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ABSTRACT
        This paper uses an evaluation of the School Based Youth
Services Program (SBYSP), a school-linked, service-integration program in New
Jersey, to explore how school-community collaborations can achieve both
educational and social, emotional and behavioral outcomes. The paper provides
background information on SBYSP and then presents organizational findings
from the analysis of the project's implementation. The article focuses on
ways to construct a collaborative working relationship between programs and
schools and details strategies, such as participating in school committees
and planning and leading school events, for maintaining good working
relationships with schools that host the services. Challenges faced by
school-project collaborations are presented and some lessons about
collaboration are offered. Profiles of the at-risk student population that
enrolled in SBYSP are offered, along with an analysis of what the program can
do for these children. The report gives an overview of findings from the
evaluation's outcome study, with a focus on educational outcomes associated
with SBYSP utilization. The text concludes that many collaborative
school-linked service programs can be an effective strategy for addressing
students' nonacademic needs. However, school-linked service programs cannot
be expected to have strong educational outcomes unless they also have strong
educational components. (RJM)

A Service-Based Approach to Addressing Educational and Social Outcomes for Youth:

Lessons from the Evaluation of New Jersey's School-Based Youth Services Program

by

Constancia Warren, Ph.D. and Cheri Fancsali, Ph.D.

Because of School-Based, I can sleep at night knowing our kids aren't falling through the cracks. [guidance counselor in School Based school]

The best thing I like about School-Based is that they always offer students the opportunity to be involved in positive activities. It is a very productive setting for students. School-Based is their second home. [teacher in School Based school]

Counseling helped me look at myself better and realize I was depressed. Now I'm able to talk to my mom about things. They've helped me with my problems and helped me concentrate on school. [School Based participant]

For many advocates of school-linked services and full-service schools, the rationale for these arrangements is primarily nonacademic—to address the fragmentation of and inadequate access to important services for children in need. These advocates see schools as an excellent delivery site to provide services to young people of school age, particularly during the adolescent years. In addition, the placement of service providers in schools also makes both prevention and health promotion, as well as treatment, possible. Through using the school as a satellite location, service providers (whether health, mental health, or employment preparation) can furnish students with an integrated array of services in one easy-to-reach location.

Moreover, as school-linked services and community-school collaborations have increased, expectations have grown that these service arrangements can also address noneducational problems, usually associated with poverty, that act as barriers to student learning. If services are provided to remove these barriers, the reasoning goes, educational outcomes will improve. School-linked programs, as a result, face increased demands to produce educational outcomes as the pressure intensifies for schools to meet more stringent performance standards. In schools where every resource is turned to helping students achieve academically, it has become logical to ask that programs using the school as a resource contribute to this push for achievement.

This paper will use the evaluation of one of the earliest school-linked service integration programs—the New Jersey School Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP)—to explore how school-community collaborations seek to achieve both educational and social, emotional and behavioral outcomes. After providing background on the School Based program, this paper presents organizational findings from the analysis of the project's implementation, followed by an overview of findings from the evaluation's outcome study, with a focus on educational outcomes associated with SBYSP utilization. We conclude, based on the experience of the program, that many students have substantial nonacademic needs and that collaborative school-linked service programs can be an effective strategy for addressing these needs. However, we also conclude that school-linked services programs cannot be expected to have strong educational outcomes unless they also have strong educational components.

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The School Based Youth Services Program

In 1987, the New Jersey Department of Human Services initiated the School Based Youth Services Program, the first statewide initiative in the country to integrate a range of services for adolescents in one location at or near schools. By creating partnerships between schools and community agencies, the program sought to provide young people with the services and supports they needed to navigate the adolescent years and "complete their education, obtain skills leading to employment or additional education, and lead a mentally and physically healthy life."[1] With ongoing help from a School Based support team in the Department of Human Services, the projects began their first full year of operation in 1988 in 29 New Jersey communities, all selected based on high levels of need. There is at least one project in every county of the state, and all students attending the host schools are eligible to participate in activities and use the services provided. The program has been cited repeatedly as an early model of service integration and has won prestigious national awards for excellence in public policy.

Projects are operated by a lead or managing agency, which receives the state grant. The basic SBYSP model, as articulated in the 1987 request for proposals, has five core areas of activities and services: recreation, health, mental health, employment counseling and preparation, and substance abuse treatment and prevention. Services are offered throughout the school year and during the summer. Some activities meet regularly, such as peer leadership groups, but other services and activities operate on a drop-in or as-needed basis (e.g., recreation or counseling). Many projects have added components over time, such as pregnancy prevention and supports for teen parents; conflict resolution and violence prevention workshops; peer leadership development and cultural awareness activities; and, less frequently, academic support and college visits and efforts to combat stereotyping and discrimination based on race, gender and sexual orientation.

As a whole, School Based services and activities are designed to treat existing problems, prevent the emergence of negative youth behaviors, and promote positive youth development. The model has evolved substantially since the initiative was launched, although individually-oriented services remain central to the work of most projects. In interviews conducted as part of the evaluation of School Based, some project directors described their mission as helping students confront barriers to succeeding in school, but more often, they focused either on more immediate concerns (for example, coping with crises or acute distress) or supporting adolescent development more generally. The primary focus was on helping individual youth—"whatever it takes to help the student" in the words of the SBYSP program director.

The Academy for Educational Development's Evaluation of SBYSP

In 1995, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, in consultation with the New Jersey Department of Human Services, selected the Academy for Educational Development (AED), an educational evaluation and technical assistance organization with offices in Washington D.C. and New York City, to conduct an evaluation of SBYSP. The AED evaluation is being conducted in two phases. The first phase of

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[1] New Jersey Department of Human Services, Request for Proposals, 1987.

the evaluation included an analysis of the state policy context for developing, implementing, and sustaining the School Based initiative and a cross-site analysis of program implementation at the site level. Evaluators visited every site twice, interviewing project directors and key staff, lead agency coordinators, school principals, guidance counselors, nurses and teachers.[2] In addition, at each site, site visitors observed activities and conducted a focus group with students involved in the project.[3]

The second phase of the evaluation, which began in summer 1996, is an outcome-based study of the program in six individual sites. The strategies for this phase are designed to increase our understanding of how individual projects operate, as well as their impact on the young people who use them.[4] They include the collection of longitudinal quantitative data via a confidential student survey and qualitative data through student interviews and focus groups.

Before discussing the outcome study and its findings, it is important to understand how the School Based programs worked in the school setting to help individual students. Using the data gathered at all 29 sites during the implementation study, the following section discusses the evolution of the relationship between the projects and their host schools and the challenges encountered in developing and maintaining good collaborative working arrangements.

Findings from the Implementation Study:
Constructing a Collaborative Working Relationship Between Programs and Schools

From the beginning of School Based, the New Jersey Department of Human Services has fostered a bottom-up collaboration between local schools and local service providers, funded and supported from the state level. Although other state-level departments (e.g., health, employment) backed the new effort, the New Jersey Department of Education had other educational priorities when SBYSP was initiated and thus provided neither political nor fiscal support for the new projects. In several wary districts, this lack of initial support slowed the acceptance of the program. Nevertheless, 10 of the original lead agencies were school districts, and school districts are the most common lead agencies (followed by mental health agencies) of School Based projects.

Several sites encountered opposition to SBYSP based on school personnel's fear that SBYSP was a first step toward privatization and "contracting out" for services currently provided by school district employees. In these sites, SBYSP was implemented only when the coordinator for SBYSP

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[2] Those teachers we interviewed were recommended by the project directors, at our request, as those having knowledge of and contact with the project.

[3] AED produced two reports based on this phase of the evaluation: *The New Jersey School Based Youth Services Program: The State Policy Context* (1997) and *The New Jersey School Based Youth Services Program: An Analysis of Implementation* (1997).

[4] Throughout this paper, we use the terms "users" to describe students who participated in School Based activities or who used School Based services, and "nonusers" to describe students who did not. While we employ "users" and "nonusers" for reasons of space, the students referred to are both *users* of services and *participants* in activities offered by the projects.

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in the department of human services reassured schools that the projects and their staff would "not do anything that the schools, could, would or should do themselves." This promise, still largely in place, has framed the relationship between the projects and the schools in important ways.

