



# National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention

## Safe Schools/Healthy Students Alumni Sustainability Stories

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May 2016



# Safe Schools/Healthy Students Alumni Programs and Initiatives

## INTRODUCTION

In 1999, the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice embarked on a unique and unprecedented collaboration, creating the Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) Initiative in response to rising concerns about youth violence, substance abuse, and school safety. This Federal grant recognizes that violence among young people is caused by a multitude of factors—including early childhood, family life, mental health, and substance abuse issues—and that no single action can be counted on to prevent it. As such, the SS/HS Initiative takes a comprehensive approach, drawing on the best practices and the latest thinking in education, justice, social services, and mental health to help communities take action. Representing school districts all over the United States, SS/HS has served rural towns, suburban communities, and sprawling cities.

The following 12 communities highlight some of SS/HS's greatest achievements, with alumni achieving success in multiple areas including, but not limited to, policy change and development, technology, capacity building, and systemic change and integration. By incorporating these strategic approaches and using the unique SS/HS Framework, grantees from a variety of cultural, environmental, and economic backgrounds have created individual stories of triumph and continued sustainability. Connecting with stakeholders and community leaders previously thought to be

unapproachable, leveraging unique data sources, and integrating previously siloed systems, these communities embody resilience and innovation. These are their stories, their lessons, and their lasting legacy as told in their voices.

## 2001 San Diego

### SS/HS FRAMEWORK

- **Elements:** Promoting Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health
- **Strategic Approaches:** Capacity Building, Collaboration and Partnership
- **Guiding Principles:** Resource Leveraging, Serving Vulnerable and At-Risk Populations, Sustainability, Youth-Guided and Family-Driven

**Promoting and Advocating for Mental Health.** As an original SS/HS recipient in 2001, the San Diego school district had expelled more than 400 students from its schools each year in the late 1990s. To combat this issue, an alternative learning high school (ALVA) was created to funnel expelled students. However, when data were reviewed, it turned out that most acts that led to suspension or expulsion were not “threatening,” and a weak tracking system did not provide strong data to show the effectiveness of ALVA. Seeing this as a mental health issue for youth, the district received a grant from University of California San Diego and initiated a preliminary mental health assessment to learn more. The idea was to create an intervention and have youth partner with clinicians and others (city police and school police officers; mental health and public health professionals) as well as to create a prevention model with hired licensed therapists working with families most at risk.

**Involving Community Partners.** A cadre of community partners was represented in San Diego’s success. Law enforcement, public health, and the probation office were all critical to establishing a single unified approach to mental health. One example of partnership success was the public health department’s hiring of staff to increase health care coverage for youth. In response, the school board matched these new hires to enable more proactive responses to health care-related issues. This demonstrated that the partnership went far beyond the original initiative and broke down previous silos.

**Using Data to Support Long-Term Success and Sustainability.** San Diego Unified School District made it a point to collect quality Youth Risk Behavior Survey data administered in school settings. These included questionnaires that provided insight into sensitive but important health issues such as substance use, suicide by ethnicity/age, and sexual behavior. The systems actively collaborated when the data were released. This promoted a progressive school board and strong advocacy for following up on these significant issues. The data also

### OVERVIEW

- Jack Campana, Former SS/HS Project Director
- **San Diego Unified School District**
- **2001 Grantee**
- San Diego Unified School District made profound changes in its approach to mental health and addressing young people’s mental health challenges. Over the course of many years, partnerships developed with county mental health agencies, probation offices, mental health centers, university partners, and law enforcement to improve and reaffirm mental health as a priority in the community. SS/HS’s original funding provided a platform for the school districts and an opportunity to examine alternative schools with mental health counselors and psychologists.

allowed agency directors to discuss related problems and coordinate programs across systems. These surveys are still administered in San Diego today.

**Sustainability Strategies.** The county mental health system played a large role in the eventual expansion and sustainability of the original SS/HS initiative. Because of strong advocates in multiple systems, a policy was implemented that youth with a mental health diagnosis be given support through the county mental health system. Schools now receive funding from the state and can contract with county or county-licensed agencies. The school district itself has become a licensed county mental health agency and contracted with UCSD and Children's Hospital. San Diego County contracts with licensed agencies to provide the services, and partnerships with probation, public health, and law enforcement agencies have led to an effective sharing and leveraging of existing resources.

**Where Is the Program Today?** After SS/HS funding, the district hired its first therapist to work with the general population. Before this, the district had only two licensed therapists involved with special education and infant populations. Today, the San Diego mental health resource center employs 150 mental health professionals; 100 are licensed therapists and 50 are rehabilitation specialists. The Incredible Years evidence-based program is implemented in high-risk areas in 15 schools, and the Multi-Systemic Therapy program works with 35 children and families in conjunction with the probation office. Every high school has drug and alcohol support groups with licensed therapists working alongside kids who have substance abuse issues. There has been a complete shift in a district that now sees mental health as critical to reaching all students.

*SS/HS has the greatest potential to improve, expand and sustain mental health services in schools more than any other federal, state and local funded program for schools that I am aware of.*

—Jack Campana, SS/HS Project Director

## 2006 Canton

### SS/HS FRAMEWORK

- **Elements:** Connecting Families, Schools, and Communities; Preventing Behavioral Health Problems
- **Strategic Approaches:** Collaboration and Partnership, Capacity Building, Policy Change and Development, Technology
- **Guiding Principles:** Evidence-Based Interventions

**Creating Partnerships.** The county-level partnership has continued to collaborate as a community-based coalition to work toward a common goal of building a safe, healthy, and drug-free community and has successfully obtained state and federal funds to target alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. The partnership has also helped communities in the county develop coalitions and/or nonprofit organizations to address community needs, such as a backpack program that provides healthy snacks for more than 300 elementary school children on weekends.

**Involving Community Partners.** The coalition is committed to recruiting, training, and retaining new members and focuses on maintaining stakeholder representation from the areas designated by the Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Drug-Free Communities Support Program. These include youth (age 18 or younger), parents, business, media, school, youth-serving organizations, law enforcement, religious/fraternal organizations, civic/volunteer groups, health care professionals, both state and local government agencies with expertise in the field of substance abuse, and other organizations involved in reducing substance abuse.

**Using Data to Support Success and Sustainability.** During the SS/HS project, 30-day alcohol use among students in Grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 at a targeted St. Lawrence County school district was 68% as reported by students on the 2009 Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA).

### OVERVIEW

- Marsha Sawyer; Director, Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program
- **St. Lawrence-Lewis Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), Canton, New York**
- **2006 Grantee**
- The St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES SS/HS project was unique in that it constituted a multidistrict model operating in eight separate school districts across St. Lawrence County, New York, in a rural mix of farms, forests, and small towns. The project's Core Management Team (CMT) consisted of a dedicated partnership of county-level organizations and agencies, including the required education, mental health, and law enforcement representatives. Working with community sector representatives, the members of this partnership developed the capacity to serve as a coordinating entity dedicated to the promotion of positive youth development and increased community capacity to address local issues. Evolving into a community-based coalition, partners have continued to apply lessons learned through the technical assistance provided by SS/HS to collaborate on such initiatives as underage drinking, tobacco use prevention, and youth marijuana and prescription drug abuse prevention.

During the SS/HS project, 30-day alcohol use among students in Grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 at a targeted St. Lawrence County school district was 68% as reported by students on the 2009 Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA). The 2015 PNA survey results indicated that 20.5% of students at the same school self-reported using alcohol in the last 30 days.

