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Guidelines for a National Definition of Truancy And Calculating Rates

National Center for School Engagement

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**An initiative of the Colorado Foundation for Families and Children
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Guidelines for Defining Truancy and Calculating Rates

Considerations in Defining Truancy

Generally, most educators and court personnel who deal with truancy define it as an unexcused absence from school. Beyond this general understanding is a myriad of state and local permutations that qualify and quantify truancy through statutes, policies, regulations, and even school building codes of student conduct. The intent of this document is not to prescribe a national definition, but rather to advise on important elements to consider. New federal requirements make state education agencies determine a school-by-school truancy rate. The first step is for the appropriate state agency to decide what “truancy” means. Then they can begin to develop a formula for a rate. This publication is designed to help those who take on the task of defining and reporting truancy.

Sample Definition

The following is a generic definition of truancy that fits many states’ policies. It is offered as a starting point. As with any definition, there are questions raised in interpreting and implementing it. Some of these questions follow the definition.

Unexcused Absence/Truancy- *If a student is absent without an excuse by the parent/guardian or if the student leaves school or a class without permission of the teacher or administrator in charge, it will be considered to be an unexcused absence and the student shall be considered truant.*

Questions to consider include:

1. What constitutes an “excuse”? Need it be written? If so, is an e-mail message good enough? Will a phone call suffice? Must the excuse be verified by a school official?
2. How many trancies can occur before the school is required to intervene with parents, sanction students, and make court referrals?
3. How are parents notified that their child is truant?

4. What if the school does not agree with the parent's decision to excuse an absence?
5. Are suspended students considered truant?

All of these questions require either state or local policies in order to interpret and implement them in the real world of school management. Because of differences in the way states answer these and other questions, aggregating state data into a national rate is problematic. Any federal reporting requirements must acknowledge state and local differences in the definition of truancy and its implementation.

Components of a Truancy Definition

Minimally, the following considerations should be made in formulating any complete policy statement about truancy. These are the areas that should be clarified:

- 1) Truancy is any absence unexcused by the school. An absence that is excused by a parent but not by school officials is still a truancy.
- 2) Truancy applies even if only part of the day is unexcused. In secondary school, students often skip one or two periods but attend the rest of the day.
- 3) Truancy is determined only if a case is reviewed. There should be a review and determination by a school official that the absence was unexcused before it is labeled a truancy.
- 4) Truancy is a term reserved for cases that are referred to court: The "truancy" label should only apply to students who have so many unexcused absences that they have triggered a court referral. This level of truancy is often referred to in statutes as "chronic truancy".
- 5) Truancy only applies to students between the ages of compulsory school attendance. Truancy is a term applied only to absences accrued by students who are required by state law to attend school.

The Federal Requirements for Truancy Reporting

Beginning with the 2005-06 school year, state education agencies are required to report truancy "rates" on a school-by-school basis to the US Department of Education. The specific federal requirements appear on the following page¹:

¹ Information provided by Janelle Krueger, Colorado Department of Education, Division of Prevention Initiatives, 2004.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: Title IV, Part A, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities; SEC. 4112. RESERVATION OF STATE FUNDS FOR SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS.

(c) State Activities

(3) UNIFORM MANAGEMENT INFORMATION AND REPORTING SYSTEM-

(A) INFORMATION AND STATISTICS- A State shall establish a uniform management information and reporting system.

(B) USES OF FUNDS- A State may use funds described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of subsection (b)(2), either directly or through grants and contracts, to implement the uniform management information and reporting system described in subparagraph (A), for the collection of information on —

Report to State on school-by-school basis.

(i) truancy rates;

- (ii) the frequency, seriousness, and incidence of violence and drug-related offenses resulting in suspensions and expulsions in elementary schools and secondary schools in the State;
- (iii) the types of curricula, programs, and services provided by the chief executive officer, the State educational agency, local educational agencies, and other recipients of funds under this subpart; and
- (iv) the incidence and prevalence, age of onset, perception of health risk, and perception of social disapproval of drug use and violence by youth in schools and communities.

(C) COMPILATION OF STATISTICS- In compiling the statistics required for the uniform management information and reporting system, the offenses described in subparagraph (B)(ii) shall be defined pursuant to the State's criminal code, but shall not identify victims of crimes or persons accused of crimes. The collected data shall include incident reports by school officials, anonymous student surveys, and anonymous teacher surveys.

Report to the public required.

(D) REPORTING- The information described under subparagraph (B) shall be reported to the public and the data referenced in clauses (i) and (ii) of such subparagraph shall be reported to the State on a school-by-school basis.

(E) LIMITATION- Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize the Secretary to require particular policies, procedures, or practices with respect to crimes committed on school property or school security.

For the first time, these new federal requirements will provide a national view of truancy. If we are to marshal resources and improve social policy, this kind of data is essential for policy makers and public officials. The specific reporting processes are still being developed in many states and will not be uniform across states. Even within states,

truancy definitions sometimes vary from school to school. Because of the complexity and ambiguity of defining and reporting truancy, we will at best have a general picture of truancy trends as we move forward. Each state's definition and rate calculation will need to be reviewed at the national level, and any national report will have to be made with many qualifiers.

The Truancy Rate Calculation Example²

As an example, we will use the Colorado formula for calculating a truancy rate. Districts are already providing, by school, both the *Student Total Days Attended* and *Student Total Days Possible*. This forms the basis for determining the "attendance rate" which then allows the calculation of a "non-attendance" rate. A non-attendance rate differs from a truancy rate, however, since it includes excused in addition to unexcused absences. The calculation of a truancy rate according to the Colorado method follows:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Student Total Days Attended} \\ & + \text{Student Total Excused Absence Days} \\ & + \underline{\text{Student Total Unexcused Absence Days}} \\ & = \text{Student Total Days Possible} \end{aligned}$$

Other Ways to Calculate Rates

An alternative way to calculate Student Total Days Possible is to add the number of students enrolled in the school across each day of the school year. Following that method, the Student Total Days Possible would equal the sum of:

$$(\text{Students1} + \text{Students2} + \dots + \text{StudentsY})$$

² Example taken from a presentation titled, "State and Federal Issues of Truancy Under the No Child Left Behind Act," by Janelle Krueger, Colorado Department of Education, Division of Prevention Initiatives. Presentation at "Partnering to Prevent Truancy" conference hosted by Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, December 2004.

where $Students_1$ equals the number of students enrolled on the first day of the school year, and $Students_Y$ equals the number enrolled on the last day of the school year.

Regardless of the method chosen, the question arises of how to count one “day” of attendance or absence. The calculation is best performed in secondary schools as the sum of periods attended (or missed) in order to be most accurate. A student who sleeps in and misses every first period all year should be thought of neither as “never truant” nor as “always truant”. However, in high school, a policy decision still needs to be made regarding how to code free periods during which the student does not need to report to anyone. If the student misses all other periods during the day it is reasonable to mark the student absent during free periods as well. But what about days in which the student attends some classes but not others? Rules regarding how to count days present and days absent must be decided upon, and can be expected to vary across schools and districts.

Note that ideally, Student Total Days Possible is not the product of the total number of school days in the year and the official number of students registered in the school. The reason is that the true number of registered students changes throughout the year, but the official number is usually a tally of students present in school on only one particular day or during one particular week. Some students enroll after the school year has begun and others leave before the end of the year, so the average number of students enrolled in the school on any given day may differ from the official count. If average enrollment drops after count day, using the official enrollment number will inflate the total number of school days possible and make the truancy rate look smaller than it really is. If overall enrollment grows after count day, using the too-small enrollment number will shrink the total days possible and inflate the truancy rate.

Once a count of Student Total Days Possible has been made, the rest is easy. Divide Student Total Unexcused Absence Days by Student Total Days Possible to yield a truancy rate. Multiply that rate by 100 to yield a truancy percent.

$$\frac{\text{Student Total Unexcused Absence Days}}{\text{Student Total Days Possible}} = \text{Truancy Rate}$$

Conclusion

Clearly, every state will wrestle with the definitional complexities and the calculation process and find reasons to question the final rates. A key variable is how schools count who is “enrolled” to find the possible student days of attendance. Another key issue is how to decide whether an absence is excused or unexcused. It is inevitable that arbitrary decisions will need to be made to determine who is counted, and how they should be classified. Local variations in policies and practice will be the unavoidable result.

Despite the method that schools and states choose to use, and the lack of consistency across schools, the reporting requirements of No Child Left Behind mean that we will at last have a reasoned estimate of truancy that can inform public policy. We need to focus national attention on attendance; truancy rate reporting will help us better understand how many students are missing school and missing learning so that we can develop state and national strategies to improve school engagement.

The National Center for School Engagement (NCSE) is an initiative of The Colorado Foundation for Families and Children (CFFC). NCSE strives to build a network of key stakeholders who share the belief that improving school attendance and school attachment promotes achievement and school success.



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The culmination of ten years of program experience and research has identified truancy and school engagement as the centerpiece of NCSE's work to improve outcomes for youth who are at the greatest risk of school failure and delinquency. We are national leaders in applying research to help communities prevent and reduce truancy.

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HOW TO EVALUATE YOUR TRUANCY REDUCTION PROGRAM

National Center for School Engagement

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How to Evaluate Your Truancy Reduction Program

Plan Ahead

- It is best to plan for evaluation at the same time that you design your program.
- Set aside money for evaluation in your initial budget application.
- Do not give up on evaluation if you did not plan it at the beginning. Start now!

Create a Logic Model of Your Program

- Decide what outcome(s) you want. Some possibilities are improved attendance school-wide; improved attendance among participating students; improved grades among participating students; increased feelings of attachment to school among participating students, or their families, or the student body in general.
- What program components will be most likely to achieve your goals?
- Be sure your program components and your designated outcomes match. In other words, if all your interventions are aimed at a small subset of students with serious attendance problems, you may not see measurable outcomes across the entire student body. But that will not mean that your program is not working – it means your evaluation is not well designed.

Know What Kind of Evaluation You Need

- Process evaluation, also known as implementation evaluation, looks at the way in which a program is set up and is operating. It is particularly relevant when an established program already shown to be effective is being copied in a new location. Unless the program is implemented as intended, one cannot expect to achieve the same good results. Process evaluation lends itself to both qualitative and quantitative data collection.
- Outcome evaluation measures the effects of a program once it has been established. A program will not likely be ready for an outcome evaluation until it has been in operation for some time – generally a year or more. If begun too early, an outcome evaluation will likely show no results and may unnecessarily dampen enthusiasm for a potentially good program.
- Cost-benefit analysis compares the cost of a program as measured in dollars to the outcomes of that program, also measured in dollars. If benefits are greater than costs, then the program may be said to pay off. Sometimes it is difficult to put a price on benefits; cost-effectiveness analysis may be used to compare the cost of a program as measured in dollars, to benefits measured in something other than dollars. For example, how many additional high school credits are earned as a

result of a \$50,000 truancy reduction program? Cost-effectiveness analysis is most useful when comparing multiple programs.

Think About Your Data and Data Collection Methods

- Data come in two general forms, quantitative and qualitative. Each provides a distinct purpose and you must consider what kind of data will be best used.
- Studies of school attendance lend themselves easily to quantitative analysis, but the most thorough evaluations include both.
- School records can provide data on outcome measures such as grades, class credits, disciplinary referrals, and attendance, which can be correlated with race, gender and age.
- Students, parents and school personnel can be surveyed. Be careful how you formulate survey questions; borrowing from other surveys is the best way to get meaningful questions. Provide clear directions so that respondents understand how to complete the survey. Always have a professional review your survey before administering it; remember junk in – junk out.
- Interviews can include structured questions in which respondents select from a set of designated responses; these data are quantitative. Interviews may also include open-ended questions that allow respondents to answer any way they please; these questions provide qualitative data. Direct quotations should be taken.
- Focus groups bring together a group of people – usually between 5 and 10 – to discuss their experiences. Questions are open-ended and discussion is encouraged. Focus groups should be tape recorded and transcribed for analysis. Focus groups provide qualitative data.