Working relationships with host schools

In all 29 sites, SBYSP personnel have devoted substantial energy to developing and maintaining positive working relationships with the host schools in order to better provide services to students. Initially, the focus of attention was directed to assisting students attending the selected schools, whether in an individual or group format. Eventually most SBYSP projects also began to work with the schools as organizations. However, the initial intent of such school-focused efforts was the enhancement of the project's capacity to assist individual students.

In addition to providing a wide range of services and activities aimed at individual students, School Based staff also invest considerable effort in becoming a part of the "school family," as one project director put it. As a result, School Based has been integrated into the host schools as project staff have built their credibility and demonstrated ways they can help the schools meet the needs of students. School Based staff now play a wide variety of roles in most host schools. These roles serve to keep the school informed about School Based activities and to keep project staff informed about the school. The most frequent activities that School Based staff take part in include:

- **Participating on numerous school committees**, such as the principal's cabinet, the child-study and crisis management teams, and the committees charged with attendance review, conflict resolution, behavior and discipline, and school safety, as well as a variety of other ad hoc committees

- **Planning and executing school events**, such as freshman orientation activities, alcohol- and drug-free post-prom and graduation parties, and other activities, such as a monthly "positive discipline" drawing, a collection of holiday presents for needy children, and a food drive

- **Conducting classes, workshops, and in-service sessions** for both students and teachers on topics such as the negative impact of stereotyping, contraception, HIV and AIDS, depression and anxiety, sexual harassment, and dealing with disruptive students

- **Advocating for and supporting special groups of students**, such as teen parents and special education students, including conducting parenting classes and support groups, and providing health care for mothers and infants, tutoring, and on-site child care (or facilitating links to community-based care)

- **Providing substance abuse prevention and crisis management activities**, including counseling and classes on anger management and conflict resolution and addressing schoolwide tragedies and crises

In a few cases, SBYSP staff also have assumed traditional school roles or responsibilities, as in one site where the recreation coordinator is also a sports coach and the senior class advisor. The projects' capacity to reach students of all kinds is greatly enhanced by the breadth of roles played by School Based staff.

SBYSP staff continually work to make their presence widely known throughout the school, undertaking numerous outreach activities, such as participating in student and faculty orientation meetings; distributing School Based materials to parents; hosting social events for students to make them aware of SBYSP offerings; communicating regularly with the principal; and maintaining ongoing and informal contact with school staff, students, and parents. Focus groups with students and interviews with project staff and school personnel revealed that, as a result of these varied outreach activities, students come to School Based in a number of different ways. Some come in response to referrals or recommendations from guidance staff, the school nurse, teachers, administrators, custodial and security staff, and parents. Other students come with friends or are drawn into a School Based activity, such as recreation or a special trip. Still others "self-refer" based on their knowledge of School Based and need of assistance. Lastly, in several schools, students caught fighting are mandated to work with the SBYSP team on anger management skills.

Challenges faced by the school-project collaborations

In a very few cases, host schools have resisted any role for the School Based project beyond providing services and activities to students and have made even that difficult. In most cases, however, there is abundant evidence of the projects' integration into the schools in the ways described above. Still, School Based projects face certain inevitable challenges in working with the schools, given the historic wariness of school staff about outside or "non-school" people, especially regarding the issue of professional credentials.

School Based has sometimes been viewed as a "dumping ground" for problem youth: "I used to think this was a place for the nut cases, but you can find just about anything you want here," explained a student who had been referred to School Based for counseling after his father's death. Not surprisingly, the projects with the most balanced array of services and activities are least likely to be labeled as a place only for students with problems. This, in turn, enables them to reach the broadest range of students.

In some schools, School-Based projects have been seen as a place for students to hang out and cut classes. To counter this misperception, projects make efforts to respect the school's need to account for students' whereabouts and teachers' insistence that students not miss class. To deter students from cutting classes, most projects have instituted the policy that students can come to the SBYSP office during class only with a pass.

School Based projects have also had to deal with persistent "turf" issues. Given the focus of most SBYSP projects on counseling and personal support, these problems most often arise with guidance personnel and school nurses over such questions as which personnel are most fit to address students'

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needs and how the information about students being seen by SBYSP clinical staff should be handled. Despite these concerns in a few schools, evaluators found that most nurses and guidance staff were among the strongest supporters of School Based.

The most problematic turf issue arises from different rules and norms concerning confidentiality and information-sharing. While health and mental health professionals (whose norms and practices dominate SBYSP on this issue) are governed by medical confidentiality considerations, school staff traditionally are less concerned with the protection of individual students' privacy than with their broad responsibility for assuring the well-being of students, both individually and collectively. As a result, school staff are more likely to discuss sensitive information openly. However, the assurance of student confidentiality is critical to a successful SBYSP project since many students will not reveal personal concerns if they think anyone else will learn about their situation. Students in focus groups volunteered that they value the confidentiality of School Based services and were quick to say, "What we say in here does not leave the room." To maintain confidentiality, most projects have worked out mutually satisfactory arrangements with school staff concerning the exchange of information. In general, some information is shared—for example, the guidance office is told *that* a student is being seen but not *what* the assistance concerns.

Just as there is "positive" turf that some school personnel were reluctant to cede, evaluators also found "negative" turf or "turf dumping." This involves areas that school personnel are sometimes too ready to hand over to School Based staff. For example, schools have sometimes requested that SBYSP staff handle areas—such as the reporting of suicide and abuse to legal authorities and counseling special education students—that are the school's legal responsibility.

The role of SBYSP in crisis management activities provides an example of the sometimes murky boundaries and complex relationships involved in working with the host schools. School Based staff regularly deal with crises that arise in the lives of individual students, working with students and their families to secure assistance and address urgent needs. However, in crises that affect the whole school, decisions about consequences for student behaviors (e.g., bringing weapons into the school) and reporting to legal authorities remain the responsibility of the schools. SBYSP staff frequently assist the school in organizing their capacity to respond to schoolwide crises and spearhead the provision of assistance to individual students affected by the crisis (e.g., the suicide of a fellow student). Unfortunately, taking on responsibilities in schoolwide crisis management can consume considerable time and energy, particularly in large and troubled schools. This can lead the School Based project to be so reactive that it has difficulty addressing other project goals, such as prevention education and support for positive youth development. At the same time, these activities sometimes bring School Based staff into contact with youth who might not otherwise know of the project, and, as a result, School Based staff often assume at least partial responsibility for these activities.

Lessons about collaboration

The effort that most SBYSP projects invest in developing activities in collaboration with school staff has helped many projects become integrated into the life of the school, as described above, and avoid the "we–they" stance that sometimes characterizes school-community collaborations in their early

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stages. Despite occasional turf issues, most School Based projects have managed to maintain effective working relationships with their schools. This is a labor-intensive process, requiring substantial and virtually continuous effort on the part of School Based project directors and their staff. More often than not, the collaborative relationships described above were initiated by SBYSP staff, and demand a commitment of time beyond that already required to address the needs of individual students. The key is ongoing communication: one project director described how she deals with boundary and confidentiality issues with her school—"negotiation, negotiation, negotiation."

At the same time, it is important to note that the arena where most School-Based projects work is carefully circumscribed by the promise made at the program's initiation: that the program would not do anything the school could or should be doing. While some projects offer homework help and tutoring for students who seek it, as well as overnight college visits to build students' interest in postsecondary education, the bulk of project work—whether with individual students or the school as a whole—is generally limited to student support and behavior issues, and rarely ventures into the pedagogical arena that is at the heart of the school's existence.[5] Nor is it likely that some of the host schools, still wary about noncertified staff despite years of positive working relationships, would easily accept the participation of SBYSP staff in pedagogical discussions. On the project side, the SBYSP directors often have more than enough to do just fulfilling what they have already defined as their central mission: helping individual students.

Despite this limitation, the positive impact of SBYSP projects on the school is evident at many sites. Teachers interviewed during visits to projects were quick to express appreciation for the counseling available to students and relief that there was somewhere to send students in difficulty, while in the past the only recourse was often punitive. Teachers and administrators also recognized that School Based's ability to meet students' personal needs helped free up both teachers' and students' attention and energy for teaching and learning. Finally, both teachers and administrators reported that the school was able to see students in a more holistic fashion than was possible before School Based. One superintendent of schools said "School Based has made the school more responsive to individual needs. We are now more prone to see kids as individuals and to look at individual cases. Perhaps this means we are more humanistic as a result."