The 2015 PNA survey results indicated that 20.5% of students at the same school self-reported using alcohol in the past 30 days. The partnership attributed this to the implementation of environmental evidence-based strategies to address underage drinking, and the community's collaboration and commitment to building a safe and drug-free community. Local data collection activities used included youth survey data, the Bach-Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment; environmental scans; youth and adult listening sessions; and adult key informant interviews, school-level discipline data, and annual coalition capacity assessment data. External data sources included Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT data center, New York State Education Department Violent and Disruptive Incident Reports, and New York State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services data.

**Sustainability Strategies.** The training that leadership received as part of SS/HS program management and accountability—on effective communication strategies, budgeting, and assessment—has been embraced by members of the original 2006 team and effectively implemented to continue the good work initiated 10 years ago. Leadership has expanded its involvement to promoting coalition development in two additional adjacent counties to serve a rural area encompassing more than 6,000 square miles in upstate New York along the U.S.–Canada border. Further, the partnership determined that a strategic planning process that uses local data to assist with planning and determining priorities has been essential to its success. They also recognize the fluidity of coalition membership relative to the priorities established for a given year, which enables members to come into meetings when their particular expertise is needed.

**Where Is the Program Today?** Following the end of the SS/HS project in 2010, the Core Management Team (CMT) continued to operate as the Cultivating Healthy Communities (CHC) Coalition of St. Lawrence County. In 2011, this group successfully applied for a New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant, Prevention First-NY! Designed to address underage drinking in six school districts and communities throughout the county, this project helped the group establish locally based community groups dedicated to serving their specific communities. The expertise of the CHC assisted in the creation of the Massena Coalition, which received a Drug Free Communities Program grant in 2014 to address marijuana and prescription drug abuse. This project also promotes collaboration among communities supporting efforts to prevent and reduce substance use among youth.

The coalition determined that direct student interventions were insufficient to address underage drinking in the county. The coalition moved toward implementing evidence-based environmental strategies in addition to school-based EBP strategies. This new approach involved the entire community and examined retail and social access, as well as parent and community norms. Strategies to address underage drinking currently consist of media advocacy, sticker shock campaigns, the implementation of safe home pledges and social host ordinances, social marketing campaigns, and the establishment of individual family policies.

Members of the original CMT continue to apply the lessons learned through SS/HS to work toward reducing substance use among youth and adults by addressing the factors in a community that increase the risk of substance abuse. Each time one of the communities embarks on an initiative, our partners' involvement is evident, whether the focus is on promoting factors that minimize the risk of substance abuse, helping to collect and analyze data, or developing proposals to leverage funds to sustain initiatives. SS/HS effectively provided community leadership and stakeholders with the capacity, skills, and tools to sustain its vision of responding effectively to risk factors that threaten the individual, the family, and the community.

**Resources:**

- Massena Drug Free Coalition App found at the online App Store:  
<https://itunes.apple.com/mg/app/massena-drug-free-coalition/id1055832510?mt=8>
- Facebook page: Massena Drug Free Community Coalition:  
<https://www.facebook.com/MassenaDFC/>

*In the past, local organizations operated in what we referred to as a silo approach. By meeting regularly and becoming familiar with the focus of each partner and agency that participates in our coalition, we were able to create a viable collaborative that leverages resources successfully and shares expertise to target specific community needs.*

—Marsha Sawyer, SS/HS Project Director



## 2007 Austin

### SS/HS FRAMEWORK

- **Elements:** Promoting Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health
- **Strategic Approaches:** Collaboration and Partnership, Technology, Capacity Building, Policy Change and Development, Systemic Change and Integration
- **Guiding Principles:** Serving Vulnerable and At-Risk Populations

**Creating Systemic Change for Mental Health Services.** The SS/HS initiative developed a Family Education Rights and Privacy Act/Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act-compliant referral process, trained school staff on how to refer, and monitored the system to ensure compliance. Putting these systems in place led to the next step of having a mental health referral center on the first campus in AISD—Crockett High School in 2012. This successful model, which demonstrated that the students receiving services had a 5.4% improvement in attendance rates, has been replicated each year for a total of 18 campuses in 2016, funded primarily through a Medicaid Section 1115 Waiver and partner the Seton Healthcare Family. The pilot also showed a 5.3% decrease in the percentage of students who exhibited significant behavioral or emotional problems per the Pediatric Symptom Checklist.

Congruently, the Youth Services Mapping (YSM) website was developed with a unique model. Rather than having grant-funded staff collect and post information about each provider, the providers were trained to post their own information. The site is valued by providers and parents because everyone can see which services are available on which campuses and in which neighborhoods. An unforeseen legal value for the district is that now AISD has a transparent listing of all external organizations on campuses. In 2012, the district changed its contract and cooperative agreement templates to require all service providers coming onto AISD campuses to keep their information up to day in the YSM. After SS/HS funding ended, the district continued to maintain the website.

### OVERVIEW

- Brenda Vicars Hummel, PhD, Former SS/HS Project Director
- **Austin Independent School District (AISD):** 84,000 students, 61% economically disadvantaged, 43% Hispanic, 28% English as a second language, 12% African American
- **2007 Grantee**
- In 2007 AISD had
  1. *no* formalized referral process for delivering mental health services to students,
  2. *no* mental health clinics/centers on any of its 127 campuses,
  3. *no* accurate listing or tracking of ~100 external service providers coming onto campuses, and
  4. *no* accurate listing of more than 200 service providers at other sites (outside the district).

A strong cadre of community partners, eager to work with the district to improve services for students, came together to write the SS/HS proposal. Once the SS/HS grant was awarded, their vision, collaboration, and hard work transformed each *no* into a *yes*.

**Using Data to Support Long-Term Success and Sustainability.** To provide the district with data demonstrating the impact of mental health and other support services on attendance, discipline, and academic achievement, staff developed the Standard Aggregate Report (SAR) system, which allows external providers to collect group data on the students they serve at no cost to them. External providers can also demonstrate to educators that mental health services coincide with improved attendance and discipline.

<b>2016 Youth Services Mapping</b>	
7	School districts
261	Service providers
10	Funders/sponsors
15	Coalitions
255	Schools

Although SS/HS did not fund AISD’s development of the Child Study System (CST) and the accompanying electronic CST (eCST), SS/HS grant staff contributed to planning the system. In alignment with Positive Behavior Support and Response to Intervention models, staff now have access to case management information on each student and to a variety of group reports.

**Involving Community Partners.** Community partners were deeply involved throughout the initiative. Several partners contributed to writing *Safe Place, Communities in Schools*, the Austin Project proposal. The CMT was expanded to include city, county, Communities in Schools, and United Way representatives.

Congruently, SS/HS staff worked 2 years with the City of Austin and Travis County to develop data-sharing agreements, passed by all three governmental agencies, which permitted establishing a cross-agency integrated case management system. This system is still being used at family resource centers and is being funded by the city, county, and AISD.

**Sustainability Strategies.** Sustainability success can be attributed to a number of factors, including the following:

- Creating excellent but small pilots, that generate stunning data (Crockett pilot = a 5.4% improvement in attendance; a 5.3% decrease in the percentage of students who exhibited significant behavioral or emotional problems).
- Sharing the pertinent data with stakeholders.
- Integrating deeply with community and intradistrict partners, so they are invested in the programs and continue the sustainability efforts when SS/HS funding ends.



