East San Jose Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative
Mid-Term Evaluation Report

Executive Summary

This report represents an evaluation of the East San Jose Safe Schools-Healthy Students Initiative (the "Initiative") at the mid-point of the 3-year effort. The original project proposal laid out a comprehensive plan that was systemic and strategic in its approach towards improving school safety and student outcomes. This evaluation report describes and analyzes the effort over five different phases of development: 1) the initial planning process that resulted in the original proposal and plan; 2) a start-up period (June-December 2000) during which the effort's structure and implementation planning timeline were fashioned; 3) site-specific implementation planning (July-December 2000); 4) early implementation (January-June 2001); and 5) current implementation (July 2001–January 2002).

This report also provides a summary of baseline and outcome data measuring progress on a variety of key outcome indicators, descriptions of key programmatic elements and activities, issues and findings for deliberation by the Initiative Steering Committee, and recommendations for improving implementation of the Initiative and enhancing the outcomes derived from it.

This evaluation brings light to several factors that can be reasonably assumed to have an effect on optimal achievement of the goals and objectives of the original plan. These include:

- The Initiative as currently implemented is less systemically oriented and strategic than as originally designed;
- For a variety of reasons the Initiative was characterized by a slow start-up and implementation of its strategies and activities;
- Several elements of the original plan were either not implemented or were significantly changed; and
- Participation by one of the partner districts was inconsistent and at times non-existent.

Despite these factors, the outcome evaluation has revealed positive change, in some areas significantly so, on key outcome indicators. Among the major evaluation findings:

- Target schools in the Initiative showed a marked decline in the number of students scoring below the 25th percentile in National Percentile Ranking on the Reading component of the state-mandated STAR test;
- Both target and non-target schools showed a considerable reduction in overall absenteeism compared to the prior year, however these reductions were more than three times as great for target schools as for all other high schools in the East Side Union High School District;
- The number of disciplinary incidents increased between the baseline year and the first project year, but this may well be because Initiative staff and school administration have been emphasizing the need to collect better data on disciplinary incidents; and
- An individual outcome analysis of the Truancy Intervention Project (TIP) comparing students served with a matched comparison group of students not served revealed that students served by TIP showed a statistically significant decrease in un-excused absences.

In addition, the evaluation identifies the following findings at the mid-point stage of the Initiative:

- Awareness of and knowledge about the Initiative is less than optimum among all stakeholders, whether they are directly involved or not;
- Despite the effects of slow start-up and administrative challenges, the Initiative has been successful in deploying an increasing number of services to the target population of the effort and to greater effect;
- The Initiative has resulted in improvements in referral processes, interagency communication and coordination, and attention being focused on at risk students;
- The Initiative is clearly developing a number of programs that are marked by strong administration, active student and family participation, and promising outcomes; these programs include:
    a. Truancy Intervention Project;
    b. Safe Schools Campus Initiative;
    c. Parent Institute for Quality Education;
    d. Families and Students Together; and
    e. Community Boards.
- The number and type of activities and services funded through the Initiative is greater and more diffuse than as planned in the original project proposal, increasing the difficulty in collecting and tracking cogent information, and potentially decreasing the degree of overall effect;
- Communication, administrative staffing, and participation on the Steering Committee have been inconsistent and problematic. However, earnest efforts at improvement on these areas have been undertaken with some degree of positive effect;
- Organization of the effort along the cluster model, and the more formal participation of community based organizations—such as the Fair Exchange and the Mayfair Neighborhood Improvement Initiative—are positive developments with implications for sustainability and replication; and
- Major problems with systems and organizational infrastructures exist particularly as they relate to the collection and sharing of information relevant for program and outcome assessment.

Finally, the evaluation report details the following recommendations:

- The membership of the Steering Committee should be reviewed to possibly include MIS and service provider representation among others.
- The Steering Committee should be more formally involved in budget monitoring and decision-making; review and development of job descriptions, organizational charts, and roles and responsibilities; and program monitoring.
- The Steering Committee should assist ESUHSD in simplifying and improving the current system of contract development and management.

- Cluster coordination should include monthly monitoring and reporting on service delivery, articulating numbers of students and families served at each school site and by each program component.
- Efforts should be made to support and strengthen the roles and capacities of the cluster and field coordinators. A full time Field Coordinator should be hired immediately.
- Incident report data should be maintained comprehensively and in the same manner across school sites.
- Efforts should be made to insure that changes in Initiative activities or strategies be done in a targeted and focused way.
- The entire assessment, referral, service delivery, and aftercare component of the Initiative, particularly in the areas of mental health services and alcohol and drug treatment, should be reviewed and organized in a more systemic way.
- Initiative staff should quickly begin working with those programs that are showing promising outcomes to develop funding sources to continue these programs beyond the grant period, and to develop additional funding to replicate them throughout the districts.

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I. Overview

In May 2000, the Federal Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative awarded the Eastside Union High School District a three-year grant that would provide $2.7 million per year for the purpose of implementing a comprehensive plan to improve school safety and student outcomes. The purpose of this report is to provide the stakeholders of this initiative with a preliminary evaluation at the mid-point of the effort and to make recommendations for future direction and implementation of the initiative. This report will contain the following elements:

History of the Initiative

- A description of the initial assessment and planning process including its findings and the resulting plan that was submitted to the Federal Government.
- A brief synopsis of the primary components and goals of the Federal Initiative

Process Evaluation

- A description of the early implementation phase of the initiative in San Jose and what early decisions were made that shaped implementation
- A description of the activities and program components that are underway. Included in this section will be a comparison of how these activities and program components differ from the original plan as well as a description of the organizational structure.

Outcome Evaluation

- A summary of baseline and outcome data to date
- A summary of findings from recently conducted focus groups and how these findings compare to the results from focus groups conducted during the initial planning phase.

Finding & Recommendations

- A list of issues for the Steering Committee to deliberate, and
- A list of recommendations to improve the implementation of the initiative and enhance outcomes.

II. History of the Initiative

A. Planning Process

The East San Jose Safe Schools-Healthy Students Initiative proposal was submitted June 1, 1999. It described the intent of the Eastside Union High School District and its partners to implement a range of comprehensive and integrated strategies in order to create safe and healthy school and community environments. This proposal was derived from a planning process that incorporated findings from key informant interviews, focus groups and archival data analysis. The plan strives to address the problems and issues that emerged from the planning process while responding to the parameters of the Federal Safe Schools Healthy Students initiative. Some of the most significant findings from the planning process were:

- Only 38% of households within the school community reported to the 1990 census that they spoke English at home, while 38% spoke Spanish. 23% spoke one of 10 Asian languages.
- 78% of the students come from families' poor enough to qualify for free or reduced lunch.
- Eastside Union's students were truant on average 10% of all school days in 1999 and of those students who were truant, 36% were considered to be chronically truant
- 27% of all students received a D average or less, and 15% failed at grade level.
- There were 93 school crime incident reports for the 1997-98 school year. School administrators acknowledge that these figures represent considerable underreporting
- In 1998, youth arrests in the target area totaled 132 per 1,000 youth as compared to 52 per 1,000 youth for the city as a whole. The rate of violent crimes was 24.9 per 1,000 for the target area compared to 9.7 for the city as a whole.

As the planning effort assembled and analyzed this type of quantitative data, efforts were also underway to insure that the planning process would be informed by the voices of the people within the school system. Focus groups were conducted with a total of 177 people of whom 135 were students. Findings from the focus groups revealed that:

- Students were most concerned about the uncleanliness and disrepair of the student bathrooms. The conditions of the bathrooms were viewed as a negative symbol representing the lack of respect and caring that the school had for students. Students believed that the poor conditions of the bathrooms created a negative climate that contributed to lack of safety.
- Students by and large felt that school was boring and that teachers did little to make class interesting. Good teachers were identified as those who took the time to interact with students.
- Students expressed their disappointment in the lack of activities available to students and did not feel connected to their school. They felt that the adults within the schools were disconnected from them and even fearful of them.
- Students for the most part expressed the belief that schools were not safe.

B. Strategic Approach

As a result of the data analysis and the findings from the focus group the original plan contained provisions to insure a range of comprehensive and integrated strategies that included the following components:

1. Establish a set of core district wide strategies that every school and student in the participating districts would benefit from;
2. Implement intensive, risk focused, and problem-solving approaches at four target high schools and their 13 Franklin McKinley School District feeder schools that have exhibited the greatest number of disciplinary actions, violent incidences and other personal, physical and climate risk factors;
3. Expand the City of San Jose's Crisis Response and Aftercare system;
4. Deploy a wide range of age-level appropriate prevention activities throughout the feeder system beginning at pre-school; and
5. Implement a system of care for all high-risk children and youth, including wraparound planning and care for those students exhibiting the greatest risk factors and behaviors.

C. Target Population

The overall target population for the Initiative was to be children and families living within the catchment areas of four high schools that presented the highest level of risk within the Eastside Union High School District—Yerba Buena, Andrew Hill, Independence, and Overfelt—and the feeder middle and elementary schools to these high schools. This represented an ambitious target area comprising a total of 17 schools within the Eastside Union High and Franklin McKinley school districts. (The feeder schools from the Alum Rock Unified School District were later invited to join during the start-up phase of the Initiative.)

Within the continuum of interventions, more restricted target populations were defined to match the level of intervention to the level of need. The following list was included in the original plan:

- *School Security and Crisis Intervention*: All students in the Eastside Union High and Franklin McKinley School Districts.
- *Prevention:* All students in the target schools and all children ages 0-5 living in ZIP Codes 95111, 95112, 95116, 95121, 95122, and 95133, and their families.
- *Early Intervention*: All students in the target schools manifesting early evidence of risk factors such as: minor violent episodes, low educational attainment, antisocial peer attachments, mental health issues, substance abuse, episodic truancy; and all children ages 0-5 in the target ZIP code who are children of teen mothers, or at risk of child abuse or mental health problems.
- *Intensive Intervention*: Students in the target schools who have two or more of the following persistent risk factors: educational (one or more grade level behind), episodic or chronic truancy (over 6 un-excused absences within one year), emotional issues (DSM IV diagnosis with moderate to serious impairments), verbal or minor physical violence, substance abuse, and chronic non-violent offending.

The following matrix of strategies was designed and included in the original plan in order to determine which age groups and schools would receive services or interventions corresponding to the plan to target populations and activities.

East San Jose Safe Schools Initiative Matrix of Strategies

	Preschool	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
School Security				
Environmental Design			■	■
Staff Training/Deployment		■	■	■
Crisis Prevention/Intervention			■	■
Prevention				
Peace Builders		■	■	
Partners in Success				■
Parent Institute for Quality Ed.	■	■	■	■
Community Outreach	■	■	■	■
Early Intervention				
Early Parenting Program	■			
Families and Schools Together	■	■	■	
Reading Recovery		■		
Truancy Intervention		■	■	■
Gang Interventions			■	■
Intensive Interventions				
SST/MST		■	■	■
Wrap-Around Planning	■	■	■	■
Individual/Tailored Care	■	■	■	■
Restorative Justice			■	■

D. Original Goals and Objectives

In order to be able to measure the success or failure in affecting school safety and improving student outcomes the following goals and objectives were also adopted:

Goal 1: Every child will be safe and will feel safe in all areas of the school.

Objective 1.1: Violent incidents on school grounds will decrease

Objective 1.2: Violent crimes with youth victims occurring between 7:30-8:30 AM and between 2:30-3:30 PM will decrease

Objective 1.3: In each project year, more youth will report a greater feeling of safety on the school campus and on the way to and from school

Goal 2: Every child will have the educational capacity, social skills, and emotional resiliency to be successful and happy in school, home, and community.

Objective 2.1: Youth in each grade will show an increase in level of conflict resolution skills

Objective 2.2: Youth in each grade will show an increase in level of multicultural awareness and acceptance.

Objective 2.3: Youth in middle schools will show an increase in understanding of appropriate gender roles and strategies to address coercion and violence in relationships.

Objective 2.4: Middle and high school students will show declines in:

- Frequency of drug use, alcohol use, and binge drinking;

- Risk behaviors (including smoking, drunk driving, and unsafe sex);
- Incidents of suicide, suicidal gestures, and suicidal ideation;
- Experiences of victimization in relationships, as victim or perpetrator.
- Criminal acts and fewer violent acts.

Objective 2.5: The percentage of youth reading below the 20th percentile will decrease. The percentage of LEP youth reading below the 20th percentile will decrease.

