TURNING THE CURVE:

YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION STRATEGIC PLAN

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY | 2015

INTRODUCTION LETTER

Dear Santa Cruz County Community,

Until we tackle the root causes, youth violence will continue to flourish and claim the lives of youth and their families. Over the past two years, with broad countywide collaboration and community support, the Youth Violence Prevention Task Force embarked on a youth violence prevention strategic planning process.

On behalf of Santa Cruz County's Criminal Justice Council, we are pleased to introduce the County's first comprehensive plan to prevent and reduce youth violence. We are particularly proud of the multidisciplinary and collaborative effort undertaken to move Santa Cruz County forward and create a safe future for our youth and our neighborhoods.

This plan will serve to guide our work in youth violence prevention toward addressing the root causes of youth violence, increasing information sharing, enhancing youth opportunities, and strengthening and mobilizing our community.

This guide is important because it provides a better understanding of community-based youth violence prevention and intervention strategies. The plan outlines why communities and governments across the county should prioritize prevention and early intervention as a means toward long term change, while also addressing the unique needs of those youth and families already involved in the criminal justice system.

We urge you to join us and the other dedicated individuals and organizations who share this commitment of creating and implementing innovative and forward-thinking policy and programs and that are fundamentally transforming the way that we effectively address and reduce youth violence in our community. We each must embrace the responsibility to stop youth violence, the accountability for the plan's implementation, and the commitment to the change needed to ensure our success over the next three years.

We look forward to working with you.

Rudy Escalante

City of Capitola, CJC Secretary

Criminal Justice Council Executive Committee

Honorable Judge Ariadne Symons, Superior Court County of Santa Cruz, CJC Chair
Michael Watkins, Superintendent Santa Cruz County Office of Education, CJC Vice-Chair
Rudy Escalante, Chief of Police, City of Capitola, CJC Secretary
John Leopold, Supervisor 1st District, County of Santa Cruz
Donna Lind, Councilmember, City of Scotts Valley
Jeff Rosell, District Attorney County of Santa Cruz
Jo Ann Allen, Executive Director Criminal Justice Council

Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

DEDICATION

The Turning the Curve: Santa Cruz County's Youth Violence Prevention Strategic Plan is dedicated to all those impacted by youth violence. It is also dedicated to the memory of Santa Cruz County District Attorney Bob Lee, who was passionate about giving victims a voice in the criminal justice system and was the catalyst behind the Board of Supervisors reinstating the Criminal Justice Council. We honor Bob's determination in bringing together diverse leaders toward a common goal of promoting the health and safety of our community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the *Turning the Curve: Santa Cruz County's Youth Violence Prevention Strategic Plan*, is the result of a multidisciplinary collaborative effort through the Youth Violence Prevention Task Force (YVPT). We especially appreciate the dedication of those who contributed their time, resources, and expertise to this endeavor:

PROCESS TEAM:

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STEERING COMMITTEE AND WORKGROUP MEMBERS:

Please see appendix II for full list

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Santa Cruz County Chief's Association
Santa Cruz County Probation Department
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OVERVIEW

"I have been involved with gangs most of my juvenile and adult life. In some way, we are all affected by violence in our community, maybe not directly, but it's time we stop just watching from the news and take action. A lot of these kids can be reached, especially at a young age. We all can change, and I believe these kids deserve a chance. I believe our community as a whole deserves a chance. With the proper guidance and opportunities made available, I believe we will see a difference in our communities. The Youth Violence Prevention Task Force is trying to tear down and bridge the gap between at-risk youth and the resources and better opportunities that are out there that can help change people's lives."

- Young Adult from Santa Cruz County

"I truly believe that this work is taking us to an unprecedented, and much needed, collaborative and comprehensive approach to impacting gang and youth violence in our County."

-Mario Sulay, Gang Task Force

Youth violence has become a growing concern in Santa Cruz County. It both directly and indirectly impacts the health, quality of life and future of our youth and our community. In response, the Youth Violence Prevention Task Force (YVPT) was formed in October 2012 as a project of the Criminal Justice Council (CJC) of Santa Cruz County to better understand the problem and its solutions.

The Task Force and its three workgroups and steering committee is comprised of over 75 stakeholders including elected officials, law enforcement, schools, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, youth, formerly incarcerated individuals and concerned citizens. This inclusive multi-sector collaborative is committed to addressing youth violence through a public health lens of prevention, intervention and suppression.

Mission

An equitable, united, and safe county where all youth are engaged in family, school and community, have a sense of safety and wellbeing, feel they have a voice and are empowered to use it, and are able to access opportunities for successful transition into adulthood.

History

In October 2012, the Criminal Justice Council of Santa Cruz County (CJC) worked closely with Santa Cruz County Probation, The United Way of Santa Cruz County and Applied Survey Research to develop a Youth Violence Summit for over 125 stakeholders committed to preventing youth, gang, and school violence in Santa Cruz County. The summit was in response to a clear need communicated by community stakeholders for better alignment, coordination and understanding of all of the efforts currently happening in our community, as well as the identification of common goals for all of these efforts to work together toward a safer community. After the initial summit, the CJC Youth Violence Prevention Task Force was formed.

GOALS OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Over the last three years, the YVPT has engaged over 200 community stakeholders including elected officials, law enforcement, schools, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, youth, formerly incarcerated individuals and concerned citizens in a countywide youth violence prevention strategic planning process. This inclusive multi-sector collaborative is committed to addressing youth violence through evidence-based, prevention-focused and asset-based solutions.

> *"It's powerful that the YVPT is bringing everyone together- people that don't normally collaborate."*
>
> *Justice Stakeholder*

This strategic plan should be used to inform and guide practices, policies, and programming across the county to allow stakeholders at all levels to work as a coordinated effort to effectively address youth violence prevention in Santa Cruz County. Although the YVPT has been working for over two years, the work is just beginning on implementation, evaluation, and data development. Ongoing efforts will need to continue in data collection, coordination of efforts, policy/program development and evaluation and tracking our progress as a community. The youth and the communities that make up Santa Cruz County are the reason for this work, and they are also part of the solution. Together we can create safer communities, supported families, and opportunities for successful youth.

Community Assessment

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

In 2013, the YVPT conducted a community assessment culminating in the first data report on youth violence in Santa Cruz County. The report included over 60 indicators of risk and protective factors that impact youth violence.

Community Capacity Building

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

Over the last two years, the YVPT has organized: two youth violence summits, the Turning the Curve on Youth Violence conference, and community events in Santa Cruz and Watsonville featuring James Bell of the W. Haywood Burns Institute and a panel of local experts speaking on strategies for addressing racial equity in our education and juvenile justice systems. The YVPT has also participated in the Peace and Unity Coalition and community march.

Community Engagement & Planning

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PLANNING

Over the last year, a steering committee and task force members participated in monthly workgroups to address three main focus areas:

- Promote Positive Child and Youth Development
- Ensure Supported and Functional Families
- Foster Safe and Vibrant Neighborhoods

Introduction and Methodology

INTRODUCTION

DEFINING YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Youth Violence Defined by the Center for Disease Control (CDC)

The CDC defines youth violence as "harmful behaviors that can start early and continue into young adulthood. Youth violence includes various behaviors. Some violent acts—such as bullying, slapping, or hitting—can cause more emotional harm than physical harm. Others, such as robbery and assault (with or without weapons) can lead to serious injury or even death."[1]

Youth ages 10-17 and Young Adults ages 17-24

For the purpose of this strategic plan, ages 10 to 24 were selected to define the target population. Ages 10 to 24 are commonly used when discussing youth violence because this age range is considered high risk. For example, gang involved youth commit violent offenses at a rate higher than those not involved in gangs, with the average age range of youth involved in gangs being 12 to 24 years old.[2] According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), homicide is a leading cause of death among youth and young adults ages 10 to 24.[3] For this report, the term "youth" refers to individuals 10 to 17 years old and "young adult" refers to individuals 18 to 24 years old, unless otherwise specified. There were 24,274 youth ages 10-17 and 41,113 young adults ages 18-24 living in Santa Cruz County in 2013.

A Public Health Approach

The YVPT is committed to taking a public health approach to youth violence, which includes the 41 Developmental Assets, risk and protective factors, and resiliency.[4]

41 Developmental Asset: 41 Developmental Assets are the "the positive values, relationships, skills and experiences that help children and teens thrive". They include external assets such as support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time, as well as internal assets such as commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity.[5]

Risk and Protective Factors: Risk factors increase the likelihood a youth will engage in delinquent behavior. Protective factors act as buffers against risk factors. Risk and protective factors occur at individual, family, peer, school and community levels. Effective prevention and intervention efforts should reduce risk factors and increase protective factors.[6]

Resiliency: According to WestEd: "At its foundation, a resilience-based approach to youth development is based upon the principle that all people have the ability to overcome adversity and to succeed in spite of their life circumstances. Resilience is a strengths-based construct, meaning its focus is on providing the developmental supports and opportunities (protective factors) that promote success, rather than on eliminating the factors that promote failure."[7]

A public health approach to this plan also included integrating a balance of prevention, intervention and suppression strategies, defined by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) as:

Prevention: Efforts that support youth who are "at-risk" of becoming involved in delinquent behavior and help prevent a juvenile from entering the juvenile justice system. Prevention includes efforts to prevent youth from penetrating further into the juvenile justice system after a juvenile has committed a delinquent act; these prevention efforts include arbitration, diversionary or mediation programs, and community service work or other treatment.

Intervention: Programs or services that are intended to disrupt a juvenile's delinquency process, reduce risk factors for delinquency and other negative behaviors, and/or build skills and prevent a youth from penetrating further into the juvenile justice or child welfare systems.

Suppression: Formal and informal social control procedures, including close supervision and monitoring of gang-involved youth by agencies of the juvenile/criminal justice system and also by community-based agencies, schools, and grassroots groups.

METHODOLOGY

RESULTS BASED ACCOUNTABILITY

Results Based Accountability (RBA) is a proven disciplined method of thinking that can be used to improve the performance of programs and enhance the lives of children, families, and communities. RBA works backwards to determine ends first and then the means to get there and can be used by programs to guide strategies, improve performance, and create greater impact. YVPT chose to follow the RBA planning process because it allows a diverse group of stakeholders to utilize a data-driven decision making process to develop a common language, create a common agenda and solve problems together, bridging divides and rising above special interests. There are six steps to RBA that this planning process followed, as listed below. To measure our success, we will be asking the three basic questions of RBA:

How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?

RBA Step 1:   Population: Identify the population you will be discussing

RBA Step 2:   Result: Identify the specific result

RBA Step 3:   Indicator: Identify data points that will measure your progress

RBA Step 4:   The Story Behind the Trend: Identify what the indicators say, what the cause and forces are that affect these indicators

RBA Step 5:   Key Partnerships: Identify partners with a role to play in turning the curve

RBA Step 6a: Steps Toward Action: Identify the 5 best ideas for Turning the Curve and improving the results

RBA Step 6b: Strategies: Identify which strategies are best suited to turning the curve in the areas identified above

QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

The Status on Youth Violence report produced in 2013 reflects the task force's data collection process, which was designed to better understand the issue of youth violence in Santa Cruz County and inform the selection of further strategies and solutions. The indicators used in the strategic plan were chosen from this report by task force members. Areas for further data development are noted throughout the strategic plan.

QUALITATIVE INFORMATION

To ensure broad community input on issues of youth violence, YVPT members completed 63 Key Informant Interviews with stakeholders ranging from those holding top leadership positions to those providing direct service, representing the following sectors: business, community-based organizations, education, government, and justice.

Family and youth focus groups were also conducted throughout the county in English and Spanish, including youth at our juvenile hall facility and families who have children involved in the juvenile justice system.

Other YVPT research included police ride-a-longs, partnering with Keeping Kids in School to survey best practices in local schools, building a local community resource inventory using the online OJJDP strategic planning tool and general research on best practices to address youth violence.

STRATEGY SELECTION

Strategies were identified based on our data through research on best practices, input from workgroup members and responses from the various processes listed above. They were also selected based on leveraging what already exists, identifying what is missing, identifying programmatic and systemic areas for change and balancing prevention, intervention and suppression.

EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Government
- Help make violence prevention a community priority through funding and policy decisions.
- Support local action by joining community-based initiatives and coalitions.
- Be a champion for implementing best practice policies and programs.

Law Enforcement
- Implement best practices and training in community/youth relations to build mutual trust.
- Participate in prevention and intervention activities along with suppression.
- Collect and utilize data to identify and address disparities in enforcement.

Schools
- Implement school climate strategies that support youth wanting to be at school.
- Work across districts to develop common data collection and evaluation tool.s
- Examine school disciplinary practices for unintended consequences and disparities.

Service Providers
- Implement best practices and evaluation of program outcomes.
- Reduce barriers and increase access to services provided.
- Participate in early identification of challenged families/youth and cross-referral.

Businesses
- Create opportunities for meaningful youth employment.
- Be a designated safe haven for youth.
- Serve as a mentor and offer internships/apprenticships.

Community Members
- Serve as a mentor or volunteer with a youth serving organization.
- Create opportunities for meaningful youth engagement in the community.
- Advocate for prevention as a community priority.

Faith Community
- Serve as a mentor or volunteer for a youth.
- Be a resource for youth and their families, referring them to appropriate services.
- Be a designated safe haven for youth.

