

ACCESS 2009–2010 Summary: Transition School-Community Liaisons

SS/HS Focus Area: *Safe school environments and violence prevention activities*

ACCESS Goal: *Decrease recidivism rates to Disciplinary Alternative Education Placements (DAEP)*

Cost (2009–2010): \$175,680

Program Overview

Within the Austin Independent School District (AISD), school-community liaisons (SCLs) function as school-based social workers, connecting students and families with school- and community-based supports and services.¹ The developers of the Austin Community Collaboration to Enhance Student Success (ACCESS) grant recognized that students returning to their home campuses following disciplinary placements represented a high-need population who could benefit from dedicated SCL support. To address this service gap, the ACCESS grant proposed three new SCL positions: one each for students returning from the Alternative Center for Elementary Students (ACES); the Alternative Learning Center (ALC, middle and high school students); and local juvenile justice (JJ) placements.²

ACES Transition School-Community Liaison

Program Implementation

First Year (2007–2008)

The ACES transition SCL was hired in January 2008. During the first semester of activity, the SCL worked to understand the needs of the position by attending removal hearings, speaking with campus staff, and educating parents about the role of ACES. A letter was sent to the elementary principals introducing the SCL and asking them to invite her to removal hearings. During this period, the SCL worked with a small number of students ($n = 15$) and focused heavily on developing systems and procedures that would be more fully implemented with the start of the following school year. Of the specific services delivered during the first year, the majority consisted of either short-term problem solving (40.8%; $n = 62$) or providing information (34.2%; $n = 52$) (see Appendix A for a detailed list of SLC service types and definitions).

What is ACCESS?

Funded through a 4-year federal Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant, ACCESS is an AISD-led community collaboration of public and nonprofit agencies working together to address the emotional, behavioral, and social needs of students.

¹ During the 2009–2010 school year, 20 SCLs provided services to 2,800+ students drawn from 111 schools.

² While at either a Disciplinary Alternative Educational Placement (DAEP) or Juvenile Justice Alternative Educational Placement (JJAEP), students maintain enrollment within AISD. ACES and ALC are AISD facilities staffed by AISD teachers. Juvenile Detention (i.e., the Gardner-Betts Juvenile Detention Center, or Gardner-Betts) is a Travis County facility, with AISD staff providing instruction.



Second Year (2008–2009)

The 2008–2009 school year represented the first full year of program implementation. The ACES transition SCL's work typically followed a three-stage sequence: consultation, internal liaison with ACES, and transition back to campus. As part of the consultation stage, the SCL encouraged campus staff to contact her at the earliest point at which they believed a removal might be necessary. Typically, this occurred when a removal hearing was scheduled; however, campus staff also routinely contacted the SCL for advice about how to appropriately categorize and respond to negative student behavior, in an effort to limit the need to remove a student. At the removal hearing, the SCL talked with the campus team to help them understand their options and to develop the terms of an appropriate placement. The SCL also worked with parents to help them understand the role of ACES and to respond to any questions or concerns they may have had.

While at a removal hearing, the SCL functioned as a liaison to the ACES staff, gathering information about the student's academic plan, to assist in planning for his or her arrival. If the SCL was not going to be present at a removal hearing, she would contact the home campus after the removal notification arrived at ACES and request the relevant information needed to prepare for the transition. During a typical stay at ACES, the SCL would have little contact with the student, with most support being provided by the teaching and counseling staff.

Three or 4 days before a student was scheduled to return to his or her home campus, the SCL would contact the appropriate principal or assistant principal and ask them to schedule a team-level meeting to plan the transition. Requested team members typically included campus administrators; teachers; counseling staff; a Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) specialist (for PBS schools); and the home campus SCL, if appropriate. The team meeting would have a problem-solving focus. The transition SCL would lead the group through the identification of needs and available services, and the development of concrete action steps. One of the team members would be asked to accept responsibility for following up with the others to keep the plan on track. In addition, the transition SCL would request that the school hold an IMPACT team meeting to further assess the student's needs and to help assure longer-term follow-up beyond the initial transition support.

During the 2008–2009 school year, the ACES SCL worked on behalf of 98 students, 23 of whom were able to remain on their home campus. The activity most frequently engaged in by the SCL during this school year was attending student staffing meetings or treatment team meetings (40.9%; $n = 251$), followed by providing information (20.9%; $n = 128$) and short-term problem solving (18.7%; $n = 115$) (see Appendix B for frequency of ACES SCL services). Each discrete period of service (i.e., the student was actively on the SCL's caseload) involved an average of 5.9 service instances (i.e., actions by the SCL on behalf of the student) and 3.1 distinct service types.

Third Year (2009–2010)

During the third program year, the transition SCL continued to work both with ACES students ($n = 104$) as well as students who remained on their home campus ($n = 21$). The service categorization scheme changed between program years, with the addition of two categories (*Consultation/meeting with family/guardian* and *Follow up on any previously made connection*) and the elimination of *Information*.⁴ During this period, attendance at student staffing or treatment team meetings continued to be the most frequent activity (41.9%; $n = 274$). The average number of distinct service types (2.9) and total service instances (4.8) were similar to but slightly lower than the previous year's figures, potentially reflecting the increased number of students served. Program staff estimated that more than 90% of parents accepted the invitation to tour ACES. According to the ACES director, parent contact prior to the creation of the transition SCL position was very minimal, and was limited by the availability of ACES staff to attend removal hearings and work directly with parents.

