

**Research Committee, Best Practices Subcommittee**

**October 17, 2006**

**General Recommendations**

**Programs must be voluntary**

**Programs will include all children and youth 6-18**

**Programs will be state-wide and include training for court personnel, probation, police, DSS workers and school personnel.**

**Program will be family/community based**

**Programs will be focused toward rapid reunification with family or life-long connection.**

**Custody will be limited to 6 months with exceptions for mental health and safety**

**All area DSS offices must provide a court liaison to each Juvenile Court in their area**

**Services**

**Rapid response teams, including DSS, schools, and when necessary probation.**

**Respite will include voluntary placement, 5-10 days with no extensions, provide intensive family support**

**Family support services may include birth family, extended family, community and life long connection.**

**Placement must be no further than 15 miles from the child's home and provide family support.**

**Transportation will be provided as funds become available**

**All area DSS offices must provide a court liaison for each Juvenile Court in their districts.**

### **Who can file?**

**Police**

**Officer of attendance or school vice-principal**

**Either parent, with custody, after the completion of a diversion program.**

**School may file truancy until 16 and stubborn child until 18.**

### **Suggested Programs**

#### **S.T.A.Y. "Start Truancy Awareness Younger"**

**This program, established by the Plymouth County Juvenile Probation Office, works with children beginning in Grade 1, is in the schools and works directly with school personnel and parents to bring information and access to services to families at the earliest possible time.**

#### **START Team**

**This program, instituted in Middlesex County, works in middle schools and is designed to respond to a child's and family needs quickly and to provide them with information and access to services. The program includes school personnel, police, DSS, Juvenile Court and the D.A's office.**

#### **Rhode Island Truancy Court**

**[www.courts.state.ri.us/truancycourt/default.htm](http://www.courts.state.ri.us/truancycourt/default.htm)**

## **Evidence Based Programs**

### **Ohio Alternative Education Challenge Grant Program**

The Center supports the work of 127 alternative education programs serving children and adolescents from more than 500 Ohio school districts. The Center identifies and disseminates information about evidence-based practices, provides technical assistance consistent with this evidence-based approach, and conducts an annual evaluation of the state-wide program. The Center also provides assistance to the elected officials and agency directors who provide leadership for the program. More than 142,000 students have been helped by the alternative education program.

<http://altdmh.osu.edu/aboutus/aboutus.html>

This center also has a searchable database for alternative education programs- all of which are evidence based

### **Adolescent Transitions Program**

[cfc.uoregon.edu/atp.htm](http://cfc.uoregon.edu/atp.htm)

Population served: Families with middle-school children

#### Program Effects:

- Increased social competence, more positive youth-caregiver interaction, lower number of behavior problems than control
- Studied alternative intervention strategies to reduce escalation in problem behaviors among 158 families with high-risk (male and female) young adolescents (aged 11-14 yrs).
- 119 families were randomly assigned to either a parent focus, teen focus, parent and teen focus, self-directed change (materials only) intervention condition.
- 39 families were recruited as a quasi-experimental control. Parent focus and teen focus interventions resulted in immediate beneficial effects in observed and reported family conflict.
- Parent intervention conditions showed immediate beneficial effects on behavior problems at school.
- Longitudinal trends suggest that the parent focus condition may reduce subsequent tobacco use, compared with all other approaches.
- Interventions that aggregated high-risk youths into groups, however, showed the highest escalations in tobacco use and problem behavior at school, beginning at termination and persisting to follow-up.

## **Fast Track Program**

Run by: Duke University, Center for Child and Family Policy

[www.fasttrackproject.org](http://www.fasttrackproject.org)

Fast Track was granted funding for the time, from September 1, 1998, to August 31, 2003. Additional funding has been renewed for September 1, 2003 to August 31, 2008

**Aim:** To prevent adolescent anti-social behavior. The program targets students when they enter first grade for intensive intervention

Program Effects:

Improvements in classroom behavior, reduced conduct problems both at school and home, increased attention and enthusiasm in the classroom, increased emotional competency.

- By the end of elementary school, 33 percent of the intervention group had a developmental trajectory of decreasing conduct problems, as compared with 27 percent of the control group.
- Furthermore, placement in special education by the end of elementary school was about one-fourth lower in the intervention group than in the control group.

## **Functional Family Therapy**

Program Effects:

- Reduce recidivism rates by 30% to 60%, reduced disruptive behavior and conduct disordered (violent) behavior.
- Estimated Program Cost per participant: \$2,140.00
- Estimated net benefit per program participant (NPV): \$26,216.00
- Estimated total benefit-to-cost ratio: \$13.25
- FFT was provided to a group of 27 rural, lower SES status delinquents (mean age 15.4 yrs) and their families, while a comparison group of 27 delinquents received only probation service.
- Recidivism during adulthood was measured by the number of offenses committed during a 3 yr period following the 2-3 yr follow-up period reported on by Gordon et al. Ss who had received FFT showed a recidivism rate of 9% for adult criminal offenses, while Ss who had received only probation services had a recidivism rate of 41%. Results were consistent with previously reported adolescent follow-up rates.

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## **Multisystemic Therapy**

\*This is a program that has been studied extensively with serious juvenile offenders. It might be worth looking at for helping at risk youth because of its track record dealing with more serious cases.

Program is based on the idea that antisocial behavior is determined by an interplay of factors in the youths family community and school. Residential placements do not change the environment that the youth will be going back into.

Treatment Population:

Youth ages 12-17, who already are involved with the law

Program Effects:

Reduced arrest rates by as much as 70%, decreased out of home placement by as much as 60%, decreased incidence of mental health problems in offending youth. Very highly replicated.

Estimated Program Cost per participant: \$5,681.00

Estimated net benefit per program participant (NPV): \$9,316.00

Estimated total benefit-to-cost ratio: \$2.64

This article describes multisystemic therapy (MST), a family- and community-based treatment that has produced favorable outcomes with violent substance-abusing or -dependent adolescents in both realms. Complete survey of research findings  
<http://www.mstservices.com/text/research.html>

\*several randomized trials and quasi-experimental studies aimed at extending the effectiveness of MST to other populations of youth presenting serious clinical problems and their families-these are apparently showing promise.

## **Quantum Opportunities Program**

Treatment Population:

9th grade students

Program Effects:

Decreased dropout rate, higher rate of post-secondary education, significant reduction in arrests.

Estimated Program Cost per participant: \$25,921.00

Estimated net benefit per program participant (NPV): -\$15,022.00

Estimated total benefit-to-cost ratio: \$0.42

#### Effects Cited in Studies:

Analysis indicates that QOP members, when compared to control groups, were more likely to graduate from high school, more likely to enroll in college, less likely to drop out, more likely to have received awards, and less likely to have children. Although QOP members were not immune from the many hazards of inner city life, the benefits of the program were made apparent by the evaluation.

### **Reconnecting Youth**

#### Treatment Population:

High-school youth at risk for dropping out

#### Program Effects:

Increased GPA, increased attendance, decreased drug and alcohol use, decreased depression and anxiety, decreased violence/ conduct problems. Very short follow-up period (less than a year), not replicated.

[www.son.washington.edu/departments/pch/ry](http://www.son.washington.edu/departments/pch/ry)

Results indicate that all groups showed decreased suicide risk behaviors, depression, hopelessness, stress, and anger; all groups also reported increased self esteem and network social support.

Increased personal control was observed only in the experimental groups and not in the assessment only control group.

### **Career Academies**

[http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5//TitleV\\_MPG\\_Table\\_Ind\\_Rec.asp?id=96](http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5//TitleV_MPG_Table_Ind_Rec.asp?id=96)

The evaluation included a sample of 1,764 students who applied for one of the Career Academies. Of these, 959 students were randomly assigned to the treatment group and were accepted for admission to the academies. The remaining 805 students were randomly assigned to a control group and were not invited to participate in the academies, though they could choose other options in the high school or school district. The sample was 56.2 percent female, 56.2 percent Hispanic, 30.2 percent African-American, 6.4 percent white, and 7.2 percent Asian-American or Native American.