Objective 2.6: The number of unexcused absences per student will decrease.

Goal 3: Every at-risk child and his/her family will be provided with needed resources and supports to live and learn in the least restrictive possible environment.

Objective 3.1: The number of chronic truants will decrease.

Objective 3.2: Students served in the Intensive Intervention component of this project will show a statistically significant improvement in life skills.

Objective 3.3: Compared to a comparison group, youth in the Intensive Intervention component will:

- Experience fewer arrests and for less serious offenses;
- Experience fewer school suspensions;
- Experience better grades, fewer truant days, and a lower dropout rate.

Goal 4: Schools and community members will hold themselves jointly accountable for the success of every child.

Objective 4.1: The numbers of parents and community members participating in school-related activities will increase.

Objective 4.2: Those participating in parent education classes will show an increase in parenting skills.

It should be noted that everyone involved with this planning effort realized that the goals were set very high – particularly considering the baseline conditions of the students and their families. However, the stated objectives of each goal provided a direction for all activities of the initiative and could be measured to determine impact.

E. Conclusions Regarding Initial Planning Process and the Resulting Plan

It should be acknowledged that, given the constraints of time and resources the Eastside Union High School District and its partners, particularly the City of San Jose undertook and completed a comprehensive planning process that was informed by both quantitative and qualitative data. Based upon the data, the district and its partners were willing to set comprehensive and measurable goals that would directly address the findings from the planning process.

The findings and data analysis from this process will be utilized to measure the progress to date in implementing some of the activities under this initiative. The Steering committee should make efforts to familiarize all members with the findings from this initial planning process so that the genesis of the East San Jose Safe Schools Healthy Students initiative is understood in its fullest context.

However, it is also obvious that many of the components of the original plan have not been followed or implemented. Plans are by their nature documents that are in need of revisions due to the naturally occurring changes that take place in the schools and communities that they reflect. As more information is gathered a plan will be further informed with this new information and changes will need to be made. However, the intent of any plan is also to tie activities and allocation of resources to a rational strategy that is aligned and well organized. A plan, even if amended, will serve as a road map of activities that will help to ensure that stakeholders reach their goals. This report will document how the current initiative has changed from the original plan, why those changes were warranted and describe the overall impact these changes have had on the initiative.

F. Federal Safe Schools-Healthy Students ("SSHS") Initiative

The Safe Schools Healthy Students Initiative is funded through a three-year grant from the Federal Safe Schools/Healthy Students Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Education and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Agency (SAMSHA). The participation of such an inclusive and diverse group of federal jurisdictions reflects the intended multidisciplinary, multilevel approach to addressing school safety and creating systemic changes in the school and community that will promote student safety and well-being.

The SSHS Initiative mandated that funded projects devise and undertake strategies and activities within the following six major areas:

1. Safe School Environments
2. Violence/Alcohol and Drug Prevention Programs
3. Mental Health Interventions
4. Early Childhood Interventions
5. Educational Reform
6. Safe School Policies

To date, there have been 3 national sessions where all of the funded sited from around the country have gathered. Other contacts with the Federal Program include;

- Written Progress Reports that is to be submitted on a semiannually.
- Monthly communications by e-mail and phone between the Project Director and the Federal Monitor
- Two site visits by the national evaluators for the Federal government
- Site visits by the Federal technical assistance providers – The Safe Schools Action Center

The Federal Safe Schools Initiative designated Eastside Union High School District as a Sentinel Site. Sentinel sites would undergo a more rigorous evaluation effort by the National evaluator team. There were special conditions, not additional funds nor reporting requirements attached to being selected as a sentinel site.

III. Process Evaluation

A. Description of Start-up of East San Jose Safe Schools Healthy Students Initiative (June 2000 to December 2000)

The first formal gathering to begin the process of implementing the initiative was held on June 19-20, 2000, which was less than a month after the grant was awarded and more than a year after the plan was written. Representatives attended this post award meeting from the two primary partners to the initiative – Eastside Unified School District and The City of San Jose. Associate Superintendent of Eastside Unified School District, Ramon Martinez, Ph.D. had been vested with the responsibility of convening the meeting and leading the initiative by Eastside's Superintendent Joe Coto. The articulated goals of this 2-day planning retreat were to:

- Review the goals and design of the original plan;
- Review the mandate of the Federal Government regarding the Initiative;
- Begin the process of undertaking an inventory of existing resources and related efforts;
- Design the start-up and initial implementation phases of the project; and
- Describe what barriers and constraints existed for implementation of the Initiative.

Of primary concern was how the collaborating agencies would work together to insure that key tasks such as hiring and supervising staff, reporting results and making sure that people throughout the community were aware of this new effort would be conducted. As in all large collaborative efforts it was clear from this first two day meeting that time would be needed to develop a common language and vision for the Initiative. A brainstormed list of topics reflected the diversity of issues that needed to be addressed. From approved meeting minutes:

Participants introduced themselves and shared what they were looking forward to and what they were worried about in the course of implementing this project. The list included the following:

Looking Forward to:

- Ways to incorporate the Arts
- Integration of Youth Intervention Program, especially after care components
- Excited by opportunities presented by new resources
- The school – community linkages
- The comprehensive, coordinated approach
- Building a "Kids 1st" system of care, bringing real services to kids
- Leveraging the dollars
- Opportunity to coordinate schools internally and externally
- Significantly increasing academic achievement

Worried About:

- Getting up to speed quickly
- Being realistic

- Not worried
- Translation of ideas and scope into actual implementation
- Getting buy-in from sites
- Anxious to get implementation plan in place
- That we can't do that
- Institutions breaking out of their usual patterns
- Thinking too small

One of the initial strengths of the initiative was the previous shared experience that the City of San Jose and the Eastside Union High School District had in collaboration. The City of San Jose had invested resources in the development of a broad spectrum of services for youth that were being delivered through the BEST service providers. BEST (Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together) is a collaboration of over 37 non-profit youth-serving agencies. Many of these service providers were already serving the population of the targeted area. It was hoped that the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative would provide a more coordinated and directed approach in partnership with the schools to delivery of these services and interventions.

At this first meeting, the idea that Alum Rock Unified School District should be invited to participate in the Initiative was introduced and discussed. People agreed that it would be important to include them because many of their schools fed two of the participating high schools. Alum Rock had participated in the original grant development planning process in the spring of 1999, but had pulled out of the collaborative just before the proposal was submitted in June of that year.

While there were many topics of discussion that the group realized would need to be revisited in future meetings, the following decisions were made at this first two-day gathering:

- *Interim Planning Committee Established* A 6-member Interim Planning Committee was identified consisting of participants of this two-day meeting and others who would be responsible for working closely together during the early stages of implementation. A large part of their work would be to spread the word about the Initiative, insure that stakeholders had an understanding of its goals and invite the participation of other organizations.

  Initial membership on the committee included representation from: Eastside Union High School District (Project Director), the Franklin-McKinley Elementary School District, the City of San Jose Division of Parks, Neighborhood, and Recreational Services, The Santa Clara County Departments of Mental Health and Probation, and Resource Development Associates, the local evaluator.

- *Adopted policy that resources should be leveraged and matched to insure maximum coordination and impact of the Initiative* It was acknowledged and agreed upon that although the grant would provide much needed additional resources to address problems, due to the size and scope of the community and the complexity of the issues to be addressed, it was an inadequate amount to have a significant impact if additional funds and resources were not leveraged. Projects already underway and showing promise would match their resources with funds from the Initiative and expand their services or programs.

- *Feeder Pattern Structure for Implementation Organized* The group affirmed what the original plan had intended regarding the organizing structure of participating schools: in order to provide the longest-term impact for students and to ameliorate the effects of student and staff mobility, strategies and activities would be consistent along the feeder patterns of the four target high schools. The resulting groupings of schools were called "Clusters."
- *Cluster-level Implementation Planning Phase Devised* The group determined that it would be best to work directly with the local schools to devise the actual implementation plans. Since the original plan had been submitted over a year previously, it would be necessary to reenlist the support and participation of many schools. Plans were made to begin orientation session for schools at the cluster level.
- *Schedule of meetings and target of public kick-off of the Initiative* At the end of the two-day meeting, the Interim Planning Committee had committed itself to complete a large laundry list of tasks. They also committed to meeting once every two weeks for the next six weeks to report on progress and continue to discuss some of the outstanding issues. The initial meeting of the "Coordinating Council" (as it was described in the original plan) was to be convened by the Project Director in mid-October. This group would later be renamed the Steering Committee.

This two-day meeting ended with participants agreeing to invite Alum Rock Unified School District to participate in the initiative. Participants also agreed to begin to organize a series of meetings for participating schools by cluster.

CHART 1: School Clusters – List of Schools by Cluster that were eventually invited to the Site Specific Implementation Planning meetings

Participating Schools	
Fair-Yerba Buena Cluster	**Sylvandale-Andrew Hill Cluster**
• Yerba Buena High School • Fair Middle School *Elementary Feeder Schools:* • Santee Elementary • Kennedy Elementary • McKinley Elementary	• Andrew Hill High School • Sylvandale Middle School *Elementary Feeder Schools*: • Hillsdale Elementary • Los Arboles Elementary • Seven Trees Elementary • Hellyer Elementary
Independence-Mathson Cluster	**Fischer-Overfelt Cluster**
• Independence High School • Mathson Middle School *Elementary Feeder Schools:* • Cesar Chavez Elementary • San Antonio Elementary • Clyde Arbuckle Elementary • Mildred Gross Elementary	• Overfelt High School • Fischer Middle School *Elementary Feeder Schools*: • Slonaker Elementary • Hubbard Elementary • Meyer Elementary • Dorsa Elementary

B. Description of Site Specific Implementation Planning (July 2000 to December 2000)

Following the planning work sessions, a series of Cluster Strategy sessions were conducted at each of the four clusters. Each cluster quickly convened a committee to participate in the implementation planning discussions. Participants in these committees included:

- District administrators from Eastside Union and Franklin McKinley school districts,
- Principals and other site administrators of participating schools,
- Community based service providers from the surrounding communities,
- City of San Jose staff, and
- Parent and student representatives.

The Overfelt-Fischer, Hill-Sylvandale, and Yerba Buena-Fair clusters met at their corresponding middle schools. The Independence-Mathson cluster schools met at the target high school. (At the time of the planning, new site administrators had not yet been identified for many of the Alum Rock schools.)

Elementary school personnel were underrepresented at these sessions with the exception of the Yerba Buena-Fair cluster. One reason for this is that elementary schools by and large do not have the additional administrative and support personnel, such as assistant principals, that middle and high schools have. As such, it becomes more difficult for them to participate in efforts that require additional meetings.

Yerba Buena-Fair cluster, which has a number of elementary schools in its mix, was an exception to this rule because they had the resource of the *Fair Exchange*. Fair Exchange, an ongoing community project of the non-profit Franklin McKinley Education Foundation, was already active in the neighborhood and able to identify parents and community members from the elementary schools to participate in this effort. During this period, Fair Exchange provided the coordinator for the Yerba Buena-Fair cluster.

Over 60 individuals representing the schools within each cluster and administration of the Eastside Union and Franklin McKinley districts met on average every two weeks for six months to translate the overall goals of the Initiative into cluster-specific plans.

C. The Work of the Cluster Meetings

The overall series of cluster planning meetings were structured as follows and had the same goals and objectives.

1. At the first meeting an orientation and explanation of the Initiative was presented. This information included:
   - The overarching goals of the original plan,
   - Some of the findings from the planning process,
   - The six required elements of the Federal government,
   - A description of the activities proposed in the original plan, and
   - Guiding principles for the implementation planning.

It was explained that each cluster had some freedom to adopt or not adopt specific activities as appropriate to the specific needs of the cluster as long as the activities that were adopted would address the goals of the initiative and the six required elements. It was also emphasized that although participants represented individual school sites, they were being asked to think and plan as members of a "cluster" of schools, ranging from elementary to high.