“I can’t imagine doing what I do without [the transition SCL’s] support.”

- Elementary principal

Program Outcomes

Methodology

The impact of the ACES transition SCL was assessed by examining potential changes in the rate of re-referral within the same year, as well as the proportion of discretionary referrals carried out by the home campus.⁵ Together, these two measures allowed us to assess the success of the transition SCL in preventing removals, in addition to helping manage them after they occurred.

Before examining the outcomes, it is important to consider whether the characteristics of students removed to ACES during the 2 years of full program implementation (2008–2009 and 2009–2010) were similar to or different from the characteristics of students at ACES during the 3 years prior selected for comparison (2005–2006 through 2007–2008).⁶ As Table 1 shows, the characteristics of both groups were similar. One notable exception was the percentage of students removed for a mandatory reason. The number and percentage of removals that were mandatory increased during the full implementation period. We will explore this further in terms of an outcome measure, but it is worth noting that this change suggests an increase in the overall severity of the offenses, potentially making it more difficult to achieve a decrease in the re-referral rate than if the severity had remained the same.

Results

As Figure 1 shows, the rate of repeat removals to ACES fluctuated across the 5 school years considered, from a low of 2.9% (2007–2008) to a high of 15.4% (2006–2007). The average rate before SCL program implementation was 9.0%, while that for the 2 years of full program implementation was 10.3%. However, if the 2007–2008 school year is excluded due to it being a numeric outlier as well as

⁴ It was determined that *Information* as a category lacked sufficient specificity.

⁵ Any removal not for a mandatory offense type is designated as *discretionary*.

⁶ Because only 15 of the 68 (22%) students removed to ACES during the 2007–2008 school year received services, this year was grouped with the two other non-service years.



being a year of partial implementation, the average non-program rate increases beyond that of the program years (2008–2009 and 2009–2010) to 12.0%. Given the wide year-to-year fluctuation in repeat referral rates, no firm conclusion can be drawn about the impact of the transition SCL position on repeat ACES removals. A clearer story emerges when the proportion of discretionary removals is examined over time (Figure 2). The proportion of discretionary removals shows a clear downward trend when both full program years (2008–2009 and 2009–2010) are compared with the non-program years (2005–2006 and 2006–2007) and the partial implementation year (2007–2008).

Table 1. Students Removed to Alternative Center for Elementary Students (ACES), 2005–2006 Through 2009–2010 School Years

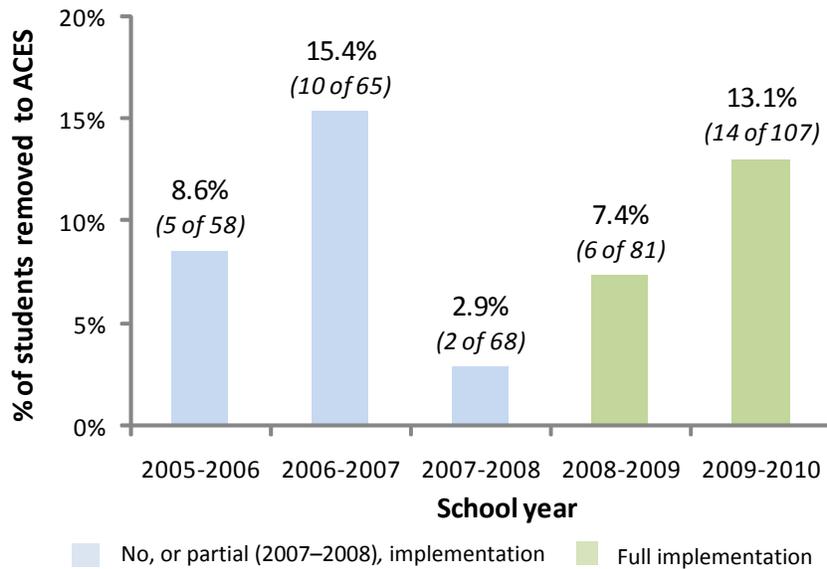
Measure	School year	
	2005–2006 through 2007–2008	2008–2009 through 2009–2010
Number of students	191	188
Number of removals	208	208
Number of schools represented	52	58
Grade		
Kindergarten, 1 st , 2 nd	52 (27.2%)	39 (20.7%)
3 rd and 4 th	72 (37.7%)	79 (42.0%)
5 th and 6 th	67 (35.1%)	70 (37.2%)
Gender		
Female	26 (13.6%)	29 (15.4%)
Male	165 (86.4%)	159 (84.6%)
Offense type (first removal) ^a		
Aggressive behavior (student focused)	69 (36.1%)	52 (27.7%)
Aggressive behavior (adult focused)	27 (14.1%)	27 (14.4%)
Disruption/insubordination	35 (18.3%)	20 (10.6%)
Alcohol/drugs	18 (9.4%)	21 (11.2%)
Weapons	8 (4.2%)	36 (19.2%)
Other	34 (17.8%)	32 (17.0%)
Removal type (first removal)		
Discretionary	137 (71.7%)	94 (50.0%)
Mandatory	54 (28.3%)	94 (50.0%)
Quarter of first removal ^b		
1	22 (11.5%)	27 (14.4%)
2	50 (26.2%)	46 (24.5%)
3	54 (28.3%)	43 (22.9%)
4	68 (34.0%)	72 (38.3%)
Prior Year ACES removal	16 (8.4%)	19 (10.1%)

Note. Removals reflect disciplinary alternative education placements (DAEP) at ACES (disposition code 035). Emergency placements are not included. A total of 41 schools are represented in both time ranges. Partial implementation occurred during Spring of the 2007-2008 school year.

