



North Thurston School District, Thurston County Washington State Incentive Grant 1st Year Community-Level Evaluation 1999-2000

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Executive Summary

North Thurston School District is one of eighteen Washington State Incentive Grant (SIG) community grantees. Eighty-five percent of SIG funds are allocated to communities to prevent the use, misuse, and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drugs by Washington State youth.

This document is a baseline community-level evaluation report, examining the history of substance abuse prevention efforts in North Thurston School District within the last decade, the community's partnership efforts, and their initial challenges and successes in providing SIG-funded prevention services. Reports are provided as feedback on the first year of SIG-related prevention efforts and as a partial record of those efforts for state and federal funding agencies.

Challenges

North Thurston School District serves an ethnically and economically diverse student population of some 13,000. It draws students from the city of Lacey and parts of rural Thurston County, including part of the Nisqually Tribe Reservation. Over half of North Thurston School District's twelfth graders report using alcohol regularly, while more than one-quarter report using tobacco or marijuana regularly. North Thurston County is part of the federally designated Northwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA).

Prevention History

Substance abuse prevention services available at North Thurston Schools include several programs that have been in place for some time: D.A.R.E. (Drug Awareness and Resistance Education); Second Step (the only research-based prevention program in use prior to SIG), a violence prevention program; and WEB (Welcome Every Body), a peer-mentoring program in which eighth grade students mentor seventh grade students in conflict resolution and social skill building. School Resource Officers of the Lacey Police Department are stationed at the high schools. A van providing information to help parents become involved in protecting their children's health and safety, Project S.A.F.E. (Safe Areas for Everyone), is provided by TOGETHER! (Thurston County Community Mobilization against Substance Abuse organization). School nurses and staff from various community agencies staff the Project S.A.F.E. van.

Lacey Parks and Recreation has provided after-school activities at one middle school for three years. Originally scheduled four days per week, these activities have been reduced to two days per week due to funding cuts. Health Planning Teams, composed of school district staff and representatives of seven community and health service agencies, prioritized family functioning and substance abuse issues as areas that must be addressed to help North Thurston students succeed in school. SIG links North Thurston's prevention planning to risk and protective factors for the first time.

North Thurston School District's State Incentive Grant: The Bridge Project

The Bridge Project got off the ground with the award of SIG to the North Thurston School District and the folding of the district's Health Planning Teams into the Community Partnership Coalition (CPC). SIG is the primary funding source for the first-year Bridge Project programs. SIG funding rescued an existing middle school after-school program that faced closure due to lack of funding. Bridge Project programs are heavily dependent upon relationships among member agencies and individuals of the CPC.

The result of three years of planning by the Health Planning Teams and CPC, the Bridge Project is designed to be an umbrella approach to helping at-risk students in times of transition. The Bridge Project includes services to address the transition between school and home, including after-school care, homework help, mentoring, and group support through Community ClubHouses at elementary and middle schools. Parent education and support are also provided. Other transitions addressed are those between elementary school and junior high school and between junior high school and high school. These are times when children are at increased risk for academic failure and involvement in substance use. The Bridge Project also creates links between schools and community social services, making more resources available to students at school, as well as making it easier for parents to access services.

Goals of the Bridge Project include enhancing student learning, strengthening student resiliency, and preventing the use of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and violent behaviors. The Bridge Project also strives to support teachers and school staff, engage parents and families, connect schools with the community, and to provide community service providers with access to students at school.

Successes and The Future

The CPC has grown to include nearly 80 members, including representatives of ten agencies, individual providers, and school staff.

A rigor scale, created by the federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, categorizes prevention programs. Rigor is the extent to which the program has been shown, through scientific research methods, to be effective in different locales and with multiple populations. The highest rating is rigor 5; the lowest, rigor 1. Descriptions of prevention programs listed below include the rigor level.

Community ClubHouses, rigor level 1 to 2, at two elementary schools and two middle schools, provided a safe place for students to interact with pro-social adults, get homework help, and improve their self-esteem. Providers reported that students enjoyed the program, attended regularly, made positive connections with school and each other, and showed increased interest in school events. ClubHouse students made progress with homework and work habits. Middle schools are responding to the positive results of increased homework completion rates by making Homework Centers available to all students.

The Strengthening Families program, rigor level 5, was provided at one site, with five families attending. Survey responses indicated that parents and their children made gains in positive communication skills, understanding each other's points of view, and understanding family values and beliefs. In Year 2, two additional sites will be added. The challenge for Year 2 will be to increase recruitment for this program.

The Transition Program, rigor level 3, served students going from sixth grade to seventh, and students moving from eighth grade to ninth. Students and their parents found the information presented helpful, and students reported that the presenters were good at listening to students and addressing their concerns. Teachers reported that students who participated in the ninth grade Transition Program had higher rates of homework completion than students had in previous years. Project TNT (Towards No Tobacco) will be integrated into the 2000-2001 Transition Program. TNT includes ways to resist peer pressure to initiate or continue smoking, and strategies for resisting media messages related to smoking. Adolescent Health Teaching Modules will be included in the ninth grade transition program in Year 2.

With funding from a 21st Century grant, the Community ClubHouse program will be expanded through school years 2000-2003, and will include an additional elementary school. Increased learning opportunities for district youth and families will be provided, including adult skill classes, ESL classes, and youth enrichment classes. Adult classes are open to all community members, regardless of whether or not they have children attending a 21st Century school.