2. At subsequent meetings time was spent talking in more detail about the added value of adopting the same programs, activities and strategies across school sites, and between feeder schools and clusters. It was the belief of many participants that consistency of messages would have an enhancing impact on outcomes. Also, the high mobility rates of students and families between schools and school districts was acknowledged as another reason for working towards systematizing programs and activities in order to insure continuity. Only activities or programs that had been evaluated and had demonstrated effectiveness were to be selected.
3. As meetings continued, Eastside Union and the City of San Jose laid out the ground rules regarding allocation of resources. These included that funding would not be equally distributed among schools and school districts. Allocation would be made based on need and the opportunity to leverage and match resources.
4. Another important piece of work that occurred during these meetings was the creation of an inventory of existing resources, projects and other efforts that were aligned with the six elements of the initiative. This inventory was created by school and by cluster. Once the inventory was completed an identification of gaps in services and discussion regarding what was needed – by school and by cluster – were held. The cluster planning groups then spent time prioritizing the list of needs to fill the gaps in services.
5. Finally, each cluster made decisions regarding adoption of cluster-wide strategies. Each cluster eventually developed a program of over a dozen activities designed to meet the goals of the overall initiative. In some instances this led to major deviations from some strategies as proposed in the original grant. The most significant of these deviations was the elimination of Reading Recovery as one of the proposed elements.

Chart 2 on the following page outlines by cluster the strategies and programs ultimately decided upon by the Cluster groups and that would form the intended implementation plan.

Chart 2: Cluster Implementation Plans

November, 2000

Clusters (District)	Campus Safety	Truancy	Conflict Resolution	Youth & Family	Academic
Overfelt-Fischer (Alum Rock)	School Safety Campus Initiative w. Youth Intervention	Truancy Intervention Project	Community Boards	Targeted intervention & case mgmt.; School-linked services; Mental health; Parent outreach & training; Response Center site improvements	AVID Tutoring; Algebra 8th grade
Independence-Mathson (Alum Rock)	School Safety Campus Initiative w. Youth Intervention	Truancy Intervention Project	Community Boards	Targeted intervention & case mgmt.; School-linked services; Mental health; Parent outreach & training; Enhanced Link Crew	AVID Tutoring; Algebra 8th grade
Hill-Sylvandale (Franklin-McKinley)	School Safety Campus Initiative w. Youth Intervention	Truancy Intervention Project	Community Boards	Targeted intervention & case mgmt.; School-linked services; Mental health; Parent outreach & training	AVID tutoring; Literacy initiative; Yr. 1 academic support pgm. & assessment; Yr. 2 expand successful models
Yerba Buena-Fair (Franklin-Mckinley)	School Safety Campus Initiative w. Youth Intervention	Truancy Intervention Project	Community Boards	Targeted intervention & case mgmt.; School-linked services; Mental health; Parent outreach & training	AVID tutoring; Literacy initiative

It should be noted that many of these proposed activities were based upon projects that were already underway but not being carried out comprehensively or with adequate resources. One of the early challenges was to encourage and maintain investment of people participating from each school site by honoring their ideas regarding what needed to be done while providing them with information on best practices and encouraging a system wide approach to activities across clusters.

During the cluster implementation-planning phase the Steering Committee began to meet regularly. The numbers of people who attended these meetings began to increase. The Project Director invited several district and community representatives to serve as added resources to the effort. It soon was not clear who was actually a member of the Steering Committee, and what their responsibilities were. There were no job descriptions, organizational charts or clear lines of accountability regarding decisions for the initiative. It was also not clear what if any role the Steering Committee had regarding allocation of resources.

Once the cluster planning process had identified desired strategies and programs, and the participants began to request funds for implementation, final decisions and actions regarding allocations were made by the Project Director to the Initiative from Eastside Union High School District.

D. Early Implementation Phase (January 2001 to June 2001)

At the point that the clusters finished their plans and funds began to be allocated to pay for programs and services, implementation began to get underway. Several factors need to be taken into account regarding this early phase of implementation:

- Alum Rock School District was undergoing major changes in leadership and organization and was not ready to implement any program activities. Their participation in the Initiative up until this point had been inconsistent due to key leadership changes.
- Elementary school participation was still spotty and start-up of programs at elementary school sites was minimal in comparison to at the middle and high schools.
- For a variety of reasons the services envisioned by the cluster planning committees were very slow to actually begin. Some reasons for this were:
  - The lack of capacity of some service providers to deliver new or additional services;
  - Slowness of contract negotiations and getting necessary institutional paperwork in place; and
  - Lack of having adequate administrative personnel in place – at this point there was no Field Coordinator and the Cluster Coordinators were just beginning to be hired. When the cluster coordinators were hired, additional time was needed for their orientation to the collaboration and system.

During this period the following accomplishments were realized:

- The School Safety Campus Initiative was expanded and services were delivered to Middle Schools;
- Truancy Intervention Project services were expanded to include several of the schools in the clusters;
- PIQE began to provide services at cluster school sites;
- Referrals began to be made to BEST service providers subcontracted by the City of San Jose;
- Contracts were negotiated for allocation of funds with the Franklin McKinley school district, helping to cement ongoing relationships and establish strong buy-in to the effort;
- The number of people attending Steering Committee meetings increased;
- The first Field Coordinator was hired; and
- Cluster Coordinators were hired.

E. Implementation Phase (July 2001-January 2002)

During this period, the scope and quantity of services increased within each of the clusters. The Steering Committee continued to meet every two weeks and was beginning to respond to issues affecting competent implementation. The following factors and issues had negative effects on both the quantity and quality of implementation:

Organizational Structure, Roles and Responsibilities

- Clarity regarding the role and composition of the Steering Committee, the decision-making process, the content of meetings was still an issue at the beginning of this period. Participation by Franklin-McKinley district administrators was inconsistent. Alum Rock district administrators were not attending these meetings at all.

- No formal training was undertaken for the four Cluster Coordinators. They felt somewhat overwhelmed as they struggled to determine what activities they were responsible for undertaking. No unifying job description or system of direct supervision or oversight was in place to guide their efforts.

- The Cluster Coordinators were provided with space at the four target middle schools. This resulted in implementation being more organized at these schools and less so at the elementary and high school sites. In some cases, cluster coordinators had to reconcile site pressure to undertake site-specific coordination and support work with their broader responsibilities to the entire cluster.

- The role of the Field Coordinator was not explicitly stated and it was unclear whether this was to be a supervisory or support role in relation to the Clusters. There was no broadly disseminated job description to clarify the role even though members of the Steering Committee agreed that the position was needed. The position was filled by the direct appointment of the Project Director.

- The Field Coordinator position became vacant in August.

Program Implementation Difficulties

- The new Superintendent for the Alum Rock District gave the directive that all schools and administrators would concentrate on academic achievement only; he prohibited any of his administrators – at both the site and district levels – from participating in any efforts not directly related to academics. One result of this was the adoption and enforcement of a "no pull-out" policy that had the effect of cutting off access to students by service providers. This policy continues to be implemented in most Alum Rock schools, two months after the controversial Superintendent was fired.

- It became apparent that the key tutoring provider, National Hispanic University would not be able to provide the tutors to conduct the Avid Tutoring strategy which each of the clusters had adopted.

- Implementation of the conflict resolution strategy, Community Boards, was slow to begin. Alternately, City of San Jose staff overseeing this contract and the Cluster Coordinators, had difficulty scheduling the dates required to train staff, students, and parents as required by the model design. Many of the trainings eventually scheduled were canceled at the last moment due to site or district conflicts.

Even though there were many difficulties during this phase of the Initiative, the following accomplishments were realized:

- Upon the firing of the Alum Rock Superintendent, the Project Director was successful in identifying a key Associate Superintendent in the Alum Rock school district to participate in the Initiative more directly. Shortly thereafter, the Associate Superintendent convened all of the Principals and Vice Principals of the participating schools to orient them to the SS-HS Initiative, discuss alignment of the Initiative with the development of their required school site plans, and kick-start implementation of selected program activities. This had a positive impact on the process of integrating Alum Rock schools within the cluster structure. Participation by the Alum Rock school district on the Steering Committee has continued since.

- Budget work sessions were undertaken by the Project Director and a subcommittee of the Steering Committee in order to bring greater clarity to the budgeting process.

- Mental health, case management, truancy intervention, and academic rigor services began to take hold in earnest and with greater consistency.

- Several teams of peer mediators and lead teachers were trained and began to implement conflict resolution. Community Boards staff, Cluster Coordinators, and City of San Jose staff met to plan and schedule additional trainings throughout the winter and spring of 2002.

- The Cluster Coordinators organized themselves to meet monthly in order to provide peer support, share resources, and identify issues needing response from the Project Director and Steering Committee.

- An interim Field Coordinator was put in place pending the hiring of a permanent replacement. This led to a greater definition of the role as a support and technical assistance mechanism for the Cluster Coordinators.

- A recruitment and hiring process for a permanent Field Coordinator was undertaken. A hiring subcommittee of the Steering Committee identified a qualified candidate, conducted a group interview and decided to hire the applicant. However, a family crisis compelled the candidate to turn down the position.

- The Fair Exchange took over Cluster Coordination for schools within the Fair-Yerba Buena cluster via a formal memorandum of understanding with Eastside Union. This has been a major development with great implications for sustainability of the effort -- institutionalizing a model of community-school partnership for human service delivery to students and families in the area.

- The Mayfair Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, which provided the Cluster Coordinator for the Independence-Mathson Cluster began to move in a similar direction in order to unblock the delivery of services to this Alum Rock cluster.

IV. Program Component Descriptions, Numbers Served and Organizational Structure

As stated earlier, the passage of time and changes in circumstances, and the need to re-engage many stakeholders in the Initiative led to the evolution of some of the original plan's components. The following chart inventories program components that were included in the original plan's budget allocations and their status today.

Chart 3: Comparison of Original and Current Program Components

Program Component	In the original plan?	Is it being implemented?	Has another program replaced it?	Notes
Elmira Prenatal	Yes	Yes	N/A	
FAST	No	Yes	N/A	
Gang Intervention (BEST)	Yes	Yes	N/A	
Mental Health Counselors	Yes	Yes	N/A	
Multi-Service Teams (MSTs) & Student Service Teams (SSTs)	Yes	Yes	N/A	
Partners In Learning	Yes	No	Yes	Community Boards is conducting Conflict Resolution Training
PeaceBuilders	Yes	No	Yes	Community Boards is conducting Conflict Resolution Training
PIQE	Yes	Yes	N/A	
Probation officer	Yes	Yes	N/A	
Reading Recovery	Yes	No	Yes	Specialized teachers in Math and Reading & other programs
School Safety Campus Initiative	Yes	Yes	N/A	
Substance abuse counselor	Yes	No	Yes	Funds provided to City of San Jose for BEST service providers
Truancy Intervention Project	Yes	Yes	N/A	

A. Major deviations from the original strategy

It is clear that the vast majority of program components that were written into the original plan are, in some way, being implemented. There are several notable exceptions:

1. *Reading Recovery*

The original planning process reinforced the need to reach out to students who are in serious academic difficulty in early elementary school. The Initiative planned to expand the Reading Recovery Program, which had been operating in two of the schools involved in the planning process. Reading Recovery was also chosen because it had demonstrated positive impact that had been validated by numerous studies and because one of the school districts, Franklin McKinley, already had a Reading Recovery master teacher. The initiative would have added 6 additional FTE's of dedicated Reading Recovery teachers in order to provide services to the bottom 15% of first grade readers.

At the point when the clusters were conducting their implementation planning, which was over a year after the original plan had been put in place, several conditions had changed. Franklin McKinley was no longer utilizing Reading Recovery as their program of choice to address reading difficulties. Other schools were hesitant to tie themselves to what they considered the rigid structure of Reading Recovery and several schools felt that it would place an administrative burden on their operations.

Instead of Reading Recovery, funding from the initiative has been spent on the following academic enrichment programs and activities:

- Summer Intervention Programs for Literacy
- Saturday Algebra/Language Classes
- Additional at-grade level or above grade level classes in math, language and reading literacy
- Math and Reading teacher professional development
- 4 additional Reading Teachers were hired
- High School Peer Tutors for early readers in K-5
- Expansion of Gear-Up to the 9th grade
- Mathematics and Parents Program MAPP which provides training in algebraic and rigor math thinking was expanded to include Yerba Buena High School and Fair Middle School

2. *Partners In Learning & PeaceBuilders*

These projects were originally selected to increase primary and secondary school children's cognitive and social competencies to reduce violence and other anti-social behaviors. The need for incorporating these types of multidimensional curriculum and conflict resolution activities was acknowledged at the cluster planning meetings. However, many of the schools had positive experiences working with Community Boards and preferred to continue working with them. Also, Community Boards appeared able to work in the elementary, middle and high school environments.

