a result, implementing school-based efforts to serve youth at risk of delinquency or those involved in the juvenile court system can be almost impossible. However, schools and communities frequently have services that might help at-risk youth. The main challenge consists of linking at-risk youth to the services.

Third, support evaluations of school-based interventions. Evaluations can be critical for ensuring successful implementation of school-based interventions that involve cross-agency collaborations. They also are essential for estimating impacts. Both go together. In the ideal instance, process evaluations are undertaken to help guide a program toward successful implementation, then impact evaluations are undertaken to assess impacts.

The Palm Beach County
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1. Statement of the Problem

In the 1980s, school districts around the country began to implement "get tough" responses to juvenile offending. Simultaneously, and consistent with the broader tough-on-crime movement, schools focused their attention on high-risk youth and on more punitive, and less rehabilitative, interventions. In more recent years, there has been recognition that a more balanced approach, one that provides for accountability and for rehabilitation and support, may be a more effective way to promote student and school success. To this end, schools have sought to develop interventions that reduce offending, juvenile court referrals, and school-based behavioral problems, and, at the same time, improve academic outcomes such as attendance, academic promotion, and grades. There is a need not only to develop such interventions but also to evaluate their effectiveness and to examine factors that influence their implementation.

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Funding for this study supported a targeted intervention in four high schools, each of which had a high concentration of youth at risk of delinquency, as well as an evaluation of the intervention. The SDPBC's intervention was designed to include several components. *First*, it provides a school-based approach. It capitalizes on the extensive period of time youth spend in school by aiming to provide more, and more effective, supervision and support for students who have had contact with law enforcement or the juvenile court. *Second*, it uses a comprehensive, wraparound strategy that emphasizes a collaborative, team-based approach—one building on collaborations among the schools, law enforcement, the juvenile court, and service and treatment providers—to supervision and intervention. *Third*, several key features of the intervention's design include identification of at-risk youth, informal assessment of their needs, development of intervention plans, monitoring of the implementation of these plans, monitoring of youth, team meetings of key personnel with youth, group counseling, crisis intervention, advocacy for youth, and referrals where appropriate for mental health and substance abuse services. *Fourth*, it relies on several staff positions to implement the intervention. These include a school-based juvenile probation officer (JPO), case manager, and family counselor. The JPO is a school-based officer who monitors youth in the school; the case manager develops interventions focused on at-risk youth; and the family counselor works with the JPO and case manager to undertake several activities. These include a range of efforts that seek to promote improved supervision and

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intervention with law enforcement- and court-involved youth and, more broadly, to improve safety and student performance throughout the school.

Below, we place this study in context and then describe the program and evaluation findings. To this end, the report is structured as follows. *Section 2* describes the goals and objectives of the program and the study. *Section 3* describes the context of the intervention and study. *Section 4* describes the intervention, including key program staff and services. (A separate report—*The Causal Logic Model of the Palm Beach County School Safety and Student Performance Program*—describes the program's causal logic.) *Section 5* presents the research design, including a discussion of all three parts of the evaluation (the evaluation of the program's impact on students, the evaluation of the program's impact on schools, and the process evaluation), the study's guiding research questions, and the study's data and analytic approach. *Section 6* presents the findings for the impact evaluation that focuses on the program's effects on students. *Section 7* presents the findings for the impact evaluation that focuses on the program's effects on schools. *Section 8* presents the findings of the process evaluation. *Section 9* concludes by discussing the study's implications for research, policy, and practice as well as the study's limitations. *Section 10* provides all references cited in the report. *Section 11* provides all referenced tables for the student-level impact analyses. And, finally, *section 12* provides all referenced tables and figures for the school-level impact analyses.

2. Goals and Objectives

The purpose of this project was to implement and evaluate a school-based intervention that aimed to improve school safety, reduce school misconduct and referrals to juvenile court, and improve students' behavioral and academic outcomes. To assess the effect of the intervention on students and schools, respectively, the evaluation employed a mixed methods approach that included (1) an experimental design in which students were randomly assigned to the program or a control group, (2) a longitudinal analysis of intervention and comparison schools to assess school-level effects, and (3) a process evaluation that documented how well the program implementation conformed with the program's design, barriers and facilitators to effective implementation, and strategies other schools and districts might use to implement the intervention successfully. The reliance on an experimental design is a central strength of this study. Despite the fact that randomized trials are generally considered the "gold standard" for assessing internal validity, they continue to be the exception rather than the rule in criminological research (Weisburd 2010; Welsh et al. 2013). An additional strength of the study is the incorporation of a process evaluation, which was used to monitor implementation, identify strategies for improving implementation, and glean lessons about how other districts might successfully implement similar interventions (Laub 2012). Three goals guided the evaluation.

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Objectives related to goal 1 included assessing the impact of wraparound services and, for youth on probation, school-based probation on future delinquency, school attendance, and academic performance for both law enforcement- and court-involved youth. To achieve these objectives, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

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3. Does it improve school attendance among at-risk youth?
4. Does it increase grade advancement among at-risk youth?
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1. Does the intervention reduce schools' rates of disciplinary infractions?
2. Does it reduce school suspensions and improve student academic performance?

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3. Does it improve school climate, as assessed through school climate surveys?

Goal 3. Assess how well the intervention is implemented, document barriers and facilitators to effective implementation of the intervention, and identify strategies that other school districts could use to successfully adopt a similar intervention. Objectives related to goal 3 included assessing the intervention's implementation, documenting barriers and facilitators to successful implementation, and identifying how the intervention might be successfully transferred to or adopted by other schools or school districts. Here, the research questions included:

1. What intervention activities were fully implemented with fidelity to program design?

2. What activities were viewed by program staff as most effective in improving outcomes?

3. What factors inhibit or facilitate full and quality implementation of program activities?

4. What approaches would contribute to successful adoption of the intervention?

3. Literature Review

School districts across the country have been under intense pressure to ensure that their schools are safe places for students to learn and excel. Research has shown that a small number of youth tend to be the most disruptive in school and commit a disproportionately high number of delinquent acts (Catalano et al. 1999; Ford 2013; Johnston 2013). Interventions that target and work with these students may have the most profound impact on both individual behavior and overall school climate (Sugai et al. 2000; Todd et al. 2008; Stormshak et al. 2016; Farrington et al. 2017). At the same time, studies establish that at-risk, though not necessarily high-risk, youth constitute an important target population. Indeed, the juvenile court is guided by a logic that emphasizes the importance of early intervention to reduce the likelihood that youth offending and problems in other arenas, including academic performance, do not escalate (Feld and Bishop 2012). That same logic points to the importance of school-based interventions that target at-risk youth and that rely on a comprehensive, multi-system, or "wraparound," approach.

The SDPBC pilot initiative, described further below, was designed in response to this logic. It focused on court-involved youth and it relied on a comprehensive approach within schools. The school-based dimension was strategic; schools provide a unique setting through which to identify at-risk youth, to provide services, to enhance probation supervision efforts, and to facilitate effective inter-agency and multi-system collaboration. For example, by situating JPOs in schools and creating opportunities for them to collaborate with school personnel, schools can help to ensure that early intervention and close monitoring of court-involved youth can occur.

The emphasis on targeting multiple risk factors through a school-based approach stems from several considerations. Research suggests that such factors as severe poverty, abuse, neglect, and disabilities all can contribute to increased delinquency (Gordon et al. 1988; Altschuler and Armstrong 1994; Catalano et al. 1999; Allen-Meares 2010; Feld and Bishop 2012). Alongside such work is research on school-based social work interventions that target at-risk middle and high school students with behavioral, learning, or emotional problems; it suggests that classroom behavior can be improved through a focus on multiple risk factors (Allen-Meares et al. 2013). Studies on cognitive behavioral group counseling (Larkin and Thyer 1999; Parton and Manby 2009; Eiraldi et al. 2016; Farrington et al. 2017) and interpersonal group counseling (Mishna and Muskat 2004) also have demonstrated promise for improving youths' behavior at school (Kavanagh et al. 2009; Kim and Franklin 2009). Many schools also rely on school resource officers and social workers to attend to the needs of different groups of youth (Catalano et al. 1999). Such individuals may be uniquely equipped to intervene with at-risk youth in school settings. In short, a consistent theme in research on school-based interventions is that there are unique opportunities to help youth by providing services, monitoring, and supervision in a highly structured setting (Feld and Bishop 2012; Gottfredson 2001, 2017).

Prior research on a parallel effort—school-based probation—has shown that juvenile court officer supervision in schools can lower levels of absenteeism, dropout, detentions, and suspensions while simultaneously improving academic performance. However, studies of such efforts have had methodological limitations that make it difficult to generalize their findings. For example, evaluations of a school-based probation program in Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, found that students who received probation services had better attendance, fewer instances of serious recidivism, fewer custodial placements, and fewer placement days (Clouser 1995; Griffin 1999; Metzger and Tobin-Fiore 1997; Torbet et al. 2001). Similarly, an evaluation of a Los

Angeles school-based probation program found that students' attendance increased while suspensions, expulsions, arrests, and violations decreased (Fain et al. 2010). In both studies, random assignment was not used and demographic and geographic differences between students in the studies' groups may have biased the estimated effects, in turn raising questions about whether the interventions were effective. Despite the methodological shortcomings, these studies and others suggest that school-based probation may reduce offending and school misconduct and improve academic performance (Griffin 1999; Collins et al. 2014).

The SDPBC intervention's logic stemmed as well from research over the past several decades that has highlighted the connection between drug abuse and youth offending and other outcomes (Prichard and Payne 2005; Van der Put et al. 2014). Adolescents who abuse drugs often suffer from other conditions, including depression, anxiety disorders, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, and conduct problems (Wilens et al. 1997). A comprehensive approach to treating such adolescents can allow for a more successful recovery. Indeed, research indicates that a multi-targeted approach, which includes the support of family members and the community (such as parents, peers, school counselors, and mentors), can be critical for an adolescent's recovery from substance abuse. Evaluations of treatment programs suggest that they can reduce illicit drug use (Finch et al. 2014). Some of the more promising research comes from evaluations of "recovery" high schools that are designed for students with substance abuse disorders (e.g., White and Finch 2006; Moberg and Finch 2008; Hennessey et al. 2016). Such schools can be either stand-alone schools or programs within traditional high schools. These programs aim to function as continuing care providers and, in so doing, reinforce and sustain therapeutic benefits gained from treatment. The most common feature of the interventions is an intensive therapeutic and peer recovery support system that is school-based. These programs enable teachers, counselors, peers, and staff to provide structured, recovery-focused programming and support to adolescents. The therapeutic programming allows for a broader continuum of services than exists in most traditional schools or in typical substance abuse programs targeting teenagers.

Mental health problems are more prevalent among youth with delinquency and school misconduct histories (Stahlberg et al. 2010; Walter et al. 2011). Accordingly, programs, such as the SDPBC's, that target mental health may be instrumental in improving not only mental health outcomes for youth but also delinquency and school performance outcomes. For example, Hoagwood and Erwin (1997) found that from 1985-1995, there were 228 evaluations of school-based mental health services for children. They conducted a study of all evaluations that included random assignment to the intervention condition, a control group, and standardized outcome measures. Sixteen evaluations met these criteria. They identified three types of interventions that improved mental health and other outcomes among program participants: cognitive behavioral therapy, social skills training, and teacher consultations.

Research on juvenile justice interventions compliment such work and suggests that timely and targeted comprehensive, or wraparound, treatment approaches can be highly effective at reducing recidivism (Gottfredson 1986; Altschuler and Armstrong 1994; Henggeler 1997; Catalano et al. 1999; Feld and Bishop 2012; McCarter 2016). These interventions typically focus on a juvenile's family, school, and community, and address a range of factors, including drug abuse, mental illness, family dysfunction, strains resulting from difficulties at home or school, and negative peer influences. Interventions that use a wraparound approach can improve delinquency and other outcomes, including at-school behavior and performance (Catalano et al.

1999; Eber 2008; Fagan 2013; Oesterle et al. 2014; Van Horn et al. 2014; McCarter 2016).

The central importance of targeting multiple risk factors and criminogenic influences has been emphasized in a large body of research. Meta-analyses consistently show that effective interventions typically use a multifaceted approach to address multiple youth needs and emphasize full and quality implementation (Lipsey 2009). Interventions that rely on counseling and skills training tend to be more effective than those based primarily on strategies of control or punishment. Lipsey's (2009) meta-analysis found that program effectiveness is greatly enhanced if the program is well-implemented, thus underscoring the need not only for interventions that address multiple risks and needs among at-risk youth but also for concomitant efforts to monitor implementation and to take steps to make improvements when problems arise.

Multisystemic therapy (MST) further exemplifies the potential effectiveness of a holistic approach, such as the SDPBC's intervention, for reducing recidivism among delinquent juveniles (Henggeler 1997; cf. Van der Stouwe et al. 2014; Vidal et al. 2017; Eeren et al. 2018). MST is an intensive family- and community-based program that focuses on addressing all environmental systems that affect youth, including their families, peers, schools, and neighborhoods. MST recognizes that each system plays a critical role in a youth's world and each system requires attention to create effective change. MST uses a combination of empirically-based treatments, such as cognitive behavior therapy and behavioral parent training.

Another illustration of an effective wraparound approach is functional family therapy (FFT), a short-term intervention targeting youth and their families. FFT works to develop family members' inner strengths and self-efficacy (Sexton and Alexander 2000). Research has shown that when well-implemented, FFT can reduce recidivism (Klein et. al. 1977; Gordon et. al. 1988; Sexton and Alexander 1999; Alexander et al. 2000; Mendel 2000; Sexton and Alexander 2000; Sexton and Turner 2010; Baglivio et al. 2014; Humayun et al. 2017; Eeren et al. 2018).

The findings from prior research and program evaluations suggest that schools may offer a unique setting in which to help youth. In particular, school-based efforts to improve school safety, reduce student delinquency, and improve academic outcomes may be effective if they involve a multifaceted, multi-system approach. SDPBC adopted precisely such an approach.

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4. The School-Based Delinquency Prevention Intervention

The School Safety and Student Performance Program was implemented in the School District of Palm Beach County from 2015 to 2018 and was based on a pilot initiative, at one school, that the district had developed in the preceding years. Funding for this project supported a targeted intervention in four high schools, each of which had a high concentration of youth at risk of delinquency, as well as an evaluation of the intervention. The intervention aimed to improve at-risk students' behavior and academic performance and to improve schoolwide safety and academic performance. A description of the program's components and the theoretical logic guiding its development can be found in this study's accompanying report, *The Causal Logic Model of the Palm Beach County School Safety and Student Performance Program*.

Briefly, as discussed in that report and as noted above, the intervention evaluated in this report was designed as follows. *First*, it entailed a collaboration between the schools, the school's police department, the juvenile court, and several service providers. *Second*, the intervention focused on at-risk youth, including those who had some type of police contact or were involved in the juvenile justice system through probation or diversion programs. *Third*, the intervention placed juvenile probation officers (JPOs) in schools along with family counselors and case managers. The JPOs provided school-based supervision only for youth who were on probation. *Fourth*, intervention plans were developed by the intervention team for youth who were randomly assigned to the intervention group. *Fifth*, all students participated voluntarily; participation only occurred after assent and consent protocols were followed. *Sixth*, the intervention consisted of identifying services that could assist the youth and that would go beyond other interventions or supervision to which they were subject to as part of the conditions of school sanctions, probation, or diversion or juvenile first-time offender program requirements. *Finally*, the express goal of the intervention was not to be punitive but instead to identify ways to help youth refrain from delinquency or misconduct and to succeed academically. An additional goal was to help improve schoolwide safety and academic performance.

5. Research Design and Methods

To assess the effect of the intervention on students and schools, respectively, the evaluation employed a mixed methods approach that included (1) an experimental design in which youth were randomly assigned to the program or a control group, (2) a longitudinal analysis of intervention and comparison schools to assess school-level effects, and (3) a process evaluation that documented how well the program implementation conformed with the program's design, barriers and facilitators to effective implementation, and strategies other schools and districts might use to implement the intervention successfully. The SDPBC was responsible for implementing the program and recruiting eligible youth. In addition, the SDPBC took responsibility for creating some of the data for the study and for providing administrative data for analysis. DJJ was responsible for hiring and training the JPOs and for providing juvenile justice system data on students in the study. FSU was responsible for the random assignment of assented and consented youth to the intervention and control groups, conducting site visits, and all analyses. The random assignment of youth and the examination of data files from the SDPBC and DJJ was done with deidentified information. Thus, the FSU researchers had no information that could be used to identify specific youth.

5.1. Overview of Research Activities

This project entailed a range of research activities. A brief overview of each is provided here; additional details are provided in subsequent sections. *For the evaluation as a whole*, the research team, before undertaking any data collection or analyses, secured clearance from FSU's Institutional Review Board. This clearance entailed approval for the project as well as approval of protocols for assenting and consenting youth and their parents. FSU then worked with SDPBC to identify the program's causal logic—that is, the various components of the program and how each of them were anticipated to contribute to student- and school-level effects. The causal logic is described briefly in section 4 and more fully in a separate report (*The Causal Logic Model of the Palm Beach County School Safety and Student Performance Program*).

For the student-level impact evaluation, the research team consulted with the SDPBC about practices for identifying and recruiting eligible students. The SDPBC undertook the recruitment, assent, and consent processes. Once students and their parents assented and consented to participate, youth were randomly assigned to the intervention or control group following the randomization protocols developed by the FSU research team. Separately, the researchers built a data collection instrument for SDPBC program staff to complete for each youth. The SDPBC and DJJ created data files that included information from SDPBC administrative records, the researcher-built data collection instrument, and DJJ records on delinquency.

For the school-level impact evaluation, FSU worked with the SDPBC to identify school-level data sources. The information and recommendations from SDPBC staff were used to help identify schools that were similar to the intervention schools with respect to pre-intervention trends on the school-level outcomes examined in the study. These schools thus could serve as a basis for comparison to identify potential schoolwide program benefits.

For the process evaluation, FSU developed data collection and coding procedures to be used for observation, interview, focus group, and survey data. The researchers conducted 13 site visits (5 visits in year 1, 4 visits in year 2, and 4 visits in year 3). During the visits, researchers

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met with program stakeholders, conducted focus groups with program administrators and staff, and interviewed program and school administrators and staff. The process evaluation also included the administration of 2 surveys of program and school administrators and staff (one survey at the end of year 1 and one survey at the end of year 2).

5.2. Program Effects on Students

The research questions guiding this evaluation focused on the program's impact on participants, the program's impact on schools, and how well the intervention was implemented. Specific questions that guided each part of the evaluation are discussed below. The research questions guiding the evaluation of the program's impact-on-youth included: (1) Does the intervention reduce at-risk youths' likelihood of future police contact? (2) Does it reduce at-risk youths' likelihood of misconduct at school? (3) Does it improve school attendance among at-risk youth? (4) Does it increase grade advancement among at-risk youth? (5) Does it improve academic performance among at-risk youth?

Sample

This program and study focused on five groups of youth, all of whom had had some form of contact with law enforcement or the juvenile court. The first group, *school-referred youth* (i.e., youth referred to school administrators by police), allegedly engaged in delinquent behavior, but, in lieu of arrest, were referred by school police to school administrators for disciplinary action. These youth may have received school-based sanctions but did not receive arrest records or police-ordered sanctions for these offenses. This group was added in year two of the study. The second group, *intake youth*, had police contact and were awaiting dispositions from the juvenile court. Their eventual outcomes could range from dismissal of their cases to placement in a residential facility. The third group, *juvenile first-time offenders (JFO)*, had police contact after engaging in delinquent behavior. The police, instead of arresting the youth, issued a civil citation (a mechanism for sanctioning youth in a manner that can avoid an arrest or conviction) or referred them to a youth court for JFOs. Youth who successfully completed their JFO sanctions did not receive arrest records for these offenses. The fourth group, *diverted youth*, were arrested, referred to the juvenile court, and required to complete programming or informal sanctions (e.g., community service hours). The youth who successfully completed the programing or sanctions did not receive an official juvenile court record of delinquency. They did, however, have an arrest record. The fifth group, *probationers*, engaged in delinquency that resulted in the juvenile court placing them on probation. Youth who had previously been committed to a juvenile residential facility were not eligible to participate in this program or study.