March 22, 2016:  
 Testifying for the third time before a Texas Legislative Committee on the mental health counseling referral center at Crockett High School, piloted under SS/HS, 2012–13. Testifying from left to right: Crockett Principal Craig Shapiro, AISD Health Services Director Tracy Spinner, LPPC Dr. Elizabeth Minne.

**Where Is the Program Today?** The SS/HS pilot at Crockett High School has been expanded to a total of 18 campuses in AISD, and the AISD Director of Health Services along with the Principal of Crockett High School and the clinician delivering services have been invited to testify before a Texas Legislative Committee three times in recent months to share information about the benefits and details of the model.

To date, the technology innovations—YSM (261 providers), SAR (80 providers), eCST (~83,000 students), and ICM (seven family resource centers)—are still in operation. Currently the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation is conducting a year-long analysis of these systems with the intent to design the best way to develop, integrate, and replicate them. By the final year of the SS/HS grant, the value of partnership support had been integrated into the fiber of AISD so deeply that the district created a new position, Administrative Supervisor of Partnerships, essentially replacing the director of the SS/HS initiative.

**Resources:**

- Youth Services Mapping Website: <http://ysm-austin.org>
- Standard Aggregate Report system:  
[http://archive.austinisd.org/community/access/docs/ACCESS\\_SAR-SSP.pdf?v=6](http://archive.austinisd.org/community/access/docs/ACCESS_SAR-SSP.pdf?v=6)
- E-Child Study System:  
<http://www.childstudysystem.org/index.html>

*I am an AISD parent and became familiar with the ACCESS link on the AISD web page. It is fabulous. Beginning 2 years ago, my son was struggling with a host of problems...The Youth Services Mapping (YSM) is amazing...This website is a wonderful step toward truly addressing some of the very issues students are facing.*

—Posted by a parent

[http://ysm-austin.org/index.php?option=com\\_ysm&object=help&task=showContent&type=showcontent\\_14](http://ysm-austin.org/index.php?option=com_ysm&object=help&task=showContent&type=showcontent_14)

# 2008 Alhambra

## SS/HS FRAMEWORK

- **Elements:** Promoting Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health
- **Strategic Approaches:** Collaboration and Partnership, Capacity Building
- **Guiding Principles:** Evidence-Based Interventions

### Implementing Evidence-Based Programs.

The evidence-based curricula implemented and sustained through SS/HS focused on social emotional learning. **Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies (PATHS)** focuses primarily on reducing aggression and behavior problems. **Steps to Respect** is an antibullying curriculum that focuses on being assertive and how to recognize, refuse, and report bullying. **Second Step** helps students develop skills for social and academic success and comprises three sections: Anger Management, Impulse Control, and Empathy Training. Interns as well as intervention advisors and school psychologists have been trained to deliver the curriculum.

Incredible Years is a program whose goal is to prevent and treat young children's behavior problems and promote their social, emotional, and academic competence. This program looks at the whole child from ages 3–5 and has a parent component. Foothill Family Service delivers the curriculum at one of our school sites. Administrators and school staff aware of families in need make referrals from the 13 elementary schools.

## OVERVIEW

- Laurel Bear, Assistant Superintendent, Student/Employee Welfare
- **Alhambra Unified School District, Alhambra, California**
- **2008 Grantee**
- Through the SS/HS initiative, the district selected, implemented, and sustained three evidence-based programs: **Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies (PATHS)**, **Steps to Respect**, and **Second Step**. The focus of these curricula is social and emotional learning. The district also partnered with one of the local mental health agencies, Foothill Family Services, to implement the Incredible Years program.





**Involving Community Partners.** The partners established through SS/HS have been critical to providing the best possible education for students. The partnerships and collaborations are a key component of delivering the evidence-based curricula. Through continued collaboration with university partners, SS/HS has been able to place two to four interns at each elementary site. Their primary role is to deliver all of the curricula. The partnership with Foothill Family Services has afforded the opportunity to provide Incredible Years to families in need of support services.

**Using Data to Support Long-Term Success and Sustainability.** Before any classroom interventions begin, a needs assessment is given at each site. Administrator feedback is also

considered on the basis of discipline referrals seen in the office. The curriculum is then administered universally or in small groups. An evaluation based on the curriculum is administered after each lesson or after the intern or intervention advisor has finished delivering the course. Teacher feedback forms are also distributed to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum. Teachers evaluate whether they have seen a decrease in aggressive behaviors and an increase in more desirable behaviors. Staff members have reported a 68% to 87% increase in prosocial emotional behavior and/or improvement in behavior.

For the 2014–2015 school year, 89 classrooms received an evidence-based curriculum. A breakdown by school site is presented below:

School	Number of classrooms	School	Number of classrooms
Baldwin	8	Monterey Highlands	6
Brightwood	5	Northrup	5
Emery Park	6	Park	13
Fremont	5	Ramona	5
Garfield	12	Repetto	5
Granada	3	Ynez	4
Marguerita	12		

**Sustainability Strategies.** The core component of sustaining the implementation of all the evidence-based curricula is continued collaboration with university partners to provide intern support. The partnership with Foothill Family Services helps continue the Incredible Years group. Evidence-based curriculum training is also needed because interns change from year

to year. This important training is linked to the intern-training academy that received the Golden Bell award for the 2014–2015 school year.

**Where Is the Program Today?** In the 2015–2016 school year, a total of 115 classrooms received one or more of the evidence-based curricula. A breakdown by school site is presented below.

School	Number of classrooms
Baldwin	13
Brightwood	12
Emery Park	6
Fremont	6
Garfield	18
Granada	6
Marguerita	7
Monterey Highlands	6
Northrup	7
Park	6
Ramona	5
Repetto	9
Ynez	14



## 2008 Alhambra

### SS/HS FRAMEWORK

- **Elements:** Connecting Families, Schools, and Communities
- **Strategic Approaches:** Systemic Change and Integration
- **Guiding Principles:** Resource Leveraging and Sustainability

**Creating Systemic Change for Mental and Behavioral Health Services.** The vision of the Gateway to Success program is to provide comprehensive prevention and intervention services for the district as a whole. In an effort to serve all students efficiently, an online counseling referral form was created. This is a convenient method for all stakeholders to generate a student referral as well as a device to obtain pertinent data related to the effectiveness of services and service delivery. The online referral form collects information ranging from student demographics to the initial date of services with providers. Every year the form is modified and improved to include additional information that could help link students to the best support services, while maintaining user friendliness.

Advertising services and educating school staff and families on generating referrals has been crucial in increasing and sustaining Gateway to Success referrals. The Gateway to Success partners also meet monthly to bring community resources to the table and enable the discussion of programs and services available for AUSD families. Parties in attendance include AUSD staff, the Alhambra Police Department, Los Angeles County probation officers, mental health agencies, and faith-based agencies. At these meetings, information regarding Gateway to Success referrals are shared.

**Involving Community Partners.** Partner and community involvement is a fundamental component of the Gateway to Success program. To best serve students, it is critical that staff, parents, and community members be on board. Gateway to Success offers annual training to all school staff district-wide to provide educational opportunities on the referral process as well as trends among students. The tremendous increase in referrals over the years can be attributed largely to the comprehensive training offered as well as to constant collaboration and communication with partnering agencies. Monthly partnership meetings serve as the perfect forum to gather all staff and community members to discuss ways to continue to provide support to all students.