^a Offense codes constituting each offense type grouping are listed in Appendix C.

^b Quarters reflect 12-week periods within each school year.

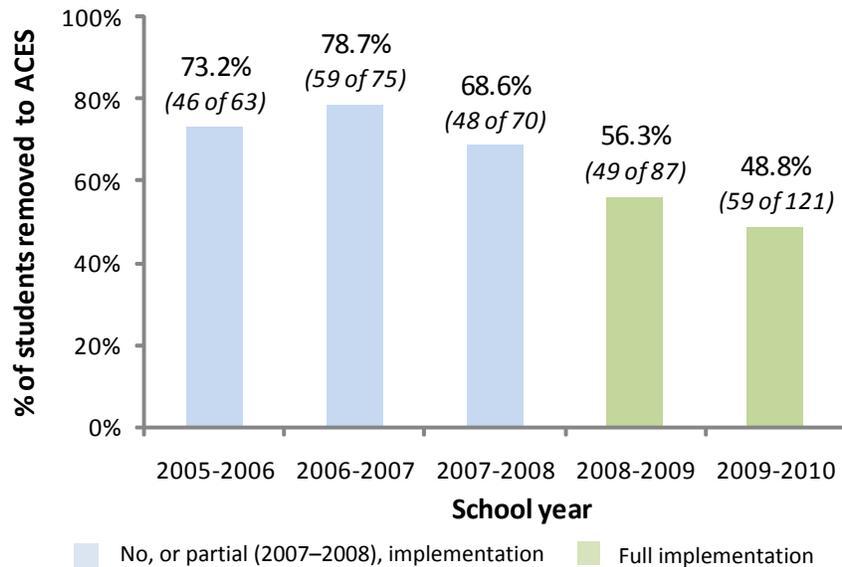
Figure 1. Repeat Alternative Center for Elementary Students (ACES) Removals, 2005–2006 Through 2009–2010 School Years



Source. AISD enrollment and disciplinary data (AENR; ADIS), 2005–2006 through 2009–2010 school years

Note. Partial implementation in 2007–2008 only

Figure 2. Discretionary Alternative Center for Elementary Students (ACES) Removals, 2005–2006 Through 2009–2010 School Years



Source. AISD enrollment and disciplinary data (AENR; ADIS), 2005–2006 through 2009–2010 school years

Note. Partial implementation in 2007–2008 only

ALC Transition School-Community Liaison

Program Implementation

First Year (2007–2008)

The ALC transition SCL was hired in late January 2008. During the first semester of program implementation, the SCL worked to inform campus staff about the new role and worked with ALC counseling staff to integrate the position with their existing processes. Over the course of the semester, the SCL provided services to 32 students. The majority of these services focused on providing information (37.7%; $n = 100$); short-term problem solving (27.9%; $n = 74$); and academic resource connections (15.5%; $n = 41$).

Second Year (2008–2009)

During the first full year of program implementation, the primary eligibility criterion for a student to receive transition SCL services was having been previously removed to ALC. Cases were assigned in consultation with the ALC clinical director, based on need and severity of behavior. Of the 1,542 students enrolled at ALC during the 2008–2009 school year, the transition SCL worked with 62 (4.05%) from eight high schools and eight middle schools.⁷

The SCL's initial contact with students occurred during the regular intake process at ALC. When a student arrives at ALC, he or she goes through an intake process that includes a psycho-social assessment of the student and his or her family. The SCL served as a member of this team and conducted interviews with the students he would later serve and participated in weekly staffing meetings in which the progress of students was reviewed by ALC clinical staff and members of partner organizations. In addition to these routine ALC assessments, the SCL administered an interest inventory to better understand what motivated and engaged individual students. During their stay at the ALC, the SCL worked with the students on a voluntary basis to provide individualized counseling focused on self-awareness and personal development. Additionally, the SCL investigated opportunities to connect the students and their families with services and supports available in the community.

Approximately a week before a student was scheduled to return to his or her home campus, the transition SCL would contact the school to set up a team meeting with – *if possible* – the grade level assistant principal, grade level counselor, teacher of record for the student's grade, campus transition facilitator, campus SCL, and relevant outside service coordinators.⁸ The transition SCL would conduct a follow-up visit approximately 2 weeks after the student's return to campus. The visit would typically involve meetings with the student and staff as well as classroom observations. In addition to providing ongoing support and contact for the student, the visit often yielded suggestions for campus staff about how to manage the transition more successfully. The types and frequency of services provided by the transition SCL, during and after the student's time at the ALC, are detailed in Table 2.

⁷ High schools: Austin, Travis, Akins, Anderson, LBJ, Johnston, and Lanier; middle schools: Burnet, Dobie, Covington, Mendez, Lamar, Webb, Garcia, and Bedichek.

⁸ Some students did not transition back to a home campus during a particular service episode; therefore, the number of *transition meeting with campus staff* entries in Table 2 do not total 100%.



