The New Jersey School Based Youth Services Program
Final Evaluation Report

Academy for Educational Development

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NOTE:

This report was first created in WordPerfect and converted to an early version of Word before being made into a PDF. There are some formatting issues throughout the report that could not be addressed.

Academy for Educational Development

New Jersey School-Based Youth Services Program

Final Report

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

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

New York City
Winter 2000

New Jersey School-Based Youth Services Program Evaluation
Executive Summary

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of an outcome study of six sites participating in the New Jersey School-Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP), a statewide initiative providing a range of services for adolescents in one location, at or near their schools. The program has operated since 1988 in 29 New Jersey communities, with at least one project in every county of the state. With parental consent, all students at host schools can participate in SBYSP activities and use SBYSP services. Core SBYSP services and activities include individual and family counseling; primary and preventive health services; drug and alcohol abuse counseling; employment counseling, training, and placement; and recreation.

Each project is managed by a lead agency, which receives the state grant. Lead agencies include the local school districts, mental health agencies and hospitals, a family service agency, a city department of human resources, a local chapter of the Urban League, and a Private Industry Council (PIC). SBYSP is overseen by a central support team in the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS).

In spring 1995, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, in consultation with DHS, selected the Academy for Educational Development (AED) to conduct an evaluation of SBYSP under its Evaluation Grants Project. The AED evaluation was conducted in two phases: the first phase of research included an analysis of the state policy context for developing, implementing, and sustaining the School Based initiative and an extensive cross-site analysis of program implementation at the site level; the second phase, which began in summer 1996 and concluded in November 1998, was an intensive outcomes study of the program in six individual sites.

In brief, evaluation results indicate that the SBYSP programs in the six sample sites are well-integrated into their schools and are reaching both those students who are already at high risk for negative outcomes and students who have just begun to experiment with risk-taking behavior or who are experiencing family and personal problems that may lead to greater risk-taking behaviors and academic difficulty if not addressed. The results of the study indicate that, when background factors such as family stress, family and other adult support, and participation in positive youth activities are held constant, youth who participated in SBYSP activities and services showed gains not found for their peers who did not take advantage of SBYSP.

It is important to note that, since some adolescent behaviors worsen before improving (particularly those involving risk-taking behavior), the gains of SBYSP participants included both actual improvement in some areas and lesser degrees of decline than their peers in others. Finally, although findings are organized by particular topic areas, students typically use a wide array of SBYSP services and activities rather than services or activities related to a particular problem. **The power of the SBYSP model is that its comprehensive approach provides both multiple ports of entry and an integrated array of services and activities to respond to students' or different individual needs and preferences.**

The summary provides a brief overview of the School Based program and of AED's evaluation of the six intensive-study sites and summaries of findings in the following areas: youth development activities; program utilization and participation patterns; networks of support; emotional health; substance use and abuse; violence and delinquent behavior; reproductive health; and education activities. It ends with conclusions and recommendations.

2. Overview of the School Based Youth Services Program

The core SBYSP program offers "one-stop shopping" to break down the bureaucratic and logistical barriers that prevent young people from obtaining the services and supports they need to navigate the adolescent years. The RFP gave priority to "communities with extensive teenage problems," including high rates of teenage mental illness, substance abuse, unemployment, suicide, pregnancy, court involvement, and school dropout. All students in SBYSP host schools are free to use the services and activities.

Because the architects of School Based wanted services and activities to be offered under a nonstigmatizing umbrella and because youth had repeatedly told them that they needed safe places to be and adults to talk to, recreational activities were strongly recommended for all sites. In addition to the core activities, most sites have added components, enabling them to reach out to a wider array of students. The five most common additional program components are adolescent pregnancy prevention; teen parent support; violence prevention; academic support; and positive youth development.

Since their inception, the School Based projects have built complex, mutually supportive relationships with their host schools. SBYSP staff participate in various school committees; help plan and execute school events; conduct classes and workshops for both students and teachers; and advocate for and support special groups of and individual students. Despite the challenges of working collaboratively and occasional "turf" issues, most School Based projects have maintained effective working relationships with their schools, and the positive impact of SBYSP projects on the school is evident at most sites.

The School Based RFP encouraged schools to work collaboratively with community-based agencies to address student needs, and over time, in some sites School Based has functioned like a magnet, attracting resources to the site that would not have been available had SBYSP not existed. Two particularly important resource linkages permitted seven of the 29 projects to offer child care to teen parents using federal child-care development block grants and five projects to conduct an intensive family intervention program addressing acute substance abuse problems with state heath department funding. In 1999, after more than a decade of stable program funding, the state of New Jersey expanded the funding for the School Based Youth Services Program to enable the creation of 15 more programs.

3. AED's Evaluation of the Six School Based Sites

The second phase of AED's evaluation of SBYSP was an outcome-based study of the program in six individual sites. The strategies for this phase were designed to increase understanding of how individual projects operated, as well as their impact on the young people using them. They included the collection of longitudinal quantitative data from a confidential student survey and qualitative data from student interviews and focus groups.

To measure the outcomes of students' use of SBYSP activities and services, AED followed for two years the cohort of students who entered ninth grade in September 1996. Students completed two specially designed confidential surveys (in fall 1996 and late spring 1998) in the six SBYSP schools selected for the outcome study. Using this data, we were able to compare the outcomes for students who had taken advantage of SBYSP to those who had not, controlling for initial differences in students' behavior, background, and situational characteristics. In addition to the surveys, AED collected school data and tracked a small sample of students from each school via individual interviews and focus groups.

The six sites identified to participate in the second phase of the School Based evaluation varied considerably. The six school districts included one regional school district encompassing 142 square miles, one citywide vocational district, and four local districts ranging from densely urban to a mixture of urban and suburban or urban and rural (a municipality incorporating a rural area with a densely populated urban center). The schools included five academic high schools and one vocational-technical school, with student populations ranging from almost entirely Caucasian in two schools to almost entirely African American and Latino in three.

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

A total of 1,509 youth (84% of the eligible cohort) responded to the baseline survey, and a total of 1,205 students took the follow-up survey administered at the end of their second year in high school, representing a response rate of 78 percent; 922 students took both the baseline and the follow-up surveys. The results presented in this report are based only on the cohort of 922 students who took both the baseline and follow-up surveys.

Survey questions were organized into six categories: **background characteristics** (gender, race/ethnicity, family composition); **situational characteristics** (level of stress, violence, family, adult, and peer support); **personal characteristics** (feelings, educational aspirations, educational history); **behavioral characteristics** (sexual activity, violence/delinquency, substance abuse); **health-related characteristics** (health status, health risks, access to health care); and **youth development characteristics** (after school and youth development activities). In addition, the follow-up survey asked questions concerning SBYSP utilization and satisfaction.

In multiple regression analyses, outcomes of students taking advantage of SBYSP offerings ("users") were compared to the outcomes of students who did not ("nonusers"). These analyses included controls for background characteristics indicating higher levels of need, such as family stress, or protective factors linked with a lower incidence of risk behavior, such as family support, others sources of adult support, and participation in positive youth activities to control for pre-existing differences.

4. Findings

The next section of this summary discusses findings in the following areas: students' participation in positive youth activities; program utilization and participation patterns; networks of support; emotional health; substance use and abuse; violence and delinquent behavior; reproductive health; and educational activities.

Program Utilization and Participation Patterns

Patterns in Participation in SBYSP: Nearly one-third of students (31%) reported having heard about SBYSP while still in middle school; the large majority of students (66%) reported hearing about SBYSP during grade 9. Participation in SBYSP activities or services grew steadily during the students' first and second years in high school. At the end of the first year in high school, 123 students had participated in SBYSP activities or used SBYSP services "early starters"). By the

end of their second year in high school, 279 additional students had joined the SBYSP user group ("late starters"). In total, 402 of the 922 survey (44% of the cohort of students taking both surveys) respondents had used SBYSP at some point over the two-year period; 520 had not (56%).

Participation in Different Types of SBYSP Services and Activities. The greatest number of students (65.7% of the user group) reported participating in some form of recreational activity, which included both drop-in recreation and specially organized events and trips. Almost two-fifths of participants reported using individual counseling (39% of users). Group counseling and discussions followed, with 32 percent of users reporting that they had sought assistance or participated in these groups. Approximately one-fourth of School Based participants (26%) reported using some form of health-related services. Almost one-fifth of School Based users reported seeking sexuality or employment-related services (19% and 18% respectively); only 13 percent of students reported seeking tutoring.

Frequency of School Based use. Students' average participation in the different activities ranged from a low of slightly more than a few times a year to a high of once or twice a month. Similarly, other than the approximately one-fifth of School Based users reporting frequent use of group counseling services, relatively few students reported using SBYSP services and activities in general on a frequent basis.

Gender Differences in Participation. Although recreation leads the list for both boys and girls, more boys participated in recreation (72%) than girls (61%). Both boys and girls made use of individual and group counseling in nearly equal proportions (38% and 39% for individual and 33% and 31% for group counseling). Roughly similar proportions of boys and girls reported using the health- and sexuality-related services (24% and 29% for health and 18% and 20% sexuality-related services), as well as employment-related activities (17% and 20%). However, boys were twice as likely to use tutoring and substance abuse counseling as were girls (9% versus 19% and 9% versus 20%).

Students' Overall Perceptions of SBYSP. The overwhelming majority of students saw SBYSP as "a place where there are a lot of different activities and services for students" (92%); "where students with problems can get help" (91%); and where "there are adults who care about kids and really listen to them" (89%). Fewer than one-fifth of students saw SBYSP as primarily for problem students or those in special education (19% and 17% respectively).

Satisfaction with Services. The most highly rated service was recreation, followed closely by individual and group counseling, with both receiving a "satisfied" ratings from girls and boys. Overall, in interviews and focus groups, students praised SBYSP for its helpfulness and the confidentiality with which staff treated students' information.

Differences between SBYSP Users and Nonusers and Early and Late Starters

Students who used SBYSP were at greater risk of negative outcomes those who did not take advantage of SBYSP offerings. In addition, students who began using SBYSP during their first year in high school had more pronounced problems than those who began during their second year of high school

Educational status. Both SBYSP user groups were noticeably weaker academically than students who did not use School Based services. There were very slight differences between the two user groups in their educational status, with early starters having very slightly lower grade point averages and numbers of credits earned at the time of the follow-up survey.

Risk and stress factors. Early starters were quite different from later starters with regard to levels of family stress. While two-fifths of early starters reported at least three family stress factors, fewer than one-third of late starters did so. Both groups, however, reported substantially more stress than nonusers, where only one-fifth reported at least three family stress factors. All students reported nearly identical levels of family support and other adult support.

Emotional distress. As was the case on the baseline survey, SBYSP users reported generally higher levels of negative emotions than their nonusing peers. Early starters reported higher levels of emotional distress than later starters, including very frequent feelings of unhappiness, depression, nervousness, worrying and anger. For example, 50 percent more early than late starters reported having thought about suicide.

Risk behaviors. School Based users reported higher levels of involvement in risk behaviors than did nonusers, but early starters also reported greater risk involvement than later starters. Specifically, early starters reported higher levels of hitting someone to hurt them, smoking cigarettes, and using beer, wine and marijuana.

Participation in Positive Youth Activities

At the baseline measure, students who were identified as SBYSP users had nearly identical participation in youth activities overall compared with their nonuser peers, and most students participated in some kind of activity on a weekly basis. Specifically, 92 percent of users participated in some type of youth activity, a slightly lower rate than for nonusers (93%). Among both users and nonusers, the most popular activities were unorganized sports or outdoor games, in which three-fourths of students reported participating, with 43 percent participating in informal sports or games several times a week.

By the follow-up survey, participation in youth activities decreased for both users and nonusers. Overall, the percentage of youth participating in any kind of activity decreased among nonusers from 93 percent to 84 percent, and among users from 92 percent to 86 percent. Participation in art, music or dance classes decreased by 13 percent for nonusers and 11 percent for users; participation in school-sponsored clubs decreased by 6 percent for nonusers and 4 percent for users; and playing on a school sports team decreased by 16 percent for nonusers and 14 percent for users.

Networks of Support

Family Support. When asked about 12 common areas of family stress at the baseline measure, SBYSP users reported higher stress levels in all 12 areas than nonusers. In addition, while one-fifth of nonusers (20%) reported having three or more areas of stress, almost one-third of users (32%) did so. At the follow-up measure, SBYSP users again reported higher levels of family stress in all 12 areas. The gap had narrowed in eight of the areas, but while almost one-quarter (24%) of nonusers reported three or more areas of stress, more than one-third of users (34%) did so.

Resistance to Peer Pressure. At the baseline measure, approximately three-quarters of users (76%) selected one of the two responses indicating that they would not give in to peer pressure. This increased slightly on the follow-up survey, with 77 percent of SBYSP users now selecting one of the two choices that reflected a willingness to resist peer pressure. Among nonusers, at the baseline measure, almost four-fifths (79%) of nonusers indicated that they were likely to resist peer pressure; this declined to precisely three-quarters (75%) on the follow-up survey. However, regression analyses (controlling for baseline response and levels of family stress, family support,

other adult support, and involvement in positive youth activities) showed negative program effects on SBYSP users' resistance to peer pressure. In other words, according to their predictions, when compared with nonusers with similar personal characteristics, SBYSP users had lost ground.

Nonetheless, students' predictions of their behavior in a hypothetical situation were not consistent with their current self-reported behaviors. Regression analysis of the differences between baseline and follow-up in responses to questions about actual behavior showed movement in the positive direction for the majority of behavioral outcomes. This apparent contradiction (between decreased peer resistance but improved behavior) suggests that the reduction in resistance to peer pressure did not have significant negative behavioral consequences. It may be that whatever gains accrued from SBYSP participation (as reflected in the generally positive direction of change observed in the regression analyses) came about because of a combination of reduced opportunities to engage in risk behavior and/or changes in the individual factors underlying risk behavior, such as negative emotions (e.g., depression, angry and destructive thoughts).

In summary, findings from the analyses of data on support systems suggest that SBYSP played a positive role in reinforcing the two most important support networks for adolescents, their families and peers. This is a particularly impressive in light of the levels of family stress reported by the students who used SBYSP services and activities.

Emotional Health and Well-being

At the baseline measure, more SBYSP users reported frequent emotional distress than did nonusers. For example, more than one-quarter of SBYSP users (26%) reported that they very often worried too much about things, and more than one-fifth (21%) reported very often feeling too tired to do things, while substantially lower proportions of nonusers (17% and 14%) reported the same feelings. Nearly one-fifth of SBYSP users reported often feeling angry or destructive (19%) or unhappy, sad or depressed (19%) at the baseline measure, while fewer than one-eighth of nonusers reported these feelings (12% and 11%).

Consistent with their greater frequency of negative emotions, SBYSP users lagged behind their peers at the baseline measure in reporting frequent positive emotions.

By the end of their second year in high school, however, SBYSP users appeared to have held their ground when compared to nonusers. More students than before in both groups reported that they very often worried too much and felt too tired to do things, but these increases were greater among nonusers (6 and 9 percentage point increases) than among SBYSP users (2 and 5 percentage point increases). At the follow-up survey, fewer SBYSP users reported very often feeling angry and destructive or sad, unhappy, or depressed (with 1 and 2 percentage point decreases) while more nonusers than at baseline reported very often having these feelings (with 5 and 3 percentage point *increases*).

In terms of positive feelings, at the end of the second year in high school, the gap between SBYSP users and nonusers appeared to have narrowed in the first three areas. Although fewer students in both groups reported very often feeling happy or pleased, the decline was greater among nonusers (a 6% decrease, compared to 3% decrease for users). Slightly more SBYSP users reported very often feeling proud of themselves, while the proportion of nonusers who did so fell by 3 percentage points. SBYSP users also made slightly greater gains in "very often feeling excited about the future."

In summary, analyses of student responses to the survey questions concerning emotional issues found that SBYSP users entered their first year in high school with substantially more frequent negative emotions and fewer positive emotions than their peers who did not take advantage of SBYSP activities and services. At the end of their second year in high school, however, the gap between the two groups had narrowed considerably. In most cases, while both groups reported more negative feelings at the follow-up survey than at the baseline measure, the increment for SBYSP users was smaller than for nonusers. Regression analyses showed statistically significant positive program effects on five of the seven negative emotions.

Substance Use and Abuse

At the baseline measure, both SBYSP users and their friends were more likely to smoke, drink alcohol and take drugs compared with nonusers. Of SBYSP users, 31 percent compared with 23 percent of nonusers reported smoking cigarettes in the previous two-month period; 35 percent of users compared with 24 percent of nonusers reported drinking; and twice as many users reported smoking marijuana compared with nonusers (20% vs. 10%).

By the end of students' second year in high school, both users and nonusers were engaging in more frequent use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs. In several cases, however, nonusers' participation in these substances increased at a greater rate than their peers who had used SBYSP services. Marijuana use doubled among nonusers and went up by 4 percentage points among users. Liquor intake increased from 24 percent to 32 percent for nonusers and from 35 percent to 38 percent for users. At the follow-up survey, nonusers surpassed School Based users in drinking and smoking: 44 percent of nonusers drank beer or wine in the previous two months compared with 39 percent of users, and 35 percent of nonusers smoked tobacco compared with 33 percent of users.

Regardless of user status, a majority of youth reported that their friends used tobacco, alcohol and drugs, attesting to the need to provide youth with drug and alcohol-free activities and peer groups: 52 percent of nonusers and 61 percent of users said at least some of their friends smoked marijuana their freshman year; 57 percent of nonusers and 64 percent of users said their friends drank liquor, and 77 percent of nonusers and 72 percent of users said their friends smoked tobacco.

In summary, participation in SBYSP activities and/or use of SBYSP services appear to have slowed the rate of increase in student use for all categories of substances, compared with rates of students who did not take advantage of SBYSP services and activities. In the case of tobacco and beer and wine, these gains were statistically significant. Moreover, during a period when substance use and abuse increased for both groups and their peers, the proportion of SBYSP users reporting that their friends were using drugs also did not increase as fast as was the case for nonusers.

Violent and Delinquent Behavior

At the baseline measure, SBYSP users exhibited more frequent violent and delinquent behavior than their nonuser peers. Nearly one-third of users said they had deliberately damaged property in the two months prior to survey administration compared with 28 percent of nonusers who had done so. The differences between the two groups were greatest in terms of getting into physical fights: 27 percent of SBYSP users reported that they had fought with someone in the first two months of school compared with 21 percent of nonusers.

Most of these behaviors decreased for both users and nonusers by the end of their second year in

high school. In two cases, damaging property and stealing things, SBYSP users showed a larger decrease than nonusers. However, although hitting decreased for both groups, nonusers showed a larger decrease than did users. Further, with regard to fighting, SBYSP users showed a small (3%) increase while nonusers showed a decrease of about the same size.

In sum, results of the analyses of student responses about their engagement in violent or delinquent behavior showed progress on the whole. Both deliberate destructive behavior and boys' reports of hitting with intentions of hurting showed gains at statistically significant levels. It is worth noting that the comprehensive SBYSP approach to violence and delinquency prevention may yield more powerful gains than could be seen with single-focus violence prevention activities that neglect other important student needs.

Reproductive Health

Differences in Sexual Behavior between Users and Nonusers. At the baseline measure, there were already visible differences between students using SBYSP services and those who had not. While more than four-fifths (85%) of nonusers definitely wanted to avoid a pregnancy during high school, only three-quarters (74.9%) of users had such clear intentions. At follow-up, both groups had declined very slightly, with 83.4 percent of nonusers and 74.3 percent of users expressing clear intentions to avoid pregnancy. Similarly, at the baseline measure, while fewer than one-quarter (23%) of nonusers had ever had sex, almost one-third (30.9%) of users had done so. At the follow-up survey, more than two-fifths (43%) of nonusers and almost three-fifths (58.3%) of users reported having had sex.

As for contraceptive use among sexually active students, almost two-thirds (60.9% and 63.6%) of users reported always using contraception, but fewer than half (44.3% and 43.6%) did so on the follow-up survey. Among nonusers, almost three-fifths (58.3% and 59.3%) reported using contraception and/or condoms at baseline, and slightly more than half (53.9% and 51.9%) did so on the follow-up survey.

In sum, the percentage of School Based users who had ever had sex increased dramatically from baseline to follow-up, and the percentage who said they always used contraception to avoid pregnancy and condoms to avoid STDs declined sharply. This was consistent with the high levels of family stress reported by these teens. . However, teen sexual behavior was definitely an area in which School Based accounted for a "less steep decline" than would otherwise have occurred among at-risk youth of this age.

Educational Activities

Participation in educational activities. Four of the six outcome-study sites offered tutoring or homework help, and a total of 13 percent of SBYSP users reported using these services. This modest level of participation reflects the relative lack of emphasis on academic services in comparison with other types of services offered, such as recreation and counseling, which two-thirds and one-third of the SBYSP respondents respectively reported using. However, of those SBYSP students who reported using tutoring or homework help, the average frequency of use was roughly monthly. Forty percent of SBYSP participants reported using tutoring a few times a year; 21 percent about once a month; 23 percent frequently (about twice a month); and 15 percent used tutoring very frequently (about once a week). Data were not collected on participation in other types of one-time academic activities such as trips to colleges, and freshman orientation (available to both users and nonusers).

Academic characteristics and status. At the baseline measure, users and nonusers were similar

with regard to many academic characteristics. Both users and nonusers had high educational aspirations, with nearly three-quarters of both groups (74% of users and 70% of nonusers) expressing the intention to pursue at least a four-year college degree. However, users and nonusers differed substantially in academic status and behavior. Specifically, users were more likely to be classified as special education students (9% versus 6%); they were more likely than nonusers to have cut class more than once in the first two months of their freshman year (12% versus 9%); they were more likely to have received a failing grade during that period (41% versus 35%); and to have been sent to the office for disciplinary reasons (17% versus 10%). By the end of their freshman year, users lagged behind nonusers in mean grade point average (2.6 versus 3.2) and in average credits earned for their freshman year (33.1 versus 34.2). As a result, SBYSP users were at substantially greater risk of dropping out than their peers who did not use SBYSP.

By the end of students' second year in high school, both users and nonusers were at greater risk for negative academic outcomes. The proportion of students classified in special education increased; average yearly credit accumulation decreased; and failing grades, cutting classes, and suspensions increased. In addition, in many cases, SBYSP users showed a greater increase in negative academic behaviors compared with nonusers.

However, when the responses of SBYSP participants are measured against those of comparable nonparticipants using regression analyses to control for baseline differences, level of family stress, participation in positive youth activities, and level of family and other adult support, participation in SBYSP showed a statistically significant positive effect on users' credit accumulation. Finally, there was (nonsignificant) positive movement on all of the academic outcomes for SBYSP users' with the exception of cutting class (where a nonsignificant negative effect was seen).

In sum, both users and nonusers experienced a downward trend in academic behaviors and outcomes between their first and second year in high school. This is common for many high school students as the academic demands of secondary education become more challenging. However, when we controlled for pre-existing differences between users and nonusers, School Based appeared to mitigate the downward trend for those who participated in its programs and activities.