### OVERVIEW

- Laurel Bear, Assistant Superintendent, Student/Employee Welfare
- **Alhambra Unified School District (AUSD), Alhambra, California**
- **2008 Grantee**
- By collaborating with community partners, AUSD established a sustainable infrastructure to continue to provide SS/HS programs and activities after grant funding ended through The Gateway to Success program. To ensure that all students receive services, Gateway to Success developed a comprehensive referral system that enables all stakeholders to generate counseling referrals for students in need of support services. This program has been sustained and the number of referrals has grown annually because of the collaboration and support of staff and community members.

Since 2009, we have seen a more than 500% increase in Gateway to Success referrals.

**Using Data to Support Long-Term Success and Sustainability.**

Data collection as it relates to Gateway referrals has been crucial to the sustainability of the Gateway to Success program. The data are entered into a secure database to track the status of counseling services for students who are referred. Data

collected in the database include information such as student demographics, reasons for referral, the party generating the referral, and the support services the student was linked to. Data are analyzed regularly to identify trends in the district and address needs with our staff. Gateway also uses the data to help plan future support services during the intern recruitment process and to share with stakeholders at monthly partnership meetings. Sharing data with all stakeholders has helped support the implementation of specialized programs by some partnering agencies. Since 2009, Gateway to Success has seen a more than 500% increase in Gateway referrals. Currently, more than 75% of all parents have agreed to Gateway to Success services.



**Sustainability Strategies.** Constant collaboration and communication with all stakeholders is a core component of the sustainability of the Gateway to Success referral system. Staff and community members are essential for identifying students in need of support services. Partnership meetings also play a vital role in generating student referrals. Following is a comparison of partnerships from the 2008–2009 school year and current partnerships.

	2008–2009 School Year	2015–2016 School Year
Number of university partners	1	14
Number of partnering agencies	3	19

*Gateway provides a better understanding of what good mental health is. Additionally, our schools are so much safer because students and parents understand and know where to go for help. Students can refer peers to Gateway, as can parents and community members.*

—Staff Member, Anonymous



**Where Is the Program Today?** The Gateway referral system is fully operational and, during this school year to date, a total of 1,771 Gateway to Success referrals have been received, and we expect to surpass the number of referrals generated last year. With the increased collaboration of students, parents, staff, and community, the Gateway to Success program has been able to service thousands of AUSD families and provide the supports necessary to ensure every child’s success. A comparison of the 2014–2015 and 2015–2016 school years appears below.

	2014–2015 School Year	2015–2016 School Year (through January 2016)
Total number of Gateway referrals	1,776	1,771
Elementary Gateway referrals	1,109	1,114
High school Gateway referrals	667	657
Referrals completed by school staff	75%	84%

**Resources:**

- Partnership Animoto: <https://animoto.com/play/OxFZOOIPA2d531wLwd8ZPQ>
- Gateway Referral Staff Training Presentation: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/OB1h7h62YXpxINWU2cktCMDVEek0/view?usp=sharing>

*Gateway to Success saved my family and my child’s life through identifying self-harm behaviors. After evaluating my child, Gateway was able to intervene with support and mental health services. Prior to Gateway, my child experienced ongoing suicide ideations and trying to take his life. My son now recognizes that his school provides the emotional support daily through the Gateway program.*

—Parent, Anonymous

## 2008 Alhambra

### SS/HS FRAMEWORK

- **Elements:** Promoting Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health
- **Strategic Approaches:** Systemic Change and Integration, Capacity Building
- **Guiding Principles:** Serving uninsured and underinsured At-Risk Populations, Resource Leveraging, Sustainability

#### Supporting Emotional and Behavioral

**Prevention.** The Intern Training Academy (ITA) aims to address the needs of students who are not receiving appropriate mental health care. Since the inception of ITA, hundreds of interns from various disciplines have received training and provided services for AUSD's vulnerable populations. Interns are divided into four categories: case management/parent support; parent engagement; academic support and counselor guidance; and direct clinical services. At each school site a minimum of

five interns are placed according to the identified needs of each individual school and university program requirements to maximize the services available to students and parents. Interns deliver prevention programs through universal evidenced-based curricula and intervene through individual mental health services that address diagnoses commonly found in school-based settings. These services ensure that multiple areas of mental health for AUSD students are supported to improve overall school climate and increase parent engagement while decreasing the stigma associated with mental health services in the community.

**Involving Community Partners.** Since 2004, school-based mental health services in AUSD had been offered at a minimal level in partnership with only one university. When the growing need for mental health services was recognized, an assessment of current resources was conducted that led to more university partnerships and collaboration to provide intern clinical training within AUSD to help support students' needs. There are partnerships with 13 local universities currently. In addition, maintaining partnerships with local mental health agencies has afforded the ITA an opportunity to collaborate with them to provide training related to best practices in mental health delivery for interns throughout the year.

### OVERVIEW

- Laurel Bear, Assistant Superintendent, Student/Employee Welfare
- **Alhambra Unified School District, Alhambra, California**
- **2008 Grantee**
- To support comprehensive emotional and behavioral prevention and behavioral sustainability after SS/HS funding ended, an Intern Training Academy (ITA) was developed to train college students so they could provide comprehensive prevention, intervention, and ongoing mental health services to uninsured, underinsured, and indigent students. This program provides a clinical training experience to graduate-level interns focusing on best practices in mental health delivery.

The ITA has expanded partnerships with universities in the last 10 years and, as of this year, established working relationships with 13 local campuses.

**Using Data to Support Long-Term Success and Sustainability.**

Extensive research was conducted within the school district and the community to identify barriers to school-based mental health services according to the families who would access those services. Parent and student focus groups as well as yearly climate surveys have revealed that stigma regarding mental health services existed in the community. Furthermore,

in an effort to continue evaluating the ITA yearly, interns are asked to complete surveys throughout the year to gauge their satisfaction with their school sites, the support provided, supervision, and challenging situations they have encountered. These data enable the identification of areas for improvement and adjustment so interns can complete the school year successfully while receiving the necessary support. Data analysis also assists in developing relevant training and procedures that will benefit the interns as well as the students and families receiving services.

**Sustainability Strategies.** The ITA uses a three-pronged approach: supervisor and preceptor support, comprehensive intern training, and university partnerships. Prong 1 is defined by the collaborative team approach, which provides layers of support for interns and therefore better supportive services for AUSD students and families. Prong 2 is comprehensive training. In an effort to develop and maintain the quality of the intern services provided through school-based mental health



services, interns are comprehensively trained to ensure they are prepared to work effectively with the various cultures that comprise AUSD students and families. To build on an intern's training experience, each intern receives an ITA manual that consists of all training materials for use as an ongoing resource and guide. Finally, Prong 3 is the partnerships with universities to secure highly skilled interns and ensure the ongoing success of the ITA.



**Where Is the Program Today?** The ITA continues to be a training institution for interns who want to obtain a comprehensive placement that will prepare them for employment in the mental health field. Because of the high level of confidence interns have in this reputable academy, dozens of potential interns apply and accept placement with the ITA every year. In addition, the ITA has begun to introduce training opportunities to neighboring districts and provide resources so they can replicate the ITA, addressing the needs of their own at-risk populations. They value the outcomes that AUSD has achieved, including improved school climate, a reduction in suspension and expulsion rates, and improvement in attendance and overall student achievement.