3. *Substance Abuse Counselor*

The original plan called for 2 FTE's of mental health staff and one substance abuse counselor to be available to work with the Student Study Teams (SSTs) and Multi-Service Teams (MSTs) to provide assessments of youth who appeared to have mental health or substance abuse issues. To date funds from the Initiative have been allocated for the two

mental health clinicians, and funding for substance abuse counselors has filtered through the City of San Jose to fund services from BEST service providers. It is unknown at this time the degree to which there is formal and strong coordination regarding substance abuse between these service providers and the MSTs as originally planned. The mental health counselors are working with referred students and providing individual counseling services not comprehensive assessment as described in the original plan.

4. Gardner Childhood Center – Early Childhood Program

The original plan provided for two full time Public Health Nurses to implement the Elmira Early Intervention Project Home Visiting Program (the David Olds model). This component is being undertaken under the auspices of the Eastside Union district's Office of Child Development. Additional funding has been used to expand the long standing Families and Schools Together (FAST) program.

B. Descriptions of Strategies Implemented

A brief description of each of the primary program components that are currently being implemented as part of the Safe Schools Initiative

1. Conflict Resolution Skills Training and Curriculum Integration

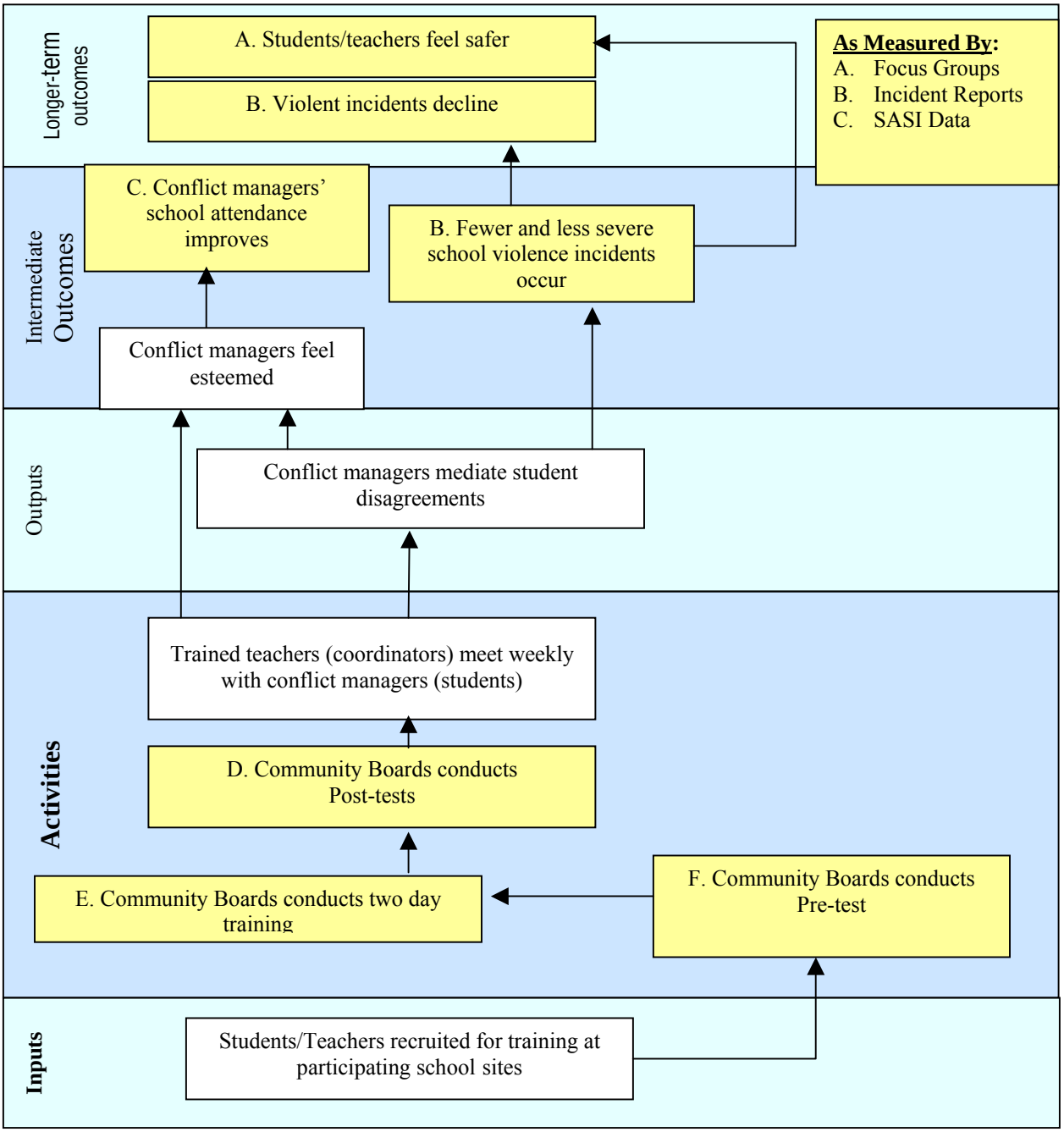
Community Boards is a non-profit organization under contract with the City of San Jose to provide these services to the participating schools of the initiative. Beginning in January of 2001 this organization was responsible for providing the following:

- A four-hour overview of the goals and philosophy of the conflict resolution program for each school site
- Implementation guidelines to assist teachers, students and administrators in developing a school wide implementation plan
- Three training sessions for selected students, teachers and other site representatives at participating schools sites who would become the trainers of other students and teachers to be able to mediate conflicts.

The logic model on the following page traces the program activities and the anticipated outcomes that are currently underway. It should be noted that this program component is aimed at addressing violence reduction and school safety on a systems wide bases and as such all students at participating schools are eligible for services.

It is also anticipated that during the third year of the Initiative, work will be undertaken to integrate a curriculum regarding conflict resolution into the ongoing classroom instruction of the participating schools.

Chart 4: Community Boards – Conflict Resolution Logic Model

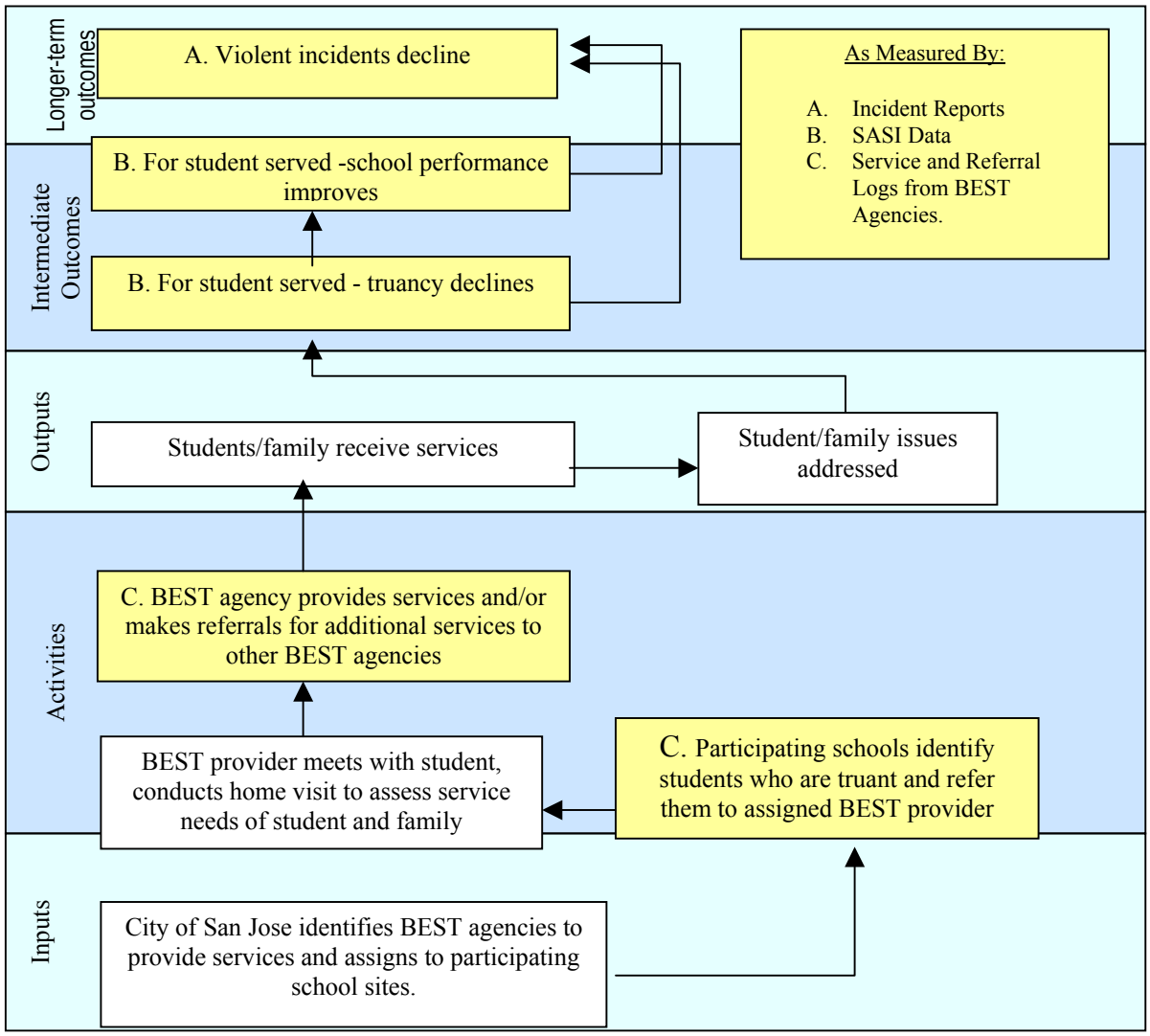


Total number trained	Populations	Notes
160	Jr.High/Middle School students	
40	High School Students	
135	Teachers/School Personnel/Staff	
TOTALS 335		

2. Truancy Intervention Program

The primary goal of this program component is to create measurable improvements in school attendance and performance for youth exhibiting problems such as patterns of absenteeism, truancy, and related behavior issues. Students who may benefit from these services are identified by school site personnel and referred to the cluster coordinator or directly to the service providers contracted by the City of San Jose to serve each school.

Chart 5: Truancy Intervention Project Logic Model

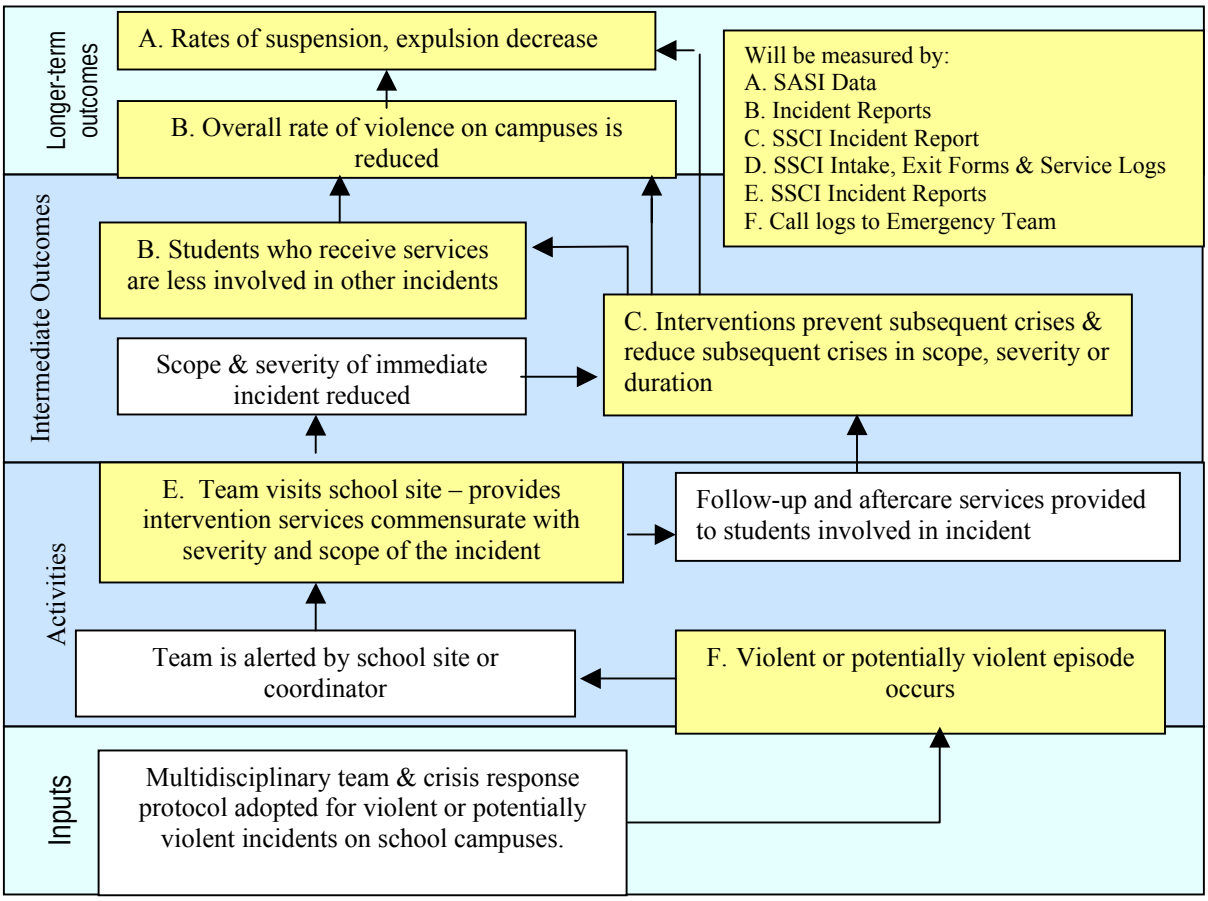


Total Number served to Date	Population	Notes
80	Jr.High/Middle School students	
94	High School Students	
7	Elementary	
TOTALS 181		