The program had the strongest effects with students who were at high risk of dropping out of high school. These students were less likely than the control group to drop out of school, had better attendance, and more credits earned in both academic and vocational subjects. The program also showed improved outcomes for the low-risk group. This group improved on several outcomes, including the percentage of students who earned

enough credits to graduate on time. Medium-risk students showed no differences between the treatment and control group.

### **Skills Opportunity and Recognition (SOAR)**

[http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5//TitleV\\_MPG\\_Table\\_Ind\\_Rec.asp?id=421](http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5//TitleV_MPG_Table_Ind_Rec.asp?id=421)

Posits that positive social bonds can reduce antisocial behavior and delinquency

Teachers receive instruction that emphasizes proactive classroom management, interactive teaching, and cooperative learning

Parents receive optional training programs throughout their children's schooling. When children are in first and second grades, seven sessions of family management training help parents monitor children and provide appropriate and consistent discipline

When children are in fifth and sixth grades, five sessions help parents create family positions on drugs and encourage children's resistance skills.

When the students reached 18 (6 years post intervention) they showed positive effects for the full treatment intervention group, compared with the control group, on many of the school, delinquency, and sexual behavior outcomes

At the end of grade 6, high-risk youth, compared with control youth, were more attached and committed to school, and SOAR boys were less involved with antisocial peers.

At the end of grade 11, SOAR students, compared with control students, showed

- Reduced involvement in violent delinquency and sexual activity
- Reductions in being drunk and in drinking and driving

Researchers found that the benefits of SOAR lasted through age 21. The students, now young adults, were engaged in less risky sexual behavior and had less history of violence and less heavy use of alcohol.

### **San Diego Breaking Cycles**

[http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5//TitleV\\_MPG\\_Table\\_Ind\\_Rec.asp?id=604](http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5//TitleV_MPG_Table_Ind_Rec.asp?id=604)

The prevention component targets youths who are not yet involved in the juvenile justice system but who exhibit problem behavior such as disobeying their parents, violating curfew, repeated truancy, running away from home, or experimenting with drugs or alcohol

Community Assessment Teams (CATs)—consisting of a coordinator, case managers, probation officers, and other experts—assess the needs of the youth and his or her family and then provide direct services or referrals to resources in the community to reduce the high-risk behaviors.

The graduated sanctions component tries to prevent further involvement in delinquency by combining sanctions with treatment

Youths in the treatment group were significantly less likely to be wards of the court at 12 months and were still less likely at 18 months (47 percent versus 63 percent).

The treatment group was significantly more likely to be enrolled in school 1 year after commitment.

This program has short lived effects for drug and alcohol use and reoffending rates

The evaluation of the graduated sanctions component for youths committed 240 days of a year found that the treatment group was less likely than the control group to have a referral to probation or a true finding during each of the time periods, but the differences decreased over time

## Model Prevention Programs with Positive Outcome Data

**State:** California

**Name:** San Diego Breaking Cycles

**Administrator:** County of San Diego Probation Department

**Funding Source:** State through SDCPD

**Established:** July of 1997

**Contact:** 858-492-2300

**Model Type:** Wraparound / Case Management

**Service Offered:** A juvenile who is at risk of an out-of-home placement can be referred to Breaking Cycles through a Juvenile Court Order, then a screening committee determines whether the juvenile will enter the program by examining his or her current offense, prior criminal history, and other personal, social, and family characteristics. A youth is brought to Breaking Cycles, put into Juvenile Hall, and begins a 10- to 14- day evaluation of educational performance, mental health needs, drug/alcohol dependencies, self and family resiliency, institutional adjustment, and strengths and future goals. A case plan is developed for each youth by a multidisciplinary team, with the family's input. A youth can be placed in a community-based institution or a home. Many youths start in a highly structured environment and, through goal attainment, step down to a lower level of commitment. Reassessments are performed weekly on the basis of public safety, the youth's rehabilitation, and subsequent compliance with the program's case plan developed in the assessment plan.

**Population Served:** Both genders Ages 12-17

**Outcome Data:** The evaluation of the prevention component found that the treatment group was less likely to receive a referral to probation (19 percent versus 27 percent); however, there was no real difference between the two groups in the amount of true findings (7 percent versus 9 percent). The treatment group was significantly less likely to use alcohol and drugs both preintervention and postintervention. There was virtually no change in school enrollment status for the treatment group after the intervention (97 percent versus 96 percent), while there was a decrease in enrollment for the control group (99 percent versus 91 percent). Both groups showed a decrease in the amount of juveniles suspended or expelled. The treatment group dropped from 54 percent to 38 percent, while the control group dropped from 57 percent to 39 percent. School performance was measured by being at the appropriate grade level in school. At pretest almost all juveniles were at the appropriate grade level (96 percent of the treatment group, 97 percent of the control), but by posttest the percentage for the control group dropped to 84 percent while the treatment group only dropped to 94 percent.

**State:** Colorado

**Name:** Behavioral Monitoring and Reinforcement Program

**Administrator:** Schools/Communities

**Funding Source:** School Budget and Grants from DOE also varies by community.

**Contact:** Brenna Bry, Ph.D Graduate School of Applied & Prof. Psychology : 732.445.2189

**Established:** The program was first developed by Dr. Bry and first published in 1982 in the American Journal of Community Psychology

**Model Type:** School/Classroom Environment

**Service Offered:** The two year intervention begins when participants are in seventh grade and includes monitoring student actions, rewarding appropriate behavior, and increasing communication between teachers, students, and parents. Program staff check school records for participants daily attendance, tardiness, and official disciplinary actions, and they contact parents by letter, phone, and occasional home visits to inform them of their children's progress. Teachers submit weekly reports assessing students' punctuality, preparedness, and behavior in the classroom, and students are rewarded for good evaluations. Each week, 3-5 students meet with a staff member to discuss their recent behaviors, learn the relationship between actions and their consequences, and role-play pro-social alternatives to problem behaviors; they are also rewarded for refraining from disruptive behavior during these meetings.

**Population Served:** The program can be used in both low-income, urban, and racially-mixed and middle-class, suburban junior high schools. Students are eligible for inclusion if they demonstrate low academic motivation, family problems, or frequent or serious school discipline referrals.

**Outcome Data:** At the end of the program, program students showed higher grades and better attendance when compared to control students. Results from a one-year follow-up study showed that intervention students, compared to control students, had less self-reported delinquency; drug abuse (including hallucinogens, stimulants, glue, tranquilizers, and barbiturates); school-based problems (suspension, absenteeism, tardiness, academic failure); and unemployment (20% and 45%, respectively). A five-year follow-up study found that intervention students had fewer county court records than control students.

**State:** Michigan

**Name:** The Chronic Truancy Initiative

**Established:** 1998

**Administrator:** Schools/Communities

**Funding Source:** School Budgets

**Contact Person:** Tim Bynum, School of Criminal Justice @ Michigan State University, Phone: (517) 355-2197

**Model Type:** School/Law Enforcement/Case Worker

**Service Offered:** School principals reviewed attendance lists at regular intervals to identify youths for inclusion in the program. Parents or guardians of the identified students were sent a form letter informing them of the specific number of days their child had missed. The letter also stressed the importance of compliance with the State compulsory school attendance law while noting potential consequences for noncompliance, including prosecution. If there was no improvement within 2 weeks, the student was referred to the truant officer. A parent or guardian was required to sign a written acknowledgment of the child's nonattendance. If further intervention was deemed necessary, the truant officer forwarded relevant information to a community mental health agency or the child and family services agency. A caseworker was assigned to the case who in turn conducted an assessment of the family, then provided follow-up services. If attendance did not improve after 2 weeks, a local police officer visited the home with the truant officer, who informed the parents or guardians of available services and potential consequences for noncompliance. The officer documented the visit and determined whether the case should be referred to a participating community resource.