Families/ Caregivers/ Other Adults
- Take advantage of and help spread the word about resources and services available.
- Provide a consistent model for how to respond to stress, fear and conflict without violence.
- Build a meaningful relationship with youth where it is safe for them to share concerns.

Youth
- Get involved in community initiatives and let your voice be heard.
- Help each other through peer to peer support and mentoring.
- Ask for help if you or a friend needs it.

Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

FOCUS AREA I: PROMOTE POSITIVE CHILD AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

SUMMARY TABLE

Result	Indicator	Strategies
#1 Youth are life, college and career ready.	A. Truancy	• Early Identification of Challenged/At-Risk Students • Improve Teacher-Student-Parent Relationships • Increase Knowledge of and Access to Academic Supports and Community Resources • Safe Routes to Schools • Continuum of Responses
	B. Suspensions C. Expulsions	• Continuum of Responses • Family Engagement • Data Analysis and Policy Review • School Climate Strategies
	D. Graduation Rate	• Personalized Education Paths • School Climate Strategies • Targeted Intervention for At-Risk Students • Academic Support
	E. Youth in Labor Force	• Business Engagement • Youth Employment Services
	F. Disconnected Youth	• Data Analysis and Policy Review • Outreach to Disconnected Youth Population and Their Families • Diversion and Alternatives to Justice System Involvement • Multidisciplinary Approaches
#2 Youth are valued and have meaningful participation in their community.	A. Prosocial Activities	• Increased Knowledge of and Access to Prosocial Activities • Program Evaluations • Increase Availability of a Diverse Array of Options for Activities

Result	Indicator	Strategies
#3 Youth are supported by caring adults.	**A. & B. School Environment: Caring Adults with High Expectations**	• Social-Emotional Learning Curriculums/Programs • Improve Youth-Teacher/Education Staff Relationships and Teacher Engagement Strategies • School Climate Strategies • School-Based Behavioral Health Services • Community-Based Organization (CBO) Prevention and Intervention Programming on School Campuses
	C. & D. Community Environment: Caring Adults with High Expectations	• Increased Knowledge of and Access to Prosocial Activities • Law Enforcement-Youth Relations • Mentoring • Street Outreach
#4 Youth are safe and feel safe at school.	**A. Harassed or Bullied on Campus**	• Anti-Bullying Strategies • Continuum of Responses • Family Engagement • School Climate Strategies
	B. & C. Students Reporting Carrying a Gun Or Other Weapon On School Campus	• Community-Based Organization (CBO) Prevention and Intervention Programming • Raise Awareness About Why Students Feel Compelled to Bring Weapons to School • Safe Routes to Schools • Preventative Evidence-Based Programming on School Campus • Develop A Protocol That Allows Students to Anonymously Report Weapons on School Campus • Targeted Gang Involvement Intervention Strategies • School Climate Strategies
	D. Students Reporting Gang Involvement	• Gang Education in Schools • Safe Routes to Schools • Increased Knowledge of and Access to Prosocial Activities Increase Availability of a Diverse Array of Options for Activities • Access to Alternatives to Gang Involvement • Family Support and Engagement • Targeted Gang Involvement Intervention Strategies

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

Result	Indicator	Strategies
#4 Youth are safe and feel safe at school. (cont.)	**E. Students Reported Feeling Very Safe or Safe at School**	• School Climate Strategies • Continuum of Responses • Multidisciplinary Approaches • Capacity Building for Appropriate Responses to Actual or Potential Violence
	F. Discriminated Against on School Property	• School Climate Strategies • Data Analysis and Policy Review • Bias-Free Classroom and Respectful School Environments • Staff Should Reflect the Diverse Populations They Serve

Result #1: Youth are life, college, and career ready.

STEP 1: TARGET POPULATION

There were 24,274 youth ages 10-17 and 41,113 young adults ages 18-24 living in Santa Cruz County in 2013.
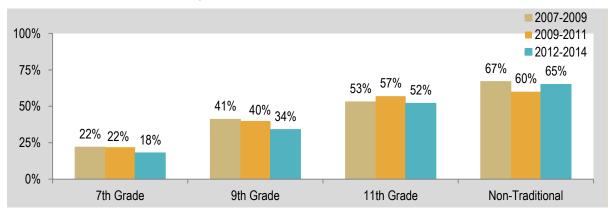
STEP 2: RESULT

Youth are life, college, and career ready.

The American Youth Policy Forum defines college and career readiness as "being prepared to successfully complete credit-bearing college coursework or industry certification without remediation, having the academic skills and self-motivation necessary to persist and progress in postsecondary education, and having identified career goals and the necessary steps to achieve them." This also includes assets that allow a young person to navigate these opportunities, such as developmental maturity, social supports and life skills. These protective factors play a critical role in a youth's successful transition into adulthood.[8]

STEP 3: INDICATORS – A MEASURE OF COMMUNITY PROGRESS

Headline Indicators

A. DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, ABOUT HOW MANY TIMES DID YOU SKIP SCHOOL OR CUT CLASSES? (RESPONDENTS ANSWERING ONE OR MORE TIMES), SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2007-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.
Note: Data are not available by ethnicity.
Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in the endnotes.[9]

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

B. SUSPENSION NUMBER AND RATE, SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH A HIGH SCHOOL

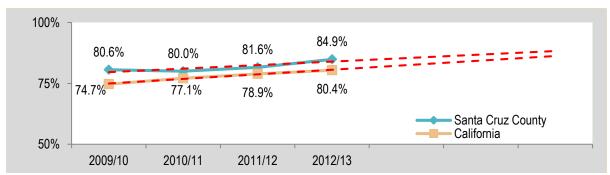| School District	2011-12	2012-13
Pajaro Valley Unified		
Students suspended	NA	1,359
Rate per 100	12.4	6.3
San Lorenzo Valley Unified		
Students suspended	111	93
Rate per 100	2.4	1.9
Santa Cruz City High		
Students suspended	240	210
Rate per 100	4.9	4.2
Scotts Valley Unified		
Students suspended	57	43
Rate per 100	2.2	1.7

Source: California Department of Education. (2014). 2011-2013 Educational Demographics Office.

C. EXPULSION NUMBER AND RATE, SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH A HIGH SCHOOL

School District	2011-12	2012-13
Pajaro Valley Unified		
Students expelled	90	82
Rate per 100	0.5	0.4
San Lorenzo Valley Unified		
Students expelled	0	0
Rate per 100	0.0	0.0
Santa Cruz City High		
Students expelled	3	15
Rate per 100	0.1	0.3
Scotts Valley Unified		
Students expelled	2	2
Rate per 100	0.1	0.1

Source: California Department of Education. (2014). 2011-2013 Educational Demographics Office.

D. COHORT OUTCOME GRADUATION RATES

Source: California Department of Education. (2014). 2009-2013 Educational Demographics Office.

Santa Cruz County: 2009/10 n=507,209, 2010/11 n=503,273, 2011/12 n=500,974, 2012/12 n=495,316

Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

D. COHORT OUTCOME GRADUATION RATES BY ETHNICITY, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Source: California Department of Education. (2014). 2009-2013 Educational Demographics Office.

Hispanic/Latino: 2009/10 n=1,446; 2010/11 n=1,448; 2011/12 n=1,439; 2012/12 n=1,471. White: 2009/10 n=1,523; 2010/11 n=1,450; 2011/12 n=1,329; 2012/13 n=1,351.

D. COHORT OUTCOME GRADUATION RATES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

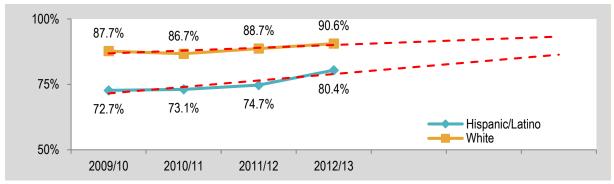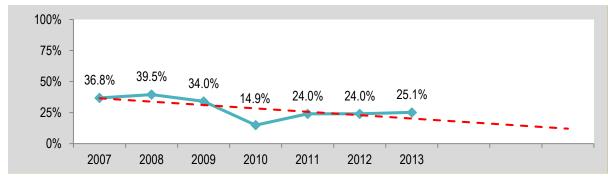| School District	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	09-13 Net Change
Pajaro Valley Unified	84.8%	81.6%	85.9%	88.6%	3.8
San Lorenzo Valley Unified	86.9%	90.1%	96.3%	94.4%	7.5
Santa Cruz City High	91.4%	90.2%	90.5%	89.8%	-1.6
Scotts Valley Unified	97.1%	96.7%	96.7%	97.9%	0.8

Source: California Department of Education. (2014). 2009-2013 Educational Demographics Office.

Note: Cohort outcome graduation rates are not available prior to the 2009/10 school year.

PVUSD: 2009/10 n=1,226; 2010/11 n=1,200; 2011/12 n=1,188; 2012/13 n=1,171. SLVU: 2009/10 n=244; 2010/11 n=223; 2011/12 n=164; 2012/13 n=197. SCCH: 2009/10 n=892; 2010/11 n=944; 2011/12 n=876; 2012/13 n=886. SCU: 2009/10 n=206; 2010/11 n=181; 2011/12 n=180; 2012/13 n=188.
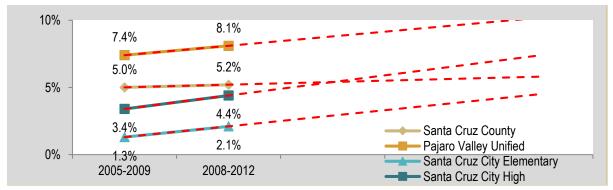
E. PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH (AGES 16-19) EMPLOYED, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Source: United States Census Bureau. (2014). 2007-2013 American Community Survey.

Number of youth employed: 2007 n=6,179; 2008 n=6,387; 2009 n=6,200; 2010 n=3,246; 2011 n=4,449; 2012 n=4,748; 2013 n=4,567.

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

F.   TEENS NOT IN SCHOOL AND NOT WORKING, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BY SCHOOL DISTRICT AREA[1]

Source: United States Census Bureau. (2014). 2005-2013 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Retrieved from Kidsdata.org.
[1]Represents those living within the school district boundaries, not which school they attend.

Note: Data are not available by ethnicity. Ns are not available.

Data Development

- School attendance for junior high and high school (chronically absent)

- Life readiness (soft skill development)

STEP 4: THE STORY BEHIND THE DATA

Indicator A: Skipping School/Truancy

School attendance is receiving national and statewide attention. Poor school attendance costs school districts, counties, and the state billions of dollars every year. Research overwhelmingly shows that school attendance is directly correlated to student success, school attachment and graduation rates. This is true "regardless of gender, ethnicity or socioeconomic status." Frequent excused and unexcused absences lead to lower academic performance and higher dropout rates. As one study showed, "when students are chronically absent during kindergarten, these students perform lower academically in first grade. The relationship is especially strong for Latino children who had much lower first grade reading scores if they were chronically absent in kindergarten."[10] According to the OJJDP, "school based risk factors such as poor school performance and poor school attachment are primary factors for eventual gang involvement."[11] California's Local Control Funding Formula has prioritized the issue of school attendance and chronic absenteeism and requires that school districts address the issue in their Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP).[12]

Overall, the number of students who reported skipping school in Santa Cruz County has been on the decline. Eleventh graders and students who attend nontraditional schools self-report the highest rates of skipping school. The YVPT will coordinate with the Keeping Kids in School (KKIS) Task Force to address these issues. KKIS was formed to address all issues regarding school absenteeism with a mission "to engage a diverse community to create a system of policies and best practices that promote positive school attendance and student success."

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

The community has indicated the following:

- Youth skipping schools is influenced by an array of factors including: being bullied, level of school engagement as interest, student health and substance use, peer influence, and familial factors.

- Due to the emphasis on standardized testing, teachers have less flexibility in their curriculums. Additionally, many courses such as art and music have been cut.

- Parents who are working may be unaware that their child is skipping school. Parents may feel powerless about how to ensure their child doesn't skip school.

- Some students have transportation issues to alternative education schools and lack safe routes to schools.

Indicators B & C: Suspensions and Expulsions

School disciplinary policies are being discussed at a local, statewide and national level. Suspensions and expulsions may have a place in effective discipline for severe or chronic behavioral issues; however, research shows that they may do more harm than good. Kidsdata.org has summarized the importance of this emerging issue by stating that suspensions and expulsions can exacerbate student academic problems, amplify the achievement gap between low-income children and their higher-income peers, and contribute to student involvement in the juvenile justice system. Suspensions and expulsions disproportionately affect students of color, students with disabilities, students in foster care, and non-heterosexual youth. Research has shown, for example, that students who experience out-of-school suspension and expulsion are 10 times more likely to drop out of high school than those who do not, and they are more likely to have less supervision at home than their peers.[13] When students are removed from the school environment, they are at a significantly "higher risk of falling behind academically, dropping out of school, and coming into contact with the juvenile justice system."[14]

Recent California legislation has limited the ability for schools to suspend and expel students and requires training in best practice classroom management and positive discipline.[15]

Locally, school leaders have reported the need for on-going resources to help look at school disciplinary policies. Traditionally, countywide data on school discipline has been inaccurate, which is a pattern that has been seen throughout the state. Previously, data surrounding suspensions and expulsions was not necessarily highly prioritized; though that has changed, and now data and accountability are requirements and state priorities. The data shows that suspensions and expulsions went up from 2011-12 to 2012-13, but some school officials were unsure as to whether the increase was due to an increase in entering data or actual rates of school discipline. In the past, schools have reported having limited tools and resources to address root causes of behavior, while promoting alternatives to suspensions and expulsions. The community has also indicated the following:

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

- Educators have stressed the importance of building relationships between students and parents, even when the student is in crisis or having disruptive behavior. It is believed that building strong positive school climate will impact suspensions and expulsions. They also spoke on the need for funding to increase counselors, social workers, and behavior technicians, as well as community-based organization prevention and intervention programming.