Table 2. Alternative Learning Center (ALC) Transition School-Community Liaison Services Delivered, 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 School Years

Service type	2008–2009		2009–2010	
	All service instances	% of service episodes receiving service	All service instances	% of service episodes receiving service
Short-term problem solving	6.2% (<i>n</i> = 39)	31.9% (<i>n</i> = 29)	10.5% (<i>n</i> = 87)	55.6% (<i>n</i> = 50)
Social service connection	4.6% (<i>n</i> = 29)	22.0% (<i>n</i> = 20)	5.6% (<i>n</i> = 46)	33.3% (<i>n</i> = 30)
Health/medical service connection	0.8% (<i>n</i> = 5)	5.5% (<i>n</i> = 5)	1.2% (<i>n</i> = 10)	6.7% (<i>n</i> = 6)
Mental health service connection	2.2% (<i>n</i> = 14)	13.2% (<i>n</i> = 12)	2.5% (<i>n</i> = 21)	13.3% (<i>n</i> = 12)
Academic resource connection	8.4% (<i>n</i> = 53)	35.2% (<i>n</i> = 32)	0.0% (<i>n</i> = 0)	28.9% (<i>n</i> = 26)
Crisis intervention	3.2% (<i>n</i> = 20)	17.6% (<i>n</i> = 16)	0.6% (<i>n</i> = 5)	5.6% (<i>n</i> = 5)
ARD support/special education	1.0% (<i>n</i> = 6)	6.6% (<i>n</i> = 6)	0.6% (<i>n</i> = 5)	5.6% (<i>n</i> = 5)
Systems of care connection	3.8% (<i>n</i> = 24)	23.1% (<i>n</i> = 21)	3.6% (<i>n</i> = 30)	22.2% (<i>n</i> = 20)
Consultation/meeting with family/guardian Information	---	---	9.2% (<i>n</i> = 76)	50.0% (<i>n</i> = 45)
Consultation at Local Support Team	25.2% (<i>n</i> = 159)	83.5% (<i>n</i> = 76)	---	---
Consultation at disciplinary hearing	0.2% (<i>n</i> = 1)	1.1% (<i>n</i> = 1)	0.0% (<i>n</i> = 0)	0.0% (<i>n</i> = 0)
Consultation at bilingual/language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) meeting	1.4% (<i>n</i> = 9)	9.9% (<i>n</i> = 9)	0.1% (<i>n</i> = 1)	1.1% (<i>n</i> = 1)
Consultation with student	0.2% (<i>n</i> = 1)	1.1% (<i>n</i> = 1)	0.0% (<i>n</i> = 0)	0.0% (<i>n</i> = 0)
Student staffing or treatment team meeting	24.6% (<i>n</i> = 155)	67.0% (<i>n</i> = 61)	27.8% (<i>n</i> = 230)	86.7% (<i>n</i> = 78)
Transition meeting with campus staff	2.9% (<i>n</i> = 18)	18.7% (<i>n</i> = 17)	3.4% (<i>n</i> = 28)	30.0% (<i>n</i> = 27)
Transition Follow-up with student	8.1% (<i>n</i> = 51)	40.7% (<i>n</i> = 37)	7.0% (<i>n</i> = 58)	56.7% (<i>n</i> = 51)
Follow up on any previously made connection	7.3% (<i>n</i> = 46)	27.5% (<i>n</i> = 25)	17.6% (<i>n</i> = 146)	54.4% (<i>n</i> = 49)
	---	---	4.0% (<i>n</i> = 33)	26.7% (<i>n</i> = 24)
<i>Total</i>	100.0% (<i>n</i> = 630)		100.0% (<i>n</i> = 828)	

Source. SCL tracking database and AISD enrollment data

Note. During the 2008–2009 school year, 62 students received 91 episodes of service. The following year, 68 students received 90 episodes of service. School of origin: Lanier (*n* = 17) and Reagan (*n* = 1) High Schools; Burnet (*n* = 14), Dobie (*n* = 5), Covington (*n* = 6), Mendez (*n* = 6), Murchison (*n* = 1), Parades (*n* = 1), and Webb (*n* = 1) Middle Schools. Each time a service was delivered, it was counted as a service instance. The same service delivered multiple times to the same individual counted as multiple service instances. A service episode reflects a continuous period of service. Students with multiple referrals to ALC or who transitioned to a juvenile justice alternative educational placement and then back to ALC had multiple service episodes. A period at ALC followed by a transition to a home campus was counted as a single episode.

Third Year (2009–2010)

A number of important lessons were learned from the first full year of program implementation (2008–2009). Serving small numbers of students at a large number of schools increased travel time at the expense of direct service. Additionally, some schools were more accepting and supportive of the



SCL's efforts than were other schools. The transition SCL, in consultation with ACCESS and ALC staff, selected a core set of five middle schools (Burnet, Dobie, Covington, Mendez, and Parades) and one high school (Lanier) upon which to focus his activity. The selection of these specific schools was based on the strength of the relationship developed with campus staff over the prior year, as well as the frequency of removals. As was the case during the previous year, the primary eligibility criterion was a prior referral to the ALC.

Experience gained over the prior year also led to changes in how the SCL planned transition meetings. At the secondary school level, coordinating schedules for a large number of team members required more lead time than often was feasible for a student about to return to campus. In response, the SCL focused more heavily on working with the grade-level assistant principal as a key point of contact and including other staff, as available, in the initial team meeting.

The services provided to the 68 students served by the ALC transition SCL during the 2009–2010 school year are listed in Table 3.