One of the largest Bridge Project endeavors of Year 2 will be the launching of the Child Development Project. The goal of CDP is to help schools become caring communities of learners that promote students' intellectual, social, and ethical development. CDP features a literature-based reading and language arts curriculum, cooperative learning, developmental discipline, school-wide community-building activities, parent involvement activities, and restructuring to support teacher collaboration, planning, and reflection. CDP is expected to improve achievement levels, with improvements in basic reading and math, to provide significant social and ethical outcomes, and reduce the incidence of drug use.

North Thurston School District, Thurston County Baseline Community-Level Evaluation

Introduction

The Washington State Incentive Grant

North Thurston School District is one of eighteen Washington State Incentive Grant community grantees. Eighty-five percent of State Incentive Grant (SIG) funds are allocated to communities to prevent the use, misuse, and abuse, of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drugs by Washington State youth. The grant consists of a three year, \$8.9 million award from the federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention to Washington State through a cooperative agreement with Governor Gary Locke's office. State agencies participating in the State Incentive Grant (SIG) have goals of coordinating resources and reducing duplication of effort. Communities will reduce key risk factors and promote protective factors in their efforts to reduce youth substance use, misuse, and abuse. Specific goals and objectives for state agencies and communities are stated in the *Washington State Incentive Grant Substance Abuse Plan*, pages 4 and 5, published in March 1999, by the Governor's Substance Abuse Prevention Advisory Committee. Appendix A contains a detailed list of those objectives. They are summarized here:

Goals:

1. Prevent alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use, misuse, and abuse by the state's youth.
2. Make the community-level system more effective.

Objectives:

1. Establish local prevention partnerships.
2. Use a risk and protective factor framework for the community prevention plan.
3. Participate in joint community risk and protective factor and resource assessment.
4. Select and implement effective prevention actions.
5. Use common reporting tools.

The SIG evaluation, of which this report is a part, is a research evaluation intended to provide feedback to state agencies and communities on their progress toward the goals and objectives stated in the Washington State Incentive Grant Substance Abuse Plan. Interim reports are provided as an integral part of that feedback. Research methods are described in Appendix B.

This document is a baseline community-level evaluation report, examining the history of the area, relevant social indicators, and details about program implementation. Reports are provided as feedback on North Thurston School District's efforts to date and as a record of those efforts for state and federal funding agencies. Future reports will include discussions of program effectiveness, community partnerships, and plans for continued funding beyond SIG.

North Thurston School District's State Incentive Grant: The Bridge Project

The Bridge Project is designed to address transitions in the lives of North Thurston School District students. Research indicates that youth are at increased risk for academic failure and susceptibility to peer pressure and alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) use in times of transition. At-risk students have one or more of these characteristics: families who do not possess the resources necessary to provide emotional support; academic failure or perceived academic failure; or they do not feel comfortable at school or supported by school staff. Transitions from elementary school to middle school, from middle school to high school, and from childhood to adolescence are especially perilous times for these students. The Bridge Project was designed to provide help with those transitions by building self-esteem and academic and social skills; by providing a safe and caring environment on school grounds after school hours; through providing parents with the resources and skills necessary to support their children; and by increasing connections between school and home, elementary school and middle school, and middle school and high school, and between the schools and community service providers.

The Community

The North Thurston School District serves the suburban city of Lacey, Washington, as well as portions of rural unincorporated Thurston County, including part of the Nisqually Tribe Reservation.¹ Thurston County is estimated to have a population of 202,700.² The largest city in the county is Olympia, with a population of 40,210, followed by Lacey at 29,020, and Tumwater, with a population of 12,530. Most of the remaining population lives in unincorporated Thurston County. Many respondents stated that the most striking change to this community in recent years has been its rapid population growth. It is estimated that there are 81,195 new residents in Thurston County since 1980, an increase of 65%.

Many north Thurston County residents commute to jobs in Olympia or travel north to Fort Lewis, McChord Airforce Base, Tacoma, Seattle, and other destinations along the Interstate 5 corridor. Lacey has no discernable center or

¹ Students from Nisqually Tribe Reservation are also served by Yelm School District.

² All population estimates are from the *State of Washington 1999 Data Book*, Office of Financial Management, 1999.

downtown. This role is loosely filled by the South Sound Mall, which has become increasingly deserted in recent years, as more shoppers travel to west Olympia to the more modern Capital Mall. Efforts are underway to revitalize the South Sound Mall.

Downtown Olympia is the cultural and retail hub of Thurston County and surrounding counties to the south and west. Respondents reported that people who live in North Thurston School District usually go to Olympia for entertainment. This includes many area youth, who go downtown to hang out.

North Thurston County, along with parts of neighboring Pierce County to the northeast, is classified as a High-Intensity Drug-Trafficking Area (HIDTA) site³. To qualify as a HIDTA site, an area must

- Be a major center of illegal drug production, manufacturing, importation, or distribution;
- Have state and local law enforcement agencies already engaged;
- Have a harmful impact on other areas of the country; and
- Require a significant increase in federal resources.⁴

Due in part to the exceptionally large number of methamphetamine labs identified in the area, this is one of only 31 areas in the United States to be classified as a HIDTA site.

Community Attitudes toward Youth

Almost universally, respondents expressed that members of the Olympia and Lacey communities are very concerned about children and that area agencies actively work together for the benefit of children.⁵ On the other hand, many felt that some community members' attitudes toward teenagers were far from favorable, and that many people, particularly business owners, seem to wish youth would disappear.

Most respondents reported that a lack of places where youth can spend time is a problem in their community. A number of teens hang out on the streets of Olympia in the evenings. In addition to those teens, homeless youth from urban and rural Thurston County, as well as from nearby rural counties, hang out on the streets in downtown Olympia. A large number of these youth smoke, some panhandle. Some downtown merchants have complained that this behavior has a negative impact on their businesses.