- Educators acknowledge that diversions and alternatives are time-consuming, and it is overwhelming being a teacher.

- Through data analysis and the implementation of alternatives, both Pajaro Valley Unified School District and Santa Cruz City Schools have reported decreases in suspensions and expulsions.

Indicator D: Graduation Rates

High school graduates earn higher salaries, have better self-esteem, more personal life satisfaction, fewer health problems, and less involvement in criminal activity as compared to high school dropouts.[16] Households headed by a high school graduate accumulate ten times more wealth than households headed by a high school dropout.[17] Roughly 60% of jobs require some type of training or education beyond high school.[18]

Locally, graduation rates for the County and the State have increased since 2009-2010. Graduation rates differed by race and ethnicity in the County. African American and Latino students had the lowest graduation rate in the County (71% and 75%, respectively). The community has indicated the following:

- There are differences in educational attainment throughout the County in terms of school districts and race and ethnicity.

- The level of educational attainment of parents may impact school success for students.

- English Language Learners and special needs students have additional academic challenges and require additional support.

- It is believed that if schools increased their guidance and mental health counselors, students would have more support, academically as well as emotionally.

- Many feel that, though a helpful option that works well for some students, alternative education is sometimes used too soon. In addition, some mentioned additional challenges with nontraditional schools: they often end the school day early, the expectations are not always as high as mainstream schools, and once students are enrolled in a nontraditional school, it is challenging getting them back into mainstream schools.

- Some students reported that the lack of bilingual educators and educational staff of color impacts comfort and trust between parents, youth and school staff. This impacts relationships and engagement in school.

- Some community members, including youth, believe that students are moved up grades when they aren't prepared. Literacy issues are a major issue in some students not feeling prepared.

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

- Schools believe they are lacking in capacity – with staff, time, and funding to holistically address the whole student.

- Some believe there is an overuse of school disciplinary responses. This impacts graduation rates. Educators stated that they felt they lacked alternatives to suspensions and expulsions and that their primary priority was school safety.

- Many asserted the schools are lacking in conflict resolution and restorative justice programs. Restorative justice practices provide alternatives to removing students from school and address problem behavior more holistically.

Indicator E: Youth in Labor Force

Research has long showed that youth employment can be a strong protective factor against violence and related behaviors. A lack of employment opportunities can create a sense of hopelessness about the future, lead to unnecessary idle time and can lead to increased criminal activity. This subsequently leads to less employment opportunities, creating a cycle that is challenging to move beyond.[19] Having access to employment and job training is critical for youth to not only successfully plan for their futures, but also to believe a positive future can be achieved.

Locally, the number of employed youth, ages 16-19, has steadily been on the decline. The community has indicated the following:

- When youth were asked about why this might be, some young people reported that they believed more youth were choosing to focus on their education rather than employment. Others expressed that between unemployed adults and college students (UCSC & Cabrillo) there is a great deal of competition for quality jobs. Additionally, ROP and vocational programs have been on the decline. These types of programs provide capacity and skill building for future employment attainment.

- Most jobs available to youth are services jobs (e.g. fast food, retail).

- Due to the recession, adults are applying for jobs that youth used to get.

- There's been a loss of federally funded job programs for youth.

- There are additional barriers for obtaining employment for youth and young adults who have criminal records and/or visible tattoos.

- There's a lack of employment training and placement for 18-24 year olds.

- Major employers, like the Boardwalk, no longer employ local youth.

- If youth are not going to school, youth cannot obtain a work permit.

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Indicator F: Disconnected Youth

Disconnected youth have education and economic disadvantages; they are neither in school nor employed. Disconnected youth are more likely to be involved in the foster care system and/or juvenile justice system, they may be homeless, struggle with mental health or substance use issues, teen pregnancy, might have learning differences or be experiencing high levels of family stress. Disconnected youth also have higher rates of school disciplinary issues.[20]

Locally, rates of disconnected youth have been on the decline and are lower than the state average. When asked about the issue of disconnected youth, the community shared stories similar to those mentioned in youth in the labor force and graduation rates. Additionally the community indicated:

- When youth are disconnected, there is usually something going on in the home. These youth are experiencing high risk factors.

- There's been a decrease in vocational programming and ROP courses, which engage nontraditional youth.

- Some believed that prioritizing GEDs and connecting youth with Cabrillo College is one mode of ensuring successful transition into adulthood.

STEP 5: COMMUNITY PARTNERS WITH A ROLE TO PLAY

Adult Education, Businesses, Cabrillo College, Community Members, Community-Based Organizations, County Health Services Agency, County Office of Education, Families, Human Services Department, Law Enforcement, School Districts, University of California, Santa Cruz, Youth

STEP 6: ACTION TO TAKE

Indicator A: Students who reported that they skipped school or cut classes 3 or more times in the past 12 months (Truancy)

Priority Strategies

Early Identification of Challenged/At-Risk Students

In the past decade, there has been much innovation in the early identification of at-risk behaviors in a school setting. Research indicates that a systematic, universal screening process is a preferred practice that would connect more vulnerable students to needed services, supports, and placements much earlier in their school careers. The following have emerged as best practices for screening and profiling students: 1) the systematic recording and analysis of archival school records resulting from disciplinary infractions commonly referred to as office discipline referrals (ODRs), 2) screening on the basis of Response to Intervention (RTI) where certain students fail to respond adequately to an appropriate intervention implemented with good treatment fidelity, 3) screening for exposure to risk factors that are associated with destructive outcomes, and 4) a multi-tiered system of support for student behaviors such as *Positive Behavior Interventions and Support* (PBIS) that is currently

being implemented at several local school districts. PBIS dictates that an entire school or district determine 3-5 behavioral expectations to teach just as they would core curriculum. The focus is on positive behavior expectations and is most effective when it is taught consistently by staff throughout the entire school.[21]

Improve Teacher-Student-Parent Relationships

Teachers play an important role in the trajectory of students throughout the formal schooling experience. Positive teacher-student relationships enable students to feel safe and secure in their learning environments and provide scaffolding for important social and academic skills. Teachers who support students in the learning environment can positively impact their social and academic outcomes, which are important for the long-term trajectory of school and eventually employment.[22]

Over 50 years of research links the various roles that families play in a child's education—as supporters of learning, encouragers of grit and determination, models of lifelong learning, and advocates of proper programming and placements for their child. The US Department of Education's Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships builds on existing research suggesting that partnerships between home and school can only develop and thrive if both families and staff have the requisite collective capacity to engage in partnership. Many school and district family engagement initiatives focus solely on providing workshops and seminars for families on how to engage more effectively in their children's education. This focus on families alone often results in increased tension between families and school staff: families are trained to be more active in their children's schools, only to be met by an unreceptive and unwelcoming school climate and resistance from district and school staff to their efforts for more active engagement. Therefore, policies and programs directed at improving family engagement must focus on building the capacities of both staff and families to engage in partnerships.[23]

Effective parent involvement programs include activities that are addressed by the following National PTA Parent and Community Standards:

- Collaborating with community - Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families and student learning.

- Communicating - Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.

- Parenting - Parenting skills are promoted and supported.

- School decision making and advocacy - Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.

- Student learning - Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

- Volunteering - Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.

Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

Increase Knowledge of and Access to Academic Supports and Community Resources for youth and families, while taking language and literacy-level needs into account. Some school districts utilize the "Resource Depot" model through their Student Services Department. Resources provided include referrals for families and their children, such as homework support, community-based prevention and intervention programs, mental health and substance use disorder treatment, after-school activities, and other health and human services.[24]

Safe Routes to Schools

In many communities, walking and bicycling are major ways youth get to school. The danger of gang recruitment, intimidation, bullying and violence discourages youth from walking to school, increasing truancy, and the likelihood that a youth will feel that they need to protect themselves. Developing safe routes to schools may include strategies such

> *"One of the biggest predictors of gang involvement for my students, is their experience getting to and from school."*
>
> *School Stakeholder*

as establishing school carpool lists, using techniques of "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design" (CPTED), encouraging local neighbors and business to serve as "eyes on the street," utilizing Street Outreach Workers, and identifying safe havens, such as specific houses, businesses, and churches where youth can go in case of emergencies while going to and from school.[25]

Continuum of Responses

Create a continuum of responses for educators that have meaningful implications for students, rather than removing youth from the school environment. For example, implement restorative practices, in-school disciplinary alternatives, such as Saturday school or in-school suspension, anger management, referrals to mental health services and community-based intervention programs. When consequences need to be enacted, they should be mildly unpleasant, short in duration, and immediate.[26] [27]

KKIS has developed four goals to respond to chronic absenteeism and truancy:

1. Launch an annual countywide campaign to promote the link between attendance in elementary school and academic success including reading at grade level and graduation rates.

2. Develop uniform protocols countywide for truancy proceedings beginning with truancy letters, to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB), to Truancy Mediation to Truancy Court.[28]

3. Design interventions with all members of KKIS that will result in individual students and families increasing attendance, including academic support, expansion of Teen Peer Court and integration of mental health services/counseling on school campuses.[29]

4. Implement a systemic training of Trauma Informed Care (TIC) to schools, courts and other providers. The California Center for Trauma Informed Care has been providing training to courts, agencies and schools.[30]

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Other Related Strategies

- Access to Engaging/Diverse After-School Activities

- Anti-Bullying Curriculums

- Community-Based Organization Programming on School Campus

- Create an Environment of Programming and Services that is Culturally Responsive

- Effective Data Tracking, such as HERO Tardy System

- Incentives, such as Positive Attendance Awards

- Increase Awareness of Chronic Absences Through District Statistics in Newspaper – Attendance Works

- Increase Parent Access to Program/Support Information, Considering Language, Literacy Levels, Access to Technology, Etc.

- In-School and After-School Academic Supports, such as Tutoring

- Interventions

- Local Control Funding Formula – Align Goals of Each District with YVPT Strategies

- Student support/ mentoring

Indicator B & C: Suspensions and Expulsions

Priority Strategies

Continuum of Responses

Create a continuum of responses for educators that have meaningful implications for students, rather than removing youth from the school environment. For example, implement restorative practices, in-school disciplinary alternatives, such as Saturday school or in-school suspension, anger management, referrals to mental health services and community-based intervention programs. When consequences need to be enacted, they should be mildly unpleasant, short in duration, and immediate.[31] [32]

Family Engagement

Over 50 years of research links the various roles that families play in a child's education—as supporters of learning, encouragers of grit and determination, models of lifelong learning, and advocates of proper programming and placements for their child. The U.S. Department of Education's *Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships* builds on existing research suggesting that partnerships between home and school can only develop and thrive if both families and staff have the requisite collective capacity to engage in partnership. Many school and district family engagement initiatives focus solely on providing workshops and seminars for families on how to engage more effectively in their children's education. Though helpful, this focus on families alone often results in increased tension between families and school staff: families

are trained to be more active in their children's schools, only to be met by an unreceptive and unwelcoming school climate and resistance from district and school staff to their efforts for more active engagement. Therefore, policies and programs directed at improving family engagement must focus on building the capacities of both staff and families to engage in partnerships. Effective parent involvement programs include activities that are addressed by the following National PTA Parent and Community Standards:[33]

- Collaborating with community - Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families and student learning.

- Communicating - Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.

- Parenting - Parenting skills are promoted and supported.

- School decision making and advocacy - Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.

- Student Learning - Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

- Volunteering - Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.

Additionally families have requested family support groups. Family support groups through the school district can bring families together to discuss shared challenges and offer solutions.

Data Analysis and Policy Review

Best practice and local education stakeholders recommend reviewing school disciplinary policies and data through the lens of race, gender, and sexual orientation, using a team process. "Analyzing disaggregated data can allow school teams to determine if different groups of students receive different penalties for the same infraction." Educational stakeholders should have a discussion and agreement as to determine when it is appropriate to call the police for school discipline issues and when it is best to allow school administrators to handle the issue in-house.[34] [35]

Keeping Kids in School (KKIS) has committed to hosting a countywide educational stakeholder forum and discussion on data, to discuss the following: common language, strategies for consistency of coding incidences and inputting data.