Program Outcomes

Methodology

Because of the changes in the schools and types of students served over the course of the grant, it was not possible to use a simple comparison of pre- and post-implementation referral rates to assess the impact of the ALC SCL. The strategy adopted was to explicitly model risk of referral for the 2009–2010 population of ALC students and examine whether those students served by the ALC SCL were less likely than were students not served by the ALC SCL to experience a second referral. A survival analysis was conducted that controlled for grade; gender; ethnicity; economic level; prior year removal or expulsion; home campus discipline rate; offense type (e.g., violence related, substance related); and removal type (i.e., mandatory or discretionary) as potential risk factors for repeat referral, in addition to service status (ALC SCL served or not served). A 90 school day follow-up period was used.

Results

The results of the survival analysis failed to find a significant difference in the likelihood of re-removal for students served by the transition SCL. Although the SCL served students at higher risk for subsequent removal, the statistical controls used in the model were designed to account for much of those differences. It is important to note that the ACCESS grant developers anticipated that the effectiveness of the transition SCLs would be dependent in part on the resources available within the school and community environment. Further research is necessary to determine whether these factors played a determining factor in the results described here.

The ALC transition SCL worked with Operation School Bell to make a stock of clothing (i.e., white shirts, blue jeans, black belts) available to provide to students who showed up to the school out of compliance with the dress code. Some students "hoped" to be sent home for non-compliance, while others had difficulty affording the appropriate clothing. The availability of the donated clothing helped keep students in compliance and in class.



Juvenile Justice Transition School-Community Liaison

Program Implementation

First Year (2007–2008)

As was the case for the other two transition SCLs, the JJ transition SCL was hired and began work in late January 2008. The transition SCL left a position as an AISD vertical-team-aligned (schools in the same feeder pattern) SCL to accept the new role. In her prior role, the JJ transition SCL had noted the need for improved communication between AISD and juvenile court.⁹

At the beginning of the first semester of service, the JJ SCL worked with JJ staff to identify programs with limited transition services that might be suitable for additional support in this area. Two populations were chosen to be the focus of the JJ SCL's services: students finishing a placement at the non-residential Travis County Day School (Day Enrichment)¹⁰ substance abuse treatment program, and students returning from juvenile detention (i.e., Gardner-Betts). During the first semester of service, the selection criteria were set initially to cover students with a stay of 2 or more weeks and returning to a specific subset of schools. However, over the course of the semester, the criteria were relaxed to include students from additional schools where assistance was requested.

Day Enrichment is a three-phase program, at the end of which students graduate and return to their home campus or another alternative educational setting. When a student reached the third stage, the transition SCL received a referral and scheduled a meeting with the individual student and his or her parents. The goal of this first meeting was to determine the student's future educational plans, which could be to return to the home campus, enroll in a charter school, pursue a general educational development (GED) certificate, or some other option. The SCL also conducted psycho-social assessment at the meeting to better understand the student's needs as well as the needs of the family. If the student planned to return to the home campus, the SCL determined what services had been engaged previously, whether the student had connections on the campus to a teacher or mentor, and what the student's attendance patterns had been in the past. With this information in hand, the SCL would discuss with the student how best to trouble shoot the environment, and asked whether adjustments needed to be made in terms of the teachers or administrators, or other factors that could be changed to help support the student's success. Through this approach, she steered the conversation from "what does it look like?" to "what does it need to look like for you to be successful?" Before graduation from Day Enrichment, a follow-up treatment team meeting would be held with the student, JJ SCL, probation officer, substance abuse counselor, and parent(s). At this second meeting, the JJ SCL would review the transition plan, including the day of home campus re-enrollment.

⁹ Gardner-Betts-based staff have, for the past 5 or more years provided information via e-mail to school transition staff advising them when a student is released to return to his or her home campus. Additionally, the supervisor of the SCL program serves as the district liaison to the juvenile court. This role includes providing the court with information pertinent to individual cases as well as district policies, procedures, and resources. On occasion, the liaison works at the request of the court to help specific students make the transition back to their home campuses.

¹⁰ The Travis County Day School, more commonly referred to as Day Enrichment, provides substance abuse counseling services in a non-residential educational environment. Although the overall program is run by Southwest Key (www.swkey.org), AISD teachers comprise the educational staff.



The SCL would plan to be present at the school for re-enrollment, to facilitate the process. Approximately half of the time, a procedural (e.g., a student not yet un-enrolled from prior placement) or other type of problem would arise that need to be resolved. A campus-located transition meeting was planned for the same day, involving the students, parent(s), and an administrator, as well as a campus counselor and campus-based community service providers (e.g., Communities in Schools), if applicable. The focus of this campus meeting was to update school staff about the progress the student had made while away and to review the school rules and expectations related to schedule, behavior, attendance, and the student's academic plan. The discussion was intended to function as a verbal behavioral contract between the student and the administrator. The meeting concluded with a written transition plan and the expectation that the SCL would follow up weekly for 4 to 6 weeks, checking in with the student, parent(s), and administration.

The approach taken with students transitioning back from juvenile detention was similar. However, the often unpredictable release schedule of juvenile detention, which was dependent on a variety of circumstances related to each individual case and the action of the court, made it more difficult to schedule pre-transition meetings. As a consequence, the SCL often had to play catch-up with students who already had been released and might have been re-enrolled, or might have attempted to do so.

During this initial semester, the JJ SCL served a total of 40 students. Most of the services delivered fell into three categories: social service connections (20.7%; $n = 76$); academic resource connections (29.4%; $n = 108$); and information (31.9%; $n = 117$).