³ High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) were authorized by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988. The program is administered by the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Website: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/enforce/hidta/overview> .html, accessed May 2000.

⁴ Drug Enforcement Agency, U.S. Department of Justice. Website: <http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/programs/hidta.htm>; accessed May 2000.

⁵ Those interviewed included school personnel and personnel from non-profit social service agencies and other public agencies involved with the Bridge Project. See Methods, Appendix B.

Many see the recently completed skateboard park in west Olympia as a major community accomplishment. The park is heavily used. One respondent reported that this is because skateboarding youth are finding the park sufficiently challenging to hold their interest. Some respondents point out, however, that the placement of the park, far from the downtown core of Olympia, was motivated by merchants' and some other community members' discomfort with these young people and the desire to remove them from the downtown core.

Bridge Project community partners interviewed for this report often mentioned the high level of collaboration between service providers in their communities. One example of this is the collaboration between the YMCA and the Olympia Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) to provide youth activities. OPRD opens its Olympia Center (a community center) to youth for games and activities on Friday nights, while the YMCA provides teen activities on Saturday nights.

North Thurston School District

Some respondents cited the diversity of its population as a unique feature of this community. North Thurston School District (NTSD) serves some 13,000 students in its twenty schools. The district has a minority population of 35%, compared to 14% for the county. A higher percentage of district residents live in poverty than in the remainder of the county and in the state. Forty percent of NTSD's children live below the poverty level, compared to 12% of the entire county's children and 35% of all children in the state. Child abuse and neglect rates in NTSD are 3.8%, while Thurston County as a whole has a rate of 1.68%.⁶

Disciplinary infractions related to violence and drugs are increasing in NTSD schools. Academic failure is high, with students scoring poorly on standardized tests, and 30% of district middle school students failing two or more courses.

Existing Prevention Services

Prior to the State Incentive Grant, substance abuse prevention services at North Thurston Schools included several independent prevention actions:

- D.A.R.E. (Drug Awareness and Resistance Education).
- Second Step: a researched-based violence prevention program used by intervention specialists at all district elementary schools starting the year prior to SIG.⁷

⁶ Proposal to Solicitation No. 991346, For Grants to Communities to provide services for the prevention of Alcohol, Tobacco, Marijuana and other Drug Use, Misuse and Abuse, North Thurston School District, Thurston County. June 1999.

⁷ Second Step, was designed by Committee for Children, a non-profit violence and abuse prevention organization. A study of the program's effectiveness has been conducted by Dr. David Grossman and his colleagues at the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center at the University of Washington, (Committee for Children, <http://www.cfchildren.org/violence.htm>, accessed 09/28/00).

- School Resource Officers were (and continue to be) stationed on campus at district high schools.
- Project S.A.F.E. (Safe Areas for Everyone) is a van provided by TOGETHER! (a community mobilization organization). Staffed by school nurses and community agencies, the van is a mobile health fair that presents information to parents in high-risk apartment complexes about how to promote their children's health and safety.
- Lacey Parks and Recreation Department (LPRD) has provided free after school activities at one middle school at a time in the district for three years.⁸ When the program began, it offered activities four-days per week. Passage of I-695 reduced the budget for the program by half, so it is now offered only on Mondays and Wednesdays.
- WEB (Welcome Every Body) is a peer mentoring program in which eighth grade students mentor seventh grade students in conflict resolution and social skill building. It became available at all middle schools beginning in autumn 1999.

Before SIG, prevention planning was not directly linked to risk and protective factors in NTSD. Second Step was the only research-based program in use. The school district and its partners worked to develop a comprehensive substance abuse prevention program, as previous ATOD prevention efforts had been fragmented and of short duration.

Community Partnership Coalition

The Community Partnership Coalition (CPC) is a collaborative effort by individuals from a broad spectrum of service agencies in the county. It evolved from a 1995 assessment of student and staff needs from student, parent, school staff, and community perspectives. This assessment was conducted by Maddy deGive, Ph.D. As part of this assessment, Dr. deGive proposed a plan for creating Health Planning Teams to assess and address broadly defined health-related needs of all students in North Thurston schools. The NTSD Superintendent created a new position, Coordinator of Health Services, and hired Dr. deGive to lead this initiative. Two Health Planning Teams were formed. One was to address health needs at the middle and high school level, and the other to address health needs at the elementary level. These teams included school intervention specialists, school counselors and psychologists, nurses and health room assistants, teachers, both basic and special education, principals, interested parents, and mental health professionals in private practice. Also included were representatives of community-based social and health service organizations:

- Behavioral Health Resources, which provides mental health care to children, adolescents, and families

⁸ The program started out at Komachin Middle School and moved to Chinook Middle School after one year.

- Community Youth Services, *Readiness to Learn* program staff
- Lacey Police Department
- Olympic Counseling
- Providence St. Peter Community Care Clinic
- St. Peter Chemical Dependency
- Thurston County Health Department
- Thurston County Social Services
- Thurston County Youth Services
- Tobacco Free Thurston County
- TOGETHER!⁹
- Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Liaison to Community Networks

The Health Planning Teams conducted surveys to further assess health needs in schools, and defined student health as including these domains: physical, social, emotional, familial, developmental, and educational. The need to foster the wellbeing of school staff was also recognized. Although the two Health Planning Teams were working independently, they identified the same student health issues for both age groups:

- Poverty
- Physical and sexual abuse
- Drug use, including parental drug use
- Mental Illness
- Neglect
- Lack of family cohesion

Based on the Health Planning Teams' recommendations, NTSD and its partners instituted two new programs: Family Fun Nights and a Summer Youth Activities Options Fair. Family Fun Nights include dinner, as well as transportation for parents and youth. The Summer Youth Activities Options Fair featured scholarships and informational tables from 4-H, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Thurston County, Lacey Parks and Recreation, and other agencies providing summer programming. Local faith community teen groups provided childcare and activities during the fair.