The student-level impact evaluation included 863 youth who assented and consented to participate in the evaluation. Of these youth, 39% were school-referred youth, 5% were intake youth, 14% were JFOs, 25% were diverted youth, and 17% were probationers. Overall, 436 were assigned to the intervention condition and 427 to the control condition.

In the last semester of the program, the enrolled youth represented approximately 48% of the total number of eligible youth across the study period. Some eligible youth could not be enrolled because they transferred to other schools (8%), graduated (6%), or withdrew from school (2%) before being consented. In addition, program staff were unable to reach 16% of eligible youth to

inform them about the study and complete the assent process. Approximately 17% of eligible youth declined to participate, and approximately 1% of parents declined to give consent. Finally, a few eligible youth were not included because they entered residential facilities or detention centers, because they withdrew consent after initially agreeing to participate, because they died, or for other miscellaneous reasons.

Data

The student-level data came from multiple sources, including school records from the SDPBC, delinquency records from DJJ, and a participant tracking form that SDPBC used to record services that youth received. These three data sources are described immediately below.

SDPBC Data

Students' academic and school behavior information came from the SDPBC. The analyses drew on data from the academic year prior to a youth's enrollment in the study, from the year of the youth's enrollment, and, when available, from the year following the youth's enrollment. For example, if a youth first enrolled in the study during the 2015-16 school year, data from 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17 were analyzed for that youth. The SDPBC data included information on youths' school attendance and performance, their grade promotion, and their school delinquency. Specific measures included:

1. Grade point average. A continuous indicator of the youth's unweighted academic grade point average during a given year. The range was 0 to 4.

2. Retained. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth was retained or "held back" a grade at the end of the school year. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

3. Withdrew. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth withdrew from school during or at the end of a given academic year for any reason other than transferring to a different school, graduating, or completing a high school equivalency degree or certification. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

4. Transferred. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth transferred to a different school during a given academic year. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes). (This measure was added to our data collection efforts following anecdotal reports that youth at times were transferred to other schools for disciplinary reasons.)

5. Graduated. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth received a high school diploma, a high school equivalency degree, or a high school certification in a given academic year. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

6. Days absent, unexcused. A continuous indicator of the youth's number of unexcused absences during a given school year. The range was 0 to 118.

7. Days absent, excused. A continuous indicator of the youth's number of excused absences during a given school year. The range was 0 to 36.

8. Days absent, total. A continuous indicator of the youth's total number of absences during a given school year. The range was 0 to 118.

9. Office disciplinary referrals, total. A continuous indicator of the youth's total number of administratively recorded office referrals for disciplinary incidents during a given school year. The range was 0 to 39. Recorded events ranged from relatively minor acts, such as insubordination and dress code violations, to more serious acts, such as major theft and physical assault. SDPBC provided the incident type for each referral, which allowed the FSU researchers to examine subcategories of disciplinary referrals as described in numbers 11, 13, and 15 below.

10. Any office disciplinary referrals. A dichotomous version of the office disciplinary referrals variable just described. The range was 0 to 1.

11. Office disciplinary referrals, criminal offenses. A continuous indicator of the youth's total number of office disciplinary referrals for criminal offenses during a given school year. The range was 0 to 7. Criminal offenses included acts that could trigger law enforcement involvement. The most common acts were physical aggression, fighting, tobacco/alcohol/drug possession, petty theft, vandalism, and weapons possession.

12. Any office disciplinary referrals for criminal offenses. A dichotomous version of the office disciplinary referrals for criminal offenses variable just described. The range was 0 to 1.

13. Office disciplinary referrals for disruptive misbehavior. A continuous indicator of the youth's total number of office disciplinary referrals for disruptive behavior during a given school year. The range was 0 to 21. Disruptive behaviors included acts that disrupted the school day but were unlikely to lead to an arrest, such as defiance/insubordination, using obscene language, using disrespectful language, and causing a disruption on a bus.

14. Any office disciplinary referrals for disruptive misbehavior. A dichotomous version of the office disciplinary referrals for disruptive misbehavior variable just described. The range was 0 to 1.

15. Office disciplinary referrals for school rule violations. A continuous indicator of the youth's total number of office disciplinary referrals for school rule violations during a given school year. The range was 0 to 31. These rule violations included acts such as failing to comply with school rules, being out of one's assigned area, habitual tardiness, and dress code violations.

16. Any office disciplinary referrals for school rule violations. A dichotomous version of the office disciplinary referrals for school rule violations just described. The range was 0 to 1.

17. Total number of suspensions. A continuous indicator of the number of school suspensions the youth received during a given school year. The range was 0 to 4.

18. Number of days suspended. A continuous indicator of the total number of days the youth was suspended during that school year. The range was 0 to 40.

19. Any suspensions. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth received any suspensions during a given school year. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

20. Number of in-school suspensions. A continuous indicator of the number of in-school suspensions the youth received during a given school year. The range was 0 to 2.

21. Number of days on in-school suspension. A dichotomous indicator of the total number of days the youth was placed on in-school suspension during a given school year. The range was 0 to 21.

22. Any in-school suspensions. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth received any in-school suspensions during a given school year. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

23. Number of out-of-school suspensions. A continuous indicator of the number of out-of-school suspensions the youth received during a given school year. The range was 0 to 2.

24. Number of days on out-of-school suspension. A continuous indicator of the total number of days the youth was placed on out-of-school suspension during a given school year. The range was 0 to 25.

25. Any out-of-school suspensions. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth received any out-of-school suspensions during a given school year. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

DJJ Data

Law enforcement data came from DJJ. These data include items on youths' police involvement during the year (365 days) before and the 90 days after the youths' enrollment in the program. These data include the following measures:

1. Justice system contact. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth was arrested or received a civil citation during a given year. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes). Most youth scoring 1 had been arrested; civil citations were much less common. A civil citation is issued by law enforcement in lieu of an arrest. Youth receiving civil citations must complete sanctions, typically assigned at a youth court hearing. Youth who successfully complete their sanctions will not have that arrest entered onto their official record.

DJJ provided additional details about these justice system contacts, which allowed FSU to examine three specific subgroups of offenses, as described below in numbers 2, 3, and 4.

2. Justice system contact, misdemeanor offense. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth received an arrest or civil citation for a misdemeanor offense during a given period of time. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

3. Justice system contact, felony offense. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth received an arrest for a felony offense during a given period of time. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

4. Justice system contact, school-based offense. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth received an arrest or civil citation for a school-based offense during a given period of time. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes). School-based arrests and civil citations were those that occurred on school grounds, on school busses, or at school events.

Program-Related Data

Program-related data for intervention youth were collected by program staff during the course of the intervention and covered years 2015-2018. These items include information about the specific services assigned by the program staff to youth in the intervention group. Below, each of the items are described.

1. Number of team meetings. A continuous indicator of the number of meetings between two or more members of the interdisciplinary treatment team about the youth. The range was 0 to 30.

As described in more detail above, the intervention involved coordinated efforts and referrals by program case managers, program family counselors, program JPOs, and various school staff, such as teachers and guidance counselors.

2. Written plan developed. A dichotomous indicator of whether the intervention team developed a written plan for the youth's treatment. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

3. Any academic interventions. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth was referred to any academic interventions (e.g., credit recovery programs, tutoring, and enrollment in elective reading courses) by the intervention team. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

4. Number of academic interventions. A continuous indicator of the number of academic interventions the youth was referred to by the intervention team. The range was 0 to 30.

5. Any behavioral interventions. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth was referred to any behavioral interventions (e.g., restorative justice circles, Functional Behavior Assessments, and mediation) by the intervention team. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

6. Number of behavioral interventions. A continuous indicator of the number of behavioral interventions the youth was referred to by the intervention team. The range was 0 to 30.

7. Attendance interventions. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth received any attendance interventions from the intervention team. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes). Attendance interventions included actions such as monitoring the youth's attendance and making wake-up calls.

8. Any home visits. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth received any home visits from program staff. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

9. Number of home visits. A continuous indicator of the number of visits made by program staff to the youth's home. The range was 0 to 14.

10. Dropout recovery intervention. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth was referred to a dropout prevention intervention. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

11. Mental health counseling provided. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth received mental health counseling from the program staff. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

12. Mental health referral. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth was referred for an external mental health evaluation. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

13. Substance abuse referral. A dichotomous indicator of whether the youth was referred for an external substance abuse health evaluation. The range was 0 (no) to 1 (yes).

Methods

Random Assignment

Once enrolled in the program, students were randomly assigned to the intervention or control conditions. Randomization was conducted separately for each group of youth (e.g., diversion youth, probation youth) within each school. There were two main phases to the process.

First, before the program and study began, FSU generated a list of random condition assignments for each group*school combination. A block randomization strategy, with blocks of

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4 or 6 depending on expected group size, was used to ensure approximate size balance between the intervention and control groups. For example, for the probation lists, the block strategy ensured that 2 of every "block" of 4 assignments would be made to the intervention condition and the other 2 to the control condition. The resulting lists contained the condition assignments of the future youth participants.

Second, after the program and study began, when a youth and their parents completed the assent and consent processes, SDPBC contacted FSU with the youth's group and school, and FSU identified the next unused condition assignment on that school-and-group's list.

Analytic Methods

To compare intervention condition and comparison condition youth on a given variable or outcome, first, the youths' scores on the outcome were averaged separately by condition. In the tables in this report, averages on continuous outcomes are expressed as means and averages on dichotomous outcomes are expressed as percentages. Second, significance levels for the differences between conditions were computed. These p-values were based on t-tests for continuous variables, bivariate logistic regression analyses for dichotomous variables, and negative binomial regression analyses for skewed count variables. Following these analyses of data from the full sample, the two steps were repeated on data from subsamples defined by year of enrollment in the program (year 1 versus years 2 and 3) and by group of youth (TOTS, diversion youth, etc.).

Sample sizes varied, in some cases considerably, between analyses for two reasons. First, some youth had missing data on isolated variables and were not included in the analyses of those variables. Second, different data elements become available at different times of year (e.g., annual GPA is not available until several months after the end of the school year). Data elements that had not yet been created or compiled by the time of this study's data collection could not be included in the analyses. The sample sizes for all analyses are given in the tables.

5.3. Program Effects on Schools

The research questions guiding the evaluation of the program's impact-on-schools included: (1) Does the intervention reduce schools' rates of disciplinary infractions? (2) Does it reduce school suspensions and expulsions and improve student grades? (3) Does it improve school climate, as assessed through school climate surveys?

Data

The examination of the program's impact on schools relied on data on the intervention schools, 4 comparison schools, and 12 other public high schools in the school district. The data spanned 2004-2018 and came from the Florida Department of Education's (DOE) Public School Data Reports, School Accountability Reports, and School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) System; the SDPBC's Gold Reports and Executive Summaries; and SDPBC's School Effectiveness Questionnaires (SEQ), which are school climate surveys administered to teachers, students, and parents at each school in the district. These data are publicly available. Information about the sources can be found in section 12 of this report.

The DOE data and the SDPBC Gold Reports and Executive Summaries provided information about the percentages of students in each school that experienced some outcome, such as graduation or suspension. They also provided information about the standardized rates of misconduct. The SEQs provided information on the percentages of teachers, students, and parents who agreed with various statements about their schools. For example, the reports gave the percentage of parents who agreed with the statement, "I feel that my child is safe at school."

In total, the school-level impact analyses examined 29 different outcomes. The data analyzed included all school years from 2004-05 to 2017-18 for which a given outcome measure was available. Some measures were not collected prior to specific years; others were not available for the most recent year(s). Specific outcome measures included:

1. Graduation rate. Taken from the SDPBC Executive Summaries.

2. Stability rate. Taken from the DOE Public School Data Reports. The stability rate represents the percentage of students who remained at the school without interruption during the school year.

3. Percent of teachers who feel student dropout rates are a concern. Taken from the SEQ. As with all SEQ-based measures, in the preparation of the SEQ reports individual teachers' responses were aggregated to the school level to compute a schoolwide percentage. This measure was not available before the 2014-15 school year.

4. Percent of graduating students enrolled in post-secondary education. Taken from the SDPBC Executive Summaries. This measure was not available before the 2007-08 school year.

5. Percent of seniors who have taken the SAT. Taken from the SDPBC Gold Reports.

6. SAT mean score. Taken from the SDPBC Gold Reports.

7. ACT mean score. Taken from the SDPBC Gold Reports.

8. Absentee rate. Taken from the SDPBC Gold Reports.

9. Percent of teachers who feel student absenteeism is a concern. Taken from the SEQ. This measure was not available before the 2014-15 school year.

10. Truancy rate. Taken from the DOE Public School Data Reports.

11. Percent of teachers who feel student truancy is a concern. Taken from the SEQ. This measure was not available before the 2014-15 school year.

12. SESIR incidents per 100 students. Taken from the DOE SESIR system reports. Includes school-reported information on 26 types of crime and misconduct that occur on school grounds or vehicles or at school events. Any incidents reported to law enforcement must be reported to the state, though schools also can include other incidents. This measure was not available before the 2007-08 school year.

13. SESIR violent incidents per 100 students. As with the general SESIR incident measure, this measure was taken from the DOE SESIR system reports and was not available before the 2007-08 school year. Violent incidents included arson, battery, fighting, homicide, kidnapping, robbery, and sexual battery.

14. SESIR drug and alcohol incidents per 100 students. As with the general SESIR incident measure, this measure was taken from the DOE SESIR system reports and was not available

before the 2007-08 school year. Drug and alcohol incidents included alcohol offenses, drug sales, drug use offenses, and tobacco offenses.

15. SESIR incidents reported to police per 100 students. As with the general SESIR incident measure, this measure was taken from the DOE SESIR system reports and was not available before the 2007-08 school year. Incidents reported to police included those for which official action was taken by a school resource officer or law enforcement officer, including assigning a case number, filing a report, filing an affidavit, conducting an investigation, or making an arrest.

16. SESIR violent incidents reported to police per 100 students. As with the general SESIR incident measure, this measure was taken from the DOE SESIR system reports and was not available before the 2007-08 school year. This measure captured the set of violent incidents, as defined above, which were reported to police, as defined above.

17. SESIR drug and alcohol incidents reported to police per 100 students. As with the general SESIR incident measure, this measure was taken from the DOE SESIR system reports and was not available before the 2007-08 school year. This measure captured the set of drug and alcohol incidents, as defined above, which were reported to police, as defined above.

18. In-school suspension rate. Taken from the SDPBC Gold Reports.

19. Out-of-school suspension rate. Taken from the SDPBC Gold Reports.

20. Percent of students who feel their school has a positive climate. Taken from the SEQ. It is a scale of 19 items tapping youths' agreement with statements such as "I care about school," "I am regularly reminded about academic goals," and "Students are treated with respect by adults at this school." Data were only available for school years 2010-11, 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2016-17.

21. Percent of students who feel their parents are involved in their school. Taken from the SEQ. It is a scale of 6 items tapping the youth's agreement with statements such as "My parents often attend parent conferences at my school" and "I often talk to my parents about what I have done in school." Data were only available for school years 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2016-17.

22. Percent of students who feel unsafe at school. Taken from the SEQ. It is a scale of 5 items tapping the youth's agreement with statements such as "I have had problems this year with students at school" and "Students at this school are often threatened or bullied." Data were only available for school years 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2016-17.

23. Percent of parents who feel their child has a positive school climate. Taken from the SEQ. It is a scale of 16 items tapping parents' agreement with statements such as "My child cares about school," "Students in my child's school respect each other," and "Discipline at my child's school is administered fairly." Data were only available for school years 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2016-17.

24. Percent of parents who feel they are involved in their child's school. Taken from the SEQ. It is a scale of 9 items tapping parents' agreement with statements such as "This school provides me with helpful ideas on how to support my child's learning at home" and "I often attend parent conferences at my child's school." Data were only available for school years 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2016-17.

25. Percent of parents who feel their child is unsafe at school. Taken from the SEQ. It is a scale of 4 items tapping parents' agreement with statements such as "My child at this school is

often teased or picked on" and "My child has problems traveling between home and school." Data were only available for school years 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2016-17.

26. Percent of teachers who feel student conduct is an issue. Taken from the SEQ. It is a scale of 11 items tapping teachers' agreement that student racial tension, student bullying, student verbal abuse of teachers, widespread disorder in classrooms, student disrespect for teachers, student tardiness, student absenteeism, student pregnancy, student dropouts, students coming to school unprepared to learn, and student disrespect for persons of a different race or ethnicity were concerns in their school. Data were unavailable prior to the 2011-12 school year.

27. Percent of teachers who feel bullying is an issue. Taken from the SEQ. This measure was not available before the 2014-15 school year.

28. Percent of teachers who feel classroom disorder is an issue. Taken from the SEQ. This measure was not available before the 2014-15 school year.

29. Percent of teachers who feel student disrespect for teachers is an issue. Taken from the SEQ. This measure was not available before the 2014-15 school year.

Methods

Comparison Schools

To identify the set of comparison schools, FSU examined pretest (i.e., prior to 2015) data from the DOE SESIR Reports and from SDPBC's Gold Reports. Specific measures examined were schools' sizes, racial and ethnic compositions, free and reduced cost lunch eligibility rates, English language learner rates, Title 1 statuses, school grades (state-generated summaries of a school's annual performance), teacher qualifications, graduation rates, truancy rates, and SESIR incident rates. Examination of these measures was supplemented by recommendations from SDPBC project staff and by information provided by school district employees who had attended or worked at the intervention schools or the potential comparison schools. The four schools that best resembled the set of treatment schools were chosen for the comparison set.

Analytic Methods

Four steps were taken to compare the intervention schools and comparison schools across each outcome variable. First, the four intervention schools' scores on the given measure were averaged (separately for each year examined). Second, the four comparison schools' scores on the given measure were averaged (separately for each year examined). Third, all district schools' scores on the given measure were averaged (excluding the four intervention schools and the pilot school). Finally, these averages were plotted, and the resulting trends—and the differences between them—were examined.

5.4. Program Implementation

The research questions guiding the process evaluation included: (1) What intervention activities were fully implemented with fidelity to program design? (2) What activities were viewed by program staff as most effective in improving outcomes? (3) What factors inhibit or

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facilitate full and quality implementation of program activities? (4) What approaches would contribute to successful adoption of the intervention?

Data

Data for the process evaluation come from document reviews, observations, interviews, focus groups, and surveys conducted during the course of the intervention's implementation. *Documents* were collected, when available, throughout the entire course of the evaluation. Examples include documents used to train program staff. Similarly, *observations* occurred during site visits and discussions with the SDPBC and stakeholders.

Interviews occurred at several times throughout the intervention. Program administrators and staff (e.g., principal investigator, program managers, case managers, family counselors, JPOs), as well as school administrators and staff (e.g., principals, assistant principals, school police) were interviewed for this process evaluation. These interviews focused on respondents' roles in the program, expectations for how the program would affect students and schools, perceptions about how the program was actually affecting students and schools, and barriers and facilitators to successful implementation of the program.

Focus groups were conducted with program administrators and staff and aimed to help identify variation in program implementation and effects, and barriers and facilitators to successful implementation.

Surveys were sent to program and school administrators and staff. Similar to the focus of the interviews and focus groups, the surveys aimed to identify what factors facilitated and inhibited implementation. The surveys served as well to identify variation in administration and staff views of the program and its effectiveness.

Methods

At the evaluation's start, the researchers identified themes from prior literature that were anticipated to arise in this process evaluation. For example, we anticipated that staff training and turnover might vary across schools and, in turn, potentially influence program implementation. Themes continued to be identified throughout the project. These themes were used to guide development and analysis of the process evaluation data.