Second Year (2008–2009)

Several important changes occurred during the second year of program implementation. First, the selection criteria for JJ cases were revised to eliminate the 2-week or longer detention period and a predefined set of schools. Instead, students with three or more detention episodes were the target detention population; however, the selection criterion for Day Enrichment remained the same, with all students eligible. Second, the SCL went out on maternity leave for the spring semester and was replaced by a temporary JJ SCL.

During the second year, 60 students were served. The most frequently delivered services (Table 3) were social service connections (23.3%; $n = 139$); academic resource connection (20.6%; $n = 123$); and information (26.0%; $n = 155$). On average, each period of service included 4.4 distinct service types, delivered on 8.9 occasions.

Third Year (2009–2010)

Prior to the start of the third program year, the original JJ SCL decided to return to her former role as a campus SCL. A permanent replacement was hired in August 2009, prior to the start of the new school year. The basic process followed by the new JJ SCL was similar to that of her predecessors. One significant change noted by the JJ SCL was that she was able to attend juvenile court when cases related to her caseload were heard.

Although the process did not change greatly for the third program year, the intensity of services increased substantially. Sixty-four students were served across 75 service episodes. The average number of service instances (13.6) increased by 53%, compared with the number the prior year. The mean

number of different service types also increased slightly from 4.4 (2008–2009) to 4.9 (2009–2010), a change of 11%. Details regarding the services delivered are provided in Table 3.

**Table 3. Juvenile Justice Transition School to Campus Liaison (SCL)
Services Delivered, 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 School Years**

Service type	2008–2009		2009–2010	
	All service instances ^a	% of service episodes receiving service ^b	All service instances ^a	% of service episodes receiving service ^b
Short-term problem solving	2.0% (n = 12)	14.9% (n = 10)	15.9% (n = 162)	61.3% (n = 46)
Social service connection	23.3% (n = 139)	77.6% (n = 52)	17.4% (n = 177)	80.0% (n = 60)
Health/medical service connection	0.3% (n = 2)	3.0% (n = 2)	0.3% (n = 3)	2.7% (n = 2)
Mental health service connection	6.5% (n = 39)	32.8% (n = 22)	0.3% (n = 3)	4.0% (n = 3)
Academic resource connection	20.6% (n = 123)	88.1% (n = 59)	12.8% (n = 130)	68.0% (n = 51)
Crisis intervention	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.5% (n = 5)	4.0% (n = 3)
ARD support/special education	3.7% (n = 22)	17.9% (n = 12)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)
Systems of care connection	0.8% (n = 5)	4.5% (n = 3)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)
Consultation/meeting with family/guardian	---	---	9.3% (n = 95)	54.7% (n = 41)
Information	26.0% (n = 155)	82.1% (n = 67)	---	---
Consultation at Local Support Team	0.2% (n = 1)	1.5% (n = 1)	0.5% (n = 5)	4.0% (n = 3)
Consultation at disciplinary hearing	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)
Consultation at bilingual/language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) meeting	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)
Consultation with student	4.5% (n = 27)	29.9% (n = 20)	7.0% (n = 71)	60.0% (n = 45)
Student staffing or treatment team meeting	5.9% (n = 35)	44.8% (n = 30)	5.8% (n = 59)	37.3% (n = 28)
Transition meeting with campus staff	3.9% (n = 23)	32.8% (n = 22)	2.9% (n = 29)	38.7% (n = 29)
Transition follow-up with student	2.2% (n = 13)	14.9% (n = 10)	27.4% (n = 279)	76.0% (n = 57)
Follow-up on any previously made connection	---	---	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0%</i> (n = 596)		<i>100.0%</i> (n = 1018)	

Source. SCL service tracking database and AISD enrollment data

Note. During the 2008–2009 school year, 60 students received 67 episodes of service. The following year, 64 students received 75 episodes of service.

^a Each time a service was delivered, it was counted as a service instance. The same service delivered multiple times to the same individual counted as multiple service instances.

^b A service episode reflects a continuous period of service. Students with multiple referrals to ALC or who transitioned to a juvenile justice alternative educational placement and then back to ALC had multiple service episodes. A period at ALC followed by a transition to a home campus was counted as a single episode.

Program Outcomes

Methodology

Program effectiveness for the JJ SCL was calculated based on intra-year recidivism to juvenile court data, based on data provided by court staff. Although the school district and juvenile court have a long history of working together in relation to individual students and policy issues, their ability to routinely share outcome data is less well developed. As such, only summary descriptive data on outcomes for the students served by the JJ SCL are provided. These data provide some indication of the success of the JJ SCL in serving JJAEP-involved students, but their utility are limited by lack of a comparison group.

Results

During the 2009–2010 school year, juvenile court staff referred 70 youth to the JJ transition SCL for service; SCL records indicate that 64 of these students were served. Of these 70 students, 58 (83%) returned to AISD placements, including two who subsequently were enrolled in Day Enrichment, five (7%) who enrolled in alternate schools or in other school districts, and two (3%) who completed a GED. Five of the 70 students did not re-enroll in an education program after release.

After referral to the JJ SCL and release from detention or Day Enrichment, 25 of the 70 youth (36%) were detained again during the school year. Eight of the 25 were detained for misdemeanor or felony offenses.

“Kids coming back without the [ALC or JJ SCL] involved is blind receivership. Without [their] help it’s a shot in the dark.”