⁹ The 1989 Omnibus Drugs Act created Community Mobilization Against Drug Abuse (CMASA). TOGETHER!, representing 37 community organizations, is the CMASA agency for the county. TOGETHER! builds and supports community coalitions, maintains neighborhood centers that provide after school and summer care programs for children, as well as education, support, and referrals for parents. TOGETHER! was responsible for the creation of Project SAFE (Safe Areas for Everybody) and the ROOF (Rochester Organization of Families) Community Resource Center, among other projects.

With the award of the State Incentive Grant (SIG), the Health Planning Teams were folded in to a new organization, the Community Partnership Coalition (CPC). CPC includes more than fifty North Thurston School District employees, among them nurses, counselors, teachers, principals, and various specialists, including intervention specialists and the Indian Education Coordinator for Nisqually Middle School. Three Timberline High School students were also active in the planning stages of the partnership. The community service agencies listed in the table below are partners in this coalition.

Table of CPC Coalition Partners and their Functions

Coalition Partners	Functions
Behavioral Health Resources	Provides positive youth enhancement team-building and social skill development activities
Community Enrichment, local branch of the National Community Education Association (NCEA)	Emphasizes community and parent involvement in the schools, lifelong learning, and enrichment of K-12 and adult education ¹⁰
Community Youth Services, Street Outreach, and <i>Readiness to Learn</i> personnel	Work with kids and families at risk to build social competence
Lacey Parks and Recreation	Provides games and sports activities for the Community ClubHouse after school program
Lacey Police Department	Facilitates gang resistance training
A local independent parent educator	Provides <i>Strengthening Families</i> training and information and referrals for families
Parent-to-Parent Thurston County	A support, education, and referral program for parents of children with disabilities that provides literature for parent information kiosks as part of the Bridge Project
Planned Parenthood Teen Council	Teaches children about body image and self esteem
Providence St. Peter Chemical Dependency Center	Conducts portable challenge activities
Providence St. Peter Hospital	Provides eating disorders resources

¹⁰ An association of education professionals and laypersons, NCEA serves as a clearinghouse for the exchange of ideas and information, and sharing of efforts (<http://www.infolit.org/members/ncea.htm>, accessed 10/23/00).

Refugee and Immigrant Service Center	Offers support services for ESL families and cultural awareness training for staff
South Sound YMCA School-Age Child Care	Performs daycare services for younger siblings at extended day sites and for parenting sessions
Thurston County Cares!	Conducts media campaign activities
Thurston County Health Department	Teaches youth about reproductive health and making good choices
Thurston County Sheriff's Office	Provides prevention activities at ClubHouses
Timberline High School Booster Club	A parent club that provided help with the 2000 Parent Summit
Tobacco Free Thurston County	Provides anti-smoking instruction and a media campaign
TOGETHER!	The county's Community Mobilization against Substance Abuse agency

The shape of the SIG project began to develop when the school district applied for a 21st Century Grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The goals of that grant were as follows:

The focus of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program is to provide expanded learning opportunities for participating children in a safe, drug-free and supervised environment. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CLC) program enables schools to provide a safe, after-school learning environment where all children have the opportunity to receive mentoring and tutoring in the core academic skills, and to participate in recreational activities, such as chorus, band and the arts.¹¹

Although NTSD did not receive a 21st Century Learning Center grant from this initial application, the nucleus of the idea of the Community ClubHouses was formed through the process of writing the grant.

Prioritized Risk and Protective Factors

To apply for SIG funding, CPC used results from the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behaviors (WSSAHB) in 1998, along with a variety of other indicators, to study the risk and protective factors of district students and their families. Additional indicators included the nature, number, and extent of disciplinary infractions; attendance records; number of students failing one or more classes; number of alcohol and drug infractions among students, including criminal arrests for students ages ten through fourteen years of age; comparative

¹¹ U.S. Department of Education, 21st Century Learning Centers, <http://www.ed.gov/21stclc/>, accessed June 2000.

data on academic achievement with similar fourth through eighth graders; student grades in reading, math, and language; level testing for grades five, six, and seven; WASL (Washington Assessment of Student Learning) scores for grades four and seven; and parent comments in parent-teacher conferences.

From this information, the following **risk factors** were prioritized as evidence of need for prevention actions:

- Alienation and rebelliousness
- Academic failure
- Little commitment to school
- Family conflict
- Family management

In addition to working to decrease these risk factors among North Thurston School District students, CPC decided to concentrate on strengthening the following **protective factors**:

- Opportunities for positive involvement in community
- Academic skills
- Rewards for conventional involvement in school
- Opportunities for positive involvement in school

The Bridge Project coordinates efforts to address these risk and protective factors for NTSD students in the fourth through ninth grades.

1996 county-level risk factor and protective factor data was not found useful at the North Thurston School District level.¹² The risk factors markedly higher in Thurston County than the state average were *community laws and norms favorable to drug abuse* and individual *constitutional factors*, such as impulsiveness and sensation seeking. All protective factors were lower in Thurston County than the state average: *rewards for conventional involvement* in the community and family and at school, *opportunities for involvement* in the family and at school, *belief in the moral order*, and *social skills*. The lack of relevance of county data at the local or school district level indicates the need for such data at sub-county levels.