**Population Served:** Elementary school students age 6-11

**Outcome Data:** School A the percentage of children missing 20–29 days of school went from 17 in 1997–88, to 15 in 1998–99, to 9 in 1999–2000. Those missing 30+ days went from 17 percent to 19 percent to 7 percent. School B showed that 15 percent of its students missed 20–29 days in 1997–98. In 1998–99 the percentage fell to 10. The level stayed at 10 percent in 1999–2000. The percentage of students who missed 30+ days fell from 21 to 14 to 9. In School C the percentage of students missing 20–29 days went from 13 in 1997–98, to 17 in 1998–99, to 12 in 1999–2000. Those who missed 30+ days dropped from 27 percent to 20 percent to 7 percent. During the 1999–2000 school year there were no other truancy reduction strategies going on in any of the schools.

**State:** Minnesota

**Name:** All Children Excel

**Established:** 1998

**Administrator:** DHS

**Funding Source:** Government

**Model Type:** Wraparound / Case Management

**Service Offered:** The case manager establishes a treatment plan that involves child, family, school, and community resources. With clinical supervision from members of the county multidisciplinary team, ACE case managers concentrate primarily on building resiliency in the child. They also help parents obtain mental health counseling, parenting-skills training, substance abuse treatment, job training, employment opportunities, and housing.

**Population Served:** High risk children of both genders ages 6 to 15 and their families

**Outcome Data:** A 2004 evaluation showed that although a majority of children had histories of chronic delinquent behavior prior to enrollment in ACE, 65% had no further police contact and 86% had not been charged with a subsequent offense over a 4.5 year period. Sixty percent displayed no disruptive behavior at school, attended regularly, and got passing grades.

**State:** Minnesota

**Name:** Early Risers 'Skills for Success' Program

**Established:** 1995

**Administrator:** Gerald J. August, Ph.D. Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Located at: Perspectives Family Center, PACT 4 Families, MidSouth Health Systems, Unlimited Success, Wabasha-Kellogg Elementary

**Funding Source:** Minnesota Department of Health and Human Services

**Model Type:** Leadership and Youth Development, Conflict Resolution / Interpersonal Skills, Classroom Curricula, Mentoring, Parent Training, School/Classroom Environment

**Service Offered:** Parent education and skills training, proactive parent-school consultation, child social skills training and strategic peer involvement, reading and math instruction and educational enrichment activities, family support, consultation, and brief interventions to cope with stress, contingency management of aggressive, disruptive, and noncompliant behavior.

**Population Served:** Elementary school children (ages 6 to 10) who are at high risk for early development of conduct problems.

**Outcome Data:** Academic achievement: High-risk children receiving the program showed significant improvement in rate of academic achievement, with this effect primarily accounted for by gains in basic reading skills. This effect held true for boys and girls. Self-regulation: Both program and control children showed reductions in self-regulation problems. However, those program children with the highest level of aggressive behavior showed significant reductions in behavioral problems compared with their high-aggressive control counterparts. Social competence: High-risk children receiving the program made significant gains in social skills, social adaptability, and leadership following 3 years of intervention.

**State:** Minnesota

**Name:** Truancy Intervention Program

**Established:** 1996

**Administrator:** Ramsey County

**Funding Source:** Ramsey County

**Model Type:** Truancy Prevention

**Service Offered:** For students with multiple absences (3 or more), the school refers the student and family to large group meeting to review attendance laws, and the legal consequences of truancy. Students who then fail to improve their attendance are referred to a School Attendance Review Team (SART). Social worker/counselor, parents, and students collaborate to design attendance contract. Referrals to social service agencies may be made as part of contract.

**Population Served:**

**Outcome Data:** In this county, truancy petitions filed in juvenile court fell by 47%

**State:** Missouri

**Name:** Independence Youth Court

**Established:** December 31, 1985

**Administrator:** Local bar association, Juvenile Division of the Jackson County, Family Court, City of Independence, Independence Police Department.

**Funding Source:** Jackson County Special Fund C.O.M.B.A.T. (Community Backed Anti-Drug Tax, and City of Independence

**Model Type:** Teen/Youth Court

**Service Offered:** The youth judge model, in which there are no jurors, the case is argued by youths volunteering as defense attorneys and prosecutors, and youth volunteer judges are responsible for all proceedings and making the sentencing decision. While not part of the formal process, the executive director is present during court hearings as a spectator and reviews the sentence to make sure that the youth and his or her parents understand the disposition. Youths may volunteer for IYC beginning

at age 13. Defendants may be as young as 7 but no older than 16. All volunteers involved in the IYC must pass a youth bar exam to serve as attorneys or judges. Finally—unlike most youth courts—defendants may plead not guilty during their initial appearance, prompting an adjudication hearing. When a youth makes a “not guilty” plea, the youth judge is responsible for determining whether a finding of guilt is warranted. However, because the IYC is a diversion program, the youth still must comply with the initial diversion agreement regardless of the finding. If not, the defendant may be referred back to the Jackson County Family Court.

**Population Served:** Young Offenders, Status Offenders, Less Serious Offenders, First-Time Offenders

**Outcome Data:** The findings of the ETC project suggest that teen courts are a promising alternative for the juvenile justice system. In IYC the results indicate that youths referred to teen court were significantly less likely to be re-referred to the juvenile justice system for a new offense within 6 months of their initial offense. Specifically, 9 percent of IYC youths recidivated, compared with 28 percent of comparison youths.

**State:** New York

**Name:** Family Keys

**Established:** 2002

**Administrator:** Orange County Dept of Social Service Referred from Probation Dept.

**Funding Source:** DSS

**Model Type:** Diversion

**Service Offered:** After brief screening, the intake officer finds sufficient allegations to support a PINS complaint, the officer refers the case to a newly established community-based agency, Family Keys, rather than to probation intake. Family Keys dispatches counselors to assess the family’s situation 2 to 48 hours after receiving a referral, depending on the severity of the case. Based on the assessment, the agency develops an appropriate short-term intervention plan for the youth and family and provides links to community-based programs. Family Keys works with the family for up to two to three weeks to ensure that the family is engaged in the service plan. The Family Keys intervention takes place lieu of filing a PINS complaint, provides intensive, short-term crisis intervention to families, and diverts PINS cases away from the court system.

**Population Served:** Those wishing to access PINS

**Outcome Data:** PINS intakes down from 762 to 426 2000-2003.

**State:** New York

**Name:** Family Assessment Program

**Established:** December 2, 2002

**Contact:** 212-442-2924, Elisia Georgia

**Administrator:** Administration for Children's Services

**Funding Source:** The New York City Administration for Children's Services

**Model Type:** Diversion

**Service Offered:** Under FAP, families wishing to access the PINS system are directed to the FAP office where they promptly meet with a FAP specialist, who is an experienced ACS social worker. The specialist assesses the families’ concerns and, on the spot, implements the appropriate next steps: a follow up meeting; a referral to emergency mental health or health services; a referral to community-based services; scheduling of further, more extensive assessment; or, in the case of a runaway, the request for a warrant.