**Resources:**

- Gateway To Success: <http://www.ausdgateway.com/interns.html>

*Overall, my experience was excellent. I would definitely recommend this placement to any other person looking to work in a school setting. The agency is structured and so much support is given to the interns.*

—Gladis Rojas, Masters Social Work Intern 2014–2015

## 2008 Alhambra

### SS/HS FRAMEWORK

- **Elements:** Connecting Families, Schools, and Communities
- **Strategic Approaches:** Capacity Building
- **Guiding Principles:** Youth Guided and Family Driven, Cultural and Linguistic Competency

**Engaging Parents.** Gateway to Success acknowledges the importance of parent engagement for student success. To include and educate parents in student success, a variety of parent workshops are offered. When Gateway to Success was first established, a Parent University was developed to engage and inform parents of hot topics and current trends such as drug awareness, school safety, dealing with your child’s emotions, and accessing resources for help. It was evident that parents wanted to participate as much as they could. The parent component was then expanded to include the Parent Project, a 10-week program that provides practical and emotional support for families as they begin the difficult process of change.

**Involving Community Partners.** Although Gateway to Success and AUSD staff take the lead in facilitating the parent workshops, the help of partners and community members enables the expansion of workshops and the accommodations necessary for accessibility to parents. Interns also play an important role in assisting staff by co-leading classes and offering parent outreach.

Gateway to Success has a strong partnership with local mental health and community agencies. The Alhambra Police Department works closely with AUSD by providing two school resources officers; it also provides the location for the Parent Project on Thursday evenings. When Gateway to Success did not have the staff to lead the Spanish class for the Parent Project, the Asian Youth Center stepped in and assisted. Asian Pacific Family Center (APFC) is now helping to provide Parent Project classes in Mandarin. In addition, APFC has its own parenting course called “Parent Like a Pro!,” to which we refer our Vietnamese and Cantonese speaking families.

**Using Data to Support Long-Term Success and Sustainability.** To track the number of attendees, each event has sign-in sheets and an online referral tracking system for Parent Project enrollees. Gateway to Success acquires feedback by communicating with parents at workshops or meetings, administering evaluations at the end of each 40 Developmental

### OVERVIEW

- Laurel Bear, Assistant Superintendent, Student/Employee Welfare
- **Alhambra Unified School District, Alhambra, California**
- **2008 Grantee**
- Before the SS/HS initiative, no formal system existed to assess how to engage parents. In an effort to expand and enhance parent engagement, Gateway to Success, developed through the SS/HS initiative, offers parent education workshops to encourage family participation in promoting student success. These workshops address a variety of topics such as healthy communication, setting limits and boundaries, drug awareness, and many more. Translation is provided to encourage attendance.

Assets class, and through Local Control and Accountability Planning Survey results. By means of these types of informal and formal surveys, Gateway to Success has been able to increase the types of parent workshops, offer events at various days and times, and provide the programs in different languages.

**The effectiveness of parent classes is measured by pre-/post assessments, which report a 45% reduction in total difficulties experienced by parents after taking the classes.**

To date, more than 600 families have attended one or more of the classes or programs offered through the Parent Project, Strengthening Families, and/or Developmental Assets. Via a pre-/post assessment, parents continue to report a more than 45% reduction in total difficulties experienced.

**Sustainability Strategies.** Creating programs that matter to various audiences, flexibility, and working to accommodate parents' schedules have all been key components to sustaining the parent engagement program. Both the Parent University and Parent Project are held in the evening, which conflicted with some parents' schedules. To accommodate parents who work in the evening, 40 Developmental Assets was made available in the daytime. The Search Institute developed 40 Developmental Assets, a program that identifies a set of skills, experiences, relationships, and behaviors that enable young people to develop into successful and contributing adults. Strengthening Families was later added and was offered in Spanish only. Strengthening Families is a 10-week program in which parents receive support to lead a harmonious family life and build the foundation necessary for their child's success. Childcare is provided for Parent University events and attendance has been excellent.

Gateway to Success staff, interns, and school community coordinators lead parent workshops and classes. Guest speakers present at Parent University and translation is provided by AUSD school community coordinators.



*Strengthening Families Graduation*

**Where Is the Program Today?** Parent education programs support and enhance a child’s education. This initiative continues to thrive and grow because of our great partnerships, the use of varying parenting programs, and a large selection of parent engagement opportunities offered at various times and in different languages. To date, Spanish and Mandarin translation are provided for all Parent University events, Spanish and Mandarin sessions are offered for the Parent Project and 40 Development Assets, and Strengthening Families has been expanded to both Spanish and English.

Parent education—Alhambra District (as of 3/11/16)			
Workshop	Attendees	Class	Attendees
Parent University—9/10/15	263	Parent Project—Fall	76
Parent University—11/5/15	281	Parent Project—Spring	86
Parent University—2/18/16	258	Strengthening Families—Fall	76
		Strengthening Families—Spring	92
Incredible Years	21	Developmental Assets—Fall	95
		Developmental Assets—Spring	143

2009

Escondido

### SS/HS FRAMEWORK

- **Elements:** Connecting Families, Schools, and Communities
- **Strategic Approaches:** Systemic Change and Integration
- **Guiding Principles:** Serving Vulnerable and At-Risk Populations

**Creating Partnerships.** The focus of the Escondido Union School District (EUSD)'s SS/HS Initiative was to create a safer and healthier Escondido through partnership and collaboration among students, parents, school staff, and community members.

School social workers were placed at 13 of 23 schools within the Escondido Union School District to assist with linkage, communication, and the coordination of student and family services to meet students' academic, health, social, and emotional needs. New partnerships were created to ensure that additional services were accessible to students and families at school.

**Using Data to Support Long-Term Success and Sustainability.** Evaluation was an essential component of the initiative in Escondido. From the outset of the program, the SS/HS project director worked collaboratively with an outside evaluation team to track outcomes that would be meaningful to local decision makers. In addition to nationally required outcomes, the local team looked at the number of participants in each program, school-wide attendance, suspension and expulsion data, and the outcomes of program participation. Data showed there was a 75% decrease in the number of violence-related suspensions at EUSD middle schools and an 84% decrease at EUSD elementary schools that had received services between 2008 and 2009 and 2013 and 2014. In addition, average days of absence at the 13 schools decreased 31% between 2008 and 2009 and 2013 and 2014.

**Sustainability Strategies.** The EUSD and local agency partners were critical to sustaining and eventually expanding the services and programs introduced through the SS/HS initiative in Escondido. In addition to funding staff and services, the district and local agencies committed to integrating systems of communication and implementing and coordinating the services established during the 5 years of SS/HS implementation. Further, the partnership among students, parents, school staff, and community members was at the center of all EUSD SS/HS initiative programs. In addition to serving on the project management team, community agency staff were essential to the implementation of activities and programs funded through the grant. These partnerships and the collaborative coordination of programming on the management and direct services levels have continued since grant funding ended in 2014. The Collaborative Agency Resources for Escondido (CARE) Youth Project Youth Community Advisory Committee; Escondido Gang Intervention, Resistance, and Prevention Task Force; Palomar Health Drug Free Communities Collaborative; Early Childhood Coalition; and S2MART Streets Coalition are examples of ongoing collaboration taking place in Escondido to continue

### OVERVIEW

- Kimberly Israel, Coordinator of Community Outreach
- **Escondido Union School District, Escondido, California**
- **2009 Grantee**
- The Escondido Union School District has sustained and expanded programs, services, and systemic structures introduced to the district and community through the SS/HS initiative.



the work initiated through the SS/HS initiative. In addition to formal collaboration teams, a more expanded offering of school-based and school-linked health and mental health programs is available at all 23 school sites since SS/HS funding ended.

