

# Juvenile Structured Day and Alternative Learning Programs: Impact and Process Study



James C. Fraser  
Center for Urban & Regional Studies  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Prepared for  
The Governor's Crime Commission  
North Carolina Department of  
Crime Control and Public Safety

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**Dr. James C. Fraser, Principal Investigator**

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## Executive Summary

The University of North Carolina's Center for Urban & Regional Studies conducted an 18-month study of 11 Juvenile Structured Day Programs (JSDPs) and Alternative Learning Programs (ALPs) for the Governor's Crime Commission, choosing four such programs for in-depth study. The Commission sponsored this study to learn more about the impact of JSDPs/ALPs on at-risk youth, their families, and communities, and to better understand the institutional and programmatic characteristics of these programs. In order to examine the processes and outcomes associated with JSDPs/ALPs, the research team reviewed existing documentation on select ALPs, and conducted primary data collection to evaluate the impact of JSDPs upon youth. Thus, the research protocol described below pertains to the data collection and analysis for the JSDPs in the study, and all numbers directly refer to this single category of programmatic effort. The research team employed a two-stage methodological strategy to study JSDPs.

First, the Governor's Crime Commission chose the 11 sites for the analysis from the approximately 24 programs that currently operate in the State of North Carolina. This sample represents approximately 45% of the population. Some of the programs have operated since 1999, but the majority of programs started in 2000. Program sites are in cities as large as Charlotte, Greensboro, Durham, and Wilmington and in smaller, more rural communities such as Monroe, Asheboro, Laurinburg, Mount Olive, and Wentworth. All programs work with adjudicated youth and youth on short- and long-term suspension. The programs vary in the number of youth served per day: ten to 100, with a median of 40 youth served.

Second, the team chose four of the 11 sites for additional collection of more detailed data. The final sample for the intensive analyses included Charlotte, Greensboro, Durham, and Wilmington. In each of these sites a second round of interviews were conducted with programmatic staff, and an initial set of interviews were conducted with other external stakeholders in the communities being served, including local juvenile justice officials, consultants with Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, local non-profits providing services in tandem with the JSDPs, and youth attending the programs. In addition, the research team collected existing data on the youth status including indicators of performance in the programs, as well as court, school, and family status, and placement at termination from the programs. The initial site visits occurred during the fall of 2002, and the subsequent visits and data analyses were conducted in 2003-2004.

The findings point to three conclusions: 1) JSDPs can fill an important gap in providing community-based services to adjudicated youth and youth at-risk of becoming involved in the

juvenile justice system; 2) JSDPs can be cost-effective; and 3) because JSDPs vary in their levels of development, and for their continued growth and maintenance of the services they provide they will need technical and economic resources from the State of North Carolina. When analyzing the data from multiple stakeholders internal and external to the JSDPs and pairing this information with measures of success, the following lessons learned are highlighted:

- JSDPs require more long-term and stable funding from the State of North Carolina in order for staff to be able to focus on service delivery and not fund raising. Even in the most effective programs, a great deal of staff effort continues to be directed toward securing funds in order to keep the doors open. According to many stakeholders, there simply needs to be a more substantial commitment from the State to sustain these efforts.
- Programs report that the development of a strong "community collaborative" is essential to the planning, maintenance, and growth of a JSDP. Many stakeholders recommend advisory boards, comprised of local juvenile justice officials, school, and non-profit service providers, parents, and even youth who have successfully matriculated in order to provide the political will to assure program effectiveness. These groups can also assist program directors in problem solving in a collaborative manner, thus strengthening links between all parties that this study found imperative to the success of a JSDP.
- Information sharing is critical for program success, and virtually every program that participated in the study has developed effective practices in the areas of behavior management, family involvement, multi-modal service delivery, the creation of tailored curriculum for short- versus long-term program stays, interpersonal development opportunities, creative education-employment internships and job training efforts, as well as a broad spectrum of activities geared at linking youth to networks of people and services who will assist them in achieving their academic goals.

The study results show that JSDPs can be effective, community-based interventions that redirect youth from further contact with the juvenile justice system toward becoming productive citizens. The full report contains results for each program that was part of the study, as well as numerous boxes that highlight lessons learned and practices that different programs in the State of North Carolina have found to be effective ways to engage youth successfully.



# Chapter 1: Introduction

## A. Study Overview

The University of North Carolina's Center for Urban & Regional Studies conducted an 18-month study of 11 Juvenile Structured Day Programs (JSDPs) and Alternative Learning Programs (ALPs) for the Governor's Crime Commission, ultimately choosing four such programs for in-depth study. The Commission sponsored the study to learn more about the impact of JSDPs/ALPs on at-risk and troubled youth, their families, and communities, and to better understand the characteristics of these programs. This study focuses primarily on adjudicated youth. In addition to documenting programs and activities that positively impact at-risk youth, researchers developed an "effective practices" module to assist local government, communities, educators, and policymakers in developing programs for at-risk and troubled youth.

Realizing the economic impact of the high school dropout problem, many states, communities, and school districts established separate educational programs for at-risk and troubled students. At-risk and troubled students are described as discouraged learners. These youth do not succeed in the standard high school program for a variety of reasons—typically poor attendance, habitual truancy, falling behind academically, and/or teenage parenthood. While the number of Alternative Learning Programs (ALPs) has grown nationwide, little is known about the impact of such programs, particularly Juvenile Structured Day Programs (JSDPs), on the students, families, and communities they serve.

Alternative Learning Programs and Juvenile Structured Day Programs serve the broad spectrum of at-risk and troubled students, including suspended and expelled students, those at risk of dropping out, and those already processed through the juvenile justice system. According to the North Carolina's Alternative Learning Programs: An Evaluation of Juvenile Structured Day Programs for Suspended and Expelled Youth, the Governor's Crime Commission (2002) states that:

“Alternative Learning Programs (ALPs) are programs that are designed to offer a variety of different learning possibilities to students who have not been successful in the traditional classroom setting. ALPs are geared toward children who are at risk for truancy, academic failure, behavior problems and dropping out of school. This may include children who are suspended or expelled, have a history of truancy, are returning from a juvenile justice setting, or whose educational needs are best met in an alternative

environment. ALPs may also address behavioral or emotional problems that may interfere with a student learning in a traditional fashion. ALPs offer a more hands-on approach to learning and give students a chance to benefit from programs not traditionally offered in regular schools. ALPs offer a more individualized, hands-on course of study.”

Whereas,

“Structured day programs are designed to offer programs to expelled and suspended youth and who are sanctioned by the courts. These programs are part of a community corrections and juvenile rehabilitative effort. While structured day programs offer academic and life skills to the students much like ALPs, they offer many more services to the students and their families as well. In accordance with North Carolina General Statute §7B-2506(16), the State Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention defines structured day programs as non-residential programs that provide intervention and prevention services to juveniles in a closely supervised, safe environment. The target population of these programs are juveniles that are adjudicated delinquent or undisciplined, intake diverted or at risk. A structured day program is made up of many components and serves youth in a community based setting. These programs should be highly structured and provide accountability for the students.”

There are 215 Alternative Learning Programs and approximately 24 Juvenile Structured Day Programs in North Carolina to date. Although such programs are costly, they can be cost-effective when states consider the instructional time per day lost to disruption in the regular classroom as well as money saved from preventing students from repeating grades or dropping out. States save money when students with behavioral problems are prevented from being incarcerated as adults and become productive members of society. Educational research indicates that the number of dropouts will likely grow in the next decade and that society will continue to bear profound social and economic costs for failing to educate these young people.

In order to determine the impact and effectiveness of ALPs and JSDPs, the research team conducted a literature review and conducted a series of interviews with program directors, program staff, and youth participants. The team collected data to examine program impacts, program matriculation rates, and recidivism rates among participating youth. The project initially included 11 programs, ultimately selecting four programs for in-depth study. The study looked at programs in the following counties: Union, Edgecombe, Nash, Guilford, Mecklenburg, Randolph, Montgomery, Rockingham, Durham, Wayne, Lenoir, Greene, Wilson, and New

Hanover. (Note: Fifteen counties are listed because some programs operated in more than one county.)

## **B. Literature Review**

Alternative educational initiatives have proliferated across the United States in the last decade (Hurst 1994). Alternative education has emerged in part as a response to a perceived crisis in education. The components of this crisis include: the underfunding of schools at a time of immense overcrowding and growing enrollment (Katsiyannis and Williams 1998); the increased social disorganization in many student's lives—particularly those from dysfunctional family contexts—leading to an array of behavioral problems (May and Copeland 1998); the rise in educational needs for a changing workforce going unmet in many schools (Frey 1999); the critique of schools as sites of social control and homogenization rather than places of individual growth and development (Johnston and Weatherill 1998); and, the general sense that national public education is a failed project (Miller 1999). Alternative education schemes range from for-profit corporations to better managed education within entire school systems (Portner 1998; Knutson 1998) and not-for-profit programs which mirror the small classes and individualized care of private schools (Feinberg 2001), to state-sponsored agencies hoping to give students who have been unsuccessful in mainstream education a second-chance (Turk, Owens and Falk 1999) and ad hoc initiatives which provide an experimental, home-school experience for a group of participating students and their families (Ramos-Zayas 1998; Merrill 1999). Unlike the national public education system, alternative education initiatives do not attempt to standardize outcomes. Instead, alternative education programming is geared to the needs of a target audience. Many alternative initiatives seek to work in tandem with the mainstream school system and push students toward greater participation in the norms and proper behavior of society at large (Raywid 1998).

Many types of alternative education exist in North Carolina today. The State has recently become more involved in the development and management of alternative education and has been noted for taking innovative steps in this direction (Katsiyannis and Williams 1998). This intervention has come primarily through the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) and the Governor's Crime Commission (GCC), as well as the Department of Public Instruction (the latter primarily via Alternative Learning Programs). These agencies have given funding and other

support to county-level, governmental and non-governmental organizations to address the needs of youth who are perceived to have taken the brunt of the crisis in education. While alternative education always exists alongside the mainstream school system, many of the purposeful interventions by the State of North Carolina aim to connect alternative and mainstream education and develop programs that return those students in alternative settings to the mainstream (King et al. 1998). Many of these programs began out of the juvenile justice system's need to provide a structured environment for youth who had been temporarily removed from mainstream school settings but had not committed offenses serious enough to warrant a residential program or even youth detention. Therefore, alternative education in North Carolina has generally been about serving the youth who have failed in mainstream schooling and ended up in the juvenile justice system. With that broad necessity in mind, local organizations have developed a variety of strategies to implement alternative education across the state (Riley and McDaniel 1999; Whitaker, Gray and Roole 1999; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction 2002).

While there is a limited amount of literature that directly addresses the ways in which agencies in North Carolina currently meet needs through alternative education programs, several themes arise to describe programmatic activities in the state. The salient themes include:

***Problem Identification***

- Alternative programs which focus on participating individuals
- Alternative programs which focus on the families/communities of participating individuals

***Education***

- Alternative programs within the public school system
- Alternative programs outside the public school system

***Crime***

- Alternative programs as crime prevention
- Alternative programs as substitute punishment/consequences for crime

***Behavior***

- Alternative programs to address truancy/drop-out
- Alternative programs to address mental health and behavioral issues

While these themes overlap in the programmatic efforts themselves, many initiatives in North Carolina articulate goals and strategies along these four broad categories. Within these categories, often two potential types of intervention are considered possible. Most agencies

make choices between the two (often for practical reasons such as funding/resources, meeting immediate needs, etc.). However, some programs do attempt to address needs more comprehensively by not counterposing the two choices as an either/or scenario.

The overall desire to provide youth services that reorient youth toward action that is physically, psychologically and socially “healthier” connects these four categories of intervention. By healthier, funders, legislators, and service deliverers mean changing youth behaviors towards the norms and values of their local communities and society at large (Rayle 1998). Underlying this hope is the assumption that through these programmatic efforts the state will meet an expectation to prepare young people to be good citizens and productive members of the labor force. Stakeholders make alternative youth programs available, therefore, because it is recognized that the conventional public school system is not successful for all youth in achieving these expectations, and that an alternative must exist before such youth are removed from legitimate civic and economic activities entirely via incarceration.

### **Indicators of Successful Programming**

While each individual program tracks success in ways most pertinent to the type of intervention pursued, indicators of a successful alternative education initiative can be extracted and generalized. Several studies and reports provide indicators of success for alternative education programs at the national, the state, and the school system levels. Additionally, evaluations of North Carolina’s alternative education initiatives provide useful information about what makes a successful program in this State.

At the national level, researchers have surveyed the various alternative education initiatives across the U.S. to identify several indicators of success that transcend individual programs’ unique efforts and results (Cox et al. 1995; Druian and Butler 2001). Results indicate that alternative education has a positive effect on youth’s academic performance, overall attitude towards schooling, and self-esteem. This is particularly salient in programs that have a specified target youth population more so than in programs that are a “catch all” for at-risk youth. However, this study found that many alternative education programs have struggled to change delinquent behavior. Results show that although many youth experience positive changes in academic performance and attitude toward school, these changes can be outweighed by continued engagement in delinquent behavior. In other words, there is no necessary correlation

between improved academic performance and a decrease in delinquent activity. Therefore, the authors suggest that more programs should focus on behavioral change in addition to youth performance and attitude in school.

Druian and Butler (2001) examine the effectiveness of programs on at-risk youth. Surveying programs across the country, they identify three types of alternative education intervention: federally-funded employment demonstration outside of the school; pull-out programs which provide an experiential learning environment within the school at large; and classroom-based programs. From evaluations of these three interventions, they discover three components of successful initiatives: leadership, climate, and classroom instruction and management. But rather than focus on youth-oriented measures of success, Druian and Butler *ibid.* delineate these three arenas to draw attention to the role of program staff in creating a successful initiative. Indeed, they argue that there are ways that program staff can be evaluated and staff-oriented indicators of success can be identified. Their study indicates that staff needs as much evaluation for success as youth do, for example, in modeling positive behavior.

At the state level, several broad studies have been conducted to identify indicators of success across states. Castleberry and Enger examine alternative programming in Arkansas (Castleberry and Enger 1998) and Houck reports results from alternative education in Pennsylvania (Houck 1997). These evaluations parallel findings at the national level: youth gain positive change in academic performance, attitude, and self-esteem from alternative education. The smaller student-to-instructor ratio is noted as a significant reason why this positive change has occurred. While such positive trends are noted, these do not necessarily impact the delinquent behavior of youth. More research is needed to assess how indicators of success shaped around behavioral change can increase overall positive outcomes.

Among school systems, a variety of studies and reports show indicators of success. Baez points to measures of success in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Baez 1992). He reveals eight indicators of success for alternative education programming in this school system, including: development of multicultural curricula; improved perceptions of such programs; greater program autonomy coupled with statutory compliance; academic assessment and credit granting; individualized educational training plans; staff development; parental involvement; and, behavioral restructuring. Successful programs focus intervention efforts in each of these areas and have indicators to mark success. Doolittle reports on indicators used by the Austin, Texas school

system (Doolittle 1998). She notes that these programs use basic measures of academic performance and recidivism rates, but that there is a need to institute a behavioral measure for assessing youths' emotional and behavioral improvement to provide a better sense of what a successful program accomplishes. Fardig evaluates the progress of school dropout prevention programs in Orlando, Florida (Fardig 1992). This research similarly indicates that measures of academic performance return highly positive results but that it remains unclear how successful programs are at changing negative behaviors overall.

In North Carolina, research has been conducted to generate a standard for evaluating success (Cobb et al. 1997; Haenn 1997; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction 1997; Dugger and Dugger 1998; Center for the Prevention of School Violence 2002). Generally, these studies indicate that successful alternative education in North Carolina has been focused upon individually contoured interventions. While academic success has been more mixed than other studies suggest, this research similarly indicates the importance of programmatic attention and evaluation on behavioral issues, noting that behavioral management can take away from academic performance. This research suggests that more refined indicators of success are needed to measure how academic performance and overall behavior are related and how intervention in both aspects of youths' individualized interventions can reveal higher levels of success. Furthermore, such research points to the need to measure staff attitudes and behaviors as well as that of students to fully appreciate how successful these programs are in changing the lives of participating youth.

## **A. Methodology**

In order to examine the processes and outcomes associated with Juvenile Structured Day Programs, the research team employed two methodological strategies. First, the team conducted an analysis of 11 programs. Second, the team chose four of the 11 sites for in-depth examination. The initial site visits occurred during fall 2002. Researchers conducted subsequent visits and data analysis in 2003. The sampling, data collection, and data analysis strategies are described below.

## ***Sampling***

The Governor's Crime Commission chose the 11 sites for analysis from the 24 programs that are currently operating in the State of North Carolina. Some of the programs have been operating since 1999, with the majority of programs starting up in 2000. These programs reside in areas ranging in size with Charlotte, Greensboro, Durham, and Wilmington being the largest and Monroe, Laurinburg, Mount Olive, and Wentworth representing smaller and more rural localities. All programs work with adjudicated youth and/or youth on short- and long-term suspension/expulsion. The programs vary in the number of youth served per day, approximately ranging from 10 to 50, with a median of 40 youth served a day.

The research team used four criteria for choosing four of these sites to move on to the intensive phase of the study and to obtain data for programs in the State of North Carolina that could be generalized. The criteria included: the programs' willingness to participate in an intensive examination; variation between rural and urban programs; variation in the size of the program; and variation in the number of elements within a program. These criteria were chosen for two reasons. First, the research team wanted to include a range of program types. Second, the research team wanted to learn more about the local affiliations and partnerships that contribute to the functioning of the programs. Therefore, the team identified a group of programs that have variation in the local areas in which such programs hold jurisdiction. These local variations help determine who attends the programs, who staffs the programs, what resources are available to the programs, and how connected the programs are to other available social services. No programs self selected out of the sampling frame during the initial phase of the research, so the research team implemented the other three criteria. This yielded a final sample program population of Charlotte, Greensboro, Durham, and Wilmington.

## ***Data Collection***

The data collection strategies for the initial 11 sites included one site visit to each program during the fall of 2002. These visits allowed researchers to conduct interviews with executive program staff, take a guided tour through the actual day-to-day operations of the programs, and collect initial secondary data that documented the origin, structure, operations, and effects of the programs. The research team developed a semi-structured interview guide to



ask questions in three areas: program planning and operation; program partnerships; and, program effectiveness (see Key Informant Interview Guide, Appendix B). Researchers conducted interviews with program directors and sometimes included other staff that had overall knowledge of the program. During these interviews program directors identified secondary data and the research team received copies of these materials.

At each of the four programs under intensive analysis the team conducted four additional site visits during the spring and summer of 2003. These visits lasted between one to two days depending upon the data collection needs and scheduling. Program staff size range from five to 20. At programs with larger staff, researchers chose a maximum of ten staff for interview. Researchers interviewed staff with the same guide used to interview directors. The research team also conducted open-ended interviews with youth participating in the programs (see the Semi-Structured Youth Interview Guide, Appendix G).

Researchers followed up with these youth during subsequent site visits. The team designed the interview guide for youth interviews in order to focus the conversations on three broad areas: youths' perceptions on the events that led up to their admission to the program; youths' experiences in the program and its relationship to other factors in their lives (i.e. family, friends); and, youths' assessment of what about the program, if anything, works best. Site visits provided the research team members an opportunity to interact with the staff and youth, to develop relationships with staff and youth, and to gain further insight through participant-observation of staff and youth. These activities ranged from participation in classroom and recreation activities, to less formal conversations during unstructured portions of daily routines. These latter conversations provided a different context than structured activities and planned interviews and yielded a wide variety of topics not necessarily noted in more formal settings.

The research team used secondary data from the State of North Carolina's Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP), local Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils (JCPCs), the Governor's Crime Commission (GCC), and each program's own evaluation data as the final data collection strategy. Researchers used this data to conduct a cross-site comparative analysis of the effects that these programs might have on youth. The secondary data employed for the quantitative examination of program process and outcomes include: problems with the court system, home, and school.

## ***Data Analysis***

The research team analyzed interview data and field notes produced from the site visits to provide an understanding of the structure of the programs, the environments in which they operate, the day-to-day operations, and the perceptions regarding program challenges. This analysis included study of the successful strategies that programs have developed to meet needs and challenges. Researchers learned about the development, maintenance, and expansion of the programs. The team used this knowledge to focus on how stakeholders—the staff, youth, and other partners and agencies relevant to the success of the programs—respond to each other’s needs. In addition, researchers examined the youths’ narratives to understand how youth explain why the programmatic efforts represent successful interventions into their lives, if at all.

The qualitative data analysis gives understanding of how stakeholders experience different aspects of the processes and outcomes that are related to Juvenile Structured Day Programs. The quantitative assessment of data that measures different programmatic processes and youth outcomes permits a comparison between people’s experiences and factual events that transpired. This report highlights both qualitative and quantitative portraits of participating JSDPs as evidence of overall programmatic effectiveness.

## **Chapter 2: Program Summaries**

This section of the report provides an overview of the four programs included in the entire study. These overviews examine program planning and operation strategies, as well as challenges faced by program staff. Policy challenges are presented in Chapter 5, while youth perspectives and effective practices are highlighted in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively.

### **A New Day Juvenile Day Reporting Center--Durham, NC**

#### ***Overview***

A New Day began in October 2000 to address three primary concerns in Durham County: high suspension rates (both short- and long-term), high drop-out rates, and high school failure rates among middle and high school students. The program began with the identification of a general need for alternative school services in Durham. This realization led to the inception of Lakeview School, an alternative educational setting with a campus in the City of Durham. Lakeview functions both as a school and as an umbrella site for a variety of alternative school services including: Broad Street Youth Home, New Horizons, technical education programs, and A New Day. These services broadly meet the needs of youth who are “falling through the cracks” of the school and youth services system. At the same time, the relevant agencies within the State of North Carolina began to recognize the need for alternative schooling. An advisory committee was formed (now the Lakeview Advisory Committee) as the guiding force in the creation of the “continuum of services” provided by Lakeview. A New Day is the Juvenile Structured Day Center located along this continuum.