5. Conclusions

After 12 years in operation, the state of New Jersey 's confidence that the School Based Youth Services Program should be expanded is well justified. The evaluation findings about the School Based Youth Services Programs are good news. Evidence abounds that SBYSP projects are fulfilling their mission to provide young people with the services and supports they need to navigate the adolescent years and "complete their education, obtain skills leading to employment or additional education, and lead a mentally and physically healthy life."

Specifically, SBYSP projects are well-integrated into most host schools, are reaching students most in need, and are having a positive impact on student behaviors, attitudes, and aspirations. Further, given the integration of most School Based projects into the life of the school, projects may also have benefited students not using SBYSP services or participating in SBYSP activities. In addition, it must be remembered that even where School Based did not appear to lead to improvements in student behavior from the baseline to follow-up survey, it may have accounted for a less steep decline in behavior.

Important evaluation findings include:

- SBYSP has become well-integrated into the daily operation of the six study schools.

- Students in the six outcome-study schools generally are at risk for negative outcomes.

- SBYSP reaches students through multiple paths of entry because of its comprehensive nature and extensive outreach efforts.

- SBYSP clearly is reaching the most vulnerable students in the six outcome-study schools.

- SBYSP has been able to make important differences in the lives of these students. Specifically, the educational benefits of SBYSP participation include statistically significant positive effects on educational aspirations and credit accumulation.

These findings are discussed in detail below.

Students in outcome-study schools are clearly at risk for negative outcomes.

According to the baseline survey, many students in the six outcome studies were at risk of negative outcomes. This finding reflects the DHS's choice of schools in communities with high levels of documented need and confirms their judgment that services should be available to all students in these schools, rather than to a smaller group already identified as more vulnerable than their peers. In fact, an analysis of the baseline-survey data revealed that many students (both SBYSP users and nonusers) in these schools had already begun engaging in risk behaviors and loosening their ties to school at a point quite early in their freshman year in high school.

SBYSP is well-integrated into the daily operation of the outcome-study schools.

In the six outcome-study sites, the projects have been institutionalized in ways that are evident from the first phone call to the district, where the SBYSP phone number is listed on the top-level menu of choices for callers. Additional evidence of the important role that projects play in their host schools includes descriptions of School Based in student handbooks, integration of SBYSP staff into key school committees, and assignment of major responsibilities to SBYSP for supporting students' transition into high school and for conducting drug-and alcohol-free celebrations. In three sites, SBYSP project directors sit on top-level district bodies or hold districtwide positions, such as director of student support services. Further, given this integration, many students who do not use SBYSP services or participate in SBYSP activities may benefit, directly or indirectly, from the role the project plays in many schools. For example, SBYSP staff help plan and conduct activities to ease the transition from middle school to high school, offer classes on sexuality and HIV/AIDS prevention, conduct workshops for both students and staff on mental health and well-being topic, serve on attendance review committees and, advocate for students with personal difficulties, even if these students are not SBYSP users.

SBYSP is reaching students through multiple paths of entry.

Students come to School Based in a variety of ways, resulting from the diverse array of relationships that SBYSP staff have built over time with different members of the school staff and their track record in working with students. Students may come to SBYSP of their own choice to participate in recreational or cultural activities or to participate in a workshop on a topic of interest. Students familiar with SBYSP services may also come seeking assistance with personal problems and clearly value SBYSP's guarantee of confidentiality. Some students come

to SBYSP on the suggestion of friends or parents to talk about personal problems or to participate in activities. Many students are referred to SBYSP by a wide range of school personnel who have noticed problems, such as depression or a sharp downturn in academic performance. Finally, in some schools, students can be mandated to participate in SBYSP anger-management workshops if they have been caught fighting.

SBYSP is reaching the most vulnerable students in the outcome-study schools.

Despite high general levels of stress and risk, a comparison of the baseline characteristics and behaviors of SBYSP participants in the six schools and those students who had not taken advantage of SBYSP activities and services showed that SBYSP users were at considerably greater risk than their peers. Their responses to questions on the baseline survey indicated that they suffered higher levels of family stress than nonusers. In addition, users reported substantially higher levels of emotional distress, sexual activity, fighting, smoking, failing grades and school suspension, and marijuana use. Participants also were somewhat more likely to be special education students and to have lower grade point averages than nonusers. These findings confirm what practitioners have long suspected—that they were reaching the students at greatest risk for negative outcomes.

In addition, a comparison of the characteristics and behaviors of early (ninth-grade) and later (tenth-grade or second-year) entrants into SBYSP showed a higher proportion of risk-related characteristics and behaviors among the early starters. This suggests that while the earlier entrants may have more acute and visible problems, the projects also are reaching some students whose risk level is lower, though still of concern, Indeed, it is possible that these students, without the support of SBYSP services and activities, may have eventually developed the kinds of acute problems that were more prevalent among those students who began using SBYSP services and activities during their first year in high school.

SBYSP has been able to make important differences on the lives of these students.

Before presenting the central findings of the outcome study, it is worth repeating our earlier caution about the difficulty of stating findings when a positive outcome may not be a visible improvement in status, but rather a less steep decline in condition. In fact, positive program effects include the six possibilities below.

Both groups improved between the baseline and follow-up survey, and SBYSP users did so more than nonusers. Improving either meant engaging in more frequent positive behaviors or fewer negative behaviors.

> Both groups (SBYSP users and nonusers) got worse between the baseline and follow-up survey, but SBYSP users did so less than nonusers. Getting worse either meant they engaged in fewer positive behaviors or more negative behaviors.
>
> SBYSP users improved while nonusers stayed the same.
>
> SBYSP users improved while nonusers got worse.
>
> SBYSP users stayed the same while nonusers got worse.
>
> SBYSP users stay the same while nonusers moved in the negative direction.

Overall, regression analyses of students' responses to the follow-up survey, controlling for baseline levels of behavior, family stress, family and other adult support, and participation in youth activities, showed positive movement on 39 of the 45 outcomes studied in the evaluation.

Eleven of the behavioral and attitudinal outcomes showed positive and desired movement at statistically significant levels: educational aspirations; academic credits earned; trouble sleeping; feelings of unhappiness, sadness or depression; worrying "too much"; feelings of anger and destructiveness; suicidal thoughts; use of contraceptives to prevent pregnancy; use of condoms to prevent STDs; smoking; and engaging in deliberate property damage, indicating a program effect. In addition, regressions analyses also found significant positive movement on access to reproductive health information, peer support and family support and on boys' involvement in hitting others with intent to hurt.

Overall Findings between Baseline and Follow-up Surveys

Analyses of differences between the baseline and follow-up surveys showed movement in the desired direction on 39 of the 45 outcomes studied in the evaluation; 14 of these outcomes showed movement in the desired direction at statistically significant levels: educational aspirations; academic credits earned; trouble sleeping; feelings of unhappiness, sadness or depression; worrying "too much"; feelings of anger and destructiveness; suicidal thoughts; use of contraceptives to prevent pregnancy; use of condoms to prevent STDs; smoking; engaging in deliberate property damage, peer support and family support.

Recommendations

Some of the following recommendations emerge directly from the analyses of differences between the baseline and follow-up surveys. Others emerge from the qualitative data gathered in focus groups and interviews with students, guidance counselors, and SBYSP staff as well as observations of the programs over the time we spent in the schools.

1. **Well-balanced programs combining an array of attractive activities and targeted supports provide the greatest overall benefits**. The broader array of activities and services avoids or reduces stigmatization of the School Based program as something for "troubled kids" and provides multiple ports of entry for many different kinds of students. In addition, the variety of services and activities enables staff to address students' complex personal issues in an integrated fashion, often combining clinical services with social support.

2. **Securing official support for SBYSP from the school is critical to both the initial and continuing strength of the partnership.** This means not only visible support in policy language, but also administrative mandates backed up with funding for technical assistance to support collaboration, and the inclusion of the "capacity to collaborate with outside organizations" as one criterion for selecting and evaluating potential school principals and guidance staff.

3. Continued technical assistance and support from the Department of Human Services has been critical to the longevity and quality of SBYSP. The experience of SBYSP shows that programs benefited enormously from the ongoing provision of resources, technical assistance, and networking opportunities. These resources sustain staff who cope daily with the challenges of addressing student needs and developing and maintaining collaborative working relationships with the host school, local service providers, and the surrounding community.

4. **Extensive outreach is facilitated by integration into the host school.** This is usually most easily done where at least part of the SBYSP staff is housed within the school building and when SBYSP staff serve on multiple school committees. Where SBYSP staff are part of committees that make other staff aware of their presence, more teachers are likely to refer

students for assistance and SBYSP staff are able to intervene on behalf of students.

5. The provision of support for families in the form of family counseling, parenting workshops, and parent-child communication retreats all helped support improvements in family relationships and should be included in all SBYSP programs. While some family problems remain beyond the scope of SBYSP services, family stress was strongly related to negative student behaviors and emotions in the survey findings.

6. Both our quantitative and qualitative evidence suggests that an important "engine" for change was SBYSP's facilitation of positive peer group relationships and that conscious efforts to help students develop relationships with a supportive peer group should be part of the program priorities. Recreation cannot be overstressed as an important service and support in this regard. In addition to providing a supervised and safe environment, recreational activities offer opportunities for young people to develop important social skills and provide support to help them cope with the challenges of adolescence. However, recreation also includes enrichment activities that take students out of their everyday environment and stretch their understanding of the world around them.

7. **For older adolescents, employment-related activities and services are an important attraction.** Several students interviewed came to School Based because they saw the immediate and material benefit of part-time work, then sought other kinds of services from staff. For other students, employment preparation programs and part-time employment secured through SBYSP provided important supports that enabled students to see themselves more positively and become more invested in positive behavior.

8. **Although SBYSP is not an educational intervention** *per se* **and cannot overcome fundamental weaknesses of host schools, it has an important role to play in improving educational prospects of the students it serves.** Many SBYSP participants had difficulty in school and were alienated from their teachers. For many of these students, SBYSP served as an important bridge back into their school life, both by providing educational supports (tutoring and homework help) and activities to open students' educational horizons (college visits). Moreover, several interviewed students stated that the interest SBYSP staff members regularly showed in their educational progress reinforced the message that education was important.

In conclusion, AED's evaluation has provided ample evidence that the New Jersey School-Based Youth Services Program has made a difference in the lives of youth in some of the state's most troubled communities. However, while School Based is a powerful model of an integrated and comprehensive approach to supporting students and families, it is important to remember that, however rich the program model, it is critical to have realistic expectations of what SBYSP can do. A program, however rich, cannot succeed if it is simply an add-on to a failing school:

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

basic school program implementation.[1]

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

> While we can begin to reduce negative social factors and help a child become ready to learn, we cannot, in fact, move the learning process if it is not understandable, interesting, or challenging for the youngsters. We must address how children and youth are taught and make serious changes
>
> on that side of the equation. . .We must do both, provide social service supports and alter the learning side if we are to see real long-term investment.[2]

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[1] [21] Douglas E. Mitchell and Linda D. Scott, "Professional and institutional perspectives on interagency collaboration" in *The Politics of Linking School and Social Services*, edited by Louise Adler and Sid Gardner, *The 1993 Yearbook of the Politics of Education Association*, Washington, D.C., The Falmer Press, 1994 , p. 84.

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

Chapter One
Introduction

"Because of School Based, I can sleep at night knowing our kids aren't falling through the cracks." (Guidance counselor in School Based school)

This report presents the findings of an outcome study of six sites participating in the New Jersey School Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP), a statewide initiative providing a range of services for adolescents in one location, at or near their schools. The program has operated since 1988 in 29 New Jersey communities, with at least one project in every county of the state. With parental consent, all students at host schools can participate in SBYSP activities and use SBYSP services. Core SBYSP services and activities include individual and family counseling; primary and preventive health services (either on site or through referral); drug and alcohol abuse counseling; employment counseling, training, and placement; and recreation. Many sites have also added activities and services relating to pregnancy prevention, teen parent support (including child care), violence prevention and conflict mediation, academic support, and leadership development. The goal of the program, as articulated in the original request for proposals (RFP), is to help young people "complete their education, obtain skills leading to employment or additional education, and lead a mentally and physically healthy life." The desired outcomes of the program include youth well-being, improved educational and health outcomes, better economic prospects for youth, and reduced need for intensive services. SBYSP is overseen by a central support team in the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS); the team monitors the School Based projects and provides extensive technical assistance.

In spring 1995, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, in consultation with DHS, selected the Academy for Educational Development (AED) to conduct an evaluation of SBYSP under its Evaluation Grants Project. The AED evaluation has been conducted in two phases: the first phase of research included an analysis of the state policy context for developing, implementing, and sustaining the School Based initiative and an extensive cross-site analysis of program implementation at the site level; the second phase, which began in summer 1996 and concluded in November 1998, was an intensive outcomes study of the program in six individual sites.[1]

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[1] Findings from the initial phase of the evaluation are contained in the two reports produced at the end of that phase: *The New Jersey School Based Youth Services Program: The State Policy Context* and *The New Jersey School Based Youth Services Program: An Analysis of Implementation* (AED, 1997) describing the policy content and the implementation of the School Based program. During the second phase, AED produced *The New Jersey School-Based Youth Services Project Outcome Study: Baseline Report* (AED, 1998).

The evaluation results indicate that the SBYSP projects in the six sample sites are well-integrated into their schools and are reaching both those students at high risk for negative outcomes and students who have begun to experiment with risk-taking behavior. In addition, SBYSP reaches another group of students who, although at lesser risk, are experiencing family and personal problems that may lead to greater risk-taking behaviors and academic difficulty if not addressed. The results of the outcome study indicate that, when background factors such as family stress, family and other adult support, and participation in positive youth activities are held constant, youth who participated in or used SBYSP activities and services showed gains not found for their peers who did not take advantage of these services and activities.

It is important to note that, since some adolescent behaviors worsen before improving (particularly those involving risk-taking behavior), the gains of SBYSP participants included both actual improvement in some areas and lesser degrees of decline than their peers in others. Thus, despite more frequent reported use of tobacco at baseline, a smaller proportion of SBYSP users than all nonusers reported using tobacco at the follow-up survey. In contrast, the use of contraceptives to prevent pregnancy among sexually active students declined for all students, but more sharply for SBYSP students when compared to all non-SBYSP students. However, when the background factors are held constant, SBYSP students' decline in contraceptive use is smaller than that of comparable nonparticipating students.

Of the 45 variables studied, SBYSP users showed either greater gains or lesser declines that were statistically significant[2] than their peers in 14 areas: educational aspirations: academic credits earned; trouble sleeping; feelings of unhappiness, sadness or depression; worrying "too much"; feelings of anger and destructiveness; suicidal thoughts; use of contraceptives to prevent pregnancy; use of condoms to prevent STDs; smoking; engaging in deliberate property damage; and access to peer and family support. In addition, on 25 of the remaining 31 variables studied, the results of regression analyses, though not statistically significant, are in the desirable direction. This preponderance of movement toward desired outcomes (87% overall, 81% of the nonsignificant findings) suggests that, over time, more outcomes might test in the statistically significant range.

Table 1.1 (below) shows the 45 variables studied in the evaluation, as well as their direction

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[2] A statistically significant finding is one that can be shown to be very unlikely to have been caused by chance. Statistical significance does not imply that a finding is meaningful or important and does not indicate the size of an effect or the causal relationship of two variables.

of change over the course of the period of study. In summary, as stated above, of these 45 outcome variables, regression analyses showed movement in the positive (desired) direction on 39 of them (87%), with 14 of the 45 (31%) at statistically significant levels (shown in bold face). These findings are particularly encouraging because, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, the students who used SBYSP services and activities were at much greater levels of risk than their peers who did not take advantage of SBYSP services and activities.

The severity of the problems exhibited by some students constituted challenges for both SBYSP practitioners and the evaluation. SBYSP sometimes is intervening in situations where students' needs exceed the scope of the program's resources. Further, many adolescent problem behaviors do not reach their peak until later in adolescence. In such a downward pattern, actual improvement in behavior may be difficult to achieve and, as state above, a slowed decline can be considered a sign of progress.

Finally, it bears remarking here that these findings, while organized by particular topic areas, are for students who have used a wide and varying array of SBYSP services and activities rather than services or activities related to a particular problem. The power of the SBYSP model is that its comprehensive approach provides both multiple ports of entry and an integrated array of services and activities to respond to students' different individual needs and preferences.

Organization of This Report

The next two chapters of this report provide an overview of the School Based program and its evaluation. Chapter four describes student participation in positive youth development activities. Chapters five through eleven present findings in the following areas: program utilization and participation patterns; networks of support; emotional health and well-being; substance use and abuse; violence and delinquent behavior; reproductive health; positive youth activities; and education activities. The last chapter presents conclusions and recommendations. Statements made by students and school and project staff in interviews and focus groups, as well as profiles of School Based students, are found throughout this report.

Table 1.1: Variables Investigated by the SBYSP Evaluation and Direction of Change

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES	
Educational Aspirations	**positive**
Skipping/cutting class	negative
Receiving failing grades	positive
Getting suspended from school	positive
Getting sent to the office for disciplinary reasons	positive
Positive educational motivation (e.g. doing well in school is important)	positive
Grade point average	positive
Credit accumulation	**positive**
Average daily attendance	positive
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL OUTCOMES	
Feeling happy or pleased	positive
Feeling proud of self	negative
Feeling excited about the future	positive
Feeling too tired to do things	positive
Having trouble sleeping	**positive**
Feeling unhappy, sad or depressed	**positive**
Feeling nervous or tense	positive
Feeling angry or destructive	**positive**
Feeling close to or appreciated by a friend	positive
Feeling like you're not going to live very long	positive
Worrying too much about things	**positive**
Having suicidal thoughts	**positive**

Positive self-efficacy	positive
Negative self-efficacy	positive
RISK BEHAVIORS	
Damaging property	**positive**
Stealing money or things	negative
Hitting others	positive*
Getting into a physical fight	positive
Having sex	positive
Using contraceptives to prevent pregnancy	**positive**
Using condoms to prevent STDs's	**positive**
Getting pregnant	negative
Wanting to avoid pregnancy while in school	negative
Smoking	**positive**
Drinking beer/wine	positive
Drinking liquor	positive
Using marijuana	positive
Using other drugs	positive
INSTRUMENTAL OUTCOMES	
Family support	**positive**
Peer support	**positive**
Other adult support	negative
Access to reproductive health care information	**positive**

Chapter Two
Overview of the School Based Program

"School Based has made the school more responsive to individual needs. We are now more prone to see kids as individuals and to look at individual cases. Perhaps this means we are more humanistic as a result." (Superintendent of schools in School Based district)

This chapter, based primarily on AED's findings from Phase I of the School Based evaluation, describes the background of the School Based program, the core model, the evolution of the program, and the relationship between School Based projects and the host school.

Background

In 1987, the New Jersey Department of Human Services launched the School Based Youth Services Program, the first statewide initiative in the country to provide integrated services for adolescents in a single location at or near schools. The goal of the program, as described in the original request for proposals (RFP), was to provide young people with the services and supports they needed to navigate the adolescent years and "complete their education, obtain skills leading to employment or additional education, and lead a mentally and physically healthy life." The projects began in 1988 in 29 New Jersey communities. There is at least one project in every county of the state; with parent consent, all students attending the host schools are eligible to participate in activities and use the services provided. The program has been cited repeatedly as a model of service integration and won prestigious national awards for excellence in public policy.

The basic SBYSP model has five core areas of activities and services: health, mental health, substance abuse treatment and prevention, employment counseling and preparation, and recreation. Services and activities are offered throughout the school year and during the summer. Over time, depending on local needs and resources, many projects have added components such as pregnancy prevention and supports for teen parents; conflict resolution and violence prevention workshops; peer leadership development and cultural awareness activities; academic support and college visits; and efforts to combat stereotyping and discrimination. As a whole, School Based services and activities are designed to treat existing problems, prevent the emergence of new problems and/or risk-taking behaviors, and promote positive youth development.

Each project is operated by a lead or managing agency, which receives the state grant. Lead agencies include the local school districts, mental health agencies and hospitals, a federally qualified

health center, a family service agency, a city department of human resources, a community development organization, a local chapter of the Urban League, and a Private Industry Council (PIC).[3] A permanent state-level support team within DHS oversees and sustains the School Based program with training, technical assistance, and networking support, and has played a crucial role in its success.

Several sites encountered opposition to SBYSP based on school personnel's fear that SBYSP was a first step toward privatization and "contracting out" of services currently provided by school district employees. In these sites, SBYSP was implemented only when the DHS coordinator for SBYSP reassured schools that the projects and their staff would "not do anything that the schools, could, would or should do themselves." This promise, still largely in place, continues to frame the relationship between projects and schools in important ways.

From the outset, the creators of SBYSP sought to build a stable base for a permanent statewide program fostering bottom-up collaboration between local schools and service providers, funded and supported from the state level. Although other state-level departments (e.g., health, employment) backed the new effort when SBYSP was initiated, it did not fit within the priorities of the New Jersey Department of Education, which provided neither political nor fiscal support for the new projects. In several wary districts, this lack of initial support slowed the acceptance of the program. Nevertheless, 10 of the lead agencies were school districts, which also are the most common SBYSP lead agencies (followed by mental health agencies).

The Core Model

The core SBYSP program, by offering "one-stop shopping," was intended to break down the bureaucratic and logistical barriers preventing young people from obtaining services and supports. The RFP gave priority to "communities with extensive teenage problems," including high rates of teenage mental illness, substance abuse, unemployment, suicide, pregnancy, court involvement, and school dropout. However, the program is designed not only for "problem kids" or those satisfying categorically defined admissions criteria: all students in SBYSP host schools are free to use the services and activities. In addition, because the SBYSP architects wanted the services to be offered

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[3] PIC is an intermediary agency created under the Job Training Partnership Act, which has responsibility for policy, guidance and oversight with respect to activities under the job training plan for its service delivery area, in partnership with the local government(s) within the area

under a nonstigmatizing umbrella and because youth had repeatedly told them that they needed safe places to be and adults to talk to, recreational activities were strongly recommended for all sites.

As shown in the figure on the next page, School Based projects bring together community-based resources to work toward four types of outcomes:

(1) **process outcomes,** by delivering services directly or improving access to services;

(2) **treatment outcomes**, by addressing and ameliorating existing problems—urgent, incidental, and chronic—such as anxiety, depression, illness, family difficulties, and substance abuse;

(3) **prevention outcomes,** by helping youth avoid the common adolescent problems—such as substance abuse and violence—by building their resistance and conflict mediation skills; and

(4) **developmental outcomes,** by promoting a healthy transition to adulthood, focusing on areas such as physical well-being and a positive self-image.

The Evolution of SBYSP

The SBYSP projects have evolved and matured since their inception, as has the field of youth services in general. The remainder of this chapter discusses four important developments: the addition of project components, especially in the area of violence prevention and support for teen parents; the linking of SBYSP to federal block grant funds for school-based child care; broader collaborations fostered by SBYSP; and the deepening relationship between School Based projects and their host schools.

Additional Components

From the beginning, the founders of SBYSP anticipated that local sites might add program components, even specifying a maximum set-aside for in-school child care. Most sites have added several program components, enabling them to reach out to a wider array of students and to provide not only supports for students at high risk but also opportunities for healthy development for all students. The five most common additional program components at the studied sites were activities focusing on adolescent pregnancy prevention; teen parent support; violence prevention; academic support; and positive youth development.