**Population Served:**

**Outcome Data:** Drastic reduction in probation intakes and court referrals

**State:** New York

**Name:** Juvenile Release Under Supervision (JRUS)

**Established:** 1985

**Administrator:** Albany County

**Funding Source:** State through DCYF

**Model Type:**

**Service Offered:** Provides intensive supervision and services to eligible youth who previously would have been remanded to detention. All PINS petitions are screened to determine their eligibility for JRUS. The probation department uses an assessment tool that looks at the youth's prior offense record, family relationships (e.g., whether he is willing to go home), community relationships (e.g., whether she is currently receiving services, treatment, or mental health counseling), and school enrollment. Based on the young person's score on the assessment, he or she can be recommended for release to a parent or guardian, release under JRUS, or remand to detention. Specialized probation officers provide daily contact—either by phone or face-to-face in an office, school, home, or treatment agency setting—with teens supervised under JRUS. Youth and families in the program also are referred to necessary services such as mediation, respite care, or parent support groups.

**Population Served:** Youth who might normally be referred to non secure detention facilities

**Outcome Data:** In the 10 months since Albany implemented JRUS, the program's outcomes have been impressive. Out of 336 cases screened for JRUS eligibility since the start of the program, 61 percent (205) were enrolled in the program, 14 percent (46 cases) were remanded to detention, and 24 percent (80 cases) were released to a parent or guardian. Eighty-two percent of all PINS youth enrolled in JRUS completed the program without being remanded to detention. Since the introduction of JRUS, county expenditures on non-secure detention have decreased by an estimated \$50,000 annually.

**State:** Ohio

**Name:** Truancy Prevention through Mediation Program

**Established:** 1996

**Contact:** Edward M. Krauss, (614) 752-9681

**Administrator:** Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management

**Funding Source:** Schools/Counties/Courts

**Model Type:** Prevention/Early Intervention

**Service Offered:** After several absences, school invites parents to participate in mediation session where mediator meets with parents and school teacher or other representative. Student not present if younger than 6th grade. Mediation participants discuss issues and together draft a strategy to move forward. If mediation agreement is violated, school refers to court for higher level of intervention. Court may impose fine or jail time.

**Population Served:** Elementary and Middle School-aged youth

**Outcome Data:** 1,700 mediation sessions helped and in each county there was a significant reduction in number of absences and tardies.

**State:** Pennsylvania

**Name:** Woodrock Youth Development Program

**Established:** 1997

**Administrator:** Schools

**Funding Source:** Woodrock Inc

**Model Type:** Prevention

**Service Offered:** The YDP program model comprises three intervention components: 1) education, including human relations and life skills seminars in which role-playing and other simulations relevant to drug use are incorporated, 2) a program of structured alternative extracurricular activities both after school and on weekends, and 3) peer mediation.

**Population Served:** Elementary and Middle School-aged youth

**Outcome Data:** Improved race relations and cultural sensitivity; and improved school attendance. Additional gains were noted in aggression and self-esteem; decreases in drug usage.

**State:** Rhode Island

**Name:** School Transitional Environmental Program (STEP)

**Established:** 1990

**Administrator:** Ann Seitzinger 401-874-4975

**Funding Source:** School Budget, Grants

**Model Type:** Prevention

**Service Offered:** Students remain in small groups for their homeroom period and their academic subjects. Homeroom teachers act as administrators and guidance counselors re: personal problems. Teachers explain projects to parents and notify them of student absences.

**Population Served:** Students in transition from elementary and middle schools

**Outcome Data:** Students display decreases in absenteeism and increases in grade point average; stability of self-concept (compared with decreases for control students); and more positive feelings of the school environment, perceiving the school as more stable, understandable, well-organized, involving, and supportive. Long-term follow-up indicated that STEP students, compared with controls, had lower dropout rates (21 percent versus 43 percent), and higher grades and fewer absences in 9th and 10th grades.

**State:** Texas

**Name:** Peers Making Peace (PMP)

**Established:** 1992, Picked up in 1995 by Office of Attorney General as a state wide program

**Contact:** 214-621-4700 (cell), Dr. Susan Armoni

**Administrator:** Pax United (non-profit)

**Funding Source:** Pax United, TX Dept. of Criminal Justice, TX Dept of Health, TX Dept. of Ed, CSAP.

**Model Type:** Prevention

**Service Offered:** Each participating school selects a group of 15 to 24 students who represent the community's racial, ethnic, and gender demographics. Students learn skills such as conflict resolution, nonverbal communication, questioning, and maintaining neutrality. Selected students apply the skills they learn by serving as third-party mediators to help those involved in conflict reach mutually satisfactory agreements. Most mediation takes place before or after school, during lunch, or during activity time. Students take responsibility for solving their own problems, which allows teachers to concentrate on teaching.

**Population Served:** Pre K-12

**Outcome Data:** 360 Youth Served - Increased school attendance, increased test scores, decreased suspensions, disciplinary actions.

**State:** Washington

**Name:** Helping the Noncompliant Child

**Established:** Cannot Find Implementation of this program beyond the aforementioned study.

**Administrator:** Community Health Centers

**Funding Source:** Private and State Grants, NPO's

**Model Type:** Parent Training/ Family Therapy

**Services Offered:** The program consists of a series of parenting skills designed to help the parent break out of the coercive cycle of interaction with the child by increasing positive attention for appropriate child behavior, ignoring minor inappropriate behaviors, providing clear instructions to the child, and providing appropriate consequences for compliance (positive attention) and noncompliance (time out). HNC consists of two phases. Parents are then instructed on different paths to follow based on the child's level of compliance. HNC places emphasis on helping parents become competent and comfortable with the various parenting skills taught in the program. Sessions are typically conducted with individual families rather than in groups. Parents and children participate in weekly 60- to 90-minute sessions; average number of sessions is 10. Skills are taught using extensive demonstration, role-plays, and direct practice with the child in the training setting and at home. Progression from one skill to the next is based on demonstrated proficiency.

**Population Served:** Children ages 3 to 8 who have noncompliance or other conduct problems

**Outcome Data:** Short-term effectiveness and setting generalization from the clinic to the home have been demonstrated for both parent and child behaviors—as well as for parents' perceptions of their children. These improvements occur regardless of families' socioeconomic status or age of the children (within the 3- to 8-year-old range). Maintenance or long-term effects of HNC have been documented in several studies, with follow-up assessments ranging from 2 months to 14 years after the end of treatment. A sample of children who had participated in the program 4½ to 14 years earlier was found to be functioning well, relative to a nonreferred "normal" sample. The young adults (ages 17 to 22) who had participated in the program as children reported levels of self-esteem, academic

progress, relationship with parents, and delinquency, drug use, and various types of psychopathology comparable with those reported by young adults in the community comparison group.

**State:** Washington

**Name:** Skills, Opportunity, and Recognition (SOAR) or Seattle Social Development Program

**Established:** 1981

**Administrator:** Local School Systems

**Funding Source:** National Institute on Drug Abuse

**Model Type:** Early Intervention

**Services Offered:** Teacher and Parent Training - teachers receive instruction that emphasizes classroom management, interactive teaching, and cooperative learning. Parents receive training programs on family management, communication, and creating positive home learning environments.

**Population Served:** 1-6th grades

**Outcome data:** 808 students (first wave of 20 year study) reports that students have stronger attachments to and less misbehavior in school. Stronger family attachments. Outcome data also examines the *children* of the children who were in first wave. An independent cost-benefit analysis estimated that a typical average cost per SSDP participant is about \$4,355. On crime-reduction by age 18 alone, these researchers estimated that taxpayers roughly break-even for this investment. However, adding the benefits that accrue to crime victims as a result of the lower expected future crime increases the net present value estimate to \$14,169 per participant, which is equivalent to a benefit-to-cost ratio of \$4.25 for every dollar spent on the prevention program. Further cost-benefit analyses will also factor in the gains due to high school completion and reduced teen pregnancy.

**State:** Wisconsin

**Name:** Families and Schools Together (FAST)

**Established:** Late 1980's

**Administrator:** School systems in collaboration w/community health centers

**Funding Sources:** <http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/FAST/Grants/Sources.htm>. Cost is \$1100.00 per.