The Bridge Project

A review of prevention research concluded that students were at greatest risk for academic failure and for participation in behaviors associated with ATOD use during periods of transition between elementary school and middle school and

¹² Kabel, Joseph, et al. 1996. *County Profile on Risk and Protection for Substance Abuse Prevention Planning in Thurston County*. Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, Office of Research and Data Analysis.

between middle school and high school.¹³ CPC focuses its efforts, therefore, on at-risk students in the fourth through ninth grades. When students are left alone after school or during the summer while their parents are at work, they are at risk for engaging in dangerous behaviors, including ATOD use. The CPC decided, therefore, that the primary emphasis of NTSD substance abuse prevention efforts would be after-school programs, transition and mentoring programs, parent education, and tobacco education.

A rigor scale, created by the federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, categorizes prevention programs. Rigor is the extent to which the program has been shown, through scientific research methods, to be effective in different locales and with multiple populations. The highest rating is rigor 5; the lowest, rigor 1. Descriptions of prevention programs listed below include the rigor level.

Overview of Prevention Programs

- **Community ClubHouses**, rigor levels 1 to 2, provides a safe after school environment for students in elementary and middle school, with additional programming for summer. Community ClubHouses provide homework help, prevention education, including TATU (Teens against Tobacco Use), and a variety of pro-social activities.¹⁴
- **The Transition Program**, rigor level 3, includes two peer-mentoring programs: WEB (Welcome Every Body) in which eighth graders mentor seventh graders; and Link, a transition program linking ninth graders with older students. In addition, transition meetings in the spring for eighth graders and fall for ninth graders help incoming students and their families learn how to navigate high school.
- **Parents as Partners**, rigor level 5, includes support for families and research-based family education program, *Strengthening Families*, which is a Best Practice program.¹⁵

¹³ Proposal to Solicitation No. 991346, For Grants to Communities to provide services for the prevention of Alcohol, Tobacco, Marijuana and other Drug Use, Misuse and Abuse, North Thurston School District, Thurston County. June 1999.

¹⁴ Local high school teens have been trained to develop anti-tobacco presentations for grades 4-7. Presentations are between 30 minutes and one hour in length, and typically involve hands-on learning, discussion, and role-plays (Tobacco Free Thurston County's Thurston County Task Force's 1999 *Comprehensive Plan for Tobacco Prevention and Control in Thurston County* is available at <http://www.kickthehabit.org/teachers.htm>).

¹⁵ "Best practices are those strategies, activities, or approaches which have been shown through research and evaluation to be effective at preventing and/or delaying substance abuse." Western Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies, <http://www.open.org/~westcapt/bestprac.htm> (accessed May 2000).

Detailed Descriptions of Prevention Programs

Community ClubHouses

The goal of the Community ClubHouses is to provide extended day programming for fourth through eighth grade students in a safe environment with pro-social adult mentors. When students come to their ClubHouse, they can expect to receive homework support, as well as recreational, social, and cultural opportunities. ClubHouse school staff communicate with teachers so that they can plan activities to complement in-class learning. In addition to this, students receive substance abuse and violence prevention education, and social skill building opportunities (Gaffney, 2000).¹⁶

For Year 1, the NTSD SIG Project included four Community ClubHouses providing after school alternatives for students who meet the eligibility criteria as determined by school and SIG staff at four district schools.¹⁷

- Two Community ClubHouses for fourth through sixth grade students: Meadows Elementary School and Lacey Elementary School
- Two Community ClubHouses for seventh and eighth grade students: Chinook Middle School and Nisqually Middle School

Community ClubHouses operate two days a week at each site, for the first six weeks of each term, for three sessions each year. The ClubHouses provide tutoring and homework planning assistance; a variety of activities and games, from cooking and arts and crafts to sports and portable challenge activities; health education, including substance abuse education; multiple opportunities for individual and small group counseling; a safe place to be during after school hours; a snack; and transportation home. Of all costs associated with the program, transportation was the highest.

During spring semester, 2000, the elementary ClubHouses served 53 students; the middle school ClubHouses served 59 students. Providers' feedback (results of a questionnaire administered by Bridge Project staff at the end of the year) was that Community ClubHouse students enjoyed the program and attended regularly, made positive connections with school and each other, showed increased interest in school events, and made progress with homework and work habits.

Respondents reported that one of the most important achievements of the ClubHouses was the trust relationship that students built with an adult mentor—a counselor from Behavioral Health Resources (BHR). This counselor was available at all times. When children were unable to participate appropriately, he

¹⁶ Gaffney, D. (2000) *The Bridge Project: Linking Community, Family, and School Resources*, North Thurston School District (informational pamphlet).

¹⁷ Eligibility to participate: Engagement in high-risk behaviors, including drug/alcohol abuse; social or emotional difficulty; attendance or behavior issues; not performing at standard on levels testing in 5th or 7th grades or failing to meet standards on 4th or 7th grade WASL testing; or failing one or more subjects.

took them out of challenging situations and worked with them one-on-one. The counselor also conducted small discussion groups with students. He and the students created a Full Value Contract, in which all participants agree to behave respectfully toward each other and themselves at all times. A striking example of the trust relationship that developed was the willingness of students to share their troubles with their support group and counselor, such as abuse issues that they had not previously confided to anyone. Students learned that they could receive not only emotional support from the counselor and their peers, but also practical help with their problems. As one respondent said,

ClubHouse students saw that they were not alone with their issues: other people struggle, have the same barriers.