**School Social Workers at the 13 schools provided individual and group services to 2,925 students between 2010 and 2014. Overall, 2,108 unduplicated parents were involved in Parent University workshops between 2010 and 2014.**

**Where Is the Program Today?** The EUSD has integrated the structures created through the SS/HS Initiative on a district-wide basis and has expanded programs, services, and supports available to students and families at all 23 EUSD school district schools. As a result of the work initiated through SS/HS, the EUSD funds both a

school social worker and a family liaison at each of the 23 schools in the district for the purpose of providing comprehensive services to meet students' and families' academic, social, emotional, and behavior needs. Each school site created a family engagement center, where families have a chance to participate in activities at school as well as access to community resources and supports. Comprehensive Student Assistance Teams at each site continue to work to identify student needs early and link students and families to a menu of support services at school and in the community. And on a community level, although not a district high school, the district's partner high school has also adopted the structures created by EUSD and over the past 3 years and funded school social workers and family liaisons for each school site to ensure that services are available for the district's students and families throughout high school.

**Resources:**

- <http://www.ca-ilg.org/general/escondido-union-school-districts-care-youth-project>
- <http://www.livewellsd.org/content/livewell/home/all-articles/partners/partner-home/escondido-union-school-district.html>
- <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2010/oct/27/escondido-program-to-connect-families-with/>
- [http://www.promoteprevent.org/sites/www.promoteprevent.org/files/resources/positive\\_behavioral\\_interventions\\_snapshots.pdf](http://www.promoteprevent.org/sites/www.promoteprevent.org/files/resources/positive_behavioral_interventions_snapshots.pdf)

*Vision and leadership have been the key for sustaining the programs and services introduced through the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative in Escondido, California. Escondido is a safer and healthier community because of the collective commitment of our district's partners in ensuring EVERY child and family is supported and connected to services to meet their varied needs.*

—Kimberly Israel, Coordinator of Community Outreach, Escondido Union School District (SS/HS Initiative Project Director 2009-2014)

# 2008 Mt. Vernon

## SS/HS FRAMEWORK

- **Elements:** Promoting Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Health
- **Strategic Approaches:** Collaboration and Partnership
- **Guiding Principles:** Resource Leveraging, Evidence Based Interventions

**Promoting Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Health.** SS/HS funding helped Youth First continue to transform and strengthen the lives of young people and their families by providing master’s-level social workers in area schools and prevention programs for families and youth. SS/HS funding provided on-site, free-of-charge behavioral health services and programs through Youth First social workers who worked with students to prevent substance abuse, improve family relationships, and develop life skills. By means of independent evaluations funded by SS/HS and Youth First, measurable outcomes were achieved that helped build a foundation for a better, stronger, healthier community in which youth and families can live and work.

**Involving Community Partners.** Diverse partnerships developed through both SS/HS initiatives generated collaboration, greater awareness of needs, and more community and school investment that added up to expansion and sustainability, which in turn positively changed both SS/HS communities. Collaboration between schools and community agencies contributed to the successful establishment of Families and Communities Embracing Success (FACES, the region’s system of care).

**Using Data to Support Long-Term Success and Sustainability.** One of the primary data sources used to highlight the impact of the school social work services was surveys administered to teachers, parents, and students regarding the intensity of their concerns before receiving services and after receiving services. Concerns addressed in the pre-/post surveys were:

- *Teachers:* grades, poor decision making, disengagement, defiance, conduct issues;
- *Parents:* poor decision making, depression, defiance, anger, family conflict; and
- *Students:* negative self-image, anxiety, depression, anger, poor academic performance.

## OVERVIEW

- Cynthia Smith—Former SS/HS Project Director of Metropolitan School District, Mt. Vernon, Indiana
- **Metropolitan School District of Mt. Vernon, Indiana (2008 Grantee) - Data from Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation, Evansville, Indiana (2005 Grantee) is also included in this snapshot**
- Through two SS/HS grants, Youth First, a partner with the SS/HS initiative, was responsible for placing master’s-prepared social workers in nine school corporations to provide social and emotional supports designed to prevent substance abuse and promote healthy behaviors. When the SS/HS grants concluded, Youth First had 32 full-time equivalent (FTE) social workers in 47 schools in four counties, and 3 years later, Youth First had 37.5 FTE social workers in 57 schools in six counties through a blend of funding streams from schools, private donors, and the state of Indiana. The grants planted the seeds and demonstrated the value of these programs. The schools and community remaining committed to continuing this important work.

In the post survey, all groups reported a significant reduction in the intensity of the concerns identified for students receiving Youth First social work services. These data spoke highly for the success and impact of the program.

**In 2016, Youth First has 39 master's-level social workers serving 57 schools in six counties in Southwest Indiana and accessible to more than 27,000 students.**

**Sustainability Strategies.** To support the school social workers, both initiatives received excellent technical assistance during grant implementation. Data generated by the independent evaluation guided improvements and demonstrated impact,

which helped the community partners and school districts recognize the value of the programs. This, in turn, generated major gift campaigns from local businesses, foundations, and individuals, and prompted the development of cost-sharing agreements between Youth First and school districts. State investment was also cultivated over the years, leading to the establishment of funding opportunities and successful grant applications.

**Where Is the Program Today?** Systems change has been realized in that there is a strong collaboration between schools and community agencies, including Youth First and the mental health center, which has contributed to the successful establishment of FACES, the region's system of care. Silos have been broken down, integration achieved, and changes have become part of everyday business. For example, Youth First social workers are embedded in all high schools, some middle schools, and some elementary schools, and they are continuing to provide evidence-based programs like Reconnecting Youth. Independent evaluation continues to measure results (an on-line database was developed to track outputs and outcomes), make improvements, and demonstrate value. For example, when SS/HS ended, the schools began contributing to the cost of sustaining services (their contributions increased from 30% to 45%), and Youth First continues to raise the balance through private support and state grants. The blended funding streams have led to increased support and expansion into other schools and school districts. Through these efforts, decreases in youth substance abuse have been reported in the region: <http://www.youthfirstinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Southwest-Indiana-Youth-Survey-Report-2014.pdf>

#### Resources:

- Youth First Website: [www.youthfirstinc.org](http://www.youthfirstinc.org)
- Brochure: [http://www.youthfirstinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Youth\\_First\\_General\\_Brochure\\_2014.pdf](http://www.youthfirstinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Youth_First_General_Brochure_2014.pdf)

#### Videos:

- Leah's Story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iblgxOF1y2M>
- Myka's Story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S30ykvRmXCg>

*The best part of having a social worker is the extra support that is provided to students and their families. One of our main areas of concern is the number of students who drop out of school and I can attribute many success stories of graduates to our social worker. If social workers do not continue to exist in our schools, a lot more children will fall through the cracks.*

—John D. Skinner, *Principal*, North High School, Evansville, Indiana

# 2008 Orlando

## SS/HS FRAMEWORK

- **Elements:** Promoting Early Childhood Social and Emotional Leadership and Development
- **Strategic Approaches:** Capacity Building, Collaboration and Partnerships
- **Guiding Principles:** Evidence-Based Intervention, Serving Vulnerable and At-Risk Populations, Cultural and Linguistic Competency

### Implementing Evidence-Based Programs.

The evidence-based curriculum, Incredible Years (IY), was selected for the prekindergarten Varying Exceptionalities classrooms in Orange County. For various reasons—one of the most prominent being their social/emotional delays—these children were at risk of being unsuccessful emotionally and/or academically upon entry into kindergarten. The goal was to reduce the number of students that exhibited delays in the social-emotional domain prior to entering kindergarten by implementing the IY program and to prevent, reduce, and treat aggressive, defiant, and oppositional behaviors.

