



North Thurston School District, Thurston County Executive Summary of the Community-Level Progress Evaluation Reports

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Executive Summary

Crossroads Treatment Center in Pierce 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.

Project Site

North Thurston School District serves an ethnically and economically diverse student population of some 13,000. It draws students from the city of Lacey and parts of rural Thurston County, including part of the Nisqually Tribe Reservation. Over half of North Thurston School District's twelfth graders report using alcohol regularly, while more than one-quarter report using tobacco or marijuana regularly. North Thurston County is part of the federally designated Northwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA).

Prevention History

Substance abuse prevention services available at North Thurston Schools include several programs that have been in place for some time: D.A.R.E. (Drug Awareness and Resistance Education); Second Step (the only research-based prevention program in use prior to SIG), a violence prevention program; and WEB (Welcome Every Body), a peer-mentoring program in which eighth grade students mentor seventh grade students in conflict resolution and social skill building. School Resource Officers of the Lacey Police Department are stationed at the high schools. SIG links North Thurston's prevention planning to risk and protective factors for the first time. The school district has an extensive history of community partnerships and the use of data in planning.

Progress toward Community Level Objectives

Objective 1: Establish partnerships...

The Bridge Project, North Thurston School District's SIG project, got off the ground with the award of SIG to the North Thurston School District and the folding of the district's Health Planning Teams into the Community Partnership

Coalition (CPC). Bridge Project programs are heavily dependent upon relationships among member agencies and individuals of the CPC.

The result of three years of planning by the Health Planning Teams and CPC, the Bridge Project is designed to be an umbrella approach to helping at-risk students in times of transition. The Bridge Project includes services to address the transition between school and home, including after-school care, homework help, mentoring, and group support through Community ClubHouses at elementary and middle schools. Parent education and support are also provided. Other transitions addressed are those between elementary school and junior high school and between junior high school and high school. These are times when children are at increased risk for academic failure and involvement in substance use. The Bridge Project also creates links between schools and community social services, making more resources available to students at school, as well as making it easier for parents to access services.

Objectives 2 and 3: Use a *risk and protective factor framework* for planning and *participate in joint community risk and protective factor and resource assessment.*

Risk and protective factors have been thoroughly incorporated into the CPC's planning efforts, which include providing substance abuse prevention programs to young children, youth, and families in north Thurston County. Knowledge of risk and protective factors is not just limited to the CPC, but teachers, principals, school board members, and district administrators now understand the value of a risk and protective framework for improving student resiliency and achievement. Risk and protective factor-based needs and resource assessments are ongoing through the CPC, which includes TOGETHER!, the county Community Mobilization Against Substance Abuse agency, representing thirty-seven community organizations.

Objective 4: *Select and implement effective prevention actions...*

This objective refers to implementing prevention programs that have been shown to be effective through research. The Bridge Project coordinates efforts to address the risk and protective factors identified for NTSD students in the fourth through ninth grades through Community ClubHouses, the Transition Program, Parents as Partners, and the Child Development Project.

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

Reporting tools are used to measure the effectiveness of prevention programs. At the program level, North Thurston School District had available through SIG the Everest program outcome monitoring system. For measurement of community level outcomes, North Thurston schools participate in the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior. Both Everest and the survey measure risk and protective factors. The survey also measures substance abuse prevalence.

Successes

One of the greatest successes of the North Thurston School District SIG project has been the creation of a menu of programs for schools to choose from and a system for funding those programs. Through SIG, NTSD has been able to field test research-based substance abuse prevention programming in its community that addresses the specific risk and protective factors indicated as areas of need, as well as piloting the Community ClubHouse program at elementary schools and middle schools in the district. Individual schools may choose programs that best fit their needs, and can know ahead of time the costs, challenges, and strategies for implementation, projected outcomes for each program, and have a system for evaluation of those programs. Schools can use Medicaid Match monies, as well as other funding streams, to bring programs tested in their own district to their students and families. School professionals do not have to look far to find someone who can help them by sharing their experiences with program implementation. The Bridge Project concept of providing support for students at critical junctures of transition has now spread to several non-SIG-funded school sites in the North Thurston School District. The NTSD has decided to include funding for student support services, such as substance abuse prevention services, in its essential funding priorities, relieving them from reliance on discretionary funds. North Thurston School District is building on SIG implementation successes to bring similar prevention packages to other schools in the district, with the goal of bringing all schools up to the same level of protection.



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