- Assistant principal

Discussion and Conclusions

During part or all of the past 3 school years, the ACES, ALC, and JJ SCLs worked to support the successful reintegration of students return to their home campuses after a disciplinary or JJ placement. Campus staff, as well as ACES, ALC, and JJ staff, were enthusiastic about the contributions made by the transition SCLs and emphasize the important role the SCLs fill in spanning the gap between the alternative educational placement and the home campus. Despite this enthusiasm, only modest empirical evidence supported the effectiveness of these positions. A decrease in the proportion of discretionary referrals to ACES was found, but not in the proportion of students referred multiple times within the same year. Analysis of data drawn from students enrolled at the ALC found no difference in re-referral, and the data available for the JJ SCL were insufficient to draw conclusions about the impact of this role on the rate of JJ recidivism.

The mixed results are consistent with those found in many pilot or demonstration projects, in which as much value often is attributed to the lessons learned as to the initial impact. In reflecting on the development of the transition SCL positions, ACCESS program staff members have noted that they underestimated the demand for services at the secondary school level. As the role was originally conceived, the transition SCLs were to serve in liaison roles, bridging the home campus ACES/ALC/Gardner-Betts gap. Over time, the ACCESS staff worked with the ALC and JJ transition SCLs to limit their caseloads so they could work more intensively with both students and campus staff to help



establish the local capacity necessary for students to transition successfully. Although this adjustment may have led to more manageable caseloads at the secondary level, it highlighted the large numbers of students who could not be served through the grant.

The experience of the SCLs also highlighted specific opportunities for implementing systemic solutions to improve the likelihood of students transitioning successfully, even without the direct involvement of a specialized SCL. When a student is un-enrolled from his or her home campus or a disciplinary placement, gap in time occurs, during which no campus has the student enrolled. Until the student re-enrolls, no campus is accountable directly for his or her attendance. Gardner-Betts staff have worked for several years to notify a home campus when to expect a student to re-enroll, but requiring a campus to maintain enrollment until a student transitions to a different campus would increase accountability and potentially speed the transition process.

The work of the transition SCL highlighted both the intensity of need among the populations targeted as well as the relative lack of easily accessible assessment data about their needs. When these data are available, they often are scattered across multiple systems and not routinely shared. Having three specialized SCLs working at the intersection of many elements of AISD and the overall community has increased awareness of this information and supported greater coordination. One of the SCLs succinctly summed up this situation when noting that “the sharing of information, coupled with the outreach for relationship, has provided paths that were previously unknown, or worse, unavailable for students who needed true wrap around services inclusive with court, school and community.”

Recommendations

- Capture the experience of transition SCLs in training guides that can be shared with campus staff so they can more effectively support students returning to campus, whether or not a specialized SCL is part of the process.
- Explore how to increase staffing for the ALC and JJ SCLs to better meet the needs of the large number of students who could not be served.
- Automatically transfer enrollment to the student’s home campus after the student is un-enrolled from ALC or a JJ placement to increase accountability for unexcused absences during the transition period.

Appendix A

School-Community Liaison Service Definitions

Service type	Definition
Short-term problem solving	AISD meeting with teacher, administrator, or colleague (parent also may attend meeting) to assess and create action plan
Social service connection	Linking client with food stamps, insurance, 211, neighborhood centers, Catholic charities, juvenile probation, Connections, daycare, etc.
Health/medical service connection	Referral/consultation/sharing information with doctor, immunization clinic, Medicaid/Children’s Health Improvement Program(CHIP), dental, Skippy, private physicians, etc.
Mental health service connection	Linking to Mental Health and Mental Retardation(MHMR), Austin Child Guidance Center (ACGC), parent support groups, private pay provider, Medicaid, etc.
Academic resource connection	Linking student to: tutoring, general educational development (GED) certificate, Job Corp, private schools; recovering student leavers
Crisis intervention	Initial response to student/employee/family situation, needs immediate attention
ARD support/Special Ed	Any assistance or support related to a special education student, participating in an admission review and dismissal (ARD) meeting or providing Special Education information to parents; information gathering for Special Education assessment (e.g., social history)
Systems of care connection	Care coordination, wrap-around Youth and Family Assistance Center (YFAC), Community Partners for Children (CPC), initial referral or attendance at case presentation (Children’s Partnership referrals)
Consultation/meeting with family/guardian ^a	Direct contact with family/guardian addressing attendance, academics, or behavior issues
Information ^b	Information sharing, broadly defined
Consultation at LST	Participation in Local Support Team (LST meeting)
Consultation at 504	Participation in 504 meeting
Consultation at disciplinary hearing	Participation at disciplinary removal hearing
Consultation/meeting with student	Direct contact with student, addressing academics, attendance, behavior issues
Student staffing or treatment team meeting	Multi-person, service-driven, formal staff meeting with outside agency regarding student behavior, attendance, or academics
Transition meeting with campus staff	Creating a plan for student success
Transition follow-up with student	Communication with a student who has transitioned back to campus
Follow up on any previously made connection ^a	Follow up on any previously made connection (social service, health/medical, mental health, or academic resource)

^a These service codes were added in the 2009–2010 school year.

^b This service code was dropped in the 2009–2010 school year.