New Funding Linkages and Broader Collaborations

As SBYSP sites launched additional components, individual sites developed linkages to new funding opportunities. These included:

- **grants for special projects** from foundations or public sources that support individual program components;

- **additional public funds** though contractual agreements for services provided by the project; and

- **corporate relationships,** through which employees from local employers have been recruited as mentors or tutors to SBYSP participants.

Over time, many project directors became skilled grant writers and program developers, and SBYSP sites built a reputation as capable operators of multiservice programs. In sites that have been particularly successful in leveraging additional resources, School Based has functioned like a magnet, attracting resources to the site that would not have been available had SBYSP not existed. In these sites, a rich patchwork of funding supports the services, with the state grant serving as the unifying core. However, other sites have had little luck in attracting additional funds, for a variety of reasons: the project's location in an area not generally thought of as needy; few local sources of funding or support; and/or lack of grant-writing skills on the part of project staff or time to pursue funding possibilities.

The School Based RFP encouraged schools to work collaboratively with community-based agencies to address student needs. This happened most naturally in cases where the lead agency was a local organization, but even in sites where the school or district was the lead agency, School Based projects have stimulated, brokered, or supported additional collaborations designed to meet the needs of youth. Thus one lead agency, a community mental health center—recognizing the therapeutic needs of adolescent parents and their children—approached the school about seeking funds to operate a school-based child-care center with special support services and parenting classes provided by SBYSP. At another site, SBYSP brokered an arrangement with a community health center to open a health clinic in a trailer in the school's parking lot. Two particularly important resource linkages permitted seven of the 29 projects to offer child care to teen parents using federal child-care development block grants and five projects to conduct an intensive family intervention program addressing acute substance abuse problems with state heath department funding. In addition, one of the outcome-study sites recently received federal funds under the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative to conduct afterschool programs with an academic support focus.

In 1999, after more than a decade of stable program funding, the state of New Jersey

expanded the funding for the School Based Youth Services Program. This will support the creation of 15 more programs.

Working Relationships with Host Schools

Since their inception, the School Based projects have built complex, mutually supportive relationships with their host schools. While primarily serving individual students, most SBYSP projects also initiated school-level activities. These were first undertaken to enable SBYSP staff to reach individual students more effectively, but, recognizing the need, project staff often went on to address these same needs at a schoolwide level. As project staff built credibility and demonstrated ways that they could help the schools, SBYSP has been integrated into the host schools. The most frequent activities that School Based staff take part in include the following:

- participating on a wide range of school committees, including the principal's cabinet, child-study teams, and committees charged with attendance review;

- planning and executing school events, such as freshman orientation activities and alcohol- and drug-free post-prom and graduation parties;

- conducting classes, workshops, and in-service sessions for both students and teachers on topics such as stereotyping, sexual harassment, and dealing with disruptive students;

- advocating for and supporting special groups of students, such as teen parents and special education students; and

- providing substance abuse prevention and crisis management activities, such as post-crisis counseling.

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

Challenges of School Based relationships with host schools. Given the historic wariness of school staff about outside or "non-school" people, School Based projects in the study sites faced certain inevitable challenges in working with the schools. This was particularly the case because the SBYSP mission—helping individual students—while considered important, was sometimes perceived as only tangentially related to schools' central mission. The most common challenges in this regard that projects faced included inaccurate and negative perceptions of School Based as a

"dumping ground" and "turf" issues, as discussed below.

Because of its focus on counseling and personal support, SBYSP has occasionally been perceived as a "dumping ground" for problem youth and special education students. To counter this perception, SBYSP projects developed a diverse array of activities designed to attract a wide range of students. In several schools, School-Based projects were also seen as a place for students to hang out and cut classes. To discourage this behavior and to respect the school's need to account for students' whereabouts and teachers' insistence that students not miss class, most projects have instituted a policy that students can come to SBYSP during class only with a pass.

As is often the case when outsiders enter schools, School Based projects have also had to deal with persistent "turf" issues, arising most often with guidance personnel and school nurses over such questions as who should address students' needs, how much access school personnel should have to information about students being seen by SBYSP clinical staff, and different norms concerning confidentiality and information-sharing. As regards confidentiality, while health and mental health professionals (whose norms and practices dominate SBYSP on this issue) are governed by medical confidentiality considerations, school staff traditionally are less concerned with the protection of individual students' privacy and more motivated by their broad responsibility for assuring the well-being of students, both individually and collectively. As a result, school staff are more likely to discuss sensitive information openly, as students in the six sites frequently pointed out. However, given the importance of student confidentiality to the success of SBYSP, most projects have worked out mutually satisfactory arrangements with school staff concerning the exchange of information. In general, some information is shared—for example, the guidance office is told that a student is being seen but not what the assistance concerns. Most important, students in the study sites were well aware of the difference. "It's a lot easier to talk to School-Based people than teachers because teachers gossip," said one student.

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

Despite these challenges and occasional turf issues, most School Based projects have

managed to maintain effective working relationships with their schools, a labor-intensive process, requiring substantial and virtually continuous efforts on the part of School Based project directors and their staff. These efforts helped many projects become integrated into the life of the school and avoid the "we–they" stance sometimes characteristic of school-community collaborations in their early stages.

At the same time, it is important to note that the major arena of most School-Based work remained carefully circumscribed by the promise made at the program's initiation: that the projects would not do anything the school could or should be doing. While some projects offered homework help and tutoring, as well as overnight college visits to build student interest in postsecondary education, the bulk of project work—whether with individual students or the school as a whole—was generally limited to student support and behavior issues, and rarely ventured into the pedagogical arena at the heart of the school's existence.[4] Indeed, it was unlikely that some host schools, wary about noncertified staff—despite years of positive working relationships—would easily have accepted the participation of SBYSP staff in pedagogical discussions. On the project side, SBYSP staff often had more than enough to do just fulfilling their central mission: helping individual students.

Conclusion

The positive impact of SBYSP projects on the school was immediately evident at most sites. Teachers interviewed during visits to projects were quick to express appreciation for the counseling available to students and relief that there was somewhere to send students in difficulty, while in the past the only recourse was often punitive. Teachers and administrators also recognized that School Based's ability to meet students' personal needs helped free up both teachers' and students' attention and energy for teaching and learning. Finally, both teachers and administrators reported that the school was able to see students in a more holistic fashion than was possible before School Based.

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[4] The one partial exception to this pattern was a pregnancy prevention program in one of the six outcome-study sites. SBYSP staff and the school's family life teachers worked together, both in the classroom and in referring and counseling individual youth. This successful collaboration, which drastically reduced the incidence of teen births in the school, demonstrated the potential of school-program partnerships.

Chapter Three
Methodology of the School Based Evaluation

Introduction

AED's evaluation of the School Based Youth Services Program was conducted in two phases. The first phase of the evaluation included an analysis of the state policy context for developing, implementing, and sustaining the School Based initiative and a cross-site analysis of program implementation at the site level. Evaluators visited every site twice, interviewing project directors and key staff, lead agency coordinators, school principals, guidance counselors, nurses, and teachers.[5] In addition, site visitors observed activities and conducted focus groups with students involved in project activities.[6]

The second phase of the evaluation, begun in summer 1996, was an outcome-based study of the program in six individual sites. The strategies for this phase were designed to increase our understanding of how individual projects operated, as well as their impact on the young people using them. They included the collection of longitudinal quantitative data via a confidential student survey and qualitative data through student interviews and focus groups. The remainder of this report summarizes findings from the second phase of the evaluation.

To measure the outcomes of students' participation in SBYSP activities and/or use of SBYSP services, AED followed the cohort of students who entered ninth grade in September 1996 for two years. Students completed specially designed confidential surveys at two points (fall 1996 and late spring 1998)[7] in the six SBYSP schools selected for the outcome study. Using the quantitative data, we were able to compare the outcomes for students who had taken advantage of SBYSP to those who had not, controlling for initial differences in students' behavior, background, and situational characteristics. In addition to the surveys, AED collected school data and tracked a small sample

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[5] Interviewed teachers were recommended by the project directors, at AED's request, as those having knowledge of and contact with School Based.

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

[7] A third survey was completed in late spring 1997. Data from this survey was used to provide interim evaluation data. These survey results were not used in the longitudinal analysis reported in this report.

of students from each school via individual interviews and focus groups. This qualitative data was collected to help illuminate the dynamics through which SBYSP achieved its results. The rest of this chapter contains descriptions of site selection, survey development, survey response rates, data analysis, and qualitative methods.

Site Selection

The six sites identified to participate in the more intensive evaluation activities were selected to enhance our understanding of the outcomes that can reasonably be expected when a full array of school-based services are provided. They were not selected to represent the other sites (i.e., we cannot generalize about the initiative based on aggregate outcomes from the six), and while we use them to exemplify the initiative, they are not exemplary in the strict sense of being the best sites.

Statistically, the six sites represented a subset of the 29 sites. The following considerations are acknowledged: all six sites had important common elements, but there were important differences among them; other sites were different from these six sites; and the initiative might have some features not represented among the six sites.

The objective of the intensive evaluation was to increase our understanding of how the projects actually operated and affected the young people using them. Our site selection strategy was designed to facilitate that purpose. Based on background research and our first round of site visits, we identified both school and program factors as important selection criteria:

- **program factors**: *service-delivery model* (whether the program provided roughly equivalent services for each component or focused on one or two of the components; whether an amplified model existed); and *type of lead agency* (school, mental health, hospital, other).

- **school factors**: *location* (urban, suburban, rural); *geographic region* (north, south, central); *type of school* (vocational vs. comprehensive; whether there were participating feeder schools); *community served by the school* (regional or local); and *population served* (in terms of racial/ethnic composition, diversity, and need).

Subsequently, the evaluation team met to identify sites that were broadly illustrative of the initiative as a whole. With the selection concerns in mind, site visitors nominated one or more sites from the group he/she had visited to be included in the outcomes study. The team then reviewed the key characteristics of the nominated sites and produced a list of nine sites for consideration. During the review, the team also considered whether the site was willing to participate in the intensive study and

the quality of the site's school and program data, as well as whether the site had any exemplary programs or was outstanding in any other way that could contribute to our understanding of the potential value of School Based services. The final selection of six sites was made with the input from program officials in DHS.

The sites selected for the outcomes study varied greatly from one another. The six school districts included one regional school district encompassing 142 square miles, one citywide vocational district, and four local districts ranging from densely urban to a mixture of urban and suburban or urban and rural (a municipality incorporating a rural area with a densely populated urban center). The schools included five academic high schools and one vocational-technical school, with student populations ranging from almost entirely Caucasian in two schools to almost entirely African American and Latino in three. According to the New Jersey Department of Education Report Card data for 1997-98, four of the schools' average scores on the High School Proficiency Examination (given to all New Jersey students in grade 11) were below the statewide average score, and in two of these cases, below the average scores for comparable schools.[8] In half the schools, the mobility rate, or number of students entering or leaving the school during the year, exceeded the statewide average of 14 percent and was more than double in one school. However, one of the schools was in the process of planning a comprehensive school reform initiative, and only one of the six schools had a dropout rate above the statewide average.

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

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[8] Source: *New Jersey Department of Education, School Report Cards, 1997-98.* Schools' scores on the HSPT are compared both to the statewide average and to the average score for the school's "District Factor Group," based on the socioeconomic status of residents in the district.

leadership program.

Survey Development

During the implementation analysis, AED, in collaboration with SBYSP project directors, articulated a theory of action for each SBYSP major area of activity (health, mental health, substance abuse prevention and treatment, employment preparation and/or counseling, and recreation). In addition, theories of action were articulated in the five most common supplementary project areas of work. For each service or activity area, evaluators mapped the theory of action, specifying which needs program designers and implementers were addressing; the activities they put in place to do so; the anticipated response of students to these offerings; and the desired mid-range outcomes and their indicators.

These theories of action served as the "roadmap" for the development of AED's primary data-collection instruments to collect individual background data and document student attitudes and behaviors in the broad range of SBYSP services and activities and their desired outcomes. Many individual survey items were selected or adapted from other instruments used to study youth.[9] In addition, other items were developed specifically for this instrument to ensure sufficient coverage of all facets of SBYSP.

The survey questions were organized into six categories:

- **background characteristics** (gender, race/ethnicity, family composition);
- **situational characteristics** (level of stress, violence, family, adult, and peer support);
- **personal characteristics** (feelings, educational aspirations, educational history);
- **behavioral characteristics** (sexual activity, violence/delinquency, substance abuse);
- **health-related characteristics** (health status, health risks, access to health care); and
- **youth development characteristics** (after school and youth development activities).

In addition, the follow-up survey asked questions concerning SBYSP utilization and satisfaction.

Survey Response Rates

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

A total of 1,509 youth (84% of the eligible cohort) responded to the baseline survey, which was administered to students by AED staff during single regular class periods.[10] A total of 1,205 students took the follow-up survey administered at the end of their second year in high school, representing a response rate of 78 percent; 922 students took both the baseline and the follow-up surveys. The results presented in this report are based only on those 922 students who took both the baseline and follow-up surveys. The appendix contains a more detailed description of the survey methodology, analysis plan, and consent procedures.

Data Analysis

Through collection of SBYSP Level of Service (LOS) data[11] and school data (average daily attendance, grade point average, credit accumulation, and transfer and special education status), AED staff were able to identify SBYSP users and nonusers and to append school data to students' survey responses. All data were entered into an SPSS database for longitudinal comparison analyses.

In seeking a comparison population to test the effect of SBYSP on users, no single school was appropriate, given the diversity of the six selected schools for the outcome study, and resources were not available for multiple comparison sites. Instead, outcomes of students taking advantage of SBYSP offerings were compared to the outcomes of students who did not. However, analysis of data collected through the baseline survey showed that students using SBYSP services and/or participating in SBYSP activities tended to be at higher risk for negative outcomes than their nonuser peers. Therefore, using linear and logistic regression analyses, the comparison of outcomes for users and nonusers included controls for background characteristics associated with higher levels of need, such as family stress, or protective factors associated with a lower incidence of risk behavior, such as family support, others sources of adult support, and participation in positive youth activities, sometimes referred to as "youth assets" [12] to control for pre-existing differences. Still, given the

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

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

[12] The Search Institute has conducted extensive research showing that the presence of these personal and community assets acts as a protective factor against youth's engaging in risk behaviors. See P. L. Benson, N.

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

Selection bias posed another potential threat to the validity of a user-nonuser comparison. It could be argued that students who sought out and used SBYSP services were more motivated to get assistance and less isolated and disengaged from the school community than their nonuser peers, and, therefore, more likely to have positive outcomes than nonusers. However, on closer examination, this did not seem to be the case. First, not all users of SBYSP were self-referred (an indication of self-selection bias). Many students were referred to SBYSP by school counselors, teachers, and even administrators who noted repeated signs of personal or academic difficulty. SBYSP staff became involved with other students in response to a specific incident, such as a crisis in the family or fighting at school. Further evidence that users were not a self-selected group whose outcomes were likely to be more positive than their nonusing peers was provided by the differences in situational characteristics and at-risk behavior at the baseline survey. As discussed earlier, users were more likely to have stressful family situations, less likely to have supportive networks outside the family, and more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco, taking drugs, and engaging in unprotected sex. Therefore, we are fairly confident that self-selection bias does not pose a substantial threat to the validity of our comparison group.

Qualitative Methods

To illuminate the dynamic through which SBYSP achieves its results, the evaluation also conducted interviews with individual SBYSP users and conducted focus groups on specific areas of activity, such as violence prevention, recreation, support for teen parents and reproductive health.

In spring 1997, each of the six SBYSP directors was asked to identify 10 incoming ninth graders (five male and five female) who had, on at least three occasions, used SBYSP services or activities. Given the high rates of turnover in student population at the six schools, this number was chosen with the hope that at least six of the original group would remain at the end of the data-

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Leffert, P.D. Scales, and D. A. Blythe, "Beyond the 'Village' Rhetoric: Creating Healthy communities for Children and Adolescents," in *Applied Developmental Science,* 1998, Volume 2, Number 3, 138-159 and L. W. Gregory, "The "Turnaround" Process: Factors Influencing the School Success of Urban Youth," in *Journal of Adolescent Research.* 10 (1), 1995.

collection process. The project directors were instructed to choose students who represented the typical range of SBYSP participants at their site. AED interviewers then met individually with each student to explain the plan for the case-profile interviews and distribute consent forms to students and parents to sign and return (stamped self-addressed envelopes were included). In spring 1998, during the students' second year in high school, in addition to re-interviewing students, evaluators' interviewed students' guidance counselors and SBYSP staff with whom they had been in contact.

A total of 56 students were interviewed during the initial round, equally divided among males and females. The initial interviews with students lasted approximately 30 minutes and followed a prepared protocol that asked how the student had heard about SBYSP, how he/she would describe it to someone unfamiliar with the program, whether he/she had consulted individually with SBYSP staff, and what services and activities were most and least helpful. During the second round, a total of 43 students were interviewed; 28 of these had been part of the original group. Again, the interview group was evenly divided by gender, with 22 girls and 21 boys.

In addition to the interviews, students were recruited for focus groups on specific topics. SBYSP staff were asked to select students who had participated in particular activities or used services, although in the focus groups on reproductive health conducted in the schools where this was a particular program emphasis, the students were simply told that their opinions were being solicited on topics where directors thought they might provide a useful perspective.

In general, students were far more forthcoming in focus groups than interviews. With a few exceptions, neither students nor staff (both school and SBYSP) were comfortable discussing students' personal experiences with SBYSP in any depth. As a whole, however, they were quick to credit SBYSP for being helpful to students in multiple ways and repeatedly stressed the confidentiality of information and nonjudgmental stance of SBYSP staff as critical characteristics in attracting students in need of assistance.

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The next chapter discusses students' participation in positive youth activities because these activities may act as protective factors against different forms of risk-taking behavior and participation in these activities may partially explain students' positive outcomes in the areas discussed in chapters five through eleven: program utilization and participation patterns; networks of support; emotional health; substance use and abuse; violence and delinquent behavior; reproductive health; and educational support.

Juan was doing fairly well in school, but he was lonely and did not feel that he fit in. According to the School Based counselor, he used to come to the game room and tutoring on his own, but "something was going on with him because he didn't care about anybody, just himself." The counselor drew him out and got him involved in the group discussions. He became very comfortable with School-Based and even brought his mother in to see the counselor. Juan worked in the School-Based summer program and made more friends. The counselor spoke with both his teachers and guidance counselors and reported that his grades had improved and he was not a "loner" any more.

Chapter Four
Positive Youth Activities

"Angie was too quick to mouth off to any adult. I thought she would benefit from their (SBYSP) services. Now Angie listens. She is respectful and not hasty. Her attitude, personality, and interpersonal skills have improved tremendously." (Guidance counselor in School Based school)

Thirty years of research on resiliency and youth development show a strong relationship between youth outcomes and participation in positive youth development activities.[13] Specifically, the research identifies several critical elements of youth development that can be facilitated (or hindered) by the types of activities youth engage in. These critical elements include the following:

- opportunities to experience themselves as resourceful, self-directed, and capable of planning and completing goal-oriented activities;

- caring relationships with supportive nonjudgmental adults;

- a sense of belonging;

- opportunities to explore and develop different facets of their own identity;

- a sense of efficacy (feeling they can meet challenges and make good decisions); and

- opportunities to contribute to their communities, schools or organizations.

Typically, high school students have many opportunities to participate in leisure-time activities from which they might benefit. Some activities are collectively organized, such as school-sponsored or community-sponsored teams, but others are individually structured, such as music lessons or volunteer work. We were interested in learning about students' participation in various types of activities in their free time because of the role these activities play as protective factors against different forms of risk-taking behavior. In addition, because participation in these activities might partially explain students' positive outcomes, we used student responses about participation in positive youth activities as one of the control factors in our regression analyses.

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[13] Zeldin, Kimball, and Price (1995). "What are the day-to-day experiences that promote youth development"? Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, Academy for Educational Development: Washington, D.C.

Table 4.1: Percentage of SBYSP Users, Nonusers and Total Participating in Selected Activities at Baseline and Follow-Up Surveys

	Users			Nonusers			Total		
	Base-line	Follow-up	Change	Base-line	Follow-up	Change	Base-line	Follow-up	Change
In the last 2 months,, have your, at least a few times:									
Done something with a group of youth from a church, temple or mosque (other than religious services)?	47.9%	39.2%	-8.7	42.5%	34.0%	-8.5	44.8%	36.2%	-8.6
Played on a school sports team?	54.7%	40.7%	-14.0	53.0%	37.4%	-15.6	53.7%	38.8%	-14.9
Played sports or other outdoor games informally (not a school or organized team)?	78.1%	63.9%	-14.2	72.9%	68.2%	-4.7	75.1%	66.4%	-8.7
Participated in school clubs?	55.4%	51.3%	-4.1	50.0%	44.2%	-5.8	52.3%	47.2%	-5.1
Participated in community service?	37.7%	36.3%	-1.4	36.0%	36.3%	0.3	36.7%	36.3%	-5.1
Been responsible for taking care of younger brothers or sisters, nieces, nephews or cousins?	77.3%	74.4%	-2.9	73.9%	64.1%	-9.8	75.3%	68.5%	-6.8
Chosen to spend extra time helping others study after school?	38.7%	28.5%	-10.2	33.4%	29.7%	-3.7	35.7%	29.2%	-6.5
Gone to a local youth or rec center, such as a YMCA or a Boys and Girls Club?	15.3%	16.9%	1.6	12.7%	12.0%	-0.7	13.8%	31.5%	0.3
Gone to the library after school or on weekends?	53.3%	44.7%	-8.6	54.9%	42.3%	-12.6	54.2%	43.3%	-10.9
Taken art, music or dance lessons?	36.4%	25.3%	-11.1	32.9%	20.1%	-12.8	34.4%	22.3%	-12.1

Participation in Positive Youth Activities

At the baseline measure, students who were identified as SBYSP users had nearly identical participation in youth activities overall compared with their nonuser peers, and most students participated in some kind of activity on a weekly basis. Specifically, 92 percent of users participated

in some type of youth activity, a slightly lower rate than for nonusers (93%), as shown on Table 4.1. Among both users and nonusers, the most popular activities were unorganized sports or outdoor games, in which three-fourths of students reported participating, with 43 percent participating in informal sports or games several times a week. Over half the surveyed students (54%) also participated on school sports teams, and over two-fifths (45%) participated in religious activities for youth (other than weekly services). Over one-third of students (37%) participated in community-service activities.

SBYSP users and nonusers differed in their youth activity participation, although these differences were not dramatic. More SBYSP users than nonusers participated in school-sponsored sports teams and clubs, informal sports, community service, religious youth groups, art, music or dance lessons, and local recreation centers or clubs. These findings suggest that users may be more social or "affiliative" than nonusers. Users were also more likely to be responsible for taking care of younger children and helping others study. However, nonusers were more likely to have gone to the library after school or on weekends—consistent with their generally stronger academic status gone.

By the follow-up survey, participation in youth activities decreased for both users and nonusers. Overall, the percentage of youth participating in any kind of activity decreased among nonusers from 93 percent to 84 percent, and among users from 92 percent to 86 percent. Participation in art, music or dance classes decreased by 13 percent for nonusers and 11 percent for users; participation in school-sponsored clubs decreased by 6 percent for nonusers and 4 percent for users; and playing on a school sports team decreased by 16 percent for nonusers and 14 percent for users. Regression analyses showed that user status did not have an effect on the frequency with which youth participated in activities.