The primary qualitative research activity centered on the interviews and focus groups. Over the course of the project, 13 site visits were conducted. Eight site visits focused on interviewing program and school administrators and staff. Three separate visits included focus groups with program staff. (The other two visits focused on project management items.) During these site visits researchers conducted interviews or focus groups with 6 project managers, 3 data managers, 4 juvenile probation officers, 3-4 case managers, 4-8 family counselors, 9-12 school police officers, 5 principals, 6 assistant principals, and 10 other staff members who assisted with the implementation of the project. For the interviews and focus groups, participants were asked about their perceptions of the program's implementation, including barriers and facilitators to successful implementation, as well as recommendations for improving implementation for the current program and lessons learned.

After the interviews and focus groups, the researchers did the following. (1) Each

interviewer wrote up his or her notes, (2) notes were combined into a single set of notes that were reviewed for accuracy by all interviewers, (3) researchers incorporated the new data with the data from past interviews and focus groups, (4) themes were derived from analysis of the new data as well as the analysis of the data as a whole, and (5) these themes then were reviewed for accuracy by the researchers who participated in the interviews or focus groups.

To augment findings from the interviews and focus groups, the research team administered surveys to school and program administrators and staff using the web-based software Qualtrics. The surveys explored the program's implementation and its perceived effects on students and schools. In the first survey, 56 people were solicited for a survey and 23 participated. In the second, 15 of the 47 individuals solicited participated in the survey. The primary respondents tended to be individuals who were involved directly in the program's implementation (e.g., case managers and family counselors). Given the small number of survey participants and the low response rates, results from the survey data were included in the discussion of the results from the interviews and focus groups.

The design of this evaluation was not intentionally a formative evaluation that aimed to provide ongoing feedback for improving implementation (see Rossi et al. 2004; Mears 2010). Nonetheless, the research team provided continuous feedback, based on the ongoing process evaluation, about how to improve implementation and fidelity to the program's design. For example, at the project's start, the team worked to identify the specific components that constituted the intervention, and worked with the district to develop a causal logic model and document that described how these components were expected to influence anticipated individual- and school-level outcomes. Researchers also assisted program staff in identifying potential strategies for identifying and recruiting eligible students. When it became apparent that there were lower-than-anticipated enrollment numbers, researchers worked with the district to help them determine how they might ensure that students who could benefit from the program might be recruited. They also communicated frequently with program staff via email, phone conferences, and site visits. After each visit, program administrators were debriefed about the visit and any findings relevant for improving the program's implementation. The research team was able to identify implementation challenges and to draw on scholarship to recommend potential avenues for addressing those challenges. Preliminary results from the evaluation were also shared through conference presentations and published journal articles.

6. Impact Evaluation Findings: Program Effects on Students

The first part of this study tested the impact of the program on academic outcomes, school attendance, delinquency, and police contact among the youth participants. This section discusses the findings that pertain to this goal. Specifically, we report descriptive statistics on services received by intervention condition youth, the extent of pretest (pre-study) differences between intervention and control condition youth, and the results of the impact evaluation.

As described above in the methods section, we conducted numerous tests for pre- and post-intervention differences between intervention condition youth and control condition youth. In total, we conducted 88 significance tests for the full sample. Statistically, we would expect 5% (in this case, between 4 and 5) of those tests to be statistically significant by chance (i.e., due to random error instead of true group differences). Of the 88 tests run for the full sample of youth, 3 were statistically significant—within the range expected by chance. We thus urge caution in interpreting those three findings, as they may not reflect true differences between the conditions.

6.1. Description of Program Services

The accompanying report, *The Causal Logic Model of the Palm Beach County School Safety and Student Performance Program*, describes the menu of services that potentially could have been provided to intervention youth. Examination of actual service use revealed that team meetings, written intervention plans, and academic interventions were the most commonly used, followed by behavioral interventions and attendance interventions. (This information could not be tracked for control group youth.) Specifically:

- 95% of intervention youth received a team meeting. On average each intervention youth received 2.95 team meetings;

- 78% of intervention youth received a written intervention plan;

- 84% received academic interventions. On average each received 2.26 academic interventions;

- 62% received behavioral interventions. On average each received 1.60 behavioral interventions;

- 56% received attendance interventions;

- 22% received home visits. On average each received .42 home visits;

- 52% received a referral for a substance abuse evaluation;

- 4% received a referral for a mental health evaluation;

- 4% received mental health counseling provided by program staff;

- 3% received a dropout recovery intervention;

- and 40% received other interventions not in these categories. These often included referrals to the schools' existing multidisciplinary teams of professionals who met regularly to develop intervention plans for students.

6.2. Pretest Differences between Intervention and Control Youth

The next stage of the analysis examined whether youth in the intervention and control conditions were equivalent at the pretest (i.e., before the intervention). Evidence of equivalence would provide evidence that the random assignment to conditions was effective. We examined equivalence on 34 different variables, including five demographic variables (gender and four race/ethnicity categories), five academic variables, three school attendance variables, eight school disciplinary referral variables, nine school suspension variables, and four justice system contact variables (results untabled; see the methods section for a list of the specific variables). None of the differences examined were statistically significant. Youth in the two conditions thus were comparable on the examined pretest variables. This equivalence provides strong reassurance that the randomization was successful.

6.3. Academic Performance

Next, we examined whether program participation improved academic performance among at-risk youth. Table 11.1 shows the results. Of the ten comparisons made—focusing on grade point average, high school graduation, grade retention, school transfer, and school withdrawal— only one difference was statistically significant. That significant difference suggested that intervention youth earned slightly lower grades than control youth during the year they enrolled in the program. As noted above, given the large number of statistical tests run, we recommend caution in interpreting this single significant finding. There was no evidence that youth in the two conditions differed on the other academic measures examined.

6.4. School Attendance

We also examined whether the program improved school attendance among at-risk youth. Table 11.2 shows the results. Of the six differences examined—focusing on unexcused absences, excused absences, and total days absent—two were statistically significant. These differences indicated that intervention youth had more days' worth of unexcused absences and more total days absent in the year following their enrollment in the program. Intervention and control condition youth were indistinguishable on the other four attendance measures. The program thus may have had an adverse effect on these measures of school attendance. Again, though, we urge caution in interpreting these isolated significant findings.

6.5. School-Based Misconduct

The next analyses examined whether the program reduced youths' likelihood of engaging in misconduct at school. This involved 34 intervention-control comparisons on the prevalence and numbers of office disciplinary referrals (total and by subtype) and school suspensions (total, in-school, and out-of-school). Table 11.3 shows the results. None of the differences between conditions were significant. The program thus had no discernible effect on the full sample of youths' school-based misconduct.

6.6. Justice System Contact

This portion of the analyses examined intervention-control differences on four measures of official delinquency, including any justice system contact, misdemeanor contacts, felony contacts, and school-based contacts. Table 11.4 shows the results. No statistically significant differences between youth in the two conditions emerged. These findings indicate that the program did not reduce youths' likelihoods of justice system contact in the three-month follow-up period after they enrolled in the program.

6.7. Analyses by Year of Program Enrollment

It is possible that although there were no appreciable program effects overall, the program had differential effects depending on when youth enrolled. For example, youth enrolling earlier in the project may have benefitted from smaller caseloads among the program staff. Alternatively, youth who enrolled in the program's later years may have benefitted from greater staff experience and knowledge of school and local resources. We examined these possibilities by repeating the analyses just described separately for youth who enrolled during year 1 and for youth who enrolled during years 2 to 3.

To summarize, no significant differences between the control and intervention conditions were found among youth who enrolled in the program during year 1. In addition, only one difference between conditions was found among youth who enrolled during years 2 and 3: In the year of program enrollment, intervention youth had lower GPAs than control youth. We thus conclude that the program's effects varied little across years.

6.8. Analyses by Subgroup

The results just described were based on data from the full youth sample. However, recall that the program served a wide range of youth with police or court contact: Some had had brief contact and no further police or court involvement, others were in police- or court-assigned diversion programs, and still others were on probation. It is possible that the program had beneficial effects for some of these groups, even if it did not for the combined sample. The next set of analyses repeated the analyses from tables 11.1-11.4 separately for each youth subgroup. Because each sub-analysis involved an additional 54 significance tests, we again urge caution in interpreting isolated significant findings.

Overall, the findings suggested that the program may in fact have had beneficial effects on behavioral outcomes, but the specific behavioral effects differed across groups of youth. For example, beneficial effects for different types of office disciplinary referrals were seen for school-referred youth and diverted youth. In addition, beneficial effects on justice system contacts were seen only for probationers. There thus was variation in the findings by subgroup. The identified significant effects tended to involve behavioral outcomes specifically (8% of the 190 delinquency/misconduct comparisons were statistically significant), and the number of significant posttest effects found was more than expected by chance for the JFO group (20%) and the probation group (11%). These subgroup analyses thus suggest that the program may have effectively improved delinquency and school misconduct among select justice-involved youth (i.e., JFOs and probationers).

Results for School-Referred, Intake, and Diverted Youth

For the school-referred, intake, and diverted groups, the results revealed only one or two significant intervention-control differences each. Nearly all of these differences favored the intervention condition youth. For example, school-referred youth in the intervention condition had fewer disciplinary referrals for criminal offenses in the year after program enrollment than school-referred youth in the control condition. Similarly, diverted youth in the intervention condition had significantly fewer referrals for disruptive misbehavior in the year of program enrollment than diverted youth in the control condition. Given that these isolated findings are fewer than would be expected by chance, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from them.

Results for JFO Youth

Greater numbers of statistically significant differences were seen for JFO youth. Eleven significant posttest differences were observed, two in the adverse direction and nine in the beneficial direction. Relative to JFO youth in the control condition, JFO youth in the intervention condition had more days absent (M=15.54 versus M=6.38 for control youth) and more days of unexcused absences (M=15.25 versus M=6.04) during the year after their enrollment in the program. However, during that year they also were less likely to receive a disciplinary referral for disruptive behavior (9% versus 36%), received fewer total disciplinary referrals for disruptive behavior (M=.24 versus M=1.19), were less likely to be suspended (9% versus 36%), had fewer total suspensions (M=.12 versus M=.47), were less likely to receive an out-of-school suspension (6% versus 31%), and had fewer total out-of-school suspensions (M=.09 versus M=.33). They also were less likely to receive an office disciplinary referral (43% versus 62%), were less likely to receive a disciplinary referral for disruptive misbehavior (28% versus 49%), and had fewer out-of-school suspensions (M=.33 versus M=.59) during the year of program enrollment. These findings suggest that while the program could have had unintended adverse effects on attendance outcomes for JFO youth, it appeared to have beneficial effects on a range of delinquency-related outcomes for those youth.

Results for Probation Youth

Six significant intervention-control differences were seen for probation youth, five of which favored the intervention condition youth. Relative to probation youth in the control condition, probation youth in the intervention condition were less likely to transfer schools in the year they enrolled in the program (5% versus 17%) and were less likely to withdraw from school in the year after they enrolled in the program (7% versus 22%), although they had more excused absences that year (M=.91 versus M=.24). The other identified effects involved office disciplinary referrals for rule violations, and justice system contacts. Regarding the former, intervention probation youth had fewer referrals for school rule violations (M=.15 versus M=.69) in the year following their enrollment in the program. During the three months after their enrollment in the program, they also were less likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system both in general (18% versus 37%) and specifically for a felony offense (6% versus 18%). These findings suggest that the program may have had beneficial effects on delinquency and misconduct outcomes for probation youth.

6.9. Student-Level Impact Findings—Results from the Process Evaluation

The process evaluation shed light on potential intervention impacts. These impacts are ones suggested by intervention staff, but most were not rigorously assessed through outcome measures used in the experimental design. As such the potential impacts should be interpreted simply as dimensions along which the intervention may have been effective.

Improved advocacy for at-risk students. Program staff, especially the family counselors who worked most directly with youth, emphasized that many of the students with whom they worked typically "fall through the cracks." For example, these youth may be truant, suspended, expelled, or transferred to an alternative school. At the same time, their various needs may go unaddressed. In their role as family counselors, the staff felt that they could advocate for youth to teachers, school administrators, police officers, and the juvenile court. In doing so, they sought not to alleviate youth of responsibility for their behavior but rather to help teachers and others put the youth's behavior in context and to devise webs of support that could improve educational and behavioral outcomes. The research team heard about many examples of youth who seemed likely to drop out or engage in delinquency, and who instead appeared to have a better chance of succeeding through the support of the family counselors.

Improvements in other difficult-to-measure outcomes for at-risk students. Program staff noted that the ways in which youth benefited were not always directly measurable or would not necessarily translate into reduced offending or improved educational outcomes. For example, staff highlighted that they could provide a "listening ear" for youth who felt that they could not handle problems at home or in school. In turn, they could help the youth develop strategies for addressing them. Their accounts of how they helped youth frequently aligned with how a parent might productively advocate for and assist their child. The end result might be better decision-making but not necessarily improved academic performance or behavior.

Improved early intervention with low-risk youth. In a related vein, program staff viewed their work as critical for low-risk youth who typically would have to progress through several more stages of misconduct or delinquency before they became identified as "problems." At that point, though, the youth would risk being suspended, expelled, or placed on probation or in a custodial facility. They described many instances in which they assisted youth in navigating situations that had the potential to result in poor decisions by the youth or schools. A frequent example involved meetings where youth would mischaracterize their court involvement as entailing a felony, when it did not. (Staff highlighted that some youth do not always appreciate the difference between felonies and misdemeanors, and know only that they are in trouble.) Without the advocacy of the program staff, the youth might be suspended by the school for committing a felony when in fact a misdemeanor occurred. At the same time, the school might fail to recognize mental health or family concerns that would warrant attention.

Helping some youth avoid transfers to alternative schools. The quantitative analyses did not identify consistent intervention impacts on transfers. However, the staff emphasized that their presence helped to ensure that schools intervened in a productive manner with youth and that, in instances of misconduct, the responses were balanced. They highlighted the challenges that schools face in seeking to educate youth and to meet state testing mandates. Schools in these circumstances frequently have little ability to individualize assessment or services with at-risk youth or to proactively intervene in ways that can prevent delinquency and improve educational outcomes. By contrast, the program staff had the ability to do so. Schools might transfer youth

to alternative schools when doing so might be unnecessary and counter-productive. The program staff, however, could help school administrators to identify intermediate sanctions or support services. Staff reported that, although the overall number of youth transferred to alternative schools was low, there were specific cases where they felt that their presence prevented a youth from being transferred in cases where transfer would not have been necessary or appropriate.

6.10. Unpacking the Student-Level Impact Findings—Results from the Process Evaluation

Before proceeding, an explanation for why the study did not identify overall program impacts bears mention. *First, it is of course possible that the intervention simply is ineffective*. However, it also is possible that the intervention could be effective if fully implemented with fidelity to program design. Doing so is, as the process evaluation highlighted, difficult.

Second, the process evaluation, which we discuss in more detail further below, identified several factors as potential reasons why the study did not identify appreciable program effects on the outcomes. Some examples included the following:

- Varying levels of implementation of the program within and across sites;

- Varying levels of school "buy-in" into the intervention;

- Varying levels of service amount and quality for the intervention youth; and

- Intervention services that may not have sufficiently exceeded that which control youth typically would or did receive. For example, it took longer than expected to hire the school-based JPOs; that led to some intervention and control group youth receiving similar types of traditional supervision.

In addition to aspects of program implementation that may have influenced the intervention's potential effectiveness, there also are methodological limitations that may have influenced the results. It is to these limitations that we now turn.

6.11. Student-Level Impact Evaluation Limitations

As with any research, limitations of the study warrant discussion because they provide context for interpreting the results and highlight where caution may be needed when generalizing results. Here, we discuss several limitations that arose during the course of the study and that indicate the need for caution when interpreting the study results.

First, in some cases, there was a risk of contamination of the control group condition. Early in the project, there were some instances when school administrators wanted to use program services for students who were not enrolled in the program. Staff initially also wanted to enroll students in the intervention when they felt that the youth were a good fit. The research team immediately worked with the district to help staff understand the importance of adhering to the randomization protocol and minimizing any diversion away from the "business-as-usual" approach for students not enrolled in the program.

Second, data limitations affected the ability to compare services across groups. At the start of the project, delays in identifying major program components led to delays in data collection. Program staff completed some data retrospectively; however, not all information from previous

months or years was available for all youth. In addition, collecting data on control youth proved cumbersome for staff. That was because, to avoid contamination between treatment and control group conditions, staff could not meet with control youth during the period initially after the random assignment. Following up with control youth after their random assignment proved challenging and resulted in limited information being collected from control group youth, thus reducing the ability to compare services across groups.

Third, program effects may not yet be visible among youth enrolled later in the program. Although the target enrollment number was met by the end of the study, much of the recruitment occurred in the last year of the study. In addition, most outcome variables were measured annually and so complete follow-up data were not available for youth enrolled later in the study period. It is possible that if the full group of youth was observed over the full course of the study, different program impacts would have been identified.

Fourth, local context may have affected the impact analyses. At the time of the program's implementation, the school district was complying with a consent decree. The decree's goals were similar to that of the program—maintain school safety but do so without excessively referring students to the police or juvenile court. There also were federal policy initiatives to help promote student retention and lower expulsions. Such changes may have led schools to be more likely to handle misconduct themselves rather than refer youth to the police or juvenile court, which in turn would reduce the likelihood of observing substantial program effects. In addition, the school district implements a range of programs that aim to assist youth. In this intervention-rich environment, it may be difficult to detect the effects of a single intervention.

Finally, the results may not generalize to other schools or districts or to all at-risk youth. The results of this study may be generalizable to other schools or school districts. However, the extent to which they are is unknown.

7. Impact Evaluation Findings: Program Effects on Schools

The first part of the study sought to examine whether the program resulted in improved behavioral and educational outcomes for program participants. The second part then turned to an investigation of whether the program might produce schoolwide effects along these same dimensions. Perhaps, for example, the presence of the program might have created a general deterrent effect or led the larger student population to be more likely to seek out assistance or support when needed. Here we discuss the findings that pertain to this second study goal. As identified through the process evaluation, some challenges in implementing the program reduced the likelihood of large and positive impacts. At the same time, little in the process evaluation pointed to the likelihood that the program would adversely affect schoolwide outcomes.

The results can be summarized briefly: Although the results revealed suggestive evidence of isolated beneficial schoolwide effects of the intervention, no easily interpretable overall pattern emerged. Within each substantive domain—academic outcomes, attendance outcomes, and delinquency outcomes—a mix of beneficial and adverse schoolwide effects were found. The most consistent potential beneficial effects were found for teachers' and parents' perceptions of outcomes, such as youth absenteeism, youth truancy, and school climate.

7.1. Schoolwide Academic Performance

We begin with a focus on whether the program improved schoolwide academic performance. Of the eight academic outcomes, a potential beneficial effect emerged for one (schoolwide post-secondary enrollment), a potential adverse effect emerged for one (schoolwide stability rates), and null effects were found for the remaining six.

Potential beneficial effect on schoolwide post-secondary enrollment

Figure 12.1 shows that after the intervention was implemented, the percentage of graduating students who enrolled in post-secondary education increased in intervention schools. In contrast, small decreases were seen for both the comparison and district schools. This finding suggests that the program may have been effective at improving post-secondary education enrollment.

Potential adverse effect on schoolwide stability rates

Figure 12.2 shows the results for schools' stability rates, or the percentage of students who remained at the school without interruption during the school year. The intervention schools displayed a decrease in their stability rates in the year following the intervention, while the comparison schools saw an increase. This finding provides suggestive evidence that the program may have negatively affected the stability rate. However, the effect was short-term. For example, the treatment schools' stability rates were similar to those of the comparison schools in the 2016-17 school year.