Findings from the Outcome-Based Study:
Identifying How the School Based Youth Services Program Benefits Students

The following section describes the development and execution of the outcome-based study, the differences between those students taking advantage of SBYSP services and activities and those who had not done so at the beginning of their first year in high school, and the differences between these two groups at the time of the follow-up survey, at the end of their second year in high school.

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[5] The one partial exception to this involves a fully integrated collaborative pregnancy prevention program combining classroom instruction and services to individual students. SBYSP staff and the school's family life teachers work together, both in the classroom and in referring and counseling individual youth. This strikingly successful collaboration, which has drastically reduced the incidence of teen births in the host school, demonstrates the potential of joining forces in a true school-program partnership.

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To measure the outcomes that students derive from participation in SBYSP activities and/or use of SBYSP services, AED has followed the cohort of students who entered ninth grade in September 1996 for two years. Students in the six SBYSP schools selected for the outcome study completed specially designed confidential surveys at the beginning of their high-school career (fall 1996) and again at the end of their sophomore year (late spring 1997). Using the quantitative data, we were able to compare outcomes for students who had taken advantage of SBYSP to those who had not, controlling for initial differences in students behavior, background and situational characteristics. In addition to the surveys, AED collected school data and tracked a small sample of students from each school via individual interviews and focus groups. This qualitative data was collected to illuminate the dynamic through which SBYSP achieves its results.

The sites selected for the outcome-based study vary greatly from one another. The six school districts include one regional school district encompassing 142 square miles, one citywide vocational district, and four local districts ranging from densely urban to a mixture of urban and suburban or urban and rural (a municipality that incorporates a rural area with a densely populated urban center). The schools include one vocational and five academic high schools, with student populations that range from almost entirely Caucasian in two schools to almost entirely African-American and Latino in three. According to the New Jersey Department of Education Report Card data for 1996-97, four of the schools' average scores on the on the High School Proficiency Examination (given to all New Jersey students in grade 11) were below the statewide average score, and in two of these cases, below the average scores for comparable schools.[6] In half the schools, the mobility rate, or number of students who entered or left the school during the year, exceeded the statewide average of 16 percent and in one school, approached 50 percent. However, one of the schools was in the process of planning a comprehensive school reform initiative, and only one of the six schools had a dropout rate above the statewide average.

The SBYSP projects included in the outcome study also varied substantially from site to site in terms of lead agencies, space, and programming. Their lead agencies included two school districts, one community development agency (working in collaboration with a hospital behavioral health department), one hospital family planning department, one local employment agency, and one community mental health agency. Four sites operated from space within the school building, while one site used a trailer in the school's parking lot, and another conducted most activities in space provided in the local armory. Although all included the core components (recreation, health, mental health, employment preparation and/or counseling, and substance abuse prevention and treatment), some projects had additional site-specific components, such as an on-site health clinic or a mentoring program.

The following discussion draws on the quantitative data collected during the students' first two years in high school.

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[6] Source: New Jersey Department of Education, School Report Cards, 1996-97. School scores on the HSPT are compared both to the statewide average and to the average score for the school's "District Factor Group" based on the socioeconomic status of residents in the district.

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Survey development

During the implementation analysis, AED, in collaboration with SBYSP project directors, articulated a theory of action for each SBYSP major area of activity (recreation, health, mental health, employment preparation and/or counseling, and substance abuse prevention and treatment, pregnancy prevention, teen parent support, violence prevention, academic support and positive youth development). For each service or activity area, the theory of action specified which needs program designers and implementers were addressing; the activities they put in place to do so; the anticipated response of students to these offerings; and desired mid-range outcomes and their indicators.

These theories of action framed the development of AED's primary data collection instruments, which collect individual background data and document students' attitudes and behaviors in the broad range of SBYSP services and activities and their desired outcomes. Many individual survey items were selected or adapted from other instruments used to study youth.[7] In addition, other items were developed specifically for this instrument to ensure sufficient coverage of all facets of SBYSP.

The survey questions were organized into six categories:

- Background characteristics (gender, race/ethnicity, family composition)
- Situational characteristics (level of stress, violence, family, adult, and peer support)
- Personal characteristics (feelings, educational aspirations, educational history)
- Behavioral characteristics (sexual activity, violence/delinquency, substance abuse)
- Health-related characteristics (health status, health risks, access to health care)
- Youth development characteristics (after school and youth development activities)

In addition, the follow-up survey also included site-specific questions on SBYSP utilization and satisfaction.

In seeking a comparison population, no single school was appropriate, given the diversity of the six selected schools for the outcome study, and resources were not available for multiple comparison sites. Instead, outcomes of students taking advantage of SBYSP offerings ("users") were compared to the outcomes of students who did not ("nonusers"). However, because those students using SBYSP services and/or participating in SBYSP activities tended to be at higher risk for negative outcomes than their nonuser peers, the comparison of outcomes for users and nonusers controlled for background characteristics associated with higher levels of need, such as family stress, or protective factors associated with a lower incidence of risk behavior. These include family support, others sources of adult support, and participation in positive youth activities, sometimes referred to

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[7] Items were drawn from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Study survey, the American Drug and Alcohol Survey, and the National Educational Longitudinal Survey, as well as from other studies of youth behavior, such as Gary Wehlage's dropout prevention studies; Mark Weist's study of mental health in Baltimore high school clinics; AED's Project Choice evaluation; and a WRI, Inc. study of New York City's high school health clinics.

as "youth assets." [8] Still, given the extent of School Based's integration into the school and the way the project may have been reflected in the school environment, the reader is cautioned that the students who did not use SBYSP services or participate in SBYSP activities may have benefitted, directly or indirectly, from the role the project played in many schools.

A total of 1,509 youth (84%) responded to the baseline survey, which was administered to students by AED staff during single regular class periods.[9] At total of 1,205 students took the follow-up survey administered at the end of their second year in high school, representing a response rate of 78 percent; 922 students took both the baseline and the follow-up survey.

Through collection of SBYSP Level of Service (LOS) data[10] and school data (average daily attendance, grade point average, credit accumulation, and transfer and special education status), AED staff were able to identify SBYSP users and nonusers and to append school data to students' survey responses. All data were entered into an SPSS database. The results reported below are based only on those 922 students who took *both* the baseline and follow-up surveys.

How do SBYSP users compare to nonusers?

A total of 402 (44%) of students had used a SBYSP service or activity at some point during their first or second year in high school; 520 (56%) had not used any type of SBYSP service during this period. The analysis of the baseline survey revealed important differences between those students who had taken advantage of SBYSP activities and those who had not.

Tables 1a – 1e show baseline information for the 922 students in the six schools that took both the baseline and follow-up surveys, disaggregated by whether or not they had used any SBYSP services or participated in any SBYSP activities by the end of their second year in high school. These baseline data verify what the practitioners had long suspected: the students they served on a regular basis were at greater risk than the rest of the student body.

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[8] The Search Institute has conducted extensive research showing that the presence of these personal and community assets act as a protective factor against youth engaging in risk behaviors. See P. Benson, *The Troubled Journey: A Portrait of 6th-12th Grade Youth* (Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran Brotherhood, 1990) and E. Roehlkepartain and P. Benson, *Healthy Communities, Healthy Youth* (Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute, 1996), pamphlet. See also L. W. Gregory, "The "Turnaround" Process: Factors Influencing the School Success of Urban Youth." *Journal of Adolescent Research.* 10 (1), 1995.

[9] In the case of special education students with limited reading ability, the survey was sometimes given separately in a double-length period. Given the sensitive nature of some questions, the survey was not given to special education students who needed the questions read aloud. The survey also was translated into Spanish and administered by a bilingual evaluator.

[10] This is the client utilization and management information system developed specially for SBYSP.

Background characteristics

Table 1a shows the background characteristics of students who participated in SBYSP activities or used SBYSP services during their first and second years of high school and those who did not take advantage of any SBYSP offerings.

Table 1a. Demographic characteristics of SBYSP Users and Nonusers at Baseline (early freshman year)

	Users	Nonusers	Total
USER STATUS	402	520	922
DEMOGRAPHICS			
Gender			
Female	59.7%	50.8%	54.7%
Male	40.3%	49.2%	45.3%
Race			
American Indian	1.5%	1.0%	1.2%
Black or African American	37.7%	23.8%	29.9%
Puerto Rican	9.7%	7.1%	8.3%
Other Latino/a or Hispanic	8.0%	6.7%	7.3%
Asian American	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%
White or Caucasian	33.9%	51.0%	43.5%
Other or mixed race	8.0%	9.0%	8.6%

As shown in this table:

- More than half of SBYSP users were female students (59.7%); in contrast, the nonusers were more evenly divided by gender.