Table 4.2: Regression Coefficients for Participation in Positive Youth Activities

Outcomes	Utilization X Baseline	School-Based Utilization	Baseline (freshman year)	Family Stress	Participation in Youth Activities	Family Support	Other Support
Betas							
Positive Youth Activities	.08 †	-.04	.54 †	-.09 †		.10 †	-.01

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

† $p < .01$, two-tailed

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Discussion of Findings

The overall trend of decreased participation in positive youth activities between freshman year and the end of sophomore year is troubling, particularly in light of the increased negative risk-taking behavior over the same period. The high proportion of youth responsible for taking care of younger relatives may also be problematic (although there was a decrease between the baseline and follow-up surveys), if it inhibits youth participation in other activities. It may also have gender implications since girls are more likely than boys to be responsible for younger children.

Jason was a special education student who struggled with his school work. He lived in one of the "toughest sections of town" and had a difficult family situation, with older siblings in and out of jail. Jason first came to School Based for recreation but he connected to the different support groups offered by the program and participated in the anger management and the "guys" groups. This helped him cope with his anger. He stated, "When I feel like I'm going to go off, I go find my counselor." The counselor described Jason as "pretty impulsive, but he has learned to think before he acts." Jason's guidance counselor praised the help SBYSP gave him. "Jason has benefitted tremendously from their help. . . As soon as he knew his father died, he called me and asked me to track down the School-Based counselors. I offered to go, but he told me he'd rather talk to them. I e-mailed them and they went to his house immediately. That's the type of relationship they have with him. I don't know where a kid like Jason would end up if it wasn't for School-Based."

Chapter Five
Program Utilization and Participation Patterns

"It [SBYSP] has always been there for me when I've needed help. They are always willing to help out and they keep a secret." (SBYSP student)

SBYSP offers a flexible array of activities and services, and thus the manner in which students enter a School Based project and the way they participate in activities and make use of services varies. To help us better understand how the students in the outcome-study sites came to use SBYSP services and activities, we asked students a series of questions about when and how they learned about SBYSP; their overall perception of the project; their patterns of participation; their participation in different types of School Based activities; and their overall satisfaction with services and activities.

How Students Learn About School Based

To reach students, SBYSP staff in the study sites continually worked to make their presence widely known throughout the school, undertaking numerous outreach activities, such as participating in student and faculty orientation meetings; distributing School Based materials to parents; hosting social events for students to make them aware of SBYSP offerings; communicating regularly with the principal; and maintaining ongoing informal contact with school staff, students, and parents. In addition, SBYSP staff devoted substantial energy to developing and maintaining positive working relationships with their host school and, as described in chapter two, played a wide variety of roles in most schools, enhancing the projects' capacity to reach students of all kinds, not just those with the most obvious needs.

Given this extensive outreach and the integration of SBYSP into the life of the schools, it was not surprising that data from focus groups with students and interviews with project staff and school personnel showed that students came to SBYSP in a variety of ways. In sites with their own recreation space, students came during and after the school day to relax and spend time with friends, in the process often learning about the availability of support services. Some students, particularly those in need of assistance, were referred by guidance staff, the school nurse, teachers, administrators, custodial and security staff, and sometimes even parents. Other students came with friends, drawn in by activities, such as recreation opportunities or special trips. Still others "self-referred" based on their knowledge of School Based and need of assistance. Lastly, in several

schools, students caught fighting were mandated to work with the SBYSP team on anger-management skills.

First Contact with SBYSP

Five of the six projects conducted activities at the middle-school level, ranging from occasional presentations to full-scale multiservice programs. Only students from the vocational school, which they entered in grade 9, had not had the opportunity to hear about the program before entering grade 9. Nearly one-third of students (31%) reported having heard about SBYSP while still in middle school, the large majority of students (66%) reported hearing about SBYSP during grade nine. Only 8 percent of students reported not having heard of SBYSP until their second year in high school, and 6 percent had never heard of the program.

Table 5.1: How Students First Heard About the School Based Youth Services Program

Source of information		Source of information	
My friends or other students told me about it.	46.8%	I heard about in an assembly.	13.7%
SB staff made a presentation in one of my classes.	27.9%	My brother or sister told me about it.	4.4%
I learned about it from printed materials from SB.	25.9%	My parents told me about it.	3.1%
One of my teachers told me about it.	21.7%	Other	10.0%

Categories are not mutually exclusive. Students may have heard about SBYSP from more than one source.

Table 5.1 shows the diverse sources from which students learned about SBYSP services and activities. Peers lead the list as the first source of contact with SBYSP, followed by the outreach activities conducted by SBYSP staff (presentations and printed materials).

Students' Overall Perceptions of SBYSP

The overwhelming majority of students saw SBYSP as "a place where there are a lot of different activities and services for students" (92%), "where students with problems can get help" (91%), and where "there are adults who care about kids and really listen to them" (89%). In all six outcome-study schools, counseling services were offered for students having emotional difficulty, and in three schools, the program worked with a substantial number of special education students. Because of this, some concern was expressed by administrators that SBYSP would be seen by students as only for students with problems or mainly for special education students.[14] However,

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[14] One school superintendent had changed SBYSP's administrative reporting relationship to the director of special education and moved its location from the wing of the school serving special education students to counter this perception.

fewer than one-fifth of students saw SBYSP as primarily for problem students or those in special education (19% and 17% respectively).

Patterns in Participation in SBYSP During the Study Period[15]

This section presents data on the growth of student participation in and use of School Based activities and services over the two-year study period, and differences between students who started using SBYSP in their first year in high school (early starters), those who started in their second year (late starters), and those who did not take advantage of SBYSP services and activities (nonusers).

By the end of their second year in high school, nearly half the students (44%) had taken advantage of at least one of the services or activities. Participation in SBYSP activities or use of SBYSP services grew steadily during the students' first and second years in high school. At the end of the first year in high school, 123 students (13% of the cohort) had participated in SBYSP activities or used SBYSP services. By the end of their second year in high school, 279 (30% of the cohort) additional students had joined the SBYSP user group. In total, 402 of the 922 survey (44%) respondents had used SBYSP at some point over the two-year period; 520 did not (56%).

Differences Between Early and Late SBYSP Starters

Analyses of the baseline survey data showed marked differences between those students who had taken advantage of SBYSP services by the end of the first year of high school and those who had not, with the SBYSP users showing clearly higher levels of family stress and involvement in risk behaviors than their nonusing peers. At the follow-up survey, administered at the end of the cohort students' second year in high school (for most, their sophomore year), we were also able to compare the characteristics of students who reported that they had first come to SBYSP before the end of their first year in high school and those who had participated in activities and/or made use of services only during their second year in high school. The following tables show that there were multiple differences between early and late starters, as well as differences between these two user groups and students who reported no use of SBYSP services and activities (nonusers).

Demographic characteristics. As shown in Table 5.2, the students who began early to take advantage of SBYSP services and activities were slightly more likely than late starters to be female. Early starters were considerably more likely to be Caucasian than late starters, making up almost half (46%) of the early starters but only slightly more than one-fourth (28%) of late starters.

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[15] The survey questions were tailored to each site, using local SBYSP staff names wherever possible to increase the likelihood of accurate responses concerning participation and utilization of services and activities.

However, nonwhite students were present in greater proportion among both user groups than they were in the total sample, perhaps reflecting the projects' efforts to reach out to nonwhite students who were not attracted to or served by traditional school offerings and services.

Educational status. There were very slight differences between the two user groups in their educational status, with early starters having very slightly lower grade point averages and numbers of credits earned at the time of the follow-up survey. Both user groups, however, were noticeably weaker academically than students not using School Based services or participating in School Based activities, with lower grade point averages and a high proportion of students with special education status.

Table 5.2: Demographic and Educational Characteristics of Early and Late SBYSP Users and Nonusers

	Early starters	Late starters	Nonusers
Gender			
Female	60.3%	58.4%	50.9%
Male	39.7%	41.6%	49.1%
Race/Ethnicity			
Black or African American	28.2%	41.0%	23.9%
Puerto Rican/Latino/a	16.4%	19.1%	13.2%
White/Caucasian	45.9%	28.4%	51.3%
Other	8.9%	11.5%	11.5%
Education			
Grade point average	2.9	2.7	3.2
Credits earned	33.7	33.9	34.3
Special education status	9.8%	8.3%	5.5%

Risk and stress factors. Larger differences between the two user groups were visible in responses to questions on the follow-up survey regarding risk and stress, as shown in Table 5.3. Early starters were quite different from late starters with regard to levels of family stress. While two-fifths of early starters reported at least three family stress factors, fewer than one-third of late starters did so. Both groups, however, reported substantially more stress than nonusers, where only one-fifth reported at least three family stress factors. All students reported nearly identical levels of family support and other adult support.

Table 5.3: Areas of Stress and Support of Early and Late SBYSP Users and Nonusers

	Early starters	Late starters	Nonusers
Family Stress*			
3 or more stressors	41.7%	31.9%	20.6%
no stressors	22.0%	28.1%	37.4%
Family Support*			
no support	0.8%	0.4%	.2%
some support	99.2%	99.6%	99.8%
Other Adult Support*			
no support	2.6%	3.7%	6.4%
some support	97.4%	96.3%	93.6%

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

Emotional distress. As was the case on the baseline survey, SBYSP users reported generally higher levels of negative emotions than their nonusing peers, as shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Emotional Distress of Early and Late SBYSP Users and Nonusers

	Early starters	Late starters	Nonusers
In the last two months . . .			
very often felt unhappy, sad or depressed	20.8%	17.8%	10.9%
very often felt nervous or tense	18.9%	16.3%	12.0%
very often worried too much about things	28.0%	24.4%	16.3%
very often felt angry or destructive	21.3%	18.2%	11.8%
thought about killing myself	23.9%	15.9%	14.4%

However, the tables also shows differences between students who began using SBYSP services and activities during their first year in high school and those who began during their second year. Early starters reported higher levels of emotional distress than late starters, including very frequent feelings of unhappiness, depression, nervousness, worrying and anger. For example, 50 percent more early than late starters reported having thought about suicide.

Risk behaviors. In similar fashion, as shown in Table 5.5, at the follow-up survey, School Based users reported higher levels of involvement in risk behaviors than did nonusers, but early starters also reported greater risk involvement than late starters. Specifically, early starters reported higher levels of hitting someone to hurt them, smoking cigarettes, and using beer, wine and

marijuana. However, there was almost no difference between the two user groups with regard to getting into fights and deliberately damaging other people's property.

Table 5.5: Risk Behaviors of Early and Late SBYSP Users and Nonusers

	Early starters	Late starters	Nonusers
In the last two months . . .			
hit someone to hurt them	38.7%	30.8%	27.2%
got into a physical fight	27.0%	27.5%	20.2%
damaged someone else's property on purpose	32.7%	32.6%	26.7%
smoked cigarettes	37.8%	30.0%	21.8%
drank beer or wine	50.0%	31.8%	36.7%
used marijuana	26.7%	17.1%	9.6%
definitely want to avoid pregnancy	73.7%	75.5%	85.4%
ever had sex	38.5%	28.5%	21.8%
In the last 2 months. . .			
when having sex, always used contraception to prevent pregnancy	49.1%	66.2%	60.8%
when having sex, always used condoms to prevent STDS	52.8%	67.6%	61.9%

School Based users were also less likely than nonusers to report that they definitely wanted to avoid experiencing or causing a pregnancy during high school, and there was little difference between the two user groups in this intention. However, substantially more early starters reported having had intercourse (39%, compared to 29%), and sexually active early starters were far less likely than sexually active late starters to report always using protective measures against both pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. However, it is interesting to note that the sexually active students who had not used School Based services and activities, while more committed to avoiding pregnancy during high school and less likely to have had intercourse, were also less likely to report the use of condoms or contraceptives than late starters.

Positive youth activities. Table 5.6 shows that, when asked about leisure-time activities, the large majority in all three groups reported participating in at least one form of positive activity three or more times in the two months prior to the survey, although the early School Based starters were slightly more likely to report no positive activities and the nonusers slightly more likely to report

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more consistent involvement.

Table 5.6: Positive Youth Activities of Early and Late SBYSP Users and Nonusers

	Early starters	Late starters	Nonusers
In the last 2 months. . .			
no activity	4.3%	2.8%	2.6%
at least one activity once or twice	4.3%	8.3%	4.3%
at least one activity 3 or more times	91.3%	88.9%	93.1%

Overall, the differences described above paint a picture of three different levels of need among students in the cohort. Students using SBYSP services and activities were at greater risk than those who had not done so, and those who came to SBYSP early in their high school career appeared to be at greater risk than students who reported beginning to take advantage of SBYSP services and activities during their second year in high school. Early participation appeared to reflect more acute needs for assistance, resulting in students either being referred by teachers and administrators in their first year or seeking out services on their own. Over time, as more students became familiar with SBYSP activities and services, participation expanded, drawing in students who, though clearly at greater risk than those not taking advantage of SBYSP, were not as acutely needy as those who came to SBYSP in their first year.

Participation in Different Types of SBYSP Services and Activities

During their first two years in high school, cohort students took advantage of a wide variety of services and activities, as can be seen in Table 5.7. The greatest number of students (66% of the user group) reported participating in some form of recreational activity, which included both drop-in recreation and specially organized events and trips. These served both as a service on its own and as a portal to other services.

Almost two-fifths of participants reported using individual counseling (39% of users). Group counseling and discussions followed in popularity, with 32 percent of users reporting that they had sought assistance or participated in these groups. Approximately one-fourth of School Based participants (26%) reported using some form of health-related services. Almost one-fifth of School Based users reported seeking sexuality or employment-related services (19% and 18% respectively); only 13 percent of students reported seeking tutoring assistance.

Table 5.7: Participation in SBYSP by End of Second Year in High School

Activity or service	Number using service	% of all students (N=922)	% of SB students (N=402)	Mean frequency of use*	% of frequent users among SB students**
Recreation	264	28.6%	65.7%	1.27	6.8%
Individual counseling	155	16.8%	38.6%	1.98	11.0%
Group counseling	129	14.0%	32.1%	2.46	21.4%
Substance abuse counseling	54	5.9%	13.4%	2.19	4.9%
Sexuality-related services	75	8.1%	18.7%	1.43	2.6%
Teen parent services	39	4.2%	5.0%	1.60	1.3%
Health-related services	104	11.3%	25.8%	1.13	2.1%
Employment-related	74	8.0%	18.4%	1.47	4.9%
Tutoring	52	5.6%	12.9%	2.13	7.0%

* Frequency of use was rated on the following scale:

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

** Reporting an average frequency of 3 or more on the scale above. Sites had multiple activities in several areas. For example, several sites offered more than one type of group counseling. Survey respondents were asked about each activity or service separately. Frequency of these was summarized by calculating the average use within each area.

It is interesting to note that relatively few students reported making use of School Based activities and services on a regular or frequent basis. The mean-frequency-scale scores for each service or activity showed that students' average participation ranged from a low of slightly more than a few times a year to a high of once or twice a month. Similarly, other than the approximately one-fifth of School Based users reporting frequent use of group counseling services, relatively few students reported using SBYSP services and activities in general on a frequent basis. This is consistent with the reports of project staff: student participation was often short-term, usually episodic rather than continuous, and with only a small number of students needing and receiving intensive and continuous service.

Gender Differences in Participation

When the participation data is examined separately for males and females, differences emerge in patterns of utilization. Recreation leads the list for both boys and girls (see Table 5.8). Both groups made use of individual and group counseling in roughly equal proportions (38% and 39% for individual and 33% and 31% for group counseling).

Table 5.8: Participation of SBYSP User in Different SBYSP Services and Activities by Gender

Activity or service	girls	boys	Total

	N	%	N	%	
Recreation	147	61.3%	117	72.2%	264
Individual counseling	92	38.3%	63	38.9%	155
Group counseling	79	32.9%	50	30.9%	129
Substance abuse counseling	22	9.2%	32	19.8%	54
Sexuality-related services	42	17.5%	33	20.4%	75
Teen parent services	15	6.3%	24	14.8%	39
Health-related services	57	23.8%	47	29.0%	104
Employment-related	41	17.1%	33	20.4%	74
Tutoring	22	9.2%	30	18.5%	52

Similarly, roughly equal proportions of boys and girls reported using the health- and sexuality-related services (24% and 29% for health-related services and 18% and 20% for sexuality-related services), as well as employment-related activities (17% and 20%). However, boys were twice as likely to use tutoring and substance abuse counseling as were girls (9% versus 19% and 9% versus 20%), and boys who reported use of teen parent services constituted more than twice the proportion of girls who reporting use of these services. (This unexpected difference may reflect the availability of teen father support groups in two sites).

Satisfaction with Services

In addition to asking students about the extent to which they took advantage of different services and activities, the survey also included questions asking how satisfied students were with these services and activities. The results are shown below in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Satisfaction with School Based Services and Activities

Activity or service	Average female rating*	rank	Average male rating	rank	Combined average

Recreation	3.38	1	3.04	1	3.23
Individual counseling	3.30	3	2.89	3	3.14
Tutoring	3.09	6	2.90	2	2.98
Group counseling	3.31	2	2.48	7	2.96
Health-related services	3.18	5	2.65	6	2.94
Employment-related	2.87	8	2.86	4	2.86
Sexuality-related services	3.20	4	2.43	8	2.84
Substance abuse counseling	2.91	7	2.67	5	2.76
Teen parent services	2.75	9	2.28	9	2.45
Average ratings -all services	3.11		2.69		2.91

* Satisfaction was rated on the following scale:

0 = "I've never used this service or activity."   3 = ""Somewhat satisfied"
1 = "Very dissatisfied"   4 = "Very satisfied"
2 = "Somewhat dissatisfied"

The most highly rated service was recreation, followed closely by individual and group counseling, with both receiving a "satisfied" ratings from girls and boys. Teen parent services received the lowest satisfaction rating from both boys and girls. Analyzed by gender, it was evident that, in all but one service area (employment-related activities and services), male users reported consistently lower average levels of satisfaction than did female users, with the largest satisfaction disparities between male and female ratings of group counseling and substance abuse counseling. In addition, although boys' and girls' top-and-bottom–ranked services and activities were the same (recreation and teen parents services), the rankings for most remaining activities and services varied. Girls ranked group and individual counseling highly, while boys ranked tutoring second and individual counseling third. At the low end, girls rated substance abuse and employment-related activities lower than most activities, while boys' satisfaction scores placed group counseling and sexuality-related services near the bottom of the list.

Overall, students were quick to praise SBYSP in focus groups and interviews for its helpfulness and the confidentiality with which staff treated students' information. Other students appreciated the open-mindedness and accepting attitude of SBYSP staff:

"The staff is realistic. They know students have problems."

"The staff doesn't put you down or make you feel bad."

Discussion of Findings

A review of the participation patterns over the two-year study period showed that SBYSP

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certainly was reaching students with substantial need of assistance. Students who used SBYSP services and activities reported learning about the program from a variety of sources and entering through multiple paths, using a wide range of services and activities. Compared to nonusers, SBYSP participants included more students with high levels of family problems and emotional distress, as well as higher levels of involvement in risky behavior. In addition, a comparison of students who began using SBYSP services and activities in their first year with those not taking advantage of services and activities until their second year showed that SBYSP was reaching youth with less severe difficulties, perhaps early enough to prevent more acute problems.

Student participation in School Based activities and use of services were largely episodic. In some cases, this reflects the episodic availability of activities, such as special trips. In others, the episodic pattern of participation reflects the fact that SBYSP staff were able to meet students' needs with short-term services, with relatively few students requiring continuous and intense levels of service. Boys and girls reported that they used services and activities in roughly similar proportions, with the only real exceptions being substance abuse counseling, teen parent services, and tutoring, all of which were used more frequently by boys than girls.

Except for employment-related services, girls who took advantage of SBYSP services and activities tended to report higher levels of satisfaction with services than did boys, which may reflect girls' lesser inclination to criticize. The examination of participation data also showed a gradual growth of project utilization over time, with fewer than one-third (31%) of SBYSP users starting during their first year in high school. When these early starters are compared to users who started during their second year in school, the early starters were visibly more in need of support than the late starters. However, both user groups were at considerably greater risk for negative outcomes than students who did not use School Based services or participate in project activities.

The implication of the marked differences between users and nonusers is twofold. First, the analysis of longitudinal change must take into account critical background factors related to these differences. The evaluation design calls for comparing the outcomes of students who took advantage of SBYSP offerings to the outcomes of those who did not. However, those students using SBYSP services and/or participating in SBYSP activities tended to be at higher risk for negative outcomes than their nonuser peers. To compare outcomes for users and nonusers fairly, we controlled for background characteristics associated with higher levels of need (family stress levels), or protective factors associated with a lower incidence of risk behavior, including family support, others sources

of adult support, and participation in positive youth activities, sometimes referred to as "youth assets."[16]

Second, given the already established patterns of risk among users and the tendency of certain adolescent risk-taking behaviors to intensify before receding, users appeared unlikely to show greater improvement overall in these outcomes than nonusers. Instead, for the most part, the hope was that participation in SBYSP would slow the decline of positive behaviors as well as the increase of negative ones and reduce the gap between users and nonusers. In the following possibilities, all can be considered evidence of positive program effects:

- Both groups improved between the baseline and follow-up survey, and SBYSP users did so more than nonusers. Improving either meant engaging in more frequent positive or fewer negative behaviors.

- Both groups (SBYSP users and nonusers) got worse between the baseline and follow-up survey, but SBYSP users did so less than nonusers. Getting worse either meant they engaged in fewer positive behaviors or more negative behaviors

- SBYSP users improved while nonusers stayed the same.

- SBYSP users improved while nonusers got worse.

- SBYSP users stayed the same while nonusers got worse.

- SBYSP users stay the same while nonusers moved in the negative direction.

<div align="center">✧✧✧✧</div>

The next six chapters discuss the findings of the School Based evaluation based on the six intensive-study sites. Evaluation findings are presented in the following areas: students' networks of support; emotional health and well-being; substance use and abuse; violence and delinquent behavior; reproductive health; and educational support.

<div align="center">

Chapter Six
Support Networks: Family, Peers, and Other Adults

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"I'm arguing a lot less than I did last year and my behavior is better. My friends

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[16] Benson et al (see note 12, p. 18).

are also different. School Based has helped my get to know other people and get help from other people." (School Based student)

SBYSP provides services that address young people's problems and concerns directly; however, the programs also seek to reinforce the two primary support systems that surround adolescents—their families and peers. In addition, SBYSP staff form an additional support system; they are available to students as supportive and nonjudgmental adults to whom youth can turn for advice and assistance. This chapter discusses the approaches taken by the six sites to strengthen students' support systems and the outcomes of those efforts.

To learn about students' support networks, we asked them about the kind and extent of support they could receive from family members, peers, and other adults, using a set of questions about the people in students' lives to whom they could turn for 10 different kinds of supports. This included someone who "pays attention to what's going on in your life," "gets on your case when you mess up" or "you could go to if you were really upset or mad about something."[17] These findings are discussed below.