A New Day serves both adjudicated and non-adjudicated middle and high school students who are in some way already involved in the social service system. The goals of the program are to improve academic achievement, increase work skills, and reduce criminal activity. A New Day maintains several programs: Academic Instruction; Saturday Workforce Development; Substance Abuse Treatment; Parent and Youth Counseling; and a summer Workforce Development session. There is much effort placed on incorporating youths’ families into programmatic efforts. By 2003 A New Day had served approximately 150 youth.

### ***Program Planning & Operation***

The overall philosophy of A New Day is to build relationships with youth that develop their trust and confidence through holistic programming. The academic instruction program works with middle school students who need an alternative learning environment. The program offers a self-contained classroom for special needs students and close attention from teachers. The program follows the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and pursues the goal of increased academic achievement when students return to their home school. The students in the Academic Instruction Program include short-term suspended students, long-term suspended students, and other court-involved youth who have been referred to A New Day by the juvenile justice system. The Saturday Workforce Development Program helps high school age youth learn on-site job skills through community service projects and role-playing social skills. Students also practice job interviewing. The summer version expands the Saturday program. Parents are encouraged to participate in programmatic efforts by sharing their own work experiences with the youth. The Substance Abuse Treatment and Parent and Youth Counseling programs offer youth and their families education about and counseling for major issues facing youth, particularly substance abuse and gang activity.

A New Day employs five staff members with strengths in treating the participating youth with respect in small group and one-to-one settings. Staff includes the Program Manager, two case managers, and two teachers. The Program Manager directs the overall operations of the program. The case managers provide all counseling, behavior interventions, and other support services to youth and their families. The teachers run the academic classroom. Volunteers from Durham assist the daily operations as needed (i.e. providing transportation for youth). The Program Manager provides staff with constant training resources to keep programmatic efforts up to date with current regulations and research findings.

Funding sources have included the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission and the Durham County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council. Additional funding is received from Duke University and Durham County. In addition to this financial support, A New Day partners with several agencies and organizations at the state and local levels. The Program Manager serves on several social service agency-based coalition committees. Additionally, A New Day is located in the Lakeview School that provides an umbrella for several alternative education-based agencies and programs with which A New Day partners at times. A major goal for the Program

Manager is to consolidate the activities provided by the various social service agencies that serve any given troubled youth. Future plans include expanding the program to meet the needs of younger, more at-risk youth through prevention measures, increasing substance abuse treatment activities, and increasing the types of job-training available in the Workforce Development program.

### ***Program Challenges***

Program staff identified several challenges that must be met to allow A New Day to best serve participating youth. More technical support is needed to assist in data collection and data management. Technical support could take the form of an additional staff person specifically for this purpose. In order to obtain this staff member, additional funding would be needed. Funding is currently on a grant-by-grant basis and more consistent and stable funding is necessary to allow the organization to spend even more of their efforts to directly focus on serving the youth. Another challenge is the service fragmentation that many troubled youth experience within the social service, court, and educational systems. This transcends to the service providers, like those at A New Day, who are attempting to consolidate intervention efforts and create holistic programming. Often, it is difficult to manage the different systems and “languages” that are spoken within each system. Further cooperation and partnership is needed. Such service fragmentation has made it difficult to advertise the services available at A New Day and more publicity is needed so that youth and their families are aware that such a program exists. Additionally, challenges that staff in the program face include the limited amount of intervention they have in the daily life of any given youth, and the prevalence of gang activity in the area, which has been identified as the program’s biggest competitor for youths’ attention.

## **Guilford County Juvenile Day Reporting Center--Greensboro, NC**

### ***Overview***

The Guilford County Department of Court Alternatives created Guilford County Juvenile Day Reporting Center in 1999. At the time of the program’s conception, Guilford County had the second highest rate of juvenile commitment to training school in the state (after Mecklenburg County). In order to address this problem, the local Juvenile Crime Prevention Council created a committee to design the Juvenile Day Reporting Center, drawing on the advice of various

experts, including the present Director of the center. The program serves sixth- through ninth-graders, males and females, who have been court-referred. Most of them are at level two sanctions (common level two offenses include drug offenses, breaking and entering, and repeat low-level offenses), though the program occasionally exercises flexibility and accepts level one and level three cases. If, for example, a child is a level three case but the judge does not want to send him/her to training school, as long as the child doesn't fall into an exclusion category (e.g., sexual assault), the program might accept this youth. The Center was created in order to keep so many adjudicated youth from being sent straight to juvenile detention and to help them return to the mainstream life. 43 youth were in the program for the 2002-2003 school year; in previous years, between 21 and 72 youth have been enrolled.

### ***Program Planning & Operation***

The focus of the program is on cognitive behavior intervention and helping students acquire coping skills, while progressing in their academic work. The director emphasizes that this is not a boot camp. Students are given many chances to succeed, and only one student has ever been expelled from the program. The program uses a holistic approach that involves families, and priority is given to listening to and responding to the needs of students and parents. The program has achieved a parent participation rate of 90%. Many students have their first experiences with academic success while in the program.

The target population of the program has shifted twice since its inception. Originally, the program served juveniles who had been suspended from school on long-term bases, sixth through eighth grades, both boys and girls. In conversations with the DJJDP, the program staff looked at trend data to make sure they were meeting needs. They determined they weren't catching enough kids with the initial target population, and changed to target sixth through eighth graders (boys and girls) who are eligible for level two sanctions whether they have been excluded from school long term or not. After a period of time, staff once again reevaluated their target population and they found that the county was not serving ninth graders to the required need. A ninth grade component was added to the program. The program seems flexible enough to handle these shifts, and the director expects to see further changes as DJJDP needs evolve. The program operates Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Students begin each day with a peer guidance session, in which they process any events that have occurred at home since

the previous day. Allowing students the time and mental space each day to transition from what may be a chaotic home environment to the structure of the program seems quite important to students' ability to focus during the day. Two more peer guidance sessions take place throughout the day--after the recreation period in the afternoon, and again just before they leave for home. This conscious effort to provide a transition between the home and larger community, on the one hand, and the students' experience in the program, on the other, may be one element in the program's success. The bulk of the day is spent in academic work, with special activities on Friday afternoons for students who have behaved well during the week. A weekly Saturday session is currently being planned in order to give extra attention to some youth. The program has recently moved from a storefront to the basement of a county social services building, which creates a more contained, structured feel. The director notes that the new space "gives the feel that it's almost a locked environment, though it's not." Staff works to create an environment that is very structured yet nurturing for students and parents.

In addition to the director and the supervisor, the staff consists of three teachers, who are all provided by the Guilford County Public Schools (GCPS), three in-class counselors, a guidance counselor, who worked for years in GCPS mainstream schools, and a substance abuse counselor, who comes from Youth Focus, a non-profit agency. The close partnership with the GCPS appears to be very important to the program's success. Teachers use GCPS curriculum and when students return to their home schools every effort is made to place them back in their appropriate grade level. Relationships have developed between home schools and the program, to the extent that principals will call the program to ask for help with certain students. Students are tracked once they leave the program. The program director emphasizes that most students do not realize how much they have gained until after they have returned to their home schools.

The primary funding sources are The Governor's Crime Commission (GCC) and the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP), with in-kind support provided through the Guilford County Public School System (GCPS) and Youth Focus, a local nonprofit.

### ***Program Challenges***

The main challenge is in assuring continual funding in order to keep the program afloat. The Director believes that if funding were lost from the GCC and DJJDP, the county would be

unlikely to support this relatively new program, despite its excellent track record. A future challenge may be in working with Spanish-speaking students (as yet, none have entered the program), but the staff have already begun to prepare for that situation. The director hopes to eventually open a satellite office in High Point, and to expand the program to include vocational education and GED courses for older students. In general, any program limitations appear to be strictly financial.

## **The Intercept Juvenile Structured Day Program--Wilmington, NC**

### ***Overview***

The Intercept Juvenile Structured Day Program in Wilmington was created out of a recognized county-wide need to develop a community-based alternative to placing youth in development centers across the state. The Intercept program began providing services in 2002, after a program director was recruited and had developed an initial program plan. One of the main selling points of the Intercept program is that it provides an alternative to residential programs for managing adjudicated youth that is at a lesser cost for local communities and the state.

The program has been set up to address three primary interrelated populations in New Hanover County: at-risk youth who are showing signs of moving toward becoming involved in the juvenile justice system; youth who have been suspended from their home school; and youth who have been adjudicated in the juvenile justice system. The program serves all three populations, although there has been an initial emphasis on adjudicated youth, in part, because many of the initial funding streams came from agencies focused on that population, including the Governor's Crime Commission.

Currently, the program has started accepting referrals directly from public schools in order to serve youth who are believed to be heading toward formal involvement with the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The goals of the program are to improve focus on two primary aspects of youth development: cognitive and behavioral improvement. The program addresses these developmental aspects through an intensive intake procedure where youth are tested on a battery of items related to these areas, a multifaceted set of programmatic activities that range from traditional academic instruction following the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's curriculum, to the provision of behavioral



modification strategies. Program components include: academic instruction; art therapy; culinary arts; building trades; parent and youth counseling; safe crisis management; and health care through an on-site clinic. A staff of 17 operates the program, serving approximately 37 youth, with a goal of having 40 at a time. About 90% of the youth receive free or reduced-cost lunch, indicating that a high proportion come from low-income homes. An over-arching goal of the program is to keep youth in the community.

### ***Program Planning & Operation***

The overall philosophy of the program is to assist youth in academic and behavioral achievement in order for them to be productive citizens. The program is designed to serve youth between the ages of 12 and 18, many of whom have had multiple cognitive and behavioral issues in their home school or with the juvenile justice system. Upon referral, staff collect all pertinent information, from school to juvenile justice records, and then set up an intake interview with the parent(s), court counselors, home-school administrator, and the youth to determine what the current situation is and if the youth will benefit from the program.

The underlying philosophy of the program is that no youth should be left behind and that once they are in the program, expulsion is not a desired option. The academic program offers youth the opportunity to have in-class instruction and to work independently using NovaNet, the state's online education program that follows the North Carolina curriculum. The program offers small class sizes for youth, and there are always multiple staff available to assist in cases of classroom interruption. The program has used a battery of protocol with the youth, including their "Ask, Tell, Assist" model claiming that physical restraint is sometimes necessary in order to assure that the environment for all youth is safe. Other stakeholders have suggested that these practices are dubious in their application and portended results. Nevertheless, as part of this process, as with all aspects of the program, a parent or legal guardian is notified and may come to the program to reinforce staff efforts.

While the program is designed to accommodate youth between the ages of 12 and 18, it does serve younger youth. In part, this is due to the lack of other community-based options available to the New Hanover County JCPC, the primary referral agency to the program. In addition, the program serves a range of cognitive abilities from exceptional students that may be behind in development, to youth who test well above their grade level. There is also a wide

range of youth offenses committed by program participants, from sexual offenses to truancy. Given the various backgrounds of the youth, in order to assure safety, there is a morning entrance procedure that includes going through a metal detector, being searched for illicit items according to the guidelines of the program, and constant supervision throughout the day.

The 17 staff members who operate the program have a variety of training experience and specialties. Program staff include the director and associate director, three certified teachers, two clinical counselors who provide case management, five intervention technicians, and a range of other personnel who provide administrative support. The program director and associate director not only oversee the operations of the program and become involved in the day-to-day events, but also take responsibility to guide the program through developing funding streams, programmatic efforts, and the development of interagency relationships that are necessary for the youth to experience a coordinated effort on the part of all stakeholders involved.

All program staff are provided opportunities for training and career enhancement work, and are provided the opportunity to take courses so that they may be certified in specific cognitive and behavioral areas. On a day-to-day basis, program staff assist each other by recognizing their own individual strengths and how they complement each other. Overall, the tone that the staff set is one of respect for youth but firmness in expectations. Staff are provided with constant training resources to keep programmatic efforts up to date with current regulations and trends.

Funding sources include the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission (GCC), the New Hanover County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC), and the local board of education. Obtaining program funding involved selling the program to the county JCPC and the GCC, negotiating that an increased funding amount was needed to start up a program that would provide consistency in service provision. Acquiring funding also involved the director going to the local school district and selling the Intercept program, saying "these are your kids who are suspended and expelled from school, and we can serve them."

Gaining funding from multiple sources has allowed Intercept to provide the necessary resources for teacher slots and other personnel, as well as covering basic operating costs of the program. Obtaining this combination of funding streams has been possible, due to knowledgeable people working with the program. The program staff continues to work to identify and acquire additional funding options. One major step in this direction has been

recently obtaining certification to receive funds for services provided to Medicaid-eligible youth. While obtaining the licensure was a challenging and arduous process, the staff viewed this as a central component that will keep the program up and running.

### ***Program Challenges***

Program staff identified several challenges that must be met to allow the Intercept program to maintain, grow, and flourish. The first challenge is continuing to develop inter-agency relationships to ensure the smooth operation of the program. Specifically, the program currently receives a wide variety of youth, some of whom they are not set up to serve. In addition, the program is designed to work with youth over a long-term period.

The DJJDP and local JCPC staff are central to these issues because, to date, they have exercised authority to drop off youth and take them out of the program without the input from program staff. According to the JSDP staff this has created situations where the program has been used as a reporting center without focusing on the treatment side. This manifests itself in challenges including: receiving short-term youth and youth who are not appropriate for the program. Even more challenging is the issue of truancy. The program only works if youth actually attend, yet, court-mandated youth are not held accountable for simply not showing up.

The other side of the story is that DJJDP staff has a limited number of slots in which to place youth, and some staff claims that the JSDP does not see the bigger picture. Moreover, some DJJDP staff has suggested that the JSDP work to serve a broader range of youth that reflect the needs of the community they serve. These issues reflect the need for the New Hanover County DJJDP and JSDP staff to develop an agreed upon set protocol that will work for both partners, yet, this is difficult since change is many times characterized by power struggles.

A second challenge is responding effectively to the larger situation that the youth face on an everyday basis. Many of the youth have experienced challenges related to family life as well as the groups of people they choose to spend their time with when they are not at the program. For example, some youth have experienced documented physical and emotional abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, as well as poverty--factors that affect their ability to be successful in developing positive cognitive and behavioral skills.

In response to these other factors in youths' lives, Intercept staff recognize the need to create protocol to have families and schools even more involved in the reinforcement of positive

development. As program staff have noted, part of the challenge they face is getting all parties to be active and coordinated participants in the provision of services.

Finally, there is the broad challenge of developing Intercept while maintaining its current services and performance. Related to the challenges mentioned prior, maintaining and developing programmatic efforts relies on consistent day-to-day operations. These are not only affected by Intercept, but also, a broader network of actors that interact with the program including state and county government, families, and schools.

Developing relationships between all of these stakeholder groups is challenging in itself, but on top of these regular activities, the program must continue to seek funding and broad political support. Currently, funding flows through three primary streams highlighted above: the GCC, JCPC, and the local school district. In addition, Medicaid funding will be available. The challenge is to find staff with the experiences, credentials, time, support, and ability to successfully seek out support. In part, this is dependent upon the broader political support that the local community and state provide these types of programs.

At Intercept, the fact that program staff has access to resources to successfully obtain Medicaid funding is positive, but the challenge of garnering political support requires more than hard work. It requires evaluation strategies that Intercept has in place to make the case that their program actually provides the local community and state much needed options for assisting youth that are at risk of being placed in the juvenile justice system or already adjudicated. To date, there are not a set of evaluation protocol that these types of programs systematically implement to make this case, but Intercept has been at the forefront of implementing some. That said, evaluation requires interagency agreements in order to track youth by using existing data collected by the state and developing other options for non-adjudicated youth.

## **The RISE (Re-education, Intervention & Skills Enhancement) Program --Charlotte, NC**

### ***Overview***

The RISE (Re-education, Intervention and Skills Enhancement) Program is a day reporting and treatment center for juvenile offenders in Mecklenburg County. The Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office developed RISE as a cooperative community project in response to priorities identified by the Mecklenburg County's Juvenile Crime Prevention Council's identified

priorities. The juvenile justice system, the courts, and the community indicated the need to address the issue of adjudicated juveniles who have been expelled or face long term suspension from public school. RISE primarily serves 12 to 18-year-old juvenile offenders facing level two juvenile sanctions. The goal of the program is to impact juvenile recidivism rates in Mecklenburg County.

### ***Program Planning & Operation***

RISE provides educational, behavioral, vocational and overall youth development in a highly structured environment. Youth attend the RISE program five days a week, 12 hours a day from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Transportation to and from the program is provided through Charlotte Area Transit buses and a program van.

The intense daily program schedule includes computer-based academic instruction, hands-on pre-vocational training, community service work projects, group counseling, substance abuse education and counseling, tutoring and homework, daily chores, and the provision of three full meals. In addition, weekend assignments and accountability are incorporated into the program design.

Staff employs a strong behavior management system in order to modify inappropriate behaviors and hold youth accountable for their actions. As noted by the program director, having a partnership with the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office is a big benefit, as the program has two deputy sheriffs on hand. In addition, the program's on-site staff includes a program director, two special education teachers, one case coordinator, one vocational/volunteer coordinator, an office assistant, and a part-time substance abuse counselor provided by Mecklenburg County Health, Mental Health and Community Services.

Program staff encourages family members to take an active role in their child's attendance, academic program, behavioral progress and community service involvement. Family participation is court ordered during the initial intake and orientation phase, and the family is encouraged to participate in the development of the juvenile's individual treatment and educational plans. Each youth's length of stay is dependent on overall progress toward specific identified goals, however, an average length of stay is from six to nine months. When youth successfully complete the program, they are transitioned back into Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools.

The North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, and the Sheriff's Office primarily fund the program, with in-kind contributions from local businesses and agencies. A special partnership with the Mecklenburg County Department of Parks and Recreation provides educational services and reward outings for youth.

### ***Program Challenges***

One of the greatest challenges the program faces is in transitioning the youth back into the school system and tracking their progress over time. Having local school support is critical to the success of the program and the youth. In addition to the time needed to establish positive working relationships with school staff and administrators, JSDP/ALP staff must also find ways to work effectively with a large number of youth with learning disabilities and cognitive and behavioral problems.

Training program staff in effective practices in these areas takes up a lot of program time and resources of the program director. The program director and advisory board must also seek to diversify funding sources, while at the same time planning for future program expansion. Another challenge has been learning what other JSDPs/ALPs are doing to work with their population of adjudicated youth. Day-to-day program operations leave little time to learn about the practices of other communities and programs.

## **Chapter 3: Perspectives on Program Effectiveness**

All of the programs under examination are under development, therefore measuring program effectiveness needs to be guided by benchmarks and outcomes that are commensurate with the fact that when this evaluation started most programs had been in existence for only a couple of years. That is, simply measuring outcomes that correspond to an endpoint, whether that be decreases in youth recidivism or increases in academic performance, does not sufficiently represent an overall gauge of program performance.

While long-term outcomes are important to assess, there are a range of short-term and mid-term outcomes that must occur in support of long-term sustainability. In the words of many people affiliated with the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC), the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP), as well as structured day program staff, these are programs under development." The following report on the status of four juvenile structured day programs (JSDPs) includes a wide range of data points. There were data collected on each youth who entered the JSDPs under examination in Greensboro, Charlotte, Wilmington, and Durham. In addition, interview data from JCPC consultants, DJJDP staff, as well as JSDP staff and youth, was also used to examine a wider range of outcomes that were not possible to measure quantitatively through existing data.

### **Guilford County/Greensboro**

The JSDP operating in Guilford County served a total of 176 youth between 2000 and 2004. Charts are provided below that represent the statistics in this next section. Out of the youth served ten percent were white, 88% African-American, and two percent other.

Table 1 illustrates that during this time period 69% of the youth were successful in completing the program, 7% did not participate, 8% were removed by court action, 2% were runaways, and 14% other.

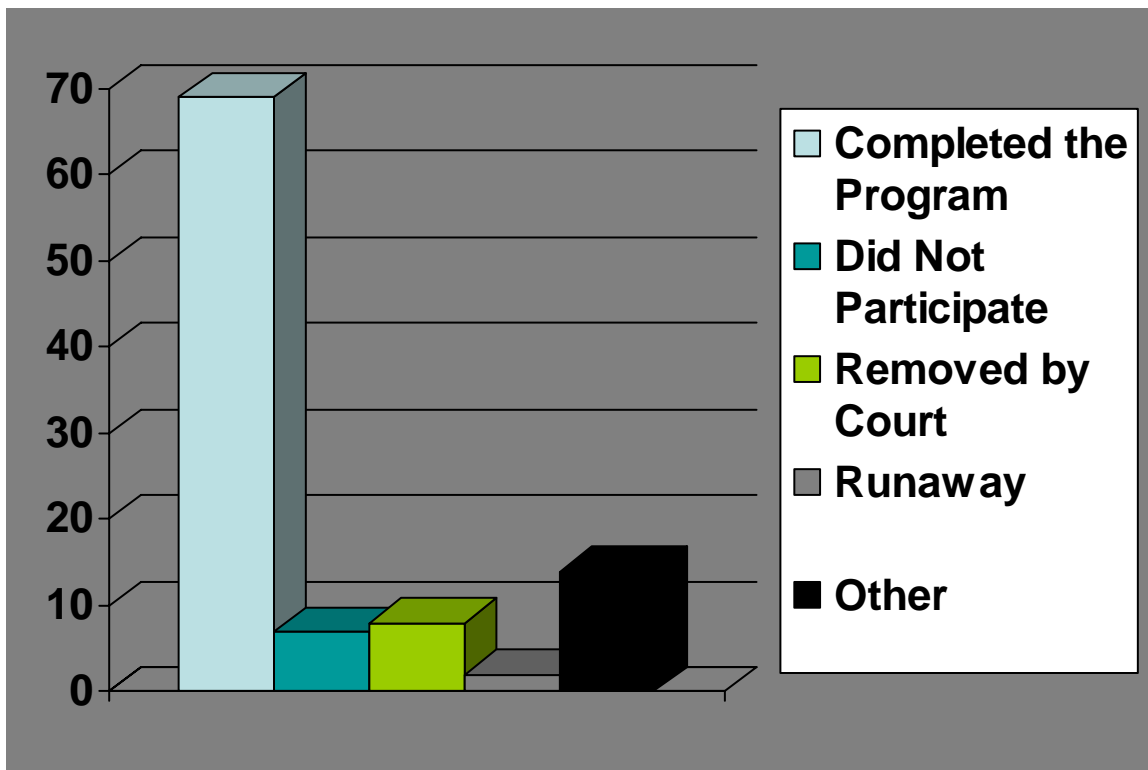
Table 2 shows that a full 52% of the youth had no new problems with the court system, while 16% had new delinquency petitions, 27% had new undisciplined petitions, and 5% had motions for violation of their court order.