- About one-third (37.7%) of SBYSP users were African American, 33.9 percent Caucasian, 8.0 percent Latino/a, and 8.0 percent identified their racial/ethnic background as "other." The nonusers included fewer African American, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, Asian American and other non-Caucasian students. This may reflect the greater concentration of students in need among non-Caucasian students, as well as the commitment of the projects to serve those students not drawn into mainstream school activities.

Areas of risk and stress

Table 1b examines the baseline status of SBYSP users and nonusers with regard to areas of stress or support often associated with variations in risk behaviors.

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Table 1b. Areas of Risk and Stress for SBYSP users and nonusers at baseline (early freshman year)

USER STATUS	Users n=402	Nonusers n=520	Total n=922
FAMILY STRESS*			
3 or more stressors	32.1%	20.4%	25.5%
no stressors	30.8%	41.3%	36.8%
FAMILY SUPPORT*			
no support	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%
some support	96.7%	96.7%	96.7%
OTHER ADULT SUPPORT*			
no support	5.4%	3.4%	4.2%
some support	94.6%	96.6%	95.8%

* Scale definitions:

Family stress is an additive scale composed of 12 individual stressful family events or situations (e.g, divorce, substance abuse problems).
Family support is an additive scale asking if there is a family member to consult regarding a range of 10 positive and negative issues.
Other adult support is an additive scale asking how many non-family adults could be consulted regarding a range of 10 positive and negative issues.

- Users reported much higher levels of family stress, including divorce, residence in unsafe neighborhoods, frequent moving, and financial, drug and alcohol problems. Among users, 32.1 percent had three or more stress factors on a scale of 12 items, as compared to only 20.4 percent of the nonusers. Conversely, 41.3 percent of nonusers reported no stress factors, against 30.8 percent of the users.

- Users and nonusers reported identical levels of family support, a scale asking how many family members one could consult or talk to about a range of both positive and negative issues. In both groups, 3.3 percent reported that they had no one to talk to about any of the issues, while 96.7 percent reported at least some support on some of the issues.

- Users reported a slightly lower level of support from other adults in their lives. Among users, 5.4 percent reported having no adults outside their families to turn to for support, while 3.4 percent of nonusers did so.

Risk behaviors

Table 1c shows the responses of SBYSP users and nonusers to survey questions that asked about a range of risk behaviors and factors at the time of the baseline survey, early in their freshman year.

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Table 1c. Risk behaviors of SBYSP Users and Nonusers at Baseline (early freshman year)

USER STATUS	Users n=402	Nonusers n=520	Total n=922
EVER HAD SEX	30.9%	23.0%	26.3%
DEFINITELY WANT TO AVOID PREGNANCY	74.9%	85.0%	80.6%
In the last 2 months...			
when having sex, always used contraception to prevent pregnancy	60.9%	58.3%	59.6%
when having sex, always used condoms to prevent STDS	63.6%	59.3%	61.5%
felt unhappy, sad or depressed	18.9%	11.2%	14.5%
felt nervous or tense	17.6%	11.8%	14.4%
worried too much about things	25.8%	16.5%	20.6%
felt angry or destructive	19.1%	12.2%	15.2%
hit someone to hurt them	34.2%	28.0%	29.9%
thought about killing myself	22.6%	18.2%	20.1%
got into a physical fight	27.0%	20.7%	23.4%
damaged someone else's property on purpose	31.9%	27.5%	29.4%
smoked cigarettes	30.8%	23.2%	26.5%
drank beer or wine	37.2%	36.7%	36.9%
used marijuana	19.7%	10.1%	14.2%

- Regarding attitudes and behaviors around sex, fewer users than nonusers affirmed their intention to avoid pregnancy during high school. More users than nonusers reported that they had already had sexual intercourse, and among users who were sexually active, more reported consistent contraceptive use (including condoms) to prevent pregnancy and consistent condom use to prevent sexually transmitted disease.

- On an emotional level, more users than nonusers reported frequent unhappy, sad or depressed feelings, as well as tension and frequent worrying. They were also more likely than nonusers to report frequent feelings of anger and destructiveness.

- More users than nonusers also reported that they had been involved in violent behavior, with greater proportions of users than nonusers responding that they had hit someone with the intention of hurting within the last year, been involved in a fight, or had deliberately damaged property belonging to others.

- Substantially more users than nonusers reported that they had already experimented with cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana in the two months prior to the survey.

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Positive youth activities

Table 1d presents the responses of both groups of students with regard to their participation in formal and informal activities that may have potential protective benefits against engaging in risk behaviors.

Table 1d. Positive Youth Activities of SBYSP users and nonusers at baseline (early freshman year)

USER STATUS	Users n=402	Nonusers n=520	Total n=922
POSITIVE YOUTH ACTIVITIES			
In the last 2 months...			
no activity	8.4%	7.3%	7.8%
at least one activity once or twice	14.3%	11.5%	12.7%
at least one activity three or more times	77.2%	81.2%	79.5%

- When asked about the frequency of their participation in 11 positive activities during the past two months, 8.4 percent of users reported no participation at all in any of these activities, compared to 7.3 percent of nonusers. However, 14.3 percent of users reported participating in at least one activity once or twice, compared to 11.5 percent of nonusers; and 81.2 percent of nonusers reported participating in at least one activity three or more times in the past two months, compared to 77.2 percent of users.

Educational characteristics and behaviors

SBYSP users also differed from nonusers in their educational characteristics and behaviors, as can been seen in Table 1e.

- SBYSP users did not differ from nonusers in their average daily attendance (95.9% and 96.2%, respectively), but were more likely to be classified as special education students (8.8% versus 5.7%).

- In addition, users lagged behind nonusers (2.6 compared to 3.2) in mean grade point average (GPA) and in average credits earned for their freshman year (33.1 versus 34.2).

- Users were more likely than nonusers to have cut class more than once in the first two months (11.8% versus 9.09%) of their freshman year. Users also were more likely to have received a failing grade during that period (41.4% versus 34.8%) or to have been sent to the office for disciplinary reasons (16.8% versus 9.8%).

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Table 1e. Educational Status and Behaviors of SBYSP users and nonusers at baseline (early freshman year)

USER STATUS		Users n=402	Nonusers n=520	Total n=922
EDUCATIONAL STATUS				
Special education status		8.8%	5.7%	7.0%
Mean grade point average		2.6	3.2	2.9
Average credits earned		33.1	34.2	33.7
EDUCATIONAL BEHAVIORS (within first two months of school)				
Cut (skipped) one or more classes	Almost every day	1.5%	0.6%	1.0%
	Once or twice a week	2.3%	3.1%	2.7%
	Once or twice a month	8.0%	5.3%	6.5%
	Only once	11.0%	9.3%	10.1%
	Never	77.3%	81.7%	79.8%
Received a failing grade		41.4%	34.8%	37.7%
Suspended from school	Zero	93.7%	96.9%	95.5%
	Once	4.7%	2.7%	3.5%
	More than once	1.6%	0.4%	0.9%
Sent to office for discipline		16.8%	9.8%	12.8%
EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS				
High school only		2.8%	4.1%	3.5%
Non-degree professional training program/two-year college degree		10.8%	9.6%	10.1%
Four-year college degree/master's degree/ doctorate		73.7%	70.2%	71.7%
Don't know		11.1%	13.5%	12.4%
EDUCATIONAL MOTIVATION				
I do my schoolwork because: (*very true* only)				
	Doing well in school is important to me.	73.4%	78.2%	76.1%
	I need to learn to get a good job.	85.5%	86.5%	86.1%
	It will help me get my diploma or GED.	85.5%	84.8%	85.1%
	Finishing my education is important to me.	90.0%	90.7%	90.4%
HIGH DROPOUT RISK*		22.8%	17.0%	19.5%

* Scale definitions:

High dropout risk is the percentage of students who had three or more of the following characteristics: over-age for grade; grade point average below 2.0; skipping one or more classes in the two months prior to the survey; receiving a failing grade in the two months prior to the survey; low educational aspirations; and special education status.