Funding variable by community

**Model Type:** Early Intervention

**Service Offered:** Participation in FAST begins when teachers or other school professionals identify children with problem behaviors who are at risk for serious future academic and social problems. Next, trained recruiters—often FAST graduates—visit parents at home to discuss the school's concerns and invite them to participate in the program. Families then gather with 8 to 12 other families for eight weekly meetings usually held in the school. The meetings include planned opening and closing routines, structured family activities, parent mutual-support time, and parent-child play therapy. A trained team consisting of a parent, a school professional, a clinical social worker, and a substance abuse counselor facilitates the meetings. Families participate in a graduation ceremony at the end of 8 weeks and then continue to participate in monthly follow-up meetings, run by the families, for 2 years

**Population Served:** Children 4-12 years of age - high risk families

**Outcome Data:** The FAST experimental studies across populations and sites show statistically significant reductions in childhood aggression and anxiety and increases in academic competence and social skills, as rated by either teachers or parents at 1- or 2-year follow-up. The outcomes of the single site preprogram and post program outcome evaluation studies are consistent with these findings.

## Rhode Island Truancy Court

[http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/truancy/success\\_1.html](http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/truancy/success_1.html)

- Started in 2000 as a pilot program – 1 high school and 1 middle school
- 1 magistrate and 1 court aide are sent to school for the hearing
- student is given option of participating in truancy program or having case go to trial
- students who fulfill all requirements by the end of the year have case dismissed
- each student has a court team that consists of guidance counselors, teachers, mental health treatment providers, the parents, and the truant officer
- during the court sessions the team reviews the students compliance; if the student has done well than they receive positive reinforcement; if not then there are consequences ranging from detention to out of home placement
- the court operates in 21 communities and 59 schools
- every year 60-80% of youth improve attendance, most also improve their grades

<http://www.courts.state.ri.us/truancycourt/default.htm>

- In Rhode Island the law states that all students must attend school till age 16
- The program is designed around the idea that truancy is often the first step in a life of criminal behavior. Truancy Court recognizes that school absence is not a discrete issue and that it usually arises from a complex combination of factors.
  - each student involved in the program is monitored weekly for compliance
  - the court is empowered to issue contempt citations to the parents if they fail to appear when ordered; the court is also empowered to level fines against parents for the same reason
  - students must do the following to be in compliance with the Truancy court, 1.) attend school every day, 2.) be on time, 3.) behave appropriately, 4.) complete all academic work that is assigned to them
  - court was started in 2000 after it was noted that between 90 and 94 percent of youth who appear in juvenile court in Rhode Island were there because of truancy (different newspaper articles quote different figures but all the figures are in the low 90% range)
  - This program is also known as the Stop Truancy Outreach Program (STOP)
  - STOP was implemented in 2002, it serves as an extension of the Truancy Court
  - STOP includes training on appropriate conflict resolution and discipline techniques for parents
  - Response times of the court have improved from 90 days to 7-10 days; this helps students take the consequences of school absence seriously
  - Before the project was students were often only able to appear in family court once or twice during the school year; this greatly reduced the ability of the Court to help the student because they were so far behind academically
  - Starting in 2002 truancy court entered into a contract with the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI)

- Students are referred to CCRI on Saturday mornings – they work on ways to build self confidence and explore future career interests. They are paired with college students to advise and mentor them
- Gilbert Stuart school had the worst attendance rates of any public school in Providence before the project; Their attendance rate was 90% at the end of 2002 and it had risen 25% between 2001 and 2002

<http://www.ncjfcj.org/content/view/245/289>

- The truancy court has the power to revoke the driver's licenses of students who are chronically absent from school

#### Truancy prevention

[http://www.vera.org/section5/section5\\_4.asp](http://www.vera.org/section5/section5_4.asp)

#### Approaches to truancy prevention (PDF article)

#### Truancy Intervention Program (Ramsey County Minnesota)

- Program began in 1995, addressed truancy in ages 12-16
- Program now addresses ages 6-18
- There are three levels of investigation
- A student with 3 or more absences referred with parents to a family meeting which addresses the legal consequences of truancy
- If the above fails, students are referred to the School Attendance Review Team
- SART team draws up contract with student, (this may include referral to counseling or other social services)
- If the attendance does not improve after the SART meeting, kids are referred to juvenile court
- 2000-2001 school year 2,192 students were referred to an initial meeting, 668 of these students had SART hearings, and 309 were referred to juvenile court
- District estimated 82% of students referred improved attendance as a result of program

## Fulton County Truancy Prevention Program, Atlanta Georgia

- Founded in 1991 by Atlanta Bar Association – provides mentors to students chronically absent from school
- 1993 Atlanta law firm establishes Kids In Need of a Dream (KIND), supports truancy prevention by training mentors ( these mentors often double as the child’s attorney)
- If school is not able to help students with attendance a petition with the court is filed
- BEFORE the case is tried – a probation officer who works exclusively with truancy issues is assigned, and the child’s case is referred to KIND where an attorney is given the child’s case
- Prior to the case being tried the attorney meets with the family and tries to come up with an alternative plan
- AFTER the case is tried, the child remains under court supervision and is required to obey a contract involving attendance and the provision of other services
- The attorney stays involved with the child and their family and continues in a supervisory role
- Outside evaluation says that the TIP program has a 70% success rate of keeping kids at risk of dropping out in school.

## Seventeenth District Truancy Reduction Project (Adams County, Colorado)

- Schools are required to try internal measures such as counseling before they refer the case to juvenile court
- If internal measures fail then the school files a petition in juvenile court
- After the case is referred to the truancy case manager families are given the option of participating in the Truancy Reduction Project as an **alternative** to having their case tried in juvenile court
- If the family decides to enroll in the Truancy Reduction Project, the Truancy Case Manager designs a family treatment plan after talking with the school.
- This treatment plan is able to require both the child AND members of their family to meet certain conditions
- The Truancy Case Manager follows the family for 12 weeks
- If the family fails to meet conditions of the family treatment plan then the case is referred to the Magistrate Judge. This judge can sentence parents to jail for contempt of court.
- Approximately 85% of children and their families complete the program.
- Program received a Judicial Conference Award for it’s success working with a difficult population

## **“START TRUANCY AWARENESS YOUNGER” S.T.A.Y. Program**

The Plymouth County Juvenile Probation Department is launching a new program designed to help identify possible truancy students beginning in the elementary schools by intervening during the first few grades (1-2-3). Similar to the current Child in Need of Services (Chins) Diversion Program, this program will be brought directly into the school. The goal of this initiative is to assist children, families and school personnel by facilitating a forum that will help prevent chronic truancy problems from developing by providing assistance, guidance and referral services to children and families at an earlier age. The intent of the program is to provide a proactive option where outside intervention, suggestions and solutions are offered at a much earlier age.

Evidence within the juvenile court clearly shows a correlation between unaddressed elementary school problems and eventual teenage truancy and delinquent behavior. There may be many factors that contribute to this pattern. Sometimes, parents are the cause of the truancy and thus information relating to mandated reporting obligations by school officials to DSS for abuse, neglect or other protective concerns will be discussed. Other times, medical problems or learning disabilities may be impacting a child's attendance or performance. There may be many other psychological, environmental, or undiscovered reasons that are contributing to the school problems. The key is to try to identify these roadblocks at the earliest possible age and provide help, or corrective action, in order to optimize a child's educational potential.