3. Safe Schools Campus Initiative

The Safe Schools Campus Initiative provides school crisis prevention and intervention services. Activities include crisis counseling, violence mediation (both gang-based and non gang-based), and planning for schools that are experiencing violence or a credible belief that a violent incident is about to occur. The team coordinates closely with the San Jose Police Department, school security personnel, juvenile probation, and community based service providers subcontracted via the City of San Jose.

Chart 6: Safe Schools Campus Initiative Logic Model

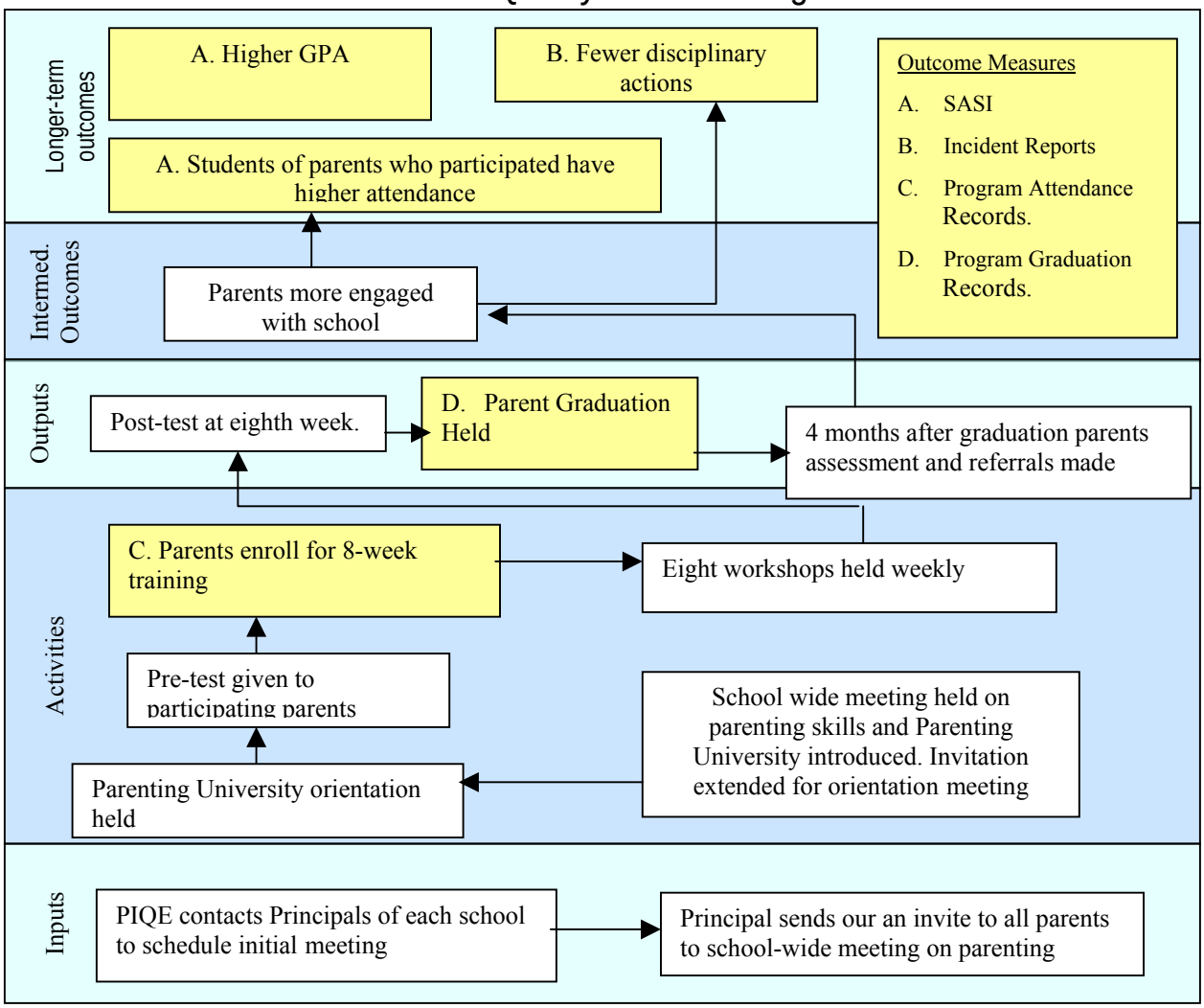


Total Number of Incident Responses SSCI (9/2000 to 1/2002)	Locations Served	NOTES
36	Jr.High/Middle Schools	
122	High Schools	
TOTALS 158		

4. Parenting Institute for Quality Education (PIQE)

PIQE is a community-based organization that works with school districts to increase parental involvement in the education process. Through a ten-week training course, which is available in ten languages, PIQE trains low income, ethnically diverse parents how to become more involved in their children's education.

Chart 7: Parent Institute for Quality Education Logic Model



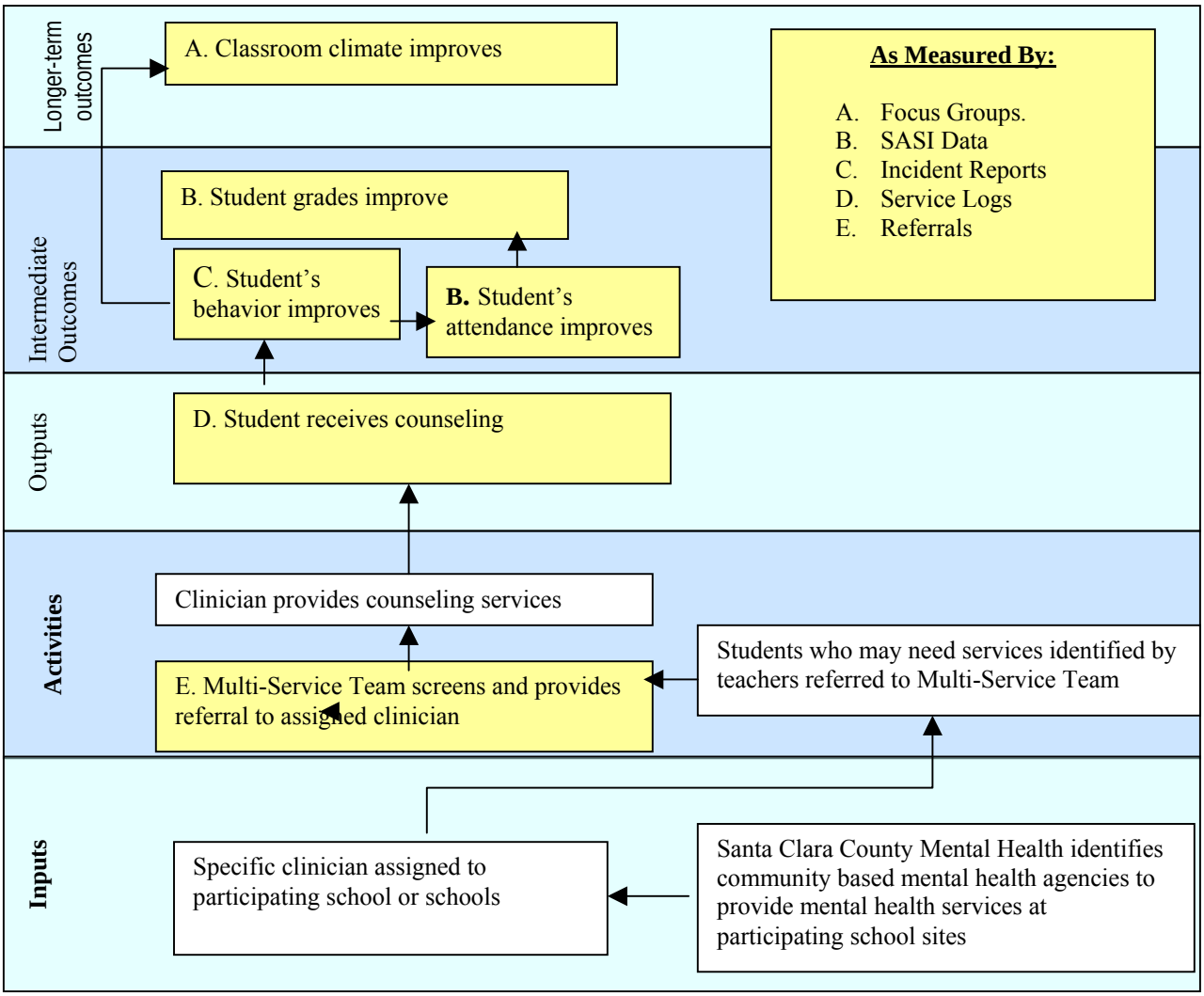
Total Number Graduated from PIQE	Population Served	Participating Schools
76	High Schools	Andrew Hill, Overfelt,
414	Middle Schools	Fair, Mathson, Fischer, Sylvandale
358	Elementary	Chavez, Franklin, Hillsdale, Kennedy, Miller, McKinley, Gross, Slonaker, Hubbard, Santee, Hillsdale, Kennedy
TOTALS 848		

5. *Mental Health Services.*

The original plan envisioned building upon the Santa Clara County Mental Health Services division's strong System of Care for Youth with Serious Emotional Disabilities. The idea was to integrate existing services into the participating schools with a well-articulated system of referral and follow-up. Students would be assessed by Student Services Teams and Multi-Service Teams using a clearly articulated range of age appropriate risk guidelines consistent across grades and schools. While it was clearly stated that full Wrap-around planning could not be provided to every at-risk student, the goal was to operate all case planning with a strengths-based, family empowerment approach and to refer those youth with severe mental health issues to the System of Care for full Wrap-around assessment.

The Student Service Teams and the Multi-Service teams are in place in the participating schools. However, the actual delivery of mental health services is occurring more along the lines of the logic model on the following page.