Know How to Collect and Analyze Quantitative Data

- Quantitative data are numeric; they can be counted and measured.
- Obvious examples include student grades on a 4-point scale, days or class periods attended or missed, and class credits earned.
- Quantitative data such as attendance, grades and credits may be collected from the school's administrative records. Quantitative data on the number of students served by a TRP, or the number of students who received tutoring or a family service referral, may be collected from the records of a TRP's social worker. Be sure to keep track of these things. Create a system for recording social worker interventions on an on-going basis and keep up to date.

- Most survey data are also quantitative. Administering a survey is the most practical way to collect data from a large sample of respondents. The following is an example of a quantitative survey question.

*How helpful was the tutoring program in motivating you to attend class regularly?
Please circle your answer.*

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Not at All</i>		<i>Somewhat</i>		<i>Very</i>
<i>Helpful</i>		<i>Helpful</i>		<i>Helpful</i>

- Several computer programs are useful aids in analyzing quantitative data. *SPSS* and *SAS* are statistical software packages capable of sophisticated analysis. You will need someone competent with statistics and familiar with the programs to use them. You may need to contract with a qualified consultant for your data analysis. *Microsoft Excel* is adequate for very simple record keeping and analyses, but not sufficient for advanced statistical analysis.

The Truancy Reduction Application Interface ([TRAIN](#)) is a web-based data collection and analysis program available from the National Center for School Engagement for a technical assistance fee. No statistical or programming experience is needed.

Know How to Collect and Analyze Qualitative Data

- Qualitative data are non-numeric. They are descriptive text passages, observations, field notes, records or documents, audio or video files.
- Qualitative data can come from interviews and focus groups, and sometimes from open-ended questions on written surveys. Collecting and analyzing qualitative data is time-consuming, and therefore expensive. It is most practical to collect qualitative data from a relatively small sample of respondents.
- While quantitative data are best suited for answering the “what” question, qualitative data are best for answering the “how” and “why” questions. Quantitative data may tell you a program did not work, but you will not know why it did not work without some qualitative data.
- It is best to tape record and transcribe interviews and focus groups to record actual responses.
- The following is an example of a qualitative interview question.

What effect did the tutoring program have on your class attendance?

- Several computer programs are useful aids in analyzing large amounts of qualitative data. *NVivo* and *Atlas-ti* allow users to import text files, code electronically, and gather all selections with the same code for analysis. The programs themselves are

relatively user friendly, but training in qualitative data analysis is needed to know what to do with your data.

What is Longitudinal Evaluation and When Would I use It?

- Longitudinal evaluations measure changes that occur within the same group of students over time.
- They require taking a “baseline” measurement, in other words, measuring the outcome variable(s) *before* the intervention begins (or in its very early stages if need be), and comparing it to a second measurement of the same variable(s) taken at the end of the program. This is also called “pre” and “post” or a time series design.
- Both quantitative and qualitative data may be collected longitudinally, though a longitudinal study is generally thought of as having a quantitative component.

Example of quantitative baseline data:

(number of class periods skipped in the month prior to TRP intervention)
(total number of class periods in the month prior to TRP intervention).

Compare the above truancy rate to the comparable figure for the last month of TRP participation:

(number of class periods skipped in the last month of TRP participation)
(total number of class periods during that month).

Was there improvement? How much? Was the change large enough to be meaningful?

- Does improvement last beyond the end of the program? Follow participants over time to find out. What happens three months after the end of the program? Six months? One year?
- Note: if attendance typically varies according to the month of the year you should consider comparing, for example, a student’s attendance rate in the November prior to TRP participation, with that student’s attendance rate in the November following program participation.

What are Control Groups and Experimental Groups?

- The best way to be sure that a program is having an effect is to compare students who participate in the TRP to students who do not.
- Students in the *experimental group* receive a treatment that is under evaluation – in this case, they participate in a TRP. Students in the *control group*, sometimes called the *comparison group*, do not participate. Researchers are then able to

compare changes in attendance among students in the experimental group to changes in attendance among students in the control group over time.

- Why is a control group important? If you discover only marginal improvement in attendance from one year to the next among TRP participants, you may be discouraged. However, truancy typically worsens as children get older. If attendance among your control group declines significantly over the same time period, your program may be having a greater impact than it appears based solely on participant behavior.
- In order for the comparison to be valid, experimental and control groups must be as similar as possible in as many factors as possible. First and foremost, they should have similar patterns of absences; but other variables to consider include gender, racial/ethnic background, age, economic background, and school characteristics among others.
- The best way to ensure that experimental and control groups are similar is to randomly assign students to each group. Ethics must be considered. Is it ethical to deny a truant child the services of a TRP? If your budget is limited and you cannot serve all the eligible students, perhaps it is. If your budget is large enough to serve everyone and you have good cause to believe that the program will be effective because you have copied a proven program, perhaps it is not. Do not fail to consider ethical issues.
- A good alternative source of a control group is to study students in a nearby school that does not offer a TRP. Be sure the school serves a similar population of students.
- If your evaluation budget cannot support a control group, do not give up. Survey, interview, or conduct focus groups among TRP participants to understand what effect the program had from their perspective. If they began attending class more regularly, why did they do so? Did it have anything to do with the program? Or was it mostly due to other factors? If their attendance did not improve, why?

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**TRUANCY PREVENTION IN ACTION:
BEST PRACTICES AND MODEL TRUANCY PROGRAMS
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

National Center for School Engagement

July 2005

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Truancy Prevention in Action: Best Practices and Model Truancy Programs

Executive Summary

Truancy has long been identified as an educational, social and juvenile justice issue worthy of public and private attention. It has been linked to many problem behaviors in adolescence, school failure, school dropout and juvenile delinquency, among others. Many national and local agencies are working to identify the best strategy for addressing truancy. In order to improve the chances of success, it is recommended that developers focus on those programs, approaches and strategies that have already demonstrated success.

Utilizing best practices is a sound investment strategy:

- *By studying those programs that have been proven to reduce or prevent truancy, practitioners and policy-makers avoid re-creating the wheel and have more time to spend on implementation and evaluation issues.*
- *By taking advantage of the research and development efforts of others, staff has more time to spend on adapting a strategy to meet the demands of the local community.*
- *By financially supporting practices that have demonstrated success, public and private funders engage in prudent expenditure of limited monies.*

Adopting and adapting approaches that have demonstrated their success is simply the most practical strategy for developing programming given the current and reasonable focus of policy-makers and funders on clear outcomes and cost/benefit analyses.

Critical Components of Truancy Programs

As a result of the research and assessment work conducted by the Department of Education (DOE), the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), the National Center for School Engagement (NCSE), the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (NDPC/N), the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) and others, a set of critical components linked to positive outcomes for children and families has been identified:

Collaboration

Truancy programs that include a broad-based collaborative as part of their approach are stronger and may last longer. Most funding and government agencies now expect that new programs engage in collaborative community-based planning. OJJDP identified collaboration as a required component for initial and ongoing funding in the Truancy Reduction Demonstration Program and for Title V Delinquency Prevention monies. The NDPC/N includes school-community collaboration as an effective strategy for dropout prevention. In addition, The National Network for Youth points to collaboration as an important part of successful after-school programs.

Family Involvement

Involving parents/guardians and family members in truancy prevention and intervention is critical. There is a large body of research demonstrating the positive outcomes associated with increased parent/guardian involvement in school activities including improved academic achievement and reduced likelihood of dropout. Involving parents/guardians in truancy programming is more than simply inviting their attendance at a school or court meeting. True participation means that parents/guardians are sought after for their advice, experience and expertise in the community, as clients of our public systems of care and as experts in the lives of their children. This means engaging parents/guardians as a natural course of events, not just when things are not going well.

Comprehensive Approach

Effective programs simultaneously focus on prevention and intervention. As described by the National Center for School Engagement, many factors contribute to truant behavior. Youth fail to attend school due to personal, academic, school climate, and family related issues. A truancy program may be called upon to help a family obtain counseling, advocate for a family to receive entitlement benefits such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), negotiate a new school schedule, figure out transportation solutions, and other more traditional social work activities such as mental health evaluation and counseling services. An effective truancy plan will address these issues and be prepared to respond to the first unexcused absence of an elementary student and not give up on the 100th absence of the habitually truant adolescent youth.

Use Incentives and Sanctions

Among the list of successful truancy practices identified by the National Center for School Engagement (NCSE), is the use of a continuum of approaches or a combination of incentives and sanctions. Specifically, meaningful sanctions for truant behavior and meaningful incentives for school attendance are key components of promising and model truancy programs. Sanctions, traditionally used to respond to truancy, frequently mirror the punitive steps taken against other undesirable behaviors: detention, suspension, petition to juvenile court, denial of privileges, etc. Incentives tend to be recognition-based, but may include special experiences or even monetary rewards. The critical task in this area is to design sanctions and incentives that are *meaningful* to youth and their families.

Develop a Supportive Context

A supportive context is crucial to developing a sustainable and effective truancy program. Programs that exist in a supportive context are more likely to survive and thrive than those that are fighting against system infrastructure or acting in isolation. Time spent nurturing a supportive context is well worth the effort. In this case, context refers to the environment in which the truancy program engages youth and their families. The context can be determined by an umbrella agency, a neighborhood, a set of laws and policies and/or a political reality. It is in the truancy program's best interest to impact and influence this context to better serve families and to survive the inevitable changes and challenges that occur to even the best of programs.

Evaluate the Program

In these lean financial times, government agencies and private funders are limiting their investments to those programs or practices that have clearly demonstrated some success. It is imperative that programs measure their impact in an effort to improve services. In addition, the criteria used to identify whether program models and practice approaches are proven or promising rests largely on the rigor of their evaluation design. It is mandatory in this environment to collect and examine data on program outcomes.

Best Practices Improve Truancy Programming

Programs that include each of these components are stronger and more successful. How these components are incorporated into existing approaches or developed from scratch should be determined by the needs and strengths of the local community. Creativity and determination are required for successful and lasting implementation of any new program!

For a more complete discussion of truancy program development, the economic and legal impact of truancy and the importance of collaboration in truancy programming, look for the truancy series to be released in Fall 2005 by the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network www.truancypreventionassociation.com in collaboration with the National Center for School Engagement www.schoolengagement.org

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Blueprints for Violence Prevention Programs That Reduce Truancy and/or Improve School Attendance

This report describes Blueprints for Violence Prevention programs that address truancy, school attendance, and/or student achievement concerns, and the evaluation studies that have tracked these programs' outcomes. Programs become "blueprints" model programs based upon standards of program effectiveness developed by the Center for the Study of the Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado at Boulder. The programs described here are grouped by setting: school based programs (10), community based programs (3), school and community based programs (3), and programs offered in other settings (2). Each listing includes name of the program, type of program, age of students covered, setting, program goals, program description, study design, study sample, and study outcomes. This report offers conclusions based on results from the 18 programs featured.