Family Support

Recognizing that a student's family provides the most important support system for any child, School Based staff work to reinforce the family support system whenever possible. This is daunting given the stress levels faced by many SBYSP students, as seen in Table 6.1. When asked about 12 common areas of family stress at the baseline measure, SBYSP users reported higher stress levels in all 12 areas than nonusers. In addition, while one-fifth of nonusers (20%) reported having three or more areas of stress, almost one-third of users (32%) did so. At the follow-up measure, SBYSP users again reported higher levels of family stress in all 12 areas.

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[17] These categories were developed by Public/Private Ventures. Other items include persons one could turn to for advice about health concerns and a personal problem (with a boy/girlfriend or family member); and help getting a job, in an emergency, with schoolwork; and in situations where one feels physically threatened, as well as someone who "tells you when you do something good."

Table 6.1: Percentages of SBYSP Users and Nonusers Experiencing Family Stress

	Users n=402			Nonusers n=520			Total n=922		
	Baseline	Follow-up	Absolute Change	Baseline	Follow-up	Absolute Change	Baseline	Follow-up	Absolute Change
A member of my family has an emotional problem.	33.1%	39.1%	6.0	25.9%	27.5%	1.6	29.0%	32.5%	3.5
A member of my family has an alcohol problem.	23.5%	23.3%	-0.2	15.2%	16.4%	1.2	18.9%	19.4%	0.5
A member of my family has serious financial problems.	28.6%	30.1%	1.5	20.3%	24.9%	4.6	24.0%	27.1%	3.1
A member of my family has a drug problem.	15.2%	18.9%	3.7	10.9%	14.0%	3.1	12.7%	16.1%	3.4
My parent(s) are away from home a lot.	12.5%	15.4%	2.9	8.4%	12.1%	3.7	10.2%	13.5%	3.3
My parents are separated or divorced.	34.5%	31.4%	-3.1	28.6%	26.4%	-2.2	31.2%	28.5%	-2.7
It is very crowded where my family lives	8.4%	11.1%	2.7	5.2%	8.3%	3.1	6.6%	9.5%	2.9
My family has moved a lot.	14.7%	13.7%	-1.0	10.0%	7.5%	-2.5	12.0%	10.2%	-1.8
My family lives in an unsafe neighborhood.	12.8%	15.4%	2.6	6.5%	9.5%	3.0	9.3%	12.1%	2.8
I have had to live with a relative/friend.	10.6%	9.5%	-1.1	6.9%	8.5%	1.6	8.6%	8.9%	0.3
I have had to live with someone other than a parent.	11.7%	8.6%	-3.1	6.9%	7.7%	0.8	9.0%	8.1%	-0.9
I have a brother or sister who is in a gang.	2.5%	3.8%	1.3	2.1%	2.8%	0.7	2.3%	3.2%	0.9

The gap had narrowed in eight of the areas, but while almost one-quarter (24%) of nonusers reported three or more areas of stress, more than one-third of users (34%) did so.

Family Support Activities

Although some family stress issues were clearly beyond the scope of SBYSP, staff used their extensive knowledge of community resource networks to refer parents to community sources of support whenever possible. In addition, family counseling was available in all six sites when necessary. One site offered counseling services in the evening to make them more accessible to parents: "It isn't just during school, either. You can bring your parents in," reported one appreciative student. In addition, in one site, an intensive family intervention program worked with families confronting severe substance abuse issues. This innovative program paired a family therapist with a community resource specialist who both served as a bridge between the therapist and the family and helped create a community support system to help address the family's underlying problems.

In addition to working with families in difficulty, some SBYSP sites also hosted occasional events to help improve parent-child communication. One student reported the benefits: "My mom came to a workshop on reducing stress. She enjoyed herself. She tries to apply some of the things she learned like stopping to think before she yells at us." In another site, after students complained to SBYSP staff that they could talk openly with them but not their parents—"Why can't we talk to our parents the same way?"—staff organized a family communication retreat. All participating students could invite a parent or guardian to a weekend-long workshop on intergenerational communication skills.

Family Support Findings

Regression analyses of students' responses to questions about whether they could turn to any family members for different kinds of support showed positive program effects on the differences between users and nonusers in levels of family support at the follow-up measure. These differences were statistically significant when we controlled for baseline levels of family support, family stress, and other adult support. However, with participation in positive youth activities, as the control, the positive finding was no longer statistically significant. It was not clear whether the loss of significance was related to the reduction in sample size (from 765 to 521) or the introduction of the additional variable into the equation.

Peer Support

The inclusion of recreation in the original RFP as one of the core SBYSP services reflects the program's commitment to providing a place for young people to congregate safely with a positive and drug-free peer group and to develop important social skills. Recreation opportunities and "place to go" were high on the list of desired program features articulated by young people in the focus groups conducted before School Based was initiated and often repeated in student interviews: "There's nothing to do but drugs and work," one student told the interviewer about his town. Three of the six sites had their own recreation space, and a fourth site made use of the school building at the end of the school day, using both hallways and the gymnasium.

In addition, the creators of SBYSP saw recreation as the sheltering and unifying "umbrella" for other project components: recreation creates a nonstigmatizing identity for the projects and attracts youth at an age when they might otherwise engage in risky behaviors. Recreation also allows students to learn about available activities and resources and permits them to "check out" staff and develop trusting relationships with them before seeking assistance. In addition, recreational activities provide a reason for students to come to the SBYSP space, allowing students to use services they need without others knowing why they came.

Peer Support Activities

Beyond their role as an entry to SBYSP, recreational activities can be seen as a critical service in their own right, especially given the role that recreation plays in fostering positive peer relationships. Many students have few opportunities for social skills development, despite the hours they spend with peers in the classroom. In the study sites, SBYSP staff consciously made use of the recreational time to introduce these skills. Sometimes this occurred through enforcement of behavioral rules in the site's drop-in recreation facility, while in other cases, special trips offered opportunities to teach students how to behave in public places.[18] Recreational activities also provided supervised and drug-free activities for teens:

> "They [SBYSP] make as much as they can available to us."

> "They schedule trips and take us to the mall and give us things to do after school. It's better than hanging out in a garage."

In addition, staff in five sites organized a range of events and trips designed to "get these kids to experience things they have not been exposed to before and to socialize without the street

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[18] For example, one SBYSP director described students who had never been to a restaurant before one project trip and had no idea how to read a menu or order a meal.

pressure," as one recreation coordinator described it. Some trips were purely for amusement, such as a sports event, an amusement park, or holiday shopping at the mall (very popular in the rural site where students without cars are isolated from commercial areas). Other trips involved cultural events like theater, music, or museum trips, often focusing on African-American and Latino culture. All six sites hosted occasional events, including parties to celebrate holidays or special events, such as an alcohol- and drug-free prom or graduation party and special activities for Black history month.

Two sites provided additional support for the development of positive peer relationships and peer culture by running peer leadership and leadership development groups. Youth in these groups met regularly to talk about important issues in their lives; they also organized and went on trips and outings together. These activities fostered the development of a positive peer group, with students acting as role models for their peers, both within and outside the group, and as counterweights to the negative role models abundant in teen culture. Participants in these groups saw these activities as both fun and beneficial:

> "The conversation (in the group) is lively and it taught me to have respect for ourselves and to carry ourselves differently."

> "My participation boosted my self-esteem. I see other students in (the group) getting good grades and going to big colleges."

Peer Support Findings

Regression analyses of students' responses to questions about how often they could count on friends they hung out with for different kinds of support showed positive program effects on the differences between users and nonusers in levels of peer support at the follow-up measure. These effects on levels of peer support were statistically significant when we controlled for baseline levels of peer support, family stress, and family support and other adult support. However, similar to the analysis of family support, when participation in positive youth activities was added as a control variable, the positive finding was no longer statistically significant. It was not clear, however, whether the loss of significance suggests that participation in positive youth activities canceled out changes in peer support (because it was experienced in another context) or if it was related to the reduction in sample size (from 511 to 472) or the introduction of another variable in the equation.

In addition to asking students about peer support, we also asked them to predict their ability to resist pressure from friends to do things they knew were wrong. As shown in Table 6.2, at the baseline measure, approximately three-quarters of users (76%) selected one of the two responses

indicating that they would not give in to peer pressure. This increased slightly on the follow-up survey, with 77 percent of SBYSP users now selecting one of the two choices that reflected a willingness to resist peer pressure. Among nonusers, at the baseline measure, almost four-fifths (79%) of nonusers indicated that they were likely to resist peer pressure; this declined to precisely three-quarters (75%) on the follow-up survey.

Table 6.2: SBYSP Users and Nonusers Self-Predicted Resistance to Peer Pressure

If your friends want you to do something that you know is wrong, what are you most likely to do?

	Users			Nonusers			Total		
	Base-line	Follow-up	Change	Base-line	Follow-up	Change	Base-line	Follow-up	Change
Do it	9.1%	10.8%	1.7	6.3%	12.7%	6.4	7.5%	11.9%	4.4
Try to talk them out of it, but go along if I can't.	14.7%	12.1%	-2.6	14.2%	12.2%	-2.0	14.4%	12.2%	-2.2
Not do it by pretending to have something else to do.	20.3%	20.1%	-0.2	21.5%	20.6%	-0.9	21.0%	20.4%	-0.6
Explain why I do not want to do it and leave.	56.0%	57.0%	1.0	57.9%	54.4%	-3.5	57.1%	55.5%	-1.6

However, despite the apparent improvement in predicted resistance to peer pressure among SBYSP users, regression analyses (controlling for baseline response and levels of family stress, family support, other adult support, and involvement in positive youth activities) showed negative program effects on SBYSP users' resistance to peer pressure. In other words, according to their predictions, when compared with nonusers with similar personal characteristics, SBYSP users had lost ground.

Nonetheless, students' predictions of their behavior in a hypothetical situation were not consistent with their current self-reported behaviors. Regression analysis of the differences between baseline and follow-up in responses to questions about actual behavior showed movement in the

positive direction for the majority of behavioral outcomes. In particular, for the 14 outcomes where peer pressure might be expected to have an effect (e.g., smoking, fighting, skipping class), regression analyses of differences between the baseline and follow-up measures showed statistically significant positive program effects on 11 outcomes.[19] This apparent contradiction (between decreased peer resistance but improved behavior) suggests that the reduction in resistance to peer pressure did not have significant negative behavioral consequences. It may be that whatever gains accrued from SBYSP participation (as reflected in the generally positive direction of change observed in the regression analyses) came about because of a combination of reduced opportunities to engage in risk behavior and/or changes in the individual factors underlying risk behavior, such as negative emotions (e.g., depression, angry and destructive thoughts).

Other Adult Support

In the study sites, SBYSP staff consciously functioned as a supplementary support system for students, helping them address the challenging transitions of adolescence. In fact, "someone to talk to" was mentioned almost as frequently by students consulted by the creators of School Based as "someplace to go." In addition to providing specific services, staff participated in social and recreation activities and generally made themselves available for informal contact with students seeking advice, a shoulder to cry on, or a pat on the back for good grades on the last report card.

We hypothesized that students who participated in SBYSP activities or used SBYSP services would perceive the availability of additional support from SBYSP staff and, further, that their perception would be reflected in changes in their responses to the questions about different kinds of support. Interview data also suggested the positive role of SBYSP staff in influencing students' behavior: "SBYSP helped me become more mature. The staff showed me things and shared information that made me question my behavior. I asked myself, should I be doing this?"

However, upon closer examination, this did not appear to be the case. Regression analyses showed a nonsignificant negative effect on other adult support, indicating that greater use of SBYSP might instead be associated with decreased perception of other adult support. It is not clear whether

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[19] The 14 outcomes were skipping class, getting suspended from school, getting sent to the office for disciplinary reasons, damaging property, stealing, hitting others, getting into a fight, having sex, getting pregnant, smoking, drinking beer or wine, drinking liquor or alcohol, using marijuana, and using other drugs. Regression analyses showed positive movement from baseline to follow-up in all but skipping class, stealing, and getting pregnant.

students failed to perceive SBYSP staff as increasing the availability of other adult support or, since we asked how many other adults they could consult for each kind of support, whether their involvement with SBYSP had the effect of narrowing their perceived network of support.

Table 6.3: Regression Coefficients for Family, Peer and Other Adult Support

Outcomes	Utilization X Baseline	School-Based Utilization	Baseline (freshman year)	Family Stress	Participation in Youth Activities	Family Support	Other Support
Betas							
Family support	.08 †	-.04	.54 †	-.09 †		.10 †	-.01
Peer support	.22 *	-.19	.07	-.20 *	.11	.09	-.09
Other adult support	.27 *	-.22	.04	-.19	.12	.03	-.10
Peer resistance							

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

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

Discussion of Findings

Reinforcing students' support systems was a key part of the SBYSP strategy to help youth achieve better personal, social and educational outcomes. In some cases this was accomplished directly through providing services to parents or helping participants sort out difficulties in their personal relationships. Other program offerings, such as peer leadership groups and recreational and social activities, also addressed students' need for greater peer and adult support.

Findings from the analyses of data on support systems suggested that, in addition to helping students through individually focused services and activities, SBYSP has played a positive role in reinforcing the two most important support networks for adolescents, their families and peers. This is a particularly impressive in light of the levels of family stress reported by the students who used SBYSP services and activities. In part, these findings reflected the School-Based efforts to help adolescents negotiate difficult family relationships. In addition, the activities sponsored in several sites to bring youth and parents together appear to have contributed to the improvement in students' reports of the different kinds of support they could find in their families.

Beyond students' families, by providing supervised and engaging activities, SBYSP gave students opportunities to develop the social skills and competencies needed to maintain good relationships with their peers and function in their daily lives. These relationships were also

reflected in the improvement in students' reports about the kinds of support available in their circle of peers. The generally positive direction of almost all the outcomes studied suggest that these positive peer relationships may be quite powerful in shaping young people's risk-taking behaviors as well as their skills in resisting negative peer pressure.

For **Karina**, school was not working: "Last year, I was barely passing my classes and missing a lot of school work. I found myself [getting] lost coming to school. I started to be in the streets more, hang out with friends 'til late and not come to school." Realizing that she would not graduate on time, Karina sought the assistance of the job developer and the social worker at School Based, who motivated her to continue her education: "I listened to the advice of [my social worker]. It if wasn't for her, I'd just be another drop out. . . But my social worker cared about me and she told me she would help. She even wrote a recommendation letter for me to get accepted in this program (a six-month residential GED program offered by the New Jersey National Guard). Now I've got a program where I can get my GED."

Chapter Seven
Emotional Health and Well-being

"Grief group helped me feel normal. I can talk to someone else who knows what I'm going through."

"I've told my counselor my problems and he's given me a lot of support I wanted to kill myself and he told me there is another way."

Adolescence is a period of emotional turbulence for many teenagers even under the best circumstances. For many students at the six high schools in this evaluation, the normal strains of adolescence were compounded by a range of stressful family situations, reinforcing the importance of the mental health services and activities central to many School Based projects, both in terms of the fiscal and personnel resources devoted to them and, in some cases, the project's public image. SBYSP mental health activities are designed to help youth cope with normal adolescent stress and to identify and treat milder mental health problems, as well as more serious psychological problems. Addressing these problems takes high priority for SBYSP because, in addition to causing distress, these problems can interfere with students' capacity to concentrate on their school work and can contribute to their engaging in a variety of risk behaviors.[20] This chapter discusses the types of mental health needs addressed by School Based projects, student use of School Based mental health services, and their impact on students' emotional health and well-being.

Types of Mental Health Needs Addressed by SBYSP

The programs' mental health activities were designed to help youth cope with three different levels of emotional need: normal transitional stresses of adolescence, such as relationship problems and tension with parents; milder mental health problems; and more serious mental health problems. Sometimes these problems involved negotiating the typical parent-teenager differences, but in other case, student concerns were more complicated, for example, involving conflicts between immigrant parents and their children.

For many of these issues, students required only occasional assistance to gain perspective or learn new ways of dealing with their emotions. "School Based help me deal with a lot of problems," said one student. "It helped me deal with people in a way that I could communicate my feelings."

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[20] For example, depression has been linked to aggressive and impulsive behavior involving drug use, sexuality, and theft. See K. Bogenschnieder, "An Ecological Risk-Focused Approach to Preventing Youth Depression," *Wisconsin Youth Futures Technical Report No. 9*, 1991.

In addition to individual and group counseling, SBYSP staff in one site offered life-skills development groups for special education students for whom these kinds of developmental changes posed particular problems.

The second level of help provided by School Based involved identifying and treating milder mental health problems, such as low self-esteem, difficulty controlling anger, and depression. "My counselor helped me stop worrying about whether people liked me and helped me learn to like myself," one student told the interviewer; "that's what's important." Students with these kinds of problems usually benefit from short-term assistance. In some cases, students with milder emotional problems were invited to participate in a therapeutic or support group, such as a grief group or anger-management workshops. These groups have become well known to students: "They have group sessions for what your need is. Boys' group, girls' group, a grief group." one student told evaluators. Students described the benefits of these groups: "Having us meet in a group is a good idea because you are more likely to listen to your peers than to your teacher or other adults," observed a student who had participated in a SBYSP anger-management group.

At the third level, the SBYSP sites studied in AED's evaluation also treated students with more serious mental health problems, such as clinical depression, eating disorders, or severe stress associated with family problems and difficulties arising from physical and sexual abuse and exposure to violence. Many of these students required ongoing counseling over substantial periods of time. In most outcome-study sites, students with severe emotional problems requiring intensive and protracted treatment were referred to outside mental health providers. In one of the six outcome-study sites, however, SBYSP was the only accessible local provider of mental health services for adolescents, and even when students required hospitalization, SBYSP provided the post-hospital care.[21]

In the six outcome-study sites, SBYSP addressed students' emotional problems with mental health services ranging from crisis intervention to ongoing counseling. All but one outcome-study sites combined individual and group counseling, and all provided counseling for other family

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[21] The two most common problems referred to outside providers were eating disorders and suicidal thinking. A student judged at risk of suicide was always referred for evaluation, following specific professional procedures. Once the student's situation was stabilized, however, he or she might return to regular counseling with the SBYSP counselor, depending on the availability of mental health resources and the follow-up practices of the evaluating institution.

members when relevant to the student's needs.[22] In addition, SBYSP staff conducted therapeutic groups and workshops on special mental health issues, such as controlling anger and coping with death and divorce. Some projects included counseling for families as well, with evening hours for working parents. SBYSP staff also conducted workshops and presentations for students and faculty on mental health issues, such as recognizing and understanding depression

In addition to counseling and workshops, SBYSP's array of social and recreational activities (discussed in Chapter 6) allowed students in the study sites to develop positive and supportive relationships with other students and also counteract the sense of isolation that many teenagers have, particularly when struggling with negative emotions.

Student Use of SBYSP Mental Health Services

According to students' responses to survey questions about service utilization and satisfaction, mental health services were, after recreation, the most-used of all SBYSP services. In both focus groups and interviews, SBYSP users stressed the importance of the confidentiality of the information they shared with staff. "If what I said in School Based was not a secret, there's no reason to come. I trust people here," one boy said. Said another, "The people here will listen to you and it's confidential. The fact that it is confidential makes students feel more comfortable to talk about their problems."

Almost one-third of all SBYSP users (32%) reported participating in some form of group counseling, with one in five students saying they did so "frequently" (about twice a month) or "very frequently" (about once a week). Almost two-fifths of SBYSP users (39%) reported that they had sought individual counseling, with approximately one-tenth of them reporting frequent or very frequent use of these services. There was some variation between sites in the proportion of SBYSP users reporting use of counseling services, ranging from one-fifth of users at the low end (21%) to almost two-fifths (38%) of users at the upper end.[23]

Table 7.1: Percentages of SBYSP Users and Nonusers Reporting Positive and Negative Emotions

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[22] In one site, an intensive family intervention program, discussed in Chapter 8, treats families with severe substance abuse problems.

[23] The calculated rate of utilization was higher in one school (67%), but this figure is not reliable because of the low number of students completing the surveys.

In the last two months...	Users			Nonusers			Total		
	Base-line	Follow-up	Change	Base-line	Follow-up	Change	Base-line	Follow-up	Change
NEGATIVE EMOTIONS									
Worried too much about things	25.8%	27.7%	1.9	16.5%	22.9%	6.4	20.6%	25.0%	4.4
Felt too tired to do things	21.3%	25.9%	4.6	13.9%	22.8%	8.9	17.1%	24.2%	7.1
Felt angry or destructive	19.1%	18.0%	-1.1	12.2%	17.4%	5.2	15.2%	17.7%	2.5
Felt unhappy, sad or depressed	18.9%	16.6%	-2.3	11.2%	14.1%	2.9	14.5%	15.2%	0.7
Thought about killing myself	20.9%	22.6%	1.7	16.9%	18.2%	1.3	18.6%	20.1%	1.5
wouldn't really do it	18.2%	20.3%	2.1	15.0%	16.0%	1.0	16.4%	17.9%	1.5
would do it if I had the chance	2.7%	2.3%	-.4	1.9%	2.2%	.3	2.2%	2.2%	0.0
Felt nervous or tense	17.6%	17.0%	-0.6	11.8%	14.6%	2.8	14.4%	15.7%	1.3
Had trouble going to sleep or staying asleep	16.3%	14.2%	-2.1	9.1%	14.3%	5.2	12.2%	14.3%	2.1
POSITIVE EMOTIONS									
Felt close to or appreciated by a friend	42.7%	43.3%	0.6	41.7%	39.6%	-2.1	42.1%	41.2%	-0.9
Felt happy or pleased about something	36.8%	33.9%	-2.9	42.6%	36.5%	-6.1	40.1%	35.4%	-4.7
Felt proud of myself	32.5%	32.9%	0.4	35.2%	32.7%	-2.5	34.0%	32.8%	-1.2
Felt excited about the future	30.3%	33.3%	3.0	32.3%	35.1%	2.8	31.4%	34.3%	2.9

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To explore the effects of participation in SBYSP activities and use of SBYSP services on emotional health, the surveys asked students about how often they experienced a range of negative and positive emotions. Negative emotions included worrying too much about things; feeling too tired to do things or feeling angry, destructive, unhappy, sad, depressed, nervous, or tense; having trouble going to sleep or staying asleep; and thinking about killing oneself. Positive emotions included feeling happy about something, proud of oneself, excited about the future, and close to or appreciated by a friend.

Findings Concerning Negative Emotions

At the baseline measure, more SBYSP users reported frequent emotional distress than did nonusers, as shown in Table 7.1. More than one-quarter of SBYSP users (26%) reported that they very often worried too much about things, and more than one-fifth (21%) reported very often feeling too tired to do things, while substantially lower proportions of nonusers (17% and 14%) reported the same feelings. Nearly one-fifth of SBYSP users reported very often feeling angry or destructive (19%) or unhappy, sad or depressed (19%) at the baseline measure, while fewer than one-eighth of nonusers reported these feelings (12% and 11%). Similarly, at baseline, more than one-sixth of SBYSP users (18%) reported very often feeling nervous or tense, compared to fewer than one-eighth of nonusers (12%). When asked whether they ever had considered killing themselves, approximately one fifth of SBYSP users reported having these thoughts (21%), compared to one-sixth (17%) of nonusers.