It is the intent of the STAY PROGRAM to provide a supportive forum that assists and clarifies state mandated truancy laws and child protective issues by working more closely with elementary school personnel by offering this program. The Assistant Chief Probation Officer will facilitate a 30 minute meeting with a school representative and a parent or guardian. The conference will include a brief summary of the child's current status, problems, school history and any relevant family problems or history that may be contributing to the truancy issue. A plan will be developed in the meeting to immediately improve overall school compliance by offering referrals for numerous community services, agency contacts and a probation follow-up to ensure there is improvement or modification. The child may be included briefly at the end of the meeting to review expectations, agreements and discuss possible consequences for continued truancy.

Simply put, it IS the responsibility of the Juvenile Court to intervene with children of all ages by assisting the community in whatever capacity is helpful to ensure a safer, more nurturing and learning environment for children of any age. We hope this new program will assist those of you who work with the younger school children by opening an access door sooner to services and intervention that is now available.

Please feel free to contact Assistant Chief Probation Officer Larry Dullea (508) 586-5136 with any further questions or to discuss your school's interest in the program. The program is for any school district within the Plymouth County Juvenile Court jurisdiction (Brockton, Hingham and Wareham Juvenile Courts).

**ALL SCHOOL RECORD INFORMATION WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT SHARED WITH ANY OTHER AGENCY, DEPARTMENT OR NON-SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AS REGULATED BY MASSACHUSETTS LAW.**

**WILMINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL  
START TEAM MEMBERS  
2005-2006**

Maryellen Iannibelli  
Assistant Principal  
WMS  
25 Carter Lane  
Wilmington, MA 01887  
978-694-6080 Ext. 3072  
[miannibelli@wilmington.k12.ma.us](mailto:miannibelli@wilmington.k12.ma.us)

Todd Rogato  
Probation Officer  
Middlesex County Division  
89 Appleton Street  
Lowell, MA 01852  
978-441-3160 Ext 236  
[tfrags@comcast.net](mailto:tfrags@comcast.net)

Debra Hornung  
Guidance Counselor  
WMS  
25 Carter Lane  
Wilmington, MA 01887  
978-694-6081 Ext. 3072  
[dhornung@wilmington.k12.ma.us](mailto:dhornung@wilmington.k12.ma.us)

Kristin MacMillan  
Social Worker  
Department of Social Services  
810 Memorial Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
617-520-6700  
[Kristin.MacMillan@state.ma.us](mailto:Kristin.MacMillan@state.ma.us)

Barbara Kolodner  
Guidance Counselor  
WMS  
25 Carter Lane  
Wilmington, MA 01887  
978-694-6080 Ext. 2072  
[bkolodner@wilmington.k12.ma.us](mailto:bkolodner@wilmington.k12.ma.us)

Mary Sullivan  
Director  
Project Alliance  
40 Thorndike Street  
Cambridge, MA 02141  
617-679-6553  
[msullivan@projectalliance.org](mailto:msullivan@projectalliance.org)

Officer Chip Bruce  
School Resource Officer / Attendance  
Officer  
WMS  
25 Carter Lane  
Wilmington, MA 01887  
978-694-6082 Ext. 3072  
[cbruce@wilmington.k12.ma.us](mailto:cbruce@wilmington.k12.ma.us)

*Feld*  
*Frank*

# START REFERRAL FORM

DATE OF TODAY'S MEETING: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DAY OF SCHOOL IN SESSION: \_\_\_\_\_

#OF DAYS OF SCHOOL IN YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

Team Information: Who is present for today's meeting?  School  Police  DSS  Probation

**Student Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Primary Language (if not English): \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

**Custodial Parent/Legal Guardian Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Documented Special Needs:  Yes  No If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Attendance History:**

Total Last Year	Absences	Tardies	Dismissals	Comments:
As of START meeting: DATE: _____	_____ Absences	_____ Tardies	_____ Dismissals	Recommendations: (see reverse side)
1 <sup>ST</sup> MONTHLY REVIEW DATE: _____	_____ Absences	_____ Tardies	_____ Dismissals	Recommendations:
2 <sup>ND</sup> MONTHLY REVIEW DATE: _____	_____ Absences	_____ Tardies	_____ Dismissals	Recommendations:
3 <sup>RD</sup> MONTHLY REVIEW DATE: _____	_____ Absences	_____ Tardies	_____ Dismissals	Recommendations:
4 <sup>TH</sup> MONTHLY REVIEW DATE: _____	_____ Absences	_____ Tardies	_____ Dismissals	Recommendations:
5 <sup>TH</sup> MONTHLY REVIEW DATE: _____	_____ Absences	_____ Tardies	_____ Dismissals	Recommendations:
6 <sup>TH</sup> MONTHLY REVIEW DATE: _____	_____ Absences	_____ Tardies	_____ Dismissals	Recommendations:
7 <sup>TH</sup> MONTHLY REVIEW DATE: _____	_____ Absences	_____ Tardies	_____ Dismissals	Recommendations:
8 <sup>TH</sup> MONTHLY REVIEW DATE: _____	_____ Absences	_____ Tardies	_____ Dismissals	Recommendations:
9 <sup>TH</sup> MONTHLY REVIEW DATE: _____	_____ Absences	_____ Tardies	_____ Dismissals	Recommendations:

## START TEAM PARENT INFORMATION

There is no doubt that one of the keys to academic achievement is good attendance. Consistent participation in school and school-based activities is important for making a successful transition from youth to adulthood. Student tardiness and truancy are challenges that confront many communities in Middlesex and across the state. Often, these behaviors are the first indicators that a student may be experiencing stress or other difficulties in his or her life.

START (*School Tardiness and Attendance Review Teams*) is a collaborative initiative, involving representatives of the Billerica Public Schools, the Billerica Police Department, the Middlesex District Attorney's Office, Project Alliance - Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Inc., Department of Social Services, and Middlesex Juvenile Court. The goal of START is to provide an early, multi-disciplinary response to youth who are exhibiting poor attendance, whether that be through tardiness or through absenteeism. START is designed to respond to a child and their family's needs quickly, providing them with information and access to the various resources and agencies available to work with children and families in order to improve attendance. START will intervene with middle school students, at a point when a poor pattern may be emerging but at a time when the future negative academic, social, and health outcomes associated with tardiness and truancy can still be avoided.

The following is a summary of some of the Massachusetts General Laws pertaining to attendance:

### **School Attendance**

Chapter 76, section 1 of the Massachusetts General Laws states that all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend school. A school district may excuse up to seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions in any period of six months. In addition to this law, each school may have its own attendance policy with which parents and guardians should be familiar.

### **Who is a Supervisor of Attendance?**

Chapter 76, section 19 of the Massachusetts General Laws states that each school committee must employ a supervisor of attendance. A supervisor of attendance has the power to apprehend and take to school any child who is truant and is required to investigate all cases where a child in the district fails to attend school.

### **What is a CHINS?**

A "CHINS" (Child in Need of Services) petition may be filed in court by a supervisor of attendance if a child between the ages of six and sixteen persistently and willfully fails to attend school or persistently violates lawful and reasonable regulations of his or her school. The Court's authority pursuant to a CHINS petition includes the power to place the child in the custody of the state agency known as the Department of Social Services.

### **What is a 51A?**

A 51A is a report of suspected child abuse or neglect that is filed with the Department of Social Services. Under Chapter 119, section 51A of the Massachusetts General Laws, a report can be filed on behalf of a child under the age of eighteen for educational neglect if a child is not attending school on a regular basis.

### **Parental Responsibility**

Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that a child under their control attends school daily. It is a crime for a responsible parent or guardian not to cause such a child to attend school. If a child fails to attend school for seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions within any six month period, the supervisor of attendance may file a criminal complaint in court against the responsible parent and/or guardian.

### **Inducing Absences**

It is a crime to induce or attempt to induce a minor to miss school, or unlawfully to employ or to harbor a minor who should be in school.

## The Worcester County Model for Elementary/Secondary School Intervention Program (ESSIP)

Collaborative, proactive, preventive work has long-characterized efforts in partnership with Worcester County Public Schools (WCPS), the Worcester Juvenile Probation Department and the Worcester Area Offices of the Department of Social Services and the Department of Mental Health (as needed).