SCHOOL BASED PROGRAMS

Behavioral Monitoring and Reinforcement Program (formerly Preventive Intervention)

Program Type: Cognitive-Behavioral Training; School - Individual Strategies

Age: Early Adolescence (12-14) - Middle - Junior

Setting: School

Program Goals: The Behavioral Monitoring and Reinforcement Program aims to prevent an increase in school failure experiences among high-risk adolescents. The program also strives to reduce school and community delinquency, including school-based problems, unemployment, criminal behavior, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Program Description: The intervention consists of four components: (a) collecting up-to-date information about students' actions from interviews with teachers and records of daily attendance, tardiness, and disciplinary action; (b) providing systematic feedback to students and/or parents about the students' actions; (c) attaching value to students' actions (e.g., students could earn points toward a special field trip by coming to school, being on time to class, receiving no disciplinary action); and (d) helping students determine strategies for modifying their behavior and thus earning more points. The program lasts for two years, with booster sessions available during the following year.

Study Design: Eighty 7th graders, including 40 from a low-income, inner-city school and 40 from a middle-class, suburban school, were matched into pairs based on relevant school failure variables. Each pair was then randomly assigned to the intervention or control group for a two year period. The control group received no treatment. During a one year post-intervention period, biweekly booster sessions were available to the experimental group. Fewer than 50% of participants attended these booster sessions; notes from the meetings were mailed to participants who did not attend the booster

sessions. Sixty three of the original 80 students participated in an interview on their employment, drug and alcohol use, and criminal behaviors during the post-intervention year. Court records of participants were analyzed five years after the intervention; at that point in time, 60 students remained in the sample.

Sample: Sixty six students completed the two year program, including 44 males and 22 females, with a mean age of 15 ½. Thirty six of these participants came from the suburban school while 30 were from the urban school; 42% were African American and 58% were white. Of the 66 students who completed the program, 63 subjects participated in the follow-up interview; school records could only be obtained for 58 of these students. Finally, 60 subjects with a mean age of 19 ½ participated in the five-year follow-up.

Outcomes: Significant differences were found after the second program year when intervention subjects' grades and attendance significantly improved while control subjects' grades and attendance continued to decline. One year after the end of the program, intervention youths were significantly more likely to have been employed and were less likely to have been involved in criminal behavior. Intervention youths also reported significantly lower rates of illegal drug use (3% of treatment youth vs. 16% of control youth), with the exception of marijuana and alcohol use, for which the intervention yielded no significant differences. Five years after the end of the program, intervention youths were 66% less likely to have a juvenile record than control youths.

Career Academy

Program Type: Academic Services; Employment – Vocational; School - Environmental Strategies

Age: Late Adolescence (15-18) - High School

Setting: School

Program Goals: The goals of the Career Academy are to enhance high-, medium-, and low-risk students' engagement and performance in high school and provide them with the credentials and skills needed to make successful transitions to post-secondary education and, eventually, a career.

Program Description: Career Academies are school based programs that seek to reduce dropout rates, as well as improve school performance and career readiness among high school youth. A Career Academy (CA) is organized as a school-within-a-school, where students work in "small learning communities." Each small learning community involves a small number of students working with the same group of teachers for three or four years of high school with the aim of creating a more personalized and supportive learning environment for students. CAs use a career theme to integrate academic and vocational curricula. In an effort to build connections between school and work and to provide students with a range of career development and work based learning opportunities, CAs establish partnerships with local employers.

Study Design: A large scale, multi-site, random assignment research design was utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of CAs in achieving their goals. The researchers studied 9 CAs with a sample size of 1,764 students. Students in the sample were identified in the 8th or 9th grade and were followed through their senior year of high school. Students were identified as either posing a high-, medium-, or low-risk for dropping out of school, based on selected background characteristics and prior school experiences. Because each of the characteristics used to define the subgroups was measured before students were randomly assigned to a study group, there were no systematic differences in observed background characteristics between the treatment group and the control group within the three risk subgroups.

Data utilized in the study consisted of survey information provided by both Academy and non-Academy students in the study sample, performance indicators obtained from school records and transcripts, and standardized test scores from a test the researchers administered to the sample of students. Qualitative data was collected during field visits to each participating site.

Sample: The final sample size was $n=1,764$. Of these, 345 were male, and 45 were Caucasian. Ten sites were initially selected for the evaluation. One of the initial CAs was disbanded after 2 years in the study and was unable to provide sufficient follow-up data to be included in the impact analysis. The attrition rate reported for the treatment group was generally low, estimated at about 10%.

Outcomes: Among treatment group students with a high risk of dropping out, there was a significant reduction in dropout rates, improvement in attendance, increase in academic course-taking, and increase in the likelihood of earning enough credits to graduate on time. Among treatment group students with a low risk of dropping out, there was an increase in the likelihood of graduating on time. Treatment group students across risk-levels experienced an increase in vocational course-taking without reducing their likelihood of completing a basic core academic curriculum. When findings are averaged across groups, there are only slight reductions in dropout rates and modest increases in other measures of school engagement; the only significant impact was for more positive youth development experiences in the past year. CAs did not improve standardized math and reading achievement scores.

High-contrast CAs, those intervention sites where the school environment is very different from non-CA schools, produced a statistically significant lower dropout rate among medium-risk students, as well as an increase in completion of a core academic curriculum. Conversely, low-contrast CAs produced higher dropout rates, reduced attendance, and lower rates of academic course-taking for medium-risk students.

Chronic Truancy Initiative

Program Type: School - Individual Strategies

Age: Late Childhood (6-11) – Elementary

Setting: School

Program Goals: The Chronic Truancy Initiative (CTI) is a school and community-based program designed to reduce absenteeism and other problems within families of identified elementary and kindergarten chronic truant youth.

Program Description: The CTI aims to decrease absenteeism among those identified as chronic truants. School attendance records are reviewed by school staff. Students who miss 20% or more days of school in a six-week period are defined as chronic truants. To reduce chronic truancy, attendance records are reviewed regularly. After truants are identified, a variety of increasingly serious measures are taken. Upon first being identified as truant, a letter is sent to the parents. If no improvement in attendance is observed, then the student is referred to a school attendance officer. Attendance records are reviewed again after the student is referred to the attendance officer; if improvement does not occur, then the child and family are referred to a social service agency. If the student remains truant after these interventions, then a uniformed police officer visits the family's home, along with the attendance officer. Finally, if attendance has not improved after these interventions have taken place, the family may be prosecuted under state compulsory attendance laws.

Study Design: Three elementary schools located in a Midwestern city participated in the CTI. Attendance data was collected from the school district's research and evaluation unit. A total of 281 students met the authors' definition of chronically truant. A pre- and post-intervention analysis was conducted in which student attendance was reviewed before and after each intervention to determine improvement. In addition, a paired samples t-test was used to determine if differences in attendance were statistically significant.

Sample: School A was composed of 50% Caucasian, 11% African American, 34% Hispanic, 4% Native American and 1% Asian youth. School B included 35% Caucasian, 8% African American, 52% Hispanic, 4% Native American and 1% Asian students. School C comprised 43% Caucasian, 18% African American, 37% Hispanic, and 2% Native American youth. Eighty five percent of the target school population and over 94% of the participants in this sample were eligible for the free or reduced school lunch program.

Outcomes: Attendance significantly improved among all truants during each of the first two intervention stages, receiving a letter from the principals and being referred to the attendance officer. Attendance for all truants improved slightly but non-significantly during the third stage of the intervention, referral to social services. However, attendance was *reduced* slightly but non-significantly for all truants during the final stage of intervention, contact by police; this final phase signified a negative effect of participation in the intervention.

Of the 281 students in the sample, 204 met the definition of a chronic truant and 77 were considered nonchronic (missing less than 20% of school days). When data were re-examined, the positive effects of the first two intervention stages remained significant

among the chronically truant. Effects on attendance for nonchronic truants, however, were *negative* although nonsignificant.

Comer School Development Program

Program Type: School - Environmental Strategies

Age: Late Childhood (6-11) – Elementary; Early Adolescence (12-14) - Middle - Junior

Setting: School

Program Goals: The Comer School Development Program (SDP) aims to create a positive, supportive, and wholesome school climate devoid of interpersonal violence. The program is also designed to promote and support children's development in six interrelated domains: physical, language, ethical, social, psychological, and academic.

Program Description: The Comer School Development Program (SDP) addresses various aspects of school climate related to the prevention and reduction of violence in the school setting. There are three main program components: (a) a school planning team that involves parents and school staff in making the critical decisions that shape school policy, influence school climate, and direct school programs; (b) a student and staff support team composed of mental health professionals and child development experts, whose task is to identify and/or develop ways to address developmentally and socially appropriate responses to issues affecting students and staff, including violence; and (c) a parent involvement program that engages parents in meaningful ways in the life of the school. Because the program adheres to the philosophy that each school should determine its own academic and social goals, the SDP specifies only the processes and structures needed to establish, monitor, and modify these goals.

Study Design 1: A four-year randomized experiment featured 23 middle schools, repeated measurement with more than 12,000 students and 2,000 staff, a survey of more than 1,000 parents, and extensive access to students' records. Prince George's County, Maryland was selected for study because of its predominantly African-American school population and its considerable internal variation in household economic standing. Twenty-three of the 25 middle schools in Prince George's County were included in the study. Students were studied in three adjacent cohorts that began in seventh grade in 1991, 1992, or 1993. Since students attend middle schools for 2 years, the total study period in these schools was 4 years.

Each year, questionnaires were used to assess staff judgments of program implementation quality, student and staff judgments of school climate, and students' reports of their social and psychological development. Averaging across schools, years, and the two questionnaires, 81% of eligible school staff completed questionnaires. During the program's second year, a telephone survey was conducted with a random sample of parents from each school who had given consent for their child to be in the study. A total of 1,046 parents completed the survey, for an average per-school response rate of 54% of those selected into the random sample. In addition, school records were used for annual assessments of each student's school performance, and interviews were conducted with

the coordinator and the facilitators of the county School Development Program. At the end of the first and last years, telephone interviews were conducted with each principal, and in one year a telephone interview was also conducted with a random sample of parents from each school.

Sample 1: The eligible population consisted of 22,314 students who were enrolled in the 23 middle schools when the early-seventh-grade questionnaire was distributed. Across the three cohorts, active consent was obtained by 77% of the eligible students. Because active consent was only obtained from 50% of the Latino students, they were excluded from the sample. This left 12,398 students in the longitudinal sample; these participants were 66% African American, 24% Caucasian, 4% Asian American, and 6% of other ethnic backgrounds. According to student reports, 63% of students in the sample lived with both biological parents and 12% lived in single parent families; 83% of fathers or male guardians and 69% of mothers or female guardians were employed full time. Five percent of mothers did not complete high school, 34% were high school graduates, and 35% were college graduates.

Outcomes 1: The most evident program effect related to academic achievement, as the Comer schools showed less of a drop in grade point average when the three cohorts were combined. No reliable main effects emerged in regard to staff or student ratings of school climate.

Study Design 2: Using 5th through 8th grade students, the Comer School Development Program was evaluated in 10 inner city Chicago schools over four years, contrasting them with 9 randomly selected no-treatment comparison schools. All schools, whether treatment or controls, wanted to be in the Comer program. The schools entered the study at differing times, either in the fall of 1991, 1992, or 1993. Data collection continued in all schools until the end of the 1996-1997 school year. In the first year a school entered the study, student outcome questionnaires were administered in late fall as a pretest. Thereafter, testing took place at the end of every school year. Each spring, students completed a questionnaire focusing on school climate. Later in the spring, staff filled out a questionnaire about the quality of program implementation and perceptions of school climate. Two study designs were utilized to test the impact of the Comer SDP: a cross sectional design and a three and four year longitudinal design.