Table 3 shows, at home, 70% of the youth had reduced problems, and 6% percent that had no problems at all. Eighteen percent of youth had unchanged home progress, and 6% had intensified problems at home.

Table 4 illustrates that, at school, 75% of the youth had reduced problems, with three percent that had no problems at all. 18% of youth had unchanged school progress and five percent had intensified problems at school.

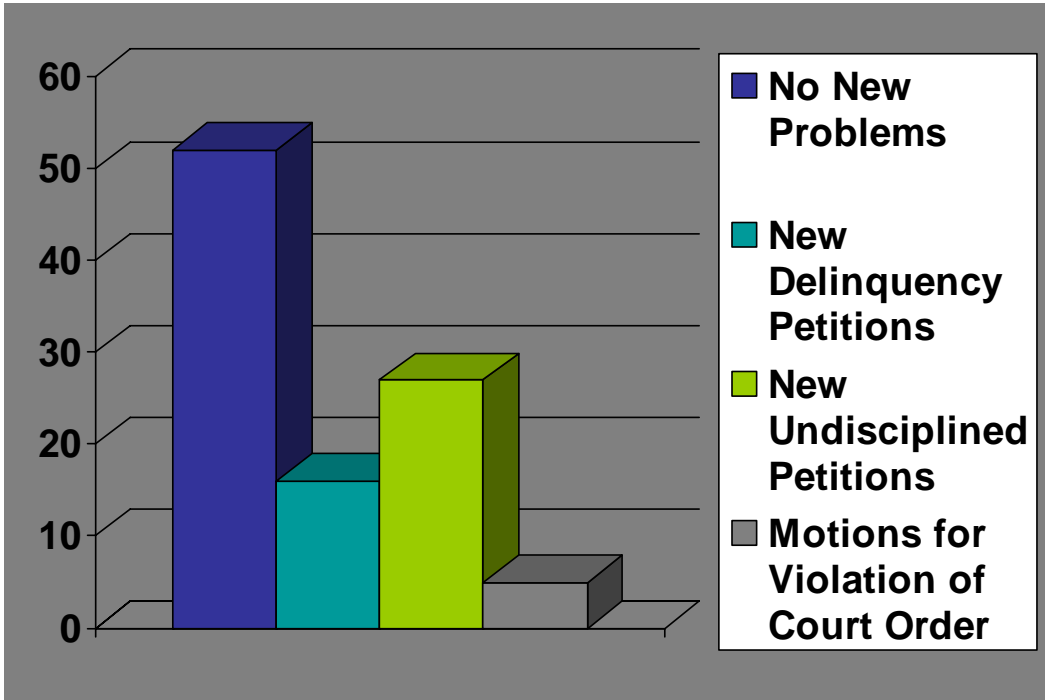
The reported termination data, shown in Table 5, demonstrate that 81% of the youth went home, while 3% went to foster care, 6% went to a group home, 1% went to youth detention, and 9% other. The cost per youth at this JSDP fluctuated over the time period with a current estimate of \$6,585.00. In addition to these outcomes, there were many programmatic outcomes that occurred along the way, which this report refers to as process-oriented outcomes.

**Table 1: Greensboro / Program Completion Data**

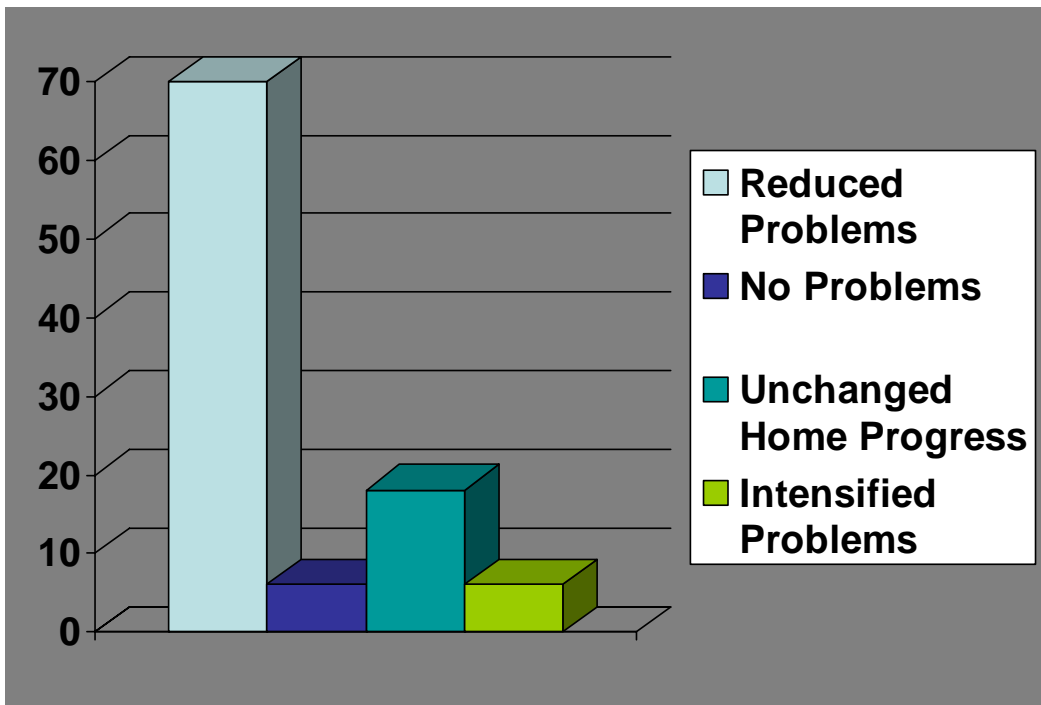




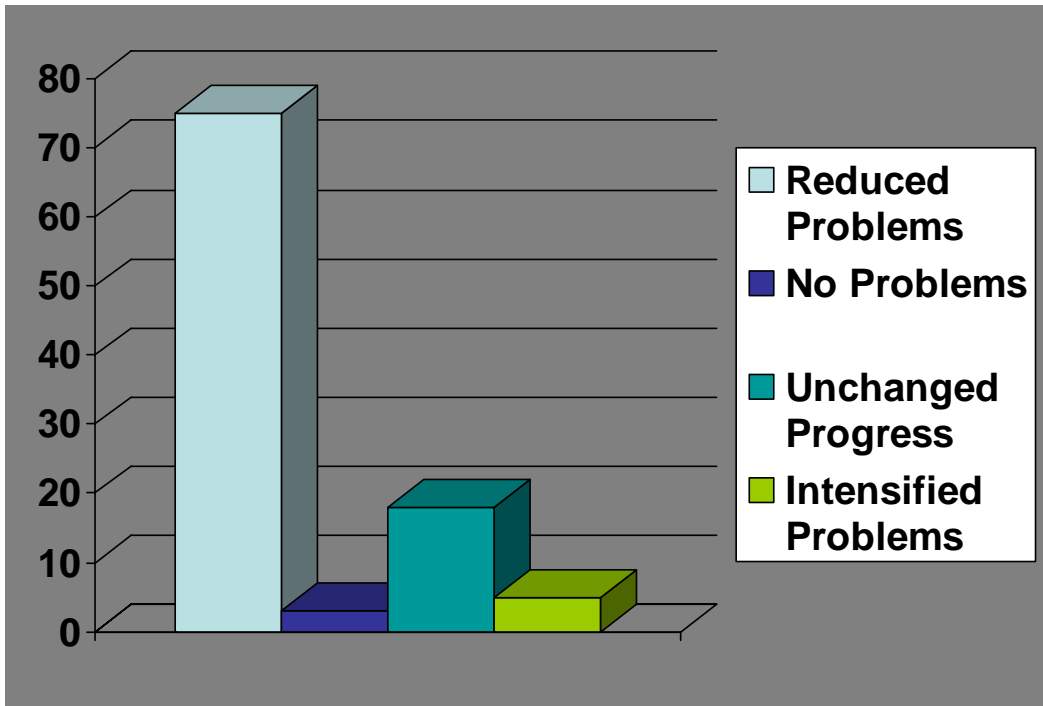
**Table 2: Greensboro Program: New Problems with Court System**



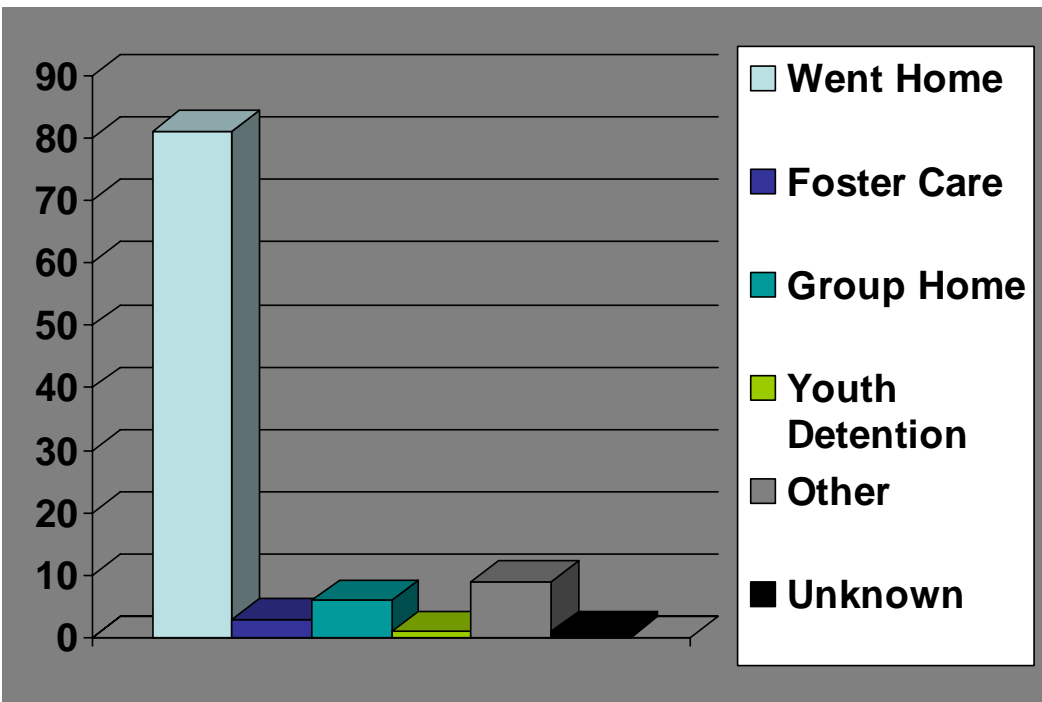
**Table 3: Problems with Family**



**Table 4: Greensboro / Problems at School**



**Table 5: Greensboro / Termination Placement**



Interview and programmatic data provide further insight as to the mechanisms and practices used to achieve these outcomes. The program emphasizes many facets that are worthy of mention. Behavior management is considered job one.

**Effective Practice Highlight: Behavior Management**

The GCJSDP considers behavior management “job one.” A primary goal is to gain behavioral control over the juveniles. A behavior management system is used to continually monitor and record juveniles’ compliance with program expectations. Juveniles receive ongoing feedback. Points may be earned and exchanged for rewards at week’s end. Juveniles earning 95 to 100% receive a recreational outing such as a movie or bowling; those earning 90 to 94% receive in-house recreation such as pool or board games; those earning 89% or less have study hall while the other activities are occurring. Juveniles demonstrate an average of 50% improvement in their behavior scores while in the program.

A central component to making this type of behavior management model work for the Greensboro/Guilford County program is the use of intensive supervision.

**Effective Practice Highlight: Intensive Supervision**

Intensive supervision is a key element at GCJSDP. The structured, extended-day environment benefits the juveniles by reducing idle time, by providing meaningful learning and therapeutic experiences and by offering timely, appropriate, one-to-one interventions by trained staff. Three certified NC Juvenile Services Officers directly supervise the juveniles at all times, including arrival, departure, lunch and restroom breaks. The high level of supervision helps to prevent behavioral problems both in and out of the program and is partially responsible for the low overall recidivism rate.

Paired together intensive supervision and behavior management have been credited for achieving positive youth outcomes.

These behavioral management and intensive supervision practices are part of a larger suite of services that the JSDP has employed to promote positive youth outcomes. Along with these interpersonal skills training a wide range of therapeutic services are offered in tandem. For example, the program seeks to achieve positive cognitive-behavioral growth through formal counseling offered by a licensed adolescent therapist and through ongoing interventions by other staff. A licensed adolescent therapist provides group counseling to juveniles on-site as well.

All program staff, particularly the juvenile counselor technicians, serve as mentors by providing positive role modeling, counseling and appropriate bonding. In addition, a counselor provided through Guilford County Schools' Safe and Drug-free Schools program holds weekly substance abuse prevention education classes. Health education is also included in academic programming.

**Effective Practice Highlight: Multi-Modal Service Provision**

Multi-faceted services addressing a multiplicity of needs are offered. These include standard academic programming and supplemental tutoring, behavior management, anger management, conflict resolution, substance abuse prevention education, violence prevention education, school counseling, cognitive-behavioral therapy, individual and group mental health counseling, recreation, enrichment activities, parental involvement, life/social skills, character education and computer literacy education. Collaborations with community partners make these services available on-site during the regular program day.

The Guilford County Juvenile Structured Day Program (GCJSDP) offers both formal and informal interpersonal skills training. Juveniles receive a wide range of services from service providers that come to the facility. This approach to development views the youth in a holistic manner that simultaneously provides opportunities for development in multiple arenas. The staff's daily interventions with the juveniles include counseling directed at developing coping, anger management and other interpersonal skills. Special activities such as ropes course training help develop such traits as confidence and teamwork.

Teamwork and collaboration are key terms to describe the provision of interpersonal skills development services provided to youth. As part of this overall outlook on promoting positive youth outcomes, the Greensboro/Guilford County JSDP also involves parents. One factor reported to possibly have a positive impact on youth behavior in the JSDPs

**Effective Strategy Highlight: Family Involvement**

The program holds monthly parent meetings that offer instruction in parenting court-involved juveniles and emphasizes the necessity of parental involvement and responsibility. Attendance is mandatory; failure to attend may result in court action against the parent. This has proven to be a very effective strategy for parent outreach. According to program staff, parents not only have a responsibility to participate but they are treated with dignity and respect as central team members that the youth depend upon. This parent involvement component has been essential in providing consistency in programmatic efforts while the youth is at the JSDP and when they are at home. This type of involvement expands the notion of community from being made up of service providers in a locality to including family.

studied has been the level of parental or family involvement. As noted by program staff, the more involved a parent is in their child's program, the more likely they are to be able to learn additional skills for handling their child's cognitive and behavioral challenges, and also reinforce positive behaviors. Not only does having a high level of parental or family involvement in a youth's program tend to benefit youth directly, but it also frequently benefits the parent and larger family unit.

As parents learn more effective ways to interact with their son or daughter, they also have the opportunity to learn and gain support from other parents in their own community who are experiencing similar challenges with their own teens. In the Greensboro program, a parent's meeting is held monthly and, while attendance varies, a large percentage of parents generally show up each month. The meetings are held on Tuesday evenings and last for about an hour and a half, during which parents are able to connect with the program staff, and also with each other. During the meetings, the program manager provides a program update and covers any pertinent administrative issues. Another staff member, such as the guidance counselor, may provide

information about a particular school issue, such as upcoming end-of-year tests. The bulk of the time, however, is spent in a parenting skills session, during which parents hear a talk about a given topic (e.g., Communicating with Your Child) and have the chance to discuss their own experiences and challenges in that area.

Program staff have noted that encouraging and sustaining parental support requires committing a fair amount of energy and time into making phone calls, sending out letters, and following up with parents. However, this time expended is likely to pay off in the long run, as parents are more involved with their child's program and are more likely to be knowledgeable and supportive of the program. In addition to having parent meetings monthly, the Greensboro program also has an open door policy, encouraging parents to drop by the school any time during the day to check on their child. Pre-arranged visits are not required. Greensboro program staff reported that they believe that having such a high level of parental involvement in their program is part of the explanation for why most youth do well in their program. They also report that having parental involvement increases levels of trust in program methods.

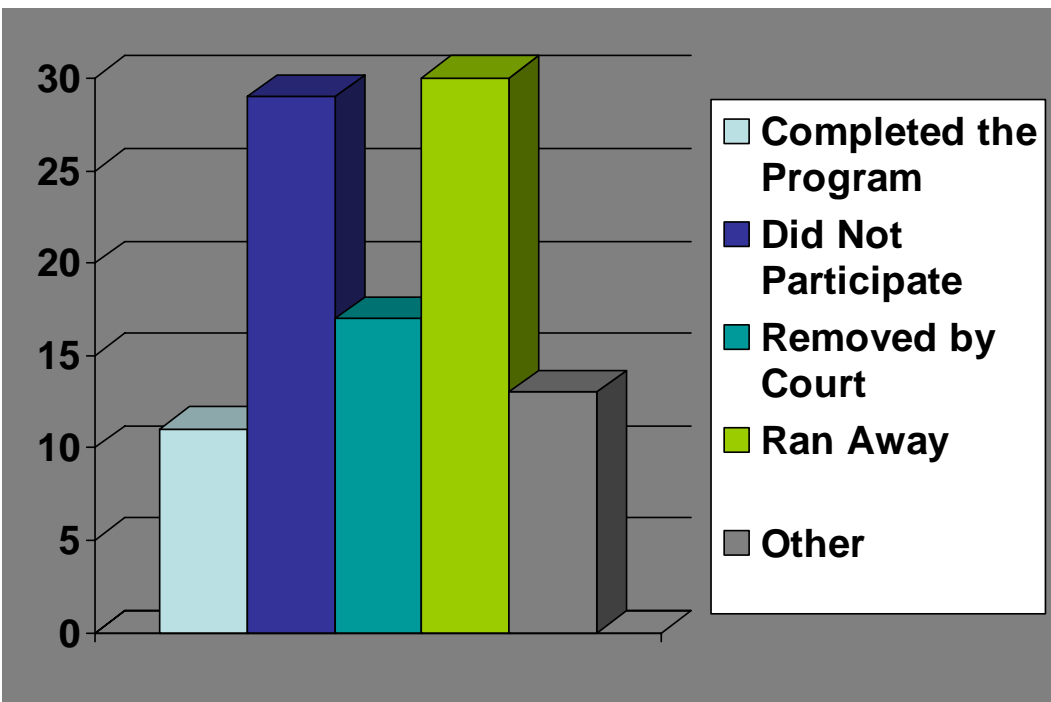
While there is a focus on behavioral management and interpersonal skills development, this JSDP also focuses on academic enhancement and achievement. The JSDP offers the North Carolina standard course of study to middle schoolers, via collaboration with the Guilford County School System, which provides three certified teachers and a school counselor. Computer-based learning is available for select ninth graders. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro provides supplementary language-literacy tutoring. During the summer months, academic tutoring and enrichment activities are offered. Juveniles have demonstrated an average improvement in academic performance of one and one-half letter grades.

The Greensboro/Guilford County JSDP have successfully employed effective practices in the areas of behavior management, interpersonal skills development, and educational enhancement and achievement. In part, this has been made possible through the inclusion of the broader community that the program serves. Many of the stakeholders that were interviewed suggested that the Greensboro/Guilford County JSDP is experiencing success because it has followed the principles of starting small, inviting all stakeholders to the table, and identifying needs that the program will serve for other institutions like the school system and DJJDP. In this way, the program is truly a community-based collaborative effort.

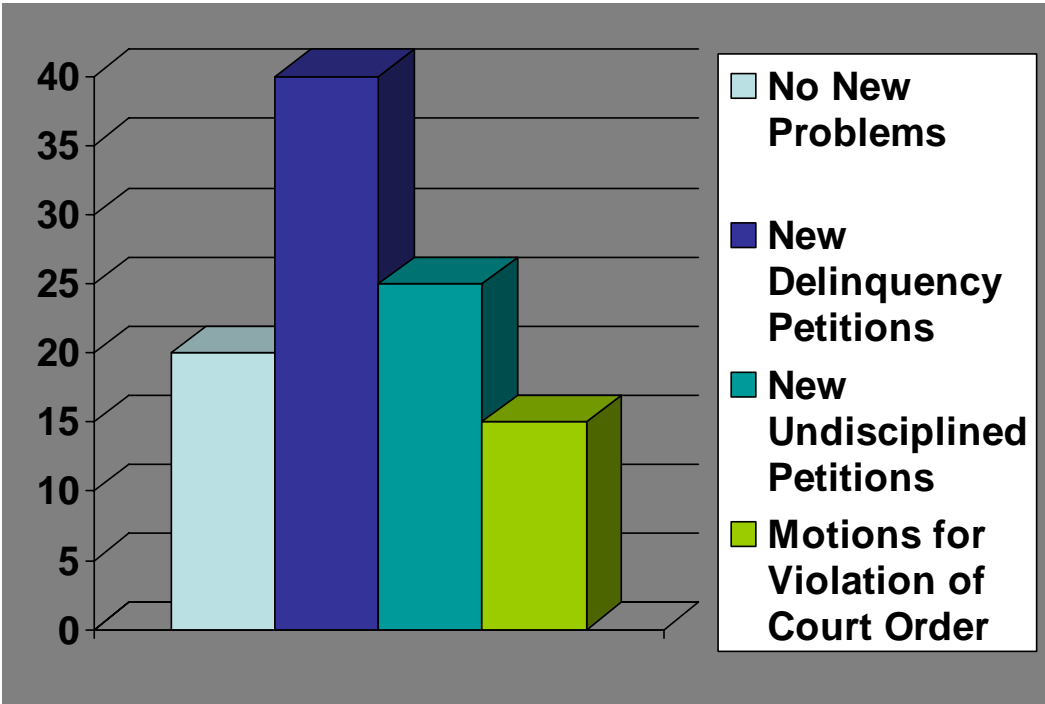
### Charlotte/Mecklenburg County (RISE)

The JSDP operating in Mecklenburg County served a total of 113 youth between 2000 and 2004. Charts are provided below that represent the statistics in this next section. Out of the youth served 6% were white, 88% African-American, and 6% other. Table 6 shows that during this time period only 11% of the youth were successful in completing the program, 29% did not participate, 17% were removed by court action, 30% were runaways, and 13% other. Table 7 demonstrates that 20% of the youth had no new problems with the court system, while 40% had new delinquency petitions, 25% had new undisciplined petitions, and 15% had motions for violation of their court order.