No visible effects on other schoolwide academic outcomes

No notable intervention-related differences were observed for the other academic outcomes. Figure 12.3 shows the example of graduation rates. For intervention schools, comparison

schools, and the district as a whole, the post-intervention trend in graduation rates appeared to continue on the same pre-intervention trend. Similar null findings were observed for the percent of seniors who have taken the SAT, mean SAT scores, mean ACT scores, and the percent of teachers concerned about the dropout rate.

7.2. Schoolwide Attendance

The study next sought to determine whether the program improved schoolwide attendance. These results revealed mixed but potentially adverse effects of the intervention on absenteeism and truancy. They also revealed potentially beneficial effects of the intervention on teachers' *perceptions* of absenteeism and truancy. To put these findings in context, while intervention schools tended to have lower attendance and truancy problems than comparison schools, teachers' perceptions of absenteeism and truancy tended to be worse in intervention schools. However, there may have been a delayed beneficial effect on teacher perceptions of absenteeism and truancy.

Mixed but potentially adverse effects on schoolwide absenteeism and truancy

Figure 12.4 shows the results for schoolwide absenteeism. In the years leading up to the intervention, intervention schools' absentee rates had been comparable to or lower than both the comparison schools' rates and the districtwide rate. This pattern was maintained the year following the intervention's implementation. However, two years into the program's implementation, the intervention schools had higher absentee rates than the comparison schools. This rate was reversed again three years into the intervention. In that year, intervention schools' absentee rates were higher than the districtwide rate. These findings suggest possible adverse effects of the intervention on schoolwide absenteeism, though any adverse effects appeared small and short-lived.

Figure 12.5 shows the results for schoolwide truancy rates. Truancy rates were fairly stable in intervention schools in the years before and after the intervention, though they increased slightly in the year immediately following the intervention. They were similarly stable in the rest of the district. In contrast, comparison schools' truancy rates increased in the year prior to the intervention and sharply decreased in the two years following the intervention. This change created a pattern where intervention schools' rates were slightly higher than comparison schools' rates two years after the intervention. These findings suggest that the intervention did not improve, and may have had a small and delayed adverse effect on, schoolwide truancy.

Potential beneficial effects on teachers' perceptions of absenteeism and truancy

The data also included information on teacher perceptions of schoolwide attendance outcomes. Figure 12.6 shows the results for teachers' concerns about student absenteeism. Between the immediate pre- and immediate post-intervention periods, this concern increased in the intervention schools, comparison schools, and district as a whole. However, teacher concern about absenteeism later decreased in intervention schools, whereas it remained constant or increased in the comparison schools and the rest of the district. This finding suggests a potential, though delayed, beneficial effect of the intervention on teacher perceptions of absenteeism.

Figure 12.7 shows the results for teachers' concerns about student truancy. Levels of this concern remained fairly constant between the immediate pre- and post- intervention periods in both the intervention schools and the comparison schools. However, between the first and second years post-intervention, teacher concern about truancy decreased in intervention schools and increased slightly in comparison schools. This finding also suggests a potential delayed beneficial effect of the intervention on teacher perceptions.

7.3. Schoolwide Delinquency and Misconduct

We next examined whether the program reduced schoolwide delinquency and suspensions. Of the eight delinquency outcomes, a potential beneficial effect emerged for two (schoolwide total misconduct and violent misconduct), a potential adverse effect emerged for two (schoolwide drug and alcohol misconduct), and null effects were found for the remaining four.

Potential beneficial effect on schoolwide total misconduct and violent misconduct

Figure 12.8 shows the results for schools' rates of SESIR (crime and misconduct) incidents. In intervention schools, comparison schools, and the district as a whole, the rate of SESIR incidents declined between the immediate pre- and post-intervention periods. However, the following year, it continued to decline in intervention schools, whereas it increased in comparison schools and the rest of the district. Additional (not shown) analyses of subtypes of crime and misconduct indicated that this pattern held for violent incidents but not for drug and alcohol incidents, which we discuss next. These results suggest that the intervention may have improved overall rates of misconduct, and rates of violent misconduct in particular.

Potential adverse effect on schoolwide drug and alcohol misconduct

Figure 12.9 shows the results for the subset of SESIR offenses capturing schoolwide drug and alcohol misconduct. In intervention schools, rates of this type of misconduct decreased between the immediate pre- and post-intervention periods. However, between the first and second years post-intervention, rates of drug and alcohol offenses increased in intervention schools but decreased in comparison schools and district schools. A similar pattern was found for SESIR drug and alcohol incidents reported to police (not shown). These findings suggest that the intervention did not cause lasting improvement in, and instead may have worsened, schoolwide rates of drug and alcohol misconduct.

No visible effects on other schoolwide delinquency and misconduct outcomes

No notable program-related differences were observed for the other delinquency outcomes. For example, in intervention schools, the rates of SESIR incidents reported to police, in-school suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions (not shown) showed small to moderate declines between the pre- and post-intervention periods, but they showed similar declines in comparison schools and the rest of the district. The rate of violent SESIR incidents reported to police was stable and low in all three groups of schools across the pre- and post-intervention periods.

7.4. Schoolwide Perceptions of School Climate

This study also investigated whether the program's presence was associated with improved perceptions of school climate among students, parents, and teachers. Of the four domains of schoolwide outcomes examined in this evaluation, the most consistent finding was that the program appeared to improve perceptions of school climate. For this domain, 10 outcomes were examined. Potential beneficial effects emerged for two (parent perceptions of school climate and parent involvement in school), weaker evidence of beneficial effects emerged for four (select student, parent, and teacher perceptions), and null results were found for the remaining four.

Potential beneficial effects on parent perceptions of school climate and parent involvement in school

Figure 12.10 shows the results for schools' percentages of parents who believed that their children had a positive school climate. Between the pre- and post-intervention periods, this percentage increased in intervention schools but decreased or remained stable in comparison schools and the rest of the district respectively. This finding suggests that the intervention may have been effective in improving parents' perceptions of the school climate.

Figure 12.11 shows the results for the percentage of parents who felt involved in their children's schools. In this case, the percentage showed a notable increase in intervention schools following the intervention. In contrast, the percentage decreased in comparison schools and only slightly increased in the rest of the district. This finding suggests that the intervention may have improved parents' perceptions of their school involvement.

Weaker evidence of beneficial effects on other select student, parent, and teacher perceptions of school climate

For four additional outcomes, the results suggested that the intervention schools did not show the adverse post-intervention trends seen in comparison schools, suggesting that the intervention may have helped schools avoid adverse outcomes. Figure 12.12 shows the example of the percentage of parents who felt their children were unsafe at school. Between the pre- and post-intervention periods, this percentage increased in comparison schools but remained nearly the same in intervention schools. This finding suggests that the intervention may have had a benefit for this outcome. However, the intervention schools' trend on this outcome mirrored the districtwide trend, making it more difficult to attribute any difference to a positive effect of the program. Similar results were found for students' perceptions of school climate, for teachers' perceptions of classroom disorder, and for teachers' perceptions of student disrespect.

No visible effects on other school climate outcomes

No notable intervention-related differences were observed for the other school climate survey outcomes. Specifically, for the outcomes of student perceptions of parental involvement in school, students' perceptions of school safety, teachers' perceptions of student misconduct, and teachers' perceptions of bullying, the intervention schools and comparison schools showed similar patterns of change over time.

7.5. School-Level Impact Findings—Results from the Process Evaluation

The process evaluation shed light on potential impacts of the intervention not only on participating youth, but also on the schools in which the intervention was situated. As with the student-level impact evaluation, a caveat applies. Specifically, the impacts are *potential* impacts, not ones that the experimental design or objective measures identified. They should not be ignored given that they may well be real impacts. But, because they were not assessed through the experimental design, neither should they be accepted as necessarily having occurred.

Improved coordination of existing services for at-risk youth. Although the intervention concentrated attention on the youth who were enrolled in it, program staff created ties with service providers who could also be of assistance to youth who attended the study schools but were not participants in the intervention.

Improved identification of planned crime or violence. Program staff indicated that youth who were in the intervention were more likely to report to them planned crime or violence that they heard about from other students. Staff indicated that non-intervention students also did the same. Accordingly, the intervention may have helped to prevent crimes or violence in school that schools typically may not have known about in advance.

The mechanism through which any such effect arose was, according to staff, via a greater willingness to report impending criminal activity to program personnel, rather than to school administrators, teachers, or police. Program staff believed that because they had no ability to sanction youth, students had greater trust in them. They felt more comfortable telling them about crime, violence, or other problems that might be on the horizon at their schools.

Improved identification of at-risk groups and their needs. A motivation for the intervention was the need to assist different at-risk groups and to take advantage of school hours to provide services and support to these groups. The very presence of the program helped to draw attention to other groups who were at risk of poor educational outcomes and of engaging in delinquency. It also helped to draw attention to the potential ineffectiveness of current approaches—such as waiting until problems escalated or responding in a punitive manner without providing treatment—to working with such youth.

7.6. Unpacking the School-Level Impact Findings—Results from the Process Evaluation

The SDPBC intervention's main goal was to improve outcomes among participants in the intervention. The program provided services and supervision to these youth, and so it was logical to expect that the end result might be improved behavioral and educational outcomes. A corollary to this idea, however, was the possibility that the presence of the program might result in more diffuse effects on the student body. Teachers might become aware of the intervention and, in so doing, learn about ways to effectively intervene with some youth, manage disciplinary problems, and have more time to focus on teaching. Students might take heed of the school's efforts to address misconduct and, at the same time, to help students to succeed. The possibility of a schoolwide effect was viewed as a possible "icing-on-the-cake" benefit of a program that primarily focuses on improving outcomes among identified at-risk youth.

In the end, the intervention appeared to affect perceptions of the school environment more

than it did actual academic, attendance, or behavioral outcomes. Possible beneficial effects were identified for some of these outcome domains, but a similar number of possible adverse effects also were found. Several explanations may account for the lack of a consistent beneficial effect.

First, it may simply be the case that the program is not effective in contributing to overall schoolwide safety, academic performance, or attendance. Influencing schoolwide outcomes in schools as large as those studied here may require an intervention that is "scaled up" to achieve any significant impact.

Second, it is possible that the program might be able to produce schoolwide effects but that certain conditions would need to be present for that to occur. For example, the program required a considerable amount of effort to implement. That included developing "buy-in" from principals and other personnel at the schools. These individuals, though, face many competing demands for their time. They may not have had the capacity to promote the program's efforts. In addition, the program staff faced challenges in fulfilling the numerous day-to-day obligations of working with students and implementing program services. That left little time to interact with other school personnel. The end result was a situation in which school administrators, teachers, and students may not have been appreciably aware of the program.

Third, varying levels of implementation fidelity may have reduced potential intervention effects. The level of implementation fidelity varied throughout the duration of the program. In the early stages of the program, for example, there were only minor differences between the intervention and business-as-usual approaches. Also, some staff members more quickly developed relationships with school administrators and personnel. Such staff were more likely to become integrated into schools and thus have a greater ability to convey the goals of the program. By contrast, at other schools, some staff were unable to quickly integrate into the school setting and thus could not as easily promote the program to school staff and administrators. On a related front, some school administrators and staff members were not familiar with the program or its goals. This situation changed, at least for some schools. For a schoolwide effect to have emerged, there would have been a need for school administrators and staff to understand and buy into the goals of the program.

Just as with the student-level evaluation, there are methodological limitations that also may have influenced the results of this impact evaluation study. We next discuss these limitations.

7.7. School-Level Impact Evaluation Limitations

Two limitations of the school-level impact evaluation warrant discussion. They should be considered when interpreting the results of the study.

First, lag effects could not be assessed. It is possible that any school climate changes that occurred because of the intervention may take several years to emerge. Although in theory the program might have achieved schoolwide climate changes in the first year or two, in practice this time was needed to initiate the program and then to improve its implementation. Thus, the study cannot speak to whether the program may result in improved outcomes in coming years. The process evaluation results suggest, however, that the primary benefits of the program likely center on intervention youth, not school-level, outcomes.

Second, the results may not generalize to other schools or school districts. As with the student-level impact evaluation, the results here may not generalize to other schools or school

districts. This school district serves one of the largest student populations in the country. In addition, the schools that implemented the program were selected in part because of their high delinquency and misconduct rates. Accordingly, it is possible that a similar intervention might produce more, or more pronounced, benefits in different settings or under different conditions.

8. Process Evaluation Findings: Program Implementation

The process evaluation sought to examine the program's implementation, including fidelity to the original program design, services and activities that may have been especially helpful in improving youth and school outcomes, facilitators and barriers to successful implementation, and factors that other school districts might want to consider when implementing a similar program. The subsequent sections describe each of these in detail.

8.1. Implementation Fidelity

The effectiveness of a program typically hinges on how well it is implemented (Blomberg 1980, 1983; Mears 2012). The process evaluation revealed that many of the services and activities that were intended as part of the original design did in fact occur. It also revealed that implementation fidelity improved with time. In the early stages of implementation, especially during the first year, challenges in hiring staff delayed full implementation. Several of these challenges were addressed in the second year. Even so, maintaining a full roster of staff for the program remained a recurring challenge. In addition, some aspects of the program design proved more difficult to implement than anticipated and so occurred with less frequency than was originally envisioned. Team meetings, for example, did not occur for some youth. Similarly, although JPOs originally were envisioned as serving as schoolwide justice leaders, they ultimately focused their attention primarily on assisting and supervising the students on their probation caseloads. The multifaceted nature of the program makes it difficult to determine precisely how shortfalls in implementation affected the program's effectiveness. As the discussion below highlights, however, there were many aspects of the program that independently and collectively appeared sufficient to improve outcomes.

8.2. Program Activities Perceived by Staff to Improve Student-Level Outcomes

The intervention consisted of a diverse set of activities. Below, we identify program services and activities that staff perceived to be effective, or possibly effective, in improving student outcomes. Further below, we identify facilitators and barriers to implementation.

Balancing support-oriented approaches with get-tough approaches

Several program and school staff members highlighted that a support-oriented program may be most beneficial in school environments where other staff members, such as school administrators or police, punish students when appropriate. The balance of punishment and supportive approaches ensures, in their view, that students receive needed assistance but also are held accountable with reasonable consequences. Staff described several ways a program such as this intervention can contribute to a balancing of support-oriented and get-tough approaches.

1. Program staff support students by advocating on their behalf. Program staff advocated on behalf of intervention students through communications with school administrators and personnel. For example, if a student was having trouble in class, the program staff member might facilitate discussions between the teacher and student in an effort to resolve any issues. One illustration of this approach can be seen in the following: A program staff member learned that a school administrator was encouraging an intervention student to transfer to a charter or

alternative school. The staff member spoke with the administrator about how retaining the student would best improve the student's behavioral and academic progress.

2. Program staff can work one-on-one with students to help them address specific issues. Many staff believed one-on-one meetings were the most beneficial aspect of the program. It helped them to build a rapport with students, which, in turn, facilitated their ability to provide students with individualized assistance and to gain buy-in from the students.

3. Program staff can assist students and hold them accountable by attending court hearings. Most staff reported going to court hearings at least some of the time. At these hearings, they could serve in a supportive role to students. They could, for example, provide updates to the court about the student's progress. They also could identify when referrals for court-funded services might help youth, especially those whose families could not afford such services.

4. Program staff can hold students accountable by monitoring attendance, academic, and behavioral progress. A primary focus of the program entailed frequent monitoring of students' progress. Monitoring entailed checking students' grades and attendance, sitting in on classes, and checking with police or the courts about progress towards sanction completion. This monitoring served to discourage misbehavior and to improve class attendance. If needed, program staff members would step in to assist a student. For example, if the student was having trouble completing their court-ordered community service hours, some staff members would work with the school's activity coordinator to identify opportunities for completing those hours.

Coordinating and leveraging school services to target students' needs

The program was designed to leverage existing resources. Accordingly, staff emphasized that the program is most likely to be effective in improving academic outcomes when it helps students to access existing school-based services that target their academic needs. These school-based services may include, among other things, tutoring services, working with a guidance counselor to build the "right" class schedule, or providing attendance assistance.

In a similar vein, staff indicated that the intervention could most improve behavioral outcomes when it accessed existing services that might help youth. Such services could include, for example, a "hot-pass" that lets students leave the classroom when they feel they cannot respond appropriately to a class issue. It could include as well a referral to a school counselor.

Absent the intervention, teachers might be best positioned to advocate for students in these ways. However, teachers frequently may not have the time to do so. They also may not know when youth require or would benefit from such assistance. By contrast, program staff reported having more time to devote to considering the diverse needs of youth.

Assisting students by using services that extend beyond those available at school

The benefit of having staff members whose sole job is to work with at-risk students is that they have the time to work with families and communities to support students. There are two primary ways program staff provided services that were otherwise unavailable to students and that staff felt improved the program's potential to be effective.

1. Increase parent and family involvement through correspondence and home visits. Several

parents of intervention students received phone calls and home visits from program staff. This correspondence and these visits helped to engage parents and to encourage them to participate in implementing the individualized services being provided to their child. In a few instances, program staff members helped families to navigate bureaucratic challenges to help ensure that their children received additional assistance.

2. Help students to access additional services through referrals to community providers. Because of their prior work experiences, some staff were especially knowledgeable about available community-based services. They used this knowledge to refer students to needed services that were unavailable at school. For example, one staff member reported helping a student and their family to find resources that could help them receive the student's needed medications at a reduced financial cost.

Identifying and eliminating activities perceived by staff to be ineffective

Not all intervention activities were perceived by staff to improve academic or behavioral outcomes for students. It would be important for the school district, or for schools adopting a similar intervention, to revisit the use and implementation of such activities. The potential problems with using such services is twofold. They may divert attention and resources away from effective activities. In addition, they may create unintended consequences that might worsen student outcomes. Below, we describe suggested modifications to the program and its activities that might increase the likelihood of program effects.

1. Reduce inconsistent or poor collaboration among agencies. There was not always clear and consistent communication between the stakeholders (e.g., school administrators, police, program staff, juvenile justice personnel, students), which, in turn, hindered implementation. Staff turnover in the early stages of implementation contributed to this problem. One result was that some program staff and JPOs found it difficult to become embedded into the schools.

2. Reduce overlap between service plans from multiple agencies to avoid overwhelming students. Some staff members observed that at-risk students at times have service plans from several agencies. That can create duplication and confusion and, in some cases, conflict.

3. Reduce the need to remove students from class for intervention services. Constantly removing students from class for intervention purposes can be disruptive to the student and to their participation in school activities and schoolwork. Students sometimes would miss opportunities to engage with their teachers and peers in class discussions when they left to receive services or meet with program staff.

4. Address any lack of after-school and summer services. This program provided limited after-school or summer services. Some staff members reported that not providing services during these times left a "gap" for students that ideally should be addressed.

5. Address the lack of tangible incentives for program participation. Some staff members believed that students should receive tangible incentives for achieving their goals of improved academics and behavior. They suggested, for example, taking students on college tours or providing tickets to local sporting events.

8.3. Program Activities Perceived by Staff to Improve School-Level Outcomes

The primary focus of this program was on improving outcomes for participating students. However, a secondary goal was to improve school-level outcomes, such as reduced behavioral problems and increases in academic performance for all students. Here, we discuss program activities that staff perceived to be especially helpful in improving outcomes for schools.

Ensuring administrators and staff prioritize school safety in a balanced way

Individuals interviewed for the study felt that school administrators and staff who prioritize school safety in a balanced way are more likely to "buy in" to the goals of the program and thus to support its implementation. They felt that when schools emphasize support, not just punishment, they create an environment where such programs are more likely to succeed.

Integrating program staff into schools to facilitate advocacy for students

Respondents emphasized the importance of program staff becoming involved in school activities as a means by which to advocate more effectively for students. Different ways to become more involved include attending pep rallies, coaching or assisting with sports teams, and attending faculty meetings. This type of involvement in the school can also make the program more recognizable to faculty and other students and signal to them that the school prioritizes safety through advocating for students as opposed to focusing primarily on punishment.