Sample 2: The schools in this study were located in economically disadvantaged African-American neighborhoods in Chicago. Most of the students had parents or guardians with no education beyond high school, and more children lived in homes without two biological parents than with them. Average test scores began at about the 30th percentile; their standard deviations suggest that very few students scored above the 50th percentile.

Outcomes 2: At the school level, results indicated that the program reduced negative social behaviors. Students in Comer schools reported relatively less acting out over time and less anger than youth in control schools. For both reading and math, program schools started about 3 points below the controls and finished at the same level; however, these are considered small changes by conventional statistical standards.

Study Design 3: During the 1982-83 school year, four elementary schools were selected to participate in the first phasing-in of the Social Development Program in the Benton Harbor Area schools. The following criteria were used in selecting the schools: (a) principal's interest in the program, (b) low level of student achievement, and (c) high rate of student behavior problems. Three additional schools were selected during the 1984-85 school year. The purpose of the analysis was to determine what, if any, changes occurred in student achievement and other school-related behaviors from the first year of the program implementation to the 1985-86 academic year.

Sample 3: The school populations varied from 341 to 864 students. The student populations of all four schools were considered low-income; ethnic composition ranged from 76 to 94 percent African American. As indicated by scores on the California Achievement Test (CAT), students enrolled in three of the four schools were functioning below national standards at all grade levels.

Outcomes 3: Program schools experienced gains in Reading, Mathematics, and the Total Battery on the CAT. In Reading, the average gain for the program schools equaled that of the district as a whole at the second-grade level and exceeded the district gains at the 5th and 6th grade levels. In Mathematics, the average gain for program schools exceeded that of the district at the 2nd and 4th grade levels. The proportion of students in program schools achieving at least 75 percent of the objectives in Mathematics ranged from 45 percent in 1982 to 78 percent in 1985. In 1983 and 1985 the increases in the proportion of students achieving at least 75 percent of the objectives in Mathematics were larger in program schools than in the district as a whole. Program schools also experienced a larger increase than the district as a whole among students attaining at least 75 percent of the objectives in Reading.

The number of suspension days for program schools declined steadily between 1982-83 and 1984-85. Suspensions decreased by 8 percent in 1983-84 and by 19 percent in 1984-85. In comparison, the district as a whole experienced a 34 percent increase in suspensions in 1984-85. Absenteeism among program schools declined by 18 percent between 1982-83 and 1984-85. Corporal punishments in program schools declined by 80 percent in 1983-84 and 100 percent in 1984-85. The district as a whole experienced a 23 percent decline in corporal punishments in 1983-84 and 36 percent in 1984-85.

Operation SAVE KIDS

Program Type: Diversion; Parent Training; School - Individual Strategies

Age: Late Childhood (6-11) – Elementary; Early Adolescence (12-14) - Middle – Junior; Late Adolescence (15-18) - High School

Setting: School

Program Goals: Operation SAVE KIDS aims to reduce truancy and instill a sense of responsibility in students and their parents.

Program Description: Operation Save Kids is a truancy program that requires school personnel to monitor school attendance closely and contact parents promptly if their children have three days of unexcused absence. Parents must respond, outlining measures they have taken to ensure that their children are attending school. If a child continues to be truant, the school notifies the prosecutor or law enforcement agency to request that criminal charges be filed against the parents. However, the prosecutor can offer families a deferred prosecution diversion program designed to strengthen family relationships and encourage youths to go to school.

Study Design: A one-group, pretest-posttest study was conducted in Peoria, Arizona. Operation Save Kids was implemented in 15 school districts (12 elementary and 2 high schools), in 10 cities and towns, in western Maricopa County (more than 60 schools & 56,000 students). By the end of the 1995-1996 school year, WESTMARC had contact with 292 truancy students and their families.

Sample: No further sample description was provided.

Outcomes: Within the first two years of the program, daytime juvenile property rates declined by 65% and citywide truancy was cut in half. When parents were notified by mail of their child's absence, attendance increased for 72.2% of the students and only 27.8% were referred for prosecution.

Positive Action through Holistic Education (Project PATHE)

Program Type: School - Environmental Strategies; School - Individual Strategies
Age: Early Adolescence (12-14) - Middle – Junior; Late Adolescence (15-18) - High School

Setting: School

Program Goals: Project PATHE seeks to increase bonding to the school and reduce school disorder through the implementation of broad-based structural changes; these changes might include adopting different disciplinary procedures, management practices, or school activities. The program also aims to increase student educational and occupational attainment.

Program Description: The school-wide intervention has six major components: (a) staff, student, and community participation in revising school policies and designing and managing school change; (b) organizational changes aimed at increasing academic performance; (c) organizational changes aimed at increasing school climate; (d) vocational preparation; (e) academic and affective services for high-risk individuals; and (f) special academic and counseling services for low-achieving and disruptive students. Individualized treatment plans addressing academic or behavior objectives were implemented with high-risk students by specialists. The programs mostly calls for counseling or tutoring sessions. Other activities include peer counseling, rap sessions, field trips, and referrals to other agencies when necessary. Target students are closely

monitored, and parents are called after three absences. Specialists also meet with parents following disciplinary incidents.

Study Design: This project utilized a nonequivalent comparison group design involving all teachers and students in five middle schools (four program and one control) and four high schools (three program and one control) in low-income, predominantly African American, urban and rural areas in Charleston County, South Carolina, between 1981 and 1983. The school, rather than the individual, is the unit of analysis; the individuals surveyed in 1983 are not necessarily the same individuals surveyed in 1981. The entire student and teacher population was surveyed in all years except 1981, when a random sample of 300 students was taken in the high schools. Survey response rates averaged 79%, 82%, and 86% for all schools in 1981, 1982, and 1983 respectively.

Sample: Seven schools were located in inner city Charleston and the other two were located in a rural, impoverished area on James Island. The inner city schools were nearly 100% African American; the rural schools were each 68% and 79% African American.

Outcomes: Treatment high schools showed significant decreases in serious delinquency, drug involvement, suspensions, and school punishments, while the treatment junior high saw significant decreases in suspensions. Student alienation significantly decreased in the treatment schools. Attachment to school significantly increased in treatment middle schools but significantly decreased in the comparison school. School attendance increased significantly in treatment and comparison high schools and self-concept significantly increased in all schools except the comparison middle school. Treatment students experienced slightly more academic success and graduated at a higher rate than control students.

School Breakfast Clubs

Program Type: School - Environmental Strategies

Age: Late Childhood (6-11) – Elementary; Early Adolescence (12-14) - Middle - Junior

Setting: School

Program Goals: The goals of School Breakfast Clubs include providing breakfast for children who might otherwise start the school day without having eaten; establishing a positive relationship at the start of the school day, thereby improving attitude, behavior, and motivation to learn and helping to reduce lateness and poor attendance; and offering healthy eating choices, providing the opportunity for children to sample and hopefully develop preferences for healthy options.

Program Description: In 1999, the United Kingdom Department of Health announced a national pilot scheme to promote the development of school breakfast clubs across England.

Study Design: The design was a cluster randomized controlled trial in which 6,076 pupils from 30 schools were randomly assigned into the breakfast club or control conditions.

Follow-up measures were collected 3 months and 12 months after the beginning of the program.

Sample: The final sample of 6,076 students was 50% male and 50% female with a mean age of approximately 10 years. Sixty seven percent of the participants were in primary school and 33% were in secondary school. Ninety three percent of the control group participants were Caucasian, 6% were Asian, and nearly 2% were Black. Over 90% of the students in both groups reported eating breakfast sometimes or always. Additionally, over 70% of parents in both groups reported that their children had low emotional stress at baseline. The majority of students from both groups reported no classes or days of school skipped within the last month.

Outcomes: Overall, the analyses revealed that the intervention group showed greater improvement in concentration than the control group on the first and second follow-up measures. Fewer secondary students in the intervention group reported having skipped classes on at least one day within the last month and having skipped at least one day of school within the last month, as compared to students in the control group. Lastly, it was found that primary students in the program reported eating more fruit for breakfast than control students.

School Transitional Environment Program (STEP)

Program Type: Academic Services; School - Environmental Strategies

Age: Early Adolescence (12-14) - Middle – Junior; Late Adolescence (15-18) - High School

Setting: School

Program Goals: The primary goal of the School Transitional Environment Program (STEP) is to address and ease major adolescent life transitions, especially the transition from junior high school to high school. The program focuses on increasing the availability of social support to adolescents experiencing this transition and reducing the complexities involved in making the transition.

Program Description: The School Transitional Environment Program (STEP) seeks to mediate the negative effects for adolescents that are associated with making the transition from junior high to high school. Specifically, the program focuses on increasing social support and decreasing the task-oriented difficulties for adolescents who are experiencing this transition. The program uses two components in order to accomplish these goals. First, the program restructures the role of homeroom teachers, who take on additional roles as counselors and school administrators to the program participants. Second, the program seeks to reorganize the social system the student is entering. STEP students are assigned to classrooms in four of their classes only with other program participants in order to keep a constant peer group in a relatively fixed location of the school.

Study Design 1: During the summer prior to their freshman year, students were randomly selected from among 450 students entering a large urban high school with a total

enrollment of approximately 1,700. Students needed to meet specific criteria in order to qualify for participation in the project: students needed to demonstrate satisfactory adjustment to school (for example, meeting all grade and attendance requirements in 8th grade for promotion into high school) and could not be considered in need of special mental health programming. The treatment group included 65 participants. The control group of 120 students met the same qualifying criteria and were matched according to sex, age, and ethnic background.

Analyses were conducted in order to determine whether the program was successful in mediating the negative consequences often associated with the transition from middle school to high school. Evaluations were conducted at the midpoint and at the end of the academic year. Of the 185 students originally selected to participate, 59 treatment and 113 control students completed all of the evaluations. Chi-square analyses indicated that there were no significant differences between the final samples and the original samples in terms of sex, age, and ethnic background.

Sample 1: The only demographic information provided was the population make-up of the school. The ethnic composition of the school was 57% African American, 19% Caucasian, 22% Hispanic, and 2% other; most students came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Outcomes 1: Short term effects found in the research study indicate that students who participated in the STEP program were more likely to maintain their academic level one year after transitioning to the new school, and less likely to be absent than control students. STEP students also had a more positive self-concept and a higher positive perception of the school social environment. STEP was shown to be effective in reducing levels of emotional, behavioral, and academic dysfunction following school transition. Long term effects illustrated that program youth were less likely to experience school failure and dropout.

Specifically, in comparison to control group participants, Project STEP participants who experienced a middle to high school transition showed higher academic performance on both school attendance and grade point average which was sustained through a five year follow-up; reported a higher perceived self-concept that remained stable through the 9th grade year; and were more likely to report positive perceptions of their school environment through the 9th grade.

Also in comparison to control students, Project STEP participants who experienced a transition into junior high school after one year of participation reported making more positive adjustments and maintained positive perceptions of the school environment; performed better academically; and showed better teacher reports of student behavior and adjustment.

Study Design 2: This replication of Project STEP was a two-year non-randomized study looking at the transition of adolescents into middle school or junior high; the transition year could have been either the 6th or 7th grade year. The sample consisted of 1,204

treatment students and 761 control students. Treatment students attended one of four schools that had adopted core STEP elements, while the control students attended one of four different schools where STEP elements had not been introduced. The schools represented a wide variety of geographic, demographic, and structural characteristics. The primary interest of researchers was the impact of Project STEP on easing the transition for students. Researchers collected student self-report measures by asking teachers to administer surveys in their classrooms; there was an 85% return rate on these surveys. In addition, researchers collected information from teachers on each student regarding behavioral adjustment of the student.