**Table 6: Charlotte Program Completion Data**



**Table 7: Charlotte / New Problems with Court System**



**Table 8: Charlotte / Problems with Family**

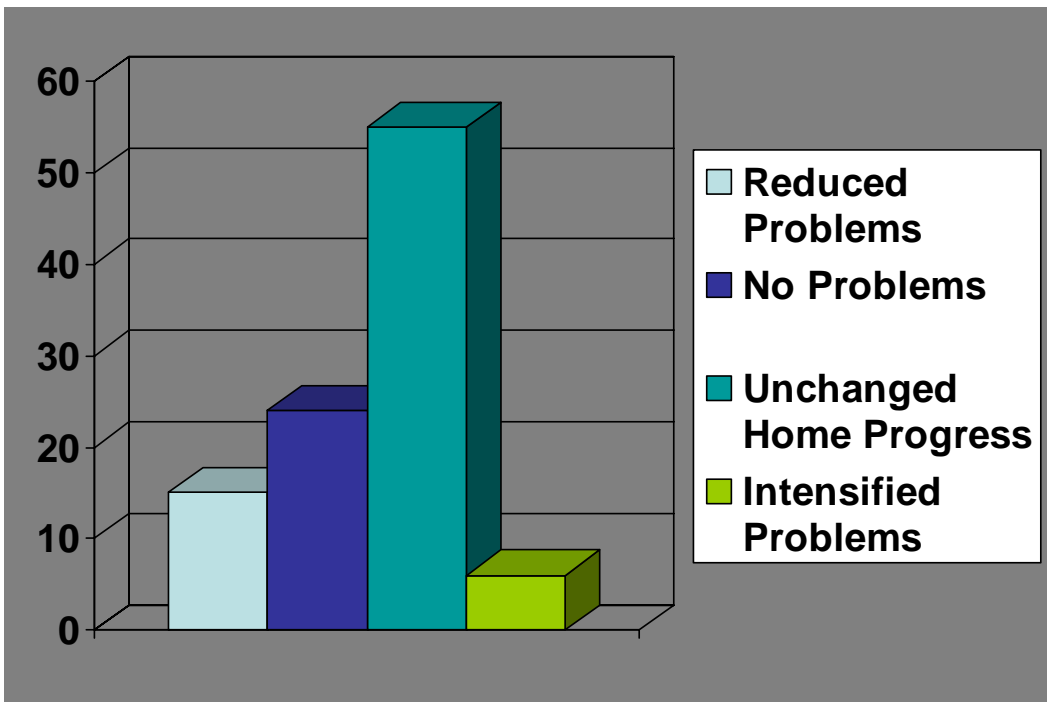
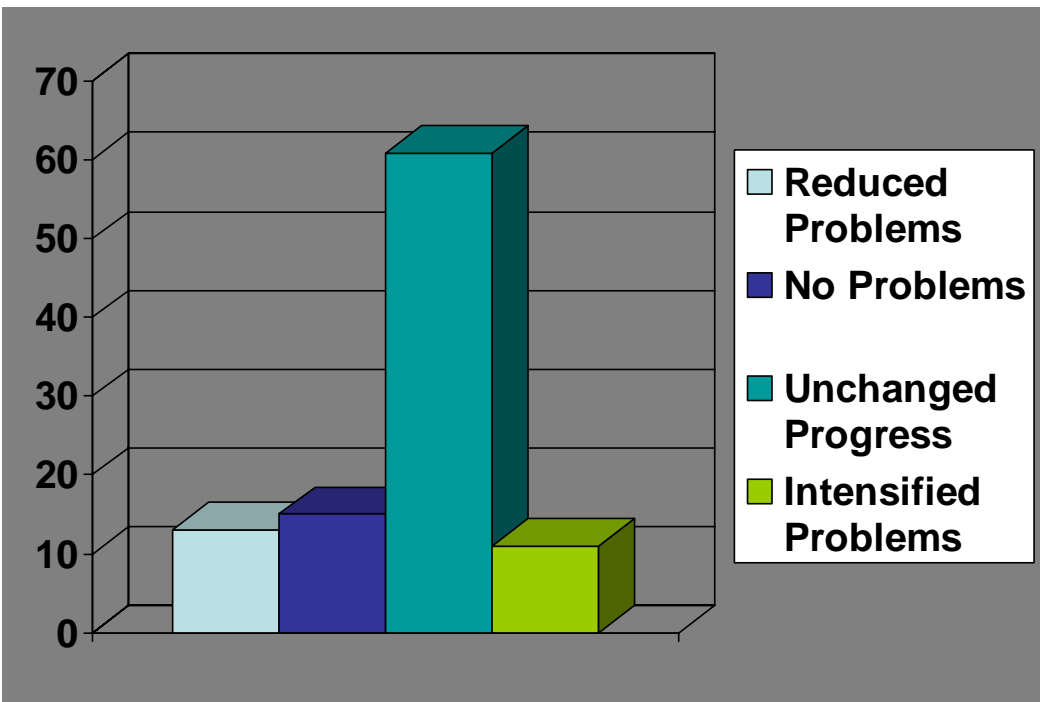




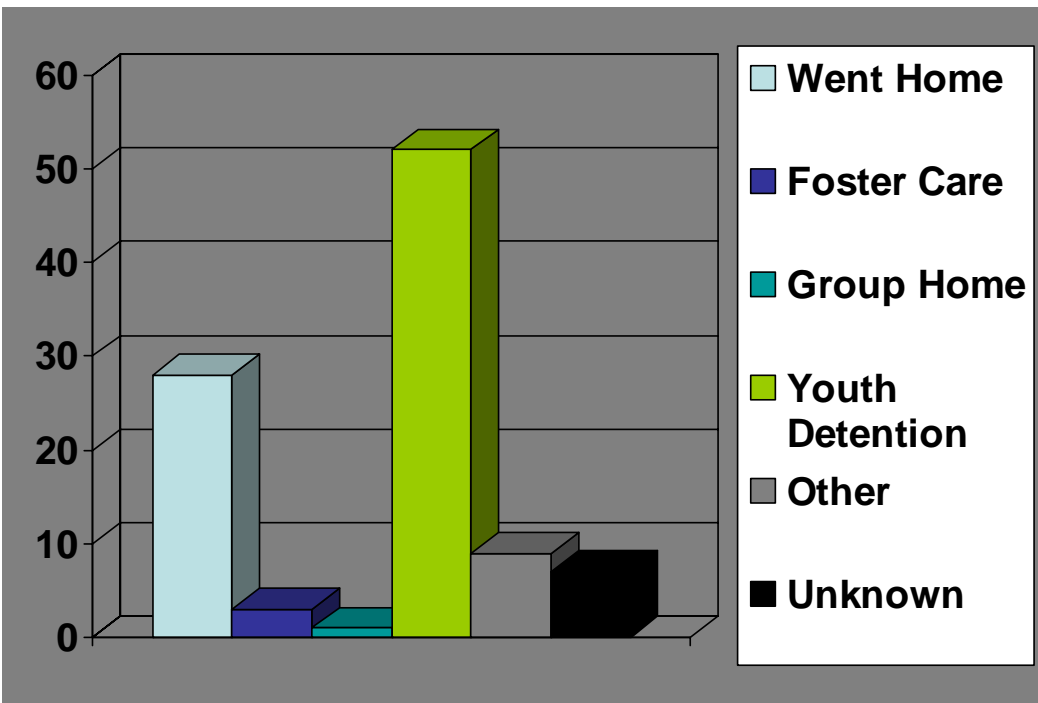
Table 8 shows that, at home, 15% of the youth had reduced problems, with 24% that had no problems at all. 55% of youth had unchanged home progress and 6% had intensified problems at home. As shown in Table 9, at school, 13% of the youth had reduced problems, with 15% that had no problems at all. 61% of youth had unchanged school progress, and 11% had intensified problems at school. The reported termination data, illustrated in Table 10, show that 28% of the youth went home, while 3% went to foster care, 1% went to a group home, 52% went to youth detention, 9% other, and 7% unknown. The cost per youth at this JSDP fluctuated over the time period with a low of \$12,578, to a high of \$24,448.

**Table 9: Charlotte / Problems at School**



If the Greensboro/Guilford County JSDP is characterized as successful and on an upward trajectory, the Charlotte/Mecklenburg County JSDP represents the other end of the spectrum. Nevertheless, the story is more complicated than the numbers show, and some very significant lessons have been learned. The program went through an overhaul during the study period and then, while some positive progress had been made, local stakeholders made the decision to discontinue the program in the summer of 2004.

**Table 10: Charlotte / Termination Placement**



Interviews with stakeholders suggested that the following issues were responsible, in part, for the program’s poor performance: behavioral management philosophy and practices, and lack of functional collaborative relationships between the program and other stakeholders.

**Lesson Learned Highlight: Behavioral Management**

The long-held belief that socially/behaviorally disordered youth will respond positively to harsh, punitively-oriented, "break 'em to make 'em" treatment falls somewhere between absurd and stupid. The lack of success demonstrated by programs utilizing this philosophy - including RISE prior to its January 2004 redesign - sufficiently indicates its futility.

-Stakeholder Interview 2004 (#15)

They really have an adult view of crime, and have a hard time looking at it from a juvenile perspective. The sheriff’s department hindered progress.

-Stakeholder Interview 2004 (#9)

The issue of overall orientation and philosophy of program, especially behavioral management, was one of the most divisive issues that at least two programs faced. In part, some people interviewed felt as if there was a lack of understanding of the context that many of these youth were experiencing, and some people interviewed felt that the program was setting up a power struggle battle that would only escalate over time.

**Lesson Learned Highlight: Context Is Important**

Let's face it: by the time these kids come into the system, the majority of them have lived through years of physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse. They have survived being shuffled through relatives, agencies, foster care, social services and various school programs. Their homes are frequently impoverished.... We, as adults, cannot and will not win the battle for power and control. While we are engaged for good causes, social improvement, or philosophical beliefs, these kids are fighting for their survival.

-Stakeholder Interview 2003 (#21)

Since January of 2004, the JSDP has endeavored to develop a non-punitive, power-and-control-avoidant approach to dealing with their clients. According to one staff member “the results indicate that it is do-able, successful, and rewarding for all involved.” The following advice is offered by program personnel:

“Stay out of battles for power and control. All behavioral choices are made by the kids with prior discussion of the alternatives and possible outcomes. For example, one particularly challenging young man has been refusing to attend an outpatient therapy group. We never argue with him or tell him that he has to go. He is told upfront that it is entirely his choice, no one is going to make him attend, and he is engaged in a discussion of the positive and negative consequences of his choice. The outcome has been that he has attended the group daily, without argument, no point losses, and has chosen to act in his own best interest.”

A renewed focusing of the program has geared it toward understanding that youth have good days and bad days, and that growth and achievement need to be recognized and rewarded. While these are only a few of the beliefs that the JSDP has initiated, the results have been impressive. Within six weeks, incident reports for staff-client and client-client conflicts dropped from three or more per week to one every four to six weeks. Client complaints about staff dropped from a relentless litany to one or two complaints a week. Staff perceptions of clients improved dramatically, and clients are no longer seen as bad seeds. At least five clients have verbalized that the program is now about hope and change, rather than defeat and hopelessness. Six clients have graduated successfully since March 2004 compared to six graduates over the last three years. The number of clients choosing to leave the program has dropped significantly, and there has been only one client who was terminated for unacceptable behavior compared to approximately 100 unsuccessful terminations over the last three years.

### **Wilmington/New Hanover County (Intercept)**

The JSDP operating in New Hanover County served a total of 141 youth between 2002 and 2004. Charts are provided below that represent the statistics in this next section. Out of the youth served 14% were white, 85% African-American, and 1% other.

Table 11 shows that during this time period 13% of the youth were successful in completing the program, 34% did not participate, 34% were removed by family, 16% were removed by court action, 1% were runaways, and 2% other.

Table 12 shows that 24% of the youth had no new problems with the court system, while 21% had new delinquency petitions, 20% had new undisciplined petitions, and 35% had motions for violation of their court order.

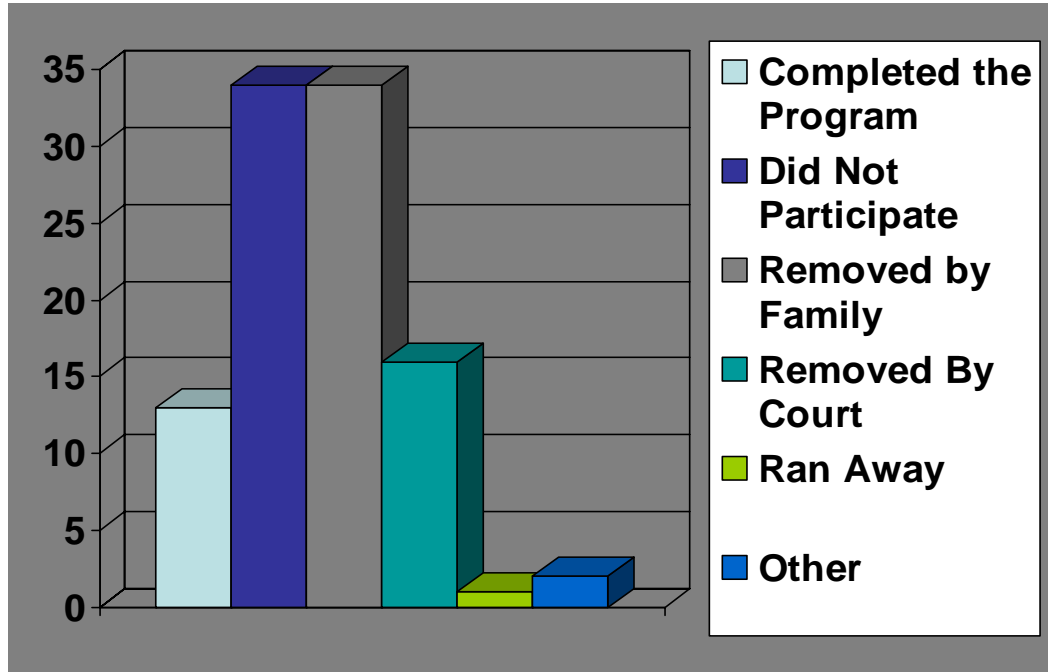
Table 13 illustrates that at home, 15% of the youth had reduced problems, with 35% that had no problems at the time of referral or since. 35% of youth had unchanged home progress and 15% had intensified problems at home.

Table 14 demonstrates that, at school, 23% of the youth had reduced problems, with 34% that had no problems at referral or since. Thirty-three% of youth had unchanged school progress and 10% had intensified problems at school.

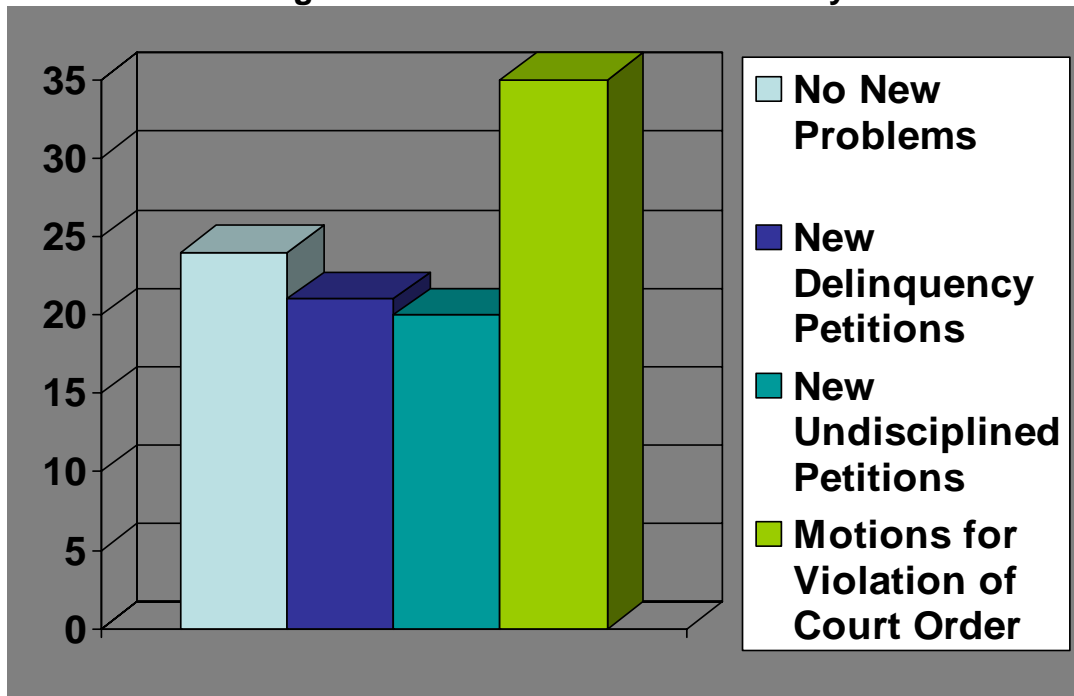
The reported termination data, found in Table 15, show that 12% of the youth went home, while 33% went to foster care, 2% went to a group home, 40% went to youth detention or secure

custody, and 13% other. While the cost per youth at this JSDP fluctuated over the time period, our calculations from reported data show an average of approximately \$22,000.

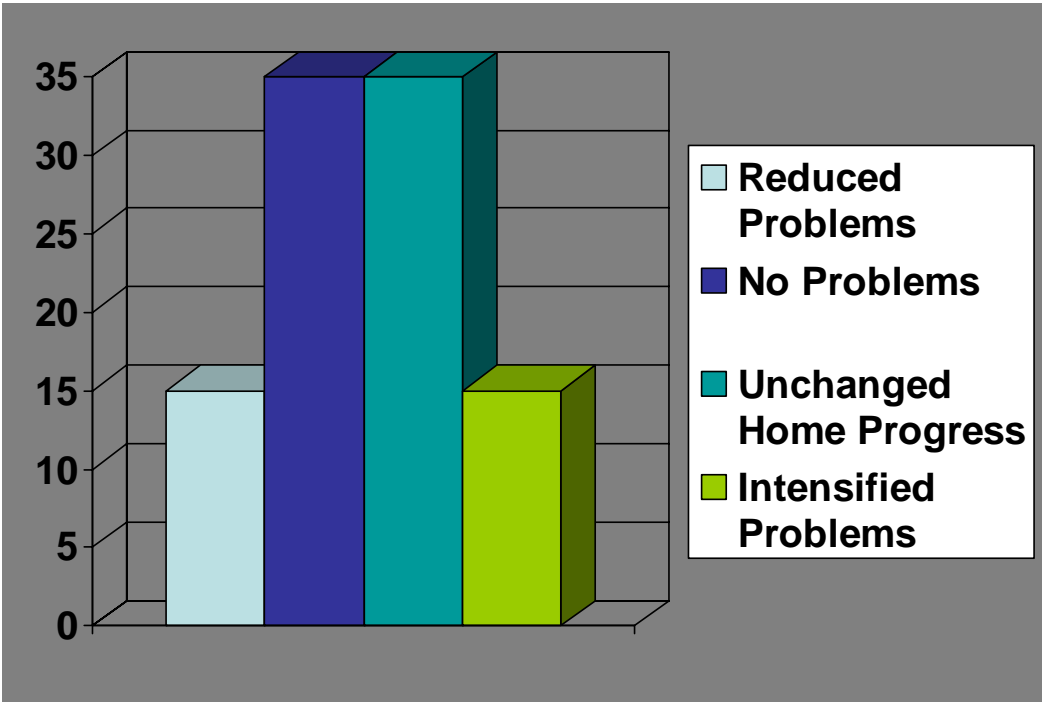
**Table 11: Wilmington Program Completion Data**



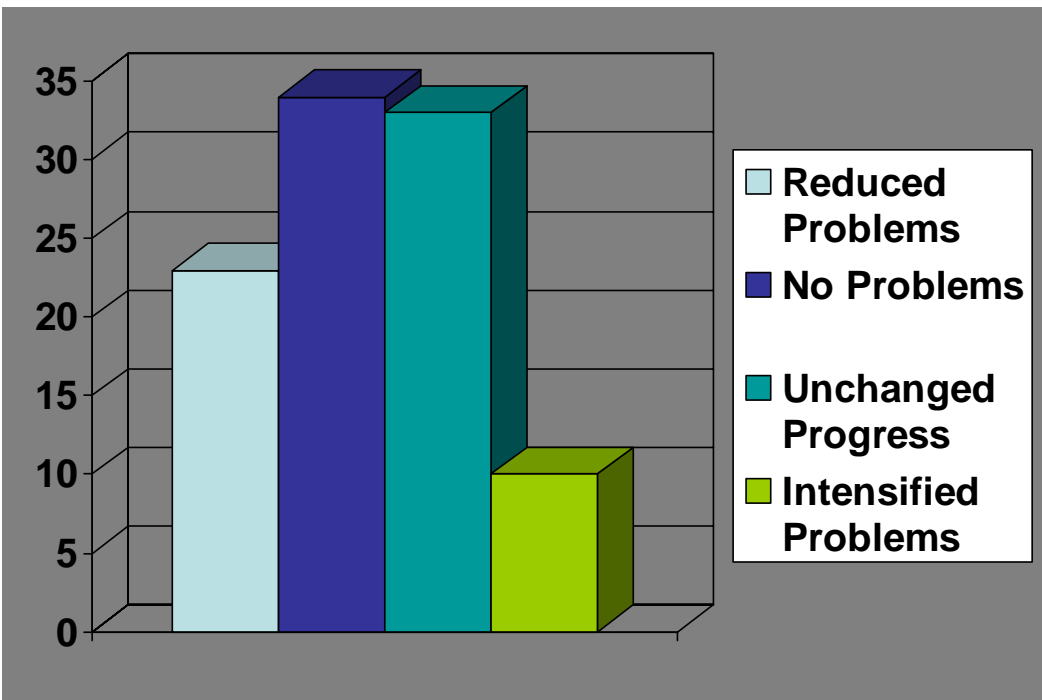
**Table 12: Wilmington / New Problems with Court System**



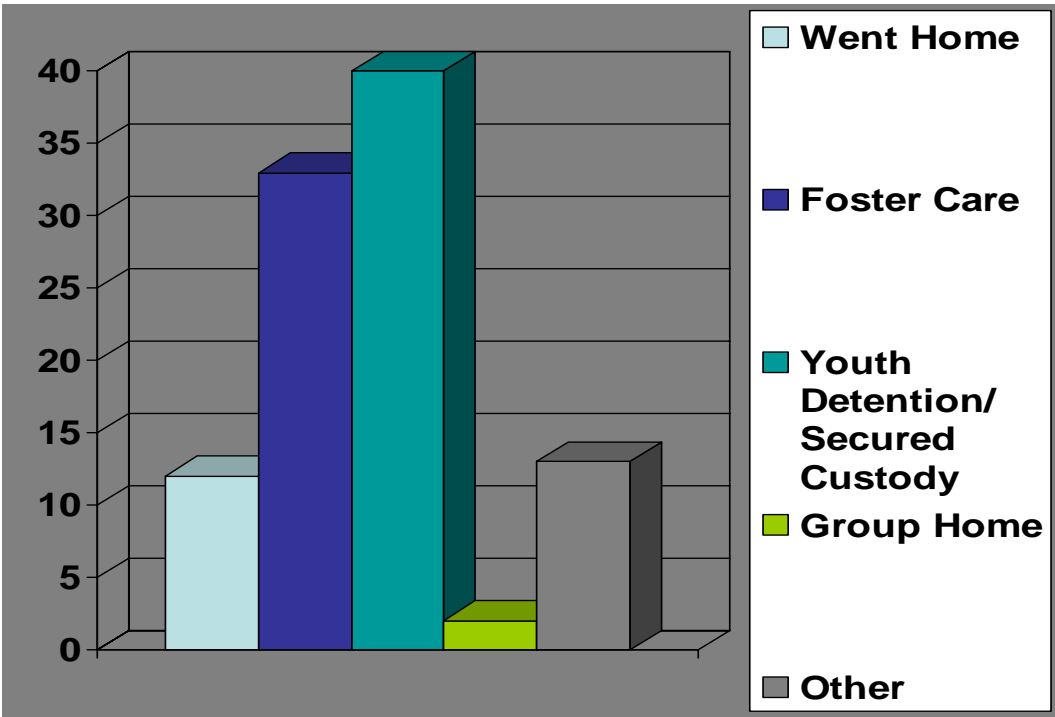
**Table 13: Wilmington / Problems with Family**



**Table 14: Wilmington / Problems at School**



**Table 15: Wilmington / Termination Placement**



While the Greensboro/Guilford County JSDP has been characterized as being on an upward trajectory and the Charlotte/Mecklenburg County JSDP has learned lessons from programmatic reported inadequacies, the Wilmington/New Hanover County JSDP is uniquely different.