With ClubHouse students relying on the BHR counselor to be a caring adult in their lives, CPC felt that it was important to continue to provide counseling services for students during times when the Community ClubHouses were not in operation. Therefore, part of NTSD's SIG funding, earmarked for therapeutic mental health, was used to pay for the counselor to visit school between ClubHouse sessions. The counselor continued to make himself available during those times by eating lunch with Community ClubHouse students and spending time on the playground.

High school students from TATU (Teens against Tobacco Use) visited Community ClubHouses and shared their knowledge of the effects of tobacco use with ClubHouse students. Students received tobacco trading cards. Each trading card illustrated one health effect of tobacco. One classroom teacher told Bridge Project staff that one of her students who participated in Community ClubHouse brought his trading card to class and explained the negative effects of smoking on the throat to his classmates. This is an example of retention of this information and the desire to share it with others.

Some respondents reported that modeling clothes was a particularly successful activity for building the self-esteem of ClubHouse students, who are generally not socially successful. ClubHouse students modeled clothing, provided by K-Mart and Sears, both at a Meadows Elementary School assembly and at the sponsoring stores. An informant observed that

they learned how to carry themselves and speak loud enough to be heard...they went out there and the school clapped and cheered, the teachers were crying because these kids never get anything. The kids got, 'People do like me and respect me.'

It is important to note that children are encouraged to think of the ClubHouses as their own, and are given the message that they are expected to return to their ClubHouse for each new session. Ideally, a student who wishes to be in Community ClubHouse could start in fourth grade, continuing through sixth grade, then transition into his/her middle school ClubHouse, continuing through eighth grade. Starting at the end of eighth grade, students would be picked up by the Transition Program. This kind of ongoing support is seen as critical to

strengthening these students who are at risk for academic failure and participation in unhealthy behaviors.

A one-week summer program, Heads Up!, helps transition students from sixth grade to middle school, and provides alternative activities for that week. BHR provided maritime activities, through their Sound Opportunities program, for two days of the Heads Up! program.¹⁸ Students chose one field trip during the week, and this year selected a trip to an ocean beach, where they flew kites. Another activity that Heads Up! students enjoyed was provided by the Lacey Police Department. Students drove a golf cart through an obstacle course, then tried again, this time wearing special glasses to simulate driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs. A respondent noted that the students reported finding it very difficult or impossible to complete the task while impaired. Heads Up! students also modeled Fall 2000 back-to-school fashions at K-Mart.

Another measure of success reported for the Community ClubHouses for Year 1 were staff enthusiasm as they saw the benefits for the students as the project unfolded. They witnessed kids forming positive connections to school and to people in the community.

The Community ClubHouses provided an opportunity for a large number of community social service agencies to play a part in schools for the first time.

The primary problem reported by providers to Bridge Project staff on response forms and other communications was the difficulty of dealing with a group of children who are all at risk. NTSD clearly targeted the children who needed this support the most, but providers felt that it was overwhelmingly difficult to work with a large group of students with severe problems, especially when there are no students in the group modeling more socially successful behaviors.

With the Community ClubHouses up and running, and the active participation and support of the Community Partnership Coalition, NTSD again applied for a 21st Century Learning Center grant, and was awarded one for the 2000-2003 school years. This grant allows NTSD to expand the Community ClubHouse program to include an additional school, Lydia Hawk Elementary School, as well as to keep the libraries at Lydia Hawk Elementary, Meadows Elementary, and Nisqually Middle School open during the evening. This will allow NTSD to offer more opportunities for district youth and families, including adult skill classes, ESL classes, and youth enrichment classes.

¹⁸ Sound Opportunities, an experiential counseling program for at-risk youth provides maritime skills, leadership training, marine science, maritime history, and environmental studies. Sound Opportunities is a program of BHR Youth Enhancement Partnership.

Transition Program

The Transition Program helps ease students and their families through the transition from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school. The Transition Program includes transition meetings at middle and high schools, and two mentoring programs. WEB (Welcome Every Body) is a peer-mentoring program, in which eighth grade students mentor seventh graders. Link, another peer-mentoring program, connects incoming ninth grade students with older students. Peer mentors receive training in teaching/tutoring skills, supporting other students, reducing use of ATOD, study strategies, conflict resolution, and social skill building. As one respondent noted:

It's scary to go from sixth grade to seventh grade and from eighth grade to ninth grade; and to know that you have some kind of mentor or someone out there for you...I think that would be wonderful.

Ninth graders at Puget Sound, River Ridge, and Timberline High Schools are provided with experiential activities for team building, diversity training, and improved communication skills through the Transition Program. Adolescent Health Teaching Modules will be included in the ninth grade Transition Program in Year 2 of SIG. Project TNT (Towards No Tobacco) will be integrated into the Transition Program. This program includes ways to resist peer pressure to initiate or continue smoking, and strategies for resisting media messages related to smoking.¹⁹

Orientation information was provided through the Transition Program for 700 students and their families at two middle schools (Nisqually and Chinook) and three high schools (Puget Sound, River Ridge, and Timberline). High school staff and students conducted transition meetings at middle schools in the spring. Meetings included introductory information about high school.

Transition meetings at local high schools in the fall included an introduction to registration and four-year planning. Counselors and upper level high school students provided entering students with personal help during scheduling and registration. Student feedback on comment forms was overwhelmingly positive, with individual assistance the most frequently mentioned helpful aspect of the meeting. Mentioned frequently, too, was the ability of one particular staff person to explain things:

Having the personal attention...to answer my questions.

Someone was always there to help.

She talked to us like she was our age and she understood how we felt.