By the end of their second year in high school, however, SBYSP users appeared to have held their ground when compared to nonusers. More students than before in both groups reported that they very often worried too much and felt too tired to do things, but these increases were greater among nonusers (6 and 9 percentage point increases) than among SBYSP users (2 and 5 percentage point increases). At the follow-up survey, fewer SBYSP users reported very often feeling angry and destructive or sad, unhappy, or depressed (with 1 and 2 percentage point *decreases*) while more nonusers than at baseline reported very often having these feelings (with 5 and 3 percentage point *increases*). Similarly, at the follow-up, fewer SBYSP users reported very often having trouble going to sleep or feeling nervous and tense than had done so at baseline (1 and 2 percentage point *decreases*) while more nonusers reported very often having these feelings than had done so at the baseline measure (5 and 3 percentage point *increases*). For all these negative emotions, the gap between users and nonusers narrowed, and in one case (having trouble going to sleep), more nonusers reported frequent difficulty than users.

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The only area where SBYSP users had not narrowed the gap was in thinking about suicide. While more students in both groups reported having thought about suicide, the increase was greater among SBYSP users than nonusers (2 versus 1 percentage points). However, these figures included both students responding that they had thought about killing themselves but would not really do it and those saying that they would kill themselves if they had the opportunity. While SBYSP users increased more than nonusers in suicidal thinking, the reverse was true for those who thought they might really take their own lives: fewer SBYSP users reported this feeling at follow-up than at baseline, while more nonusers did so.

Findings Concerning Positive Emotions

Consistent with their greater frequency of negative emotions, SBYSP users lagged behind their peers at the baseline measure in reporting frequent positive emotions. Fewer SBYSP users than nonusers reported very often feeling happy or pleased about something (37% compared with 43%), proud of themselves (33% compared with 35%), excited about the future (30% compared with 32%) or close to or appreciated by a friend (42% compared with 43%). At the end of the second year in high school, the gap between SBYSP users and nonusers appeared to have narrowed in the first three areas. Although fewer students in both groups reported very often feeling happy or pleased, the decline was greater among nonusers (a 6% decrease, compared to 3% decrease for users). Slightly more SBYSP users reported very often feeling proud of themselves, while the proportion of nonusers who did so fell by 3 percentage points. SBYSP users also made slightly greater gains in "very often feeling excited about the future." However, fewer SBYSP users reported very often feeling close to or appreciated by a friend than had done so on the baseline survey, while slightly more nonusers did so.

Table 7.2 Regression Coefficients for Social/Emotional Outcomes

Outcomes	Utilization X Baseline		School-Based Utilization		Baseline (freshman year)		Family Stress		Participation in Youth Activities		Family Support		Other Support	
Betas														
NEGATIVE														
Worried too much about things	-.07	*	-.04		.36	†	.12	†	.07	*	-.01		.00	
Felt too tired to do things	-.05		.01		.30	†	.15	†	-.01		-.07	*	.00	
Felt angry or destructive	-.07	*	.01		.32	†	.13	†	-.04		-.06		.00	
Felt unhappy, sad or depressed	-.07	*	-.04		.37	†	.12	†	.02		.02		-.02	
Thought about killing myself	-.11	**	.1b	†	.26	†	.04		-.09	**	-.00		-.01	
Felt nervous or tense	-.02		-.03		.30	†	.08	*	.10	**	-.01		-.00	
Had trouble going to sleep or staying asleep	-.09	**	.04		.35	†	.04		-.01		-.01		-.04	
POSITIVE														
Felt close to or appreciated by a friend	.04		-.08	*	.17	†	.07		.07	*	.14	†	.08	*
Felt happy or pleased about something	.02		-.07	*	.27	†	.03		.08	*	.01		.09	*
Felt proud of myself	-.05		-.07		.33	†	.01		.07	*	.06		.12	†
Felt excited about the future	.00		-.07	*	.26	†	.10	**	.13	†	.12	†	.01	

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

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

Regression analyses controlling for baseline responses to these questions and family stress, family support, other adult support, and participation in positive youth activities confirmed the gains made by SBYSP participants in the emotional domain. The responses of SBYSP users showed statistically significant positive program effects in five of the seven questions concerning negative emotions: very often having difficulty sleeping; worrying too much; feeling unhappy, sad or depressed; feeling angry or destructive; and thinking about killing oneself. The users' responses to

the four questions about positive emotions also showed nonsignificant positive movement in all but one case (feeling proud of oneself).

Discussion of Findings

Given the multiple sources of family stress reported by SBYSP participants, it is hardly surprising that these students also reported higher levels of emotional distress and less frequent positive emotions. Analyses of students responses to the survey questions concerning emotional issues found that SBYSP users entered their first year in high school with substantially more frequent negative emotions and fewer positive emotions than their peers who did not take advantage of SBYSP activities and services. At the end of their second year in high school, however, the gap between the two groups had narrowed considerably. In most cases, while both groups reported more negative feelings at the follow-up survey than at the baseline measure, the increment for SBYSP users was smaller than for nonusers. Regression analyses showed statistically significant positive program effects on five of the seven negative emotions. Similarly, while both groups reported fewer frequent positive emotions than at baseline, the decline for users was smaller than for nonusers. In several cases, SBYSP user responses improved while those for nonusers worsened.

The gains in emotional health realized by SBYSP participants are very encouraging, both in and of themselves and because emotional difficulties can disrupt educational progress and play a major contributing role in several different kinds of risk behavior. It is important to note that, while a substantial proportion of students reported using some form of counseling services during the two-year study period, these gains might not have occurred in a program exclusively offering clinical mental health services, despite the critical role these services play. First, some students would never have brought their needs to the attention of counselors without the opportunity to first "check out" the staff provided by other School Based services, particularly recreation. Second, the availability of another arena in which to make friends and experience oneself as competent, as well as access to additional peer and adult support, can have beneficial effects for teenagers struggling with personal and family emotional problems and the transitional stresses of adolescence.

Chapter Eight
Substance Use and Abuse

"I stopped hanging out with the young crowd." [referring to those students who were using drugs]. "I learned to respect myself and that it's better to be a leader than a follower." (School Based student)

Many teenagers experiment with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs during their high school years. For many, this experimentation will be temporary (though even short-term drug use can endanger teens when it compromises rational decision making at critical moments). However, for other teens, especially those with underlying personal and family problems, experimentation may lead to long-term substance abuse problems. The problem of adolescent substance abuse was of such concern to the architects of SBYSP that the RFP made access to the services of a certified substance abuse counselor a requirement, anticipating that some students would develop serious substance problems during their high school careers. Many School Based activities are designed to prevent adolescent substance abuse, both directly and indirectly, through three different types of activities: direct substance abuse prevention efforts, broadly preventive strategies that work indirectly to discourage substance abuse, and therapeutic and supportive services addressing the emotional problems often associated with substance abuse. This chapter describes these three approaches to prevention; student participation in these activities; student use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs; and the effect of SBYSP on students' substance use.

Three Levels of Prevention

In all six sites, the first level of substance abuse prevention activities included distributing substance abuse prevention materials, making classroom presentations, and conducting workshops focusing on the hazards of substance abuse and fostering student resistance-skills. These activities sought to directly affect substance use by enhancing teens' sense of the importance of their physical and emotional development and how they might be negatively affected by alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. In addition, two of the six sites had developed peer leadership programs as part of their substance abuse prevention activities. These groups (discussed in chapter 6) were open to most students with minimal requirements, such as regular attendance at meetings and substance-free behavior. Members participated in group discussions on personal and social development topics and planned and carried out drug-free activities. As

one staff member put it, "We are trying to make the 'good kids' the popular ones—the ones other kids look up to and want to emulate." Data from focus groups of student participating in these types of leadership activities indicated that they helped students think more carefully about their involvement with drugs. One student said: "[The leadership group] helped me become more mature; the staff showed me things and shared information with me that made me question my behavior. I asked myself, should I be doing this?"

At a second level, most SBYSP activities at the study sites were planned with a broadly preventive intent. The underlying logic was to engage students in positive activities providing alternatives to risk-taking activities and motivate students to protect themselves from potentially harmful agents and behaviors. Thus employment preparation programs were designed not only to prepare youth for the labor market but also to help teens develop a more concrete vision of a future that might be compromised by drug use. Similarly, a diverse array of on-site recreational activities and special trips helped youth make positive use of leisure time and foster a drug-free peer group.

At the third level, all six study sites provided individual and group counseling to address the individual and family problems sometimes associated with substance abuse. Given the severe family stress experienced by a substantial proportion of the SBYSP users (sometimes including substance abuse by family members), these supportive services addressed emotional issues that could lead young people to engage in reckless experimentation with drugs and alcohol.

In addition to prevention activities, the six sites also worked with students with existing substance abuse problems. Four outcome-study sites employed their own substance abuse counselors, while two sites referred students with substance abuse problems to the certified substance abuse counselor employed by the host school. Students with severe problems (such as use of narcotics) were often referred to community-based substance abuse programs. In one site, however, an intensive family intervention program worked with students and families confronting severe substance abuse issues. This innovative program paired a family therapist with a community resource specialist, who both served as a bridge between the therapist and the family and helped create a community support system to help address the family's underlying

problems.[24]

Participation in Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Services and Activities

Because many sites in this evaluation focused primarily on indirect prevention activities (such as recreation), the number of youth participating specifically in substance use and abuse services was relatively small. A total of 6 percent of all survey respondents used substance use and abuse counseling; 13 percent of SBYSP users did so. However, SBYSP addressed prevention needs with a much broader audience through services, such as drop-in recreation and special trips (in which 63% of the SBYSP users participated) and discussion and support groups (in which 31% of SBYSP users participated). Indeed, it may be these other services that had the most impact on preventing and decreasing students' substance use and abuse, with the exception of students with serious substance abuse problems.

Students Use of Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs

To measure the impact of SBYSP on students use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, we asked students about both their own use of these substances and the practices of their friends. At the baseline measure, both SBYSP users and their friends were more likely to smoke, drink alcohol and take drugs compared with nonusers. The results are shown in Table 8.1 below. Of SBYSP users, 31 percent, compared with 23 percent of nonusers, reported smoking cigarettes in the previous two-month period; 35 percent of users, compared with 24 percent of nonusers, reported drinking; and twice as many users reported smoking marijuana compared with nonusers (20% vs. 10%).

By the end of students' second year in high school, both users and nonusers were engaging in more frequent use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs. In several cases, however, nonusers' participation in these substances increased at a greater rate than their peers who had used SBYSP services. As shown in Table 8.1, marijuana use doubled among nonusers and went up by 4 percentage points among users. Liquor intake increased from 24 percent to 32 percent for nonusers and from 35 percent to 38 percent for users. At the follow-up survey, nonusers surpassed School Based users in drinking and smoking: 44 percent of nonusers drank beer or wine in the previous two months compared with 39 percent of users, and 35 percent of nonusers

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[24] To qualify for the services of this intensive program, the substance abuse counselor had to document that the student and or family member was in imminent need of in-patient care that could be prevented through the program's services.

smoked tobacco compared with 33 percent of users.

Table 8.1: Percentages of SBYSP Users and Nonusers Reporting Use of Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs

Substance Abuse	Users			Nonusers			Total		
	Base-line	Follow-up	Change	Base-line	Follow-up	Change	Base-line	Follow-up	Change
How often did you use these kinds of substances in the last two months? "A few times" or more.									
Smoking	30.8%	32.7%	1.9	23.2%	34.5%	11.3	26.5%	33.7%	7.2
Beer/Wine	37.2%	39.2%	2.0	36.7%	43.5%	6.8	36.9%	41.7%	4.8
Liquor	35.0%	38.0%	3.0	24.0%	32.3%	8.3	28.8%	34.7%	5.9
Marijuana	19.7%	24.0%	4.3	10.1%	20.8%	10.7	14.2%	22.1%	7.9
Other Drugs	4.0%	6.4%	2.4	1.5%	5.4%	3.9	2.6%	5.8%	3.2

Regardless of user status, a majority of youth reported that their friends used tobacco, alcohol and drugs, attesting to the need to provide youth with drug and alcohol-free activities and peer groups. As shown in Table 8.2, 52 percent of nonusers and 61 percent of users said at least some of their friends smoked marijuana their freshman year; 57 percent of nonusers and 64 percent of users said their friends drank liquor, and 77 percent of nonusers and 72 percent of users said their friends smoked tobacco.

After two years of high school, regression analyses (see Table 8.3 below) show that the differences in drinking beer and wine were statistically significant when we controlled for baseline levels of engagement in these two areas, but not when youth activities and family stress and support were included. However, the differences between users and nonusers in smoking were statistically significant when we controlled for participation in youth activities and level of family and other adult support (factors known to be protective and to foster positive youth development), and level of family stress. This indicates that SBYSP had a positive effect on reducing students' use of tobacco. In addition, by the follow-up survey, there were differences between users and nonusers regarding marijuana and other drugs that were also in the positive direction, although not statistically significant.

Table 8.2: Percentages of SBYSP Users and Nonusers Reporting Use of Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drugs by their Peers

Peer Substance Abuse	Peers of Users			Peers of Nonusers			Total		
	Base-line	Follow-up	Change	Base-line	Follow-up	Change	Base-line	Follow-up	Change
How many of your friends use each of the following. . .? Percentage responding "A few" or more.									
Smoking	71.6%	74.4%	2.8	76.5%	80.8%	4.3	74.4%	78.1%	3.7
Beer/wine	70.6%	77.6%	7.0	70.8%	81.7%	10.9	70.7%	80.0%	9.3
Liquor	64.3%	73.8%	9.5	56.9%	75.8%	18.9	60.2%	75.0%	14.8
Marijuana	60.7%	71.2%	10.5	52.2%	68.3%	16.1	55.9%	69.5%	13.6
Other drugs	24.5%	29.7%	5.2	17.3%	30.4%	13.1	20.4%	30.1%	9.7

By the follow-up survey, the use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs by peers increased for both School Based nonusers and users, but more nonusers reported that their peers drank liquor, beer or wine and smoked tobacco compared with users. However, while these changes are encouraging, regression analyses did not show them to be statistically significant.

Table 8:3   Regression Coefficients Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use Outcomes

Outcomes	Utilization X Baseline	School-Based Utilization	Baseline (freshman year)	Family Stress	Participation in Youth Activities	Family Support	Other Support
Betas							
Smoking	-.13 †	-.04	.37 †	.06	-.07	.03	-.02
Beer/wine	-.05	.08 **	.43 †	.01	-.08 **	-.00	-.01
Liquor	-.02	.09 **	.41 †	.07	-.09 **	-.04	.05
Marijuana	.02	.05	.35 †	.02	-.13 †	-.07 *	.06
Other drugs	-.02	.15 †	.06	.09 **	-.09 *	-.11 **	.01
Peer smoking							
Peer beer/wine							
Peer liquor							
Peer marijuana							

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

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

Discussion of Findings

SBYSP intervenes in both direct and indirect ways to reduce student use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. These efforts have shown encouraging results over the two-year period studied. Participation in SBYSP activities and/or use of SBYSP services appear to have slowed the rate of increase in student use for all categories of substances, compared with rates of students who did not take advantage of SBYSP services and activities. In the case of tobacco and beer and wine, these gains were statistically significant. Moreover, during a period when substance use and abuse increased for both groups and their peers, the proportion of SBYSP users reporting that their friends were using drugs also did not increase as fast as was the case for nonusers.

As in other service areas, SBYSP addresses substance abuse issues with a multipronged approach, combining social and recreational activities with targeted presentations and counseling services that address the underlying reasons for serious substance abuse. Thus it is likely that the observed changes resulted from a combination of the direct prevention strategies and the broader preventive approach taken by the projects. Because the evaluation results only cover the first two years of high school, it is impossible to know whether these promising patterns, while not statistically significant in most cases, might become so with more time.

Chapter Nine
Violence and Delinquent Behavior

"School Based has helped me make a few friends. It has helped me solve major problems. I've been ready to fight and instead I've come down and settled the problem without getting into a fight and getting suspended." (School Based student)

Although violence prevention was not listed among the core services to be provided, School Based projects quickly recognized the need work to prevent violent and delinquent behavior among students. In some cases this behavior reflected a lack of negotiating skills in situations of interpersonal conflict or experimentation by bored youth, as in the case of the vandalism reported by one student: "Last year the school was broken into. Thousands of dollars worth of musical instruments were stolen. Students were bored, so they decided to break into the school."

In other cases, however, students' violent and delinquent behavior was rooted in underlying emotional problems leading to an excess of angry and destructive feelings. As in other issue areas, SBYSP's comprehensive array of services and activities permitted a multipronged approach that included supervised recreational and social activities, peer leadership development, counseling, and structured anger management and conflict mediation activities.

Violence Prevention Activities

The six study sites addressed violence and delinquency primarily through a combination of general youth development activities and targeted support services to youth. Recreation, trips and sports activities provided youth in the six outcome-study sites with positive, supervised, and engaging leisure-time opportunities when they might otherwise have engaged in negative or delinquent behaviors. In addition, in two sites, peer leadership groups worked to develop a positive peer culture in which violence and delinquency were deemed "uncool." The six sites also dealt with violence prevention directly through group and individual counseling sessions addressing emotional and family problems that could lead to acts of delinquency and interpersonal conflict. In two sites, SBYSP programs offered structured anger-management workshops. Theses services were provided with the goal of helping youth learn to manage anger and build conflict-resolution skills to help them avoid fighting. One of the six sites also offered specific mediation services as part of a schoolwide campaign against violence that trained both

staff and students. One-fourth of the users at this site reported participating in mediation sessions. Students were eloquent and colorful in their descriptions of the mediation sessions:

"It's a low-budget version of the Jerry Springer show."

"It's a program that helps you to get your problems resolved like a talk show. You get a chance to tell your story."

"It's a good program because everyone gets a chance to talk about the problem they are having with someone else. Both parties get a chance to debate their position. You get to go back and forth."

Student Engagement in Violent and Delinquent Behavior

At the baseline measure, SBYSP users exhibited more frequent violent and delinquent behavior than their nonuser peers. As shown in Table 9.1, nearly one-third of users said they had deliberately damaged property in the two months prior to survey administration compared with 28 percent of nonusers who had done so. Similarly, 25 percent of SBYSP users had stolen something, compared with 21 percent of nonusers; and 32 percent of users had hit someone with the intention of hurting, compared with 28 percent of nonusers. The differences between the two groups were even greater when it came to getting into physical fights: 27 percent of SBYSP users reported that they had fought with someone in the first two months of school compared with 21 percent of nonusers.

Table 9.1: Percentage of SBYSP Users and Nonusers Reporting Violent or Delinquent Behavior

	Users			Nonusers			Total		
	Base-line	Follow-up	Change	Base-line	Follow-up	Change	Base-line	Follow-up	Change
In the last 2 months:									
Damaged property	31.9%	20.6%	-11.3	27.5%	20.0%	-7.5	29.4%	20.3%	-9.1
Stole things	25.4%	19.2%	-6.2	21.3%	17.4%	-3.9	23.1%	18.2%	-4.9
Hit someone	32.4%	26.7%	-5.7	28.0%	18.5%	-9.5	29.9%	21.9%	-8.0
Got into a physical fight	27.0%	29.5%	2.5	20.7%	18.4%	-2.3	23.4%	23.1%	-0.3

Most of these behaviors decreased for both users and nonusers by the end of their second

year in high school. In two cases, damaging property and stealing things, SBYSP users showed a larger decrease than nonusers. However, although hitting decreased for both groups, nonusers showed a larger decrease than did users. Further, with regard to fighting, SBYSP users showed a small (3%) increase while nonusers showed a decrease of about the same size. In general, when responses were disaggregated by gender, boys were more likely to say they had damaged property, stolen things, or gotten into physical fights, compared with girls.

Regression analyses examining differences in baseline and follow-up responses to survey questions on violent and delinquent behavior showed that, when controlling for baseline violent and delinquent behavior, level of family stress, and protective factors (participation in youth activities, family support and other adult support), SBYSP had a statistically significant positive effect on reducing property damage. In addition, analyses by gender also showed a statistically significant effect of SBYSP on decreasing hitting by boys. This effect was not seen for girls, most likely because of the much lower incidence of girls' exhibiting this behavior. In addition, regression analyses found positive but nonsignificant effects on hitting and fighting, as well as nonsignificant negative effects on reports of stealing.

Table 9.2: Regression Coefficients Violence and Delinquency-related Outcomes

Outcomes	Utilization X Baseline	School-Based Utilization	Baseline (freshman year)	Family Stress	Participation in Youth Activities	Family Support	Other Support
Betas							
Damaging property	-.63 *	1.33	2.49 †	1.16	-.91	-.13 †	-.88
Stealing	1.11	1.36	2.25 †	2.66	1.04	-.39	-.82
Hitting others	-.67	1.16	2.25 †	2.66	1.04	-.39	-.82
Getting into a physical fight	-.00	.19 *	.41 †	.19	.00	-.04	-.00

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

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

Discussion of Findings

The results of the analyses of student responses about their engagement in violent or delinquent behavior showed progress on the whole. Both deliberate destructive behavior and boys' reports of hitting with intentions of hurting showed decreases at statistically significant levels. Again, the comprehensive natures of SBYSP's approach to violence and delinquency prevention may yield more powerful gains than could be seen with single-focus violence prevention activities that neglect other important student needs. The findings reflect a combination of the progress made by SBYSP users in the emotional domain, where there were statistically significant positive program effects on feeling angry and destructive, and of the practical strategies for avoiding conflict that students learned in the anger management workshops, about which students said:

"I've learned to control my temper.

"I learned ways to prevent problems."

"I have less fights and keep my mind focused on school."

Kevin was referred to SBYSP by his teachers to help him make friends. He had a lot of older cousins in the school, but they were a bad influence on him, and he had fallen out of contact with an earlier group of friends. The SBYSP recreation coordinator reached out to Kevin and invited him to go on several School Based trips as a way to help him make new friends.

"Now I hang out with more intelligent people," Kevin told us. "I have to get ready for the future. My attitude has changed and I'm arguing a lot less than I did last year, and my behavior is better. My friends are also different. School-Based helped me get to know other people and get help from them."

Kevin now participates in one of the school's sports teams and is a member of Students Against Drunk Driving and plans to have a career in law enforcement. This pleased the recreation coordinator: "This is one of our goals—to get kids out and doing well on their own."

Chapter Ten
Reproductive Health

"They taught me about contraceptive methods. Of course, they talk about abstinence, too, but then they give you options." (SBYSP student)

"They gave me pamphlets and made me think about the consequences of my actions." (SBYSP student)

Adolescent pregnancy and parenting were central concerns both for DHS and site-level project designers. This was reflected in the inclusion of local teen-birth rates among the local criteria of need. Although pregnancy prevention was not listed among the core services required by the School Based RFP, many sites added specific pregnancy prevention strategies, either at start-up or after the project had become established. These strategies combined several key elements necessary for teens to avoid early and unintended pregnancies:

- information about reproductive health and methods for preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease;

- support and reinforcement for responsible decision making with regard to sexual behavior;

- access to reproductive health services (whether directly or through referrals); and

- assistance addressing underlying problems that may be linked to behaviors that place them at risk of experiencing or causing an unintended pregnancy.

SBYSP services and activities in these four areas are discussed below, followed by a summary of the survey results on items related to reproductive health.