While the reported statistics on the program indicate that there have been less than desirable outcomes in some areas, many people interviewed felt that it was a model program except for a couple of components. The many strengths of the program include creative interventions to assist in broadening opportunities for youth to learn and develop a positive sense of self.

The JSDP offers a wide variety of hands-on programmatic areas for youth to excel. The creative interventions that the JSDP has employed serve multiple ends of interpersonal skills development, job training, and behavior management.

### **Lesson Learned Highlight: Creative Interventions**

The creative programming that has been offered at the JSDP includes programs in carpentry, gardening and culinary arts. These programs have helped to broaden the experiences of young people by providing them opportunities outside of the academic classroom to develop their skills. Another important component of this hands-on training is that it has been therapeutic in the sense of building the youth's self esteem and locus of control, both associated with academic achievement. In addition, the program has chosen these programs, in part, because they provide real opportunities for youth who may not be able to continue on to college. The greater Wilmington area has an expanding tourism sector for which culinary arts is relevant. The area also boasts a large gardening and nursery industry that may employ some youth. Last, carpentry skills provide youth with job training as well for home building and work in the existing film industry.

Toward the end of employment, the program has had initial success in placing some of the youth in part-time positions of employment in order to build on the programmatic components in place at the JSDP. One indicator of the success of these efforts, according to an external stakeholder is that, “the youth are motivated, excited, and follow through with these offerings.”

Another strength of the JSDP has been successful partnering with agencies and organizations to bring needed services in order to serve the youth in a holistic manner. Since the planning process of the New Hanover County JSDP the stakeholders on board have included the DJJDP, the school system, and DHHS. This collaborative foundation was in place when the program was initiated. Program staff identified needs and recruited partners in order to offer a wide range of services.



### **Effective Practices Highlight: Examples of Partnering**

The level of support and involvement that the local school system has had from the beginning was instrumental in getting the program off the ground. The New Hanover County school system has been a very generous partner providing needed resources including teacher's positions, textbooks and academic materials, meals through the school lunch program, and NovaNet, a computer platform which allows youngsters to matriculate at their own pace through school.

The JSDP created a strong partnership with Dreams of Wilmington, an arts and crafts program that has a definite therapeutic focus. Dreams of Wilmington has several purposes including: exposing youngsters to the arts, which many have not had; helping youngsters get in touch with their feelings and emotions; and providing opportunities for youngsters to be successful and get recognition.

The JSDP also partnered with a community-based health provider that brings nurses to the program on a periodic basis who are able to do medical screenings. This broadens the scope of what can be offered to the youth as many of them may need medical attention.

- Stakeholder Interview 2004 (#35)

Another strength of the Wilmington/New Hanover JSDP has been the extraordinary ability of the leadership to create an administrative infrastructure that has simultaneously put together manuals and training plans for staff and youth while being entrepreneurial in terms of seeking resources from virtually all possible avenues. One JCPC stakeholder said "what they have in place programmatically is excellent. I want to see this program succeed and develop. The program is only two years old and there has been a development progression." That said, virtually all stakeholders external to the program identified a couple of common themes which the program has adopted: collaborative governance and the appropriateness of a behavior management system that includes physical force.

### **Lesson Learned: Behavioral Management**

The program needs to develop more internal techniques to individualize behavioral management with a set of rewards and motivators that are tailored to the specific youngster. Being forced to do something is not a good motivator for cooperation and helping the individual youth excel. The program is still evolving in putting things in place to get this youngster to begin to buy into the program and put his/her best efforts into the program. Right now there is a lot of emphasis for the youth based on the philosophy "if you don't want to experience this (physical punishment) then you need to get on with the program." This needs to be changed and also tempered with a payoff. When we are asking someone to give up a set of responses then we got to help them replace it with different, worthwhile alternatives.

- Stakeholder Interview 2004 (#38)

Other stakeholders external to the program staff shared a version of this view, and this component of the behavioral management modality blossomed into a wedge that divided some program leaders and other stakeholders. From the perspective of the program their "Ask, Tell, Assist" model was necessary in order to maintain the safety of other youth as well as promote an environment where there were high expectations for youth development in all arenas from interpersonal skill development to academic success. In addition, JSDP leaders expressed that other stakeholders, unfamiliar with the entire behavioral management system and suite of activities, were unnecessarily depicting the program negatively.

During site visits and interviews with staff the study evaluation team learned that to this JSDP, it could not be effective without a multi-prong approach to youth that included a variety of elements: the intervention model, the motivation system, and the creation of constructive activity. The interviews with external stakeholders did not indicate that there was an issue with using a motivation system or constructive activity, some of which we have highlighted. It was the physical force directed toward youth, according to some stakeholders, even when the

situation may not have needed to escalate to that level. This issue cannot be resolved in a report such as this one, since that would be siding with one group of stakeholders over another. This study does suggest, however, that the process by which this issue was dealt with was not satisfactory to anyone until issues of governance were addressed.

#### **Lesson Learned: Advisory Committee**

The County made a decision months ago that there really needs to be an advisory committee for the program. They pulled together a strategic advisement committee to do focused planning with stakeholders. Some really good work and communication has come out of that group. It has helped lend credibility to stakeholders that have complained about aspects of the program in the past. It has allowed stakeholders to have a role in the ongoing program. There needs to be some type of advisory board or group to the program in order to assure involvement of stakeholders in planning and policy-making.

- Stakeholder Interview 2004 (#40)

Interviews with a wide range of stakeholders indicated that they appreciated having an advisory committee, and that it lent credence to the notion that the JSDP belonged to no one group. As one respondent said, "the process needs to emphasize planned, intentional, and ongoing communication" between stakeholders so the group can provide solutions to challenges.

The JSDP operating in Wilmington/New Hanover County has had significant successes over the last two years during its development. The facility, programming, staff, and approach has been rated very highly by most stakeholders except in the areas of fully embracing a new governance structure that permits multiple stakeholders to determine what the program will look like.

In particular, this has emerged over the issue of behavioral management although general partnering has been affected. On the other hand, some program leaders have made the case that for these programs to work collaboration is a two-way street. One of the issues that was evident at the JSDP, which program staff as well as some outside stakeholders agreed upon, was that the facility could not be used by DJJDP as a place to temporarily house a youth when it was not deemed an appropriate placement by a consortium of stakeholders including program staff. Some respondents suggested that this was disruptive to the program and not a positive

experience for the youth involved, and that the advisory committee along with program staff would need to determine what populations can best be served in a single facility.

### **Durham/Durham County (A New Day)**

The New Day JSDP operating in Durham County has served an approximate total of 194 youth between October 2001 and the beginning of 2004. Out of the youth served eight percent were white, 90% African-American, and two percent Hispanic. Table 16 shows that during this time period 71% the youth were successful in completing the program, 5.5% did not participate, 2% were removed by court action, .5% were runaways, 3% were removed by their parents, and 18% other.

**Table 16: Durham Program Completion Data**

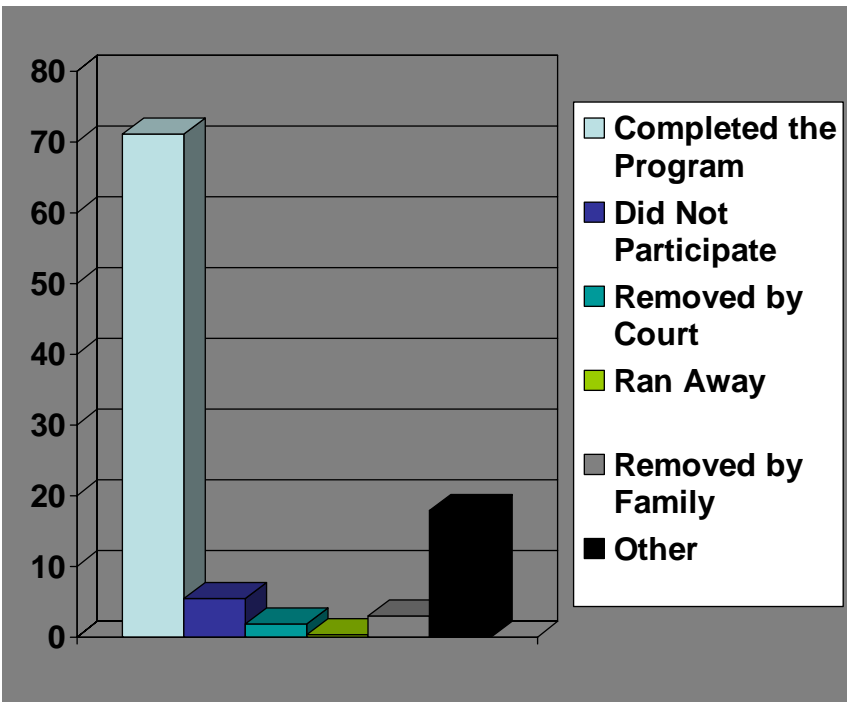


Table 17 demonstrates that 20% of the youth had no new problems with the court system, while 40% had new delinquency petitions, 25% had new undisciplined petitions, and 15% had motions for violation of their court order.

**Table 17: Durham / New Problems with Court System**

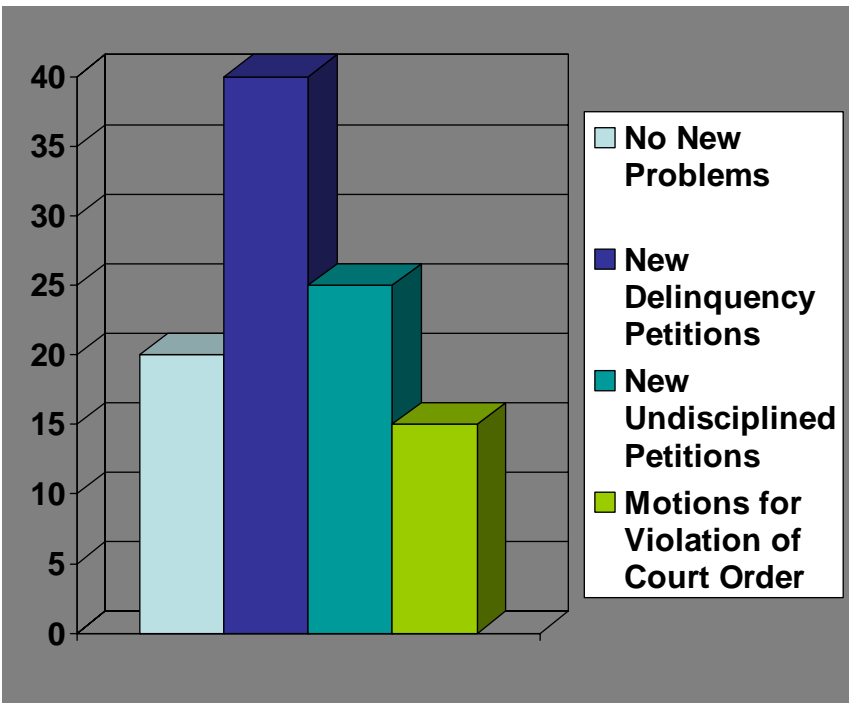


Table 18 shows that, at home, 38% of the youth had reduced problems, with 13% that had no problems at all. 44% of youth had unchanged home progress, and 5% had intensified problems at home.

**Table 18: Durham / Problems with Family**

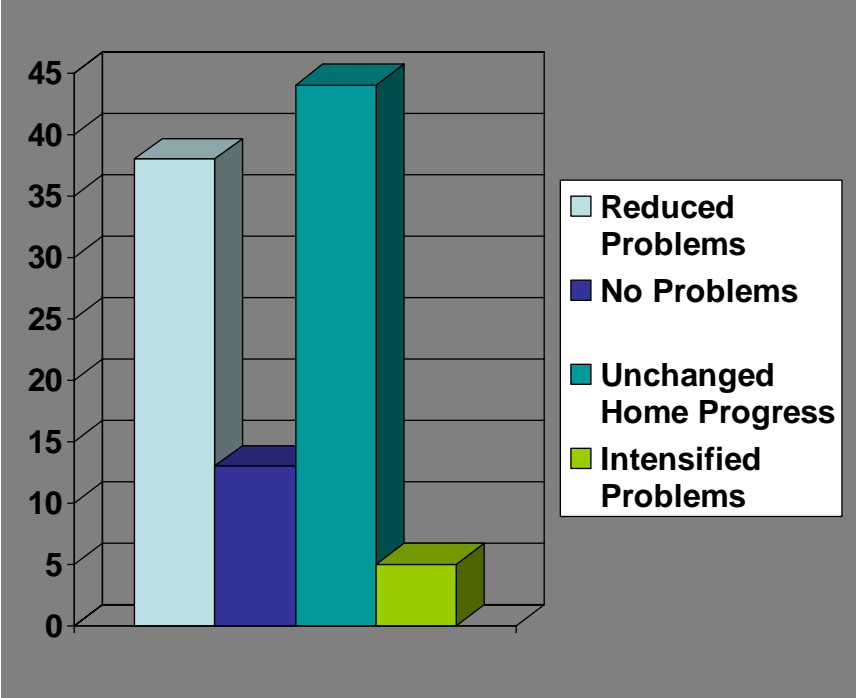
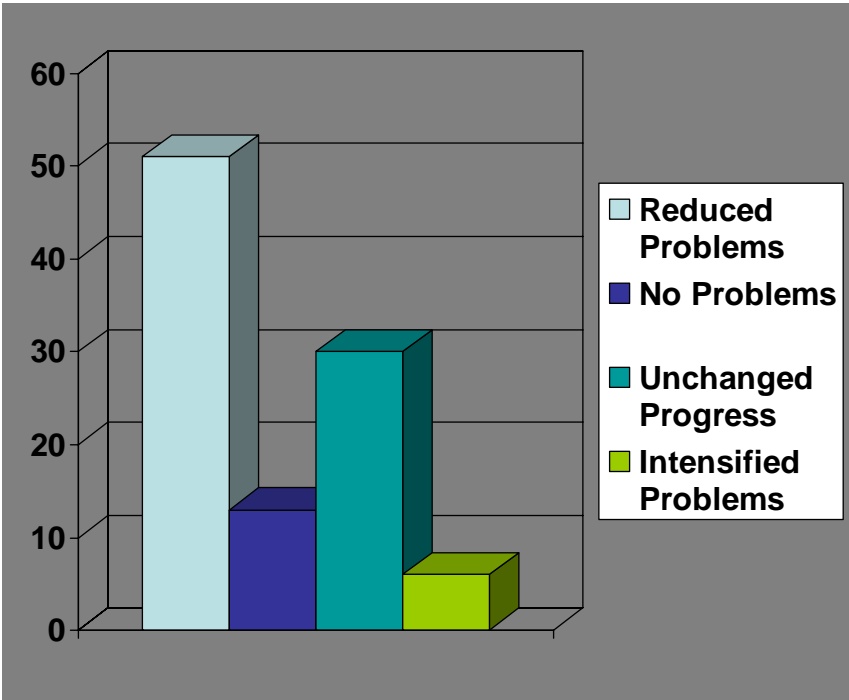


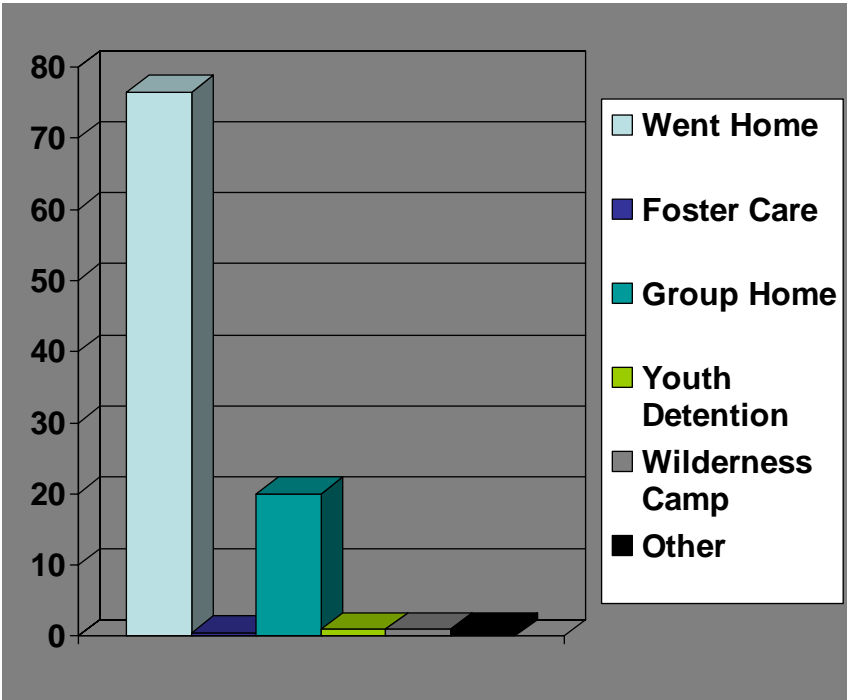
Table 19 illustrates that, at school, 51% of the youth had reduced problems, with 13% that had no problems at all. Thirty percent of youth had unchanged school progress, and 6% had intensified problems at school.

**Table 19: Durham / Problems at School**



The reported termination data, reported in Table 20, show that 76.5% of the youth went home, while .5% went to foster care, 20% went to a group home, 1% went to youth detention, 1% went to wilderness camp, and 1% other. The 2004-2005 cost per youth has been estimated at \$2,102, but this is low due to the variety of length of time that youth spend in the program. For example, there is a Saturday Program that youth attend an average of seven days, while the regular academic week youth spends an average of 74 days. In addition, the program provides an after school program.

**Table 20: Durham / Termination Placement**



All structured day programs are somewhat different even if many of the final outcomes fall within the same domains. New Day, when compared to other types of JSDPs, has shown remarkable strides toward providing youth with a resource with which to develop. There are many components to this program that help it achieve successes with youth. One of the cornerstones is the senior case managers who provide linkages to a variety of services. For example, individual, group, and family counseling case managers are available throughout the day.

**Effective Practice Highlight: Case Management**

Case individual managers are available throughout the day to provide counseling as needed by students. Some students seek out contact on their own, whereas with others the case manager has to ask the student to come to their office for a visit. Students who are eligible for mental health services can receive individual counseling through the area mental health program. From July 2004 through June 2006, all *A New Day* staff will undergo training in two forms of therapy, "Relational Healing" and "Peer Governance." The training will cover group and family counseling and will be provided by Bethesda Family Services in Milton, Pennsylvania. This training will assure that the entire *A New Day* staff is unified in a science-based approach.



Case management works with the entire family unit as well, recognizing that the youth lives outside the JSDP. At A New Day multiple points of contact are made with families, and even if parents do not have the time to attend or participate in all the offerings the wide variety allows for parents with busy work schedules and other responsibilities to have meaningful contact.

### **Effective Practice Highlight: Family Involvement**

We refer parents/families experiencing chronic problems to free in-home family counseling either through mental health or an agency funded through JCPC for this purpose. The senior case managers are in continuous contact with parents regarding their child's progress. Parents attend regular service plan and team conferences with our staff. The first two years of our program we provided parenting training and support groups. The purpose of some sessions was to create an atmosphere that was enjoyable and relaxing with music, art projects, discussion, and food. During the past two years, the alternative school we are located in offered Parent Nights with a banquet and speakers. Parents are too busy to do both Parenting Nights and the parent/family training sessions.