Schools provide the arena in which children come into their most significant contact with others beyond the immediate family. Schools provide structure, expected parameters of behavior, opportunities for expanded peer and adult interactions as well as educational experiences. In the WCPS, members of the support staff, particularly Guidance Counselors, Adjustment Counselors and School Psychologists work with children and adolescents who encounter challenges complying with the expectations in schools. They attempt to work with parents/guardians to resolve challenges in settings beyond the school (such as in the home or community) that may contribute to adjustment difficulties in school. They may facilitate access to specialized school services or to community-based services when necessary. They may initiate the Student Support Process (SSP) in the school to engage additional school personnel with parents in clarifying the issues and strategizing for problem-solving. For most students and their families these efforts are effective in addressing attendance, learning and behavior problems.

School Adjustment Counselors may also be the designated Supervisors of Attendance for the WCPS. As such, they have the responsibility to bring truancy matters (including chronic significant tardiness to school) before the Juvenile Court. The usual vehicles for this are a Failure to Cause School Attendance Complaint against the parent (for a young child) or a Child In Need of Services (CHINS) filing for those students who do not meet the compulsory attendance requirement in spite of the efforts of their parents/guardians. The use of the Court is reserved for those situations where school-based efforts to engage parents in cooperative problem-solving around attendance and severe behavior problems have not been successful. The work of selecting appropriate families falls primarily to the School Adjustment Counselors. Logistics of the process vary from one school site to another, but our hope is to standardize the essential features of ESSIP to facilitate adoption by additional school sites.

Experience has shown us that, in many situations, the involvement of the Juvenile Court Probation Department and/or the Department of Social Services brings a higher level of authority to parent meetings and helps us to effectively engage parents who may be reluctant to work with school staff to address attendance and behavior problems. Hearings on Adult Failure to Cause Attendance matters with the Clerk Magistrate are generally well-attended, frequently enabling the School Adjustment Counselor to communicate with the parent for the first time and begin to work on resolving issues that have interfered with attendance or other aspects of successful school performance. As an example, ESSIP has been used for many years for a select few families as an effective diversion from the need for court involvement, in a small number of Worcester Public Schools. An ESSIP meeting is a family meeting, held at the student's school and attended by a Probation Officer and a caseworker from the Department of Social Services. Additional school staff members may attend as appropriate. **From the perspective of probation and DSS, this is an "informal and informational" meeting with a family.** (Originally, the

Department of Mental Health was also represented at ESSIP meetings; however, due to reductions in staff with that agency they currently are invited only to selected meetings.) **Letters of invitation** to the family are sent from the Juvenile Probation Department.

Parents who have been reluctant to engage with school staff usually attend ESSIP meetings and are often motivated to resolve the issues at hand avoiding formal involvement of the court or DSS. In many cases, through the ESSIP meeting process, student and family situations improve and formal filings with the Juvenile Court are avoided.

Typical outcomes of these meetings may include, but are not limited to:

- an informal contract with a student, signed by all parties, to improve attendance and/or behavior at home and at school;
- parents learning about school services that may be appropriate for their child and how to access these;
- parents signing on for voluntary services with DSS;
- referral for attention to other agencies or community-based service-providers (after-school programs, housing or other supplemental assistance programs, medical services, domestic-violence, court clinic or other mental health service providers, legal assistance, child care assistance, etc.)
- a follow-up meeting is scheduled to revisit progress, acknowledge success or consider additional efforts, if necessary.

By providing the ESSIP process as part of a continuum of supports for our students and families in the Worcester Schools, additional elementary and secondary sites in Worcester and throughout the county will be able to avail themselves of this preventive tool. With this standardized model, it is anticipated that “Mobile Teams” may be established to provide this service to those schools that are need of only periodic meetings. ESSIP will include additional middle and high schools in Worcester, as well as, in many school districts throughout the County, as the model is considered and adopted by individual school administrations.

### **ESSIP Process in Brief:**

(As currently implemented; revisions for a high school level process should be discussed)

1. School Adjustment Counselor identifies student and family appropriate for an ESSIP meeting based on the following criteria:
  - Continued truancy from school in spite of increased monitoring, efforts to communicate with family, offers of additional support, school conferences;
  - Continued serious behavior problems in school, either willfully by a student or with apparent roots in situations beyond the purview of school intervention efforts, with limited or no cooperative engagement of family to address the problems and in spite of in-school interventions and offers of other supports;
  - Challenges in engagement of family indicate that court involvement is likely to become necessary.
2. Adjustment Counselor completes the ESSIP referral form and faxes it to Juvenile Court designee.
3. Juvenile Probation sends an invitation letter to the parent's home, stating date and time of ESSIP meeting and identifying those planning to attend.
4. Meeting is held. At the meeting the concerns of the school relative to attendance or other student needs are reviewed with the family. The family is invited to present their concerns relative to the student's situation. The family is advised of the regulations around attendance and the need for students to comply with basic behavioral expectations at school. Appropriate school and/or community-based resources, services and the steps to access these are identified.
5. Plans that are developed are documented (the specific format of the agreement plan document varies among schools) and the family is provided a copy of the plan. families are offered additional support, if necessary to follow through on the steps agreed upon.
6. When appropriate the student is invited in for the final part of the meeting (particularly if the child is deemed a willful truant or habitual school offender) and plans are reviewed with them. The probation officer may develop an informal (no docket number) contract with the student in order to clarify the student's responsibilities within the plan.
7. A follow-up meeting is scheduled, usually at an interval of one to two months.
8. At the follow-up meeting progress is reviewed, success is acknowledged and additional intervention plans are developed if needed.
9. If truancy or serious behavior problems are unremitting in spite of the ESSIP process, appropriate action is filed with Worcester Juvenile Court.

**Worcester Public Schools Currently Using ESSIP:**

<b>Elementary</b>	<b>SAC</b>	<b>Probation Officer</b>	<b>DSS Social Worker</b>
ALL	Elaine Irizarry-Kline	Rafael Ortiz	Julie Creen
Belmont	Kelly McNamara	Bill Cantwell	Julie Creen
Canterbury	Kelly Deneault	Irena Stumbras	Julie Creen
Elm Park	Rob Pelczarski	Penelope Wolosz	Julie Creen
Fanning El	Maura Mahoney	Penelope Wolosz	Julie Creen
Lincoln St	Cindy Harnois	Irena Stumbras	Julie Creen
Vernon Hill	Mellisa Fergus	Darlene Charleston	Julie Creen
<b>Secondary</b>	<b>SAC</b>	<b>Probation Officer</b>	<b>DSS Social Worker</b>
BMS	Cindy Vail	Herb Donahue	Julie Creen
Modified version:			
NHS	Carmen Grant/ Felicite Boisvert	Bill Cantwell	n/a

**Frequency of ESSIP meetings:**

Currently this varies by school with most meeting bi-weekly or monthly on a prearranged day determined by the schedules of participants

## WPS, DSS, WCJC ESSIP MOBILE TEAM EXPANSION

### ESSIP Mobile Teams

As a result of positive outcomes in the areas of attendance and services to families identified and involved in the existing ESSIP process, a consensus was reached that this process should be available to additional elementary schools within the city of Worcester.

Families usually do not have formal Court nor DSS involvement, as the intent of this effort is to assist parents and children with overcoming obstacles to attending and participating successfully in school. Clearly, Worcester East/West DSS and Juvenile Court Probation do not have extensive personnel available to attend regular meetings at additional schools, as their participation is viewed as prevention. However, if Juvenile Probation and two Worcester Area Offices of DSS are able to commit additional staff to this early intervention effort, expanding the continuum of supports for students and families in the Worcester Public Schools by offering the

ESSIP process in additional elementary, and eventually secondary, sites is feasible.