Increasing student monitoring through presence of program staff at schools

The presence of additional staff members was believed to increase the monitoring of all students. Respondents thought that their presence improved school safety in part through their visibility and in part through assistance in resolving school-related issues (e.g., resolving a behavioral problem with a student, helping with school events). Some school staff members reported that the program staff's supervision of at-risk students freed up other school staff to supervise and work with other students who typically would not receive extra attention. In addition, the presence of the JPO was believed to provide extra accountability for all students.

8.4. Implementation Facilitators and Barriers

In the two sections that follow, we describe facilitators to implementation and barriers to implementation, respectively. We discuss them to highlight factors that affected overall program implementation fidelity and to identify issues that school districts would want to consider when seeking to implement a similar intervention. In each instance, we describe the facilitators and barriers in the form of recommendations (e.g., "encourage more of X" or "minimize Y").

Facilitators

Ensure school district and school buy-in and support

<u>Develop and maintain buy-in and support from school leadership and staff</u>

The program was reported to be most effective when school administrators and staff not only buy into the program but also actively support it and engage with program staff and participants. For example, when buy-in exists, principals may be more likely to contact the program staff to resolve issues with intervention youth rather than sending them to detention. Such support can also lead to imparting greater credibility to program staff in their interactions with teachers, officers, and students. Administrators and staff stressed that many challenges exist in undertaking a collaborative intervention in school settings. Precisely because of these challenges, strong support from school leadership appears to be essential to program success.

<u>Encourage school district support of the program and related approaches</u>

Support for school-based programs is needed not just at the school level, but also at the district-level. Several school administrators, such as principals or assistant principals, indicated that the approaches they use to address student delinquency and to improve school safety reflect districtwide mandates or initiatives. For example, if the district prioritizes reducing suspensions, school administrators will be more likely to support a school program that targets this outcome.

Maximize stakeholders' efforts to collaborate

<u>Integrate program staff into schools</u>

During the program's early stages, program staff as a whole were not well integrated into their respective schools and school cultures. However, as the program progressed, program staff became better integrated into their schools, which, they believed, contributed to more effective program implementation. For example, other school staff became familiar with them and their roles at the school, there appeared to be better collaboration between the school and program staff, and school administrators were more likely to use program staff to help address student issues. Being integrated into schools thus helped program staff to better assist students.

<u>Use a unified team approach to address students' needs</u>

The program was perceived to be most effective when program staff worked with other stakeholders, including school and juvenile court personnel and police, to address a student's needs. This program was designed to leverage already-available school-based services and resources as well as those that may exist in the community. In schools where program staff partnered with a variety of other stakeholders, there was a greater ability to craft individualized responses to youth and to do so in ways that did not duplicate existing services. School staff could offer, for example, guidance counseling, tutoring, and community service opportunities through ties to the different stakeholders. Without the program and a unified team approach, the youth would be unlikely to receive these types of interventions. In cases where youth receive sanctions, the program staff could help to eliminate duplication of services and to ensure that sanctions did not interfere with educational activities or treatment services.

Encourage school JPOs to have frequent contact with students on probation

A potential benefit of having school-based JPOs is that they can build deeper relationships with students who are on probation. Community-based JPOs often will come into contact with youth on their caseload only when they are checking in on them in the community or when the youth violate terms of probation. School-based JPOs, however, may regularly see the students on their probation caseload and do so in a school setting. This contact provides an opportunity to learn more about the student, their needs, and the circumstances that may have contributed to their delinquency. In addition, contact with other members of a youth's intervention team provides an opportunity to further inform a JPO's understanding of the youth and his or her risks and needs. One school-based JPO felt that this arrangement allowed youth on probation to have more chances before having their probation violated. In addition, the daily contact with youth was believed to potentially discourage youth from engaging in misconduct. The importance of finding someone who was the "right" fit for this position was highlighted by staff members. For example, one school staff member argued that it may be better to hire someone from outside of the community because it can be difficult to hold students accountable when the JPO is friends with their parents or when they have to interact with the parents in the community.

Rely on experienced staff to ensure high-quality program implementation

Build on staff members' prior experiences working with at-risk youth

The school district intentionally hired people who had prior experience working with at-risk or delinquent youth. For example, some staff had worked as JPOs. These staff were familiar with ways to communicate with at-risk students and with approaches that might be used to enhance their likelihood of success. They also had a nuts-and-bolts knowledge of what services existed for at-risk youth and how to access those services. Not least, these individuals understood the terminologies and processes of the juvenile court. This understanding could help them to aid students and school personnel in understanding the precise legal status of youth. Many students, for example, may not understand the difference between being referred to juvenile court, having their case informally processed, and receiving a formal sanction.

Hire program staff who complement each other's roles

The diverse program staff positions helped to achieve a balanced approach for identifying and addressing students' needs. For example, the presence of JPOs was perceived as giving credibility to family counselors and case managers. Some students were less inclined to respond to a family counselor alone. However, when the JPO was also present, those students were more likely to believe they could not get away with misbehaving and were more likely to listen to the family counselor. Conversely, the presence of case managers and family counselors provided students with access to staff members who aimed to assist the student and, at the same time, could not discipline them. Having staff members who were perceived as "supportive" and other staff members who were perceived as "punitive" brought balance to the program and enhanced the likelihood that students would respond positively to the intervention.

Encourage program staff to develop rapport with students

Program implementation appeared to be greater when program staff developed rapport with students. When students trusted program staff and did not feel that their program participation was another form of punishment, staff members were better able to assist youth. For example, students may be more likely to seek help from program staff when problems arise. Some staff members reported that it was easier to build this rapport when staff members came from the students' home communities because they might be better able to identify with the student.

Provide sufficient staffing

Family counselors reported that their ability to advocate for and to assist youth improved when there were at least two family counselors assigned to each school. The combined presence conveyed more credibility to other school personnel. It also enabled them to develop a better understanding of the school culture and the resources available to help youth.

Modify program as needed to improve implementation and effectiveness

The flexibility to modify the program when needed can result in a greater ability to serve students. For example, school attendance was not originally a focus of the program. However, as the program progressed it became clear that such a focus was needed. Many students eligible for the program frequently missed school and showed up late to class. Program staff felt that the ability to recalibrate the intervention so that they could focus their efforts on improving attendance and reducing tardiness helped to improve educational and behavioral outcomes.

Barriers

Identify and avoid administrative delays

Address administrative factors that might delay program startup efforts

Administrative factors, if not proactively attended to, can delay the program's startup. To help ensure a strong program startup, staff hiring and execution of subcontracts will need to be prioritized before the program's intended start date. For example, in this program, it took longer than was expected for the budget for the JPOs to be approved, which delayed their hiring. Also, it took longer than was anticipated to develop and refine a process for identifying youth who were eligible for program participation. Initial lower-than-expected numbers of target population youth led to a need to understand better why initial targets were not being met.

Streamline processes for identifying program-eligible youth

During the early stages of implementation, it was difficult to identify youth who were eligible for the program. This issue was due in part to the fact that the school district had to coordinate with multiple agencies (e.g., school police, court, state attorney, diversion providers) to identify youth who were eligible for participation in the program and study.

Keep program stakeholders "in the loop"

Although the school district brought many stakeholders to the table, key stakeholders were not always fully aware of the program's activities or goals, especially early on in the program. That may have led some stakeholders, such as principals, not to buy into the program as much as they otherwise might have. It also might have led to some at-risk youth transferring to other schools before they were given an opportunity to enroll in the program.

With greater stakeholder communication, there is a greater chance that a program can be successfully implemented. For this intervention, one of the areas of potential confusion centers on the precise role of the JPOs. The design of the intervention envisioned that JPOs would be integrated into schools in a variety of ways. However, JPOs might have felt, and in other jurisdictions might well feel, that their focus should extend only to youth who are on probation.

More frequent communication across agencies and staff members may strengthen implementation. Several individuals reported that it would be helpful to have frequent meetings that bring all stakeholders and their staff members involved in implementation together. One-on-one meetings at each school may not be as helpful at improving program implementation.

Recruit and retain skilled staff and provide consistent training

The school district was able to hire individuals who had experience working with at-risk youth (e.g., former probation officers). That helped greatly with successful implementation of the program. There was, however, considerable staff turnover; for example, program staff members sometimes were offered other jobs within the district. Staff turnover was more common with the JPOs. This position did not come with employment benefits, which may have made these positions less appealing than community-based JPO positions. With more turnover, it is more challenging to create teams that work well together and operate with a shared mission.

School and program staff members highlighted the need for consistent staff training. Many of the trainings related to school district processes. The need for training on specific program-required activities was reported by some staff to be a way to improve the intervention. Staff also emphasized the importance of cross-over training for the stakeholders and staff to improve understanding of the goals and processes of the different agencies (e.g., schools, courts, police).

Determine whether the program could benefit students during summer months

The program's summer implementation was limited. Some program staff members, but not all, believed that providing summer services could be beneficial for students. To maintain some continuity, many staff members would try to make phone contact or conduct a home visit to check in with intervention group students. It was suggested that during the summer the program should provide job training or take students on college tours.

Address any factors that affect collaboration

Communicate frequently to help align stakeholders' goals

Schools, law enforcement, and the juvenile court do not always have the same goals or employ the same strategies to achieve the goals that they share. This situation can lead to inconsistent support for multi-agency collaborative interventions like the school district's. In

turn, it can adversely affect program implementation. It therefore can be helpful to rely on frequent communication among stakeholders to educate them about the program and to obtain their support for it. Such communication also can be useful in addressing stakeholder concerns.

Create a program team that shares information about participants and services

The logic of the program relied in part on having a group of multi-system providers who were equipped to help address a range of potential risk factors. This approach, though, requires that staff fully understand the range of available services and that various stakeholders and agency staff know about the different program components and collaborate with the staff. That was a challenge that confronted a number of the program staff and those with whom they sought to collaborate. Some school administrators, for example, were unaware of which students were in the program. Concerns about student privacy may have contributed to such occurrences, but they also might have limited the amount of assistance the school could provide to the student.

Address any factors that contribute to inconsistent program implementation

Address any misunderstanding about program tasks and goals

Although the intervention built on a pilot program, there were details to be ironed out, especially during the early stages of the project. In addition to hiring many new staff at several schools, there was the need to develop a clear understanding about what each staff member's unique tasks and responsibilities would be and how the teams would collaborate. That was challenging given that the intervention was implemented across four schools and that many new staff were hired. Frequent and intensive trainings early in such an intervention may help to ensure that all staff understand the tasks that they are to undertake and the program's logic.

Ensure that schools have the capacity to implement the program

Asking schools to implement a new, complex program that brings together multiple agencies contributes to the already high demands placed on school staff. Overlaid on this task are the unique difficulties that come with using an experimental design to study the impacts of the program. Although the program-researcher partnership included funding for program and research staff, effective program and study execution still requires support and resources from school administrators and staff. When this type of active support was received, it enhanced the implementation of the program and the study.

Create and follow processes for identifying and addressing students' needs

Program staff members did not use formal risk and needs assessment tools to determine what services to provide to youth. Instead, they typically would meet or talk with students and sometimes parents; they also would review the youth's court or police casefiles and academic record. Because many of the staff had experience working with at-risk youth, this strategy may have been effective. However, reliance on formal risk and needs assessment and treatment plan protocols might be a more effective way to ensure successful intervention with at-risk youth.

Develop guidelines for determining program "dosage"

In the early stages of program implementation, the program administrators, staff, and

researchers discussed the importance of identifying the "dosage" of program that would be used. The initial pilot program did not identify a particular amount or duration of intervention that was viewed as necessary for producing beneficial impacts. Ultimately, the district devolved on a "once enrolled, always enrolled" approach, with reduced intervention as youth appeared to progress. Establishing the most beneficial "dosage" in fact is difficult for such a multi-faceted intervention. It is possible that providing intervention services for 1 to 2 years might be appropriate. This determination, though, should be established based on careful consideration of available resources and the risks and needs of the target population.

<u>Identify a single point-of-contact for program staff and for stakeholders</u>

Administrative staff turnover led to confusion among some staff about who among the program leadership to contact with questions. Such turnover may be less problematic for programs sited in only one school. However, this program was implemented across four schools and included many different staff from several agencies. With similar interventions in similar contexts, clear communication about the point-of-contact can help to improve program implementation. As was evident in later stages of the project, frequent visits from a program administrator to each school can be especially useful.

8.5. Strategies for Successful Program Adoption by Other Schools and Districts

This section discusses strategies that other school districts may want to consider or address to ensure successful adoption of the program. These strategies are based on a range of lessons learned from the process evaluation. They cover ways to maximize implementation fidelity, improve youth participation, best use program resources, and avoid unintended consequences.

Leverage facilitators and minimize barriers to successful implementation

The previous discussion highlighted a number of facilitators and barriers to successful implementation. Success with a similar program will entail leveraging the facilitators and minimizing the barriers. For example, schools and districts that intend to adopt this program would want to ensure that key stakeholders understand and buy into the program's logic and design and are willing to actively assist with program implementation.

Develop clear eligibility requirements and recruitment processes

Identify eligibility criteria for program participation

Prior to the start of the program, school district staff should work with law enforcement and court agencies to determine which groups of youth would be a good fit for the program. They also should work with school leadership, such as principals and assistant principals, to determine whether there are groups of students who have not been arrested or adjudicated delinquent but who nonetheless may be an at-risk population who would be a good fit for the program. The discussions should focus on developing specific criteria for what makes a youth eligible for program participation. For example, the criteria might include evidence of police or court contact, engaging in certain types of delinquency, or misconduct that requires school discipline.

The district would also want to consider whether to allow students who do not meet eligibility criteria but who want to enroll in the program (e.g., youth who approach program staff about how to receive services) to do so. Doing so may stretch program staff and resources too thin. At the same time, such youth may benefit from the advocacy that the program could offer.

Use delinquency and school discipline data to identify potential program youth

The groups of youth that may most warrant or benefit from intervention can vary from school to school and district to district. Prior to implementation, school districts should consider using school, police, and court data to identify youth populations that may be a good fit for the program. The criteria may need to be revised for different settings. For example, several program staff reported that this type of program may be beneficial in middle schools where they can work with youth before they have engaged in serious delinquency. In their view, waiting until "bigger" problems emerged led to a cascade of problems, such as further problem behavior and a greater likelihood of punishment, including suspensions, arrests, and court involvement. In addition, several of the enrolled youth had police or court contact but did not have issues at school. Staff reported potential reasons for this occurrence. Some students may have made a single mistake and otherwise have had no behavioral issues. In other instances, schools served as a respite from the troubles some students faced at home or in their community. Because this program places heavy emphasis on academic and attendance interventions, schools might focus such programs on youth who have police or court contact and who also face challenges at school.

Identify all agencies that can sanction or refer youth to the program

If the chosen eligibility criteria for program participation involve police or court contact, school districts will want to identify each agency that has the authority to cite or sanction youth. For example, school districts might contact school administrators, local law enforcement, school police, diversion programs, juvenile courts, and state attorney's offices. Contact with these agencies may be useful in identifying what at-risk youth populations might benefit from program participation. In addition, these agencies can help to identify specific eligible participants.

Monitor ways that school policies may influence recruitment

Several school policies or events may influence a program's ability to recruit youth. For example, in this program recruitment appeared to drop in the spring. The drop may have been due in part to school preparations for state-mandated tests. Some schools did not allow students to be removed from classes during test prep sessions, which meant program staff could not share information about the program or administer the program's assent forms. There also may be other school policies that influence recruitment, such as changes in discipline practices, that impact recruitment. For example, during this study the school police implemented changes that altered the number of youth who were arrested. Such policies can influence the number of eligible youth as well as which groups are targeted for participation.

Secure buy-in from stakeholders and staff prior to implementation

Obtain buy-in from school administrators prior to implementation

By the end of the study period, most school administrators had bought into the program. However, for the schools where this support was not consistently in place, program implementation was more difficult. Program staff members, for example, had more difficulty in securing resources and developing relationships with school staff. In schools where administrators proactively supported the program, implementation was more successful.

Clarify program goals for staff, school administrators, and other stakeholders

Program staff members believed that it would be helpful if they had an opportunity at the beginning of each school year to describe their roles to school administrators and stakeholders and also to learn how each party's work contributed to the program's goals. A number of respondents recommended that there be regular meetings with all program stakeholders and all principals from the participating schools. The meetings could help to ensure that stakeholders understand the program and its goals, as well as each stakeholder's role in implementation. It also could provide an opportunity for program and school staff at the different sites to share what they have learned and how best to improve program implementation.

Keep the program focused on providing assistance to schools and students

Scope the program to each school's needs and existing resources

The underlying logic of the program is reliance on school-based staff, in conjunction with court personnel, to arrive at an individualized intervention that can help youth to do well in school and to avoid engaging in delinquency. No set number or types of services necessarily need to be provided. Rather, schools and school districts should seek to maximize their abilities to individualize intervention plans for youth within the constraints set by available local resources. Indeed, the focus should be on creating a team-based approach to developing an intervention plan that leverages existing services, resources, or activities to assist youth.

Ensure that youth are not stigmatized by program participation

The presence of this program on school grounds provides an opportunity to provide frequent assistance to youth who are at-risk of misbehavior and academic failure. Although this model has potential benefits for youth and for schools, it also may present opportunities for youth to be stigmatized. For example, the program identifies youth who have engaged in delinquency. School administrators and staff, then, may learn about the delinquency of some youth in situations where they otherwise might not have known about it. That can lead to enhanced school monitoring, which may increase the likelihood that youth are caught and sanctioned for misconduct. School districts that implement school-based delinquency prevention programs will want to ensure that youth who agree to participate are not stigmatized for doing so.

Identify opportunities to serve students when they are not in school

Some program staff advocated for identifying ways that students could receive services when they were not in school. After-school assistance was suggested as one option. The assistance could entail, for example, transportation home from after-school tutoring. In addition, staff members suggested providing services during the summer months. They suggested that this time could be used to take students on college tours or other learning-oriented trips.

Ensure collaboration among stakeholders

Hire an experienced project leader and provide administrative support

With a multiagency and multifaceted intervention, an experienced project leader who oversees the day-to-day operations and communications can be essential to program success. This person may need administrative support for tasks such as data management, monitoring the implementation of assent and consent processes, and following up on youth recruitment. This support will provide the project leader with the time to focus on maintaining smooth implementation and troubleshooting issues as they arise. Limiting turnover in this position is, by extension, critical for program success.

Involve school administrators in the hiring process for program staff

In this program, the school administrators were not a part of the hiring process for program staff members. This step may have provided benefits. For example, it let the school district staff who were most familiar with the program hire individuals who they believed could best implement the program's various components. However, this step also may have reduced school principal buy-in and may have made it more difficult for program staff members to become embedded in the schools. It is recommended that even if the school district makes hiring decisions that they consider involving administrators from participating schools in that process.

Maintain strong working relationships with school administrators and staff

The program staff members who had strong relationships with schools staff appeared to be able to more effectively implement the program. They seemed better able to assist youth and to navigate issues at school as compared to the schools where staff were not as well-integrated into the schools. Taking steps to develop and maintain these relationships thus can be critical to program success. Many approaches, including frequent communication with principals and responses to any concerns that they may have, exist to do so. Another is to work directly with school administrators and staff to identify approaches for assisting youth.

Train staff about the links between schools and juvenile justice

Some program staff had limited experience with the juvenile justice system. It was difficult for them to transition to working with at-risk youth and to collaborate with the juvenile justice system to do so. Similarly, some court staff, such as JPOs, had limited experience working with schools. School districts that might implement this type of program should consider cross-over

training to familiarize the school-based staff with the juvenile justice system and the JPOs with the school system. Such trainings also might be helpful for the various stakeholders, such as school principals and supervising JPOs.