Reproductive Health Information

All six outcome-study sites provided information, both written and oral, to help young people understand the biological, psychological and social dimensions of family development and reproductive decision making. In most cases, SBYSP staff worked alongside school personnel offering state-mandated family life education and HIV/AIDS prevention classes, often giving the session on contraceptive and disease prevention methods.[21] These sessions served a dual purpose, both giving students important information and making them aware of the resources offered by

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[21] It is important to note that these classes are open to all students, including both SBYSP users and nonusers.

SBYSP. In addition, projects also offered occasional health workshops covering the same material—particularly important for students during the years with no mandated family life and HIV/AIDS prevention classes. Finally, printed reproductive health information materials were available in all School Based offices.

In focus groups, when asked about sources of reproductive health information, students had frequent words of praise for SYBSP staff:

"They are realistic—they know students have problems and they admit that students are having sex."

"School Based staff aren't judgmental. They make you feel really normal."

"They can answer any kind of question."

"They don't put you down or make you feel bad."

Support for Responsible Decision Making

All six sites also offered individual sexuality-related counseling to students. These counseling services helped teens work on decision making and peer pressure, with the goal of delaying the onset of sexual activity and encouraging contraceptive use among sexually active students. Almost one SBYSP user in five (18.7%) reported having used these services.

In two sites, a dedicated SBYSP staff member was available to students wanting to talk on an individual basis. Over time, as students came to know staff, they brought in friends they thought might be sexually active. Counselors were selected for their friendly, nonjudgmental manner to ensure that sexually active students received counseling to encourage use of contraception. Staff also played key roles in helping pregnant and parenting students arrange for needed services.

In a third site, the School Based health screening program included a two-part interview with a nurse and social worker where individual behavioral issues were raised, including sexual activity and the use of protective measures against disease and pregnancy. In a fourth site, "relationship-ready" counseling was available to students; these sessions raised a range of issues, including reproductive health measures.

Access to Reproductive Health-Care Services

Among the six outcome-study sites, three provided targeted assistance to students in need of reproductive health care. In one site, SBYSP brokered the placement of a health clinic on school grounds where these services were offered as one of a range of adolescent health services. In a second site, the reproductive health counselor worked one day a week at the nearby women's health center (from which her time at SBYSP was subcontracted); her presence there increased the probability that students would follow through on referrals for needed services. Students praised her personal and nonjudgmental support for helping them confront a difficult situation: "When we thought my girlfriend was pregnant, a staff person even went with us for the pregnancy test."[22]

At a third site, students completing a health screening also saw a nurse from the local Planned Parenthood center for their physical examination. Following the screening, they could follow up referrals for reproductive health care (often raised during the screening interview) at either the Planned Parenthood or the local community health center. (In addition, the health center, after consultation with SBYSP about low utilization by teens, revamped its adolescent services to make them more "teen-friendly.") The remaining three sites helped students secure appointments as part of their approach to helping students get the health services they needed.

Assistance Addressing Underlying Problems

Both research and practitioner experience suggest a relationship between emotional and familial problems and early and unprotected sexual activity.[23] SBYSP staff in all six sites provided individual and family counseling to help teens address these issues and reduce their possible contribution to risk-taking behaviors. Nearly two-fifths (38.6%) of SBYSP users reported using individual counseling services. According to the counselors, relationship issues often were a central issue in counseling.

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[22] It also is worth noting that the young man says"we"—he was probably encouraged by the counselor to accompany his girlfriend for the test, reinforcing a dual responsibility for contraception.

[23] Family stress had statistically negative effects on use of contraception in this study. This is consistent with findings of a comprehensive review of research on adolescent pregnancy prevention strategies, which identified as important "a set family strengths including nurturing and love, monitoring and discipline, clear values and authoritative communication which instill in children and adolescents the will and capacity to postpone parenthood." K.A. Moore, et al., *Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Programs: Interventions and Evaluations*, Washington, D.C: Child Trends, Inc. 1995,

Differences in Sexual Behavior Between Users and Nonusers

At the baseline measure, there were already visible differences between students using SBYSP services and those who had not, as can be seen on Table 10.1. While more than four-fifths (85%) of nonusers definitely wanted to avoid a pregnancy during high school, only three-quarters (74.9%) of users had such clear intentions. At follow-up, both groups had declined very slightly, with 83.4 percent of nonusers and 74.3 percent of users expressing clear intentions to avoid pregnancy. Similarly, at the baseline measure, while fewer than one-quarter (23%) of nonusers had ever had sex, almost one-third (30.9%) of users had done so. At the follow-up survey, more than two-fifths (43%) of nonusers and almost three-fifths (58.3%) of users reported having had sex.

When those students who were sexually active were asked on the baseline survey about use of contraception to prevent pregnancies and condoms to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, almost two-thirds (60.9% and 63.6%) of users reported always using contraception, but fewer than half (44.3% and 43.6%) did so on the follow-up survey. Among nonusers, almost three-fifths (58.3% and 59.3%) reported using contraception and/or condoms at baseline, and slightly more than half (53.9% and 51.9%) did so on the follow-up survey.

Table 10.1: Reproductive Health Behavior at Baseline and Follow-Up for SBYSP Users and Nonusers

	Users			Nonusers			Total		
	Base-line	Follow-up	Change	Base-line	Follow-up	Change	Base-line	Follow-up	Change
DEFINITELY WANT TO AVOID PREGNANCY									
	74.9%	74.3%	-.6	85.0%	83.4%	-1.6	80.6%	79.4%	-1.2
EVER HAD SEX									
	30.9%	58.3%	27.4	23.0%	43.0%	20.0	26.3%	49.7%	23.4
Among students who are sexually active, in the last 2 months...									
when having sex, always used contraception to prevent pregnancy	60.9%	44.3%	-16.6	58.3%	53.9%	-4.4	59.6%	48.9%	-10.7
when having sex, always used condoms to prevent STDS	63.6%	43.6%	-20.0	59.3%	51.5%	-7.8	61.5%	47.4%	-14.1

Despite these apparent declines, when SBYSP students' responses are measured against those of comparable nonusers through regression analyses controlling for baseline levels of behavior in these two areas, as well as participation in positive youth activities, family and other adult support, and family stress, the results show that the differences between users and nonusers in using contraceptives to prevent pregnancy and condoms to prevent sexually transmitted diseases at the follow-up survey were statistically significant. This indicates a positive effect of SBYSP on student use of contraceptives and condoms. In addition, parallel regression analyses found statistically significant positive differences in students' access to reproductive health care information. However, nonsignificant negative differences were found regarding intention to avoid pregnancy during high school and becoming pregnant, and nonsignificant positive differences were found for engaging in sexual intercourse.

Table 10.2: Regression Coefficients (Betas and Odds) for Selected SBYSP Outcomes

Outcomes	Utilization X Baseline		School-Based Utilization		Baseline (freshman year)		Family Stress		Participation in Youth Activities	Family Support		Other Support
Betas												
Access to reproductive information												
Want to prevent pregnancy during HS	-.74		-.59	*	2.26	†	-.59		1.19	3.11	*	-.92
Using condoms to prevent pregnancy	.22	*	-.19		.07		-.20	*	.11	.09		-.09
Using condoms to prevent STD's	.27	*	-.22		.04		-.19		.12	.03		-.10
Had or caused pregnancy	3.27		-.24		6.68	†	-.15		-.53	40.80	*	1.21

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

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

Discussion of Findings

The percentage of School Based users who had ever had sex increased dramatically from baseline to follow-up, and the percentage who said they always used contraception to avoid pregnancy and condoms to avoid STDs declined sharply. This was consistent with the high levels of family stress reported by these teens. However, when examined more closely, teen sexual behavior was

definitely an area in which School Based accounted for a "less steep decline" than would otherwise have occurred among at-risk youth of this age. The regression analyses showed positive program effects on students' access to reproductive health information, which suggests that this may help account for changes in student behavior.

The multipronged SBYSP approach provided access to information and services and counseling about responsible sexual behavior, as well as addressing underlying emotional issues. In doing so, SBYSP was able to help students slow the decline in their reproductive health care behaviors designed to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Indeed, the positive findings about the use of contraception and condoms may also be related to strong gains SBYSP users made in the areas of emotional health and well-being. Regression analyses showed statistically significant positive program effects both on use of contraception to prevent pregnancies and use of condoms to prevent sexually transmitted diseases. In other words, were it not for their participation in SBYSP activities and services, these young people most likely would have had even higher levels of sexual activity and lower levels of consistent protection against pregnancy and disease.

Unfortunately, SBYSP was not able to show positive effects on students' resolve to prevent pregnancy or on their rates of becoming pregnant or causing pregnancy. Prior research has shown that these outcomes, though certainly related to more responsible reproductive health behavior, are also related to long-standing educational problems and how young people envision their future. These issues were largely beyond the scope of the SBYSP projects.

Chapter Eleven
Educational Activities

"I have a lot of friends who don't want to go to class, but this year I'm trying to do what I've learned from my [SBYSP] counselor. I'm encouraging them to go to class. Last year I'd be hanging out there with them." (SBYSP student)

The School Based Youth Services Program's overarching mission is to address the fragmentation and inaccessibility of important youth services in order to help young people "complete their education, obtain skills leading to employment or additional education, and lead a mentally and physically healthy life." However, academic support was not listed among the core services required by the School Based RFP. Rather, improvement of academic outcomes was expected to result from the removal of personal barriers to students' academic achievement.

Nonetheless, several sites added specific activities and services to help students do better in school and set higher educational goals, including the following:

- programs and activities to support the transition from middle to high school;
- summer programs for students identified as at risk in middle school;
- freshman orientation activities;
- homework help and tutoring programs;
- overnight visits to colleges; and
- counseling to help students address problems interfering with their schoolwork.

In addition to providing direct services and academic activities for individual students, SBYSP counselors at the six study sites took part in different school committees considering the needs of individual students in academic difficulty, such as the attendance review committee or the child-study team. The rest of this chapter presents findings about student use of School Based academic services and their effect on students' academic outcomes.

Student Use of Academic Services and Activities

SBYSP staff quickly realized that students who used services or participated in their activities often had academic as well as personal problems. Four of the six outcome-study sites offered tutoring or homework help, and a total of 13 percent of SBYSP users reported using these services. This modest level of participation reflects the relative lack of emphasis on academic services in comparison with other types of services offered, such as recreation and counseling, which two-thirds and one-third of the SBYSP respondents respectively reported using. However, of those SBYSP students who reported using tutoring or homework help, the average frequency of use was roughly

monthly. Forty percent of SBYSP participants reported using tutoring a few times a year; 21 percent about once a month; 23 percent frequently (about twice a month); and 15 percent used tutoring very frequently (about once a week). Data were not collected on participation in other types of one-time academic activities such as trips to colleges, and freshman orientation (available to both users and nonusers).[24]

Findings About User and Nonuser Participation in Academic Services

At the baseline measure, users and nonusers were similar with regard to many academic characteristics, as shown on Table 11.1. Both users and nonusers had high educational aspirations, with nearly three-quarters of both groups (74% of users and 70% of nonusers) expressing the intention to pursue at least a four-year college degree. If anything, SBYSP users appeared a little clearer about their intentions and expected a slightly higher level of educational attainment. Users and nonusers were also quite similar in their educational motivation, with only the following small differences: doing well in school was less frequently cited as a motive for doing one's school work by SBYSP users than nonusers (73% versus 78%), and users slightly more frequently cited the need to get a diploma or GED as the motivation for doing schoolwork (86% versus 85%). In addition, users differed only slightly from nonusers in average daily attendance (95.9% versus 96.2%).

However, at the beginning of their high school career, SBYSP users and nonusers also differed substantially in academic status and behavior. Specifically, users were more likely to be classified as special education students (9% versus 6%); they were more likely than nonusers to have cut class more than once in the first two months of their freshman year (12% versus 9%); they were more likely to have received a failing grade during that period (41% versus 35%); and to have been sent to the office for disciplinary reasons (17% versus 10%). By the end of their freshman year, users lagged behind nonusers in mean grade point average (2.6 versus 3.2) and in average credits earned for their freshman year (33.1 versus 34.2).

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[24] In addition, counseling that was stimulated by and/or dealt with educational issues would have been counted as individual counseling.

Table 11.1: Changes in Educational Status and Behaviors for SBYSP Users and Nonusers

	Users			Nonusers		
	Base-line	Follow-up	Change	Base-line	Follow-up	Change
EDUCATIONAL STATUS						
Average daily attendance	95.9%	96.2%	.3	96.2%	96.4%	.2
Special education status	8.8%	8.7%	-0.1	5.7%	6.2%	0.5
Mean grade point average	2.6	2.7	0.1	3.2	3.1	-0.1
Averaged credits earned	33.1	31.3	-1.8	34.2	32.8	-1.4
EDUCATIONAL BEHAVIORS (within the last two months of school)						
Received a failing grade	41.4%	56.2%	14.8	34.8%	54.7%	19.9
Cut (skipped) one or more classes	22.7%	47.5%	24.8	18.3%	39.7%	21.4
Suspended from school	6.3%	16.8%	10.5	3.1%	11.6%	8.5
Sent to office for discipline	16.8%	24.7%	7.9	9.8%	22.8%	13.0
EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS						
High school only	2.8%	5.8%	3.0	4.1%	4.1%	0.0
Non-degree professional training program/two-year college degree	10.8%	10.1%	-0.7	9.6%	15.9%	6.3
Four-year college degree/master's degree/ doctorate	73.7%	70.6%	-3.1	70.2%	67.9%	-2.3
Don't know	11.1%	8.4%	-2.7	13.5%	8.2%	-5.3
EDUCATIONAL MOTIVATION						
I do my schoolwork because: (*very true* only)						
Doing well in school is important to me.	73.4%	62.8%	-10.6	78.2%	67.6%	-11.4
I need to learn to get a good job.	85.5%	64.9%	-20.6	86.5%	74.1%	-12.4
It will help me get my diploma or GED.	85.5%	76.2%	-9.3	84.8%	75.7%	-9.1
Finishing my education is important to me.	90.0%	87.5%	-2.5	90.7%	88.4%	-2.3
High dropout risk*	22.8%	40.3%	17.5	17.0%	35.8%	18.8

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

As a result, SBYSP users were at substantially greater risk of dropping out than their peers who did not use SBYSP. To measure dropout risk, AED constructed a scale combining baseline survey responses and school data with regard to the following risk factors: over-age for grade, GPA below 2.0, skipping one or more classes in the previous two months, failing grades in the previous two months, low educational aspirations, and special education status. Students

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with three or more factors were considered to be at high risk of dropping out. Almost one-quarter of users (22.8%) had three or more risk factors in their freshman year, compared to fewer than one-fifth of nonusers (17.0%).

By the end of students' second year in high school, both users and nonusers were at greater risk for negative academic outcomes, as can be seen in Table 11.1. The proportion of students classified in special education increased; average yearly credit accumulation decreased; and failing grades, cutting classes, and suspensions increased. In addition, in many cases, SBYSP users showed a greater increase in negative academic behaviors compared with nonusers.

Table 11.2: Regression Coefficients (Betas and Odds) for Selected SBYSP Outcomes

Outcomes	Utilization X Baseline	School-Based Utilization	Baseline (freshman year)	Family Stress	Participation in Youth Activities	Family Support	Other Support
Betas							
Educational aspirations	.08 †	-.04	.54 †	-.09 †		.10 †	-.01
Skipping class	.02	.03	.44 †	.14 †	-.00	-.05	-.06
Suspensions	-.04	.01	.21 †	.10 *	.04	-.01	-.08
Failing grades	-.93	1.10	1.42 †	3.27 *	-.92	-.56	-.80 *
Sent to office	-.93	-.75	2.09 †	5.75 *	1.02	-.21 †	-.87
Positive motivation	.03	-.11 †	.26 †	-.06	.09 **	.08 *	.08 *
GPA	.01	.01	.91 †	-.01	.04 **	.03	-.02
Average daily attendance	.06	-.11 †	.48 †	.01	.06	-.04	-.06
Credits earned	.16 †	-.12 †	.47 †	-.02	.09 *	.07 **	-.03

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

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

However, when the responses of SBYSP participants are measured against those of comparable nonparticipants using regression analyses to control for baseline differences, level of family stress, participation in positive youth activities, and level of family and other adult support, participation in SBYSP showed a statistically significant positive effect on users' credit accumulation. This reflects not only the persistence of students in school but also concrete progress toward graduation. In addition, there were statistically significant positive effects for

educational aspirations, without controlling for youth activities.[25] Finally, there was (nonsignificant) positive movement on all of the academic outcomes for SBYSP users' with the exception of cutting class (where a nonsignificant negative effect was seen).

Discussion of Findings

In sum, both users and nonusers experienced a downward trend in academic behaviors and outcomes between their first and second year in high school. This is common for many high school students as the academic demands of secondary education become more challenging. However, when we controlled for pre-existing differences between users and nonusers, School Based appeared to mitigate the downward trend for those who participated in its programs and activities. In grade point average, average daily attendance, educational motivation, avoiding suspension and other disciplinary actions, and receiving non-failing grades on tests and assignments, SBYSP users showed a positive, although not statistically significant, movement. Moreover, credit accumulation and educational aspirations were statistically significant, associated with use of SBYSP programs and activities—suggesting that, despite the relatively low emphasis on providing specific academic supports (such as tutoring), SBYSP projects have the potential to sustain some at-risk students long enough for them to make concrete progress toward completing high school.

The finding of a statistically significant positive effect of SBYSP on students' accumulation of credits toward graduation suggests that participation in SBYSP activities or use of services may help reduce the likelihood of students' dropping out of school. If it is true that SBYSP is responsible for the persistence of these students as "keep-ins" (as opposed to dropouts), this is an important phenomenon to try to measure and understand. Unfortunately, not dropping out of school when one might otherwise have done so is a statistical non-event, no different in appearance from the continued enrollment of other students who had not entertained thoughts of leaving.

Given the short time-frame of the initial evaluation (covering only the first two years of high

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[25] Participation in positive youth activities was not used as a control variable in the analyses of educational aspirations because we hypothesized that youth with higher aspirations were more likely to participate in youth activities in order to increase their attractiveness to colleges. Therefore, greater participation in youth activities may be a result of higher aspirations, rather than a contributing factor to higher aspirations.

school), the option of comparing dropout rates for SBYSP users and nonusers was not a practical possibility, since almost all students in the cohort were under the legal age for school-leaving. However, even after students turn 16, actual dropping out is often a statistical non-event, since relatively few students who have become so detached from school as to stop coming suddenly decide to walk into the guidance counselor's office to officially withdraw. More often, according to guidance counselors, they simply stop coming to school and disappear. A longer study is needed to determine whether SBYSP really had a positive effect on retaining students at risk of dropping out.

Ashley was capable of doing better in school, but her stressful and disorganized home life was getting in the way. She came to the School-Based program in her school for recreational activities and college visiting trips, but also participated in the conflict resolution program. She also involved her mother in the program as a way to address some of her family problems.

Ashley thinks she has definitely matured since starting high school: "High school was a lot of work and I wanted to play games. . . The [School-Based] counselor, without lecturing or preaching, let me know what I was capable of doing." Ashley also improved her relationships with teachers and other students: "I've become more aware of how to treat teachers with more respect. School-Based helped me work on carrying myself better. I had problems with authority, and I've learned to treat people how I like to be treated."

Chapter Twelve
Conclusions and Recommendations

After 12 years in operation, the state of New Jersey 's confidence that the School Based Youth Services Program should be expanded is well justified. Evidence abounds that SBYSP projects are fulfilling their mission to provide young people with the services and supports they need to navigate the adolescent years and "complete their education, obtain skills leading to employment or additional education, and lead a mentally and physically healthy life." Specifically, SBYSP projects are well-integrated into most host schools, are reaching students most in need, and are having a positive impact on student behaviors, attitudes, and aspirations. Further, given the integration of most School Based projects into the life of the school, projects may also have benefitted students not using SBYSP services or participating in SBYSP activities. In addition, it must be remembered that even where School Based did not appear to lead to improvements in student behavior from the baseline to follow-up survey, it may have accounted for a less steep decline in behavior.

Important evaluation findings include:

Students in the six outcome-study schools are clearly at risk for negative outcomes.

SBYSP has become well-integrated into the daily operation of the six study schools.

SBYSP reaches students through multiple paths of entry because of its comprehensive nature and extensive outreach efforts.

SBYSP is clearly reaching the most vulnerable students in the six outcome-study schools.

SBYSP has been able to make important differences in the lives of these students.

The educational benefits of SBYSP participation include statistically significant positive effects on educational aspirations and credit accumulation.

These findings are discussed in detail below.

Students in outcome-study schools are clearly at risk for negative outcomes.

According to the baseline survey, many students in the six outcome-study schools were at risk of negative outcomes. This finding reflects the priority that the Department of Human Services placed on selecting schools in communities with high levels of documented need and confirms its

judgment that services should be available to all students in these schools, rather than to a smaller group already identified as more vulnerable than their peers. In fact, an analysis of the baseline-survey data revealed that many students (both SBYSP users and nonusers) in these schools had already begun engaging in risk behaviors and loosening their ties to school at a point quite early in their freshman year in high school. For example, student responses to the baseline survey showed that a quarter of all students had at least three of 12 factors on a scale measuring family stress, and, within the first two months of high school, one in five students reported thinking about suicide; nearly one in three reported having hit someone to hurt them; and more than one in five reported having cut class at least once.

SBYSP is well-integrated into the daily operation of the outcome-study schools.

In the six outcome-study sites, the projects have been institutionalized in ways that are evident from the first phone call to the district, where the SBYSP phone number is listed on the top-level menu of choices for callers. Additional evidence of the important role that projects play in their host schools includes descriptions of School Based in student handbooks, integration of SBYSP staff into key school committees, and assignment of major responsibilities to SBYSP for supporting students' transition into high school and for conducting drug-and alcohol-free celebrations. In three sites, SBYSP project directors sit on top-level district bodies or hold districtwide positions, such as director of student support services. Further, given this integration, many students who do not use SBYSP services or participate in SBYSP activities may benefit, directly or indirectly, from the role the project plays in many schools.

SBYSP is reaching students through multiple paths of entry.

Students come to School Based in a variety of ways, resulting from the diverse array of relationships that SBYSP staff have built over time with different members of the school staff and their track record in working with students. Students may come to SBYSP of their own choice to participate in recreational or cultural activities or to participate in a workshop on a topic of interest. Students familiar with SBYSP services may also come seeking assistance with personal problems and clearly value SBYSP's guarantee of confidentiality. Some students come to SBYSP on the suggestion of friends or parents to talk about personal problems or participate in activities. Many students are referred to SBYSP by a wide range of school personnel who have noticed problems, such as depression or a sharp downturn in academic performance. Finally, in some schools, students

caught fighting can be mandated to participate in SBYSP anger-management workshops.

SBYSP is clearly reaching the most vulnerable students in the outcome-study schools.

Despite high general levels of stress and risk, a comparison of the baseline characteristics and behaviors of SBYSP participants in the six schools and those students who had not taken advantage of SBYSP activities and services showed that SBYSP users were at considerably greater risk than their nonuser peers. The responses of users to questions on the baseline survey indicated that they suffered higher levels of family stress than nonusers. In addition, users reported substantially higher levels of emotional distress, sexual activity, fighting, smoking, failing grades and school suspension, and marijuana use. Participants also were somewhat more likely to be special education students and to have lower grade point averages than nonusers. These findings confirm what practitioners have long suspected: that they were reaching the students at greatest risk for negative outcomes.