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- Both users and nonusers had high educational aspirations, with nearly three-quarters of both groups (73.7% of users and 70.2% of nonusers) expressing the intention to pursue at least a four-year college degree. If anything, SBYSP users appeared to be a little more clear about their intentions and to expect a slightly higher level of educational attainment.

- Users and nonusers were quite similar in their educational motivation, with only the following small differences: doing well in school was less frequently cited as a motive by users than nonusers (73.4% and 78.2% respectively), and users slightly more frequently cited the need to get a diploma or GED as the motivation for doing schoolwork (85.5% versus 84.8%).

Dropout risk

- To measure dropout risk, AED staff constructed a scale combining baseline survey responses and school data with regard to the following risk factors: over-age for grade, GPA below 2.0, skipping one or more classes in the previous two months, failing grades in the previous two months, low educational aspirations, and special education status. Students with three or more factors were considered to be at high risk of dropping out. SBYSP users were at substantially greater risk of dropping out than their peers who did not use SBYSP, with almost one-quarter of users (22.8%) having three or more risk factors, compared to fewer than one-fifth of nonusers (17.0%).

Overall, the responses to the baseline survey clearly demonstrated that SBYSP is attracting those students at greater risk for negative outcomes and most in need of assistance if they are to avoid more serious problems in both personal and educational domains.

Patterns in students' participation in SBYSP during the study period

Participation in SBYSP activities or use of SBYSP services grew steadily during the students' first and second years in high school. The responses presented above describe the baseline characteristics for students who were SBYSP users by the end of their second year in high school. However, an earlier analysis of differences between students who had used SBYSP by the end of their first year and those who had not showed sharper differences.[11] This most likely results from the earlier participation in School Based by students with more severe difficulties, many of whom were referred by school personnel to the project for assistance early in their high school career. Over time, as more students became familiar with the projects and their offerings, participation expanded, drawing in students who, though at greater risk than those not taking advantage of SBYSP, were not as acutely needy as those who came to SBYSP in first year.

During their first two years in high school, students took advantage of a wide variety of services and activities, but relatively few did so on a regular or frequent basis, as can be seen in Table 2. As in single-focused, school-based service programs (e.g., school clinics and school-based mental health programs),

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[11] *The New Jersey School Based Youth Services Program Outcome Study: Baseline Report*, AED, 1998.

participation was usually episodic rather than continuous and often short-term. The mean scale scores for each service or activity show that students' participation ranged from a low of slightly more than a few times a year to a high of between once or twice per month.

Table 2. Participation in Different SBYSP Services and Activities

Activity or service	Number using service	% of all students (N=922)	% of SB students (N=402)	Mean frequency of use*
Recreation	264	28.6%	65.7%	1.27
Individual counseling	155	16.8%	38.6%	1.98
Group counseling	129	14.0%	32.1%	2.46
Substance abuse counseling	54	5.9%	13.4%	2.19
Sexuality-related services	75	81.0%	18.7%	1.43
Teen parent services	39	4.2%	5.0%	1.60
Health-related services	104	11.3%	25.8%	1.13
Employment-related	74	8.0%	18.4%	1.47
Tutoring	52	5.6%	12.9%	2.13

* Frequency of use was rated on the following scale:

0 = "I've never used this service or activity."
1 = "A few times a year"
2 = "About once a month"
3 = "Frequently (about twice a month)"
4 = "Very frequently (about once a week)"

Changes from baseline to the end of the second year in high school

In total, we looked at 37 academic, social/emotional, and behavioral outcomes for youth participating in SBYSP. (See box on next page.) The responses of all students in the cohort to the follow-up survey, administered at the end of their second year in high school, showed the same overall worsening pattern in many areas that is found for many adolescents in difficulty.[12] (See Table 3a, below.) Although both groups reported fewer incidents of delinquent behavior, more users and nonusers reported use of tobacco and alcohol. In addition, more users and nonusers reported having had sex, and those who reported being sexually active had sharply decreased their use of contraception and condoms to prevent STDs.

Educational motivation also declined for all students, as did students' aspirations to complete a four-year postsecondary education. (See Table 3b, below.)   More users and nonusers reported cutting classes,

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[12] J. Dryfoos, *Adolescents at Risk: Prevalence and Prevention*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1990).

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receiving failing grades, and being sent to the office for discipline reasons or being suspended from school.

Youth Outcomes Investigated by SBYSP Evaluation	
Academic Outcomes	**Risk Behaviors**
Educational Aspirations	Damaging property
Skipping/cutting class	Stealing money or things
Receiving failing grades	Hitting others
Getting suspended from school	Getting into a physical fight
Getting sent to the office for disciplinary reasons	Having sex
Positive educational motivation (e.g. doing well in school is important)	Using condoms to prevent pregnancy
Grade point average	Using condoms to prevent STD's
Credit accumulation	Getting pregnant
Average daily attendance	Wanting to avoid pregnancy while in school
Social/Emotional Outcomes	Smoking
Feeling happy or pleased	Drinking beer/wine
Feeling proud of self	Drinking liquor
Feeling excited about the future	Using marijuana
Feeling too tired to do things	Using other drugs
Having trouble sleeping	
Feeling unhappy, sad or depressed	
Feeling nervous or tense	
Feeling angry or destructive	
Feeling close to or appreciated by a friend	
Feeling like you weren't going to live very long	
Worrying too much about things	
Having suicidal thoughts	
Positive self-efficacy	
Negative self-efficacy	

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Table 3a. Changes in Risk Behaviors from the baseline (early freshman year) to the follow-up survey (late sophomore year)

USER STATUS	Users n=402			Nonusers n=520			Total n=922		
	Baseline	Follow-up	Absolute Change	Baseline	Follow-up	Absolute Change	Baseline	Follow-up	Absolute Change
EVER HAD SEX	30.9%	58.3%	27.4	23.0%	43.0%	20	26.3%	49.7%	23.4
DEFINITELY WANT TO AVOID PREGNANCY	74.9%	74.3%	-.6	85.0%	83.4%	-1.6	80.6%	79.4%	-1.2
In the last 2 months...									
when having sex, always used contraception to prevent pregnancy	60.9%	44.3%	-16.6	58.3%	53.9%	-4.4	59.6%	48.9%	-10.7
when having sex, always used condoms to prevent STDS	63.6%	43.6%	-20.0	59.3%	51.5%	-7.8	61.5%	47.4%	-14.1
felt unhappy, sad or depressed	18.9%	16.6%	-2.3	11.2%	14.1%	2.9	14.5%	15.2%	0.7
felt nervous or tense	17.6%	17.0%	-0.6	11.8%	14.6%	2.8	14.4%	15.7%	1.3
worried too much about things	25.8%	27.7%	1.9	16.5%	22.9%	6.4	20.6%	25.0%	4.4
felt angry or destructive	19.1%	18.0%	-1.1	12.2%	17.4%	5.2	15.2%	17.7%	2.5
thought about killing myself	22.6%	20.9%	-1.7	18.2%	16.9%	-1.3	20.1%	18.6%	-1.5
hit someone to hurt them	34.2%	26.7%	-5.7	28.0%	18.5%	-9.5	29.9%	21.9%	-8.0
got into a physical fight	27.0%	29.5%	2.5	20.7%	18.4%	-2.3	23.4%	23.1%	-.3
damaged someone else's property on purpose	31.9%	20.6%	-11.3	27.5%	20.0%	-7.5	29.4%	20/3%	-9.1
smoked cigarettes	30.8%	32.7%	1.9	23.2%	34.5%	11.3	26.5%	33.7%	7.2
drank beer or wine	37.2%	39.2%	2.0	36.7%	43.5%	6.8	36.9%	41.7%	4.8
used marijuana	19.7%	24.0%	4.3	10.1%	20.8%	10.7	14.2%	22.1%	7.9

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Table 3b. Changes in Educational Status and Behaviors from the baseline (early freshman year) to follow-up survey (late sophomore year)