Sample 2: The total sample included 1,204 students who were enrolled in STEP schools and 761 students who were enrolled in non-STEP schools. The sample demographics indicated that 17% of the participants were non-Caucasian, while 44% came from a household in which the highest level of parental education was high school graduation. Because the structure of the schools varied, transitions were defined differently; 58% of the students made the transition in the 6th grade, while 42% of the students made the transition in the 7th grade. School demographics indicate that the mean entering class size for treatment schools and control schools were 295 and 179, respectively. In addition, the overall average size of the STEP schools was 880 while the overall size of the non-STEP schools was 434.

Outcomes 2: On the measure of perceptions of school environment, analyses revealed that STEP students had a significantly more positive experience than non-STEP students did during the transition year. A correlation was also found between the STEP environment and student outcomes (101 out of 112 correlations were significant), indicating that a positive school environment is significantly associated with positive student adjustment and performance. Specifically, STEP students reported significantly lower levels of school transition stress and better adjustment on measures of school, family and general self-esteem, depression, anxiety, delinquent behavior, and academic performance. Teacher reports on classroom behavior and adjustment were more positive for STEP students; academic and attendance records were significantly more favorable for STEP versus non-STEP students.

Taking Charge Program

Program Type: School - Individual Strategies

Age: Late Adolescence (15-18) - High School

Setting: School

Program Goals: The main goal of the Taking Charge Program is to teach skills that are critical to long-term self-sufficiency of pregnant and parenting teenagers. Cognitive-behavioral skills-training programs provide many features identified in successful programs for adolescent mothers.

Program Description: The Taking Charge Program is a task-centered, cognitive-behavioral, school-based group intervention developed specifically for helping adolescent

Mexican American mothers improve problem-focused coping behavior, social problem-solving skills, and school achievement. The program curriculum is delivered over the course of eight weeks. The program's main objective is to teach skills that are critical to long-term self-sufficiency of pregnant and parenting teenagers.

Study Design: The investigation was a randomized, experimental group design with pre- and posttest and follow-up measurement. The target population for the study was pregnant and parenting female students. The sample was drawn from an urban school district on the U.S.-Mexico border in Texas. Five of the district's 12 high schools were selected for participation in the study. All female students who were under eight months pregnant or currently parenting children were invited to participate. Of 86 women who initially entered the study, 73 completed the pretest-posttest phase; the treatment group consisted of 33 women, while 40 participants were in the control group.

Sample: Preliminary analyses revealed no differences between groups in age, grade in school, ethnicity, parenting status, and living arrangements. The average age of the participants was seventeen. Of the 73 participants, 70 identified themselves as Mexican or Mexican American. Forty-one of the participants had one child, 11 had two children, and 17 were pregnant for the first time.

Outcomes: The results indicated significant social skills improvement in the treatment group on the Rational Problem-Solving Subscale (RPS). Differences were also found on the Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences (A-COPE), with the treatment group showing significant improvement in problem-focused coping behavior while the controls coping behavior decreased. The mean attendance rate increased for treatment group participants and decreased for controls. Grade point average also increased in the treatment groups while decreasing in the control group. These effects were maintained at the thirty-day follow-up. Overall, the participants in the treatment group showed improvement over the control participants on all measures.

Truant Recovery Program

Program Type: Police Crime Prevention

Age: Early Adolescence (12-14) - Middle – Junior; Late Adolescence (15-18) - High School

Setting: School

Program Goals: The primary goal of this program is to return truants to school as soon as possible.

Program Description: The Truant Recovery Program authorizes police jurisdictions to make contact with students on the streets during school hours. If the students do not have a valid excuse slip, they are taken into temporary custody. The students are then taken to the Student Welfare and Attendance Office (SWAT). The SWAT personnel contact the parents of the student, and counseling is given to student and parent before the parent returns the student to school. If the parent cannot be contacted, the student is returned to

school by SWAT personnel. The school and SWAT office monitor the student's attendance more closely in future. Three additional program components are designed to provide accountability and consequences: all contacted juveniles are screened for probation violations and bench warrants; attendance records are reviewed with habitual truants being referred to juvenile court; and students may be enrolled in a Suspension Alternative Class, an in-school endeavor that promotes students' reintegration into schooling.

Study Design: A pre-post design was used to examine the Truant Recovery Program, which drew a random sample of 178 students that had been taken to the SWAT office in 1997. Detailed criminal and juvenile justice data were collected for each truant for two years before pick-up by police and for 18-21 months after the contact. Academic performance information was collected for three years prior to the contact and two years afterwards. No control group was used in the study.

Sample: The sample was 69% male and 31% female. Participants were 60% African American, 25% Hispanic, 8% Asian, and 3% Caucasian. Truants' median age was 15; 30% were 13 years or younger and approximately 10% were older than 16.

Outcomes: During the 18-21 month follow-up, contacts with local police increased. Comparisons of academic performance showed that the vast majority of truants continued to struggle in school after the truancy sweep. Approximately 75% percent became involved in at least one disciplinary incident, more than 90% recorded an unexcused absence, and 88% received at least one below-average D or F grade.

Despite these continued struggles, school performance did improve in certain aspects. The students got into trouble less often and were punished less frequently, skipped school less (generally missing less school), and improved their grades.

COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMS

Ada County Attendance Court

Program Type: Juvenile Justice, Other

Age: Late Childhood (6-11) – Elementary

Setting: Community

Program Goals: Ada County Attendance Court aims to reduce school truancy and tardiness, thereby decreasing the likelihood of dropout and serious future offenses.

Program Description: Ada County Attendance Court is a diversion program designed to reduce student absenteeism. The program operates under the juvenile court's jurisdiction, but is a multiagency partnership. The attendance court cases are usually initiated by a referral from a school administrator. This referral is typically made after the school unsuccessfully attempted to handle the problem internally. An attendance court coordinator investigates the referrals, and ultimately makes the decision whether or not to

set a hearing date. If a hearing date is set, then the school resource officer issues a court summons.

Study Design: Direct observations of four court days totaling 15 hours took place between April and May of 2002. Several interviews were also conducted with participants to clarify activities that occurred during the proceedings and to determine the nature of the referral process. Finally, referral sheets provided demographic data, number of absences for current and previous year, case statute, attendance record after the initial hearing, and teachers' perceptions of student progress after the initial hearing.

Sample: Fifty four percent of participants were female. Fifty seven percent of students became involved with Attendance Court between 4th and 6th grade, while the other 43% became involved between kindergarten and 3rd grade. Fifty-nine percent of students lived with a single mother, 35% lived with both parents, and 6% lived with a single father. Tardies accounted for 8% of referrals, excessive absences for 46%, and a combination of excessive absences and tardies for 46%. The mean number of student absences during the current year for students who were referred to the court was 15.5, whereas the mean number of absences during the previous year for these students was 25.5.

Outcomes: The student referral sheets provided some preliminary descriptive statistics for analysis. Sixty-five percent of cases were closed successfully; 9% were either referred to a prosecutor or closed due to the student moving, 6% were closed due to the student being involved with foster care, and 2% were re-opened. Seventy seven percent of students improved attendance after the initial hearing, while 12% did not improve. The remaining students' improvement could not be judged due to withdrawal from school; these students may have moved, entered homeschooling, or been removed from their homes. Finally, 73% of students increased their academic performance as indicated by grades following the initial hearing, while 16% did not improve. Again, the remaining students' grades were not measured for the same withdrawal reasons.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA)

Program Type: Mentoring - Tutoring

Age: Late Childhood (6-11) – Elementary; Early Adolescence (12-14) - Middle – Junior; Late Adolescence (15-18) - High School

Setting: Community

Program Goals: Big Brothers Big Sisters of America aims to delay or reduce antisocial behaviors, increase academic performance, improve attitudes and behaviors, strengthen peer and family relationships, increase self-concept, and provide social and cultural enrichment.

Program Description: The BBBSA program matches volunteer adult mentors with at-risk children and youth, anticipating that caring and supportive relationships will develop. Mentors are selected, screened, and matched with children based on shared goals and interests of the child and adult volunteer. Mentors are expected to meet with the child at

least 3-5 hours per week for a period of 12 months or longer. BBBSA staff monitor the relationship and maintain contact with the mentor, child, and parent/guardian throughout the matched relationship. BBBSA staff can provide advice and guidance to the mentor, as well as support and encouragement.

Study Design 1: Sites for this study were selected from eight BBBSA offices nationwide which met the criteria for a large caseload and geographic diversity. The sites included Philadelphia, Rochester, Minneapolis, Columbus, Wichita, San Antonio, and Phoenix. Of the 1,138 youth found eligible for matches, baseline interviews were conducted with 1,107. Half were randomly assigned to a treatment group, for which BBBS matches were made or attempted. The other half were assigned to BBBS waiting lists for 18 months. The matched youth met with their mentors for an average of almost 12 months, with meetings about 3 times a month lasting approximately 4 hours each. The ultimate goal of these visits was to provide a supportive relationship.

Sample 1: Of the total 1,138 sample participants at the time of assignment, 959 were available at follow-up including 487 treatment youth and 472 control youth. Of the 487 youth in the treatment group, 378 were matched with a mentor during the study period. Statistical analyses indicated that there were no baseline differences between the treatment and the control group youth. The sample was slightly more than 60% male and over 55% non-Caucasian; of non-Caucasian youth, the participants were 71% African American, 18% Hispanic, 5% biracial, 3% Native American, and 3% other. Sixty-nine percent of the youth came to the program between the ages of 11 and 13. Many of the youth came from poor households, with over 40% receiving either food stamps and/or cash public assistance. Ninety percent of youth lived with one parent, and 5.6% lived with one of their grandparents. Approximately 20% of the parents/guardians did not graduate from high school, and over 35% had completed only high school or earned a GED. Many of the youth in the study had experienced difficult personal situations, including divorce or separation of their parents, family history of substance abuse or domestic violence, or were victims of physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse. T-tests performed on the two groups revealed no demographic and descriptive differences between the treatment and control groups at baseline.

Outcomes 1: Effects found in the research studies indicated significant reductions in adolescent initiation of alcohol (27%) and illicit drugs (46%), as well as incidences of hitting other people. Adolescents mentored by a Big Brother or Big Sister saw improvements in academic performance and achievement; treatment youth skipped half as many days as did control youth, felt more competent about doing schoolwork, skipped fewer classes, and showed modest gains in grade point averages (marginally significant, $p = .10$). These gains were strongest among minority females. Mentees also experienced improvements in quality of relationship with parents and peer emotional support.

Study Design 2: This study evaluated the impact of the BBBS program on academic achievement of at-risk youth. Participants in the treatment group were matched with a mentor after a stringent screening process; mentors and mentees met for two to four hours per week for a commitment of one year. Matches were supervised by case managers

through contacts with the parent, youth, and mentor. Training was provided to all volunteers and families.

Sample 2: Treatment youth in this quasi-experimental design study were boys recruited from agency events, while control participants consisted of boys who had been accepted into the BBBS program but were waiting to be assigned a mentor (average length of time on list was 15 months). The original study contained 17 participants in each group. At post-test, 12 treatment youth and 13 control youth remained. Average age of treatment youth was 11.9, while the average age of control youth was 10.4. The sample was predominantly Caucasian, with African American and Hispanic youth also represented. All study participants had the risk factor of being from a single parent home, and at least one additional risk factor in order to be eligible to participate. Other risk factors included family, school, peer, and substance use risk factors.