-Program Staff Member 2004

As part of effective case management and family involvement, A New Day provides an atmosphere whereby youth feel valued. As opposed to behavior management taking on a negative or authoritative tone, the program staff attempt to work closely with the youth on an individual basis in order to reduce behaviors that will get them in trouble and increase the youth's sense of self. For example, one staff member states that for "middle school age students, cognitive-behavior therapy is effective when connected immediately in time with the *teachable moment*. Catch a juvenile in the act or behavior and immediately process the event. Assist students in thinking through what they just did. Moreover, help students to think about their pattern of behavior" (program staff member 2004). The statistics for A New Day demonstrate that this approach has been effective for many youth.

### Effective Practice Highlight:

#### Choices and Changes Curriculum for Short-Term Youth

The staff created a ten-day curriculum. The **goal** of the curriculum is to reduce behaviors that lead to suspensions. Students use role play to practice new skills and behaviors. The role plays are video taped and then played back to the students for further discussion and reinforcement. The curriculum includes two days of substance abuse education that connects to suspension issues. The staff teaches students verbal self defense; most conflicts start with a verbal attack. Students learn to use words to defuse situations. The **target population** is: students serving ten suspension days or less and all new students entering the program. Also, any long-term *A New Day* student that is suspended needs to retake the ten-day series. Each session is 50 minutes in length. The resources used to teach interpersonal skills include: a series of three videos (Givin' It, Takin' It, Workin' It Out) from *Dealing with Anger*, a Violence Prevention Program for African-America Youth (distributed by Research Press, Champaign, Illinois.), and *Tongue Fu: How to Deflect, Disarm, and Defuse Any Verbal Conflict*, by Sam Horn, published St.Martin's Press, 1996.

Other programs mentioned that short-term youth are a difficult population to assist because change takes time. *A New Day* has actually implemented a curriculum that is informed by the temporal nature of the suspension in order to achieve successes with this population.

One of the other ways that the *A New Day* program addresses the reality that youth spend much of their time outside of the structured day program is through employment training. Employment training offers the possibility that a youth will spend time after school engaged in technical and interpersonal skill development. Through some unique collaborative relationships, *A New Day* has been able to provide some exemplary programmatic components that permit students to learn skills necessary to learn about approaching job opportunities that spark an interest in the youth.

### **Effective Practice Highlight: Creative Approaches to Employment Training**

During the past four years, *A New Day* has used a variety of approaches to employment training. One year, we created a teaching collaboration between Durham County Co-Operative Extension and Duke's Center for Documentary Studies. The Co-Op extension taught job-related skills and knowledge. Duke's Documentary Studies help students identify jobs that interested students. Students learned how to interview and to use cameras and tape recorders. Students took the cameras and tape recorders on their field trips to businesses that interested them. Another year, we took students to do community service learning at the Red Cross. Students did office work and prepared first aid kits. This was a more hands-on approach that allowed us to job coach students. Our senior case managers also teach employment training skills. Every year we help about 25 youth in our Saturday program and academic program fill out job applications for the Mayor's summer youth program. In the past, our most intensive employment training has been in the summer. The entire summer program was focused on employment-related issues. However, summer 2004 we are going to focus on course recovery, drop-out prevention, and reducing truancy. Our middle students need assistance in learning strategies to succeed in school.

-Program Staff Member 2004

This type of programming serves multiple purposes because it not only assists youth with building skills and their self-concept, but it uses these positive activities after school and on the weekends when youth are most likely to engage in activities that could be detrimental to their development.

While there are other components of *A New Day* that might be highlighted, these aspects of the program are worth noting for this JSDP has achieved successes while working in the context of difficult circumstances. The consistent availability of support and therapeutic model of service provision has begun to produce successes. Outside stakeholders overwhelmingly agree that the strengths of the program include dedication of the staff, a collaborative outlook, caring for the kids, and one-on-one time with the director as well as other staff. Multiple stakeholders complimented the program on conducting effective outreach with partners in the local community as well.

## **Additional Effective Practices**

While there are many components to highlight for each of the JSDPs, this report has sought to forward some of the practices that have helped programs to achieve positive results. There are three additional components that most program staff felt are important to emphasize: student decompression time; extended programming; and long-term follow-up and after care.

### ***Student Decompression Time***

Another important practice mentioned by program staff to allow youth time to make a mental and physical transition between home and school by providing time for students' down time or time to decompress as one program director called it. This time is provided to allow students to reflect upon and discuss their feelings.

One structured day program used what it called peer guidance sessions at the beginning and end of each day for this purpose. In these morning sessions, students generally talked about anything that had happened to them since the previous day of school in order to mentally prepare for the school day. At the end of the day, students generally processed the day's events and prepare to return home.

Program staff noted that having this time for shared reflection seemed to help students make the transition between the safe environment of school and the sometimes chaotic environment of home. It also helped students gain greater self-awareness.

### ***Extended Programming***

In addition to having decompression or down time for youth at the start and end of each school day, program staff also noted that having extended program, such as having a ten- or 12-hour day, was critical to keeping youth off the streets and out of trouble. As indicated by national research, most violent crime committed by juveniles peaks in the after-school hours on school days and in the evenings on non-school days (Snyder and Sickmund, 1999).

### ***Long-Term Follow Up and After Care***

Program managers and staff members all reported at length on the importance of having follow-up or after care with youth once they leave the program.

Program staffers and administrators are very aware that, although many students thrive in a structured day program, they risk losing some of what they have gained when they return to their regular school environments. Greensboro staff have therefore made a practice of spending the first month of the school year (when there are very few, if any, students yet at the JSDP) visiting former students at their regular schools, to see how they are doing to help reinforce what they learned at the JSDP. Program staff in all of the programs studied stated that they would like to have the resources to put more time into helping students transition back into their home schools, and more time to follow up with former students, to ensure that they are still on the right track.

In some programs, youth after care or follow-up is the responsibility of a team of staffers. In other programs it falls primarily on one staff member. In multiple JSDPs, the guidance counselor, in particular, puts energy into maintaining contact with staff at area schools, and was in the best position to do continuous follow-up care, as they already had established relationships within the local schools. Several program directors and staff indicated that in-depth follow up with youth is particularly important during the year after they exit the program, as this is typically the time frame that youth fall back into repeating delinquent behavior patterns.

### **Youth Perspectives on JSDPs**

Youth interviewed were generally quite positive about the programs. Most youth interviewed cited personal improvement in anger management and academic work as a result of program participation. Youth generally commented that their school environments were respectful, and appreciated the attention they received from teachers and counselors. In addition, youth commented positively on the fact that their school environments were more calm, more stable, had fewer distractions, and that, as a result, they were better able to concentrate on their school work. In fact, many youth were so positive about their experience in the structured day program, that they expressed a desire to remain in the program, rather than return to their home school. As one student noted, “If it weren’t an alternative school, I’d come back next year,” noting that he preferred the JSDP because it was more personal and comfortable for him.

Many youth also commented on the supportive nature of the structured day program, noting that their JSDP was helping them to “succeed at everything [one] can do” and “to stay focused on positive actions.” The majority of students also noted dramatic improvements in

their grades since attending their JSDP; even youth attending for only a few months reported positive changes in grades and attitude towards school. Some students stated that their experience in their structured day program was the first time they had felt a desire to do well in school and in life. Several youth we interviewed talked about how the JSDP teachers and staff helped them view their program as a stepping stone to their future endeavors, including graduating from high school, going to college, getting jobs, and starting their own families. Youth also noted that parents, friends, and even court counselors had noticed these positive changes in attitude and action. Other youth interviewed commented that the program had not changed them, but rather, that it allowed them to be who they were without the negative distractions of their home school.

Youth interviewed for the study attributed their positive experiences to the self-contained classroom, the variety of programs and activities offered throughout the day, and to the teachers. Youth agreed that the teachers were adept at knowing when to help youth in one-on-one scenarios and when to allow youth to work through academic and social problems on their own so that they felt supported yet confident and independent. Several youth indicated that they considered their teachers to be friends as well as mentors and teachers and that the program felt like a family. Indeed, youth in one program revealed that in the classroom when one person got in trouble, everyone got in trouble, so youth wanted to work with each other to succeed together. Youth interviewed showed that they are not necessarily bad *at* school. Instead, many of the youth achieve poorly when *in* school, surrounded by the lack of structure, the negative peer pressures, and the low levels of inspiration provided by their home public school teachers.

Most youth interviewed felt that they were the primary bearers of responsibility for their current situation and that they would ultimately be the ones to determine their future. While most youth interviewed maintained a desire to return to mainstream life and had committed themselves to reducing the negative influences in their lives as much as they could control (i.e. drug use, gang activity, inappropriate behavior in school), some youth still assumed that violence would be a part of their behavior when necessary. This follows with other studies that have noted the success alternative education programming can have in improving academic performance without, necessarily, an equally significant impact on reducing the offending behaviors that lead youth to alternative education in the first place. Even with this slight gap

between academic and behavioral improvements, the youth overwhelmingly approved of their programs and agreed that they offered an experience that had redirected their lives for the better.

## **Conclusions**

This chapter has highlighted effective practices and lessons learned from four JSDPs operating in North Carolina. Some themes emerge from the case studies including: the importance of effective collaboration; developing a behavioral management system that does not cause constant power struggles between staff and youth; involving a wide range of interpersonal development opportunities for the youth; using creative programmatic components to achieve multiple goals that includes the youth's family and larger community; and effective partnering with service providers that are able to supplement programmatic offerings. One JCPC consultant stated, “These should not be considered altogether new. We need to build upon and organize the services that are already available in the larger community.” In many ways the JSDPs highlighted in this study have acknowledged this and employed the services of multiple stakeholders, yet, these JSDPs do offer something new. They are places where youth can obtain the focused attention that they need.

## **Chapter 4: Policy Recommendations**

A significant thread that ties all of these initiatives together is the challenges that each face. No program operates in its ideal state and many impediments hinder the best workings of these initiatives. While each agency comes up against specific challenges particular to its unique scenario and local context, many programs experience related challenges. These challenges could be remedied through policy changes at the state level. These challenges include: prioritization at the state level; funding; community partnership; inter-agency relations; serving multiple populations of youth; information sharing; and transportation. Below, this study details each of the challenges and offers recommendations for policy change related to the operation of Juvenile Structured Day Programs (JSDPs).

### ***Prioritization at the State Level***

There is a disparity between the state's recognition that these alternative education initiatives are a necessary and promising component of North Carolina's crime prevention, human service provision, and education systems at the level of priority and state resources JSDPs receive to implement such programs. The state needs to clarify what level of priority this form of alternative education is for addressing crime prevention, human service provision, and education. The Governor's Crime Commission (GCC), Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP), Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and local Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils (JCPCs) need to work closely with the Governor and the General Assembly to determine if these programs are at a high enough priority to warrant substantial funding and support.

If these programs are of a high priority, then funding resources need to be made available to offer sustained financial assistance that is not dispensed on a grant-by-grant or project-by-project basis. This would allow these agencies to operate in a more permanent way and direct more attention to program development and service provision instead of fundraising. If alternative education programs are a low priority, then a concerted effort needs to be made to work with JSDPs to identify other sources of support.



## ***Funding***

Program directors are continually faced with the looming threat of program extinction due to the difficulty in finding funding sources to meet program needs. Difficulty in diversifying funding is a major complaint and source of anxiety to all program directors, boards, and staff. Program staff may be unaware of funding sources available, or may not have the knowledge of how to access these options.

In some instances, there is simply a lack of available funding. Frequently, several agencies in a community compete for the same source of funding. Those agencies with less experience in grant writing and fundraising are less likely to be successful in meeting needs. Program staff can rarely afford the time needed to research new ways to acquire funding. While programs must make the time to do so in order to survive long term, providing day-to-day operations is the first priority and what all staff direct resources towards. Finding funding can be time consuming and can impact the quality of service youth program participants receive.

A solution to this problem that has begun to be implemented is for JCPC, DJJDP, and GCC to provide ongoing technical assistance, to establish a central database where program directors and staff can gain access to funding information quickly, and to hold sessions where program staff can "brainstorm" new funding strategies with staff from other programs in order to learn from their colleagues.

## ***Community Partnerships***

Community partnerships are vital for the success of an alternative learning program. Partnerships provide physical space to house program activities, service learning opportunities, in-kind donations and grants, as well as needed program components and social service provisions.

Successful agencies have been able to partner directly with the local school system and local community institutions in the places they serve. However, many programs find it difficult to create such partnerships, and competing interests can get in the way of successful relationships being built. The Governor's Crime Commission may be able to encourage alternative education programs by fostering partnerships in the schools and in the community. The JCPC can institute two policies to aid alternative education programs in this capacity. One policy, developed in conjunction with the DPI, would create a position in each local school system as an Alternative

Education Liaison. While some school systems already have someone in their guidance counseling offices acting as a mediator between the school and the alternative education program, more direct attention is needed to coordinate individualized education plans, identify at-risk youth, as well as ease the transition back into the school system for successful youth. This liaison can also assist in navigating the bureaucracy between the school system and the justice system for adjudicated youth and serve as a vital resource for families of troubled youth needing additional resources.

A second policy, developed in conjunction with area Better Business Bureaus (BBBs), can establish a "Community-Education Liaison." This position, funded jointly by the State and the BBBs, could provide a direct link between area businesses and local educational initiatives, including alternative education programs. This position would employ someone to identify the needs of local education initiatives that could be met by area businesses and work with area businesses to meet such needs. Needs might range from in-kind donations to programs to more intensive employment-training apprenticeships for youth.

### ***Inter-Agency Relationships with the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention***

JSDPs operate with, and are impacted by, other institution's agencies. In particular, these programs are affected by the relationship they have to the juvenile justice system at the State and local levels. Whereas some localities have created a mutually beneficial relationship between the DJJDP and the JSDP, other localities have not. Some of the issues that have arisen include practices by both agencies for intake and termination that do not serve both parties. The JSDPs cannot be effective treatment options if other agencies have the authority to use them as reporting centers where youth can be dropped-off or removed without screening.

In order for JSDPs to be effective, there needs to be consistency and continuity in the daily activities. In addition, these programs need to have some level of authority to determine whether or not a youth is appropriate for their program and if the admittance of a youth will disrupt other youth and staff at the program.

Policy needs to be created which identifies whether these programs are to be conceived of and operate as community-based reporting centers that serve as a temporary holding place for adjudicated youth, or whether these programs are to be considered community-based treatment

options that offer high-quality services to appropriately identified youth. Many programs have felt a need to focus service on youth already in the system as opposed to serving schools by working with youth that are at-risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system.

### ***Serving Multiple Populations of Youth***

Program staff members are continually challenged to find effective means of dealing with the wide range of issues that youth program participants face, including mental health, behavioral, cognitive, substance abuse, family, school, and community environment issues. The impact of having to serve multiple populations of youth is huge; no one program can serve to address the multitude of issues alone. Partnerships with other community programs are keys to the success of JSDPs. In addition to struggling to meet the needs of youth, program staff members interact with youths' families and school staff members, which can also pose additional challenges.

Program staff must be trained so they remain informed about the latest research and intervention methods. The standardization of evaluation protocol and access to training and development for staff at all levels can be a difficult task for any program to achieve, particularly a new and growing program. In addition, many programs have expressed the desire to ultimately serve at-risk youth not yet institutionalized, which would only add to the information, training, and evaluation program components.

Some communities lack continuity in service provision to adjudicated youth. Program staff noted that kids are frequently bounced around from program to program, and that the need for a team approach exists in their county. The need to have open and clear channels of communication across agencies is apparent in all counties, as is the development of consistent protocols to deal with family and community environment issues (such as what activities youth are engaged in when not in a JSDP). Program directors often express the sentiment that they have little control over what youth are included in their programs, and that they face constant pressure by other agencies and groups to change their approach. An important step for addressing program staff concerns would be to better advertise JSDP goals and impacts across the communities they serve.

## ***Information Sharing***

Many of the 24 currently operating JSDPs are struggling with the simultaneous mandates of program creation, maintenance, and expansion. Most of the programs have developed strategies to manage these multiple tasks. Some of the areas in which this adaptation has taken place include the development of intake protocol, curriculum development, staff training opportunities, locating and securing funds from sources other than the GCC and the local JCPC, as well as developing self-evaluation strategies. Yet, there is no mechanism in place to disseminate to other programs the efforts of specific JSDPs and their development of effective practices. Further, even when programs may hear of the efforts of other JSDPs, there is the need for technical assistance in order to develop the skills necessary to effectively incorporate these strategies in their own programs.

These issues need to be addressed through policy that would institutionalize opportunities for JSDPs to obtain needed information and technical support in a variety of ways. A technical assistance resource center should be initiated that would serve as an information and data warehouse, technical assistance provider, and as a central location that would be responsible for working with programs to develop and use self-evaluation strategies.

## ***Transportation***

Transportation is a problem for many alternative education programs in North Carolina. Currently, there is no standard of how programs should or could provide transportation and it is up to the individual programs to identify transportation needs, prioritize such needs, locate potential resources, and implement strategies to meet any transportation needs.

Some programs have been able to do this through the local school system or from the services of local volunteers. While a best course of action does not necessitate a standard policy of transportation provision, it is clear that some resources need to be made available at the State level to alleviate transportation needs as they arise. DPI and DJJDP, in partnership with the General Assembly, should implement a transportation policy. This policy would include creating a pool of state-owned vehicles that any agency funded by the local JCPC could access free of charge.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions

This analysis of the Juvenile Structured Day Programs highlights some of the challenges and effective practices faced by programs struggling to provide a space for adjudicated youth, without removing them from their homes or communities.

As stressed by the program directors and staff we interviewed, setting up, maintaining, and expanding such programs can be an extremely time-consuming and overwhelming process. However, it can also be--as noted by most program staff and students--a very rewarding process when members of a family and community form partnerships to work together in the best interests of a student. While garnering the necessary community support and resources can be quite difficult for program directors and staff--as can finding creative ways to ensure continued funding--structured day programs show promising results.

The many students in the JSDPs we studied made cognitive and behavioral progress, successfully completed coursework and instruction covering a wide range of topics, from topics such as anger management, conflict resolution, drug and alcohol abuse, gang awareness, job skills enhancement, literacy and computer skills, to gardening, community service, and even public speaking.

One important factor in considering the value of JSDPs is that of financial cost. JSDPs offer a less expensive alternative to youth detention centers. For the Guilford County structured day program alone, the annual cost for one juvenile is approximately \$9,000, whereas for a juvenile committed to a residential facility, such as a state Youth Development Center, the annual cost is more than \$50,000. Furthermore, such programs are consistent with the North Carolina Juvenile Code's recent emphasis on community-based alternatives for juvenile offenders. As program directors and staff have noted, JSDPs not only allow juvenile offenders to remain in their communities, but they place emphasis on behavior modification rather than punishment. While they emphasize behavior modification through highly structured programming, this programming is designed specifically towards personal responsibility and accountability. All programming is geared to redirecting program participants' thinking and behavior towards actions that are productive and lawful.

Due to the relative infancy of Juvenile Structured Day Programs, further long-term study of effective practices and outcomes is needed. However, our research indicates that JSDPs fill an important gap in providing community-based services to adjudicated youth and youth at-risk

of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system, and offer promising results for youth who have not yet been placed in the adult criminal justice system.

## Appendix A: Key Informant Consent Form

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

#### Juvenile Structured Day and Alternative Learning Programs: Impact and Process Study

#### Key Informant Interview and Secondary Data Collection

Principal Investigator: James C. Fraser, Ph.D.  
Phone Number: (919) 962-6835

Co-Investigator: Rebecca Elmore, M.P.H.

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You have been asked to take part in a research study under the direction of James C. Fraser, Ph.D., Rebecca Elmore, M.P.H., Jonathan Lepofsky, and Amanda Huron. This study is sponsored by the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission.

You will be one of approximately 12 key informants in this research study.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this research study is to better understand the process of developing and coordinating juvenile structured day and alternative learning programs.

**Duration:** Your participation in this interview will last approximately two hours.

**Procedures:** You are being asked to participate in an individual, in-depth interview. During this interview you will be asked to discuss some background information about your agency, key agency partners, and types of youth served. You will also be asked about program lessons learned, effective practices, and how the program might be improved. If you participate in a face to face interview, it will be tape-recorded and notes will be taken. In addition to the interview, you will be asked to collect and provide access to exiting data on participants in your agency's programs.

**Risks:** This study should not involve any risks to you.

**Benefits:** There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research project. Your answers to the questions will be used to develop program recommendations and further understanding of how communities can best serve the needs of at-risk youth.

**Confidentiality:** Every effort will be taken to protect your identity as a participant, as well as anyone listed in secondary data provided to us in this study. However, there is no guarantee that

the information cannot be obtained by legal process or court order. You will not be identified in any report or publication of this study or its results.

**Right to Refuse or Withdraw:** Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, or may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of any services that you otherwise would be entitled to receive. If you choose to participate, a copy of this consent form will be provided to you for your records.

**Institutional Review Board Approval:** This project has been approved by the Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board (AA-IRB) of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. You may contact the Board at the following address and telephone number at any time during this study if you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant:

Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board (AA-IRB)  
Barbara Davis Goldman, Ph.D., Chair  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Tel. (919) 962-7761  
E-mail:aa-irb@unc.edu

**Offer to Answer Questions:** Please ask any questions you may have about this research. If you have any other questions, you may call Dr. Fraser at (919) 962-6835.

I agree to participate.

---

(Signature of Participant)

---

(Date)

---

(Signature of Principal Investigator)

---

(Date)



## **Appendix B: Key Informant Interview Guide**

### **Juvenile Structured Day Programs and Alternative Learning Programs: Impact and Process Study**

#### **Study Purpose**

The Juvenile Structured Day and Alternative Learning Programs Study is an 18-month program, funded by the Governor's Crime Commission, to evaluate the impacts of juvenile structured day programs (JSDPs) and alternative learning programs (ALPs) on the community and youth in four North Carolina communities.

