






Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS)

The Local Perspective: Enlarged City School District of Middletown, NY





The SS/HS Initiative

- A unique collaboration among the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice   
- Created in 1999 in response to rising concerns about youth violence and school safety
- Empowers local communities to create coordinated, comprehensive programs that recognize the complexity of youth violence



About Our Initiative

- ECSDM received grant in 2006
- \$5.7 million over three years
- Collaborate with local juvenile justice, law enforcement, and mental health agencies
- Promote the healthy development of school-age children
- Promote mental health and prevent violence in youth by using evidence-based programs with demonstrated long-term positive effects



SS/HS Partners

- Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Council of Orange County
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County
- Dispute Resolution Center
- Middletown Recreation and Parks Department
- Middletown City Police and Town of Wallkill Police Departments
- Occupations, Inc.
- Orange County Department of Mental Health
- Orange County Probation Department
- Orange County Youth Bureau
- Ophelia Project



Six Core SS/HS Elements

1. Safe school environment
2. Violence, alcohol, and other drug prevention and early intervention
3. School and community mental health prevention and intervention services
4. Early childhood psychosocial and emotional development services
5. Supporting and connecting schools and communities
6. Safe school policies



Element 1: Safe School Environment

Install...

- Digital closed-circuit security cameras in all schools
- Visitor identification systems
- Outside lights and exterior door alarms
- Duress alarms in all building reception areas

- School Resource Officer for the high school
- Building Safety Committees
- Security staff training



Element 2: Violence, alcohol, and other drug prevention and early intervention.

- **Ophelia Project** – reduce relational aggression and improve school climate
- **G.R.E.A.T.** (Gang Resistance Education And Training) – prevent violence
- **PBIS** (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports) – promote positive student behavior
- **Peer Mediation** - reduce aggressive behavior and promote non-violent conflict resolution
- **Life Skills Training** – prevent substance use
- **Project SUCCESS** – prevention/intervention of substance use and abuse



Element 3: School and community mental health prevention and intervention services.

Occupations Inc. SS/HS Behavioral Health Team

- Screen students for mental health illness
- Provide mental health services



Element 4: Early childhood psychosocial and emotional development services.

Healthy Families Program

- In-home instruction to expecting families and new parents
- Instruction to pregnant high school students and high school students who are parents



Element 5: Supporting and connecting schools and communities.

- **High School Truant-Probation Officer** - promote and improve student attendance
- **Big Brothers Big Sisters** – school-based mentoring program to develop resiliency and life skills
- **Middletown Recreation Community Center** – after school recreation/academic mentoring programs
- **Parents Apart Program** - instructional workshops to separated, divorced, and never married parents.



Element 6: Safe school policies

Consultant review of...

- District-wide Policies and Procedures Manual related to safety, health, and wellness
- Student Code of Conduct
- Staff in-service training



Outcomes

Increase...

- Student, staff, and community perception of safety
- School attendance
- Emotional well-being of children
- Opportunities for mental health services
- Student participation in recreational activities



Outcomes

Decrease...

- Violent and disruptive behavior on school property
- Anti-social behavior
- School suspensions
- Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use



Outcomes

Improve...

- District policies and procedures to support health and safety of students, faculty, and staff
- Student Code of Conduct



Benefits to the Community

- Increase school and community attachment; programs and services build trust, caring, and mutual responsibility
- Provide students with positive recreational activities
- Provide students with employment opportunities
- Increase communications to residents about available community and school resources/services
- Evaluation results will direct effective future services
- Develop community cohesiveness and pride
- Decrease long-term health care costs



Benefits continued . . .

- Increase programs for residents (Healthy Families and Parents Apart programs)
- Promotes supportive families
- Models the importance of “service to others”
- Demonstrates there is “power in partnership/working together”
- Reduce crime rate and behaviors that lead to crime
- Agency collaboration strengthens future funding opportunities
- Increase State aid through improved attendance



How You Can Help

- Support and encourage your child(ren)'s attendance and participation in school and SS/HS activities
- Take an active role: Participate in school and community based programs
- Let us know your comments and suggestions