Outcomes 2: Analysis indicated that there was a significant impact of mentoring on composite scores on standardized tests for academic achievement. Adjusted mean scores in reading and math also indicated significant differences between the two groups, with no significant difference in spelling scores.

Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA)

Program Type: Academic Services; After School; Drug Prevention / Treatment; Leadership and Youth Development; Mentoring – Tutoring; Recreation - Leisure - Community Service; Skills Training

Age: Late Childhood (6-11) – Elementary; Early Adolescence (12-14) - Middle – Junior; Late Adolescence (15-18) - High School

Setting: Community

Program Goals: Boys and Girls Clubs of America strives to help at-risk youth decrease problem behaviors by increasing their exposure to and involvement in prosocial activities and prosocial norms and values.

Program Description: The Boys and Girls Clubs of America are designed to help youth make healthy choices in their physical, educational, personal, social, emotional, vocational, and spiritual lives. The clubs provide the following basic resources to club members: (a) a safe haven away from the negative influences of the street; (b) guidance, discipline, and values from caring adult leaders; (c) constructive youth development activities and programs in supervised, supportive environments; (d) access to comprehensive, coordinated services that meet the complex needs of youth at risk; (e) educational support, increased awareness of career options, and guidance in setting goals; (f) a comprehensive violence prevention initiative; and (g) a vision of a safer, healthier, and more productive life.

There are five core program areas including Character and Leadership Development; Education and Career Development; Health and Life Skills; the Arts; and Sports, Fitness, and Recreation. The programs focus on developing social competence among youth

participants through alcohol, drug, and pregnancy prevention; career exploration; and delinquency and gang prevention. BGCA also seeks to promote positive youth development through less structured programs such as sporting events, recreation games, and health and fitness activities.

Study Design: This cross-sectional design examined the correlations between Club attendance, reasons for attendance, activities, academic achievement, and drug and alcohol use. One hundred and twenty youths were recruited for participation in the study at an urban Club located in a western community. An additional 30 youths were recruited at a local neighborhood apartment complex where many youth that attended the Club reside, in order to provide a comparison group of youths who frequented the Club less often. One hundred fifty youths returned the parent/guardian consent form during the two-week recruitment period. The final sample included 139 youths because youth who disclosed that they were not honest were dropped from the study. A 90-item questionnaire battery was administered to obtain information in five areas: participation in the Club, motivation for involvement, age, academic achievement and school engagement, and substance use.

Sample: The sample was 42% female and 58% male; participants ranged in age from 10 to 17 years, with a mean age of 12.02 years. The ethnic background of the sample was 46% Hispanic, 35% Caucasian, 7% African American, 5% Native American, and 7% other. Fifty four percent of the youths in the study resided in single-parent families.

Outcomes: According to the cross sectional study, overall monthly attendance at the Club was positively related to self-reported grades, enjoyment of school, and effort in school. Club participation was negatively related to favorable attitudes toward cheating and cigarette use. Participation was significantly related to truancy, favorable attitudes toward cheating, enjoyment in school, and effort in school. Statistically significant relationships favored youth with higher levels of participation in Club activities. Participation was significantly related to 30-day cigarette use. Again, statistically significant relationships favored youth with higher levels of participation in Club activities.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMS

Girl Power!

Program Type: Community, Other Approaches; School - Environmental Strategies; Skills Training

Age: Late Childhood (6-11) – Elementary; Early Adolescence (12-14) - Middle – Junior; Late Adolescence (15-18) - High School

Setting: Community; School

Program Goals: The goals of this program are to reduce the incidence of substance abuse and related risk factors while increasing the resiliency skills of girls; to infuse science-based substance abuse prevention practices in organizations serving youth; and to increase public information and awareness about proven substance abuse prevention

programs. The program also aims to increase school bonding and achievement through school-based activities and active partnerships with the schools. Evidence of effectiveness is demonstrated by improved grade point averages; reduced negative school behavioral incidents; and improved school attendance of program participants.

Program Description: The Girl Power! program was created by the United States Department of Health and Human Services as a public education campaign promoting healthy life choices for adolescent girls. The program includes prevention efforts and activities at the individual, community, and policy levels. Activities implemented to meet the program goals and objectives include the following: weekly 90 minute Girl Power! groups that focus on education and problem-solving skill development and meet over a 32-week period; alternative activities and community service projects that provide meaningful opportunities for girls and promote confidence and community pride; weekly activities and interaction with peers and healthy adult relationships; and school-based activities or other activities that increase school bonding and success.

Study Design: The study was a pre-posttest design, which included middle school and late elementary school girls, ages 10-15.

Sample: No description of the sample was provided; however, the program targets middle school and late elementary school girls, ages 10-15.

Outcomes: The results of the 1998-2000 school year revealed that 62% of Girl Power! participants had an increase in grades; 70% had an improvement in attendance; and 73% of these students had no record of disciplinary behavior in the school during this academic year. The results of the 2001-2002 school year revealed that 63% of participants (only 53% of the total sample was measured) had an increase in grade point average after the first nine weeks in the program; 86% improved or remained stable in the area of school bonding, as measured by respect for school property and on school report cards; and 81% demonstrated improvement in the area of self-control.

LA's BEST

Program Type: Academic Services; After School; Recreation - Leisure - Community Service; School - Individual Strategies; Skills Training

Age: Late Childhood (6-11) – Elementary

Setting: Community; School

Program Goals: LA's BEST is a comprehensive, community-based intervention that seeks to foster a safe environment in which interpersonal skills and self-esteem can be developed. It attempts to integrate the educational support structure to enhance children's opportunities and supplement and enrich regular educational programming with new educational and recreational activities.

Program Description: This community-based, after school intervention program offers assistance with homework, library activities, interpersonal skills and self-esteem

development, and field trips emphasizing the performance arts, in addition to recreational activities. Students enroll and are expected to participate on a regular basis.

Study Design: This program has been evaluated using a non-random, longitudinal design, beginning in the 1993-1994 school year. Second through fifth grade students enrolled in the program and were tracked through the 1997-1998 school year. Absences and English proficiency were measured by school-reported data. Achievement test scores on either the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) or the Stanford-9 Achievement Test (SAT-9) were used to generate reading, math, and language arts abilities.

Sample: A total of 4,312 students received the intervention, while 15,010 children were in qualifying schools but did not participate. This latter group served as a comparison group for certain evaluations. In the intervention group, 50.7% were female, 73.7% were Hispanic, and 58.6% were considered Limited English Proficient. In the non-intervention group, 66.9% of the students were designated as Limited English Proficient.

Outcomes:

Pretest - Posttest Results: For students with at least four years of program involvement, and controlling for gender, ethnicity, income and language status, higher participation was significantly related to higher math, reading, and language arts achievement scores and significantly related to better school attendance. Path analysis results indicate that higher participation led to higher school attendance and, in turn, led to the higher levels of academic achievement.

Treatment versus Comparison Group: Treatment students in the 4th grade cohort, the only cohort analyzed for this measure, made significantly better improvements in language redesignation (Limited English Proficient to English Proficient) than comparison students at posttest and again in grades 6 and 8. There were no differences found on this measure in grades 5 and 7. Treatment students in the 5th grade cohort had significantly fewer absences than comparison students in grades 6 and 7, though these differences disappeared in grades 8 and 9. Finally, in the first year, treatment students had significantly lower math achievement scores than comparison students, but these differences no longer existed by the 1997-1998 school year.

Student Transition and Recovery Program (STAR)

Program Type: Academic Services; Community Supervision and Aftercare; Diversion; Juvenile Justice, Other; Mentoring - Tutoring

Age: Early Adolescence (12-14) - Middle - Junior

Setting: Community; School

Program Goals: STAR aims to reduce bullying, suspension, expulsion and juvenile anti-social behavior by combining military-style drilling and exercise with academic tutoring.

Program Description: STAR is comprised of three levels of intervention for middle school students at risk of being suspended from school or placed in a juvenile detention

facility. STAR I is a one-day intervention for students referred by the school system. The one-day program involves rigorous military exercise and training. This level is meant as an "attention-getting" program for students who are at-risk for escalating problem behaviors. STAR II is a 30-day program for students referred by the school system for consistent problem behaviors that would usually warrant suspension. Students spend five hours a day at the STAR facility before and after school. Students participate in a military style "boot camp" every morning before school, and wear uniforms and military hairstyles. Students receive two hours of academic tutoring and conflict resolution instruction per day as well as attend weekly student group counseling. Parents must attend a weekly parent support/skills group. STAR III is a 24 week program, similar to STAR II, for students who are referred by the court system and is proscribed in lieu of juvenile detention placement. During the first phase, students participate in STAR II activities. Successful completion of Phase I -- including passing all subjects and no program violations -- allows the student to move into the second phase in which students no longer attend the morning military drilling, do not wear uniforms and parent/student counseling groups become optional. In Phase III of this program, students report to the STAR facility only one time per week and schools must submit weekly progress reports.

Study Design: Anonymous, voluntary parent and youth surveys were collected and compiled, in addition to standard year-end school-generated reports on attendance, grade point averages, and disciplinary referrals from ten program sites in Georgia.

Sample: The youth in this sample were middle school students in Georgia at risk of suspension, expulsion, or detention in a juvenile facility. No additional demographic information was provided.

Outcomes: On surveys, 79% of students and 75% of parents felt that STAR helped improve grades. The second most significant change cited by 67% of students and 65% of parents was improved relations with family members.

Absenteeism and suspension/expulsion rates for three years of STAR implementation in eight Georgia sites showed fluctuating patterns. The percentage of students absent 10 or more days declined in the first year (1996-97) of STAR implementation from 23% to 12%; this indicator increased to 19% the following year and remained at that level for 1998-99. The suspension/expulsion rate also exhibited an erratic pattern; the rate declined for two years from 32% to 11%, then increased to 14%.

All schools reported a marked decline in absenteeism and an increase in grade point averages.

PROGRAMS IN OTHER SETTINGS

Police Led Truancy Intervention

Program Type: Police Crime Prevention; School - Individual Strategies

Age: Late Childhood (6-11) – Elementary; Early Adolescence (12-14) - Middle – Junior; Late Adolescence (15-18) - High School

Setting: Juvenile Justice Setting; School; Social Services

Program Goals: Police Led Truancy Intervention aims to improve subsequent school attendance and reduce subsequent delinquency of youth processed through the Truancy Unit.

Program Description: The Police Led Truancy Intervention program is a truancy and delinquency prevention program using law enforcement and a community-based truancy unit to deter youth from skipping school. Sheriff's deputies or other law enforcement officers patrol communities looking for youth not accompanied by an adult during school hours and confirm that these youth have not been granted an excused absence from school. After verifying that the legal criteria are met for admission to the Truancy Unit, officers escort the truant youth to the Unit where they are processed, assessed, interviewed by staff, and informed of a forced silence requirement during their stay. Informal counseling with clinical staff is provided on an as-needed basis during intake. Unit rules are explained to all youth, as are the disciplinary actions in place for those who break the rules. Youth may stay at the facility for a maximum of six hours, at which time they must be released to a parent, guardian, or competent adult willing to sign for their release.