Appendix B

Alternative Center for Elementary Students (ACES) Transition School-Community Liaison Services Delivered, 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 School Years

Service type	2008–2009		2009–2010			
	All service instances	% of service episodes receiving specific service		All service instances ^a	% of service episodes receiving specific service	
		ACES	Non-ACES		ACES	Non-ACES
Short-term problem solving	18.7% (n = 115)	59.3% (n = 48)	43.5% (n = 10)	24.3% (n = 159)	86.0% (n = 98)	90.5% (n = 19)
Social service connection	1.1% (n = 7)	4.9% (n = 4)	13.0% (n = 3)	0.9% (n = 6)	3.5% (n = 4)	9.5% (n = 2)
Health/medical service connection	0.5% (n = 3)	1.2% (n = 1)	4.4% (n = 1)	1.2% (n = 8)	2.6% (n = 3)	9.5% (n = 2)
Mental health service connection	0.5% (n = 3)	2.5% (n = 2)	0.0% (n = 0)	2.0% (n = 13)	7.0% (n = 8)	9.5% (n = 2)
Academic resource connection	0.2% (n = 1)	1.2% (n = 1)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)
Crisis intervention	0.2% (n = 1)	0.0% (n = 0)	4.4% (n = 1)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)
Admission review and dismissal (ARD) support/special education	0.3% (n = 2)	1.2% (n = 1)	0.0% (n = 0)	1.2% (n = 8)	4.4% (n = 5)	4.8% (n = 1)
Consultation/meeting with family/guardian	---	---	---	8.7% (n = 57)	21.9% (n = 25)	23.8% (n = 5)
Information	20.9% (n = 128)	67.9% (n = 55)	65.2% (n = 15)	---	---	---
Consultation at local support team (LST)	0.3% (n = 2)	2.5% (n = 2)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.3% (n = 2)	1.8% (n = 2)	0.0% (n = 0)
Consultation at 504	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.2% (n = 1)	0.9% (n = 1)	0.0% (n = 0)
Consultation at disciplinary hearing	8.5% (n = 52)	55.6% (n = 45)	21.7% (n = 5)	12.1% (n = 79)	63.2% (n = 72)	23.8% (n = 5)
Consultation with student	1.6% (n = 10)	7.4% (n = 6)	4.4% (n = 1)	1.2% (n = 8)	5.3% (n = 6)	0.0% (n = 0)
Student staffing or treatment team meeting	40.9% (n = 251)	91.4% (n = 74)	47.8% (n = 11)	41.9% (n = 274)	78.1% (n = 89)	57.1% (n = 12)
Transition meeting with campus staff	5.5% (n = 34)	38.3% (n = 31)	13.0% (n = 3)	4.1% (n = 27)	19.3% (n = 22)	19.1% (n = 4)
Transition follow-up with student	0.8% (n = 4)	4.9% (n = 4)	4.4% (n = 1)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)	0.0% (n = 0)
Follow up on any previously made connection	---	---	---	1.8% (n = 12)	9.7% (n = 11)	0.0% (n = 0)
Totals	100.0% (n = 614)			100.0% (n = 654)		

Source: SCL tracking database and AISD enrollment data

Note: Non-ACES reflects students who were not removed to ACES, on whose behalf the SCL worked. During the 2008–2009 school year, 98 students received 104 episodes of service (ACES: n = 81; non-ACES: n = 23). The following year (2009–2010), 125 students received 90 episodes of service (ACES: n = 104; non-ACES: n = 21). Each time a service was delivered, it was counted as a service instance. The same service delivered multiple times to the same individual counted as multiple service instances of the same service type. A service episode reflects a continuous period of service. Students with multiple referrals to ACES had multiple service episodes. A period at ACES followed by a transition to a home campus counted as a single episode. According to the ACES SCL, transition meetings with staff sometimes were categorized under the student staffing or treatment team meeting headings; therefore, the *transition meeting with campus staff* category does not reflect the full percentage of students for whom a transition meeting was held.

Appendix B

ACES Offense Type Definitions

Not all violations listed below occurred; they represent how potential violations listed within the AISD *Administrative Discipline Procedures Manual* were grouped for the analysis presented here. Underlined numbers reflect mandatory removal for that offense code.

Aggressive behavior (student focused):

Inappropriate language or gestures to student (005), harassment/intimidation/threat of student (010), physical aggression against students (015), fighting/mutual combat (020), assault with injury against a student (025), aggravated assault against a student (030), making a false report (035), gang related activity (037), school-related gang violence (040)

Aggressive behavior (adult focused):

Inappropriate language or gestures to adult (045), harassment/intimidation/threat of adult (050), physical aggression against adults (055), assault with injury against an adult (060), aggravated assault against an adult (065), and retaliation against school employee (070)

Disruption/insubordination:

Disruption of educational process (310), failure to follow instructions (325)

Alcohol/drugs:

Inappropriate use of over-the-counter medicine (155), drug paraphernalia (195), tobacco violation (200), possession of marijuana/other controlled substance-misd. (160), consumption of marijuana/other controlled substance-misdemeanor. (165), under the influence of marijuana/other controlled substance-misd. (170), sale or distribution of marijuana/other controlled substance-misd. (175), abuse of glue or aerosol paint (205), possession of marijuana/other controlled substance-felony (180), sale or distribution of marijuana/other controlled substance-felony (190), possession of alcoholic beverage (210), consumption of alcoholic beverage (215), under influence of alcoholic beverage (220), sale/distribution of alcoholic beverage (225), alcohol offense-felony (230)

Weapons:

Firearm violation (130), BB gun/air gun (132), legal knife (135), illegal knife violation (140), illegal club violation (145), prohibited weapon violation (150), home-made weapon (151)

Other:

Any code not listed above.

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