



Aberdeen School District, Grays Harbor County Executive Summary of the Community-Level Progress Evaluation Reports

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Executive Summary

The Aberdeen School District in Grays Harbor County is one of eighteen recipients of the Washington State Incentive Grant (SIG). SIG funds are allocated to communities to prevent the use, misuse and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other drugs by Washington State youth. Community grantees are expected to make their local prevention system more effective by establishing prevention partnerships, using a risk and protective factor framework for data driven needs assessments, and by implementing and monitoring science-based prevention programs. This report documents the Aberdeen School District's efforts toward prevention system change during the first two years of its SIG funding.

Challenges

Aberdeen, a rural town of 16,420 population on Washington's Pacific Coast, has experienced two periods of drastic downsizing in the timber industry in the last twenty years, and sharp declines in the fishing industry as well. The entire coastal area suffers from a lack of opportunity compared to other areas in the state; unemployment is at 8%. Aberdeen's higher than average rates of poverty and substance abuse are blamed for the area's high rates of domestic violence and child abuse. Grays Harbor County's rates of adults in alcohol or other drug treatment, domestic violence, and child abuse are all significantly higher than state rates. Youth substance abuse is also high, with juvenile drug arrest rates higher than those for similar counties and juvenile alcohol arrest rates over twice that of the state rate.

Prevention History and Resources

Prior to the State Incentive Grant, prevention services at the elementary school level were primarily provided by the Aberdeen Police Department through the D.A.R.E. (Drug Awareness and Resistance Education) program. Aberdeen was the second D.A.R.E. site in Washington State, and many residents are proud of the D.A.R.E. program. Educational Service District 113 (ESD 113) provides prevention, intervention, and treatment services, through the True North program, for high school students. The school district was familiar with prevention in general and coordinated with prevention partners, but had not used data for planning, implemented science-based programs, nor had it evaluated program outcomes.

Prevention Program

The Aberdeen School District principals' work group felt that the goals of the prevention program, Families and Schools Together (FAST), were a good fit for the risks faced by their at-risk elementary school students and families. This is the only prevention program provided through SIG funds in the Aberdeen School District.

Prioritized Risk and Protective Factors

A work group of Aberdeen School District principals prioritized risk and protective factors based on the WSSAHB and their experience with the community and the children they serve.

Risk Factors

- Friends who engage in the problem behavior
- Family history of the problem behavior
- Family management problems
- Family conflict

Protective Factors

- Bonding: Family Attachment
- Bonding: School Attachment

Progress toward SIG Community Level Objectives

Objective 1: To *establish partnerships...*to collaborate at the local level to prevent alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use, misuse, and abuse by youth.

The Aberdeen School District partners with Grays Harbor Public Health and Human Services (GHCPHHS), Educational Service District 113 (ESD 113), the Aberdeen Police Department, and Community Mobilization against Substance Abuse (CMASA) to provide substance abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment to its students. GHCPHHS partners with a broad spectrum of agencies, both public and private, to provide substance abuse prevention and education services throughout the county.

Objective 2: To *use a risk and protective factor framework* to develop a community prevention action plan...

GHCPHHS and its partners have been using a risk and protective factor framework since 1993 to coordinate substance abuse prevention efforts.

Objective 3: *To participate in joint community risk and protective factor and resource assessment...*

Every two years, Grays Harbor County partners assess the substance abuse prevention needs of their community. Partners include GHCPHHS, Aberdeen School District, the local CMASA office, the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, Grays Harbor County Human Services Advisory Board, the United Way, local businesses, as well as other partners and individuals in the county. Resource assessment, conducted by the Community Assessment Steering Committee, is published as the *Grays Harbor County Resource Directory*, by CMASA.

One consistent finding of this partnership's assessments is that the needs of Grays Harbor County residents far outstrip the resources available, both in terms of funding and in terms of professional personnel capable of providing services in the community. Several respondents have stated that changes to the state's funding formulae for substance abuse prevention services that reflected the higher than average rates of risk factors in Grays Harbor County would help by providing more funding and more professional resources for Grays Harbor communities.

Objective 4: *To select and implement effective prevention actions...*

A workgroup of elementary school principals in the Aberdeen School District, working with GHCPHHS, found that the family domain was not being addressed for their students, and chose to implement the Families and Schools Together (FAST) program at their schools.

Objective 5: *To use common reporting tools...*

The Aberdeen School District participates in the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behaviors. FAST pre-and post-program surveys provided and analyzed by the Alliance for Children and Families measure FAST immediate outcomes. Starting with Year 3 of SIG, 2001-2002, Aberdeen School District FAST will also use the Everest Database.

Successes:

The Aberdeen School District FAST teams have provided four eight week cycles of FAST at its first site, two cycles at the second site, and a first cycle at the third site, so far. All Aberdeen elementary schools now participate in FAST, and teams plan to provide at least two cycles at each of the three sites for Year 3. Two members of the FAST team have become FAST trainers and have trained Aberdeen's additional FAST teams, as well as presented FAST at the Washington State School Superintendents and Principals Conference. FASTWorks, the follow-up program for FAST parents, is gaining in parent participation and autonomy, with one active FASTWorks group.



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