USER STATUS	Users n=402			Nonusers n=520			Total n=922		
	Baseline	Follow-up	Absolute Change	Baseline	Follow-up	Absolute Change	Baseline	Follow-up	Absolute Change
EDUCATIONAL STATUS									
Average daily attendance	95.9%	96.2%	.3	96.2%	96.4%	.2	96.1%	96.3%	.2
Special education status	8.8%	8.7%	-0.1	5.7%	6.2%	0.5	7.0%	7.3%	.3
Mean grade point average	2.6	2.7	0.1	3.2	3.1	-0.1	2.9	2.9	0.0
Averaged credits earned	33.1	31.3	-1.8	34.2	32.8	-1.4	33.7	32.1	-1.6
EDUCATIONAL BEHAVIORS (within the last two months of school)									
Received a falling grade	41.4%	56.2%	14.8	34.8%	54.7%	19.9	37.7%	55.4%	17.7
Cut (skipped) one or more classes									
Almost every day	1.5%	5.3%	3.8	0.6%	3.5%	2.9	1.0%	4.3%	3.3
Once or twice a week	2.3%	6.9%	4.6	3.1%	6.7%	3.6	2.7%	6.8%	4.1
Once or twice a month	8.0%	16.6%	8.6	5.3%	13.5%	8.2	6.5%	14.8%	8.3
Only once	11.0%	18.8%	7.8	9.3%	16.0%	6.7	10.1%	17.2%	7.1
Never	77.3%	52.5%	-24.8	81.7%	60.3%	-21.4	79.8%	57.0%	-22.8

USER STATUS	Users n=402			Nonusers n=520			Total n=922		
	Baseline	Follow-up	Absolute Change	Baseline	Follow-up	Absolute Change	Baseline	Follow-up	Absolute Change
Suspended from school									
Zero	93.7%	83.2%	-10.5	96.9%	88.4%	-8.5	95.5%	86.2%	-9.3
Once	4.7%	12.2%	7.5	2.7%	7.1%	4.4	3.5%	9.3%	5.8
More than once	1.6%	4.6%	3.0	0.4%	4.4%	4.0	0.9%	4.5%	3.6
Sent to office for discipline	16.8%	24.7%	7.9	9.8%	22.8%	13.0	12.8%	23.6%	10.8
EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS									
High school only	2.8%	5.8%	3.0	4.1%	4.1%	0.0	3.5%	4.9%	1.4
Non-degree professional training program/Two-year college degree	10.8%	10.1%	-0.7	9.6%	15.9%	6.3	10.1%	13.3%	3.2
Four-year college degree/Master's degree/ Doctorate	73.7%	70.6%	-3.1	70.2%	67.9%	-2.3	71.7%	69.0%	-2.7
Don't know	11.1%	8.4%	-2.7	13.5%	8.2%	-5.3	12.4%	8.3%	-4.1
EDUCATIONAL MOTIVATION									
I do my schoolwork because: (percent responding *very true*)									
Doing well in school is important to me.	73.4%	62.8%	-10.6	78.2%	67.6%	-11.4	76.1%	65.5%	-10.6
I need to learn to get a good job.	85.5%	64.9%	-20.6	86.5%	74.1%	-12.4	86.1%	70.1%	-16.0
It will help me get my diploma or GED.	85.5%	76.2%	-9.3	84.8%	75.7%	-9.1	85.1%	75.9%	-9.2
Finishing my education is important to me.	90.0%	87.5%	-2.5	90.7%	88.4%	-2.3	90.4%	88.0%	-2.4
High dropout risk*	22.8%	40.3%	17.5	17.0%	35.8%	18.8	19.5%	37.7%	18.2

* Percentage of students who had three or more of the following characteristics: over-age for grade, grade point average below 2.0, skipping one or more classes in the two months prior to the survey, receiving a failing grade in the two months prior to the survey, low educational aspirations, and special education status.

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In many outcome areas, without controlling for initial differences, SBYSP users appeared to have lost more ground than nonusers. That is, SBYSP users showed even greater change in a negative direction than their nonusing peers. For example, more users than nonusers reported increased delinquent acts, such as stealing and hitting with the intention of hurting. More sexually active users than nonusers reported never using contraception or condoms to prevent STDs than at the baseline survey and fewer reported that they used protection every time or most times than had originally done so. The greater increase in risky behavior among users at the follow-up survey is not surprising considering SBYSP users were more at risk and engaged in more risky behavior than nonusers at the baseline survey. Despite this, users appeared to make gains compared with nonusers in a few areas. Specifically, users showed greater improvement from the baseline to the follow-up survey than nonusers in average daily attendance, grade point average, being sent to the office for discipline, multiple suspensions, and use of tobacco and alcohol.

However, it is important to recall that the baseline survey revealed important differences between students who took advantage of SBYSP services and activities and those who did not. This means that the outcomes for users and nonusers cannot be compared fairly without controlling for these differences. To address this problem, we conducted multiple and logistic regression analyses on the outcome variables controlling for prevalence of the outcome or behavior at the baseline, degree of family stress, presence of family support and other sources of adult support, and participation in positive youth activities. This set of variables allowed us to control for pre-existing (or baseline) differences in user and nonuser behavior, as well as for elements that the literature and research have shown to be protective factors in youth development.[13]

Another potential threat to the validity of a user/nonuser comparison is selection bias. It could be argued that students who seek out and use SBYSP services may be more motivated to get assistance and less isolated and disengaged from the school community than their nonusing peers—and therefore, more likely to have positive outcomes than nonusers. This does not seem to be the case however. First, not all users of SBYSP are self-referred (an indication of self-selection bias). Many students are referred to SBYSP by school counselors, teachers and administrators when there are signs of trouble. For other students, SBYSP becomes involved in response to a specific incidence, such as a crisis in the family or fighting at school (where participation in an SBYSP anger-management work shop is mandatory). Further evidence that users were not a self-selected group whose outcomes are likely to be more positive than their nonusing peers are the differences in situational characteristics and at-risk behavior at the baseline survey. As discussed earlier, users were more likely to have stressful family situations, less likely to have supportive networks outside of their family, and more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco, taking drugs, and engaging in unprotected sex. Therefore, we were confident that self-selection bias did not pose a substantial threat to the validity of our comparison group.

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[13] P. Benson, *The Troubled Journey: A Portrait of 6th-12th Grade Youth* (Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran Brotherhood, 1990) and E. Roehlkepartain and P. Benson, *Healthy Communities, Healthy Youth* (Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute, 1996), pamphlet. See also M. D. Resnick, P.S. Bearman, R.W. Blum, K.E. Bauman, K.M. Harris, J. Jones, J. Tabor, T. Beuhring, R.E. Sieving, M. Shew, M. Ireland, L. H. Bearinger, J. R. Udry, "Protecting Adolescents from Harm: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health," *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 278, No. 10, September 10, 1997.

Our hypothesis, then, was that although SBYSP user outcomes were worse at the baseline measure compared with nonusers and were likely to continue to decline over time, participation in SBYSP might reverse the downward trend or at least lessen the rate of decline. In other words, although users were unlikely to show greater improvement in these outcomes than nonusers, participation in SBYSP would reduce the gap between users and nonusers. Results of regression analyses conducted on the 37 outcomes investigated support this hypothesis. For 31 of the 37 outcomes, we saw greater improvement, or less of a decline, for users compared with nonusers. Further, the following 11 outcomes showed a positive and statistically significant[14] effect of participating in SBYSP:

- Damaging, destroying or marking up somebody else's property on purpose

- Using contraceptives to prevent pregnancy

- Using condoms for STD prevention

- Smoking cigarettes

- Having trouble going to sleep or staying asleep

- Feeling angry and destructive

- Worrying too much about things

- Feeling unhappy, sad or depressed

- Having suicidal thoughts

- Expressing higher educational aspirations

- Accumulating credits toward graduation

As shown in **Table 4**, the statistically significant positive findings for the outcomes listed above indicate that the greater a student's use of SBYSP, the greater his or her improvement (or the smaller the decline) in the outcome area, compared with nonusers. In six areas—stealing, skipping or cutting classes, using marijuana, getting pregnant, wanting to avoid pregnancy while in high school, and feeling proud of oneself—the regressions analyses showed negative, but nonsignificant, effects.