#### **Initial Site Visits**

The purpose of this site visit is to learn more about Juvenile Structured Day Programs (JSDPs) and Alternative Learning Programs (ALPs) and the process of developing and running such programs. We are interested in learning about this process from you, and would like to know what has and has not worked well for you. The information we gather through our initial site visits with 12 North Carolina programs will help us choose sites for in-depth study. In the final sites, we will conduct individual, in-depth interviews and surveys with staff, teachers, and students, to examine program impacts, including matriculation and recidivism rates among students. Data findings will be compiled in an "effective practices" report to assist researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and localities in the development of appropriate, effective programs targeting at-risk youth.

In order to learn about your organization, we have designed the following interview guide that takes about **two hours**. After the interview portion, we would like to take an hour to follow up with a tour of the program facilities, meet with other staff and students, and collect any relevant program documents.

### **Key Informant Interview Guide**

#### **I. Program Planning and Operation**

- A. Could you please tell me how people were brought together to create this program?
1. How long has your program been in operation?
  2. Who were the original key stakeholders who developed this program?
  3. What were the problems that this group of stakeholders wanted to address?
  4. Would you please describe the overall philosophy of the program?

5. Would you please describe your program's curriculum and activities?
  - a. Does your program's curricula follow the N.C. Standard Course of Study? Why or why not?
6. How have program efforts been changed since your program started? Why?
7. What types of youth does your program serve?
  - a. What factors created the need to serve these types of youth? (court/judge factors, school/administrative, student/behavioral/attitudinal factors, etc.)
8. How many staff members does your agency employ?
  - a. Tell me a little about the qualifications and experience of your staff.
  - a. Does your program employ state/nationally certified teachers? Why or why not?
  - c. Do the programs have staff trained/certified for students with special learning needs (e.g., BED, EH, etc.) Why or why not?
  - d. What sort of staff development/training do you have?
  - e. What limitations have you faced regarding staff training and certification?
9. What are the program's sources of funding?
  - a. What other sources of funding are available?
  - b. How have these funding sources impacted your program (positively and negatively)?
10. Is transportation an issue for the program and for the students involved?
11. What challenges have you faced keeping the program up and running?
  - a. How have you responded to these challenges?

## **II. Program Partnerships**

1. How would you describe the larger community that this program effort serves?
  - a. How is this community considered in regard to the general philosophy and specific mission of this program?
2. Would you please describe who your agency partners with in the community? (i.e., other community agencies or individuals)
  - a. How have these partnerships helped your agency meet its goals?
  - b. Please tell me about any limitations or difficulties you've faced in partnering with other agencies or individuals.

## **III. Program Effectiveness**

- A. What indicators of success does your program use? [Probe: What signs of shortcomings and successes do you use?]
  1. How do you track and document program success and challenges?

- a. What data are collected on the youth enrolled and the program? Are there any documents that we may have copies of?
  2. How many youth has your program served? (by year, and to date)
  3. Are the students your program serves the ones your program was originally designed to serve?
    - a. If not, why has your program design changed?
  4. What types of youth tend to be most successful in your program?
    - a. What types of youth tend to be less successful in meeting your program goals?
  5. Do you track where youth go after they leave your program?
    - a. After going through your program, where do most youth go?
    - b. Have any youth returned to your program?
  6. Does your program utilize a standardized or objective intake or student assessment to determine level of functioning? Why or why not?
    - a. Do you repeat this assessment at discharge?
  7. How would you describe the larger community that this program effort serves?
    - a. How is this community considered in regard to the general philosophy and specific mission of this program?
  8. What process has been put in place for program governance and decision-making?
  9. How do the youth you serve, or the community you serve more generally, have any impact upon how decisions get made regarding program operation?
  10. What would you consider to be an honest assessment of the limitations of this program?
  11. What do you see happening with your program in the next five years?
  12. Do you have any recommendations regarding types of questions we should be asking youth participating in your program?
    - a. What do you think youth participating in your program will say about the program (positive and negative aspects)?
- 

Thank you for your time!

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact us at any time.

## Appendix C: Final Site Selection Letter

**Director Name**  
**Address Line 1**  
**City, State, Zip**

**Dear [Director]:**

This letter is to inform you that based on the information we have gathered to date, your project has been chosen for further, in-depth study as part of our project, "Juvenile Structured Day and Alternative Learning Programs: Impact and Process Study." We are excited about the strategies employed by your program that work to meet the needs of at-risk youth, and we feel there is much more to be learned from your example.

In order to effectively document program impacts and learn more about the challenges and successes you face on a daily basis, we will be requesting to meet with you several times over the next few months. We understand that your time is very limited, and we will work hard not to be disruptive to your staff or students. We appreciate your willingness to share program assessment tools, youth records, and evaluation procedures with us; this information will help us compile an "effective practices" report and develop key policy recommendations for the state of North Carolina. In addition to collecting secondary data, we would like to conduct brief interviews with several youth enrolled in your program, in order to find out how they view the program. The semi-structured interview guide we will be using is attached for your review. Before any youth can be interviewed, we are required to obtain permission from a parent or legal guardian, and also written assent from each youth. Copies of these two forms are also enclosed for your review.

My co-researchers and I look forward to working with you over the coming months. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

James C. Fraser, Ph.D.

## Appendix D: Final Site Selection GCC Letter

[ON GCC LETTERHEAD]

[DATE]

Dear [Director's Name]:

The Governor's Crime Commission has a vital interest in the success of juvenile structured day programs throughout the state. Thus it has funded a collaborative project with the Center for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the *Juvenile Structured Day and Alternative Learning Programs: Impact and Process Study*. With your help we hope to learn more about the process of developing JSDBs and how they interface with ALPs, plus determine impacts on the community and youth they serve.

Researchers from UNC Chapel Hill will be contacting you to schedule an appropriate time to conduct staff and youth interviews, and collect program data in order to develop key recommendations for programs in various phases of development. Naturally all work will be with appropriate permission and strict confidentiality. This information will also help them compile a set of "effective practices" and statewide policy recommendations which will be used to help those of us involved in the development of youth services, especially juvenile structured day programs. In order for the UNC research team to complete their study, we request that you assist them with access to appropriate records and documentation for participants in your program and provide copies of information you may use to track program successes and challenges.

As always, we sincerely appreciate your assistance in this important work. The lessons you have learned while providing services to our youth will help not only policy and decision makers, it will greatly assist your colleagues throughout the state in this really important work. Please do not hesitate to contact the commission with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

[SIGNATURE]

David Jones, Executive Director

## **Appendix E: Parental Consent Form**

### **PERMISSION FOR SON/DAUGHTER TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

#### **Juvenile Structured Day and Alternative Learning Programs: Impact and Process Study**

#### **Youth Interview and Secondary Data Collection**

Principal Investigator: James C. Fraser, Ph.D.  
Phone Number: (919) 962-6835

Co-Investigator: Rebecca Elmore, M.P.H.

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Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am conducting a research project on how North Carolina's Juvenile Structured Day Programs (JSDPs) and Alternative Learning Programs (ALPs) are impacting at-risk youth. The North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission funded this research in order to learn more about the process of developing JSDPs/ALPs, and to measure their impact on participating youth. In order to determine the impact of these programs on youth, I request permission for your son/daughter to participate in a short, in-person interview. Youth participating in these interviews will be asked questions about what types of daily activities they take part in, how they view the program, what they like and dislike about the program, and what impact they feel the program has made.

Each youth will be invited to leave the classroom to participate in this interview. The project will be explained in terms that your son/daughter can understand, and your teen will accompany me only if he or she is willing to do so. I will conduct interviews with the help of my two Research Associates, and written notes will be taken. Participants' responses will be reported as group results only, and no names or identifying personal information will be included in any published study results. Only I and members of my research staff will view the notes. In addition to your son/daughter's interview participation, I will need to look at the JSDP's/ALP's records to obtain your teen's enrollment and test score data.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your son/daughter to participate will not affect the services normally provided by their program. At the conclusion of the study, a summary of group results will be made available to all interested parents and teachers. Should you have any questions or desire further information, please call me at (919) 962-6835 or email me at pavement@unc.edu.

There are two copies of this letter. After signing them, keep one copy for your records and return the other one to your teen's school. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

James C. Fraser, Ph.D.  
Principal Investigator

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board (AA-IRB) at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. You may contact the AA-IRB if you have questions or concerns about your teen's rights as a research participant at (919) 962-7761 or at aa-irb@unc.edu.

Please indicate whether or not you wish to have your son/daughter participate in this project below. Please also print your teen's name in the space provided. After signing your name, return this sheet to your son/daughter's program director in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

I DO grant permission for my son/daughter to participate in Dr. Fraser's research project.

I DO NOT grant permission for my son/daughter to participate in Dr. Fraser's research project.

---

**(Parent/Guardian Signature)**

---

**(DATE)**

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**Teen's Name (Please Print)**

## **Appendix F: Youth Assent Form**

### **WRITTEN ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

#### **Juvenile Structured Day and Alternative Learning Programs: Impact and Process Study**

##### **Youth Interview and Secondary Data Collection**

Principal Investigator: James C. Fraser, Ph.D.

Phone Number: (919) 962-6835

Co-Investigator: Rebecca Elmore, M.P.H.

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#### **Introduction to the Study:**

- We are inviting you to be in a research study of youth in four North Carolina Juvenile Structured Day Programs (JSDPs) or Alternative Learning Programs (ALPs).
- We are studying how these programs might be improved and examining how these programs are affecting youth.
- Dr. Jim Fraser of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is directing this study.

#### **Purpose:**

- The purpose of this study is to see how well Juvenile Structured Day Programs (JSDPs) and Alternative Learning Programs (ALPs) are working to help youth. We also want to help people starting their own youth programs.
- We hope to use what we learn from the study to make changes to these programs so they will help youth even more than they already do.

#### **What Will Happen During the Study:**

This is what will happen during the study (which will take place while you are at the Program):

1. We will ask you to participate in a short, in-person interview. In the interview, we will ask you questions about your experiences here in this program, including how long you have been here, how you feel about this program, and what you would like to change about this program. We will take notes during this interview.
2. We will ask the director for permission to access your enrollment and test records to track the changes you've made since you started in this program.

If you have any questions or concerns about being in this study, you should contact Dr. Fraser at (919) 962-6835 or pavement@unc.edu.



**Your Privacy Is Important:**

- We will make every effort to protect your privacy.
- We will not use your name in any of the information we get from this study or in any of the research reports.
- Any information we get in the study will be recorded with a code number that will let Dr. Fraser know who you are.
- When the study is finished the key that shows which code number goes with your name will be destroyed.

**Risks and Discomforts:**

We do not know of any personal risk or discomfort you will experience from being in this study.

**Your Rights:**

- You decide on your own whether or not you want to be in this study.
- You will not be treated any differently if you decide not to be in the study.
- If you decide to be in the study, you will have the right to stop being in the study at any time.
- If you decide not to be in the study or to stop being in the study, this will not affect the regular services you get from this program.

**Institutional Review Board Approval:**

- The Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board (AA-IRB) at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has approved this study.
- If you have any concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the AA-IRB at (919) 962-7761 or at aa-irb@unc.edu.

I have had the chance to ask any questions I have about this study, and they have been answered for me.

I have read the information in this assent form, and I agree to be in the study. There are two copies of this form. I will keep one copy and return the other to the investigator.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Participant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(DATE)

## **Appendix G: Semi-Structured Youth Interview Guide**

1. How did you end up in this program?
2. How long have you been in this program?
3. What do you think is the point of the program?
4. What is a typical day like for you here?
5. What do you do in your free time outside of this program?
6. How do you think other people view or see you?
  - a. parents
  - b. friends
  - c. current teachers
  - d. old school
  - e. parole officer/court counselor
  - f. others
7. How do you view yourself?
8. How do you feel you've changed since you started in this program?
9. What do you like most about this program? Least?
10. Is there anything you would like to see changed about this program?
11. What do you see yourself doing after you leave the program? (Probe: When will that be?)

## **Appendix H: Summaries of Sites Participating in Initial Stage of Study**

### **Positive Impact of Union County, Inc.--Monroe, NC**

#### ***Overview***

Positive Impact began operating in March of 2000. Before Positive Impact began, the primary services available to adjudicated and at-risk youth in Union county had been a restitution program run through a local organization. Using funds made available by the Union County Juvenile Crime Prevention Commission (JCPC), Positive Impact opened its doors to expand the restitution program and create an after-school program. Positive Impact initially worked in conjunction with the organization running the restitution program to extend the services offered.

Positive Impact began primarily from the efforts of the previous Executive Director to provide for troubled youth in Union County. After achieving full not-for-profit status at the end of 2000, Positive Impact took full responsibility for the restitution program in addition to an after-school initiative. The agency secured funds for operating costs and for an additional staff member from the JCPC monies. The county school system joined the effort by hiring a part-time teacher to coordinate and conduct Positive Impact's academic services. The organization expanded into a full-day operation with an array of services through a grant from the GCC. Both the JCPC and GCC recognized, alongside the founders of Positive Impact, several unmet needs of adjudicated youth and non-adjudicated youth in Union County. The needs identified include behavioral adjustment activities, academic guidance, psychological counseling, and substance abuse treatment. The Union County site runs a Clinical Evaluation Program, a Juvenile Structured Full-Day Program, a Juvenile Structured After-School Program, and a Restitution Program.

#### ***Program Planning & Operation***

The organization activities are structured around four programs: a Clinical Evaluation Program, a Juvenile Structured Full-Day Program, a Juvenile Structured After-School Program, and a Restitution Program. The Juvenile Court and the Union County school system refer youth to Positive Impact. Referrals are handled either internally by Positive Impact staff or through existing external sources. The youth's Court Counselor manages external services provided for Positive Impact adjudicated youth. The Clinical Evaluation Program uses a systems approach to

accurately identify the individualized needs of each youth and then make appropriate referrals. Needs are identified by examining the following factors: individual risk factors, family risk factors, school-level risk factors, and community risk factors. The Juvenile Structured Full-Day Program targets long-term suspended youth. This program aims to return youth to the school system and end their involvement in the court system. Working in conjunction with external agencies, this program addresses the following risk factors in individualized and group settings: individual risk factors, family risk factors, peer group risk factors, school-level risk factors, and community risk factors. Staff place stress on creating an academic and therapeutic structure with a focus on responsibility, personal accountability, and choices and consequences for youth. Youth can receive school credit during participation in the Juvenile Structured Full-Day Program via the Education Component. The Juvenile Structured After-School Program provides similar services as the Full-Day Program during the high-crime hours of 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The After-School Program provides supplementary educational services along with behavioral services. The Restitution Program serves as a sentencing alternative for adjudicated youth. This program places youth at a worksite to earn funds to pay victims. Some youth can receive restitution credit through participation in the After-School Program.

Currently, Positive Impact employs ten staff in-house. The staff includes licensed therapists, teachers and individuals with training for students with special needs. The Union County JCPC and the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission (GCC) are the main funders for the agency. GCC funds primarily go to the Juvenile Structured Full-Day Program. Positive Impact has successful working partnerships with an array of local and state-wide organizations, including: the Union County JCPC, the GCC, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Mental Health, the 4-H Club, South Piedmont Community College, local businesses, local organizations and individuals comprising the Positive Impact Board of Directors, and the local school systems.

### ***Program Challenges***

While the agency has seen much success for its clients, the main challenges facing Positive Impact are maintaining stable funding and providing transportation for participating youth. Funding to date has been piecemeal and focused on obtaining support on a program-by-program basis. The challenge remains to achieve stable funding aimed at the agency as a whole

to secure its position as a successful service provider. Transportation remains a hindrance for youth who do not have a means of transportation. Since Positive Impact is located in two rural counties, program clients are widely dispersed. While Positive Impact makes an effort to provide transportation to all youth who are in need, this occurs on a limited basis. The challenge remains to provide stable and reliable transportation—perhaps via the school system—to youth attending Positive Impact. This challenge is particularly difficult for youth in the Structured After-School Program.

### **Project P.R.I.D.E. (Providing Regimented Instruction, Drug treatment & Education)--Asheboro, NC**

#### ***Overview***

Project P.R.I.D.E. (Providing Regimented Instruction, Drug treatment and Education) serves youth in Randolph and Montgomery Counties. Project P.R.I.D.E. emerged out of the services provided through the area Adult Day Reporting Center. Before its inception, no such facility existed for youth offenders. Juvenile court counselors, community leaders, the JCPC, and the GCC began conversations about how to address the growing rates of academic failure and suspended or court-involved youth in the area. Taking advantage of the interest in funding such programs as alternative schooling initiatives, Project P.R.I.D.E. began in 2000 with a summer pilot program modeled on the Adult Day Reporting Center. After this trial period, the program was revamped and began operating in August 2000 similar to its current form. The activities have become more attuned to the needs of at-risk and troubled youth, with a desire to reverse trends of school failure, and the drive to create an intensive treatment and supervisory environment. According to program staff, the type of intense structure provided by this Juvenile Structured Day Center distinguishes it from other such projects funded by the GCC and JCPC and has made it successful in meeting many needs of the youth in Randolph and Montgomery counties.

The organization is a quasi-public agency in the justice system that attempts to be an independent alternative to the conventional consequences that adjudicated youth face. The agency primarily works on cognitive behavior intervention and sees itself as an opportunity—as opposed to a punishment—for adjudicated youth in the area to avoid boot camp or prison. Project P.R.I.D.E. offers a highly structured program in a contained environment and places an

emphasis on physical activity to assist with cognitive behavioral intervention. While the organization's main function is to serve adjudicated youth as a Juvenile Structured Day Center, supplementary activities include adult education for parents. Staff members hope to expand services to reach at-risk youth who have yet to be court involved. The program runs year round and youth attend for various lengths of time.

### ***Program Planning & Operation***

Project P.R.I.D.E. began in January 2000 as a day reporting center to meet the needs of youth in the City of Asheboro, and in Randolph and Montgomery counties. The need for this program grew with increased suspension rates of youth, increased academic failure among youth, and the lack of services for court-involved youth who had not been sentenced to a residential facility. Approximately ten to 12 youth attend on an average day. The youth range from ages ten to 18 and attend the agency for five and a half hours per day from 12:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Daily activities begin with youth changing attire from their clothes to baseball caps, black sweatshirts, and black sweatpants provided by Project P.R.I.D.E. Youth spend the afternoon performing physical activities (such as military-style formations), obtaining Life Skills training (such as learning how to manage a checkbook or behave at a job), and attending academic classes. There is significant focus on building a sense of personal pride in students with a "firm but fair" daily structure within which youth can choose to be successful or not. Additional significance is placed on attuning youth to the world around them and developing a civic attitude. Because many youth are only at Project P.R.I.D.E. for a short time period, the agency tries to send a strong and clear message to youth that the youth must choose to be successful. Agency staff understand their job to be making the community safer by not only taking offending youth out of the situations in which they make bad choices, but also by trying to instill long-term personal management skills so that youth will make better choices when left to their own devices. In addition to the daily routine services include: drug treatment and education, parent education, individual counseling, transportation, agency referrals for other service agencies, and monthly progress reports of participating youth.

The staff of eight includes former military personnel, former group home workers, a certified teacher and others otherwise experienced in servicing court-involved youth who may or may not have cognitive and/or behavioral disorders. Staff members receive training at the North

Carolina Justice Academy (NCJA) in proper search and seizure techniques, crisis intervention, and other skills. Funded primarily by the Randolph/Montgomery County JCPCs, and the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission, the program also depends on funding from various private in-kind donors. Key partnerships incorporate actors in the juvenile justice system (such as court counselors) and the school systems (such as public school teachers and administrators).

### ***Program Challenges***

Key challenges that Project P.R.I.D.E. faces include finding diverse funding sources and the limitations of their physical facility on the types of services they can provide. While project staff have been able to acquire funding for programs when needed, this funding runs on a grant-by-grant basis. More stable funding is desired to provide for the program as a whole and guarantee organizational stability. Additional funding would also allow Project P.R.I.D.E. to provide many more relevant services that are currently out-sourced or achieved through interagency referrals. In addition to funding needs, Project P.R.I.D.E. operates out of a small storefront space in downtown Asheboro. Outdoor activities—a large component of Project P.R.I.D.E.'s program—occur behind the facility on a small concrete space next to a parking lot. Space constraints are obvious at the facility, especially considering how the cramped environment can exacerbate many youths' volatile behavior. Space also limits how many youth can be serviced. Stable funding and access to a better space could greatly enhance Project P.R.I.D.E.'s efforts and allow staff to develop the ideas they have for expanding the agency towards prevention activities.

## **Rockingham County Youth Services' ALPS/Day Center--Wentworth, NC**

### ***Overview***

The Rockingham County Youth Services' ALPS/Day Center began to address the growing crime rate in Wentworth, which at the time was the highest in Rockingham County. Stemming from a grant proposal submitted to the GCC in the mid 1990s by the current director, the ALPS/Day Center is a broad initiative in close partnership with the school system. Much of the initiative to activate the program came from the current Director and through the current Director's relationships with key decision makers and administrators in the school system and

the county at large. The initiative provides an alternative educational setting for referred youth in grades six through 12. Youth come to the program through the courts and school referrals as long- and short-term suspended and at-risk students. The program is run by a county governmental agency, Rockingham County Youth Services. The program combines an Alternative Learning Program of Study with a Juvenile Structured Day Center and is available for youth throughout Rockingham County.

### ***Program Planning & Operation***

The ALPS/Day Center initiative has evolved over the last ten years into its current format. Initially, Rockingham County Youth Services set out to address the growing crime rate in the area by targeting youths (both offending and at-risk). At this stage, the program was mostly voluntary for youth to attend. With the growing success of these efforts and the consolidation of the city and county school systems, the program has become mandatory for adjudicated youth and school-referred youth. The ALPS runs during regular school hours, except during the summer, and is voluntary. Operating year round, The Juvenile Day Center begins later in the morning and continues later into the day than normal school hours. Youth in the Day Center are required to attend as adjudicated youth.

The overall philosophy of the program is holistic and incorporates a variety of services for the youth and their families. The director designs the program around personal development and academic achievement for attending youth. Staff members build personal development by preparing participating youth to be engaged citizens as adults. Recognizing that the youth of today will be the adult members of the community tomorrow, staff members structure personal development around substance abuse prevention, career exploration, self improvement, conflict resolution, peer mediation, study skills, and building self esteem. Youth, as well as program staff, evaluate personal development growth.