In addition, a comparison of the characteristics and behaviors of early (ninth-grade) and late (tenth-grade or second-year) entrants into SBYSP showed a higher proportion of risk-related characteristics and behaviors among the early starters. This suggests that while the earlier entrants may have more acute and visible problems, the projects are also reaching some students whose risk level is lower, though still of concern. Indeed, it is possible that these students, without the support of SBYSP services and activities, might eventually develop the kinds of acute problems that were more prevalent among students who began using SBYSP services and activities during their first year in high school.

The severity of the problems exhibited by some students constituted challenges for both SBYSP practitioners and the evaluation. In general, many adolescent problem behaviors do not reach their peak until later in adolescence. As a result, SBYSP sometimes is intervening in situations where students' needs exceed the scope of the program's resources. In such a downward pattern, actual improvement in behavior may be difficult to achieve and a slowed decline can be considered a sign of progress.

SBYSP has been able to make important differences in the lives of these students.

Before discussing the central findings of the outcome study, it is worth repeating what was just said about the difficulty of stating findings when a positive outcome may not be a visible improvement in status, but rather a less steep decline in condition. In fact, positive program effects include the following possibilities:

1. Both groups improved between the baseline and follow-up survey, and SBYSP users did so more than nonusers. Improving either meant engaging in more frequent positive or fewer negative behaviors.

2. Both groups (SBYSP users and nonusers) got worse between the baseline and follow-up survey, but SBYSP users did so less than nonusers. Getting worse either meant they engaged in fewer positive behaviors or more negative behaviors.

3. SBYSP users improved while nonusers stayed the same.

4. SBYSP users improved while nonusers got worse.

5. SBYSP users stayed the same while nonusers got worse.

In addition, it is important to note that analyses of the differences between students' baseline and follow-up survey responses have been conducted controlling for baseline levels of behavior, family stress, family and other adult support, and participation in youth activities in order to fairly compare the behavior of students at greatly increased risk to their peers who are, in general, at much lower risk of negative outcomes. Overall, these regression analyses of students' responses to the follow-up survey showed positive movement on 39 of the 45 outcomes studied in the evaluation. Eleven of the behavioral and attitudinal outcomes showed positive and desired movement at statistically significant levels: educational aspirations; academic credits earned; trouble sleeping; feelings of unhappiness, sadness or depression; worrying "too much"; feelings of anger and destructiveness; suicidal thoughts; use of contraceptives to prevent pregnancy; use of condoms to prevent STDs; smoking; and engaging in deliberate property damage, indicating a program effect. In addition, regressions analyses also found significant positive movement on three instrumental outcomes: access to reproductive health information, peer support and family support, and on boys' involvement in hitting others with intent to hurt.

Curiously, the one statistically significant negative finding concerned peer influence, where it appeared that greater SBYSP usage over time was associated with reduced student responses indicating that they would not go along with friends urging them to do something they thought was wrong. However, our question only tapped self-predicted responses to hypothetical negative peer pressure, while SBYSP users' responses to questions about their actual behavior (e.g., smoking, damaging property) indicated positive program effects on 11 of the 14 behavioral outcomes where negative peer pressure might be expected to influence risk-taking behavior. This suggests that

negative peer pressure was not playing a substantial role in shaping students' behaviors. In fact, findings suggested that the positive movement was more likely the result of reduced opportunities to engage in risk behavior and important changes in the underlying individual factors (e.g,, depression or angry and destructive feelings) associated with risk-taking behavior.

The educational benefits of SBYSP participation include statistically significant positive effects on educational aspirations and credit accumulation.

These results suggest that SBYSP is having an impact on keeping at-risk youth in school, both by helping them imagine future educational options and by supporting concrete progress toward graduation. This is reinforced by qualitative data from focus groups conducted as part of AED's evaluation where nearly all students interviewed, when summing up what they had gained from SBYSP, noted that they had become more serious about themselves and focused on their education. Several students made it clear that, without SBYSP, they would not have stayed in school. Interviewed project staff also described students whose connection to school was tenuous and for whom SBYSP had played a critical role in keeping them in school.

While other interventions with more focused educational components have yielded broader educational results (such as improved attendance and grades), these positive findings suggest that, at least for some students, addressing the factors that act as barriers to academic success does indeed free both students and teachers to concentrate on the heart of the matter and most likely increases the chances that these students will go on to complete high school.

Many evaluations show that educational, social/emotional, and behavioral outcomes are relatively long-term goals and that a significant amount of time is required before outcomes achieve measurable magnitude. For example, youth in the Quantum Opportunities Program showed widespread statistically significant effects only after four years of participation in the intervention, although the second-year results, similar to those for SBYSP, showed statistically significant gains in several areas and movement in the desired direction in other outcome areas.

The SBYSP evaluation was limited by the relatively short duration of the study. We were able to track students' outcomes for only the first two years of their high school career and were able to see some strong gains during that period, as well as reasons to suspect that the gains would consolidate over time. However, to truly measure the effect of SBYSP on its stated mission of

"enabling adolescents, especially those with problems, to complete their education, [and] obtain skills that either lead to employment or to additional education," the evaluation would need to continue follow this cohort of youth for a longer period of time.

Recommendations

Some of the following recommendations emerge directly from the analyses of differences between the baseline and follow-up surveys. Others emerge from the qualitative data gathered in focus groups and interviews with students, guidance counselors, and SBYSP staff as well as observations of the programs over the time we spent in the schools.

1. **Well-balanced programs combining an array of attractive activities and targeted supports provide the greatest overall benefits.** The broader array of activities and services avoids or reduces stigmatization of the School Based program as something for "troubled kids" and provides multiple ports of entry for many different kinds of students. In addition, the variety of services and activities enables staff to address students' complex personal issues in an integrated fashion, often combining clinical services with social support.

2. **Securing official support for SBYSP from the school is critical to both the initial and continuing strength of the partnership.** This means not only visible support in policy language, but also administrative mandates backed up with funding for technical assistance to support collaboration, and the inclusion of the "capacity to collaborate with outside organizations" as one criterion for selecting and evaluating potential school principals and guidance staff.

3. **Continued technical assistance and support from the Department of Human Services has been critical to the longevity and quality of SBYSP.** The experience of SBYSP shows that programs benefitted enormously from the ongoing provision of resources, technical assistance, and networking opportunities. These resources sustain staff who cope daily with the challenges of addressing student needs and developing and maintaining collaborative working relationships with the host school, local service providers, and the surrounding community.

4. **Extensive outreach is facilitated by integration into the host school.** This is usually most easily done where at least part of the SBYSP staff is housed within the school building and when SBYSP staff serve on multiple school committees. Where SBYSP staff are part of committees that make other staff aware of their presence, more teachers are likely to refer students for assistance and SBYSP staff are able to intervene on behalf of students.

5. **The provision of support for families in the form of family counseling, parenting workshops, and parent-child communication retreats all helped support improvements in family relationships and should be included in all SBYSP programs.** While some family problems remain beyond the scope of SBYSP services, family stress was strongly related to negative student behaviors and emotions in the survey findings.

6. **Both our quantitative and qualitative evidence suggests that an important "engine" for**

change was SBYSP's facilitation of positive peer group relationships and that conscious efforts to help students develop relationships with a supportive peer group should be part of the program priorities. **Recreation cannot be overstressed as an important service and support in this regard.** In addition to providing a supervised and safe environment, recreational activities offer opportunities for young people to develop important social skills and provide support to help them cope with the challenges of adolescence. However, recreation also includes enrichment activities that take students out of their everyday environment and stretch their understanding of the world around them.

7. **For older adolescents, employment-related activities and services are an important attraction.** Several students interviewed came to School Based because they saw the immediate and material benefit of part-time work, then sought other kinds of services from staff. For other students, employment preparation programs and part-time employment secured through SBYSP provided important supports that enabled students to see themselves more positively and become more invested in positive behavior.

8. **Although SBYSP is not an educational intervention** *per se* **and cannot overcome fundamental weaknesses of host schools, it has an important role to play in improving educational prospects of the students it serves.** Many SBYSP participants had difficulty in school and were alienated from their teachers. For many of these students, SBYSP served as an important bridge back into their school life, both by providing educational supports (tutoring and homework help) and activities to open students' educational horizons (college visits). Moreover, several interviewed students stated that the interest SBYSP staff members regularly showed in their educational progress reinforced the message that education was important.

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In conclusion, AED's evaluation has provided ample evidence that the New Jersey School-Based Youth Services Program has made a difference in the lives of youth in some of the state's most troubled communities. However, while School Based is a powerful model of an integrated and comprehensive approach to supporting students and families, it is important to remember that, however rich the program model, it is critical to have realistic expectations of what SBYSP can do. A program, however rich, cannot succeed if it is simply an add-on to a failing school:

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

school program implementation.[21]

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

> While we can begin to reduce negative social factors and help a child become ready to learn, we cannot, in fact, move the learning process if it is not understandable, interesting, or challenging for the youngsters. We must address how children and youth are taught and make serious changes on that side of the equation. . .We must do both, provide social service supports and alter the learning side if we are to see real long-term investment.[22]

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

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

Appendix
Survey Methodology

To address the individual outcome and participation questions specified in the evaluation design, AED developed a confidential youth survey for administration to the cohort of all 1996-97 ninth graders in the six selected SBYSP sites. The findings in this report are from two surveys administered to this cohort of students in fall 1996 (baseline) and spring 1998 (second follow-up). [1] A total of 1,509 youth responded to the baseline survey, representing an 84 percent response rate and 1,205 took the follow-up survey, representing a 78 percent response rate. The survey included questions about demographics and school background; situational characteristics, such as access to adult support and home composition; personal characteristics; behavioral characteristics, including sexual activity, violence/delinquency, substance use, health status, and health risks; youth development characteristics; and access to support. The survey was administered to students by AED staff during a single regular class period. [2] Through subsequent collection of SBYSP (Level of Service) [3] and school data, AED staff were able to identify SBYSP users and nonusers, [4] and to append school data to students' survey responses. In addition, to improve the quality and depth of information about SBYSP usage, students responding to the follow-up survey were also asked to complete a short questionnaire about their use of SBYSP. AED entered all data into an SPSS database. The following section describes how the survey was developed and administered, as well as how participants and nonparticipants in the SBYSP program were identified.

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[1] A third survey was completed in late spring 1997. Data from this survey was used to provide interim evaluation data. These survey results were not used in the longitudinal analysis reported in this report.

[2] In the case of special education students with limited reading ability, the survey was sometimes given separately in a double-length period. Given the sensitive nature of some questions, the survey was not given to special education students who needed the questions read aloud.

[3] Each SBYSP site maintained a Level of Service (LOS) data base to record basic demographic data (such as age, grade-level, gender, race/ethnicity, referral source) and specific SBYSP usage information for all students receiving services. For each service encounter, the purpose of the student's visit (e.g., crisis, depression, family problem, health information) and type of procedure performed (e.g., employment/health/substance abuse/mental health counseling, tutoring, etc.) are recorded. In addition, the provider and length of time for the procedure are recorded.

[4] Throughout this report, we use the terms "users" to describe students who participated in School-Based activities or who used School-Based services, and the term "nonusers" to describe students who did not.

Survey Development

 The SBYSP baseline survey was developed by AED as one of the primary data collection instruments for the outcome study. It was designed to collect background data and to document initial attitudes and behaviors for the broad range of SBYSP services and activities and their desired outcomes that had been identified during Phase I and articulated in the theories of change. Many individual survey items were selected or adapted from other instruments used to study youth, including the Centers for Disease Control's Youth Risk Behavior Study survey, the American Drug and Alcohol Survey, and the National Educational Longitudinal Survey, or from other studies of youth behavior, such as P/PV's youth development studies, Gary Wehlage's dropout prevention studies and Mark Weist's study of violence exposure, AED's Project Choice evaluation, and a WRI, Inc. study of New York City's high school health clinics. In addition, many items were developed specifically for this instrument to ensure sufficient coverage of the many facets of SBYSP.

 Survey development was very challenging. In order to accommodate the widest range of students' reading abilities, the language was kept as simple as possible (Flesch-Kincaid grade level = 5.69). Not only were there length, time, and language constraints, but the survey also needed to cover a wide variety of subject areas to address the range of outcomes sought by the multiple components of SBYSP (all six sites had the five core components and at least three or four additional components). In general, the available instruments and studies we reviewed focused on only one area or a subset of the areas covered by SBYSP. The SBYSP survey, however, required 62 multiple choice questions (with many subquestions) on topics ranging from basic background information to access to health care to specifics about sexual activity, often asking only two or three questions per topic given constraints of length and time.

 The individual items involved questions about the following categories:
- Demographics and family composition
- School background and current status
- Diet, exercise, and general health
- Health care (including access and typical strategies)
- Feelings and actions (mental health and sexuality questions)
- Family and community supports, stresses, and exposure to violence
- Risk behaviors (fighting, weapons, and some substance abuse)

- Alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs

- Career preparation and work

- Peer pressure and support

- Afterschool and youth development activities

Prior to administration of the survey, AED conducted several reviews of the instrument. This included a limited field-test of the instrument with 10 students in grade 9 to determine time requirements, ease of reading, appropriateness of language, and youth responses to the sensitive nature of the questions. Other advisory staff at AED also reviewed the instrument and suggested modifications. In addition, the contents of the survey (though not the precise wording of the questions) were discussed with school and SBYSP staff from each of the six sites. Based on those efforts, final modifications were made and survey booklets were produced. An annotated copy of the instrument is available from AED.

Survey Administration

AED staff developed survey administration procedures for each of the six selected sites. Two months prior to the initial administration, anticipated survey administration, staff requested a meeting with each school's district superintendent, principal, SBYSP director, and, in most cases, the school's head guidance counselor or a teacher who was asked to help develop administration procedures. At these meetings, which sometimes included a representative from the New Jersey Department of Human Services, the group discussed specific procedures for administering the survey. Finally, AED staff described the security procedures for protecting the confidentiality of student responses. In each site, a class attended by all ninth graders was identified as the class where the survey would be administered. In most cases, this was the ninth-grade English class; at one site, the ninth-grade general science class was surveyed. Special education students who could read at a sixth-grade level or higher were also surveyed, either in the designated ninth-grade classes or in a separate administration to a group of special education students. When needed, students were offered surveys written in Spanish, and Spanish-speaking staff were available to administer the survey.

Several weeks prior to the administration date, consent forms for parents[5] were either mailed to the parents of all ninth graders or distributed to students in their home room class. At

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[5] Passive consent forms for parents required them to sign and return the form only if they did _not_ want their child to participate in the survey.

follow-up survey administrations, consent letters were sent to parents of all new students who had joined the age cohort. At least one week before each administration, AED sent letters to teachers whose classes would be used to administer the survey. These letters explained the purpose of the study and the procedures for survey administration. AED also drafted a letter for teachers to distribute letters to all ninth graders prior to administration. This letter explained the purpose of the study, stressing that participation was completely voluntary, and that students were not required to complete the survey or any item on the survey if they did not want to. The letter also explained that the surveys were confidential, and that no data would be reported individually or by name, nor would survey responses be shared with anyone at the school; both parent and student letters were translated into Spanish.

The organization of the baseline survey administration was fairly straightforward, involving one subject taken by all incoming ninth grade students (usually English). The procedure was similar for the follow-up surveys, but evaluators needed to track down students who had been retained in ninth grade and either schedule special survey administration sessions or arrange for these students to join one of the classes where the survey was being administered.

At the beginning of each class session where the survey was administered, trained survey administrators again explained the purpose of the study; that completion of the survey was voluntary; that survey responses were strictly confidential, and that individual responses would not be released to anyone. These statements were also printed on the back page of the survey booklet. Students were then asked to print their first and last names and sign the back page of the survey booklet, indicating that these statements had been read to them. This page, which was the only place where student's names were recorded, was collected by survey administrators and placed in a sealed envelope before students began completing the survey. These "tear sheets" were used to create a secured data base of student names and survey ID numbers. This data base enables AED to match baseline surveys with the first and second follow-up surveys, LOS data, and school data to create a longitudinal data set for each respondent.

Students whose parents had not given consent to their participation or who chose not to participate in the survey either left the room during the administration or worked quietly on other material during the administration. At the end of the class period, all surveys were collected by the administrator and sealed in an envelope separate from the back pages of the survey. Because of the sensitive nature of some survey items, a few School-Based directors requested that the

survey administrators pass out a flyer to each surveyed student with information about where to go if the survey brought up any difficult or confusing feelings that they would like to discuss.

Identification of Users and Nonusers

Each SBYSP site maintained an LOS data base to record basic demographic data (such as age, grade-level, gender, race/ethnicity, referral source) and specific SBYSP usage information for all students receiving services. For each service encounter, the purpose of the student's visit (e.g., crisis, depression, family problem, health information) and type of procedure performed (e.g., employment/health/substance abuse/mental health counseling, tutoring, etc.) are recorded. In addition, the provider and length of time for the procedure are recorded.

At the end of the 1996-97 school year, AED worked with Metis Associates to determine which variables should be extracted from the LOS system for analysis. Metis then developed a program to extract these variables in a format compatible with AED's survey data base. Each site was asked to extract LOS data for all 1996-97 ninth graders and return it to AED. Almost all the sites, however, ran into logistical difficulties in extracting these data. Several sites found that their LOS data sets were incomplete. They were missing students who they knew had been served and discovered that some activities and services (such as field trips) were not recorded in the LOS system at all. The sites reviewed the LOS data and submitted lists of students who were not on the data set but had been served in the 1996-97 school year. One site did not have the computer hardware necessary to maintain LOS data; this site created paper records of ninth-graders served by SBYSP. LOS data collection was completed in November 1997. Because of the logistical problems encountered by sites in extracting LOS data, we were not able to retrieve detailed information on the types and intensity of services received by all users. Therefore, for the baseline analyses, we defined SBYSP users as ninth graders who had used any School-Based service during the 1996-97 school year, regardless of intensity.

As noted earlier, to increase the quality and depth of the information about SBYSP usage, we created a short questionnaire to be completed by each survey respondent. The questionnaire asked students if they had used any type of SBYSP service, and how often they used such service.[6] Students were also asked to rate their satisfaction with the service, and if they would

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[6] The participation survey was tailored to each site, separately listing each service or activity (e.g., special trips, individual counseling). In addition, SB staff names also were used whenever appropriate to increase the students' ability to identify which services they had used.

recommend SBYSP to other students. This questionnaire allowed us to determine the intensity of services received, and more accurately captured the number of youth who used any type of SBYSP service than the LOS data system.

Survey Data Analysis

All individual survey responses were entered into a survey database at AED and prepared for analysis. The following section presents response rates; a description of data entry, verification, and merging processes; and a summary of the basic analysis plan.

Response Rates

Survey response rates were calculated by dividing the number of eligible ninth graders (i.e., those that did not return a signed "disconsent" form from their parents, were in attendance on the administration day, and signed the agreement on the back page of the survey booklet) by the number of students who actually took the survey. As shown in the table below, response rates for the baseline survey were fairly high. A total of 1,834 ninth graders were enrolled in the six schools at the time of the survey. Of these, 98 percent (1,796) agreed to take the survey and 16 percent (289) were absent on the day of the survey. Thus, 84 percent of the eligible ninth-grade students actually took it. As is evident in the following table, response rates varied by school: Site E had the lowest response rate at 76 percent while Site B had the highest at 88 percent.

Baseline Survey Response Rates at Six SBYSP Sites

Site	Total enrolled 9th graders	Number who agreed to take the survey	Number absent on day of survey	Total number who took the survey	Response rate[7]
A	336	323	42	281	87%
B	253	245	30	215	88%
C	433	430	81	349	81%
D	345	343	46	297	87%
E	261	257	61	196	76%
F	206	198	29	171	86%
Total	1,834	1,796	289	1,509	84%

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[7] The response rate is based on the number of students who agreed to take the survey, rather than the total enrolled.

Response rates on individual survey questions varied: some students were not able to complete the entire survey during the class period allotted; other students chose not to answer certain survey questions (students were instructed prior to survey administration that they did not have to answer any items they did not want to). An analysis of missing data was conducted for each survey item. In cases where more than 20 percent of a site's respondents did not respond to a particular item, aggregate responses are marked with an asterisk on the tables in chapters three and four.

A total of 1,585 ninth graders were enrolled in the six schools at the time of the follow-up survey. Of these, 97 percent (1,544) agreed to take the survey and 21 percent (339) were absent on the day of the survey. Thus, 76 percent of the eligible students actually took the survey. As with the baseline survey, response rates varied by school. However, for 5 sites the response rates did not vary greatly, ranging from 81 percent to 86 percent. One site (D) had a much lower response rate of 63 percent.

Follow-up Survey Response Rates at Six SBYSP Sites

Site	Total enrolled 10th graders	Number who agreed to take the survey	Number absent on day of survey	Total number who took the survey	Response rate[8]
A	341	336	57	279	83%
B	236	228	33	195	86%
C	297	296	55	241	81%
D	406	404	151	253	63%
E	128	121	19	102	84%
F	167	159	24	135	85%
Total	1,585	1,544	339	1,205	76%

A total of 922 students took both the baseline and follow-up surveys. The analyses in this report are based on responses from those students who took both the baseline and follow-up surveys.

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[8] The response rate is based on the number of students who agreed to take the survey, rather than the total enrolled.

Data Entry and File Merging

For the baseline survey, trained data-entry clerks entered data into an SPSS relational database. After entry, frequencies were run on all variables to check for "outlier" values, which were compared to original surveys to check for accuracy, and corrected if needed. A random sample of 10 percent of the surveys were selected for full verification. This entailed checking each response against the original survey to check for random and systematic data entry errors; none were found.

The follow-up survey was created using a machine readable form. Respondents completed the survey using a number two pencil. To prepare the surveys to be scanned into a database, AED staff cleaned the survey for stray marks and incomplete erasures. Once the data were scanned, the database was converted into an SPSS file. Data verification was not necessary using the machine readable forms.

Each baseline and follow-up survey had a unique identification number, which was used to match survey responses to a separate file of student names and school identification numbers. Individual student identification numbers were collected from each school prior to survey administration; they were used only to append data collected from the school (i.e., attendance, credit accumulation, special education status) and SBYSP participation data to the survey data. The follow-up survey, school and participation data for each respondent was merged to the baseline file using the unique student identification numbers, creating a longitudinal data file.

Survey Analysis Plan

The SBYSP logic model and the theories of change provided the framework for the analysis of the baseline and follow-up surveys (the appendix contains a copy of the SBYSP logic model). Survey analyses occurred in three major stages: descriptive analysis of baseline survey data (fall/winter 1997/98); identification of School-Based program users and nonusers (winter/spring 1998); and analysis of the follow-up survey with a two-year longitudinal comparison of users and nonusers (spring 1999).

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Principal Offices

<table>
<tr><td>**1825 Connecticut Avenue**</td><td>**100 Fifth Avenue**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Washington DC 20009-5721**</td><td>**New York, NY 10011**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Tel: 202-884-8000**</td><td>**Tel: 212-243-1110**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Fax: 202-884-8400**</td><td>**Fax: 212-627-0407**</td></tr>
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