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[14] Because we hypothesized that SBYSP would have a positive effect on outcomes, we used a one-tailed significance test.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients (Betas and Odds) for Selected SBYSP Outcomes

Outcomes	Utilization X Baseline		School-Based Utilization		Baseline (freshman year)		Family Stress		Participation in Youth Activities		Family Support		Other Support
Betas													
Educational aspirations	.08	†	-.04		.54	†	-.09	†			.10	†	-.01
Using condoms to prevent pregnancy	.22	*	-.19		.07		-.20	*	.11		.09		-.09
Using condoms to prevent STD's	.27	*	-.22		.04		-.19	†	.12		.03		-.10
Smoking	-.13	†	-.04		.37	†	.06		-.07		.03		-.02
Insomnia	-.09	**	.04		.35	†	.04		-.01		-.01		-.04
Feeling unhappy, sad or depressed	-.07	*	-.04		.37	†	.12	†	.02		.02		-.02
Worrying too much	-.07	*	-.04		.36	†	.12	†	.07	*	-.01		.00
Feeling angry or destructive	-.07	*	.01		.32	†	.13	†	-.04		-.06		.00
Suicidal thoughts	-.11	**	.16	†	.26	†	.04		-.09	**	-.00		-.01
Credits earned	.16	†	-.12	†	.47	†	-.02		.09	*	.07	**	-.03
Odds													
Vandalizing property	-.63	*	1.33		2.49	†	1.16		-.91		-.13	†	-.88

Note: Negative signs on odds indicate the direction of change.

* p < .05, one-tailed
** p < .05, two-tailed
† p < .01, two-tailed

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For each regression model, students' utilization of SBYSP services,[15] their baseline measure of the outcome variable (e.g., frequency of smoking at the baseline survey), presence of family and other adult support, and participation in positive youth activities were used to predict the outcome variables (e.g., frequency of smoking at the follow-up survey). In addition, differences between users and nonusers at the baseline measure indicated that there was an interaction effect between SBYSP utilization and baseline outcomes. Therefore, the interaction between utilization and baseline measures of the outcome was also used to predict the outcome variables, and its coefficient can be interpreted as the effect of SBYSP utilization on the outcome.

Among these 11 statistically significant outcomes,[16] the largest effect size, as measured by the regression coefficient betas, was seen for using condoms to prevent STDs. Using contraceptives to prevent pregnancy, credit accumulation, and smoking also had larger betas than educational aspirations or emotional health-related outcomes. However, statistical significance tests suggest that SBYSP's effect on students' educational aspirations, credit accumulation and smoking was also strong, with highly significant ($p < .01$, two-tailed) main effects.

SBYSP utilization was the strongest predictor of the outcome variable in most of these models. However, for some outcomes, family stress and family support were stronger predictors. Not surprisingly, family stress was a greater predictor of students' feeling unhappy or depressed, worrying too much, and feeling angry or destructive than SBYSP utilization. Family stress was also a greater predictor of educational aspirations than SBYSP utilization. Level of family support was the strongest predictor of vandalism in this model.

Level of support from other adults was not a statistically significant predictor of any of the 11 outcomes, suggesting that it is not as strong a protective factor as receiving support from family members and participating in positive youth activities. Another possible explanation is that support from other adults works as a protective factor only in the absence of support from family members. In other words, if students have support from their families, there may not be "value added" from additional support from other adults. Additional analyses need to be conducted to test this hypothesis.

These results suggest that those students who took advantage of SBYSP services and activities did indeed benefit from them in quite important ways that reduce their risks of a range of negative outcomes and increase the probability of positive outcomes. Although most educational outcomes did not show statistically significant positive effects, the finding of a significant positive association between credit accumulation and program participation is very important. It suggests that SBYSP projects have the potential to sustain some quite-at-risk students long enough for them to make concrete progress toward completing high school.

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[15] Utilization of SBYSP is a scale score that takes into account the number of different services used and the frequency with which they were used.

[16] Because the outcome variable for damaging property was a dichotomous variable, we used logistic regression to test the model. Logistic regressions yield odds rather than betas, therefore the size of the effect for the outcome damaging property cannot be compared to the size of the effect of the multiple regression equation outcomes. Therefore, effect size comparisons were made only among the 10 multiple regression models.

Methodological challenges to Measuring Educational Outcomes

Measuring educational outcomes for participants of the SBYSP posed several methodological challenges endemic to any comparable study. The following section describes these challenges as they related to accurately measuring dropouts, the difficulty of measuring SBYSP's effect on keeping students from dropping out of school, and the limited ability to measure latent effects of SBYSP.

"Keep-ins" and dropouts. During most focus groups conducted as part of AED's evaluation, at least one student made it clear that, without SBYSP, he or she would not have stayed in school. "If it wasn't for School-Based, I wouldn't be in school any more," said one girl in a rural project. Interviewed project staff also described students whose connection to school was tenuous and for whom SBYSP had played a critical role in keeping them connected to school. If it is true that SBYSP is responsible for the persistence of these students as "keep-ins" (as opposed to dropouts), this is an important phenomenon to try to measure and understand. We tried to capture it through the data, experimenting with several strategies, but found no methodologically sound way of doing so.

Unfortunately, not dropping out of school when one might otherwise have done so is a statistical non-event, no different in appearance from the continued enrollment of other students who had not entertained thoughts of leaving. Given the short time frame of the evaluation (covering only the first 2 years of high school), the option of comparing dropout rates for SBYSP users and nonusers was not a practical possibility, since almost all students were under the legal age for school-leaving. In fact, even after students turn 16, actual dropping out is also often a statistical non-event, since relatively few students who have become so detached from school as to stop coming suddenly decide to walk into the guidance counselor's office to officially withdraw. More often, according to the guidance counselors, they simply stop coming to school and disappear.

Searching for other ways to tell whether students taking advantage of SBYSP services and activities were less likely to leave school prematurely, evaluators considered comparing the rate of non-return (as a result of transferring from the school, being a long-term absentee, or any other reason for no longer being included on the class rolls) for students in both groups who were at highest risk of dropping out (students with more than three risk factors on the dropout scale) and who had taken the baseline survey. This involved identifying students who did not take the follow-up survey because they were no longer in school, as distinct from those who were still on the rolls but were absent or missed taking the survey for some other reason.

We encountered two problems in this effort. First, the number of non-returning students who were at high risk of dropout was sufficiently low that we questioned the validity of interpreting any difference in sample attrition between these two groups. Second, even if differences in non-return were visible, those factors most likely to be associated with school dropout are very difficult to distinguish from the residential instability experienced by many students in families experiencing social and economic stress.

Keep-ins are not model students. A second challenge encountered in interpreting the educational outcome data involved the apparent lack of change in all but two educational outcomes—educational aspiration and accumulation of credits toward graduation. Despite apparent movement in a positive direction, we did not find statistically significant association between participation in SBYSP and

students' grade point average, educational motivation, attendance, cutting classes, getting sent to the office for discipline or being suspended or receiving failing grades. This suggests that, if it is true that SBYSP managed to keep some quite-at-risk students in school, they still were not able to address students' underlying educational problems, nor their emotional and behavioral responses to these problems and to school in general.

Latent effects of SBYSP. A third challenge relates to the time frame of our evaluation, and within which youth may show outcomes of their participation in SBYSP. Many evaluations show that educational, social/emotional and behavioral outcomes are relatively long-term goals and that a significant amount of time is required before outcomes achieve measurable magnitude. For example, youth in the Quantum Opportunities Program showed statistically significant effects only after four years of participation in the intervention. The SBYSP evaluation was limited by the relatively short duration of the study. We were able to track students' outcomes for only the first two years of their high-school career. To truly measure the effect of SBYSP on its stated mission of "enabling adolescents, especially those with problems, to complete their education, obtain skills that either lead to employment or to additional education, and to lead a mentally and physically healthy life," we will have to continue follow this cohort of youth for several more years.

School-linked Collaborative Services and the Balance Between Social and Educational Outcomes

In discussing the lessons that can be drawn from the experience of the School Based Youth Services Program, this evaluation has looked at two kinds of outcomes: 1) the social, emotional and behavioral effects on students using services and/or participating in activities delivered in school settings and 2) the academic effects on students taking advantage of these services and activities. Although one might have hoped that SBYSP would lead to a greater range improved academic outcomes at statistically significant levels, it must be recalled that SBYSP is primarily a school-linked service model, with strong components in recreation, health, mental health, employment preparation, and substance abuse prevention, but a relatively weak educational component. Indeed, the evaluation's data have shown that a substantial group of students attending these six schools had significant social, emotional and behavioral problems, and that SBYSP was reaching those students with the greatest needs.

Across New Jersey, SBYSP has made substantial contributions to the lives of the students and schools it serves. Its nonacademic components have been utilized by thousands of students in all 21 counties of the state. Exemplary programs have been implemented in areas such as the prevention of adolescent pregnancy and school violence as SBYSP site directors saw these needs arising in their schools. In addition, SBYSP has functioned as a magnet for resources, enabling some sites to provide case management and child-care services to keep adolescent parents in school.