Study Design: The Police Led Truancy Intervention was evaluated using a quasi-experimental design that compared students processed in the truancy unit to those stopped by an officer but not processed in order to gauge its impact on two sets of intended outcomes--reductions in unexcused absences from school and subsequent delinquency among school aged youth. To assess this impact, three attendance variables were used: (a) a simple dichotomous measure based on whether the youth returned to school the day after processing at the Truancy Unit (processed youth) or being stopped by an officer (nonprocessed youth), (b) a comparison of the total number of unexcused absences 30 days before and after the encounter, and (c) the total number of days missed for the remainder of the school year following the intervention. Delinquent involvement was measured by referrals to the Department of Juvenile Justice, the agency responsible for most juvenile justice services.

Sample: During the 1999-2000 academic year, 12,330 youth were stopped by police on suspicion of truancy; of these youth, 7,395 were processed through the Truancy Unit and the remaining 4,935 were released after questioning. The sample of processed youth was 64% male, 39% Caucasian, 53% African American, 7% Hispanic, and 1% Asian. The sample of nonprocessed youth was 72% male, 28% Caucasian, 65% African American, 5% Hispanic, and 1% Asian. The distributions for age and grade were almost identical for both samples.

Outcomes: Among youth processed at the truancy unit, 71% returned to school the next day, while 63% of the nonprocessed youth returned to school the next day. Thirty days after a police encounter, 26% of nonprocessed youth had perfect school attendance,

compared to only 9% of processed youth. For the remainder of the school year, only 5% of processed youth had perfect attendance after the intervention compared to 21% of nonprocessed youth after being stopped and questioned by an officer. In the processed group, 43% missed fewer days of school after the intervention than before, compared to 28% of the nonprocessed youth. It should be noted, however, that 48% of both groups had more absences in the 30 days after the intervention than before. Finally, among those students who had been truant for 31 days or more, the mean number of days absent measured over the entire school year after the intervention for processed youth was 21 days with a standard deviation of 19 days, while the mean number of days absent for the nonprocessed youth was only 11 days with a standard deviation of 13 days, a significant difference. In summary, at the bivariate level, it appears that processed youth had some good short-term results, with more returning to school the next day and missing fewer school days 30 days after processing. But the program had a negative impact on long-term attendance, with the non-processed students missing fewer days over the entire year and more likely to have perfect attendance.

Using multivariate analyses, with other variables held constant (processed/nonprocessed, prior involvement in the juvenile justice system/no involvement, prior attendance, age, race, and gender), processed students were significantly more likely to have improved attendance at the 30-day interval than were nonprocessed students. The only other significant finding indicated that males were more likely to have improved attendance during the 30-day follow-up than were females. Unfortunately, the long-term data collected on attendance for the remainder of the school year indicated that processed youth missed significantly more days than nonprocessed youth. In addition, students who had delinquency records were more likely to miss more school days throughout the year after their police encounter (either processed or stopped by police) than were students without delinquency records. Finally, the impact of prior attendance is also relatively strong and statistically significant: the greater the number of days absent prior to the intervention, the greater the number of days absent after the intervention.

There were no significant differences between either the processed or nonprocessed students on measures of delinquency after an encounter with an officer, even among students with a prior record of delinquency. No significant results were found for the delinquency outcomes with either processed or nonprocessed students when all other variables were controlled for.

Wraparound Services Model – Columbus, Ohio

Program Type: Counseling and Social Work; Employment – Vocational; Family Therapy; Juvenile Justice, Other; School - Environmental Strategies

Age: Late Childhood (6-11) – Elementary; Early Adolescence (12-14) - Middle – Junior; Late Adolescence (15-18) - High School

Setting: Community; Hospital / Medical Center; Mental Health / Treatment Center; School

Program Goals: The goal of the wraparound services program is to support normalized and inclusive options for youth with complex needs and their families. The behavioral goal is that the juvenile participants who receive the wraparound services will have fewer subsequent arrests, fewer school absences, not be expelled or suspended, not run away from home, not be picked up by the police, and not be assaultive.

Program Description: The wraparound services approach is a comprehensive model that joins the efforts of significant individuals in the youth's life with the community. These efforts are joined to identify and build on the strengths of the youth and family, while encouraging behaviors that would reduce the likelihood of further involvement with the juvenile justice system. The wraparound services approach was built on two major beliefs; (a) that families need to be involved in helping their family member and (b) that maintaining community living is paramount. Effective treatments address the multiple determinants of delinquent behavior and provide broad-level, complex, community-based interventions. In the wraparound services program, problem areas are divided into eight life domains including Home/Living Arrangement, Family/Surrogate Family, Psychological/Emotional, Educational/Vocational, Legal, Social, Safety, and Medical.

Study Design: This study used a pre-post test control group design with random assignment to treatment conditions. Program participants were tracked and contacted following program entry. The program offered a follow-up for subsequent juvenile court contacts and subsequent at-risk and delinquent behavior. Research staff workers conducted follow-up interviews every other month for 18 months, or 9 times, over the course of the investigation. The study included only participants that met the project criteria: under 17 years of age, referred for charges filed against them for unruly or delinquent behavior (misdemeanant or felony levels 3 and 4), those in the pre-sentence stage who had been adjudicated unruly or delinquent (misdemeanant or felony levels 3 and 4), and those entering the children's services intake division for delinquency or unruly behavior, but not for neglect or dependency cases. Initially, 500 youth were invited to participate in the study; 307 youth agreed to participate and entered the program. Of the 307 participants, 166 were excluded from the study due to loss of contact, moving, or inadequate implementation of services. Of the remaining 141 participants, 73 were randomly assigned to receive wraparound services and 68 to receive conventional services.

Sample: One hundred and forty one juveniles who entered the juvenile justice center in Franklin County, South Carolina, participated in the investigation. Participants included 54 females and 87 males. The participants' ethnicity was 50% Caucasian, 49% African American, and 1% biracial. The participants' mean age was reported as 14.85 years; however, all juvenile participants had to be under the age of 17 to qualify.

Outcomes: Participants in the wraparound program participants had fewer unexcused school absences, were expelled or suspended from school less, ran away from home less, were picked up by police less, and were less assaultive than control youth. There were no significant differences found between the two groups with regard to arrests or incarceration during program involvement. The study did find support for the hypothesis

that those involved in wraparound services would engage in less at-risk and delinquent behavior. However, it failed to provide empirical support for the hypothesis that youth who received wraparound services would have fewer subsequent criminal offenses at 6, 12, or 18 months than youth who received conventional services.

Conclusions

Studies on all 18 programs included findings regarding attendance, while studies on 12 of the programs included information on academic achievement. Nearly all of the programs demonstrated increased attendance and academic achievement, indicating that a range of strategies in various settings can be effective in bolstering student participation and performance. However, two programs, the Chronic Truancy Initiative (school based program) and the Police Led Truancy Intervention (program in other setting), demonstrated initial increases in attendance with long term decreases following police intervention.

In addition, of the 18 programs reviewed, 8 received positive rankings by at least one of the following agencies:

- United States Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)
- United States Department of Education (DOE)
- National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
- United States Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Blueprints for Violence Prevention (OJJDP Blueprints)
- United States Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Title V Community Prevention Grants Program (OJJDP Title V)

The following table displays the 8 favorably reviewed programs:

Program	CSAP	DOE	NIDA	OJJDP Blueprints	OJJDP Title V
Behavioral Monitoring and Reinforcement Program (formerly Preventive Intervention)	Promising			Promising	
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA)	Effective			Model	Exemplary
Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA)					Effective
Career Academy					Effective
Chronic Truancy Initiative					Promising

Positive Action through Holistic Education (Project PATHE)				Promising	Promising
School Transitional Environment Program (STEP)				Promising	Effective
Truant Recovery Program					Promising

Six of the 8 favorably reviewed programs were considered school based programs, while the other two were considered community based programs. No programs in either the “School and community based programs” category or in the “Programs in other settings” category were noted by the aforementioned organizations. The following table demonstrates the 8 favorably ranked programs by setting category:

School Based Programs	Community Based Programs
Behavioral Monitoring and Reinforcement Program (formerly Preventive Intervention)	Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA)
Career Academy	Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA)
Chronic Truancy Initiative	
Positive Action through Holistic Education (Project PATHE)	
School Transitional Environment Program (STEP)	
Truant Recovery Program	

Implications

A variety of program types and settings can be effective in increasing student attendance and academic achievement. Programs that include police intervention may have long term negative effects on student attendance. Program developers may benefit from analyzing and replicating elements of programs that have achieved national recognition, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of America and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

The National Center for School Engagement (NCSE) is an initiative of The Colorado Foundation for Families and Children (CFFC). NCSE strives to build a network of key stakeholders who share the belief that improving school attendance and school attachment promotes achievement and school success.



National Center for School Engagement

NCSE was established as a result of more than a decade of educational research about youth out of the educational mainstream conducted by CFFC. The impact of this work has been the development of significant investments of state funds to reduce suspensions expulsions and truancy. Over five years ago, CFFC began working with the OJJDP, US Department of Justice to assist in the planning and implementation of pilot demonstration projects across the country. As projects developed, CFFC became the national evaluator of this five-year truancy demonstration project.

The culmination of ten years of program experience and research has identified truancy and school engagement as the centerpiece of NCSE's work to improve outcomes for youth who are at the greatest risk of school failure and delinquency. We are national leaders in applying research to help communities prevent and reduce truancy.

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NCSE | National Center for School Engagement

Using A Typology for Truancy Prevention

National Center for School Engagement

July 28, 2006

**An initiative of the Colorado Foundation for Families and Children
303 E. 17th Avenue, Suite 400 Denver, CO 80203
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Using a Typology for Truancy Prevention

Overall Steps to Success

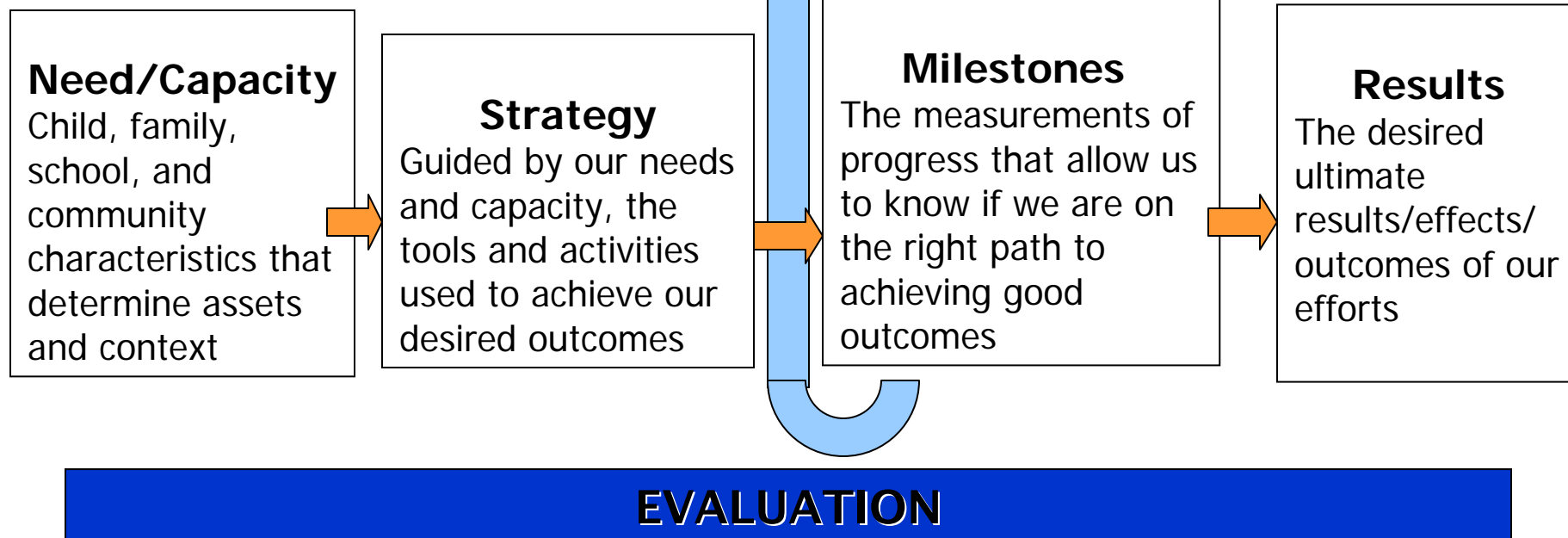
- Assess needs and resources
- Develop a logic model
- Plan for success around attendance, attachment, achievement
- Data-based decision making
- Review / change policies
- Balance sticks and carrots
- Select your interventions
- Implement your actions
- Public awareness and involvement