This program extended beyond the classroom to working with the parents of these children and offering them support through the Basic parenting program, one of the IY parenting programs. The Basic parenting program was offered in both English and Spanish to ensure that as many parents as possible had the opportunity to attend sessions in the language they were most comfortable speaking. The parenting program expanded into the community by reaching out to Head Start programs and local preschools and sharing the data that had been gathered on the success of IY. To expand the program beyond the school district, Head Start and other community providers were trained in the Basic parenting program. Over a 7-year period, more than 675 parents were trained in the parent program. Using the multifaceted approach of training teachers, students, parents, and community providers, IY has been a huge success in Orange County, proving to be of great benefit to students and families in our community.

**Involving Community Partners.** As IY began to expand within the school district, Head Start and the Healthy Start Coalition were invited to collaborate with the district. The team studied the IY program and began to discuss the best ways to expand the program into the community. Some of the elements the team determined important for moving the initiative forward were parent support, classes, and training in the program. Thus, a “train the trainer”

## OVERVIEW

- Meribeth McKean, Former SS/HS Project Director
- **Orange County School District, Orlando, Florida**
- **2008 Grantee**
- Our goal was to increase the number of prosocial behaviors with early childhood children who were being served in our prekindergarten Varying Exceptionalities classrooms. We implemented the program, Incredible Years, by hosting successful parent programs and offering teacher training and support from the Community Management Team and community partners. The program flourished in Orange County and has expanded throughout the school district that abuts our district. SS/HS was the reason all of this has taken place.

approach was implemented in the IY and basic parenting programs. Orange County purchased the parenting curriculum and accompanying two-day professional development training. Head Start began to offer the Basic parenting program for the families who participated in preschool programs.

**During the SS/HS implementation period, 3,902 children were evaluated for social/emotional delays; 28 percent were identified as having developmental delays in social/emotional development. Of the 413 students that graduated to kindergarten over a 4-year period, 322 (78%) of those students no longer scored as delayed, scoring within the average range of all children. One hundred percent (100%) showed gains on the post-test.**

As news of these programs spread via published brochures, success stories, and shared data findings, inquiries into expanding the program began.

**Using Data to Support Long-Term Success and Sustainability.** During the SS/HS implementation period, 3,902 children were evaluated for social/emotional delays; 28% were identified as having developmental delays in social-emotional development. Of the 413 students that graduated to kindergarten over a 4-year period, 322 (78%) were no longer considered delayed, scoring within the average range of all children. One hundred percent (100%) showed gains on the posttest. Currently, more than 650 parents have been

trained successfully in the Basic parent program and parent follow-up remarks regarding the impact are extremely positive.

Since the implementation period, student data have continued to be collected. Current data show that, over the last 3 years, an average of 69% of children who entered preschool below grade expectations in the social-emotional domain have substantially increased their use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs by the time they exit the prekindergarten program and enter kindergarten.

**Sustainability Strategies.** The primary component leading to the sustainability and expansion of the IY program was the excellent data collected, which showcased the strength of the program in supporting student growth in the social-emotional domain. The multifaceted approach of training teachers, paraprofessionals, community partners, and parents in conjunction with monitoring and supporting the implementation of the classroom program helped lead to child growth in the social-emotional domain. Positive data, teacher and parental support, and excellent training led the district to support the program by using district funds to expand to regular prekindergarten classrooms.

**Where Is the Program Today?** The IY curriculum is now being implemented in the district at the prekindergarten level and has expanded from the first 10 schools at the beginning of the SS/HS grant to all 92 prekindergarten classrooms in the district. Because of the program's success, district funds are now used to purchase the curriculum and provide training for new teachers and parents. IY is now an integral part of the regular preschool curriculum.

The Basic parenting program has continued to be offered at the Preschool Evaluation Center. Reviews at the end of the 10-week program are phenomenal. Statements such as "The class has made a huge difference in my family and I only wish the class could keep going" are often heard. The classes continue to be offered in both English and Spanish and to public and private preschool parents.

Osceola County Public Schools—Orange County’s closest neighbor—has now adopted the IY Dina Dinosaur curriculum to address the social-emotional component of their prekindergarten exceptional student education program based on the positive data collected by Orange County. The success of implementing this program through SS/HS has prompted other Florida school districts to consider adopting this curriculum. IY has had a positive impact on many children and their families and led to system-wide change in the school district that has overflowed into the community as well as surrounding communities.

*Our son was showing signs of autism and to better learn strategies to teach him to use words and react nicely to other people we were encouraged to take the Incredible Years parenting class. We learned so much and the class was very helpful. He is now much less aggressive and it’s so nice to have a calm household now.”*

—Parent who attended the Basic parenting program

2009

Alton

## SS/HS FRAMEWORK

- **Elements:** Promoting Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health
- **Strategic Approaches:** Capacity Building, Collaboration and Partnerships
- **Guiding Principles:** Resource Leveraging, Serving Vulnerable and At-Risk Populations

**Leveraging Community Partnerships.** A collaborative partnership established with Wellspring Resources (now merged and renamed Centerstone) established mental health specialists in 2010, initially one at an elementary school and one shared between Alton Middle School and Alton High School. It was evident that a full-time mental health specialist was needed at both the high school and the middle school, and in 2011, three specialists were serving students at the three schools. The school district provided an office with a phone, and the mental health specialists received referrals from school administration and social workers, and began to integrate with the multitiered systems of support/Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports team.

**Involving Community Partners.** A formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the school district and the mental health agency is renewed each year, outlining the responsibilities of both parties. This MOU has continued beyond the grant as the program continues through mutual agreement. The mental health agency has a newer building with a community meeting room. School social work staff have held meetings and attended training at the agency.

Mental health staff provide training for district staff on topics such as the impact of trauma on education, behavioral supports, and mental health awareness. The agency and National Alliance on Mental Illness representatives have provided educational and support programs for parents.

**Using Data to Support Long-Term Success and Sustainability.** During the 2009–2014 funded period, the number of students receiving school-based mental health services increased 80% compared to the year before the SS/HS grant was awarded. The number of mental health specialists has increased from two in 2010 to four currently. In the last school year, four mental health specialists each maintained a caseload of 30–45 students, seeing an average of 50 students per school year. This has been a valuable resource, because

## OVERVIEW

- Sandy Crawford
- **Alton Community Unit School District # 11**
- **2009 Grantee**
- A school-based mental health program initially funded through 2009–2014 SS/HS funds was sustained beyond grant funding and has expanded beyond the initially funded staff. Technical assistance support through SS/HS enabled the school district and mental health agency to develop a service delivery system that became self-supporting and financially sustainable. A collaborative partnership between the school district and mental health agency has continued through regular communication and the integration of services.

budget constraints have caused a reduction in the number of school social workers and school counselors during the past year.