School Climate Strategies

Addressing the school climate can greatly impact youth. It can determine whether a youth is comfortable and wants to be at school. Recognizing that all youth arrive each day with the stressors of their lives outside of school is important in interacting with them in both positive and disciplinary interactions. Changing school climate requires a multidisciplinary approach to create safe environments where both students and staff feel engaged, safe, and supported. Some of the following strategies can be utilized to change the school climate:

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) programming was mentioned as an asset they desired for their school by the majority of education stakeholders YVPT interviewed. PBIS dictates that an entire school or district determine 3-5 behavioral expectations to teach just as they would core curriculum. The focus is on positive behavior expectations and is most effective when it is taught consistently by staff throughout the entire school.[36]

Trauma Informed Care policies and practices in schools involves a framework that recognizes and understands the effects of trauma in youth's life. It is an approach that emphasizes emotional, psychological, and physical safety for the students and staff by practicing trauma narrative, cognitive coping mechanisms and processing, and relaxation skills.[37]

Conflict Mediation as a way of resolving interpersonal conflict empowers youth to deal with differences of opinion and diverse cultures in a peaceful and responsible way. The skills learned help youth build constructive solutions in difficult situations.[38]

Restorative Justice in the Educational System is a practice that can be used to address and discuss the needs of the school, build healthy relationships between educators and students, reduce, prevent and improve harmful behavior, repair harm and restore positive relationships, resolve conflict, and hold individuals accountable. Restorative Justice can be used to enhance school safety and as an alternative to zero-tolerance policies, reducing suspensions, expulsions, and involvement in the juvenile justice system. Restorative Practices included: Restorative Justice, community conferencing, community service, peer juries, circle process, preventative and post-conflict resolution programs, peer mediation, informal restorative justice practices, and social-emotional learning (SEL).[39] [40]

Cultural Responsivity teaching can be practiced in schools by having awareness of student's beliefs, customs, values, and behaviors that they have gained through their individual and collective experiences. Schools should be able to function effectively while acknowledging differences, validating student's identities, and being inclusive of varying perspectives. Culturally-based programming on school campuses is one method to increase cultural responsivity. Culturally-based programming models use a strength-based approach that taps into the cultural values, principles, customs, and traditions of diverse ethnic groups, taking a holistic approach in enhancing protective factors of youth and their families. La Cultura Cura, or culturally-based healing approach, uses a trauma-informed approach that enhances cultural identity and self-development, and provides a sense of status and inclusion for youth.[41] [42]

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

Other Related Strategies

- Academic Support

- Community-Based Organization Programming on School Campuses

- Conflict Mediation and Restorative Justice

- Creating an Environment of Programming and Services that is Culturally Responsive

- Family Engagement and Support

- Resource Depot

- School Resource Officers (SRO): Clarify Roles, Align SRO Practices with this Plan Across the County, Collect Data on Their Interventions

- Social-Emotional/Behavioral Support

Indicator D: Graduation Rate

Priority Strategies

Personalized Education Paths

Personalized education and learning paths are designed to meet the needs and goals of each student. All students are held to clear high expectations, but each student follows a customized path towards the appropriate goal, whether it's community college, a 4-year university, or vocational school. Each path responds and adapts to their motivations and goals, and the students' progress towards clearly defined goals are continuously assessed. To support students towards their goal, the following activities may be included: college readiness such as introductions to the college application process, college field trips, help with applications, knowledge about scholarships and financial aid; increased student and guardian awareness of what is required to get into college, and information about vocational programming. Additionally, efforts should be made to ensure that all students, regardless of race and ethnicity or socio-economic background have equal access and are prepared to transition to higher education.[43]

School Climate Strategies

Addressing the school climate can greatly impact youth. It can determine whether a youth is comfortable and wants to be at school. Recognizing that each youth arrives each day with the stressors of their lives outside of school is important in interacting with them in both positive and disciplinary interactions. Changing school climate requires a multidisciplinary approach to create safe environments where both students and staff feel engaged, safe, and supported. Some of the following strategies can be utilized to change the school climate:

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

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Targeted intervention for At-Risk Students

Research on early identification of at-risk behaviors in a school setting indicates that a systematic, universal screening processes is a preferred practice that would connect more vulnerable students to needed services, supports, and placements much earlier in their school careers. The following have emerged as best practices for screening and profiling students: (1) the systematic recording and analysis of archival school records resulting from disciplinary infractions commonly referred to as office discipline referrals (ODRs), (2) screening on the basis of Response to Intervention (RTI) where certain students fail to respond adequately to an appropriate

intervention implemented with good treatment fidelity, (3) screening for exposure to risk factors that are associated with destructive outcomes, and (4) a multi-tiered system of support for student behaviors.[51] Appropriate referrals should be made to school counselors and relevant social services.

Academic Support

All students should receive the academic support they need. Academic supports can include tutoring and homework clubs. Best practice tutoring programs are culturally responsive, conduct targeted outreach, prioritize most at-risk students, and manage student retention.[52] Homework Clubs provide a structured environment to complete homework. Homework Clubs support students by improving their academic ability, as well as their work habits, emotional adjustment, and peer relationships. Homework Clubs can be run by educational staff or volunteers.[53]

Other Related Strategies

- Community-Based Organization Programming on Campus

- Create an Environment of Programming and Services that is Culturally Responsive

- Family Support and Engagement

- Student Support/Mentoring

Indicator E: Youth in Labor Force

Priority Strategies

Business Engagement

Encouraging businesses to hire youth and increase internships will provide more opportunities for youth to participate in the labor market. Employers may also need additional guidance in how to best support their young employees for a mutually beneficial experience and recognition that acknowledges business owners who implement these best practices.

Youth Employment Services

Skills/Preparation: Youth and some young adults need additional support when entering into the job market. This may include skill building, such as vocational training, resume building and interview workgroups, teaching young people how to identify opportunities, align their interests with market needs, and acquire relevant skills that will let them succeed in sustainable careers. Supportive services such as counseling, career guidance, and job mentors increase protective factors for at-risk youth and young adults.[54]

> *"The greatest crime preventers are jobs and opportunities."*
>
> *Government Stakeholder*

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

> *"It's hard to get jobs due to stereotypes."*
>
> *Watsonville Youth Focus Group*

Job Placement: For youth still enrolled in high school, jobs should be: compatible with school in supporting academic roles, age-appropriate, skill building, organized, and have high supervision. We need to increase both the quantity and quality of jobs that youth and young adults have access to. Young adults who are not enrolled in school should have equal access job placement.

Equitable Access: This includes equal access to jobs and job preparation programs to reach all youth and young adults who want to be employed. Some youth and young adults currently encounter barriers in gaining employment due to criminal backgrounds or a job program's restrictions on certain populations. In addition, disconnected youth who are not in school cannot obtain a work permit.

Other Related Strategies

- Activities that Connect Youth with Science Industries (e.g., Environmental Studies, Technology, Agriculture)

- Development of Clear Career Pathways in High School and Community College

- High school based career support, such as: vocational training, ROP, Social Emotional Skills Training, School learning Communities Based on Career Themes

Indicator F: Disconnected Youth

Priority Strategies

Data Analysis and Policy Review

Best practice and local education stakeholders recommend reviewing school disciplinary policies and data through the lens of race, gender, and sexual orientation using a team process. "Analyzing disaggregated data can allow school teams to determine if different groups of students receive different penalties for the same infraction." Policies should be reviewed to examine unintended consequences.[55] [56]

Outreach to Disconnected Youth Population and Their Families

Community-based case managers can help identify, track and support with direct/immediate referrals to services. Attempts should be made to reengage youth in school, and referral can range from job placement and vocational training programs, to mental health and substance use disorder treatment. Engage formerly incarcerated/ gang-involved youth and young adults to participate in leadership and civic engagement opportunities, as well as mentoring. Engage disconnected youth in juvenile hall to prepare for reentry.[57]

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Diversion and Alternatives to Justice System Involvement

Proper use of diversion programs for first time and low-level offenders are shown to reduce recidivism, provide more appropriate treatments at the community level, and reduce stigma associated with formal justice system involvement. Evidence-based risk assessment instruments are able to gauge the appropriateness of diversions. Diversions include: participation in treatment and services, utilization of the Restorative Justice Model, and electronic monitoring.[58] [59]

> *"Once you're in the system, it's hard to get out."*
>
> *Juvenile Hall Youth Focus Group*

Multidisciplinary Approaches

This includes increased coordination and communication between stakeholders, such as a comprehensive service navigation system to connect young people to secondary and post-secondary education, job training and employment, community service, substance use counseling, and recreational opportunities. Ideally through a central youth serving center, young people in search of assistance are assessed by caseworkers and connected to appropriate programs, based on their individual needs. Intensive case management and data tracking technology help to ensure that young people access the correct services and do not slip through the cracks. Best practice programs usually include combinations of education (usually targeting the GED), vocational training, work experience, and youth development activities.[60]

Other Related Strategies

- Foster Youth Outreach and Engagement
- Student Support/ Mentoring and Peer-to-Peer Mentoring
- See Graduation Rates indicator
- See Youth in Labor Force indicator

Result #2: Youth are valued and have meaningful participation in their community.

STEP 1: TARGET POPULATION

There were 24,274 youth ages 10-17 and 41,113 young adults ages 18-24 living in Santa Cruz County in 2013.
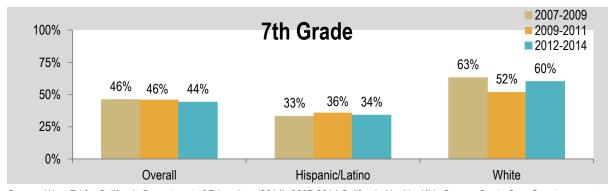
STEP 2: RESULT

Youth are valued and have meaningful participation in their community.

There are several child and youth assets that are known to be critical for healthy development: external assets such as engaging in activities in the community; and internal assets such as self-esteem, sense of purpose, and a positive view of one's future. According to the Search Institute, the more assets youth possess, the more likely they are to choose healthy activities, succeed in school and avoid risky behaviors. Both external and internal assets can be achieved through participation in prosocial activities in school as well as after-school when youth are most likely to be unsupervised. Studies have shown that the after-school hours can be dangerous ones for youth. The Department of Justice reports that 29% of all juvenile offenses occur on school days between 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. and that the number of violent crimes committed doubles in the hour immediately after school is let out.[61]

STEP 3: INDICATORS – A MEASURE OF COMMUNITY PROGRESS

Headline Indicators

A. COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT: STUDENTS WHO HAVE A "HIGH" LEVEL OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION[1], SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BY ETHNICITY
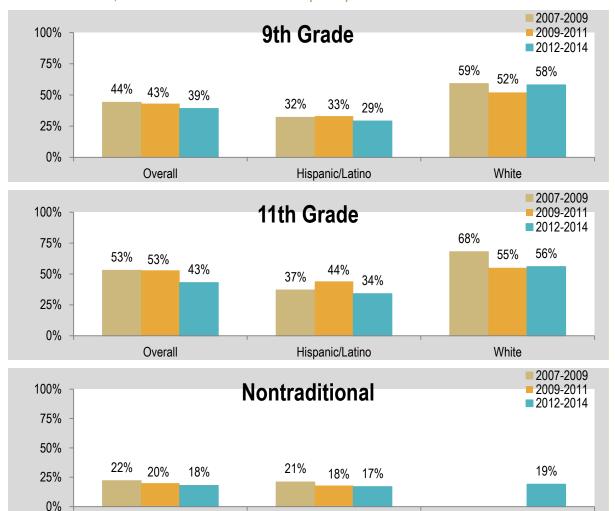

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2007-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

[1]Includes: I am part of clubs, sport teams, church/temple, or other group activities; I am involved in music, art, literature, sports, or a hobby; and I help other people.)

Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.

A. COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT: STUDENTS WHO HAVE A "HIGH" LEVEL OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION[1], SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BY ETHNICITY (CONT.)

9th Grade

Legend: 2007-2009, 2009-2011, 2012-2014

	Overall	Hispanic/Latino	White
2007-2009	44%	32%	59%
2009-2011	43%	33%	52%
2012-2014	39%	29%	58%

11th Grade

Legend: 2007-2009, 2009-2011, 2012-2014

	Overall	Hispanic/Latino	White
2007-2009	53%	37%	68%
2009-2011	53%	44%	55%
2012-2014	43%	34%	56%

Nontraditional

Legend: 2007-2009, 2009-2011, 2012-2014

	Overall	Hispanic/Latino	White
2007-2009	22%	21%	
2009-2011	20%	18%	
2012-2014	18%	17%	19%

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2007-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

[1]Includes: I am part of clubs, sport teams, church/temple, or other group activities; I am involved in music, art, literature, sports, or a hobby; and I help other people.)

Note: For nontraditional students there were fewer than 25 White respondents for 2007-09 and 2009-11 and therefore the data were suppressed for confidentiality.

Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.

Secondary Indicators

- How often does (do) your MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL age child (children) participate in activities after school?

Data Development

- Youth City Council (YCC) Survey: Do you think you can make your community a safer place?

- Youth City Council (YCC) Survey: Youth who are willing to report a crime anonymously

Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

STEP 4: THE STORY BEHIND THE DATA

Indicator A: Community Protective Factors – Prosocial Activities

During the "after-school gap", which is the time between when youth get out of school and when their parents/caregivers return home from work, youth have an average of 20-25 hours a week of unsupervised time. Data tells us that this unsupervised time directly correlates to an increase in youth crime.[62] Prosocial activities are a good alternative for youth when they are otherwise unsupervised. Survey data shows that countywide 9th grade participation in group activities is just slightly under that of the state level and has remained constant since 2007. However, student involvement in group activities, both in school and outside of school, varied greatly by school district and grade. The community has indicated the following issues that may prohibit local youth from having meaningful participation in the community:

- There are barriers to participation that include financial barriers, lack of knowledge about opportunities to participate, lack of transportation, lack of diversity in types of opportunities, and lack of cultural relevancy.

"There's a lack of information about what's out there in the community for youth to do"

SC High Youth Focus Group

- There is a lack of participation by youth that attend nontraditional schools.