Suggestions for improvement were the inclusion of refreshments or dinner, providing summaries of the courses in the packet that was sent home prior to the

¹⁹ Information on program activities is taken from the Community-Based Prevention Action Plan Implementation Matrix, created by NTSD project director and the SIG state project director.

meeting, check-in at the door with forms handed out there, and having smaller groups to allow for more one-on-one time.

Parents as Partners

The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) was implemented, with five families attending. The program was designed for families in which the parents abuse substances, with the optimal group including six or seven children. The goals of SFP are improved parenting skills and reduced risk factors for children and their families. SFP has three parts:

- a. The Parent Training Program gives parents instruction in appropriate strategies for dealing with their children's problem behaviors and alternative ways to increase positive interaction with their children. A licensed parent educator provides this instruction.
- b. The Children's Skills Training Program teams children with program therapists who teach appropriate social and behavioral skills to enhance positive interactions with their parents.
- c. The Family Skills Training Program gives parents and children multiple opportunities for practicing new skills and behaviors, as well as providing additional exercises to practice at home.

Program survey responses indicated that parents and their youth made gains in positive communications skills, understanding each other's points of view, and understanding family values and beliefs.

North Thurston SIG Project Year 2 Transitions

Community ClubHouses

In addition to the inclusion of Lydia Hawk Elementary School as a Community ClubHouse site, some adjustments are being made to the Community ClubHouse program for the second year of SIG. One change will be the inclusion of some at-risk students who are more highly functional as a balance and model to the more severely socially disabled students. More attention will also be paid to balancing male and female students.

To provide more continuous support and connection for Community ClubHouse students and keep them working together as a team, participants will work on a community service project or go on a field trip between ClubHouse sessions during Year 2.

Additional partners will be participating in Community ClubHouses during Year 2. Refugee and Immigrant Service Center (RISC) will be working on issues of diversity and respect. The Teen Council of Planned Parenthood, who are high school students, will do some work with ClubHouse participants on issues of self-

esteem and body image. Community Enrichment will provide additional activities, such as clothes modeling, origami, cake decorating, and martial arts.

Community members teaching the skills of their trade, such as cake decorating, will share with students the steps that they went through themselves to become a paid professional. The intent of this sharing is for students to see that breaking goals into smaller steps makes them easier to achieve. The process of planning to achieve long-term goals will be described.

Child Development Project

NTSD will begin implementing the Child Development Project (CDP) in Year 2. Five schools will participate in the project. In October, five staff members from each participating school will be trained as CDP trainers of trainers. They will train teachers and support staff at their respective schools.

The goal of CDP is to help schools become caring communities of learners that promote students' intellectual, social, and ethical development. CDP features a literature-based reading and language arts curriculum, cooperative learning, developmental discipline, school-wide community-building activities, parent involvement activities, and restructuring to support teacher collaboration, planning, and reflection. CDP is expected to improve academic achievement levels, provide significant social and ethical outcomes, and reduce the incidence of drug use.²⁰

Conclusions

NTSD Bridge Project strives to improve outcomes for at-risk district students by increasing involvement of community partners at district schools. For SIG project schools, participation by community partners has increased from two (Lacey Parks and Recreation and Lacey Police Department) to intensive involvement by ten area agencies in SIG prevention activities.

Community Partnership Coalition continues to meet on a monthly basis to plan for increasing involvement by member agencies in schools, and increasing comprehensive prevention programming at district schools.

There are other expectations associated with SIG, in addition to carrying out substance abuse prevention services. These involve changes in the system by which local prevention services are planned, delivered, and evaluated. North Thurston School District and Community Partnership Coalition have already begun a major change to this system by collaborating to plan and implement a unified approach to substance abuse prevention at seven district schools. The coalition's goals are to provide the following:

²⁰ Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Website: <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/natspec/catalog/children.htm>, accessed June 2000.

1. A safe, structured, supportive environment for at-risk students.
2. Consistent mentoring and assistance with transitions.
3. Education and support for at-risk families.
4. Progress toward the creation of caring learning communities in district schools in the belief that this will significantly strengthen children's chances of succeeding in school and resisting destructive behaviors.

As a way of measuring progress toward the goals for communities of the Washington State Incentive Grant Substance Abuse Prevention Plan, grantees are expected to participate in the SIG community-level evaluation. This evaluation has four components:

- **Process evaluation**, which examines organizational capacity and prevention planning.
- **Program implementation fidelity**, what was actually done and how it compares to what was planned.
- **Program effectiveness**, which is how effective the program was, measured by participant pre- and post-tests.
- **Long-term community-wide changes in substance abuse prevalence and risk and protective factors**, which are assumed to result from changes in community organization and planning and the provision of prevention program services to targeted populations, measured by the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior (WSSAHB). For long-term outcomes, the WSSAHB will be administered to sixth, eighth, tenth, and twelfth, graders every two years through 2006.

For the Bridge Project of the North Thurston School District, seven items will be important during Year Two:

1. Continued implementation of prevention programs.
2. Continued participation in program effectiveness monitoring (Everest database and other agreed upon measurement methods when the Everest database is inappropriate for use with a particular program).
3. Participation in program implementation fidelity measures.
4. Continued development of a system for community-wide prevention planning, delivery, and evaluation.
5. Continued participation in process evaluation, consisting of interviews and document review.
6. Ensuring schools' participation in the Autumn 2000 administration of the Washington State Adolescent Health Behavior Survey (WSSAHB).
7. Developing specific plans to track progress toward and achieve anticipated immediate changes from the Community-Based Prevention Action Plan Implementation Matrix (column 7) and the community-level goals from the *Washington State Incentive Grant Substance Abuse Plan* (see Appendix A).