Chart 8: Mental Health Counseling Services Logic Model

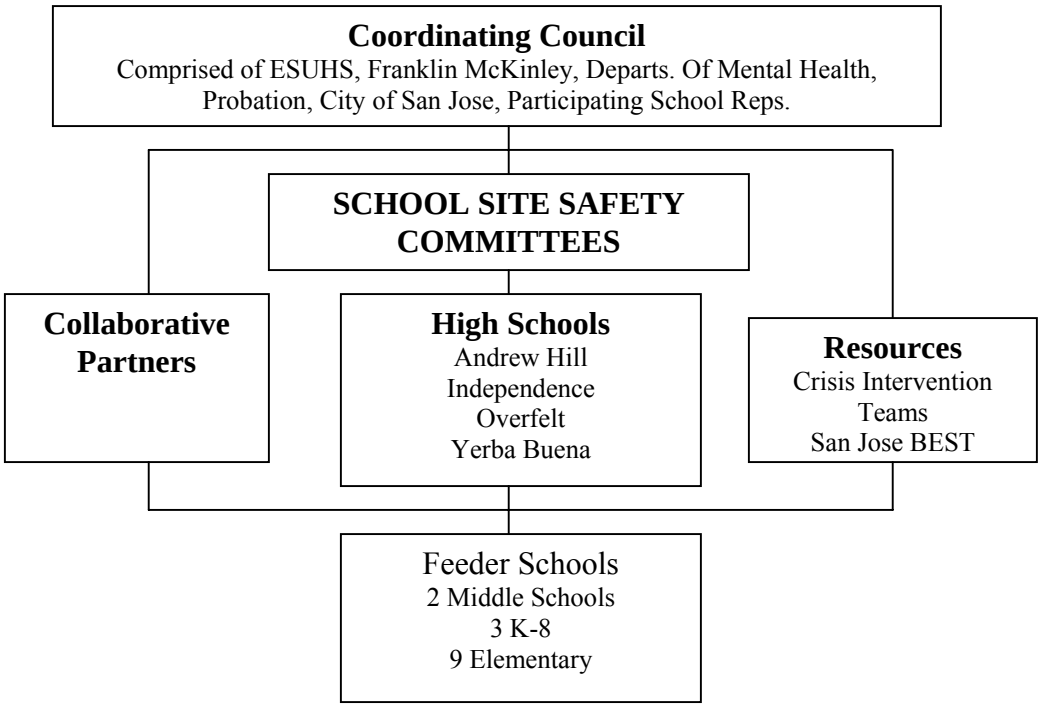


Total Number Served by Mental Health (June-Dec 2001)	Population Served	NOTES
40	Jr.High/Middle School students	
55	High School Students	
10	Elementary	
TOTALS 105		

C. Organizational Structure and Operations of the Initiative

At the beginning of the post award meeting that was held on June 19, 2000 the leadership of the initiative had proposed the following organizational structure:

Chart 9: Organizational Chart – June 2000



As the cluster planning got underway, the initiative quickly outgrew this structure. This fact led to adjustments in how the operations and management of Initiative implementation would be handled as well.

- The number of schools invited to participate increased as the Alum Rock Unified School District became more directly a part of the effort.

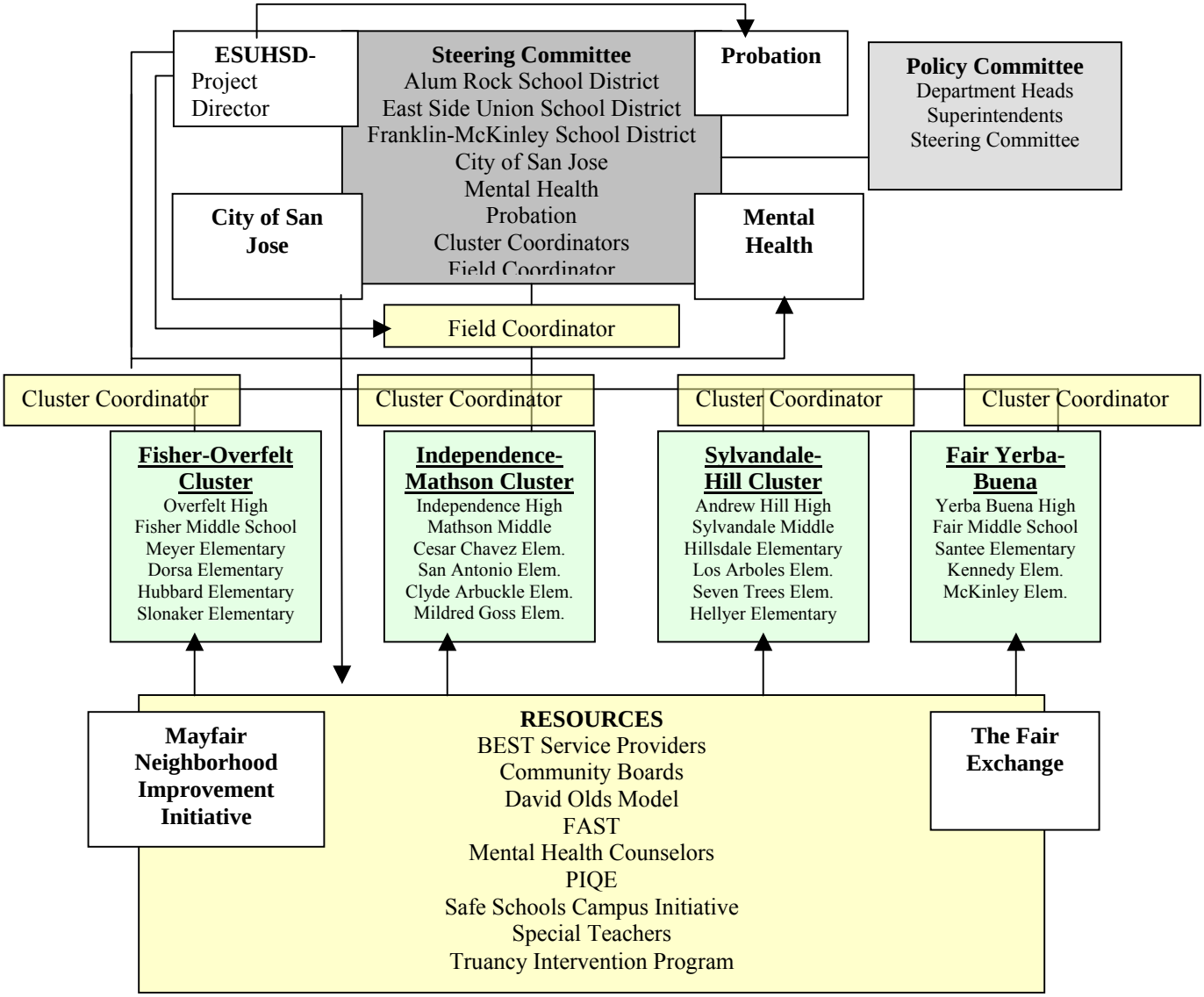
- In order to insure that time was not lost in the slow process of contract negotiations and hiring Santa Clara County personnel, all agreed that wherever possible services would be contracted through the City of San Jose, BEST service providers.

- The need for hiring staff to coordinate each cluster and a Field Coordinator to facilitate communications among the clusters and collaborative partners became evident.

- The Coordinating Council was renamed the Steering Committee

In July of 2001 the following structure was agreed to by the Steering Committee:

Chart 10: Organizational Chart – July 2001



This chart represents the variety of contractual relationships that exist in the initiative. The East Side Union High School District is responsible for administering the award from the Federal government. ESUHSD contracts a large portion of the funding to The City of San Jose. Those funds are then divided up into a variety of contracts, some of which are listed under resources in the above chart. ESUHSD also directs grant dollars through direct contracts with each of the participating school districts for the purchase services, teachers and other items deemed important by the school sites for implementation of the initiative. ESUHSD also directs grant dollars to the Probation Department and the Mental Health Department. In addition, ESUHSD directs grant dollars directly to the Fair Exchange Collaborative, and the Mayfair Collaborative for cluster coordination and direct service activities.

V. Outcome Evaluation

A. System-Level Outcomes

Although $2.7 million per year is a relatively modest amount in comparison to the ambitious institutional scope (three school districts and twenty-three schools) of the project, planners of project felt that, by targeting these funds strategically, guided by an overall developmental model, that the Initiative could have a measurable macroscopic impact on student's safety and perceptions of safety. While implementation of the Initiative is still too recent to anticipate any measurable changes, we are providing system-level results in this report to offer a baseline and a structure for later analyses.

1. Data Sources

For these analyses, the evaluators sought to obtain an extract from the Management Information Systems of the three participating school districts. We were successful in this effort for two of the Districts: Franklin-McKinley and East Side Union. The Alum Rock District, which has been in the process of changing over to a new version of its MIS system that will be integrated with those of the other two districts, has promised us a retroactive extract that will be conducted no later than April 2002. Consequently, for most purposes, Alum Rock schools and students have been excluded from most of the outcome analyses in this report, except for several cases when we were able to extract relevant data from the California Department of Education data warehouse.

There are several issues that should be noted with the data:

- *Critical Incident Reports*: California has a state-mandated system for reporting violent and criminal behavior on campus, even when that behavior does not rise to the level of police intervention. If this system were implemented fully and rigorously across all schools, it would provide a very satisfactory data source for measuring this most critical of outcome variables. Unfortunately, the data reporting is very erratic across school sites. The threshold for entering an incident into the system, the way in which incidents are coded, and even the coding schemes themselves vary dramatically from school-to-school. Moreover, within-school practices can change from year-to-year as school administrators and school safety staff are changed. Nor is there any district-level monitoring or auditing of this data to encourage consistency. Many administrators feel that if they enter incidents rigorously, they will be called to account for having an unsafe campus. These problems are compounded by the fact that the incident forms have no dedicated data entry staff. Forms are entered by clerical staff at the individual schools on an as-available basis.

  As evaluators, we have attempted to address the weaknesses in this system to the extent possible. We have met with Deans of Students to try to encourage common standards. We have offered to enter backlogs of incident reports ourselves; currently we are entering a two-year backlog of reports covering all of the target schools for one of the districts. Our hope over time is that, with regular feedback and support, and some pressure at the District level, the quality of this data source will improve over time.

We were not able to obtain incident reports from East Side for SY 1999-00, although we do have them for SY 2000-01. We have Franklin-McKinley's incidents for both years, but currently have Alum Rock's for neither year. Once again, we are working to remediate this problem and believe that we will have a complete set for subsequent reports.

- *Attendance:* Student absences are coded based upon a coding typology with 24 codes. We have collapsed these codes into three categories: *excused absence, unexcused absence*, and *suspension-related absence*. Most of the choices were relatively unproblematic. However, one category—"unverified absence"—that comprises about 10% of all absences, was somewhat problematic. When an "unverified absence" is entered, school personnel are supposed to make efforts to determine whether the absence is excused, and—if they are not able to make a determination—convert it to an unexcused absence after a period of time. However, in our database, a relatively large number of these events remain coded as unverified. We have chosen to treat them as unexcused absences.

  Absences are recorded on a period-by-period basis. Only absences and tardies are recorded; blank or missing data means that the student attended class and was on time.[1] For our purposes, three consecutive absent periods were regarded as necessary and sufficient for recording an absence. If any of those missed periods was unexcused, the whole day was regarded as an unexcused absence.

2. Reading Outcomes

As discussed above, the Initiative hypothesized that school failure represents a risk factor for violent behavior by alienating the student from the values, norms, and hope for the future upon which successful student performance is founded. The focus was to be on those students who were in the bottom quartile of the class and the measure of program success was to be the student's National Percentile Ranking on the state-mandated STAR test. Table 1, below presents the percentage of students scoring below the 25th percentile on the STAR Reading Test for SY1990-2000 and SY2000-2001. The SY1999-2000 test was administered in Spring 2000, and the SY 2000-01 test was administered in Spring 2001.

As Table 1 shows, the schools in the Initiative did show a decline in the number of students scoring below the 25th percentile in National Percentile Ranking. (Given the way the objective is framed, a negative change represents a positive outcome.) Although this change did not reach the level of statistical significance, it was substantial. A number of the individual schools in the Initiative did have score changes that were statistically significant at the α=.05 level, and all of these changes were in the predicted direction. Table 2 provides mean changes by cluster. All of the clusters had changes in the predicted direction and the decrease in the Yerba Buena-Fair Cluster was statistically significant.

Given the diffuse nature of the funding the Initiative provided for academic programs, we cannot assert a causal connection with any confidence. However, this result is consistent with a positive impact of the program.

[1] Except for alternative schools, which have affirmative attendance tracking.