- School discipline issues can create a barrier to youth participating in school-based activities.

- San Lorenzo Valley is lacking in structured prosocial activities (e.g., youth groups).

- Community libraries can play a role in providing more structured activities.

- There is not enough meaningful programming that focuses on leadership development, empowerment, and civic engagement/politicization.

STEP 5: COMMUNITY PARTNERS WITH A ROLE TO PLAY

Community Members, Community-Based Organizations, County Office of Education, Faith Community, Families, Libraries, Neighborhood Services/Parks and Recreation, School Districts, Youth

STEP 6: ACTIONS TO TAKE

Indicator A: Community Protective Factors – Prosocial Activities

Priority Strategies

Increased Knowledge of and Access to Prosocial Activities

A youth's ability to participate in activities in the community can be thwarted by an array of barriers, both in knowledge of what is available and in their ability to actually attend. First and foremost, youth must know about what opportunities exist in order to want to participate. Once a youth knows about a program or activity, they can encounter other barriers. Needing a referral for participation can stop a youth from gaining access even when

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they want to be involved because they are dependent on someone else to make the decision. Funding is often a barrier for participation which can be seen in sports teams that require fees for equipment and uniforms. If the program/activity is not in a location that the youth can get to and from, then they will be unable to attend. If programs are not culturally responsive or do not operate in the language spoken by the youth, then they will not be able to participate in a meaningful way. It is also important that there be programs available that pique interest based on a youth's identity whether that be their gender, sexual identity, or status in school. Ultimately, prosocial activities need to be inclusive in order to gain participation and reach youth that encounter some of the following barriers indicated:

- Referral Barriers

- Financial Barriers

- Location and Transportation Barriers - Programs brought directly to neighborhoods and transportations to bring youth to programs

- Language Barriers

- Cultural Competency in Programming

- Gender Specific Programming

- Special Focus on Youth from Nontraditional Schools

> *"There's not enough resources directed towards diverse activities. We have to ask ourselves, 'what else can we do to engage our youth?'"*
>
> *Justice Stakeholder*

Program Evaluations

In order to get a picture of the effectiveness of the current programs available to youth, programmatic evaluations must be completed. Research shows that effective programs make fact-based decisions based on a set system of inputs from multiple sources.[63] It is important to have a real understanding of the effectiveness and efficiency of a program so that limited resources can be prioritized by funders. Evaluations help inform program directors and decisions makers as to what programming is producing positive outcomes and should be expanded and made more widely available to youth across the county.

Increase Availability of a Diverse Array of Options for Activities

In order to ensure that the participation is meaningful, inclusive, and interesting, it is important that programming be culturally responsive and appropriate for the youth served. In order to serve the diverse population of youth across the county and meet their varied interests and strengths, there needs to be an array of opportunities for participation. Some examples of diversified programs include:

- Science and environmental studies, agriculture, and technology

- Leadership opportunities

- Mentorship programs

- Sports programs that offer free access to team sports

Result #3: Youth are supported by caring adults.

STEP 1: TARGET POPULATION

There were 24,274 youth ages 10-17 and 41,113 young adults ages 18-24 living in Santa Cruz County in 2013.

STEP 2: RESULT

Youth are supported by caring adults.

"We need to recognize community members as assets. There's a lot of caring individuals that want to reach out to youth. If we're able to tap into adults that want to help youth –it's a great opportunity."
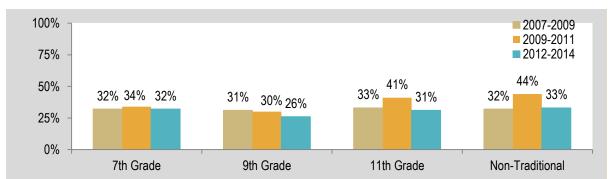
Government Stakeholder

Research shows that "youth's beliefs about themselves and their abilities are shaped by the extent to which they perceive that the adults in their lives care about them and are involved in their lives." Outside of the home, these positive connections to adult role models can happen in school, recreational, social service or mentorship settings. In terms of youth violence prevention, the CDC states "whether adults are supportive, encouraging of youth to use nonviolent ways to solve problems, and willing to intervene with conflicts also contribute to youth's beliefs about the acceptability of violence and their likelihood to act violently."[64] Positive connections with adult role models help youth to feel more connected and can lead to better choices and performance in all facets of their lives.

STEP 3: INDICATOR: A MEASURE OF COMMUNITY PROGRESS
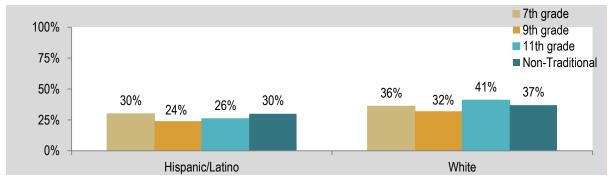
Headline Indicators

A. SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT: STUDENTS WHO HAVE A "HIGH" LEVEL OF CARING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS IN SCHOOL[1], SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2007-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

[1]Includes: At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who: really cares about me; notices when I am not there; and listens when I have something to say.

Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.

A. SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT: STUDENTS WHO HAVE A "HIGH" LEVEL OF CARING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS IN SCHOOL[1], SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BY ETHNICITY – 2012-2014
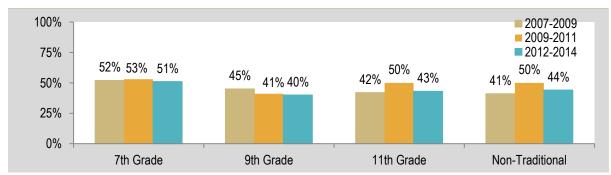

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2012-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

[1]*Includes: At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who: really cares about me; notices when I am not there; and listens when I have something to say.*

Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.

B. SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT: STUDENTS WHO HAVE A "HIGH" LEVEL OF HIGH EXPECTATIONS WITH ADULTS IN SCHOOL[1], SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
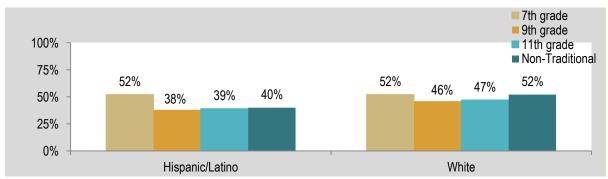

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2007-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

[1]*Includes: At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who: tells me when I do a good job; always wants me to do my best; and believes that I will be a success.*

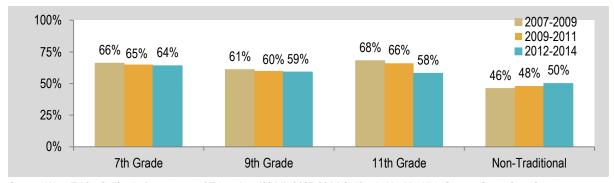*Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.*

B. SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT: STUDENTS WHO HAVE A "HIGH" LEVEL OF HIGH EXPECTATIONS WITH ADULTS IN SCHOOL[1], SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BY ETHNICITY – 2012-2014

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2012-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

[1]*Includes: At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who: tells me when I do a good job; always wants me to do my best; and believes that I will be a success.*

Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.

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C. COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT: STUDENTS WHO HAVE A "HIGH" LEVEL OF CARING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY[1], SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
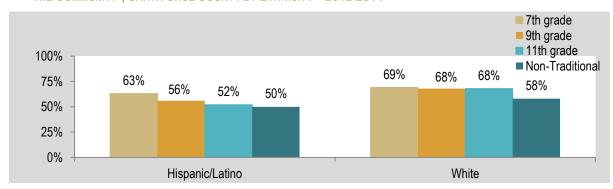

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2007-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

[1]Includes: Outside my home and school, there is a teacher or some other adult who: really cares about me; notices when I am upset about something; and whom I trust.

Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.

C. COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT: STUDENTS WHO HAVE A "HIGH" LEVEL OF CARING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY[1], SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BY ETHNICITY – 2012-2014
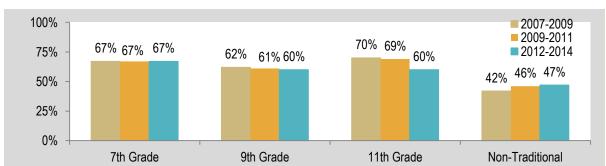

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2012-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

[1]Includes: Outside my home and school, there is a teacher or some other adult who: really cares about me; notices when I am upset about something; and whom I trust.

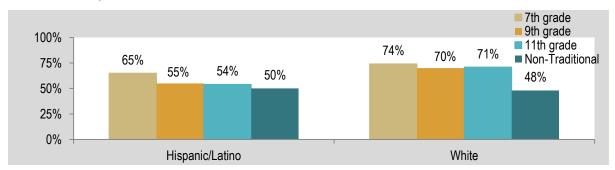*Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.*

D. COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT: STUDENTS WHO HAVE A "HIGH" LEVEL OF HIGH EXPECTATIONS WITH ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY[1], SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2007-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

[1]Includes: Outside my home and school, there is a teacher or some other adult who: tells me when I do a good job; always wants me to do my best; and believes that I will be a success.

Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.

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D. Community Environment: Students Who Have a "High" Level of High Expectations with Adults in the Community[1], Santa Cruz County by Ethnicity – 2012-2014

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2012-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

[1] *Includes: Outside my home and school, there is a teacher or some other adult who: tells me when I do a good job; always wants me to do my best; and believes that I will be a success.*

Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.

Data Development

- Students who reported they have five or more adults who care, support, protect, praise

STEP 4: THE STORY BEHIND THE DATA

Indicator A & B: School Environment Factors: Caring Adults and High Expectations

Due to the amount of time youth spend in school, the school setting is where youth are very likely to have caring adult connections and feel that they are being held to a high level of expectation. According to the CDC, school environmental protective factors may contribute to the protection of youth from the potential harmful effects of negative situations, such as exposure to violence.[65] The community has indicated that the following factors can affect a youth's ability to have relationships with caring adults in the school setting:

- There is a perception in the community that teachers are not as engaged with their students as they could be. This may be due to lack of capacity, class sizes, lack of time, different classroom management styles, disconnected youth, and emphasis on standardized testing.

- Youth feel that educators underestimate their abilities.

"They underestimate us."
Watsonville Youth Focus Group

- There are a lack of Latino educational staff which can impact comfort and trust between parents/youth and school staff. It is also reported that the racial and cultural differences can be a barrier for youth to build caring relationships. Some Latino youth in focus groups reported feeling that they are treated differently than their white counterparts.

- There are barriers and other responsibilities that conflict with participating in school-based prosocial activities, such as: finances, older siblings having to take care of younger siblings, employment, and the consequences of school discipline.

- There is a lack of community-based organizations on campus.

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- Union can act as barriers to having community volunteers in schools.

- Nontraditional students have less adult connections.

- In high school, eleventh grade is crucial to having relationships with other adults, because that is the time when youth begin to ask for letters of recommendation for college.

Indicator C & D: Community Protective Factors- Caring Relationships with Adults and High Expectations

Youth also have opportunity to form relationships with caring adults in the community. According to 2008-10 data, about two-thirds of California public school students in grades 7, 9, and 11 expressed a high level of agreement that adults in the community had high expectations of them and that adults in the community cared about them. The majority of 7th, 9th, and 11th graders in Santa Cruz County school districts also reported that they had an adult outside of their home and school that cared about them in 2010-11. The community indicated the following issues surrounding the cultivation of caring relationships in the community:

- There is a stigma around youth. Latino youth are labeled negatively.

- Lack of meaningful relationships with law enforcement, adults, and parents.

- There are not enough intentional opportunities for neighbors to get to know each other and the youth.

- Unwillingness to work with former/current gang members. Organizations are stigmatized for working with those who report they are involved in a gang.

- Youth focus group participants expressed the perception that adults in the community underestimate their capabilities.

STEP 5: COMMUNITY PARTNERS WITH A ROLE TO PLAY

City and County Government, Community Members, Community-Based Organizations, County Health Services Agency, County Office of Education, Faith Community, Families, Libraries, Law Enforcement, Neighborhood-Based Groups, Neighborhood Services/ Parks and Recreation, School Districts, Youth

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STEP 6: ACTIONS TO TAKE

Indicators A & B: School Environment Factors- Caring Adults and High Expectations

Priority Strategies

Social-Emotional Learning Curriculums/Programs

According to the California Department of Education, "social-emotional development includes the child's experience,

> *"We need holistic curriculums in school that are engaging and address the whole student."*
>
> *Government Stakeholder*

expression, and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others. It encompasses both intra- and interpersonal processes."[66] In addition to being able to establish rewarding relationships with others, social-emotional skills include the ability to identify and understand emotions in one's self and others, behavior regulation, and expressions of emotion in a constructive manner. All of these skills are important both in school and out in the community.

Improve Youth-Teacher/Education Staff Relationships and Teacher Engagement Strategies

According to the CDC, when youth have stable connections to school personnel, it has been found to have a positive effect on decreasing aggressive behavior.[67] The youth-teacher/education staff relationship is a direct opportunity for caring adult relationships for youth. The structure of this relationship inherently provides the opportunity for setting expectations for youth. The amount of time spent in school also allows for the development of caring relationships between teachers and students. One way to increase teacher engagement with youth is through the implementation of social-emotional learning curriculums because they provide opportunities for discussion and connection on issues outside of standard academic lessons.