**During the 2009–2014 funded period, the number of students receiving school-based mental health services increased 80% compared to the year before the SS/HS grant was awarded.**

A focus on early intervention is intended to prevent behavioral problems by providing adequate supports for students and families before higher-intensity intervention is needed. An additional advantage of the school-based mental health specialists is continuity of services over the summer break and school vacation periods. Staff are employees of the Centerstone agency

and maintain contact with students during school breaks through continued use of school office space during summer school, home visits, and agency visits.

**Sustainability Strategies.** A core component of sustaining the school-based mental health program was building a strong mutual understanding of both the mental health and education systems, with clarity regarding where they interface as well as their different roles, language, and legal mandates. SS/HS technical assistance staff were instrumental in sharing a strategy for the mental health agency to maintain a sufficient caseload to sustain their staff while providing time for “nonbillable” consultative and collaborative services for school staff. An important communications component was establishing clear distinctions between the role of the school-based mental health specialist and related school roles such as school counselor or social worker. This prevented any potential conflicts about turf issues or collective bargaining concerns. In addition, a representative from the mental health agency continues to serve on a district leadership team and maintains communication with district stakeholders.

**Where Is the Program Today?** Four mental health specialists are currently serving two large elementary schools, a large middle school, and a large high school. The fourth specialist was added after funding through SS/HS ended, and a fifth is anticipated. All four school-based mental health specialists are serving students and families at no cost to the school district beyond office space and phone. The specialists work closely with district school social workers and counseling staff. The presence of agency staff in the schools has reduced barriers to services including stigma and access to services.

Recently a newspaper article reported delayed funding from the state for mental health centers, highlighting a reduction in staff and closing of a satellite office of the Centerstone agency. Despite this financial downturn, a commitment was made to continue all school-based services.

*The school-based position is quite sustainable with a strong working relationship between the agency and the school district. We anticipate being able to dedicate five staff to serve students and families in the coming year.*

—Stephanie Terry, Team Leader of Family Services at Centerstone



2009

Alton

## SS/HS FRAMEWORK

- **Elements:** Connecting Families, Schools, Communities
- **Strategic Approaches:** Capacity Building, Collaboration and Partnerships
- **Guiding Principles:** Resource Leveraging, Serving Vulnerable and At-Risk Populations

**Creating Partnerships.** A mentoring program was established in the Alton School District in 2010. A part-time mentoring coordinator, hired with SS/HS funds, designed a one-to-one volunteer mentoring program, matching trained volunteers with students at risk and focused on relationship mentoring. In 2012, the program was modified to add a focus on literacy with a concentration on reading activities while maintaining a supportive mentoring relationship. An additional before-school reading program for second grade students was developed during the no-cost extension period, in cooperation with a community business partner, to make use of volunteers who have early morning/before-work availability.

**Involving Community Partners.** Through articles in the local papers and presentations at community organizations (Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, retired teachers, faith-based), volunteers were solicited for both programs. In 2015, a local bank president was interested in finding a way to support literacy and was instrumental in recruiting his employees and encouraging other businesses through the business association to support the program. Employees participating in the before-school reading program were allowed to arrive after 8:00 a.m. to enable them to volunteer for 30 minutes before their work day.

Home Depot has provided a yearly Kids Workshop in which Alton Reading Mentor students, their mentors, and parents can meet to build wooden craft items. This event has taken place for the past 2 years and is coordinated by one of the volunteer reading mentors. Steve Fredrick, Alton Reading Mentor volunteer and organizer of this program, says, “I look forward to this activity and it’s a great opportunity for the parents to meet their student’s mentor, and for us to connect in a fun atmosphere.” Another older volunteer said, “I get a lot out of mentoring, and it keeps me young.”

**Using Data to Support Long-Term Success and Sustainability.** During the 2009–2013 grant period, 154 students were matched with mentors. Since the end of grant funding for mentoring in 2013, the Alton Reading Mentor program has continued and an additional 26 students have been served in the program. The addition of a second literacy volunteer program, Reach Out and Read, has generated an additional 190 volunteers, serving nearly 200 students. Teachers report improvement in areas such as attendance, behavior, and reading. Mentor relationships continue for at least one full school year, which is instrumental in preventing school and behavioral health problems.

## OVERVIEW

- Sandy Crawford
- **Alton Community Unit School District # 11**
- **2009 Grantee**
- A literacy-based mentoring program was established in Alton schools through an SS/HS grant in 2010. The program continued to evolve after funding ended and has expanded to two volunteer literacy programs.

**Sustainability Strategies.** For the program to continue, it was crucial to build the capacity for sustainability through existing resources. Creating a sense of ownership at each school building for both volunteer programs was critical; as schools and staff saw the benefits of the program, they were interested in maintaining this resource and willing to do a little extra to keep the program viable. Elaine Kane, district literacy coach, said, “Teachers are willing to devote a small amount of time to support these programs when they see first-hand the positive results.” When they see 10 minutes of their time translate into 30 minutes of reading for 20 students, they know students are benefitting.

A training program and background check is required for the Alton Reading Mentor Program. The district human resource secretary completes a background check, and training is provided by a volunteer and the school district literacy coach. A school staff person at each school is designated as the contact for referrals and concerns.

The literacy coach for the Reach Out and Read Program provides a brief training, and staff in each school agree to provide space and morning supervision. Students spend 30 minutes reading to the volunteers, and reading time is recorded on the students’ reading logs.

**Where Is the Program Today?** The Alton Reading Mentor Program currently has 24 volunteers serving 27 students at six elementary schools, meeting for 40–45 minutes per week during the school day. Two volunteers serve more than one student. A connection with the national Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring Program provided training, books, and support at no cost. The Oasis program is located in nearby St. Louis and available in cities with Macy’s department stores. Due to loss of funding in 2014, the local Oasis program could no longer provide supplies and supports at no cost. Alton District did not have the funds to continue the program’s required fees, so they discontinued the Oasis sponsorship and name. The program has continued as the Alton Reading Mentor program.

The Reach Out and Read Program currently has 190 volunteers listening to students read at seven elementary schools during the 30-minute period before school starts. The district literacy coordinator is the contact person for both programs, and staff in each school provide referrals and obtain parent permission for the Alton Reading Mentor program. For the Reach Out and Read program, staff in each school provide early morning supervision of volunteers and students.

The availability of two different volunteer programs—one before school and one during the school day—provides a menu of options for volunteers who want to make a difference in students’ lives. Recruitment of volunteers representing diversity in age, gender, and race, and a focus on training and reading materials that reflect a minority population ensure attention to the guiding principle of cultural and linguistic competence.

**Resources:**

- A news feature on a St. Louis television station highlighted the Reach Out and Read program and is featured on the district website: [www.altonschools.org](http://www.altonschools.org)

## CONCLUSION

Using the SS/HS Framework, the 12 grantee stories exhibit innovative approaches in applying a comprehensive youth violence prevention and mental health promotion model drawing from the guiding principles and strategic approaches to develop, implement, and sustain systemic change in communities across the country. These stories represent how strong partnerships, effective leadership, and implementing best practices based on strong evidence can make lasting change. Through grantee and partner efforts, the legacy of SS/HS continues to impact students, families, schools, and communities long after grant funding ended.