Table 1

Cluster	School	% below 25th percentile in National Percentile Ranking SY 1999-2000	SY 2000-2001	Net Change SY 1999-00 to SY 2000-01
Hill	Hellyer	31.8%	27.4%	-4.4%
Hill	Hill	51.0%	55.3%	4.3%
Hill	Hillsdale	55.0%	51.2%	-3.8%
Hill	LosArboles	47.0%	50.4%	3.4%
Hill	SevenTrees	49.4%	47.4%	-2.0%
Hill	Sylvandale	47.0%	43.0%	-4.0%
Independence	Arbuckle	57.5%	61.8%	4.3%
Independence	Chavez	62.3%	61.3%	-1.0%
Independence	Goss	61.5%	57.0%	-4.5%
Independence	Independence	50.7%	46.3%	-4.3%
Independence	Mathson	61.3%	59.3%	-2.0%
Independence	SanAntonio	51.5%	53.8%	2.3%
Overfelt	Dorsa	59.8%	60.0%	0.3%
Overfelt	Fischer	62.3%	51.3%	**-11.0%**
Overfelt	Miller	48.3%	46.8%	-1.5%
Overfelt	Overfelt	67.3%	59.0%	**-8.3%**
Overfelt	Slonacker	55.8%	54.5%	-1.3%
Yerba Buena	Fair	47.5%	50.5%	3.0%
Yerba Buena	Kennedy	51.4%	42.6%	**-8.8%**
Yerba Buena	McKinley	73.0%	71.4%	-1.6%
Yerba Buena	Santee	74.2%	68.8%	**-5.4%**
Yerba Buena	Yerba Buena	83.3%	61.3%	**-22.0%**
Mean Change				-3.0%
StDev				11.9%
Confidence Interval (.05)				4.97%
Districtwide change 2000-01				-0.3%

Changes that represent a statistically significant deviation from the mean districtwide change are in bold

Table 2: Cluster Summaries

Cluster	% below 25th percentile in National Percentile Ranking SY 1999-2000	SY 2000-2001	Net Change SY 1999-00 to SY 2000-01
Hill-Sylvandale	46.9%	45.8%	-1.1%
Independence-Mathson	57.5%	56.6%	-0.9%
Overfelt-Fischer	58.7%	54.3%	-4.4%
Yerba Buena-Fair	65.9%	58.9%	-7.0%

3. Attendance

We next examined attendance trends, comparing the first project year to the prior baseline year and comparing Initiative target schools to other district schools. Both target and non-target schools showed a considerable reduction in overall absenteeism compared to the prior year. However, as with reading scores, these reductions were more than three times as great for target schools as for all other (non-alternative) high schools in the East Side Union High School District. This comparison, combined with the results for the Truancy Intervention Program, presented below, suggests that this positive change is, at least in part, likely to be a result of Initiative programs. The greatest decline in absenteeism came as a reduction of excused absences. We believe, however, that this is a result of changes in state law relating to "Average Daily Attendance" funding. Under the new law, schools do not receive funding for any absent students, whereas prior law provided reimbursements for students with excused absences. This has resulted in schools paying less attention to obtaining and recording absence excuses and has shifted the focus to keeping children in school.

Improvements in attendance were much more modest in the Franklin McKinley District. Moreover, the reduction in absenteeism in the Target Schools was actually less than that for the non-participating schools.

Table 3
Attendance Trends: East Side Union High School District

School	School Year	Independence	Yerba Buena	Overfelt	Andrew Hill	Mean of participating schools	All non-participating regular high schools	All continuation schools
Mean excused absences as % of days enrolled	SY1999-00	7.95%	8.26%	8.19%	13.07%	9.37%	9.16%	4.24%
	SY2000-01	3.46%	4.21%	5.22%	3.60%	4.12%	4.62%	3.87%
	Net change	-4.49%	-4.05%	-2.96%	-9.48%	-5.24%	-4.54%	-0.38%
Mean unexcused absences as % of days enrolled	SY1999-00	9.59%	17.43%	18.97%	12.89%	14.72%	7.68%	5.13%
	SY2000-01	15.10%	13.69%	16.46%	12.75%	14.50%	10.55%	5.16%
	Net change	5.51%	-3.75%	-2.51%	-0.14%	-0.22%	2.87%	0.03%
Mean suspension days as % of days enrolled	SY1999-00	0.31%	0.26%	0.25%	0.15%	0.24%	0.24%	11.21%
	SY2000-01	0.29%	0.18%	0.17%	0.23%	0.22%	0.38%	0.06%
	Net change	-0.01%	-0.07%	-0.08%	0.08%	-0.02%	0.14%	-11.14%
Mean total absences as % of days enrolled	SY1999-00	17.84%	25.95%	27.40%	26.12%	24.33%	17.09%	20.58%
	SY2000-01	18.86%	18.08%	21.85%	16.58%	18.84%	15.56%	9.09%
	Net change	1.01%	-7.87%	-5.55%	-9.54%	-5.49%	-1.53%	-11.49%

Table 4: Attendance Trends, Franklin McKinley

	School Year 1999-2000				School Year 2000-01				Net Change			
	Mean excused absences as % of days enrolled	Mean unexcused absences as % of days enrolled	Mean suspension days as % of days enrolled	Mean total absences as % of days enrolled	Mean excused absences as % of days enrolled	Mean unexcused absences as % of days enrolled	Mean suspension days as % of days enrolled	Mean total absences as % of days enrolled	Mean excused absences as % of days enrolled	Mean unexcused absences as % of days enrolled	Mean suspension days as % of days enrolled	Mean total absences as % of days enrolled
Fair Middle School	2.9%	1.5%	0.3%	4.7%	3.4%	0.3%	0.1%	3.9%	0.5%	-1.1%	-0.1%	-0.7%
Hellyer School	2.5%	0.9%	0.0%	3.5%	2.7%	0.7%	0.0%	3.4%	0.2%	-0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Hillsdale School	3.2%	1.5%	0.0%	4.7%	4.5%	1.2%	0.0%	5.7%	1.3%	-0.3%	0.0%	1.0%
Kennedy School	2.1%	2.2%	0.0%	4.2%	2.6%	2.4%	0.0%	5.0%	0.5%	0.3%	0.0%	0.8%
Los Arboles School	3.1%	1.4%	0.0%	4.5%	3.2%	1.4%	0.0%	4.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
McKinley School	3.4%	0.9%	0.1%	4.4%	3.2%	0.8%	0.1%	4.1%	-0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	-0.3%
Santee School	3.9%	0.6%	0.1%	4.5%	3.6%	1.0%	0.1%	4.6%	-0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%
Seven Trees School	3.3%	1.2%	0.0%	4.5%	2.8%	1.0%	0.0%	3.8%	-0.5%	-0.2%	0.0%	-0.7%
Sylvandale Middle School	3.5%	2.8%	0.3%	6.6%	3.6%	1.2%	0.2%	5.0%	0.1%	-1.6%	-0.1%	-1.6%
All participating schools	3.1%	1.4%	0.1%	4.6%	3.3%	1.1%	0.1%	4.5%	0.2%	-0.3%	0.0%	-0.2%
All non participating schools	3.1%	1.7%	0.0%	4.8%	3.3%	0.9%	0.0%	4.2%	0.2%	-0.8%	0.0%	-0.6%

4. Disciplinary Incidents

Table 5 below compares disciplinary incidents for school years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. Unfortunately, at this time, we only have full data for the Franklin-McKinley District. Although the number of incidents increased between the baseline year and the first project year, this may well be because the Project staff and school administration have been emphasizing the need to collect better data on disciplinary incidents.

Table 5
Disciplinary Incidents: Franklin McKinley District SY1999/00 to SY 2000-01

	SY 1999-2000	SY 2000-2001	Net Change FY99_00 to FY 00_01	Cluster
Hillsdale School	337	50	(287)	Hill
Los Arboles School	64	425	361	Hill
Seven Trees School	84	139	55	Hill
Hellyer School	5	138	133	Hill
Sylvandale Middle Sch	875	802	(73)	Hill
McKinley School	454	263	(191)	YerbaBuena
Santee School	643	1103	460	YerbaBuena
Kennedy School	131	270	139	YerbaBuena
Fair Middle School	917	971	54	YerbaBuena
Meadows School	103	47	(56)	None
Franklin School	210	473	263	None
Stonegate School	49	145	96	None
Windmill Springs Scho	81	89	8	None
Shirakawa School	95	15	(80)	None
Net Change Target Schools			651	
Net Change: Non target Schools			231	

B. Individual-Level Outcomes

Whereas many of the programs within this initiative have as their unit of intervention the entire school—and thus do not lend themselves to individual outcome analysis—several of the interventions do focus on individual at-risk youth. For these programs, it is our intention to conduct individual-level outcome analyses. Programs selected for individual outcome analysis include:

- Truancy Intervention Project
- Families and Students Together (FAST)
- Mental Health Counseling
- Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE)

The intention is to link youth served through these programs to their school records, obtained from extracts from the District MIS systems, construct a comparison group matched on key demographic and historical variables, and then assess whether the intervention has had an impact on measures of school performance including attendance, grades, suspensions, standardized test scores, and disciplinary incidents. As we are still in the process of assembling the necessary data from the school districts, we have attempted a single pilot study in this report—the Truancy Intervention Project (TIP).

1. Pilot Study: The Truancy Intervention Project

Project Description: TIP consists of a range of San José B.E.S.T. service providers who have the capacity to provide specialized truancy intervention/case management services to truant youth and their families referred by the TABS Center. The goal of the pilot project is to create measurable improvements in school attendance and performance for youth with problems including patterns of absenteeism, truancy, and related behavioral problems.

Evaluation Approach: For comparison purposes with the students served by these interventions, a matched comparison group of students not-served was identified and matched using the following variables:

- Grade level
- School
- Race
- Age
- Gender

The evaluation then compared the effects of the intervention on the participants versus the comparison group on total absences, excused absences, and unexcused absences.

Creating A Comparison for TIP: There were 37 TIP youth available for analysis after merging with school records. The goal was to draw a sample of non-TIP youth from student records that closely approximate the percentage distributions of TIP youth on the variables of gender, ethnicity, age, grade, school, and prior absences.

Comparing TIP to Non-Tip Groups on Each Matching Variable:

- *Gender*: No difference in gender distribution
- *Ethnicity*: TIP is nearly homogenously Hispanic

- *Age:* TIP group (ages 12-18) tended to be younger with significantly more youth 13 years of age and fewer youth 17 years of age than the NON TIP group.
- *School:* The TIP group has youth in 4 schools with 80% in Overfelt and Yerba Buena High Schools.
- *Grade:* Differences mirrored age with TIP youth representing grade 8 at higher levels and grade 12 at lower levels than Non TIP youth.

Analysis of Change

Annual excused and unexcused absences were compared for the TIP (n=37) and Non-TIP matched group (n=32). It might be expected by the nature of the program that TIP youth have a higher absence rate. Due to low sample size and non-normal distributions a nonparametric comparison of median annual absences showed the TIP youth had higher annual unexcused excused (median=48.0) absences that non TIP youth (median=16.0, p=.001). There were no statistical differences between TIP (median=10.5) and non-TIP (median=7.0) youth on excused absences.

The following tables show the average absences per month for the TIP youth and a sample matched by gender, ethnicity, and school. The TIP youth were slightly younger and also more extreme in prior absences, particularly unexcused. Because TIP youth are more extreme in unexcused absences, regression to the mean may inflate the average decrease.

Also, program entry and exit dates for non-TIP youth were artificially fixed at 2/15/01 and 3/15/01 in order to create before and during/after periods. As a result these dates do not match the same distribution of calendar periods for all TIP youth.

Average Excused Absences Per Month

Group	Before	During/After Program	Average decrease
TIP (n=31)	2.41	1.00	2.56
Non TIP (n=32)	1.27	0.59	0.68

Average Unexcused Absences Per Month

Group	Before	During/After Program	Average decrease
TIP (n=31)	5.38	1.94	6.01
Non TIP (n=32)	3.24	1.27	1.97

Analyses were conducted to statistically remove the effect of before program absence rate and determine if TIP group predicts absence rate in the during/after period. Being a member of the TIP group did predict a statistically significant decrease in unexcused absences ($b=.71, p<.01$).

Future Design and Analytic Issues

In considering the treatment/control pre-post design, it may be important to not only match

groups on prior absences, but to also use a similar cohort to adjust for any seasonal effects on rate of absences.

C. Qualitative Outcomes

1. Purpose of Focus Groups and Interviews

As part of this report, focus groups and key informant interviews were conducted to collect anecdotal evidence on and assess the following:

- Awareness of, and knowledge about, the Initiative
- Engagement and commitment of stakeholders to the goals of the Initiative
- Positive or negative experiences of stakeholders with the Initiative
- Ideas regarding what added value if any the Initiative brought to the stakeholders.
- Opinions on what was working and what needed improvement.
- Ideas for long-term sustainability.