The plan is to create teams of DSS workers and Probation Officers that could be called upon by those elementary schools who may need to utilize the process on an occasional basis. As a result of an internal needs analysis and survey conducted this year through

School Adjustment Counselors, approximately 6 additional elementary schools expressed an interest and need for these meetings. Logistics of the process vary from one school site to another, but our hope is to standardize the essential features of ESSIP to facilitate adoption by additional school sites. The work of selecting appropriate families falls primarily to the School Adjustment Counselors,

so we are proposing expansion in schools where they are prepared to follow the established process.

It was further decided that to accommodate the service/catchment areas of assignment for both DSS workers and Juvenile Probation Officers, ESSIP Mobile Teams would be developed based upon the WPS area quadrants. By utilizing this process, the following coverage is envisioned:

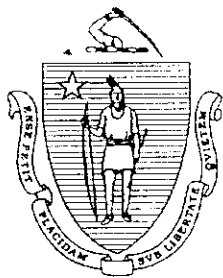
ESSIP Mobile Teams Coverage

Worcester Area DSS Representatives:

East Office:

West Office:

<u>North Quadrant</u>	<u>South Quadrant</u>
<p><b>Currently Participating In Regular Meetings:</b></p> <p><u>Schools:</u> Belmont Community</p> <p><b>Mobile Team Schools and Probation Officers:</b></p> <p><u>Schools:</u> City View Rice Square Roosevelt</p> <p><u>Probation Officers:</u> Penelope Wolosz Bill Cantwell Candy Harris Frank D'Elia</p>	<p><b>Currently Participating In Regular Meetings:</b></p> <p><u>Schools:</u> Vernon Hill Canterbury St. A.L.L.</p> <p><b>Mobile Team Schools and Probation Officers:</b></p> <p><u>Schools:</u> Heard Street Gates Lane</p> <p><u>Probation Officers:</u> Darlene Charleston Irena Stumbras Rafael Ortiz Maria Medina</p>
<p><u>Burncoat Quadrant</u></p> <p><b>Currently Participating In Regular Meetings:</b></p> <p><u>Schools:</u> Lincoln Street Burncoat Middle</p> <p><b>Mobile Team Schools and Probation Officers:</b></p> <p><u>Schools:</u> McGrath</p>	<p><u>Doherty Quadrant</u></p> <p><b>Currently Participating In Regular Meetings:</b></p> <p><u>Schools:</u> Elm Park Community Alt. @ Fanning</p> <p><b>Mobile Team Schools and Probation Officers:</b></p> <p><u>Schools:</u> Nelson Place</p> <p><u>Probation Officers:</u> Penelope Wolosz Bill Cantwell Candy Harris Atouneny Le</p>



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Social Services

**Attleboro/Taunton Area Office**

67 Mechanic Street Attleboro, Massachusetts 02703  
Phone: (508) 431-9500 Fax: (508) 226-6706

MARTIN KENNEY  
Area Director

DENNIS SOUZA  
Area Program Manager

PATRICIA JACKSON  
Supervisor

Community Liaisons

**Attleboro**

MICHAEL COSTA  
JODY FERREIRA  
COLLEEN HURLEY

**North Attleboro**

ALLISON GREENBERG

**Norton**

SANGEETA NASIFF

**Mansfield**

JEFF JOHNSON

Carol Martin  
School Principal  
Coehlo Middle School  
99 Brown Street  
Attleboro, Ma. 02703

September 13, 2004

Dear Principal Martin,

I am pleased to announce that the Attleboro Adolescent Unit of the Department of Social Services will be sponsoring a pilot program to assist school systems and communities in addressing the problems of at-risk youth. It is our goal to develop a structural linkage between our agency, the juvenile court system, schools, and other systems that can help provide support and guidance for at-risk youth and their families.

Our program will entail monthly scheduled meetings within school systems to discuss ongoing youth that are currently involved with the Department of Social Services. In addition to ongoing clients, there will be an opportunity to discuss concerns about other youth beginning to exhibit at-risk behaviors. Parents will be invited to attend these meetings and will be required to sign a release of information.

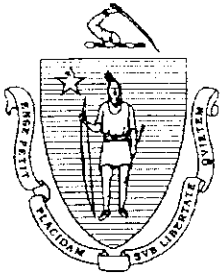
Please contact me at your earliest convenience so that I can make arrangements to come to your school to further discuss our program. I can be reached at (508)431-9564 or by email address: [patricia.jackson@state.ma.us](mailto:patricia.jackson@state.ma.us).

Sincerely,

Patricia Jackson, M. Ed., LMHC

Adolescent Supervisor

cc: Dennis Souza, DSS Area Program Manager  
Joel Lovering, Attleboro School Superintendent



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Social Services

**Attleboro/Taunton Area Office**

67 Mechanic Street Attleboro, Massachusetts 02703  
Phone: (508) 431-9500 Fax: (508) 226-6706

MARTIN KENNEY  
Area Director

DENNIS SOUZA  
Area Program Manager

PATRICIA JACKSON  
Supervisor

Community Liaisons

**Attleboro**

MICHAEL COSTA  
JODY FERREIRA  
COLLEEN HURLEY

**North Attleboro**

ALICIA BENNETTE

**Norton**

ALLISON GREENBER

**Mansfield**

ALCIA BENNETTE

**Consumer Release of Information Authorization**

This release will serve to notify that I grant permission the Department of Social Services to have discussions and obtain information from the \_\_\_\_\_ (school system) on behalf of my child, \_\_\_\_\_, for purposes of the School Diversion/CHINS Intervention Program which may include representatives from, Juvenile Probation, Department of Youth Services, Key Outreach & Tracking and other provider agencies within the community.

The effective period of this authorization shall be limited to the 2005/2006 school year.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Attleboro Adolescent Unit

The Adolescent Diversion Team works with the following communities; Attleboro, North Attleboro, Norton and Mansfield. The social workers from the unit have each been assigned to the four communities that we service to act as a liaison to the school system. The social worker is responsible to maintain a supportive relationship with the various schools in their assigned community. These four communities have been offered to initiate a School Diversion Program in their middle and high school systems.

The School Diversion Program is a system partnership program model in which schools, criminal justice agencies and social service agencies collaborate to serve at-risk adolescents and their families. The model includes monthly meetings that promote joint planning and shared decision-making and providing support and guidance to adolescents and their families that are currently involved with the Department of Social Services/Department of Youth Services and/or the Juvenile Court. This integrative model allows for all systems to be jointly accountable for outcomes and jointly responsible for organizing change.

In addition, the School Diversion Program allows for school personnel to refer students that are presenting with at-risk behavior to the Diversion team for consultation before becoming formally involved with DSS/DYS or the Juvenile Court. This allows the school systems to intervene at an earlier stage in hopes to develop structural linkages to other systems that can help provide support and guidance for the students in their school system.

The Diversion meetings have been most successful at the Attleboro High School where our biggest population exists. Present at the meetings are the Deans of Students from 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade, School Psychologist, School Guidance Counselor, School Resource Officer (SRO), Juvenile Probation Officers, DYS Case Managers, DSS Supervisor and Social Workers.

Student Name:	Grade:						School System:	
	Absences	Tardiness	Suspensions	School Offenses	Court Activity	Overall School Performance	Home Status	
October								
November								
December								
January								
February								
March								
April								
May								
June								

Student's Name	Date of Initial Meeting	Type School Offender/Truancy	Grade	School System

Parent/Guardian	Address	Home Phone	Work/ Cell Phone

Placement Information Child	Placement Address	Home Phone	Cell Phone

**Collaterals:**

Name	Address	Relationship	Phone #

**Reason for Referral:**