Appendix A:

Community-Level Goals and Objectives²¹

Goal:

Communities selected to receive State Incentive Grant funds will work to prevent alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use, misuse, and abuse by the state's youth in these communities. They will develop and implement prevention plans, which will foster changes in the prevention system at the community level to make the system more effective.

Objectives:

1. To *establish partnerships* which include existing agencies and organizations, and families, youth, school, and workplaces to collaborate at the local level to prevent alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use, misuse, and abuse by youth.
2. To *use a risk and protective factor framework* to develop a community prevention action plan which reduces factors which put youth at risk for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug abuse and increase factors which protect or buffer youth from these risks.
3. To *participate in joint community risk and protective factor and resource assessment* by collecting, assessing, and prioritizing community-level information for: (a) youth alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use, misuse, and abuse; (b) risk and protective factor indicators; and (c) existing resources and service gaps.
4. To *select and implement effective prevention actions* that address priority risk and protective factors in the community by filling identified gaps in resources.
5. To *use common reporting tools* which provide information on what works and what does not work to reduce youth alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use, misuse, and abuse.

²¹ Governor's Substance Abuse Prevention Advisory Committee. 1999. *Washington State Incentive Grant Substance Abuse Prevention Plan*. Olympia, WA: Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, State Incentive Grant Project.

Appendix B: Methods

Information Sources

Interviews

Audiotaped interviews were conducted with lead agency contacts, as well as prevention service providers and community members. Interviewees were informed at the beginning of each interview that the audiotapes were confidential, were for the purpose of ensuring accuracy, and would be erased as soon as notes were taken from them. Questions were based on an interview guide, as well as related topics that arose during the interviews. Interview guides were modified after initial site visits were completed based on the evaluation team's ability to obtain the desired information from the questions asked, and a shift in the evaluation focus toward more background history for this initial baseline report. Interview responses were compared and tallied to identify majority and minority opinions.

Document review

1. North Thurston Approved State Incentive Grant Community Matrices: Prevention programs intended to address desired outcomes and associated risk and protective factors are described in detail in matrices created by the North Thurston School District, as lead agency, and the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA) State Incentive Grant administrative staff. These matrices were used to guide inquiry into the process of achieving anticipated local outcomes.
2. Middle and High School Health Planning Team meeting minutes, and Elementary School Health Planning Team meeting minutes.
3. Linda Becker et al. 1999. *County Profile on Risk and Protection for Substance Abuse Prevention Planning, Thurston County*. Olympia, WA: Department of Social and Health Services, Research and Data Analysis.
4. Committee for Children, *Second Step: A Violence Prevention Program*. Website: <http://www.cfchildren.org/violence.htm>. Accessed 09/28/00.
5. Proposal to Solicitation No. 991346, For Grants to Communities to provide services for the prevention of Alcohol, Tobacco, Marijuana and other Drug Use, Misuse and Abuse, North Thurston School District, Thurston County. June 1999.
6. Gaffney, D. 2000. *The Bridge Project: Linking Community, Family, and School Resources*, North Thurston School District.
7. Governor's Substance Abuse Prevention Advisory Committee. 1999. *Washington State Incentive Grant Substance Abuse Prevention Plan*. Olympia, WA: Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, State Incentive Grant Project.

8. Tobacco Free Thurston County, Thurston County Taskforce. 1999: *Comprehensive Plan for Tobacco Prevention and Control in Thurston County*.
9. Barmes, Patrick. 2000: Sound Opportunities flier, Behavioral Health Resources, Olympia.
10. Washington Employment Security Department. 2000: *Washington State Labor Market Information, Labor Market Information by Area, Selected Economic Data*. Website: <http://www.wa.gov/esd/lmea/labrmrkt/sed/thursed.htm>.
11. Washington State Office of Financial Management. 1999. *State of Washington 1999 Data Book*. Also available online at: <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/databook/index.htm>.
12. Western Regional Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies 1999. *Best Practices and Promising Practices*, Reno, Nevada, University of Nevada, Reno. Also available online at: <http://www.unr.edu/westcapt/>.

Meeting Observations

Community Partnership Coalition meetings were observed in March, April, and June, 2000.

Survey

Sub-recipient Checklist: COSMOS Corporation designed the Sub-recipient Checklist under contract with the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention to conduct a cross-site evaluation. It is intended to document prevention activities semi-annually. Questions are asked about the sub-recipient's most important prevention program or actions, although more than one form can be completed if the sub-recipient wishes to describe other programs. The "most important" prevention program is defined as that which is most likely to produce measurable outcomes.

Accessing Informants

- a. Key Informants: Initial informants were identified through the North Thurston School District SIG proposal.
- b. Snowball Sampling Strategy: Key informants were asked for names of community members who could provide insight into Community Partnership Coalition's history of challenges, successes, and substance abuse prevention services.

Analysis

This report is the first step in a case study. Data analysis occurs throughout the research process in a case study, from the process of formulating the topic through the write-up. During and after interviews, information gathered is weighed in light of previous information. Questions and topics are modified as indicated by

the new information. Data verification occurs through cross checking information from informants with that from other informants, documents, observation, and the researcher's journal entries.

Data analysis in a case study occurs by creating categories of information, broad at first, then becoming more specific. As familiarity with the study topic occurs, categories are related to one another and to theory. CSAP and COSMOS Corporation created broad data categories, around which interview questions and inquiry topics were framed. Data were gathered in the process of this evaluation with the intent of answering specific questions about system change in planning, providing, and evaluating prevention services for youth in local communities. Additional categories were added, as it became apparent that they were of importance to the SIG community grantees.



**Research and Data Analysis
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