2. Who We Talked With

During the months of December 2001 and January 2002 RDA staff conducted a total of 13 focus groups and 6 key informant interviews. This work was done with groups involving stakeholders of students, teachers, administrators, service providers, and others who were in some way involved in the Initiative. These focus groups were conducted at the following sites and involved the following constituencies:

Institution	Group
Eastside Union Safe Schools Initiative	Steering Committee
Alum Rock Unified School District	Principals and Assistant Principals
Franklin McKinley School District	Principals and Assistant Principals
Yerba Buena High Schools	Students – Conflict Resolution Managers
Overfelt High School	Students
Andrew Hill High School	Students – Conflict Resolution Managers
Fischer Middle School	Students – Conflict Resolution Managers
Eastside Union High School District	Students
City of San Jose	BEST Service Providers
Santa Clara Mental Health	Mental Health Clinicians
Eastside Teachers Association	Teachers
City of San Jose / Eastside Union	Multi-Disciplinary Team Members
Eastside Union High School District	Multi-Service Team Coordinators

The demographics of participants in these groups are as follows:

Race/Ethnicity		Sex		Age	
African American	5	Males	32	Adults	35
Hispanic	39	Females	60	Students	57
Asian American/ Pacific Islander	26				
White	21				
Other	1				
Total	92				

3. Major Recurring Issues

The following issues were raised and recurred most often during the focus groups and interviews:

a. Awareness of and knowledge about the Initiative

Levels of knowledge regarding the Initiative were generally low among stakeholders with whom we spoke. Those who were directly involved in providing services understood their service component but felt that they lacked information about the overall goals of the Initiative and how the entire project worked together. School site personnel (teachers, principals, and vice-principals) in general felt that they lacked information regarding the budget and what could be paid for with funds from the Initiative. Some principals and vice principals reported not knowing about what services were to be made available at their schools. This was especially true for those school sites where startup had been particularly slow. Where program components were in place and services being provided there was generally a higher level of awareness about the Initiative but principals and vice principals still felt relatively uninformed.

All of the students we spoke with had not heard about the Initiative even if they were receiving services that were funded through it. A small percentage of the student peer mediators who understood that money from the Initiative paid for their program were the exception.

b. Pace and scope of service delivery

School site personnel reported disappointment at the slow pace and smaller scope of service delivery as compared to the expectations raised during the cluster implementation planning phase. Institutional red tape such as slowness in getting contracts processes, getting positions filled remained a barrier to fully implementing services at school sites. Lack of administrative support and participation in the Alum Rock District meant that services are only now being deployed in several of the participating schools. Mental Health workers reported that it is still the policy of this district to not allow release time for students who have been referred for services. Elementary schools representatives reported receiving some services only recently. Service levels were described as often inadequate for the problems being addressed (e.g., one mental health worker for all of Independence High School). Respondents acknowledged that

the pace of implementation has improved over the past six months and that additional needed services were now being made more readily available to at-risk students through the Initiative.

c. Cluster Coordination

The additional coordination capacity provided by the Cluster Coordinators was seen as invaluable by most stakeholders - even many of the students with whom we spoke. School administrators felt that the work of the cluster coordinators freed up administrator and counselor time at some of the school sites and helped to insure that problems with individual students did not fall through the cracks. The degree of success at cluster coordination was experienced as inconsistent among stakeholders – particularly school site personnel. Some cluster participants felt that some of the schools, particularly at the elementary level were not being well served.

d. Inter-agency communication and coordination

There was acknowledgment that inter-agency communication and coordination has been enhanced through the Initiative. There was also increased knowledge among the adults with whom we spoke concerning what services or additional resources were available. Stakeholders felt that programs such as the Truancy Intervention Program are beginning to be seen as integral parts of school services.

e. Service referral process and access to services

According to many adults that we spoke with, referral processes seemed to be improved and more students were being given access to services. However, there were still many teachers that did not necessarily know about availability of services or how to access them for students.

There was a shared perception that there were more service providers and other adults on campus attending to students in need. This was seen as having a positive effect on school climate. The need for improvement in having adequate information concerning providers' roles, expected units of service, and follow up communication concerning results of interventions was expressed by many people that we spoke with.

Alum Rock district's 'no pull-out' policy was and continues to be a serious impediment to getting services to students within that District's schools.

f. Campus safety interventions

Respondents felt that additional police and probation presence on campuses have contributed to greater sense of safety. School administrators reported excellent response by MDT teams to actual and potential campus incidents.

g. Conflict Resolution program

Students who had received training as conflict resolution managers were unanimous about their support and enthusiasm about the program. They reported greater feelings of self-confidence and newfound ability to look at different sides of issues. Many stated that although they had not yet conducted direct mediations with other students, they were using these skills informally, at school and at home.

h. School discipline policies

Students felt that school discipline policies were inconsistently applied. They were in favor of strict but fair application of the rules. Most were in favor of zero tolerance for some types of behavior.

i. Adult-student interactions

Students felt that how adults treated the students had a direct impact on the climate of the school. While they were quick to point out the positive attributes of teachers and administrators whom they respected, they also felt that many adults on campus treated them with disregard, or held some prejudices against all students. Campus security personnel were often described as aggressive and disrespectful.

j. Bathrooms

The majority of students interviewed voiced strong dissatisfaction with the state of the bathrooms. They described a wide variety of conditions that discouraged them from even using the facilities. Missing stall doors, lack of toilet tissue and soap were common complaints. They also saw the bathrooms, as places were illicit activity tended to take place.

4. Suggestions for Improvement

Respondents offered several ideas for improving Initiative implementation. Many of these ideas were presented as improvements that would impact the safety of the schools. Recurring ideas included:

- The 3 school districts have recently invested time and money into developing a state of the art shared computer system. However, the system is not currently being used anywhere near its capacity. It is believed that this system could be used to provide information on student needs, the services that they are provided with, and any changes in their circumstances so that better coordination of delivery of services and follow-up could occur.
- School site personnel expressed the belief that more attention should be paid to students who transgress school rules on the first occasion in order to prevent negative behaviors from escalating. Many people expressed the belief that the two systems dealing with disciplinary actions and service interventions were woefully unrelated and need to be intertwined. It seems as though some students receive services while others receive punishment and which students receive either is dependent on individual philosophy rather than a system wide approach.
- Site personnel expressed the need for better communication about available services and student assessment processes for all school staff. People expressed the need for teacher training so that they can act earlier to identify student problems and better understand the service referral system.
- Everyone agreed that dedicated full time liaisons/coordinators are needed at schools to coordinate the school-community service activities and systems.
- The need was expressed for improved tracking of students between schools so that consistency of delivery of services and intervention can be maintained.

- The belief was expressed from the majority of students and many adults that disciplinary actions are not meted out in a consistent manner. This is an important topic that requires more examination to determine if it is a misperception or if it is a problem, the extent to which it occurs, and why. It is important that students and adults see the system as fair.
- Students and adults agreed that there continues to be a need for increased recreational and alternative positive activities and options for students before and after school and during lunchtime.
- More attention to the physical quality of the campus, especially rest rooms is needed.

5. Sustainability and Other Topics for Steering Committee Consideration

Respondents identified the following elements that would be worth sustaining beyond the life of the current grant:

- The role of the Cluster Coordinators and the continued and enhanced communication and coordination among schools within the feeder patterns.
- Early mental health services particularly at the elementary and middle school levels.
- The case management approach focused on addressing multiple problems for individual at risk students.
- The conflict resolution program.
- Parenting education classes, especially for pre-school and elementary school parents.
- The focus on providing intensive and individualized services to chronic truants.

We recommend that the Steering Committee also discuss the following:

- The fact that student respondents felt as negatively regarding the conditions of the student bathrooms as they did three years ago when the original planning process was undertaken should be a matter of great concern for the stakeholders of this initiative.
- The fact that so few students had any knowledge of this initiative is something that the Steering Committee should discuss and remedy. While it is not important that students have a comprehensive understanding of the entire initiative, it is important that they learn that their school system is taking steps to insure that their schools are safer and that students and their families have more resources that can help them succeed.

VI. Findings and Recommendations

Based upon our ongoing participation providing support and technical assistance to the implementation of the initiative, the results of the focus groups and an analysis of the events and decisions that were made to date we offer the following recommendations.

A. Organizational Structure, Staffing and Accountability

1. A full time Field Coordinator should be immediately hired. It is important that the Steering Committee, particularly the cluster coordinators participate in the screening and hiring of this position.
2. The membership of the Steering Committee should be reviewed. At a minimum, MIS staff from each of the districts should be included to insure continuity of data collection and full use of the shared SASI data system for this initiative. A discussion should be held regarding the need for participation of representatives from major program components such as Conflict Resolution, PIQE, and other activities that are designed to impact all participating schools.
3. As the grantee of the Federal Government, ESUHSD is ultimately responsible for fiscal decision-making. However, input from the Steering Committee should be obtained prior to budgetary changes. In order to insure informed decision-making a monthly fiscal report should be provided to the Steering Committee. This will help quell concerns regarding lack of budgetary information.
4. The Steering Committee should review existing job descriptions, organizational charts and agree upon roles and responsibilities**.**
5. A written report from each cluster coordinator should be submitted monthly articulating how many students were served at each school site and by which program component. This information needs to be used for a wide variety of activities including evaluation, program monitoring and contract compliance. The Steering Committee should review these numbers monthly.
6. The current system of contracts and management of those contracts is difficult to understand and monitor. The Steering Committee should assist ESUHSD in exploring a simplification of this process that will result in the ability to monitor the contracts.
7. It is clear that stakeholders are experiencing added value from the coordination of clusters and feeder schools. It is important that each of the institutional stakeholders (e.g., school districts, City of San Jose, Santa Clara County Probation Mental Health) insure that coordination of activities continue beyond the life of the grant. Efforts should be made to support and strengthen the roles of the cluster and field coordinators by providing data system capacity for sharing information and tracking services and students as well as ongoing training.
8. In order to adequately measure whether or not the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative or any other programs are having an impact on school safety it is essential that incident report data be maintained comprehensively and in the same manner across school sites. It is clear that currently this is not being done. There seem to be many reasons for this including:

a. Lack of data entry staff to enter reports into computer system;

b. Lack of common and shared definitions regarding classification of incidents; and

c. Fear of institutional retaliation (e.g. firing of personnel) if poor conditions are measured and reported.

The Steering Committee, along with the Policy Committee should discuss this topic and develop a plan for instituting changes. Other school districts across the nation have struggled with the same problem and some have found that ongoing training helps as does insuring that people are rewarded for maintaining good data.

B. Program Activities and Service Delivery

1. The original plan contained fewer separate program activities. The decision to spread funding around to a wider variety of services and activities makes it very difficult to monitor programs or evaluate outcomes. It may also defuse the potential impact that these funds and related activities will have on the system as a whole.

   An example of this is the funding that is being spent on academic improvement activities. This component was originally envisioned as being targeted to improve reading skills for those first and second graders performing significantly below grade level. While it is perfectly understandable that schools had their reasons and the right to reject this particular program, more effort should have been made to insure that what replaced it was targeted and focused. It is not clear that Initiative funds are much more than a general subsidy to district remedial education efforts. Unless funding is targeted more clearly to a particular set of populations with a particular approach (or approaches), it will not be possible to provide any outcome evaluation on the efforts in academic improvement.

2. The mental health and alcohol and drug component of the original plan were structured as to insure that delivery of services would be focused, comprehensive and integrated into the larger systems of Santa Clara County Services. Determination regarding level of services was to be based on individual assessments and clearly articulated standards and risk factors. It is not clear that mental health or alcohol and drug services are being delivered in this way. While school site staff are encouraged that more counseling services are being made available, it is not clear how children are being chosen for the scarce services that are being provided, nor does it appear that the services provided are part of a comprehensive plan for the student and family.

3. School site personnel have reported that as a result of the initiative they feel that students who are experiencing difficulties have more access to services and interventions. As previously stated, the cluster coordination has greatly assisted in the effort of getting students with need connected to services. However, it is not clear that students are being assessed and that the most appropriate type and level of service are being provided as a result of assessment.

4. Based both upon qualitative and quantitative data, the Initiative is clearly developing a number of programs that are marked by strong administration, active student and family participation, and promising outcomes. These programs include:

- Truancy Intervention Program
- Parent Institute for Quality Education
- Safe Schools Campus Initiative
- Families and Schools Together
- Community Boards

Initiative staff should begin working with these agencies now, while there is still considerable time, to develop funding sources to continue these programs beyond the grant period, and to develop additional funding to replicate them throughout the district.