



Educational Service District 123, Benton County Executive Summary of the Community-Level Progress Evaluation Reports

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Executive Summary

Educational Service District 123 (ESD 123) 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.

Project Site

According to the 2000 Census, Benton County's population grew by 27% in the past decade.¹ The median household money income is \$46,002, slightly higher than the state median income of \$41,715. The percent of children living below poverty is 13%, slightly below the state level of 15%. The community of Finley tends to have lower incomes and more children living in poverty than do other parts of the county, according to informants working in the area. The 2000 Census reports 5,770 residents living in the community of Finley.² The majority of the residents (98%) are white.

Finley is a rural farming and bedroom community located near the Tri-Cities of Kennewick, Richland, and Pasco. Finley lacks an internal infrastructure in which to develop many resources for youth. The school is the only public facility and it serves as the center of the community.

Prevention History

ESD 123 has been providing some prevention services in Finley. There are prevention specialists in the middle and high schools, and the Benton County Sheriff's Office operates a D.A.R.E. (Drug Resistance and Education) program. A substance abuse coalition has been active in the nearby Tri-Cities of Kennewick, Pasco, and Richland since 1989. While prevention concepts are new to Finley, ESD 123 is experienced in using the risk and protective factor model to

¹ <http://quickFacts.census.gov/gfd/states/53/53071.html>, Benton County

² U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171), Summary File, Matrices PL1, PL2, PL3 and PL4. Finley.

organize data, conduct prevention planning, and implement and monitor science-based prevention programs.

Summary of Progress Toward 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.*

Prevention partnerships are not new to Benton County, but they are new to Finley. The bedroom community lacks service providers. Partnerships that exist are among the school, the Parent-Teacher Organization, ESD 123, and a few community members.

The physical structures of the schools are excellent. There is a new elementary school and the middle school was remodeled last year. The high school is undergoing renovation this year. Some in Finley would like to turn the old elementary school into a community center, but funds are not available to convert it at this time.

A SIG Advisory Board is composed of educators, youth, and parents in Finley. The three main functions of the board are (1) to provide general education to teachers, administrators and parents about drug abuse; (2) to bring the community together with drug and alcohol free events; and (3) to collaborate with DARE and the School Resource Officer in working with young people and educating the community about drugs and their effects on health and the community's well being.

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

and

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

Substance abuse prevention and the use of Hawkins and Catalano's risk and protective framework were not new to Benton County.³ The Benton-Franklin Substance Abuse Coalition provided some prevention services and used the risk and protective framework prior to SIG. Benton-Franklin Counties conducted a community needs assessment, but these data did not adequately represent the Finley community.⁴ The project director used data from the Finley School District's 1998 Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior to identify risk factors for the SIG project.⁵

³ Hawkins, David J., Catalano, Richard F., and Associates. *Communities That Care, Action for Drug Abuse Prevention*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Pub. 1992.

⁴ Community Needs Assessment, Benton and Franklin Counties, Risk Factor/Protective Factor Approach, "Finding the Keys to a Healthy Community." November 1999.

⁵ Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior. 1998. School Results for Finley School District, RMC Research Corporation. Portland, OR. October 1998.

Indicator data have been used in planning at the county level, but not specifically for the community of Finley until ESD 123 used the school survey data for the SIG proposal.

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

The SIG process encouraged the choice of programs shown through published research to be effective in different locales and with multiple populations. ESD 123 sub-contracted with the Benton-Franklin Substance Abuse Coalition to provide a prevention specialist for Finley schools as part of the SIG project. The prevention specialist taught anti-tobacco and other drug classes during the regular school day. The ESD, in collaboration with the schools and the community, chose several science-based programs for the SIG project, including: Project Alert, Project Northland, Multi-Prevention Components Approach, Family as A Team, and Summer Challenge Program. In addition to teaching, the SIG prevention specialist, ESD middle school coordinator, and the ESD intervention/prevention specialist worked with parents and other community members to engage families with the schools and the PTO.

Overall, the SIG project served hundreds of 4th - 9th grade youth and some parents with five prevention programs. Through Project Northland and Multi-Link Community Approach, youth were empowered to work on community and school change by educating others about what they learned of the health dangers of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Below is a brief summary of the programs presented to the schools and in the community.

- *Project Alert:* In total, 141 youth experienced the video-based Project Alert in the second year. The booster class was given to the 7th graders and the beginning class to the 6th graders. The second year began slowly due to scheduling conflicts. Classes started in a new building, and students, teachers, and administrators had to adjust to the new environment. Some of the teachers, trained last year to facilitate Project Alert this year, moved to another school and so were not available to teach. This put an additional teaching load on the prevention specialist.
- *Project Northland:* Seventy-six eighth-grade students learned skills they need to make a good transition from junior to high school. Since the textbooks for the health class arrived late, the prevention specialist was able to use Project Northland material for the health curriculum. This made the homework and final project part of the regular class and thus the assignments were graded. Other components of the program were teen dances and parent nights.
- *Multi-Link Community Approach:* The program served 184 4th and 5th graders this year. Students participated in a poster contest and invited speakers to the classroom. The 5th graders attended DARE classes during the first part of the school year and Multi-Link later. Students completed home projects and made exhibits for a tobacco and health fair in May. A spaghetti dinner was used to disseminate literature designed to educate the public about drug abuse.

In the spring of 2000, ESD 123, Finley Schools, and Benton-Franklin Substance Abuse Coalition sponsored a community picnic. Last year it was a big success with about 350 students and parents. This year's picnic was even more successful with over 700 adults and youth attending.

- *Family As A Team*: This program has been a challenge. First, it was difficult to find the staff time to plan and implement it because only one prevention specialist was assigned to the SIG project. He had his hands full with the other programs. ESD 123 provided training to leaders in February 2000, and staff began recruiting families. Eventually, eight families signed up, but none finished the program.
- *Summer Challenge – ROPES Course*: Attendance was lower than anticipated last summer. The program was not marketed in the schools early enough, according to the local SIG project director. It is scheduled to occur again this summer. Enrollment is expected to be twice as high as last year (2000).

Successes

- Over 500 students and several parents benefited in some way from the SIG project over the past two years.
- Sixth and seventh graders were provided tools to resist drugs through Project Alert.
- Through Project Northland, eighth grade students learned how to resist peer pressure and to develop social and competence skills.
- Both 4th and 5th graders experienced Multi-Component School-Linked Community, a program that emphasized parent involvement, student anti-tobacco activism, and media interventions.

Challenges

- Finley faces the need to enhance community self image and turn the media around so that they report good things about Finley.
- There are a large number of methamphetamine labs in the area.
- During the first project year, the biggest challenge was working with the teachers to get the curriculums into the classrooms after the teachers had already prepared their yearly lesson plans. In the second year, scheduling the prevention classes continued to be a challenge because of other special programs and regular class requirements.
- Even with start up difficulties, the Family as a Team program managed to get 8 parents and 23 youth into the program. Unfortunately, none finished the program. The PTO plans to take a more active role and recruit parents to get them involved with the schools and prevention activities.

Conclusion

The ESD 123 SIG project made progress toward achieving the community level objectives, as established by the Governor's Substance Abuse Prevention

Advisory Committee. During the last year of SIG community funding, ESD 123 and the Finley SIG staff intend to develop methods to maintain some of the changes they have achieved in the system of prevention planning, funding, implementation, and monitoring developed under SIG.



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