Prepare for administrative and staffing changes

Address changes in school policies and practices that may affect the program

School policies and practices may change over the course of a program's implementation. For example, this program experienced a dip in eligible participants due to districtwide changes in school discipline policies and practices. School districts that intend to implement this program should frequently take stock of changing policies and how they might influence the program.

Take proactive steps to reduce staff turnover

Some staff may have viewed employment with the program as a "stepping stone" to longer-term employment with the school district. Such positions may offer more certainty (e.g., this program was grant-funded and did not have long-term funding) and possibly better salaries and benefits. School districts should be aware of such possibilities and take steps to reduce turnover.

Avoid unintended consequences

Use clear recruitment criteria and processes to reduce potential net-widening

To limit the likelihood that youth who are not a good fit for the program are not enrolled, clear recruitment criteria and processes are needed. If enrollment criteria are not clearly set and enforced, it leaves room for program staff members to enroll any youth who they perceive to be at risk without clear boundaries of what constitutes "at risk."

Ensure that program participation does not interfere with student learning

Program staff made a concerted effort to ensure students were not provided with duplicative services and to not provide program services during core class hours. Participation in school-based programs like the school district's can interfere with education when students miss class to participate in program activities. Accordingly, school districts will want to identify the best times of day for program staff to work with students and will want program staff to ensure that program activities are not interfering with students' academic work.

Address potential student misuse of program enrollment

In some cases, JPOs indicated that students may use their probation status to look "cool" in front of their peers. They may, for example, point out their JPO to fellow students so that they become aware of the student's probation status. Program staff and JPOs may want to find ways to use such instances to secure more program buy-in from youth participants.

8.6. Process Evaluation Limitations

As with the impact evaluations, there are limitations that attend to the process evaluation and that warrant mention. Here, we discuss two that warrant mention.

First, teachers and students were not interviewed. The process evaluation relied on school and program administrators and staff to provide insights about program implementation. Although their observations provided invaluable insights into implementation of the various aspects of the program, teachers and students at the schools where the program was implemented might have had different views about it. These views, however, are not reflected in this study.

Second, caution should be exercised in generalizing the study results. The process evaluation relied primarily on site visits, focus groups, surveys, and interviews. Although such approaches can provide unique insights into program implementation, theory, and effects, there is the risk that they provide an understanding that differs from insights that would arise with the use of random samples and quantitative measures of implementation. For example, the process evaluation pointed to the importance of "buy-in" from the district, program, and principals and teachers. Such buy-in was thought to be critical for a multifaceted intervention like the district's to be effective. That said, the study did not have quantitative data on which to draw to confirm the extent to which buy-in influences program effectiveness.

9. Implications for Research and Policy and Practice

In this section, we discuss implications of the study's findings for research and for policy and practice. As discussed in earlier sections (6.8, 7.7, and 8.6) of the report, a number of limitations should be considered when interpreting the results and, by extension, implications of them. Here we emphasize that this study's findings may not generalize to other student populations, schools, or school districts. Also, additional studies will be needed to determine how best to implement similar interventions and to identify the conditions that might influence their potential impacts.

9.1. Implications for Research

Identify ways to use school settings and school hours to assist at-risk youth

Youth who are at risk of delinquency do not cease to be at risk during school hours. Further research is needed on ways that school settings and school hours can be used to work with such youth both to reduce offending and to improve academic performance.

Replicate this study in other districts and schools

This study was only implemented in one school district and at only four of the district's schools. The findings of the study therefore do not necessarily generalize to other schools or school districts. To better understand the robustness of this study's results, future studies of this program—as well as of other school-based programs that are guided by a logic similar to that of this program—should be conducted.

Assess potential variation in program effects for different groups of students

To build on the results of this study, future work could test for potential variation in the effectiveness of the intervention for different groups of at-risk students. For example, this intervention did not target for inclusion youth released from custodial facilities who then return to schools. It is conceivable that the intervention might be effective with this population.

Assess potential variation in program effects for different districts and schools

In a similar vein, future studies should examine potential variation in the effectiveness of the intervention for different districts and schools. For example, this type of intervention may be easier to implement in settings where case flows are smaller and where it may be easier for schools, police, and the courts to collaborate.

Identify additional avenues through which collaborations between schools and juvenile justice might improve youth outcomes

The program relied on the presence of strong working relationships between schools and the juvenile justice system. More research is needed on what aspects of such collaborations are most feasible and most effective. Perhaps, for example, the attendance of school personnel at court

hearings is more likely to result in court-ordered sanctions that prioritize educational goals. Whether such involvement is feasible is, however, another matter, especially in school districts with significant staffing shortages. Similarly, in some districts, collaboration with probation departments may be easier or more difficult, depending on the agencies' proximity to one another and whether they have shared visions for how best to assist youth.

Identify additional avenues through which collaborations between schools and juvenile justice might improve school safety and education

Future research should consider building on this study by identifying ways that schools and the juvenile justice system can best collaborate to improve school safety and education. The district's intervention focused on working one-on-one with youth. There was, though, the possibility that the intervention might have influenced school-level outcomes. For example, the mere presence of family counselors might have led some students, intervention and non-intervention alike, to contact them about possible violence on campus. School-based interventions seem to hold particular promise for achieving impacts both at the individual-level and the school-level. Accordingly, research is needed on how interventions that help individual youth may simultaneously improve school-level outcomes.

9.2. Implications for Policy and Practice

Promote school-court collaborations to effectively intervene with at-risk youth

Police and court sanctions ideally help rather than hinder academic success and also result in behavioral improvements. Without collaborations between schools and the police, and the juvenile justice system more broadly, there is the risk that each institution creates barriers to success for youth. Terms of probation, for example, may interfere with school activities. Similarly, schools may punish youth in ways that are not aligned with court-ordered requirements. For example, the process evaluation identified instances when the courts would mandate youth to attend school and, at the same time, schools would suspend youth.

This program highlighted that the program staff members can be a tool for school administrators to use when there are problems or issues that arise with the youth in the program. Rather than taking punitive disciplinary action, such as referring youth to an alternative school, school administrators can seek the assistance of program staff to help address the specific needs or issues of a particular youth. They also can rely on program staff members to frequently monitor youth. Such collaborations, then, can promote accountability of students and can do so in ways that improve their educational and behavioral outcomes.

That said, a clear caution remains: Some separation of these realms is necessary. The proper purview of the juvenile court begins with acts of delinquency. When the court's purview begins to intertwine with that of schools, there is the risk that youth become subject to the equivalent of a "police state." In the end, the extremes of no collaboration and full collaboration likely should be avoided. That is one lesson from this initiative: A balanced approach can potentially avoid the problems that come from schools and the juvenile justice system failing to work together to help youth and may potentially reduce the school-to-court (or prison) pipeline.

Identify and leverage existing school-based and community-based services

The logic of this program centers on leveraging already-available services to help youth. It does not provide specialized services for youth. For example, program staff do not provide tutoring or drug treatment. Instead, they refer youth who need such services to organizations or entities that provide these services. Accordingly, the success of this type of program requires that staff build a comprehensive knowledge of existing school- and community-based services and know what steps need to be taken to secure those services for youth.

Schools and school districts should consider similar types of programs

Although this study did not identify appreciable student-level or school-level impacts of the intervention, the program is built on a sound theoretically-informed foundation for improving student success, including behavioral and academic outcomes. If implemented fully and well, it is possible that the program—or any intervention built from a similar logic—may be effective.

Almost all schools have students who become enmeshed in the juvenile justice system. The result is that these youth are at-risk of falling behind academically. At the same time, they have risk factors that may increase their likelihood of offending. Intervening during school hours would seem to be a logical extension of the court's efforts to support youth in avoiding delinquent activity and of pursuing a prosocial life. This idea, though, remains understudied and interventions like the one that was the subject of this evaluation remain few and far between.

A related idea is important to emphasize: To appreciably improve school safety and student educational performance, it likely is more effective to address school-level factors that can do so than to invest only in programs for at-risk youth. Here, again, the program that was the subject of this evaluation presented the foundation for such an approach. It ultimately entails creating a culture of accountability and support. Youth who engage in misconduct must answer for their behavior. At the same time, such youth may have risk factors that, if well-addressed, might both reduce their behavior and improve academic success. To achieve such outcomes on a large scale ultimately would seem to require the combined efforts of school administrators, teachers, students, parents, communities, law enforcement, and the courts.

Use an ongoing process evaluation to improve implementation

To increase the likelihood that a collaborative intervention like the school district's will succeed, the intervention components must be implemented with fidelity to the program's design. Implementation challenges, however, can and do arise. These challenges mean there is a need to identify factors that reduce the intervention's implementation fidelity. An ongoing process evaluation can assist in identifying such factors and how they might be addressed. It also can do so in "real time," and so allows program staff to overcome problems as they arise.

Address challenges of school, police, and court collaborations

Assisting police- and court-involved youth in a school system context is challenging. That is in part because of limited resources and staffing and differing emphases of the police, courts, and schools. There may be disagreements between the diverse stakeholders about how best to intervene. For example, low-risk delinquent youth may be viewed as "low risk" from the police

and court's perspectives and so those entities may promote a support-oriented intervention. Those same youth, however, may be viewed as "high risk" from the school's perspective. The schools, then, may promote a more get-tough approach with these youth.

Successful school, police, and court collaborations require considerable effort and thus require that a variety of challenges, such as diverging views about how best to intervene with at-risk youth, be addressed. The process evaluation highlighted, for example, that multi-agency collaborations require sustained buy-in from all stakeholders (e.g., police, courts, teachers, principals, and parents). Buy-in can increase the likelihood that stakeholders are willing to work together to identify and address barriers to collaboration.

Secure and maintain buy-in from school administrators and staff, community stakeholders, parents, and students

Buy-in is important not only for successfully initiating a program but also for successfully continuing it. For example, principals who do not believe in the program may be less likely to provide school-based program staff with the resources needed to implement the program. And if students do not buy in to the program's logic or intent, they may be unlikely to listen to or seek guidance from program staff. Accordingly, a key aspect of successfully implementing school-based interventions entails securing buy-in from stakeholders from the start and maintaining that buy-in throughout the program's implementation.

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11. Tables: Student-Level Impact Analyses

Table 11.1.   Academic Outcomes Following Program/Study Enrollment among Intervention and Control Group Youth

Outcome	Intervention Group			Control Group			
	N	Mean/%	SD	N	Mean/%	SD	
Academic outcomes in the school year of enrollment							
Grade point average[a]	420	1.91	0.89	401	2.05	0.88	*
Retained	423	0%	--	416	0%	--	
Withdrew[b]	436	4%	--	427	3%	--	
Transferred	436	4%	--	427	5%	--	
Graduated[c]	436	6%	--	427	6%	--	
Academic outcomes in the school year after enrollment							
Grade point average[a]	148	1.98	1.05	150	2.10	1.01	
Retained	226	0%	--	220	0%	--	
Withdrew[b]	226	6%	--	220	9%	--	
Transferred	226	10%	--	220	6%	--	
Graduated[c]	226	7%	--	220	6%	--	

[a]Significance level derived from t-tests; all other significance levels derived from bivariate logistic regressions
[b]Includes all withdrawals except transfers to other schools and leaving school due to graduation or completion of a high school equivalency degree or certification
[c]Includes graduation and completion of a high school equivalency degree or certification
*$p<.05$, **$p<.01$, ***$p<.001$ for difference between groups

Table 11.2.   Attendance Outcomes Following Program/Study Enrollment among Intervention and Control Group Youth

Outcome	Intervention Group			Control Group			
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	
Attendance outcomes in the school year of enrollment							
Days absent, unexcused	362	10.87	11.54	360	10.72	13.15	
Days absent, excused	362	0.66	1.88	360	0.88	2.25	
Days absent, total	362	11.53	11.77	360	11.60	13.30	
Attendance outcomes in the school year after enrollment							
Days absent, unexcused	176	13.40	16.42	170	10.42	12.94	*
Days absent, excused	176	0.76	2.54	170	0.62	2.06	
Days absent, total	176	14.15	16.65	170	11.05	13.38	*

NOTE: Significance levels derived from bivariate negative binomial regressions
*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 for difference between groups

Table 11.3. School-Based Misconduct Outcomes Following Program/Study Enrollment among Intervention and Control Group Youth

Outcome	Intervention Group			Control Group		
	N	Mean/%	SD	N	Mean/%	SD
Misconduct outcomes in the school year of enrollment						
Office disciplinary referrals						
Office disciplinary referrals, total	436	2.43	4.31	427	2.56	4.46
Any office disciplinary referral[a]	436	51%	--	427	49%	--
Referrals for criminal offenses, total	436	0.19	0.53	427	0.25	0.64
Any referral for a criminal offense[a]	436	14%	--	427	16%	--
Referrals for disruptive misbehavior, total	436	1.33	2.60	427	1.41	2.78
Any referral for disruptive misbehavior[a]	436	39%	--	427	40%	--
Number of referrals for school rule violations	436	0.92	2.03	427	0.91	1.86
Any referral for a school rule violation[a]	436	33%	--	427	34%	--
Suspensions						
Total number of suspensions	434	0.49	0.79	426	0.51	0.79
Number of days suspended	434	1.92	3.86	426	2.07	4.06
Any suspensions[a]	434	33%	--	426	35%	--
Total number of in-school suspensions[b]	434	0.09	0.29	426	0.08	0.27
Number of days on in-school suspension	434	0.21	0.84	426	0.18	0.89
Any in-school suspensions[a]	434	9%	--	426	8%	--
Total number of out-of-school suspensions	434	0.40	0.65	426	0.43	0.67
Number of days on out-of-school suspension	434	1.71	3.53	426	1.88	3.83
Any out-of-school suspensions[a]	434	31%	--	426	33%	--

(continued)

Table 11.3 continued

Outcome	Intervention Group			Control Group		
	N	Mean/%	SD	N	Mean/%	SD
Misconduct outcomes in the school year after enrollment						
Office disciplinary referrals						
Office disciplinary referrals, total	226	1.07	2.60	220	1.44	2.79
Any office disciplinary referral[a]	226	33%	--	220	40%	--
Referrals for criminal offenses, total	226	0.11	0.41	220	0.15	0.46
Any referral for a criminal offense[a]	226	8%	--	220	11%	--
Referrals for disruptive misbehavior, total	226	0.66	1.83	220	0.91	1.86
Any referral for disruptive misbehavior[a]	226	25%	--	220	32%	--
Number of referrals for school rule violations	226	0.30	0.91	220	0.38	1.05
Any referral for a school rule violation[a]	226	15%	--	220	18%	--
Suspensions						
Total number of suspensions	219	0.26	0.58	211	0.35	0.67
Number of days suspended	219	0.88	2.22	211	1.34	3.31
Any suspensions[a]	219	20%	--	211	26%	--
Total number of in-school suspensions	219	0.06	0.26	211	0.07	0.26
Number of days on in-school suspension	219	0.10	0.43	211	0.19	0.87
Any in-school suspensions[a]	219	6%	--	211	7%	--
Total number of out-of-school suspensions	219	0.20	0.44	211	0.28	0.53
Number of days on out-of-school suspension	219	0.78	2.10	211	1.15	2.85
Any out-of-school suspensions[a]	219	18%	--	211	24%	--

NOTE: Significance levels derived from bivariate negative binominal regressions unless otherwise indicated
[a]Significance levels derived from bivariate logistic regressions
[b]Significance level derived from t-test
*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 for difference between groups

Table 11.4.   Justice System Contact Outcomes Following Program/Study Enrollment among Intervention and Control Group Youth

Outcome	Intervention Group		Control Group	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Justice system contact outcomes in the three months after enrollment				
Justice system contact	336	12%	338	13%
Justice system contact, misdemeanor offense	336	7%	338	8%
Justice system contact, felony offense	336	4%	338	5%
Justice system contact, school-based offense	336	2%	338	2%

NOTE. Significance levels derived from bivariate logistic regressions
*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 for difference between groups

12.Figures: School-Level Impact Analyses

Figure 12.1.   Percent of Graduating Students Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education
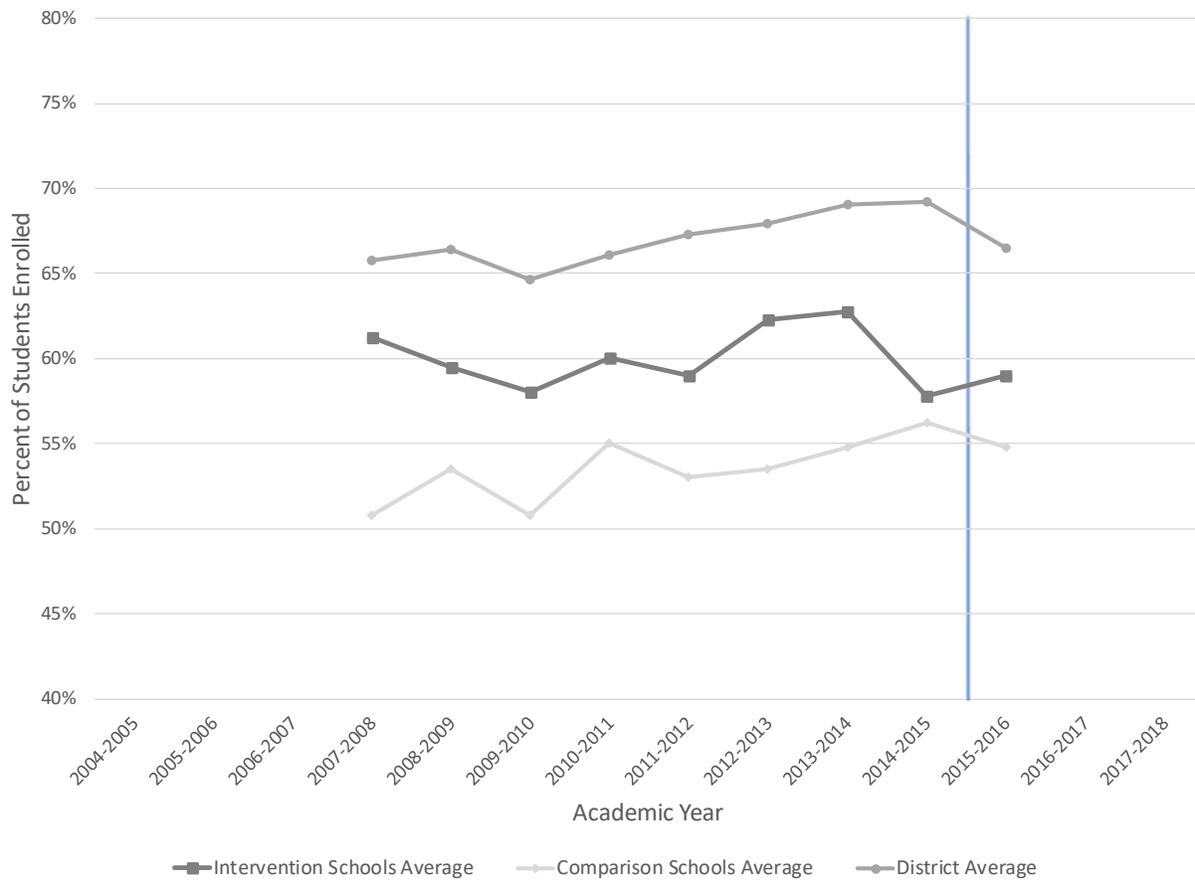
Source: School District of Palm Beach County. 2017. *College Matriculation Summary, 2007-2016*. Palm Beach, FL: School District of Palm Beach County.

Notes:

* This measure specifically refers to the percent of graduating students enrolled in post-secondary education in the fall immediately following graduation.

* Data are not available prior to the 2007-2008 school year.

* The vertical line represents the break point for when the intervention was implemented. Specifically, the focus is on trends prior to the 2015-2016 school year compared to the trends in the 2015-2016 school year and thereafter.