An example of an effort working towards the improvement of youth-teacher relationships is called Youth on Board. This project increases student involvement in teacher evaluations and allows for a process that results in constructive feedback. This process instills value in the student voice and builds teacher support for a positive classroom environment.[68] Ultimately any program that works on improving students' problem solving and social skills will help them to build positive relationships with peers and teachers.[69]

School Climate Strategies

Addressing the school climate can greatly impact youth. It can determine whether a youth is comfortable and wants to be at school. Recognizing that all youth arrive each day with the stressors of their lives outside of school is important in interacting with them in both positive and disciplinary interactions. Changing school climate requires a multidisciplinary approach to create safe environments where both students and staff feel engaged, safe, and supported. Some of the following strategies can be utilized to change the school climate:

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) programming was mentioned as an asset they desired for their school by the majority of education stakeholders YVPT interviewed. PBIS dictates that an entire school or district determine 3-5 behavioral expectations to teach just as they would core curriculum. The focus is on

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

positive behavior expectations and is most effective when it is taught consistently by staff throughout the entire school.[70]

Trauma Informed Care policies and practices in schools involves a framework that recognizes and understands the effects of trauma in youth's life. It is an approach that emphasizes emotional, psychological, and physical safety for the students and staff by practicing trauma narrative, cognitive coping mechanisms and processing, and relaxation skills.[71]

Conflict Mediation as a way of resolving interpersonal conflict empowers youth to deal with differences of opinion and diverse cultures in a peaceful and responsible way. The skills learned help youth build constructive solutions in difficult situations.[72]

Restorative Justice in the Educational System is a practice that can be used to address and discuss the needs of the school, build healthy relationships between educators and students, reduce, prevent and improve harmful behavior, repair harm and restore positive relationships, resolve conflict, and hold individuals accountable. Restorative Justice can be used to enhance school safety and as an alternative to zero-tolerance policies, reducing suspensions, expulsions, and involvement in the juvenile justice system. Restorative Practices included: Restorative Justice, community conferencing, community service, peer juries, circle process, preventative and post-conflict resolution programs, peer mediation, informal restorative justice practices, and social-emotional learning (SEL).[73] [74]

Cultural Responsivity teaching can be practiced in schools by having awareness of student's beliefs, customs, values, and behaviors that they have gained through their individual and collective experiences. Schools should be able to function effectively while acknowledging differences, validating student's identities, and being inclusive of varying perspectives. Culturally-based programming on school campuses is one method to increase cultural responsivity, Culturally-based programming models use a strength-based approach that taps into the cultural values, principles, customs, and traditions of diverse ethnic groups, taking a holistic approach in enhancing protective factors of youth and their families. La Cultura Cura, or culturally-based healing approach, uses a trauma-informed approach that enhances cultural identity and self-development, and provides a sense of status and inclusion for youth.

School-Based Behavioral Health Services

The term "mental health" historically has been used in reference to mental illness; however, mental health is increasingly now viewed as a state of wellbeing. This new framework for mental health includes a focus on resilience, and having certain family and community supports that help improve wellbeing such as youth having adult mentors, participating in after-school activities and volunteer and leadership opportunities in the community. A youth's mental health plays a key role in how they interact with others, their ability to build relationships, how they perform in school, their behavior, and how they display their social-emotional skills. It can also play a role in their prevention of and response to crisis in their lives.[75]

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

It should be noted that New Mental Health Parity laws, and the Affordable Care Act, now require behavioral health services to be provided by insurers on par with other health concerns. While youth with Medi-Cal (38% in the county) have access to a range of therapy and case management services through County Mental Health and their contract partners, youth with insurance/uninsured (62%) in particular need access to a broader array of therapy and support options by providers. Community stakeholders largely noted that having access to mental health services on school campuses makes access to these services much easier, adding that they would like to see these services at every school site and available after school hours. Increased access to on-site services can help eliminate many of the barriers that arise when seeking services in the community.

Community-Based Organizational (CBO) Prevention and Intervention Programming on School Campuses

Having CBO programing on school campuses provides additional support for students, their families, and staff. CBO program staff are able to connect youth and their families with resources in the schools as well as in the community. CBO program staff provide additional protective factors for youth. Among many things, they are able to act as mentors for the youth, encouraging school attendance and supporting students' socio-emotional needs. They are also able to assist with conflict resolution, provide culturally-based programming, help students apply for college, and even develop job resumes.

Other Related Strategies

- Student Mentoring

- Identification and Early Intervention for At-Risk Students

- Smaller Class Sizes and Small Learning Communities

Indicators C & D: Community Protective Factors- Caring Relationships with Adults and High Expectations

Priority Strategies

Increased Knowledge of and Access to Prosocial Activities

A youths' ability to participate in activities in their communities can be thwarted by an array of barriers, both in knowledge of what is available and in their ability to actually attend. First and foremost, youth must know about what opportunities exist in order to want to participate. Once a youth knows about a program or activity, they can encounter other barriers. Needing a referral for participation can stop a youth from gaining access even when they want to be involved because they are dependent on someone else to make the decision. Funding is often a barrier for participation which can often be seen in sports teams that require fees for equipment and uniforms. If the program/activity is not in a location that the youth can get to and from then they will be unable to attend. If programs are not culturally responsive or do

not operate in the language spoken by the youth, then they will not be able to participate in a meaningful way. It is also important that there be programs available that pique interest based on a youth's identity whether that is their gender, sexual identity, or status in school. Ultimately, prosocial activities need to be inclusive in order to gain participation and reach youth that encounter some of the following barriers indicated:

- Referral Barriers

- Financial Barriers

- Location and Transportation Barriers - Programs brought directly to neighborhoods and transportations to bring youth to programs

- Language Barriers

- Cultural Competency in Programming

- Gender Specific Programming

- Special Focus on Youth from Nontraditional Schools

Law Enforcement-Youth Relations

Interacting with youth is an integral aspect of policing duties, which presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges. Lack of trust and positive relationships between law enforcement and youth impacts the perceived legitimacy of the law, and therefore increases the likelihood that youth will engage in delinquent behavior.[76] [77]

According to a brief published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, in order to ensure positive outcomes between youth-law enforcement interactions, "law enforcement officers need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively interact with youth in any situation."[78]Law enforcement strategies to improve interactions with youth include trainings on: adolescent development, how to approach and interact with youth both verbally and nonverbally, trauma-informed care practices and policies, as well as opportunities for youth and law enforcement to interact in a non-suppression focused/nonthreatening situation such as through the Police Activities League.[79]

Mentoring

Mentoring has been proven to be one of the most effective strategies for creating a "close, developmental relationship between an older, more experienced individual and a younger person, usually sustained over a period of time and involving mutual commitment, respect, and loyalty."[80] It has also been shown that having a mentoring relationship can positively affect a young person's school attendance and engagement, academic performance, self-efficacy and attitude toward drugs and alcohol. Community stakeholders identified a need to: increase community volunteers from the faith community, retirees, etc., and provide them with training in effective practices for mentoring; engage these mentors to work with "gang affiliated" youth; increase Latino mentors; increase long term relationship building activities, rather than one-time events or short term programs.

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

Street Outreach

A street outreach model should take a multidisciplinary approach, where outreach workers work with law enforcement, probation, service providers and the community to target and mentor youth and young adults most at-risk. They work to build one-on-one relationships, provide connections to services and crisis response with other agencies following a violent incident.[81]

In order to gain credibility in the community, street outreach workers should have lived experience and be familiar with and knowledgeable of the neighborhoods and community. Workers also must trust and be trusted by law enforcement personnel. Potential street outreach workers must be screened and undergo proper training. Outreach workers and partnering agencies "need to clearly understand each other's roles so that they do not violate information sharing boundaries. It is very important that community members, Intervention Team members, and the gang members themselves see the outreach workers as intervention-focused, and not as law enforcement adjuncts."[82]

Other Related Strategies

- Youth-Friendly Events That Allow Neighbors to Get to Know Each Other, Such as Block Parties, National Night Out, Neighborhood Watch

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

Result #4: Youth are safe and feel safe at school.

STEP 1: TARGET POPULATION

There were 24,274 youth ages 10-17 and 41,113 young adults ages 18-24 living in Santa Cruz County in 2013.
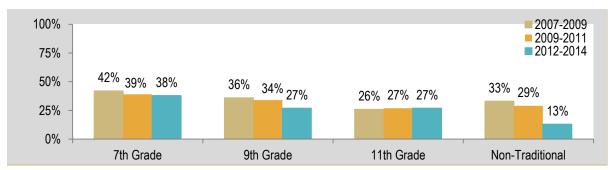
STEP 2: RESULT

Youth are safe and feel safe at school.

Effective prevention and intervention programs are comprehensive, applying an array of strategies to promote a safe school climate. Ensuring youth are safe and feel safe at school requires ongoing planning, commitment, and collaboration between schools, parents, youth, and community members. It is important to be proactive rather than reactive when addressing school safety. According to the Safe and Responsive Schools Project, "[p]reventive programs, such as bullying prevention, peer mediation, or anger management, have far more data available to support their effectiveness than do technology-based fixes such as metal detectors or video surveillance cameras." Addressing school safety involves school climate strategies, early identification and interventions, and effective responses.[83] [84]

STEP 3: INDICATOR: A MEASURE OF COMMUNITY PROGRESS
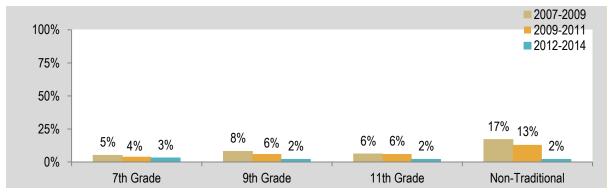
Headline Indicators

A. DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, HOW MANY TIMES ON SCHOOL PROPERTY WERE YOU HARASSED OR BULLIED FOR ANY REASON?, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2007-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.
Note: Data are not available by ethnicity.
Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

B. DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, HOW MANY TIMES ON SCHOOL PROPERTY HAVE YOU CARRIED A GUN? (RESPONDENTS ANSWERING AT LEAST ONE TIME), SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
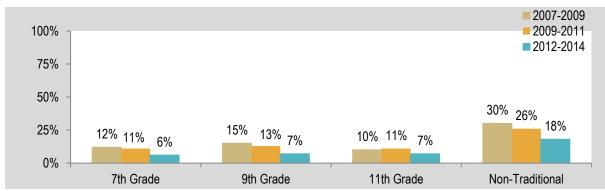

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2007-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

Note: Data are not available by ethnicity.

Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.

C. DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, HOW MANY TIMES ON SCHOOL PROPERTY HAVE YOU CARRIED ANY WEAPON OTHER THAN A GUN? (RESPONDENTS ANSWERING AT LEAST ONE TIME), SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
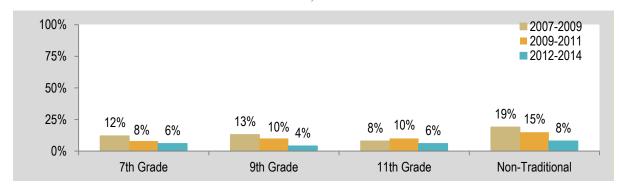

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2007-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

Note: Data are not available by ethnicity.

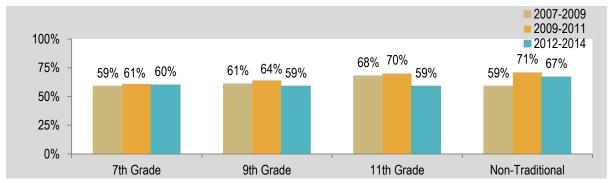*Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.*

D. DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A MEMBER OF A GANG?, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2007-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

Note: Data are not available by ethnicity.

Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.

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E. HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU ARE AT SCHOOL? (RESPONDENTS ANSWERING "VERY SAFE" OR "SAFE"), SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
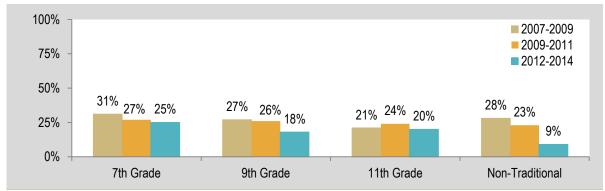

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2007-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.
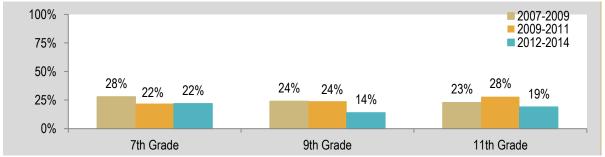
Note: Data are not available by ethnicity.

Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.

F. DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, HOW MANY TIMES ON SCHOOL PROPERTY WERE YOU HARASSED OR BULLIED BECAUSE OF RACE, ETHNICITY, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN, RELIGION, GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, OR PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITY? (RESPONDENTS ANSWERING AT LEAST ONE TIME), SANTA CRUZ COUNTY – TOTAL RESPONDENTS
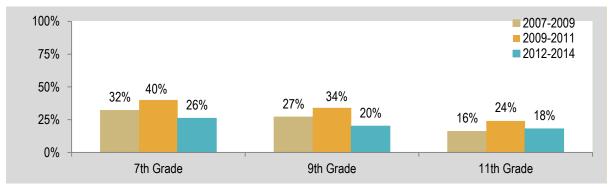

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2007-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.

F. DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, HOW MANY TIMES ON SCHOOL PROPERTY WERE YOU HARASSED OR BULLIED BECAUSE OF RACE, ETHNICITY, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN, RELIGION, GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, OR PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITY? (RESPONDENTS ANSWERING AT LEAST ONE TIME), SANTA CRUZ COUNTY – HISPANIC OR LATINO RESPONDENTS

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2007-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.

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F. **DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, HOW MANY TIMES ON SCHOOL PROPERTY WERE YOU HARASSED OR BULLIED BECAUSE OF RACE, ETHNICITY, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN, RELIGION, GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, OR PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITY? (RESPONDENTS ANSWERING AT LEAST ONE TIME), SANTA CRUZ COUNTY – WHITE RESPONDENTS**

Source: West Ed for California Department of Education. (2014). 2007-2014 California Healthy Kids Survey, Santa Cruz County.

Note: Number of survey respondents can be found in endnote #9.

Secondary Indicators

- During the past 12 months, how many times did other students spread mean rumors or lies about you on the internet?

- Hospitalization rates per 1,000 youth ages 15-19 for mental health (5150: suicidal, homicidal, or gravely disabled)

- Suspensions/Expulsions

- Self-reported symptomatic depression

- Juvenile arrests

Data Development

- Youth City Council Survey: What makes you feel the most unsafe in Watsonville/Santa Cruz?

- Youth City Council Survey: How safe do you feel at school during the day?

- Youth City Council Survey: Youth who reported being approached by a gang member to join.

- Youth victims of crime

STEP 4: THE STORY BEHIND THE DATA

Indicator A: Harassed or Bullied

Bullying is prevalent in most schools, yet it has been found that school staff commonly underestimate the presence and impact of bullying on students.[85] According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, "Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power

Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose."[86]

Nationally, over the past several years, bullying has received much public attention. Youth are harassed or bullied for diverse reasons, including gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical features, and socio-economic status. Bullying impacts school attendance, academic achievement, and emotional wellbeing. Bullying others or being bullied puts a youth at greater risk for engaging in future violent behavior.[87]

Locally, students reporting being harassed or bullied for any reason on school property has been on the decline since 2007. However, about one in four students in the 7th, 9th, and 11th grade in Santa Cruz County reported that they were harassed or bullied on school property in 2010-11. The percentage of students who reported being bullied on the internet increased with age in 2010-11. The community has indicated the following:

- Many youth are cyberbullied through social media. Some reported that unsupervised media is a factor in this.

- Youth focus groups reported that school staff sometimes ignore bullying and do not intervene.

- Some believe that schools are lacking restorative justice and conflict mediation programs, which may help address the issue.

Indicator B & C: Bring a Gun or Any Other Weapons on School Property

Bringing a weapon to school can result in school suspension or expulsion. According to law enforcement, youth are able to access weapons through the black market, their families, and their peers. Overall, students carrying any type of weapon on school campus has been on the decline since 2007. Six percent of 9th grade students in Santa Cruz County reported that they carried a gun onto school property, higher than 9th graders in the state (5%). Thirteen percent of 9th graders in the county reported carrying a weapon other than a gun onto school property. Community members have indicated that:

- Youth sometimes bring weapons onto campus because they do not feel safe on campus or going to and from school.

- Gang involvement may increase bringing weapons onto campus.

- Several educators and parents expressed their concerns about the normalization of violence amongst youth.

- The schools and community are lacking in culturally responsive conflict resolution prevention and intervention programming.

- Some believe that each school should have a School Resource Officer.

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

Indicator D: Gang Involvement

Individuals identified as being gang involved by law enforcement are responsible for the majority of serious violence committed by youth. There is an estimated 756,000 youth involved in gangs in the U.S. and most gang members join between the ages of 12 and 15. One in ten local ninth graders reported gang involvement in 2011, which is higher than the state average. A CDC study of youth and gangs, however, showed that when youth had more protective factors, they had a much lower rate of gang involvement. Protective factors may include good parent supervision, a supportive family, social skills, and an ability to cope with conflict. Youth who had seven or more protective factors had a 2% chance of joining a gang, compared to youth who had 0-3 protective factors who had a 26% chance of being in a gang. Research also suggests that a comprehensive approach to gangs involving prevention, intervention, and suppression efforts works better than suppression efforts alone. Schools are a critical component of this comprehensive approach. The community indicated the following issues regarding youth and young adult gang involvement:

- Youth join gangs for various reasons: safety, identity, to obtain a sense of belonging, status and respect, peer and familial influence, because of a "forced choice."

- Violence is normalized for youth in today's society.

- There is a lack of culturally-based prevention and intervention programs - in schools and in the broader community. Youth need an alternative identity that provides status.

- Need more support for those that want to "walk away" from gangs (differentiated from "dropping out").

- Intergenerational gang involvement in families and neighborhoods.

- Youth and broader community expressed concerns with over-labeling/ identification of youth being gang involved, by educators, law enforcement, and broader community (e.g., self-fulfilling prophecies).

- Single-parent households and working long hours impacts parental engagement and ability to supervise children. Parents may not know if their child is engaging in risky behavior. Poverty increase family stressors.

- Families of youth who are at-risk of being gang involved feel under-supported. Some families expressed frustration that they felt that their child(ren) had to get into trouble before they were able to access supportive services.

- Some parents and educators believe that youth use social media for gang-related activities.

Indicator E: Youth Reported Feeling Safe at School

When youth feel safe in school, it improves their educational performance and their ability to concentrate and learn.[88] However, in a 2011 nationally representative sample of youth in grades 9-12, 6% of youth did not go to school on one or more days in the last 30 days prior to the survey because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to school.217 Statewide, Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP) must prioritize school climate.

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Perceived school safety, violence, and bullying fall under the category of school climate.[89] Locally, youth reporting feeling safe at school has been on the incline. The community has indicated the following:

- Youth may not feel safe at school due to bullying and gangs.

- A sense of safety is both physical and emotional.

- Access to caring adults on schools campuses impacts sense of safety.

- Some youth reported that the lack of Latino educational staff impacts trust and comfort levels in going to staff when they do not feel safe.

Indicator F: Discriminated Against at School Because of Race, Ethnicity, or National Origin, Religion, Gender, Sexual Orientation, or Physical or Mental Disability

When community stakeholders were asked about discrimination, they focused on the issues of racial and ethnic disparities and school disciplinary policies. The issue of racial and ethnic disparities and school disciplinary policies is being discussed at a local, statewide and national level. Interestingly, it has been pointed out that Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP) for Santa Cruz County school districts do not address racial and ethnic disparities. School leaders have reported the need for on-going resources to help look at school disciplinary policies. Locally, the community indicated the following:

- School disciplinary policies can be implemented subjectively.

- Some district officials said they believe they need funding for support in addressing equity, so that it is more than a one-time training (e.g., consultants).

- Educational staff are not necessarily representative of the population of students, which can impact comfort and trust between parents/youth and school staff. It is also reported that racial and cultural differences can act as barriers for youth in building relationships with adults. Some Latino youth in focus groups reported feeling that they were treated differently than their White counterparts.

STEP 5: PARTNERS WITH A ROLE TO PLAY

Businesses, Community Members, Community-Based Organizations, County Health Services Agency, County Office of Education, Families, Law Enforcement, Libraries, Neighborhood Services/Parks and Recreation, School Districts, Youth

STEP 6: ACTION TO TAKE

Indicator A: During the past 12 months, how many times on school property were you harassed or bullied?

Priority Strategies

Anti-Bullying Strategies

The best way to address bullying is to stop it before it starts. It is important for everyone in the community to work together to send a unified message against bullying. There are a number of things school staff can do to prevent bullying, including: an assessment to determine how often bullying occurs, where it happens, how students and adults intervene, and whether prevention efforts are working; launch an awareness campaign to make the objectives known to the school, parents, and community members; establish a school safety committee or task force to plan, implement, and evaluate your school's bullying prevention program; create clear policies and rules against bullying; and create a mission statement, code of conduct, and a bullying reporting system. These approaches establish a climate in which bullying is not acceptable. It is also important to disseminate and communicate information that helps establish a school culture of acceptance, tolerance and respect through staff meetings, assemblies, class and parent meetings, newsletters to families, the school website, and the student handbook. Teacher and staff training on the school's rules and policies is also critical, giving them the skills to intervene consistently and appropriately.

Continuum of Responses

Create a continuum of responses for educators that have meaningful implications for students, rather than removing youth from the school environment. For example, implement restorative practices, in-school disciplinary alternatives, such as Saturday school or in-school suspension, anger management, referrals to mental health services and community-based intervention programs. When consequences need to be enacted, they should be mildly unpleasant, short in duration, and immediate.[90] [91]

Family Engagement

Over 50 years of research links the various roles that families play in a child's education-as supporters of learning, encouragers of determination, models of lifelong learning, and advocates of proper programming and placements for their child. The U.S. Department of Education's Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships builds on existing research suggesting that partnerships between home and school can only develop and thrive if both families and staff have the requisite collective capacity to engage in partnership.[92]

Many school and district family engagement initiatives focus solely on providing workshops and seminars for families on how to engage more effectively in their children's education. Though helpful, this focus on families alone often results in increased tension between families and school staff: families are trained to be more active in their children's schools, only to be met by an unreceptive and unwelcoming school climate and resistance from district and school staff to their efforts for more active engagement. Therefore, policies and programs directed at improving family engagement must focus on building the capacities of both staff and families to

engage in partnerships.67 Effective parent involvement programs include activities that are addressed by the following National PTA Parent and Community Standards:

- Collaborating with community - Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families and student learning.

- Communicating - Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.

- Parenting - Parenting skills are promoted and supported.

- School decision-making and advocacy - Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.

- Student learning - Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

- Volunteering - Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.

Additionally families have requested family support groups. Family support groups through the school district can bring families together to discuss shared challenges and offer solutions.

School Climate Strategies

Addressing the school climate can greatly impact youth. It can determine whether a youth is comfortable and wants to be at school. Recognizing that all youth arrive each day with the stressors of their lives outside of school is important in interacting with them in both positive and disciplinary interactions. Changing school climate requires a multidisciplinary approach to create safe environments where both students and staff feel engaged, safe, and supported. Some of the following strategies can be utilized to change the school climate:

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) programming was mentioned as an asset they desired for their school by the majority of education stakeholders YVPT interviewed. PBIS dictates that an entire school or district determine 3-5 behavioral expectations to teach just as they would core curriculum. The focus is on positive behavior expectations and is most effective when it is taught consistently by staff throughout the entire school.[93]

Trauma Informed Care policies and practices in schools involves a framework that recognizes and understands the effects of trauma in youth's life. It is an approach that emphasizes emotional, psychological, and physical safety for the students and staff by practicing trauma narrative, cognitive coping mechanisms and processing, and relaxation skills.[94]

Conflict Mediation as a way of resolving interpersonal conflict empowers youth to deal with differences of opinion and diverse cultures in a peaceful and responsible way. The skills learned help youth build constructive solutions in difficult situations.[95]

Restorative Justice in the Educational System is a practice that can be used to address and discuss the needs of the school, build healthy relationships between educators and students, reduce, prevent and improve harmful behavior, repair harm and restore positive relationships, resolve conflict, and hold individuals accountable.

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Restorative Justice can be used to enhance school safety and as an alternative to zero-tolerance policies, reducing suspensions, expulsions, and involvement in the juvenile justice system. Restorative Practices included: Restorative Justice, community conferencing, community service, peer juries, circle process, preventative and post-conflict resolution programs, peer mediation, informal restorative justice practices, and social-emotional learning (SEL).[96] [97]

Cultural Responsivity teaching can be practiced in schools by having awareness of student's beliefs, customs, values, and behaviors that they have gained through their individual and collective experiences. Schools should be able to function effectively while acknowledging differences, validating student's identities, and being inclusive of varying perspectives. Culturally-based programming on school campuses is one method to increase cultural responsivity, Culturally-based programming models use a strength-based approach that taps into the cultural values, principles, customs, and traditions of diverse ethnic groups, taking a holistic approach in enhancing protective factors of youth and their families. La Cultura Cura, or culturally-based healing approach, uses a trauma-informed approach that enhances cultural identity and self-development, and provides a sense of status and inclusion for youth.[98] [99]

Other Related Strategies

- School Policies That Allow Students to Anonymously File Harassment Complaint

- School Resource Officers

Indicator B & C: On School Property, Carried a Gun and Carried Any Other Weapon

Priority Strategies

Community-Based Organization (CBO) Prevention and Intervention Programming

Having CBO programing on school campuses provides additional support for students, their families, and staff. CBO program staff are able to connect youth and their families with resources in the schools as well as in the community. CBO program staff provide additional protective factors for youth. Among many things, they are able to act as mentors for the youth, encouraging school attendance and supporting students' socio-emotional needs. They are also able to assist with conflict resolution, provide culturally-based programming, help students apply for college, and even develop job resumes.

Raise Awareness about Why Students Feel Compelled to Bring Weapons to School

Community stakeholders indicated that school staff often are unaware that students may be bringing a weapon to school out of concern for their own safety. When educators have more knowledge as to why students are likely to bring a weapon onto a school campus, educators are more likely to participate in appropriate prevention and intervention practices such as identifying and addressing the warning signs, checking-in with a student and referring them to the appropriate resource.