Academic improvement of individual students was approached tangentially by most School Based sites. The implicit assumption was that when the social, emotional, and behavioral barriers to educational achievement were removed, students would be able to achieve academically in ways similar to students without these kinds of problems. However, the only academically focused support service provided by SBYSP was tutoring. Since tutoring was not one of the core services (being, as it is, on the edge of what the school "could, would or should do itself"), it was provided in an inconsistent manner depending on funding levels and the integration of the School Based project into the host school. In fact, tutoring

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was only available in four of the six sites that AED studied in depth, and in only one site on a continuing basis. Further, only 12.9 percent of SBYSP students reported receiving tutoring, about one-third the number who reported receiving individual or group counseling. Moreover, the average frequency of receiving tutoring was only slightly more than once a month. Indeed, an analysis that looked at only students using tutoring services on a regular basis might show statistically significant results in a greater range of educational outcomes. Unfortunately, our sample size is not sufficiently robust to permit such analyses.

Thus the lack of broad educational outcomes for SBYSP should not be surprising. First, the poverty that is associated with the kinds of social, emotional and behavioral problems we observed is also reflected in low-performing schools with lower paid teachers. Second, the emotional, familial and educational problems that may have caused or contributed to the students' academic difficulties probably did so long before they entered high school. In effect, these students entered high school with academic problems that needed to be addressed by more than tutoring. Once students' personal barriers to academic achievement are removed, it does not automatically follow that their academic problems will simply disappear or be easily remedied.

Nevertheless, programs like SBYSP can make major contributions to their host schools. Beyond helping students address individual and family problems, school-linked service programs can help create a more friendly and supportive environment in a school, where students' difficulties can be dealt with in a supportive and non-punitive manner. They can help schools address their contribution to students' problems (e.g., treating students in a manner that stimulates or reinforces negative personal and academic behavior) or develop ways to cope more productively with students whose difficulties lead them to be disruptive. The School Based project can also help the school support the transition between middle school and high school and help build relationships with parents. Finally, the program has rooted itself in the communities where it exists and has made it acceptable for programs within schools to address problems once considered outside of school purview, such as pregnancy prevention. In doing so, it has helped the community regard the school as a center for needed services to their families, and it has led to improvements in the access and delivery of social services.

In addition to school-linked service collaborations, however, schools need to bring together the supportive services and activities that address students nonacademic needs with effective educational approaches. Interventions that have achieved impressive educational gains, such as the Quantum Opportunities Program or Marshalltown, Iowa's Caring Connection, have strong educational components that involve at-risk students in ongoing educational support activities, as well as a range of social and emotional support services and activities.

To achieve the improved educational outcomes so urgently demanded by today's educational authorities, collaborative service programs need to be matched to appropriate educational strategies that address students' academic problems in a major way, like the programs cited above. And it is important not to underestimate the labor-intensive effort involved in developing the collaborative relationships that enable most educational interventions to work.

Discussion

This last section presents conclusions and recommendations for school-community collaborations seeking to improve educational outcomes, based on the experience of the New Jersey School Based program.

Community-school collaborations that focus on linking the school to vital services would be well advised to address the full age-range of young people—from the elementary school level through the end of high school. Given the pressures in the lives of today's children and youth, strong programs are needed that can support them at different stages during their development. There is no way of predicting at what point young people will need educational and emotional support. For example, a student who is doing well, both educationally and emotionally, at the end of elementary school may still confront a devastating family crisis, in middle or high school.

Timeliness of services is also critical. By high school, students' unaddressed educational problems often have sunk deep roots, with emotional and behavioral consequences. Addressing these educational problems years after they began often requires much more comprehensive attention than might have been needed earlier, including intensive educational support—which may be beyond the scope of a collaborative program to offer—as well as accompanying individual attention from the schools.

Finally, it is important that the push for better educational outcomes not lead to a categorical focus for school-linked service programs, narrowing the availability of services to students with academic difficulties. While, as a whole, SBYSP users were less solid students than nonusers, many among them were functioning reasonably well on an academic level but had serious needs for services.

However rich the program model, **it is critical to have realistic expectations of what a supportive community-school collaboration can do**, and not promise funders and policy makers more than can be delivered, as the following quote makes clear:

> Having realistic bench-marks and negotiating obtainable and measurable outcomes increases multifold the possibility for successful outcomes—which increases the possibilities of continued funding. . . .This is not to seek low standards or outcome measures which could be conceived as having little merit. Rather it is to note that setting unrealistic or unobtainable outcomes has a deeper price than just the failure of program or the demise of a collaborative arrangement. The real cost is in the loss of services to human beings who need them. . . Measurable outcomes, goals, and targets all need to be extremely sensitive to this fact." [17]

Securing official support for collaboration from both sides of the organizational divide is critical to both the initial and continuing strength of the partnership. This means not only visible support in policy language, but also administrative mandates backed up with funding for technical assistance to

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[17] James R. Garvin and Alma H. Young, "Resource issues: a case study from New Orleans," in *The Politics of Linking School and Social Services*, edited by Louise Adler and Sid Gardner, *The 1993 Yearbook of the Politics of Education Association*, Washington, D.C., The Falmer Press, 1994 , p. 105.

support collaboration, and the inclusion of the "capacity to collaborate with outside organizations" as a criterion in procedures for selecting and evaluating school principals and guidance staff.

School-community collaborations benefit from continued technical assistance and support. The experience of SBYSP, with the continuing technical support provided by the New Jersey Department of Human Services,[18] as well as that of other community-school collaborations—such as the New York City Beacons Initiative (assisted by the Youth Development Institute of the Fund for the City of New York)—show that such programs benefit enormously from the ongoing provision of resources, technical assistance, and networking opportunities. These resources sustain staff who cope daily with the challenges of addressing students needs and developing and maintaining collaborative working relationships with the host school, local service providers and the surrounding community.

In the case of New Jersey, the School Based support team provides ongoing access to information, training, and other resources, as well as site-level intelligence on how to cope with the challenges of constructing both effective School Based programming and good collaborative relationships with schools, lead agencies, and community-based agencies. In addition, the monthly School Based meetings, organized by the support team, provide project leaders the opportunity to fully articulate the vision of the collaboration and learn ways to narrow the gap between the vision and the reality. By providing funds for sufficient time and the technical and networking support to achieve success, the School Based initiative laid the groundwork for public support and policy changes to support the initiative.

Community-school collaborations, however well designed and implemented, cannot substitute for reform of the schools, nor can a program succeed if it is simply an add-on to a failing school:

> Interdisciplinary cooperation, no matter how expert it might be, cannot solve systemic breakdowns. It is a short step from this observation to the realization that interagency collaboration efforts are doomed to failure if they are merely "pasted on" to an existing system which is failing to establish professional control over basic school program implementation.[19]

Efforts to address students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs must be accompanied by equally committed efforts to improve the schools these students attend. Edward Tetelman, one of the creators of New Jersey's School-Based Youth Services Program, has appeared before the state legislature and worked within bureaucratic channels to push for increased funding for the schools served by SBYSP projects, challenging the legislature, in so many words, to do what SBYSP, under the best of circumstances, can never be expected to do—improve the schools:

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[18] The role of the support team at the New Jersey Department of Human Services is discussed in *The New Jersey School Based Youth Services Program: The State Policy Context Title*, Academy for Educational Development, 1998. The organizational location of the capacity building intermediary agent is less important than its ability to work with the projects, both individually and collectively, in a constructive and nonthreatening manner.

[19] Douglas E. Mitchell and Linda D. Scott, "Professional and institutional perspectives on interagency collaboration" in *The Politics of Linking School and Social Services*, edited by Louise Adler and Sid Gardner, *The 1993 Yearbook of the Politics of Education Association*, Washington, D.C., The Falmer Press, 1994 , p. 84.

While we can begin to reduce negative social factors and help a child become ready to learn, we cannot, in fact, move the learning process if it is not understandable, interesting, or challenging for the youngsters. We must address how children and youth are taught and make serious changes on that side of the equation. . . We must do both—provide social service supports and alter the learning side if we are to see real long-term investment."[20]

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[20] Edward Tetelman, Assistant Commissioner and Director of the Office Legal and Regulatory Affairs, New Jersey Department of Human Services, Testimony delivered before the Education Funding Review Commission, August 18, 1993.

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