Figure 12.2   School Enrollment Stability Rate
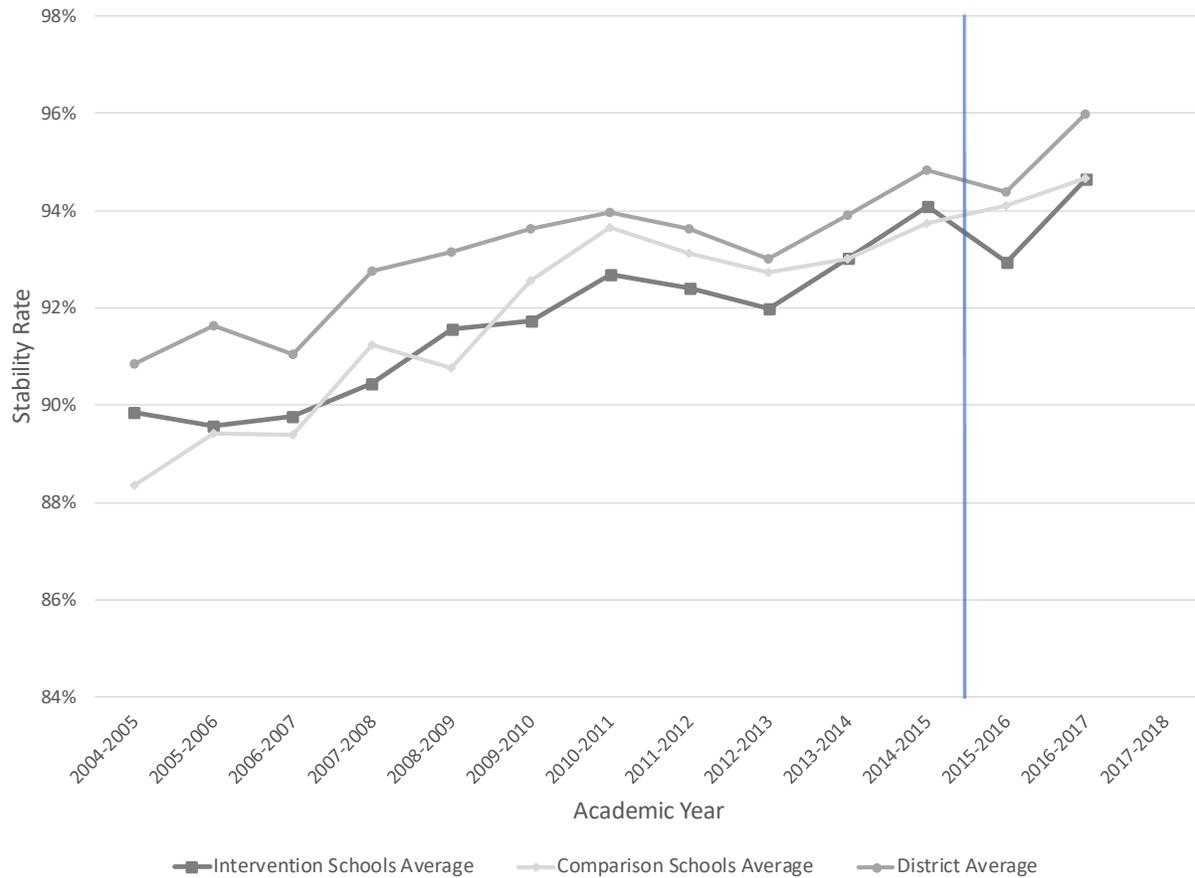
Figure 12.3. School Graduation Rate
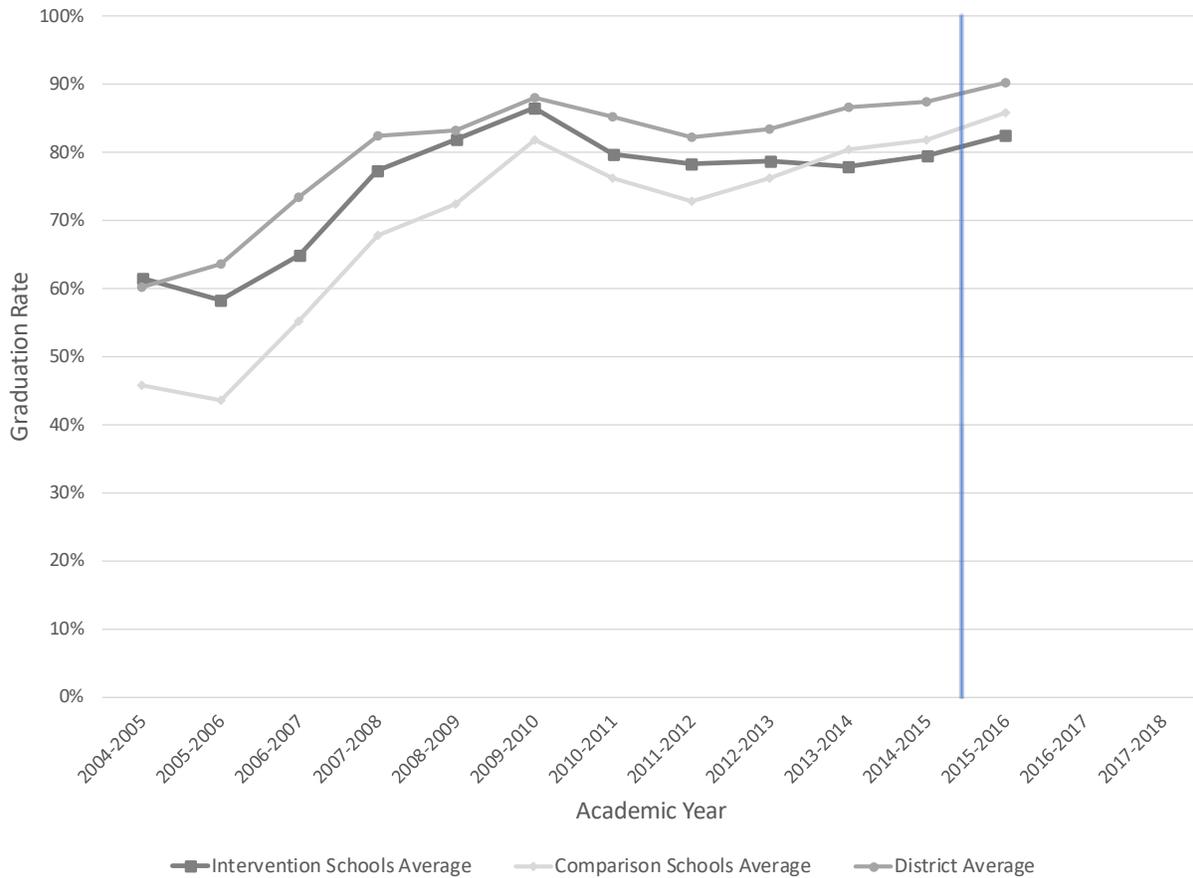
Source: School District of Palm Beach County. 2017. *Executive Summaries, 2010-2016*.
Graduation Rate Reports & Tools. Palm Beach, FL: School District of Palm Beach County.
Notes:
* From the 2011-2012 academic year onward, the graduation rate reflects the Federal High
School Graduation Rate. Prior to 2011-2012, the National Governors Association graduation
rate was used, which is less rigorous. The current graduation rate is defined as the percent of on-
time graduates from the graduation cohort (all students who entered grade 9 four years
previously plus all new enrolled students, minus transfers to other schools, home education, or
deceased students). Excluded from the graduates are dropouts, certificate recipients, special
diploma recipients, continuing enrollees, and transfers to adult programs or DJJ centers.
* The vertical line represents the break point for when the intervention was implemented.
Specifically, the focus is on trends prior to the 2015-2016 school year compared to the trends in
the 2015-2016 school year and thereafter.

Figure 12.4.   School Absentee Rate
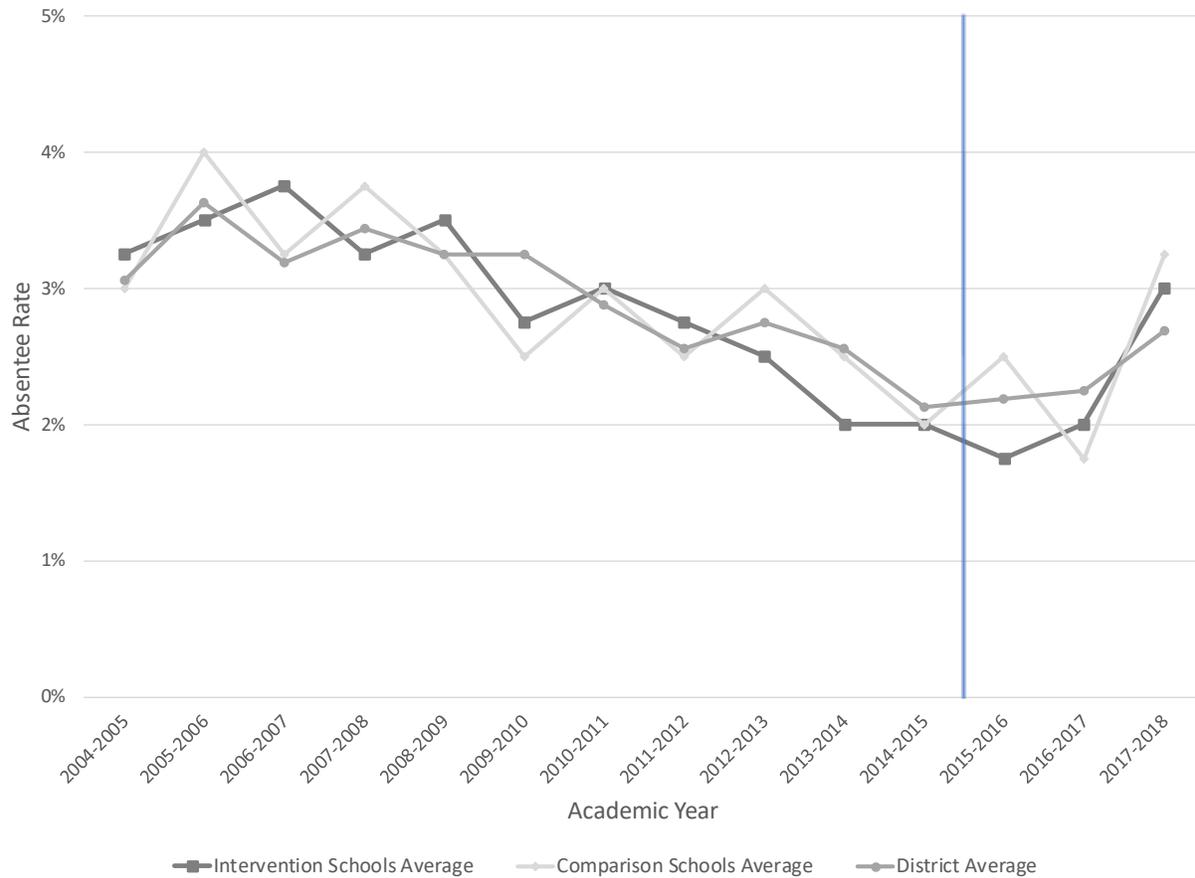
Notes:
* The vertical line represents the break point for when the intervention was implemented. Specifically, the focus is on trends prior to the 2015-2016 school year compared to the trends in the 2015-2016 school year and thereafter.

Figure 12.5. School Truancy Rate
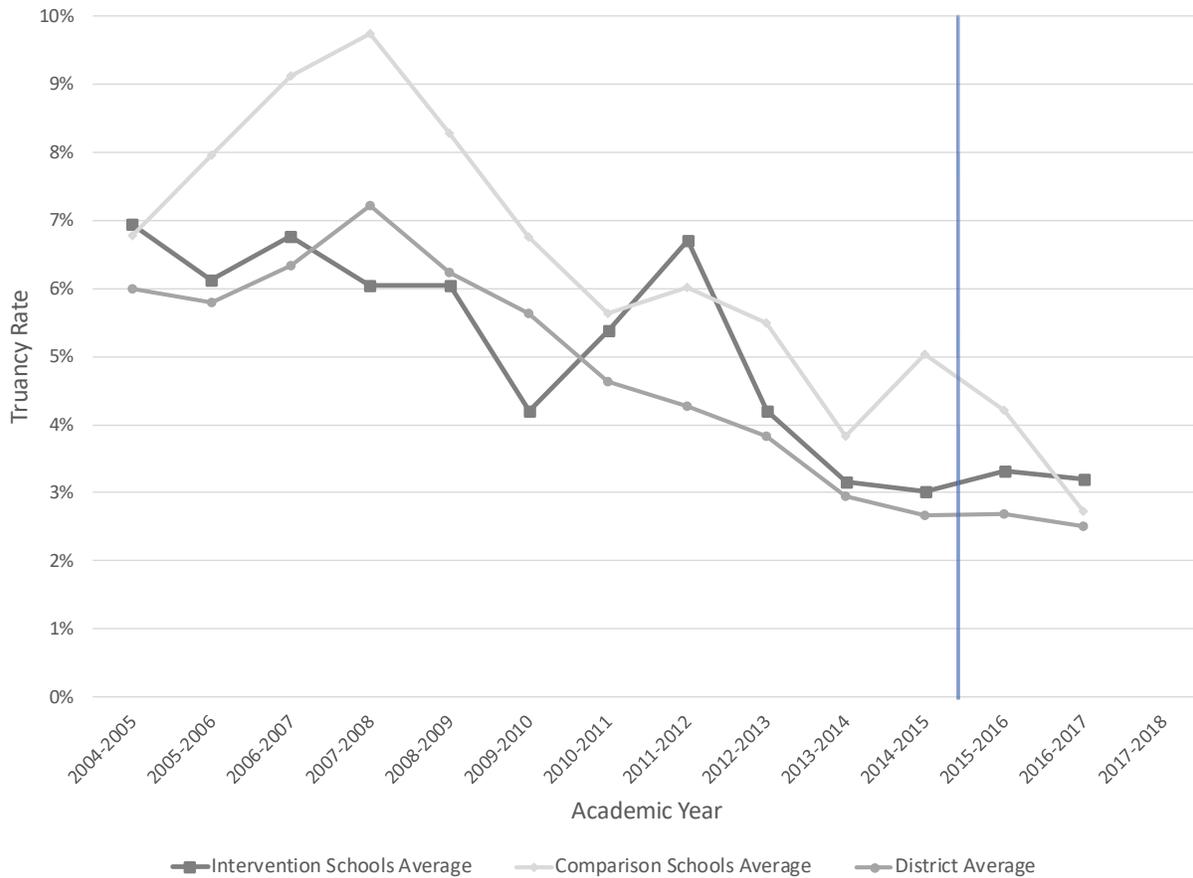
Notes:
* The vertical line represents the break point for when the intervention was implemented. Specifically, the focus is on trends prior to the 2015-2016 school year compared to the trends in the 2015-2016 school year and thereafter.

Figure 12.6. Percent of Teachers Who Feel Student Absenteeism Is a Concern
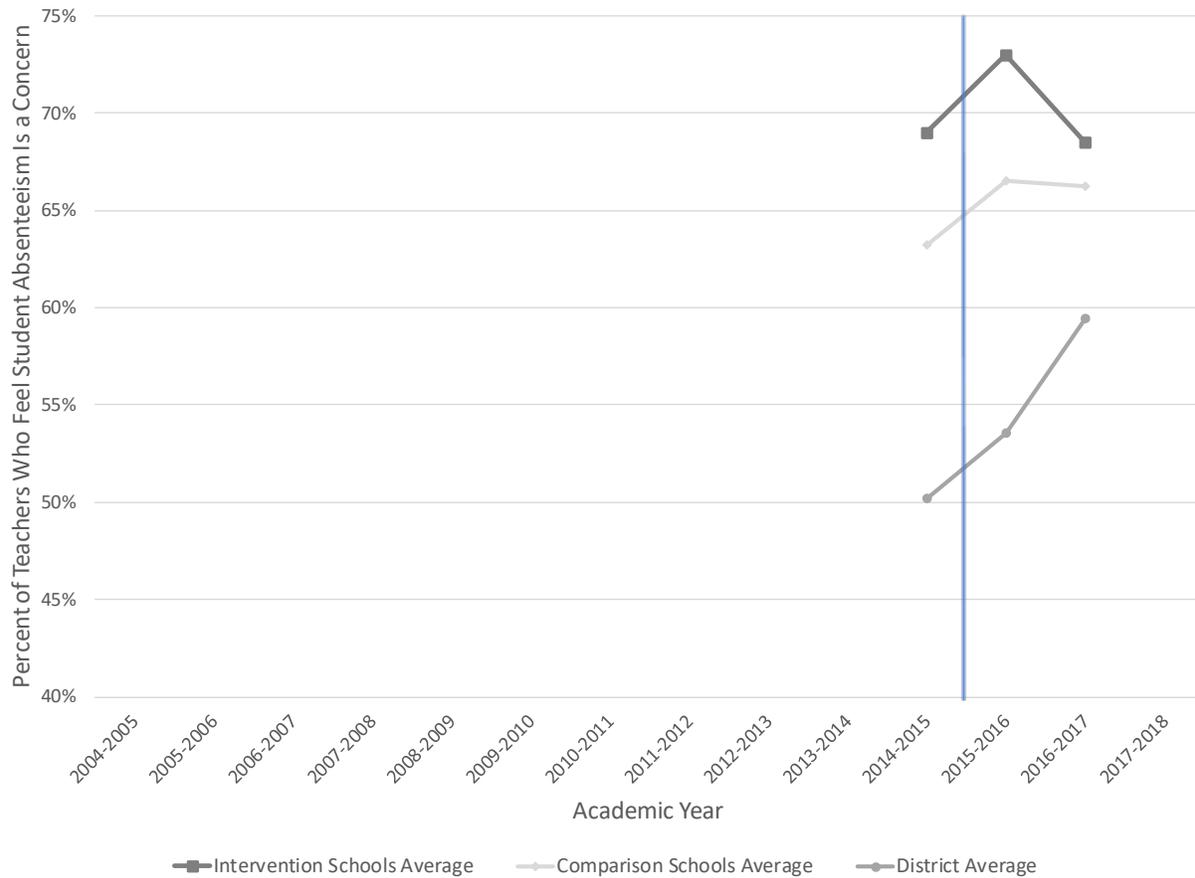
Source: School District of Palm Beach County. 2017. *FY 2017 Teacher/Staff School Effectiveness Questionnaire*. Palm Beach, FL: School District of Palm Beach County.
Notes:
* Teacher perceptions of student absenteeism is one item from the "Student Conduct" summary measure, indicating the percent of teachers in each school who perceive student absenteeism to be an issue in their school.
* Data are not available prior to the 2014-2015 school year.
* The vertical line represents the break point for when the intervention was implemented. Specifically, the focus is on trends prior to the 2015-2016 school year compared to the trends in the 2015-2016 school year and thereafter.

Figure 12.7.   Percent of Teachers Who Feel Student Truancy Is a Concern

Notes:
* Teacher perceptions of student truancy is one item from the "Student Conduct" summary measure, indicating the percent of teachers in each school who perceive student truancy to be an issue in their school.
* Data are not available prior to the 2014-2015 school year.
* The vertical line represents the break point for when the intervention was implemented. Specifically, the focus is on trends prior to the 2015-2016 school year compared to the trends in the 2015-2016 school year and thereafter.