RESULTS-BASED TRUANCY PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL

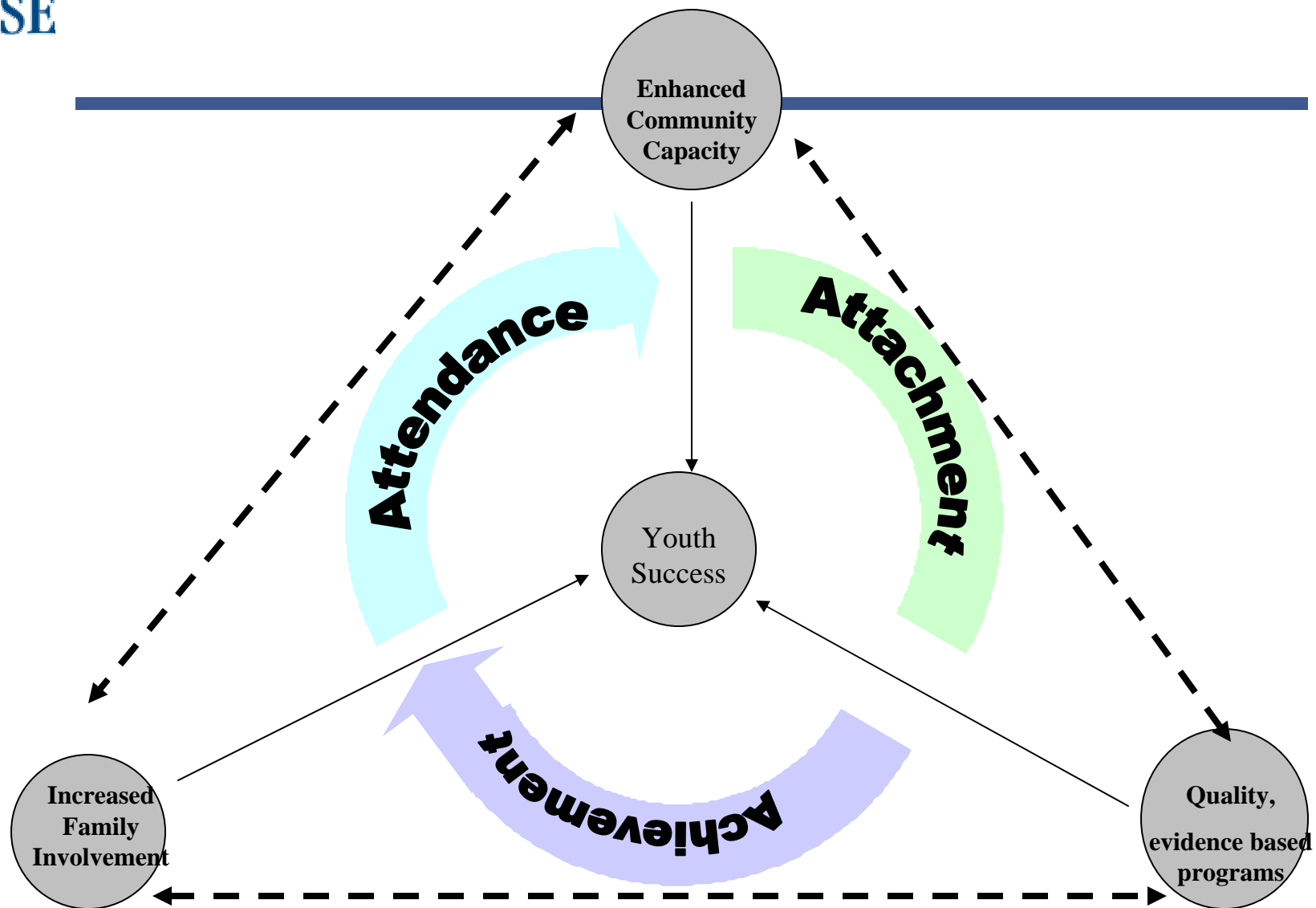
Principles that guide the work:

- Diversity is valued
- Families are actively involved
- Youth are treated with respect
- Collaboration with community partners is critical





Solutions for Truant Youth





A Continuum Typology



- 1) **What?** Collaborations for Community Action: **Who?** Schools, courts, police
Actions: Planning and interagency agreements
- 2) **What?** Public Awareness Activities_ **Who?** School & community
Actions: Media, publications, community campaigns
- 3) **What?** Short Term Interventions_ **Who?** Schools
Actions:
Teacher-parent call and conversation
Principal-teacher-parent conference
Student Attendance Review Boards (SARB)
Parent-student workshop to develop behavior contracts & school accommodations
Home visits
Mediation
- 4) **What?** Longer Term Interventions **Who?** School, courts, community
Action: Case Management: youth advocacy and service coordination
Action: Student Support Services: counseling, academic tutoring
- 5) **What?** Court interventions **Who?** Courts, juvenile services
Actions: Parent arrest, detention of youth, fines , Dependency and neglect petitions,
At-risk youth petitions, Driver's license revocation/delay



Local Action

Where do we start?

- Know your attendance laws, local policies & their inconsistencies
- Develop a strategic plan across agencies
- Focus on attendance and engagement not just truancy
- Adopt promising practices that “fit” locally
- Create both incentives and graduated sanctions
- Involve students and parents in planning programs to improve attendance and engagement
- Take baselines and track progress



Sticks and Carrots: Mix and Match

Sticks/Sanctions

Fine or Arrest of Parents
Contempt Citation & Detention
Withhold TANF from Parents
File CHINS/PINS Petitions
File Educational Neglect Petition
School F Grade for absence
No Extra Curricular Activities.
School Suspensions/.Expulsions
Suspend Driving License
Take cell phone away

Carrots/Incentives

Attendance Awards
Change Teachers/ Placement
Flexible School Schedule
Tutoring & Academic Support
Home Visits + Plan
Service Learning
School-Home Contracts
After School Programs
Classmates Send Letters Home
Case Mgmt. Services
Truancy Workshops



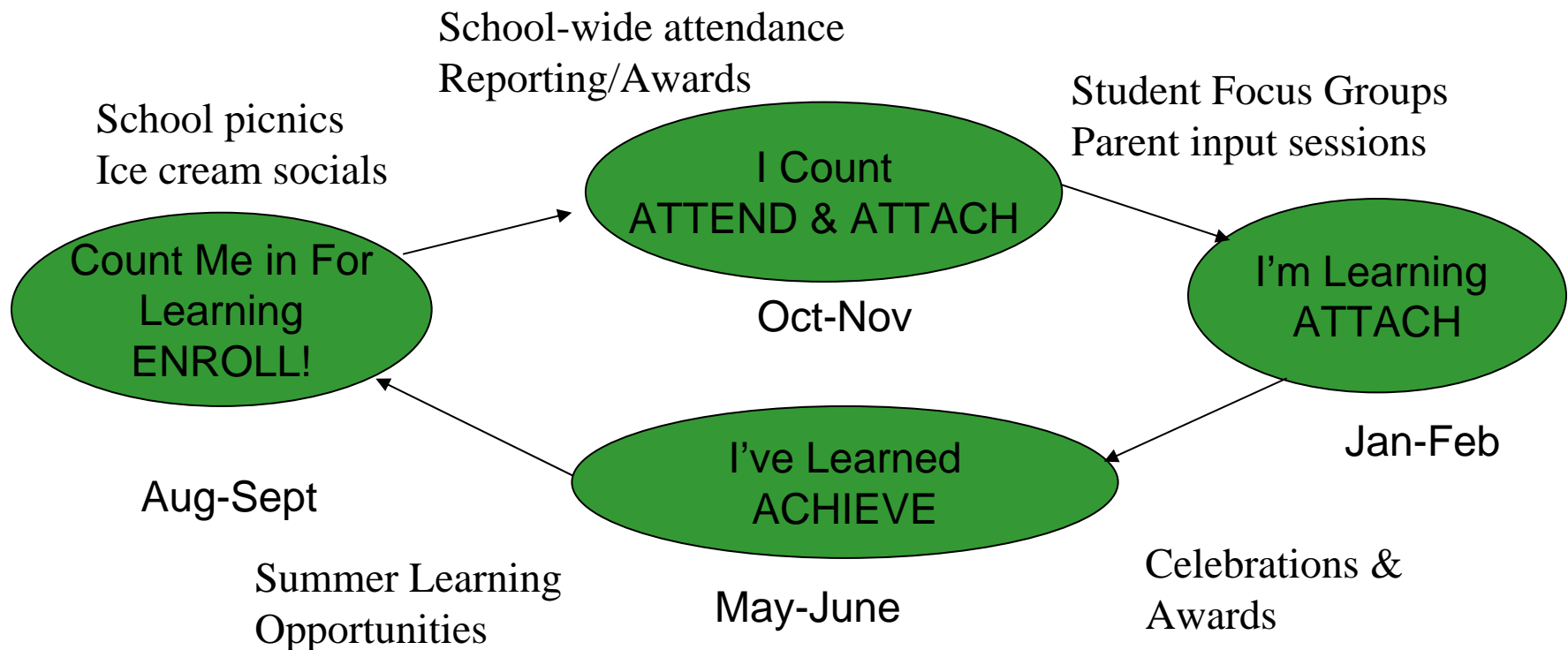
Typical Policies Needing Change

- **End out of school suspensions for being truant**
- **Finance schools by average daily attendance rate, not one day counts**
- **Document attendance and truancy by school and set goals**
- **Less use by courts of detention for truancy**
- **Remove attendance as a factor in grading**
- **Start secondary schools later in the day**
- **Provide partial credit options for students**
- **Conduct a “push out” policy audit of rules and practices**
- **Eliminate “push-out policies” and modify to promote engagement**
- **Raise compulsory attendance age to 18**



Count Me In For Learning!

Public Education Campaign for School Engagement Year-Long Topical Activities in Schools and Communities



The National Center for School Engagement (NCSE) is an initiative of The Colorado Foundation for Families and Children (CFFC). NCSE strives to build a network of key stakeholders who share the belief that improving school attendance and school attachment promotes achievement and school success.



National Center for School Engagement

NCSE was established as a result of more than a decade of educational research about youth out of the educational mainstream conducted by CFFC. The impact of this work has been the development of significant investments of state funds to reduce suspensions expulsions and truancy. Over five years ago, CFFC began working with the OJJDP, US Department of Justice to assist in the planning and implementation of pilot demonstration projects across the country. As projects developed, CFFC became the national evaluator of this five-year truancy demonstration project.

The culmination of ten years of program experience and research has identified truancy and school engagement as the centerpiece of NCSE's work to improve outcomes for youth who are at the greatest risk of school failure and delinquency. We are national leaders in applying research to help communities prevent and reduce truancy.

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