Academic achievement curriculum follows the North Carolina Course of Study, and high school students can earn up to two credits per semester when approved by their home school principal. Several tests evaluate academic achievement, including the TABE (Tests of Adult Basic Education) diagnostic and ongoing evaluations of youth's academic progress. Program staff members conduct extensive intake analysis of youth to measure progress during the program and adjust programmatic efforts according to individualized needs when appropriate.



Youth are also involved in individual, group, and family counseling services, and Day Center youth have physical activities as part of their program. Staff members make every effort to give youth community service and social field trip opportunities in the local area. According to the director, the youth that seem to be most successful in the ALPS/Day Center are those who stay the longest. As such, program staff focus on long-term behavior change, though results have also been measured as successful in the short term.

The program employs eight part-time staff, many who are retired teachers from the local school system. Most staff members are certified teachers and have extensive experience working with special needs youth. They continue training as part of their employment. Rockingham County and the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission primarily fund the program. The ALPS/Day Center has extensive connections with local agencies and businesses which partner with the initiative, such as the County Public Library, area restaurants, and organizations like the YMCA and 4-H Club. These partners include local governmental agencies, state agencies, local community service organizations and local businesses that work with the youth, offer community service opportunities for the youth, provide donations, and assist in the general operation of the program.

### ***Program Challenges***

While this program has been very successful, several challenges need to be addressed. Providing transportation is a challenge for youth in the Day Center. Youth attending the ALPS receive transportation through the school system; however, because Day Center hours are different than ALPS hours, this option is not yet available for the Day Center. Another challenge regards the staff. While having part-time staff members allows greater flexibility in terms of staff expenditures, the part-time status often leads to positions being filled on a temporary basis. Therefore, a large challenge is maintaining a stable staff (though currently this is not of immediate concern). This challenge is related to another hindrance: funding. Funding has been stable over the years, but funding has been limited to program specific operations rather than organizational development. Some staff, particularly the director, remain occupied by the need to identify additional sources of funding and to maintain existing funding levels. These activities take these staff away from the day-to-day operations of the organization. Increased funding aimed at organization development would greatly enhance the program. An additional challenge

identified by agency staff is the amount of paperwork and bureaucratic tasks necessary to fulfill directives from governmental agencies. (Department of Public Instruction's policies were noted as particularly burdensome.) Staff members hope that future bureaucratic tasks can be more streamlined to allow them more time to work with the youth directly.

## **Scotland County Juvenile Structured Day Program (PALS)--Laurinburg, NC**

### ***Overview***

With the initiative of the chief court counselor and Director of Parks and Recreation, Scotland County submitted a proposal to develop a Juvenile Structured Day Program in 1999--PALS--to the local Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC). Later, county officials submitted a similar proposal to the Governor's Crime Commission. County leaders recognized an increasing problem with suspended youth being sent home, often into unsupervised situations in which youth would get into further trouble. Some of these youth were already a part of the county social services caseload. With broad support of local judges, DJJDP wanted to see something different happen where youth would be in a more structured environment. The JCPC also noticed these trends. At first, JCPC was the sole funding source for the effort to redirect these developments, but it was not until the Governor's Crime Commission's involvement that the county had enough resources to make the program viable in 2002.

Program staff members work closely with court counselors through an informal interagency agreement. This agreement helps the program to obtain funding and to ensure that the program receives youth appropriate for the services offered. Court counselors provide referrals of youth for whom the program is specifically designed. The PALS program director attends the weekly staff meetings with local DJJDP staff to decide on potential youth placements in the PALS program. This form of cooperation creates a stable and productive partnership to assure that the program's intake process operates smoothly. In addition to decision-making activities generated out of this partnership, there is an advisory board that represents potential stakeholders in the community. Similarly, there are close relationships to the public schools and with local principals.

The key program component is the academic education based on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Youth use NovaNet to obtain independent study opportunities as well as small class experiences. There are also programmatic components that cover life skills, anger

management, drug and alcohol prevention, and other behavior management issues. Staff members create portfolios on each youth to document their attendance, progress, and achievements. Staff members present these portfolios to principals when youth return to their home school to help administrators determine how to place the youth. This provides an opportunity for some youth to take their grade examination over the summer, so that they may receive credit and move up to the next level.

Staff designed the PALS program for short-term and long-term youth between grades six and twelve. At any point in time, the program will have ten long-term youth and a handful of short-term youth. The majority of youth come from low-income families and they participate in the reduced-cost or free-lunch programs. Court counselors make every effort to support program consistency by not referring violent offenders or similar types of offenders who need services not offered by PALS. Initially local DJJDP staff refer all youth, however, inroads are being made with school officials to serve at-risk youth in addition to the adjudicated youth now directed to PALS. This effort represents a shift toward expanding the program in order to serve a broader segment of the community.

### ***Program Planning & Operation***

The underlying philosophy of the program is to get youth back into their home school and have them successfully matriculate. As the program director stated, “We try to do everything just like at the home school environment.”

The program is broken into two sections: Phase 1, for older youth, and Phase 2, for younger youth. In Phase 1, the older youth attend the program from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. While the hours are longer than a traditional school day, PALS attempts to simulate a typical school schedule by providing academic instruction, physical education, time for lunch, and occasional guest speakers.

In Phase 2, younger youth are on a home school schedule and stay until 3:00 p.m. These students do the same type of activities as youth in Phase 1, however, they are broken up into different classrooms. Short-term suspended youth typically come to the program with materials from their home school, so they will not lose their academic standing. All PALS students sign a contract whereby they agree to act in accordance with program policy. If youth act-up, the

probation officer is notified, yet, to date, there have been no youth suspended from PALS. Program staff members have the option of moving youth into formal detention.

Five staff members operate the PALS program. Of these staff members, one is a certified teacher and four are teaching assistants. With such a small staff, each member's role in the overall program is vital, and each staff provides specialized programming in a specific area. For example, one staff member focuses on working with handicapped or exceptional students; one is trained and certified in physical restraint and management and social skills development; and one is experienced as a student aide. The program director assists in creating PALS day-to-day programming. Often, the director works with school principals in coordinating services for the youth and determines academic, mental, and behavioral issues that specific youth are experiencing.

### ***Program Challenges***

The two most significant challenges to the program are interrelated. First, the director and staff must continually demonstrate that the program is contributing a needed service to the community. Second, the program must find sustained financial resources to operate and make a needed contribution to the community. The program will struggle to be a viable service provider when current funding from the GCC ends. PALS' future is unclear if other funding streams are not identified or if the GCC does not reallocate funds for an additional period of time. A related, broader challenge is how similar types of programs are being asked to develop, maintain, and expand in a short period of time without a model to follow. In addition, although there is no model provided, PALS finds itself in a situation where they must develop an evaluation mechanism that will be persuasive for potential sponsors at the local and state levels.

## **The KIPP Academy (Knowledge is Power Program)--Asheville, NC**

### ***Overview***

The KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) Academy officially opened in the city of Asheville in Buncombe County in January 2002. The KIPP Academy is an academically rigorous, college-prep, public middle school for at-risk students. There are five key components to the KIPP program, or the pillars of the KIPP network: high expectations for academic

achievement and conduct; students' commitment to the school and each other; extended time on task; power to lead; and a focus on results.

The program director of KIPP was formerly a fourth grade teacher at Randolph Elementary School, and was selected from a pool of applicants to lead the KIPP program. After being selected to lead the KIPP program in Asheville, the director received training in the KIPP program and principles in July 2001 at the Haas School of Business at the University of California at Berkeley. The director also spent two months in residence at KIPP schools in New York and Texas in order to learn about how KIPP programs are being run successfully in other states. After this initial training, the program director spent six months establishing the program for Asheville City Schools. Youth were brought into the program in July 2002.

### ***Program Planning & Operation***

The Knowledge is Power Program began with academies in Houston, Texas and in New York's south Bronx area. Due to positive outcomes with youth in the Texas and New York programs, funding was provided by founder of *The Gap* clothing store, to replicate the program nationwide. The Asheville City Board of Education voted in December 2000 to pursue the program at the request of local African-American parents who had visited the academy in the Bronx and were looking for ways to close the achievement gap between minority and white students. The Asheville program director was selected because of his track record and his "unrelenting enthusiasm and record of achievement in helping low-performing students do better in school."

The KIPP Asheville program is housed in two classrooms at Randolph Elementary School in the Montford neighborhood and currently serves 54 fifth graders. As noted by the director, students of any background can apply to the KIPP program; race, income, and past academic performance are not used to decide who gets in. According to the program director, the program is open to all at-risk youth who demonstrate a willingness to apply themselves to the KIPP principles: "We're going to blow the bugle everywhere...This school is for any and all students willing to make this commitment to excellence; this is an opportunity for education at its finest. We expect to have great outcomes, and we are going to do whatever it takes to move these kids forward."

KIPP Asheville operates as one of the city school system's magnet schools--essentially a school within a school college preparatory program. According to local school officials, the program plans to add a grade each year until it serves 250 students in grades five through eight. Randolph Elementary School was picked for the initial effort because it had the available space, but the plan is to eventually branch out and be housed in a separate school building.

The KIPP program requires students and parents to sign a written contract that specifies student attendance. One of the key components of KIPP is the amount of time students spend in the classroom: students are at KIPP from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Fridays, and 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. three Saturdays a month. One of the benefits of this increased time commitment is that students get a lot of instruction time, individual attention, and extra time to really cover subjects in an intensive manner. At the end of it, the kids spend nearly 70% more time in school, and it's not just any type of time, it's structured, high-quality teaching and learning time. No longer do you have to rob social studies to teach more math...KIPPsters are the hardest working students in the nation. In addition, students also get hands-on instruction and assistance that they may not be able to get at home.

Responsibility for remaining focused on the Five Pillars rests with students, parents, teachers, and administrators. The primary goal of KIPP is to enhance academic success and character skills. In working toward this goal, all KIPP teachers are on call 24 hours a day, and carry cell phones at all times to be available to students and parents after school hours for homework help and other questions. In addition, teachers make home visits to assist with homework and help teach parents how to provide academic support to the child. "We encourage our kids and parents to contact us ASAP because we're all team and family. There are no secrets at KIPP." The program is also recruiting volunteers for a KIPP advisory council to help raise money for the program. The initial program budget will be \$180,000, which will fund the salaries of the director, two to three teachers, and a clerical person. "KIPP has a commitment-to-excellence component that the parent has to read and understand. They must be willing to sign a formal agreement that they will work with their child and us to meet the standards of the program. We feel that parents will want to be involved in it because of the standards of the program and the success rate of the program" (Morrison 2002).

Free transportation is offered to all students residing in the city school district. Applicants from outside the district are also welcome to apply. Teachers are paid about 20%

more because of the additional time required for the program. The school system is responsible for providing a location, staff, transportation and technology, while the national KIPP organization provides ongoing training, technical assistance and regular evaluations of the program. KIPP National also provides the academy with \$100,000 over two years for things like uniforms, field trips, musical instruments, and KIPP dollars as incentives for the students.

### ***Program Challenges***

There has been continued difficulty (nationwide and statewide) in finding effective methods to impact the lives of African-American youth; it is absolutely critical to find better ways to make positive changes in the lives of these young people. Another ongoing struggle is finding ways to diversify funding and gain community support. The KIPP Asheville program has been extremely fortunate to have the support and experience of KIPP National; they have been able to learn from other programs' positive and negative experiences and outcomes. Nationwide publicity garnered by the Texas and New York KIPP programs has also been a plus.

While the KIPP Houston program (see Appendix I) has gained national attention, it is important to note that KIPP programs do not serve adjudicated youth. The program serves youth labeled at risk, an entirely different set of youth, with entirely different sets of problems. The focus of KIPP is to ultimately provide at-risk youth with the academic and behavioral support and skills they need to get into college and succeed in college. Programs focusing on the needs of adjudicated youth cannot afford to look so far to the future; they are wholly driven by the desire to reach these youth and provide them with survival skills--academically, socially, and behaviorally. The focus on college admittance is, for many program directors, a luxury on which they cannot afford to focus.

## **Twin County Juvenile Day Reporting Center--Rocky Mount, NC**

### ***Overview***

The Twin County Juvenile Day Reporting Center serves delinquent juveniles from Edgecombe and Nash counties who are in need of a structured sentencing alternative that includes standard educational programming, life skills instruction, school re-entry planning, computer literacy and comprehensive family-centered service planning. All referrals are

received from Juvenile Court Counselors. Students are involved in a full day, after-school programming and tutoring as well as summer programming.

The original grant application for the program was written in 1999. One of the reasons the program was able to come together quickly and meet the needs of at-risk youth was that Edgecombe and Nash counties had established a good working relationship between agencies prior to the program's inception. In addition, local officials were interested in the program and in making it work; there was broad community support for such a program, due to recognition that county youth had a lack of resources and opportunities available to them. Historically, the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District has experienced a high rate of secure detentions and training school commitments.

### ***Program Planning & Operation***

Program staff members include the director, assistant director, social worker, and two teachers. Program staff works closely with the chief court counselor and the county manager. One of the positives of the program, according to the director, is that they are not part of a local school system, and are independent and can make independent decisions. This independence, however, can lead to problems for the youth when they are transitioned back into their school system. At the time of this study, the program had 11 youth, with a capacity for 15 youth. For the 2002-2003 year to date, the program had served 30 youth, and served 67 youth in the 2001-2002 year, an increase from 50 the previous year, and 9 served in the program's first year.

### ***Program Challenges***

According to the program's director, one of the greatest difficulties is coordinating effectively with court counselors. Some program staff perceives that court counselors often do not fully understand the needs and limitations of the program, so it becomes difficult for counselors to understand what types of support the JSDP needs. Program staff also noted the need for increased coordination between the program and local schools, due to the fact that there is little involvement with youth's teachers, which places added burden on the youth when they are transitioned back into their school system. In addition, a major frustration to program staff is the worry over continued funding from the state, and amount of time and resources needed to find additional funding sources in an already strapped economy, which became even more



strained after Hurricane Floyd in 1999. The program staff also expressed frustration at not being able to work with youth before they were court-involved, which often left them feeling that there was little they could do to turn participants' lives around.

## **The Wayne/Lenoir/Greene Juvenile Day Treatment Center--Mount Olive, NC**

### ***Overview***

The Wayne/Lenoir/Greene Juvenile Day Treatment Center offers an array of comprehensive services for court adjudicated juveniles while correcting behavioral patterns that lead to criminal activity. The center's mission is to hold enrolled juvenile offenders accountable for their actions by providing them with essential preventive measures, treatment and educational experiences to be responsive, responsible individuals at home, in school and in the community. Center staff combine comprehensive counseling, intensive programming, increased court supervision, community service, graduated sanctions, job marketing skills, and quality educational programming, to give juveniles intense, collaborative services. Unduplicated services and shared decision-making are the benefits of this team approach to addressing the needs of juvenile offenders. This program serves as a one-stop center that affords other relevant agencies the opportunity to make more sound decisions regarding their clients in a central setting. The center is equipped to provide alternative solutions and intermediate sanctions to lessen tremendous burdens placed upon the juvenile justice system due to high rates of delinquency complaints, court-involved youth, delinquent juveniles, delinquency diversion, secure detention, and training school commitments. Wayne, Lenoir, and Greene counties are in the top ten percent in the state in these categories. Staff at the center hope to decrease court-related incidents, provide integrated service delivery, stabilize families of these youth, redirect negative behaviors, serve as the vehicle to out-of-school suspension and out-of-home placement, engage youth in quality education programming, and allow for community service to be performed.

### ***Program Planning & Operation***

The program targets youth between the ages of 9-17 ranging from those who exhibit behaviors leading to training school commitment and those suspended from school, to those already placed in secure detention or who have been released from training school. Comprehensive counseling, educational programming, treatment plan, and prevention strategies are implemented as warranted on a case-by-case assessment.

The center operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., with an abbreviated schedule on Saturday. A team of parents, DJJDP, court and school officials, and local agency officials are involved in the targeting, screening, referral, placement, and termination processes.

At intake, youth go through an orientation and assessment that consists of reviews of social history, family support, behavioral reports, academic reports, court history, medical history, substance abuse evaluation, and psychological testing for five to ten days. During treatment, the program provides the following services: individual, group, and in-home family counseling; educational programming (that meets and exceeds local and state standards); job seeking and interviewing skills; vocational skills; social/life skills; effective parenting; community service; violence prevention; anger management; crisis intervention; substance abuse avoidance and screening; recreational activities; meals; and, transportation.

Center staff consists of the JDRC coordinator, a counselor/in-home worker, two certified teachers, an administrative assistant, and an executive director. The program staff also work with three individual consultants who provide technical assistance, educational consulting, and recreational consulting.

The Eastern Piedmont Treatment and Prevention Council (EPTPC) is responsible for implementation of the GCC grant; the EPTPC board of directors and the executive director oversee, manage, advertise, and evaluate the program. Program evaluation is an ongoing process, and the director has brought in an outside evaluator to assist in determination of juveniles' progress, staff, service delivery, staff/in-service training, and parental involvement. Surveys are conducted with project participants, parents, community members, teachers, other school officials, court representatives, and law enforcement officials.

### ***Program Challenges***

One of the challenges the program has faced has been in serving such a large area. In serving a three-county area, the program must attempt to meet the needs of a large number of youth with a wide range of academic and behavioral concerns. Serving such a wide area also complicates the transportation issue for program staff. The program director has trained all program staff to be able to function in all program roles, including that of driver, when necessary. The program has also struggled to partner with a broad range of service providers, due to the lack of youth services available in the program area. EPTPC also faces an ongoing struggle to pursue funds from private donations, foundations, and the State DJJDP, to provide monies after federal funds are no longer available.

## **Appendix I: National Comparison Site / The Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP), Houston, Texas**

### ***Summary***

KIPP stands for "Knowledge is Power Program." KIPP is a college prep public school for at-risk students in grades five through nine. KIPP is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization. KIPP's mission is: *to prepare students with the academic, intellectual, and character skills necessary for success in high school, college, and the competitive world beyond.* The KIPP Houston Program was the First KIPP Academy, founded in 1994. KIPP was first chartered by the Houston Independent School District in 1995 and in 1998 by the Texas Education Agency.

There is a lot of emphasis on slogans--they are written on the school's walls, on walkways, on signs in hallways, in the classrooms, on student T-shirts, and on posters all over the schools. Examples of these slogans are:

*"All of Us Will Learn"*

*"Team Always Beats Individual"*

*"Be Nice. Work Hard."*

*"If You Can't Run with the Big Dogs, Stay on the Porch" -- ("the porch" is a term for punishment -- kids can't talk to other kids not on the porch, have to wear T-shirts inside out, etc.)*

KIPP students and parents must sign a "Commitment to Excellence" form that specifies attendance from 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, four hours on Saturdays, and one month each summer. Parents agree to support this commitment, ensure attendance, and help with 2-3 hours of homework each night.

### ***Program Planning & Operation***

KIPP's Guiding Principles are:

- There are no shortcuts.
- Success is built through desire, discipline, and dedication.
- The path to success is education.
- A quality education is based upon
  1. MORE TIME for students in the classroom daily, weekly, and yearly;
  2. CHOICE AND COMMITMENT to the school on the part of teachers, parents, and students alike;

3. POWER TO LEAD for the school leader who needs to have control over personnel and budget;
4. HIGH EXPECTATIONS for student academic achievement and conduct regardless of their backgrounds, and;
5. FOCUS ON RESULTS as the manner to assess student, teacher, administrator, and overall school performance.

In 2001, KIPP was named an Exemplary School by the Texas Education Agency, and 99% of all KIPP students passed all sections of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). In math, writing, science, and social studies, KIPP students earned a perfect passing rate of 100%. In Reading, KIPP students earned a school-wide passing rate of 99%. All students were tested; KIPP claimed no exceptions. In addition to exemplary test scores, eighth graders who finished KIPP in the last three years (1999-2001) have earned over \$7.5 million in high school scholarships, and have gone on to several prestigious public and private high schools in Texas and other states (e.g., Choate Prep, Andover, Exeter, Milton). KIPP has 340 students enrolled in grades five through nine; these youth spend 67% more time in school than other public school students. Ninety-five percent are Hispanic or African-American; 89% are eligible for federal breakfast and lunch programs.

KIPP had 18 teachers for the 2001-2002 school year; teachers are not required to be certified. Teachers make home visits to provide homework assistance; they help teach parents methods of academic support; they provide transportation to and from school for those students who do not have transportation; and are on call 24-hours, providing students with home phone, cellular, and pager numbers, and respond to a toll-free 1-800 number for student homework questions and emergencies. KIPP students have a dress code (e.g., shirts tucked in, pants with belts, no excessively baggy pants or low hanging pants, no crop tops, no tank tops); students wear school shirts or shirts from approved field trips at all times.

KIPP's annual budget is approximately \$3,010,000. As a public charter school, KIPP receives nearly \$7,200 annually per student, of \$2.5 million in federal and state funding. KIPP raises approximately \$500,000 annually to supplement this funding, providing students with a full range of academic, cultural, and social programs. Contributed funds pay for students' school supplies, instructional materials, uniforms, Saturday Enrichment classes, Saturday lunches, student field lessons, and alumni support throughout their high school years. KIPP has many major donors, including Compaq, Pepsi, and Wendy's.

### ***Program Challenges***

While the Houston KIPP program has been able to secure many funding sources, it struggles to continue to diversify its funding sources over the long term. It has gained national and local attention through various media sources, and was a favored program by George Bush when he was Governor of Texas; yet, surprisingly, there was no apparent effort to document evaluation processes of the program. While such evaluation processes may be taking place, having little to no documentation of these efforts is a serious shortcoming. In addition, while the KIPP program clearly has made headway with at-risk youth, it may be quite challenging to transfer the successes of the KIPP program over to programs dealing with adjudicated youth. Youth who do not follow the KIPP contract may be reprimanded and lose school privileges, and eventually may be kicked out of the program entirely. Programs dealing with adjudicated youth are not able to simply remove troubled youth from their programs, as their programs often offer a last chance for these youth before they end up incarcerated with the adult prison population or are sent to training school.

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