Figure 12.8.   SESIR Incidents per 100 Students
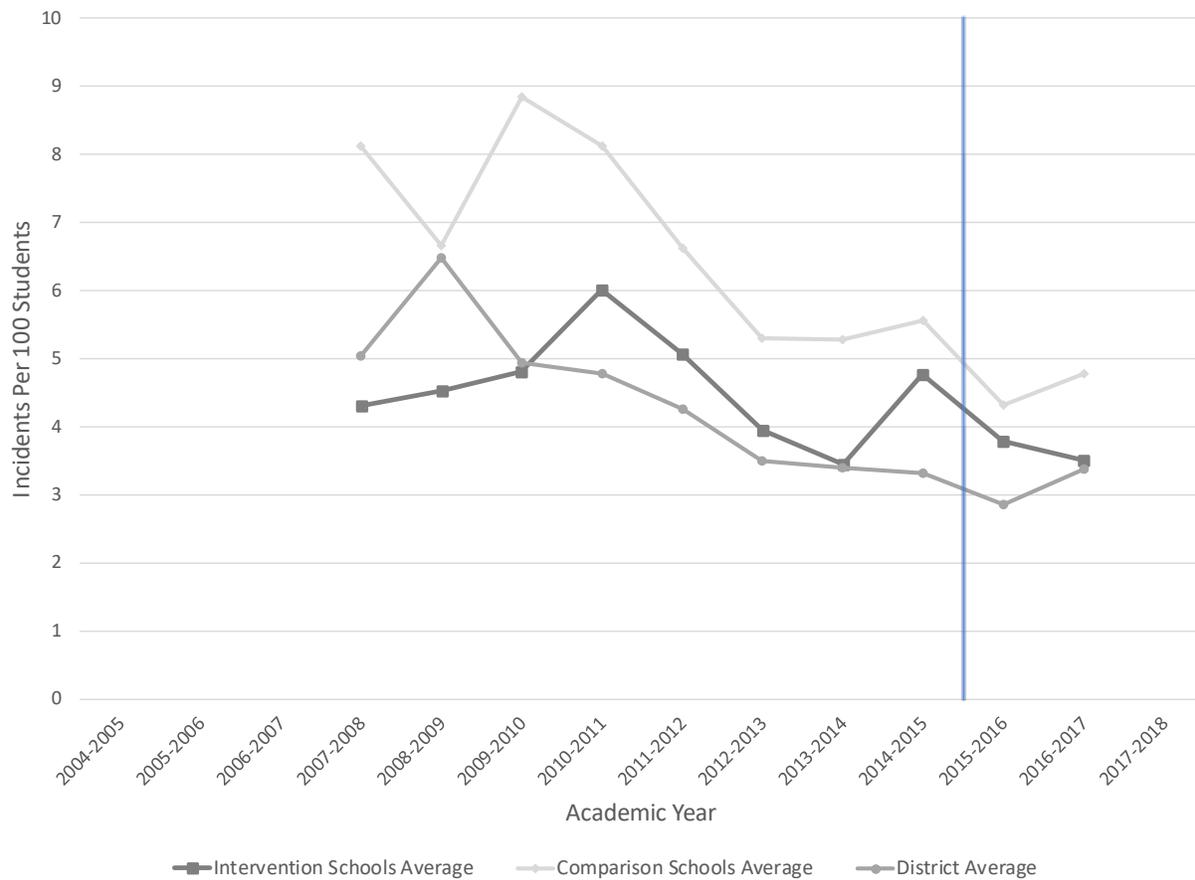
Notes:
* SESIR refers to the School Environment Safety Incident Reporting system. It stores school-reported data on 26 crimes and misconduct that occur on school grounds or vehicles or at school events. Any incidents which required consultation with law enforcement must be reported to the state, though schools may also include incidents that did not require consultation with law enforcement.
* Data are not available prior to the 2007-2008 school year.
* The vertical line represents the break point for when the intervention was implemented. Specifically, the focus is on trends prior to the 2015-2016 school year compared to the trends in the 2015-2016 school year and thereafter.

Figure 12.9.   SESIR Drug and Alcohol Incidents per 100 Students
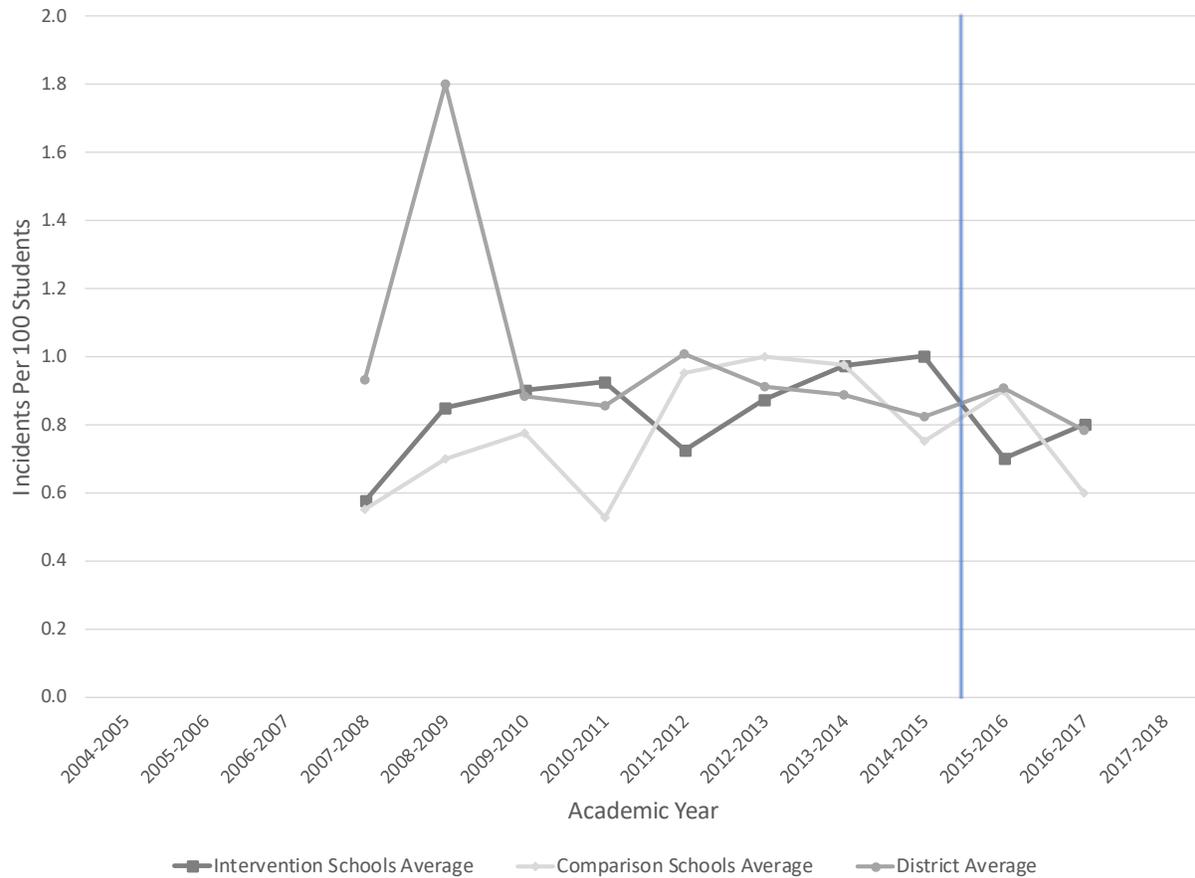
Notes:
* SESIR refers to the School Environment Safety Incident Reporting system. It stores school-reported data on 26 crimes and misconduct that occur on school grounds or vehicles or at school events. Any incidents which required consultation with law enforcement must be reported to the state, though schools may also include incidents that did not require consultation with law enforcement.
* Drug and alcohol SESIR incidents include all alcohol, drug sales, drug use, and tobacco offenses.
* Data are not available prior to the 2007-2008 school year.
* The vertical line represents the break point for when the intervention was implemented. Specifically, the focus is on trends prior to the 2015-2016 school year compared to the trends in the 2015-2016 school year and thereafter.

Figure 12.10. Percent of Parents Who Feel Their Child Has a Positive School Climate
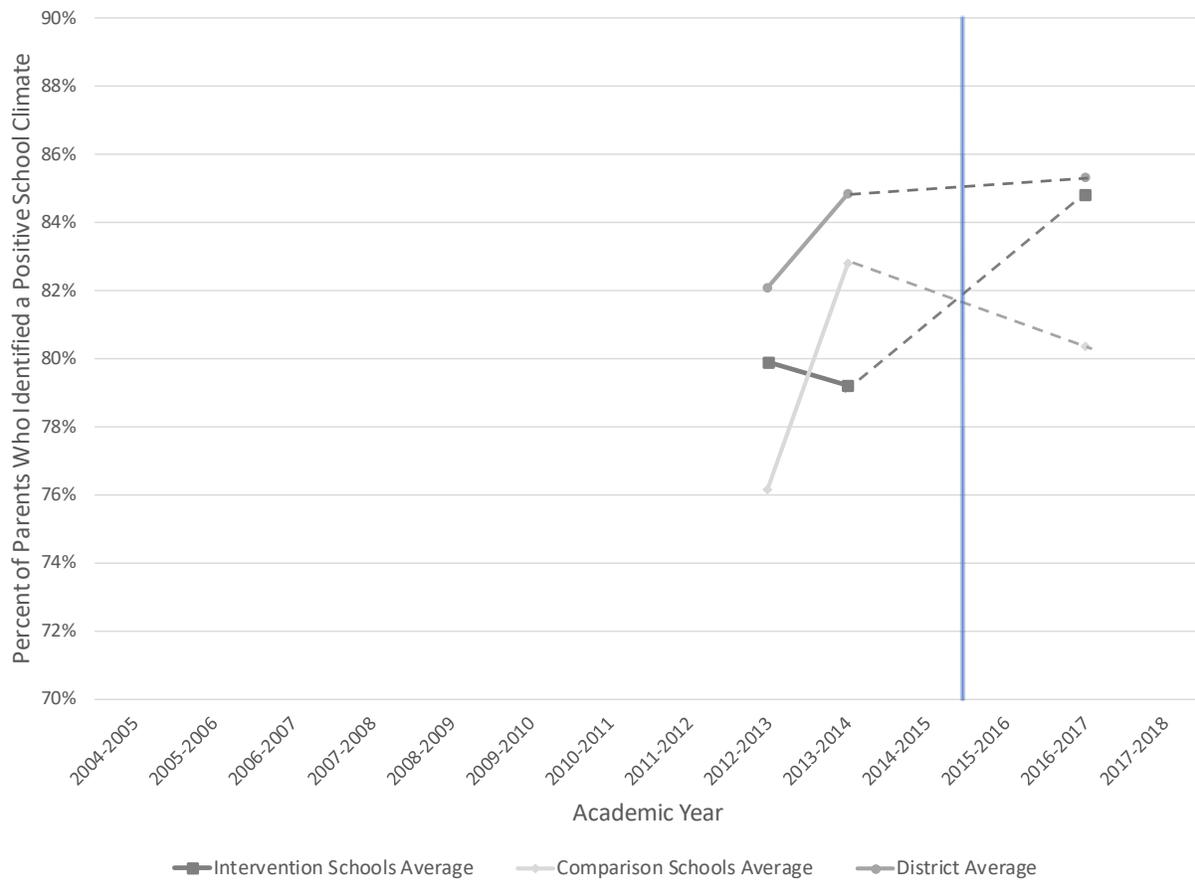
Source: School District of Palm Beach County. 2017. *Parent/Student School Effectiveness Questionnaire, 2012-2017*. Palm Beach, FL: School District of Palm Beach County.

Notes:

* "School Climate" is a summary measure made up of 16 statements about the parent's perception of their child's school, including "My child cares about school," "Students in my child's school respect each other," and "Discipline at my child's school is administered fairly." The average scores indicate the percent of parents who agreed with these statements, with higher scores indicating a more positive school environment.

* Data are only available for school years 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2016-2017. The dashed lines between 2014 and 2016 indicate an unobserved trendline.

* The vertical line represents the break point for when the intervention was implemented. Specifically, the focus is on trends prior to the 2015-2016 school year compared to the trends in the 2015-2016 school year and thereafter.

Figure 12.11. Percent of Parents Who Feel They Are Involved in Their Child's School
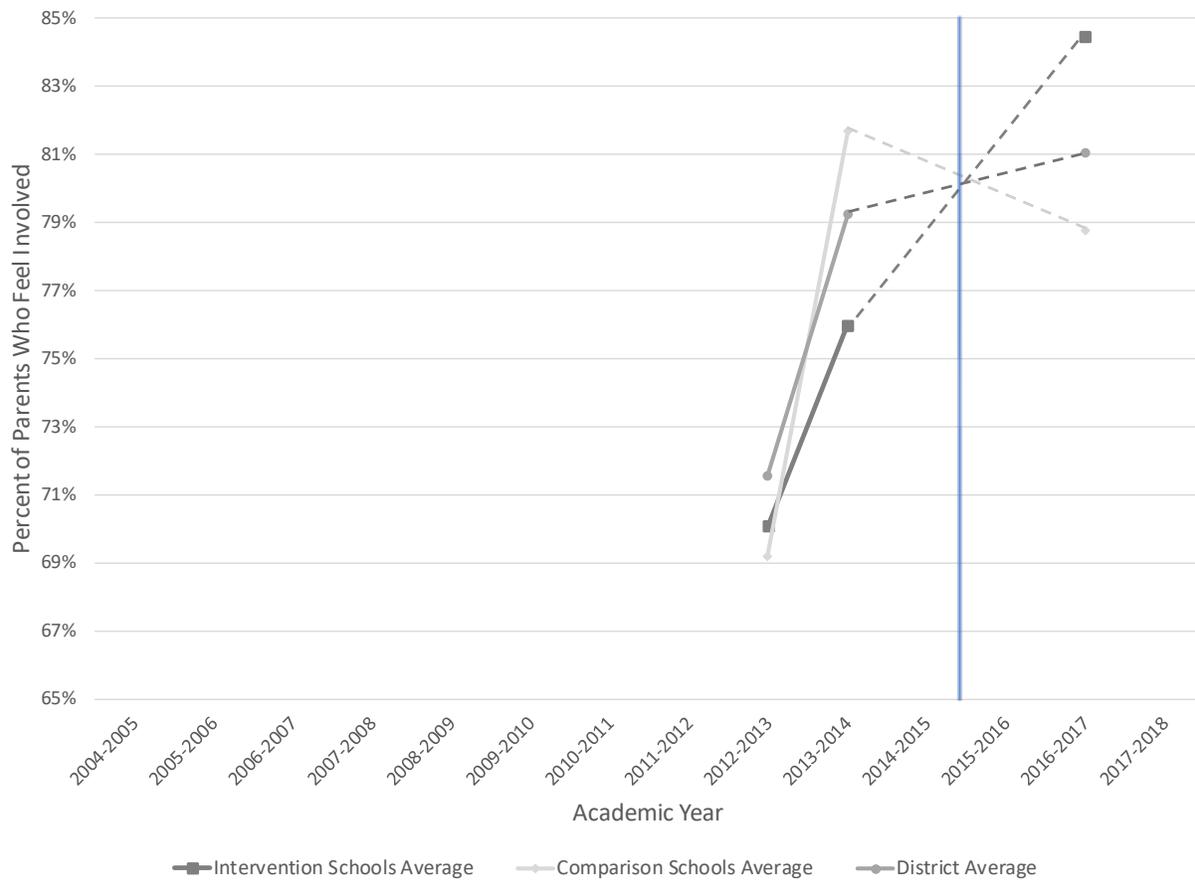
Source: School District of Palm Beach County. 2017. *Parent/Student School Effectiveness Questionnaire, 2012-2017*. Palm Beach, FL: School District of Palm Beach County.
Notes:
* "Parental Involvement" is a summary measure made up of 9 statements about the parent's perception of their involvement in their child's school, including "This school provides me with helpful ideas on how to support my child's learning at home" and "I often attend parent conferences at my child's school." The average scores indicate the percent of parents who agreed with these statements, with higher scores indicating greater parental involvement in schools.
* Data are only available for school years 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2016-2017. The dashed lines between 2014 and 2016 indicate an unobserved trendline.
* The vertical line represents the break point for when the intervention was implemented. Specifically, the focus is on trends prior to the 2015-2016 school year compared to the trends in the 2015-2016 school year and thereafter.

Figure 12.12. Percent of Parents Who Feel Their Child Is Unsafe at School
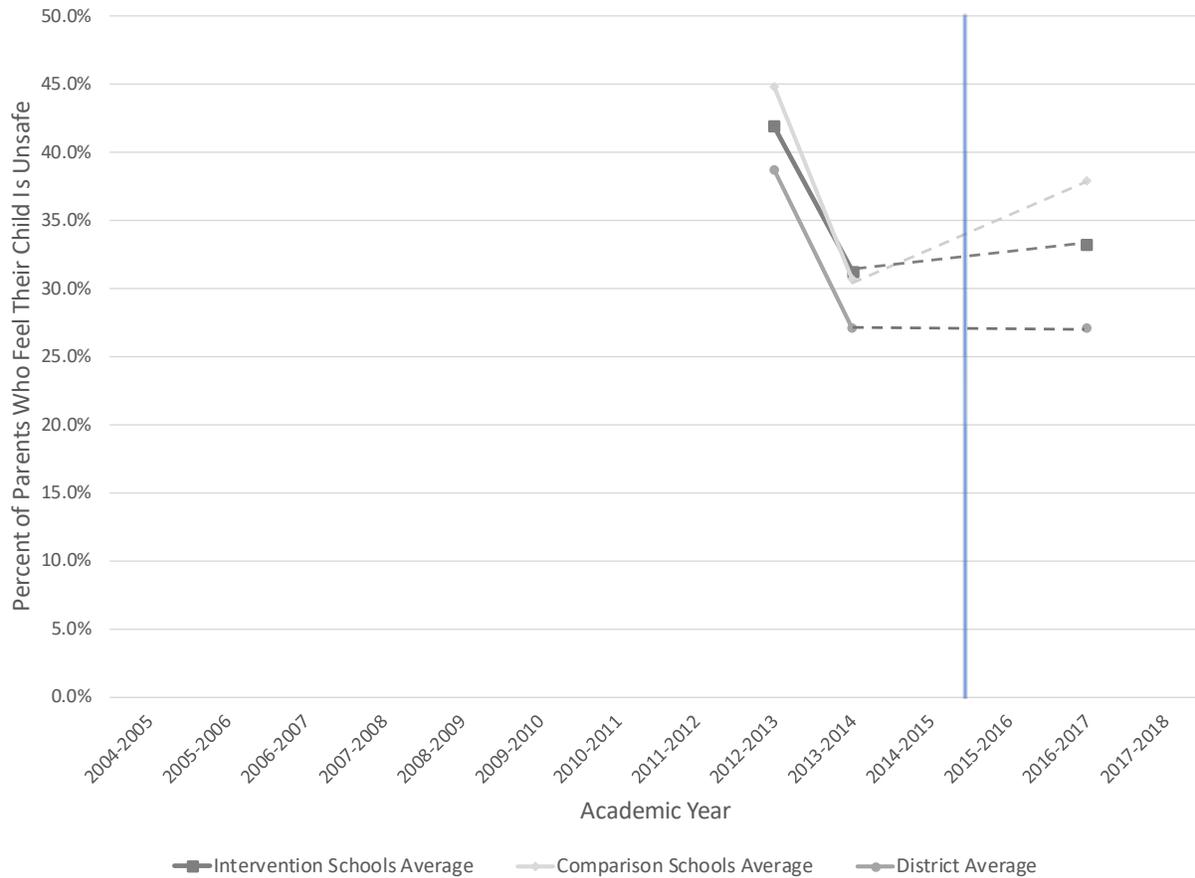
Notes:
* "Safety" is a summary measure made up of 4 statements about the parent's perception of their child's safety in their school, including "My child at this school is often teased or picked on" and "My child has problems traveling between home and school." The average scores indicate the percent of parents who agreed with these statements, with higher scores indicating that personal safety is a greater concern.
* Data are only available for school years 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2016-2017. The dashed lines between 2014 and 2016 indicate an unobserved trendline.
* The vertical line represents the break point for when the intervention was implemented. Specifically, the focus is on trends prior to the 2015-2016 school year compared to the trends in the 2015-2016 school year and thereafter.