Safe Routes to Schools

In many communities, walking and bicycling are major ways youth get to school. The danger of gang recruitment, intimidation, bullying and violence discourages youth from walking to school, increasing truancy and the likelihood that a youth will feel that they need to protect themselves. This was confirmed through our stakeholder interviews and youth focus groups. Developing safe routes to schools may include strategies such as establishing school carpool lists, using techniques of "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design" (CPTED), encouraging local neighbors and business to serve as "eyes on the street," utilizing Street Outreach Workers, and identifying safe havens, such as specific houses, businesses, community libraries, and churches where youth can go in case of emergencies while going to and from school.[100]

Preventative Evidence-Based Programming on School Campus

These programs promote socio-emotional skills aimed at reducing impulsive and aggressive behavior. Programs that build on cognitive behavioral intervention models, social learning theory and empathy research can be utilized to better equip youth to manage their emotional reactions and decision making capabilities.[101]

Develop a Protocol That Allows Students to Anonymously Report Weapons on School Campus

It is important that students feel they can safely report a concern about a weapon without fear of retaliation or punishment. Some school districts have set up hotlines and have a link on their district website for students to make anonymous tips. These methods have also been used so that students can report bullying and potential violence. Students may need some guidance and discussion in regards to what should be reported and what the warning signs may be.

Targeted Gang Involvement Intervention Strategies

Community stakeholders identified the importance of providing supportive services for individuals who are carrying a weapon to school, as this is likely a sign of additional risks such as gang involvement. Targeted intervention includes: early identification of youth who are at risk of becoming involved in a gang and referrals to community-based intervention programs such as Broad-Based Apprehension Suppression Treatment and Alternatives (BASTA), and referrals to supportive services such as mentoring, counseling and other services in the community.

School Climate Strategies

Addressing the school climate can greatly impact youth. It can determine whether a youth is comfortable and wants to be at school. Recognizing that all youth arrive each day with the stressors of their lives outside of school is important in interacting with them in both positive and disciplinary interactions. Changing school climate requires a multidisciplinary approach to create safe environments where both students and staff feel engaged, safe, and supported. Some of the following strategies can be utilized to change the school climate:

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) programming was mentioned as an asset they desired for their school by the majority of education stakeholders YVPT interviewed. PBIS dictates that an entire school or

district determine 3-5 behavioral expectations to teach just as they would core curriculum. The focus is on positive behavior expectations and is most effective when it is taught consistently by staff throughout the entire school.[102]

Trauma Informed Care policies and practices in schools involves a framework that recognizes and understands the effects of trauma in youth's life. It is an approach that emphasizes emotional, psychological, and physical safety for the students and staff by practicing trauma narrative, cognitive coping mechanisms and processing, and relaxation skills.[103]

Conflict Mediation as a way of resolving interpersonal conflict empowers youth to deal with differences of opinion and diverse cultures in a peaceful and responsible way. The skills learned help youth build constructive solutions in difficult situations.[104]

Restorative Justice in the Educational System is a practice that can be used to address and discuss the needs of the school, build healthy relationships between educators and students, reduce, prevent and improve harmful behavior, repair harm and restore positive relationships, resolve conflict, and hold individuals accountable. Restorative Justice can be used to enhance school safety and as an alternative to zero-tolerance policies, reducing suspensions, expulsions, and involvement in the juvenile justice system. Restorative Practices included: Restorative Justice, community conferencing, community service, peer juries, circle process, preventative and post-conflict resolution programs, peer mediation, informal restorative justice practices, and social-emotional learning (SEL).[105] [106]

Cultural Responsivity teaching can be practiced in schools by having awareness of student's beliefs, customs, values, and behaviors that they have gained through their individual and collective experiences. Schools should be able to function effectively while acknowledging differences, validating student's identities, and being inclusive of varying perspectives. Culturally-based programming on school campuses is one method to increase cultural responsivity, Culturally-based programming models use a strength-based approach that taps into the cultural values, principles, customs, and traditions of diverse ethnic groups, taking a holistic approach in enhancing protective factors of youth and their families. La Cultura Cura, or culturally-based healing approach, uses a trauma-informed approach that enhances cultural identity and self-development, and provides a sense of status and inclusion for youth.[107] [108]

Indicator D: Students Who Reported Gang Involvement

Priority Strategies

Gang Education in Schools

Increased utilization of the BASTA website as a resource for teachers, staff and parents is recommended. Community stakeholders also identified the need for gang education curriculums in schools starting in elementary school that address both youth and families such as Gang Resistance Education and Training. Programs to educate students, teachers and staff should represent diverse perspectives and offer a compassionate approach when addressing youth who may have intergenerational gang involvement. They

should include early warning signs of gang involvement and include research on trauma, adolescent development and social science.[109]

Safe Routes to Schools

In many communities, walking and bicycling are major ways youth get to school. The danger of gang recruitment, intimidation, bullying and violence discourages youth from walking to school, increasing truancy and the likelihood that a youth will feel that they need to protect themselves. This was confirmed in our stakeholder interviews and youth focus groups. Developing safe routes to schools may include strategies such as establishing school carpool lists, using techniques of "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design" (CPTED), encouraging local neighbors and business to serve as "eyes on the street," utilizing Street Outreach Workers, and identifying safe havens, such as specific houses, businesses, community libraries, and churches where youth can go in case of emergencies while going to and from school.[110]

Increased Knowledge of and Access to Prosocial Activities

A youth's ability to participate in activities in the community can be thwarted by an array of barriers, both in knowledge of what is available and in their ability to actually attend. First and foremost, youth must know about what opportunities exist in order to want to participate. Once a youth knows about a program or activity, they can encounter other barriers. Needing a referral for participation can stop a youth from gaining access even when they want to be involved because they are dependent on someone else to make the decision. Funding is often a barrier for participation which can often be seen in sports teams that require fees for equipment and uniforms. If the program/activity is not in a location that the youth can get to and from then they will be unable to attend. If programs are not culturally responsive or do not operate in the language spoken by the youth, then they will not be able to participate in a meaningful way. It is also important that there be programs available that pique interest based on a youth's identity whether that be their gender, sexual identity, or status in school. Ultimately, prosocial activities need to be inclusive in order to gain participation and reach youth that encounter some of the following barriers indicated:

- Referral Barriers
- Financial Barriers
- Location and Transportation Barriers - Programs brought directly to neighborhoods and transportations to bring youth to programs
- Language Barriers
- Cultural Competency in Programming
- Gender Specific Programming
- Special Focus on Youth from Non-Traditional Schools

Increase Availability of a Diverse Array of Options for Activities

It is important that programming be culturally responsive and appropriate for the youth they serve in order to ensure that the participation is meaningful, inclusive, and interesting. In order to serve the diverse population of youth across the county and meet their varied interests and strengths, there needs to be an array of opportunities for participation. Some examples of diversified programs include:

- Science and environmental studies, agriculture, and technology

- Leadership and civic engagement opportunities

- Mentorship programs

- Sports programs that offer free access to team sports

Access to Alternatives to Gang Involvement

In addition to factors such as poverty, lack of parental supervision, intergenerational involvement in gangs and lack of school attainment, youth report they join gangs to gain status, gain a sense of family, or to fit in. Community stakeholders identified the need to increase legitimate opportunities for youth to obtain status in the community. Within schools, this may include peer mentors, leadership opportunities, interesting, diverse and culturally relevant after-school activities and positive adult role models that maintain high expectations of the youth.

Family Support and Engagement

Some families of justice system involved youth interviewed said that they lack resources for best supporting their children prior to their child getting in trouble. They asserted that families should not have to wait until their children get involved in the system before they can access resources and services. This can be mitigated through:

wrap-around services through a team-based approach that provide individualized care planning, case management, and referrals[111]; family support groups where families can share challenges of parenting, give and receive practical advice, and resource sharing; and culturally-based/relevant programming.

Targeted Gang Involvement Intervention Strategies

Community stakeholders identified the importance of providing supportive services for individuals who are involved in a gang. This includes: access to immediately available tattoo removal services; early identification of youth who are involved in a gang and referrals to community-based intervention programs such as BASTA; and Gang Interventionists to provide supportive services such as mentoring, counseling and referrals to other services in the community (Interventionists are trained individuals who have lived experience of gang lifestyle and can therefore more easily build trust and rapport with those who are gang involved).

Section: Focus Area I: Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

Other Related Strategies

- Create an Environment of Programming and Services that is Culturally Responsive

- Provide Case Management by a Particular Agency for Case Conferencing and to Coordinate Services to Offenders and the Families of Youth Who Are Gang Involved

- Capacity Building for Those With Lived-Experience to Share Their Stories With Families and Youth, Such as a Speakers Bureau

- One-Stop Center That Addresses Gang Involvement and General Delinquency Involvement With Individual Problem Assessment, Services, Service Referral, and Recreational Activities

- Restorative Justice

Indicator E: Students Report Feeling Very Safe or Safe at School

Priority Strategies

School Climate Strategies

Addressing the school climate can greatly impact youth. It can determine whether a youth is comfortable and wants to be at school. Recognizing that all youth arrive each day with the stressors of their lives outside of school is important in interacting with them in both positive and disciplinary interactions. Changing school climate requires a multidisciplinary approach to create safe environments where both students and staff feel engaged, safe, and supported. Some of the following strategies can be utilized to change the school climate:

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reducing suspensions, expulsions, and involvement in the juvenile justice system. Restorative Practices included: Restorative Justice, community conferencing, community service, peer juries, circle process, preventative and post-conflict resolution programs, peer mediation, informal restorative justice practices, and social-emotional learning (SEL).[115] [116]

> "We need to get all the non-profit organizations together to create a vision of how they can work together in a coordinated effort."
>
> CBO Stakeholder

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Continuum of Responses

Create a continuum of responses for educators that have meaningful implications for students, rather than removing youth from the school environment. For example, implement restorative practices, in-school disciplinary alternatives, such as Saturday school or in-school suspension, anger management, referrals to mental health services and community-based intervention programs. When consequences need to be enacted, they should be mildly unpleasant, short in duration, and immediate.[119] [120] [121]

Multidisciplinary Approaches

Improve collaboration and communication between schools, parents, law enforcement, juvenile justice, mental health professionals, and community-based organizations in order to promote early identification and targeted interventions and responses. Coordinated services, such as wraparound teams, have become more widely used, allowing for the development of a comprehensive plan for youth and their families.[122] [123]

Capacity Building for Appropriate Responses to Actual or Potential Violence

Establish district and school-wide policies and procedures for responding to actual or potential violence. It is recommended that all school staff and agencies receive professional development training in crisis prevention and intervention. Schools should have a crisis intervention plan so that staff are clear about proper responses and courses of action.[124]

Other Related Strategies

- Anti-Bullying Curriculums

- Community-Based Organization Prevention and Intervention Programs on Campus

- Reconsider Zero Tolerance Policies, and Understand Unintended Consequences

- School Resource Officers

Indicator F: Discriminated Against for Any Reason on School Property (youth self-reported)

Priority Strategies

School Climate Strategies

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Data Analysis and Policy Review

Best practice and local education stakeholders recommend reviewing school disciplinary policies and data through the lens of race, gender, and sexual orientation, using a team process. "Analyzing disaggregated data can allow school teams to determine if different groups of students receive different penalties for the same infraction." Educational stakeholders should have a discussion and agreement as to determine when it is appropriate to call the police for school discipline issues and when it is best to allow school administrators to handle the issue in-house.[132] [133]

Keeping Kids in School (KKIS) has committed to hosting a countywide educational stakeholder forum and discussion on data, to discuss the following: common language, and strategies for consistency of coding incidences and inputting data.

Bias-Free Classroom and Respectful School Environments

Educators "can create safe and respectful classroom environments through materials, events, and teaching that reflect the diversity of their classrooms and community."[108] Curriculums should address race and ethnicity, culture, gender, and LGBTI issues. Curriculum models involve critical thinking, empathy development, self-exploration, are skill building and comprehensively integrated into all aspects of teaching.[134] [135]

Staff Should Reflect the Diverse Populations They Serve

Fostering trust and ensuring value for all members of a community can begin by seeing the cultural makeup of a community reflected in the agency staff serving community. When students and families can relate to the people in the positions providing services they will feel more comfortable accessing them. This can also help to curb issues surrounding systematic discrimination. One way that this strategy can be achieved is through having intentionality in hiring practices. This starts by having a diverse hiring panel, seeking local applicants, and building strong relationships with other agencies with diverse staffing. Community stakeholders referenced the following areas where they want to see this change reflected:

- Resource Centers, Law Enforcement, Community-Based Organizations, and Schools

- Tracking data on organizational staff demographics as well as the demographic of the population served

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Other Related Strategies

- School-Based Programs, such as: Teaching Tolerance; Restorative Justice Circles

Focus Area II: Ensure Supported and Functioning Families

FOCUS AREA II: ENSURE SUPPORTED AND FUNCTIONING FAMILIES

SUMMARY TABLE

Result	Indicator	Strategies
#1 Families are Connected, Engaged, and Valued.	**A. People in Your Neighborhood Help Each Other**	• Utilize Schools as Venues to Reach Out to and Engage Families With Each Other, Especially in Isolated Communities. • Increased Connectivity Through Neighborhood-Based Supports and Events
	B. Know How to Make a Positive Change in the Community	• Inclusion of Families in Decision-Making • Increase Access to Volunteer Opportunities • Civic Engagement Programs and Organizations
	C. Satisfaction with Local System of Education	• Family Engagement in Academics • Community-Based Organization (CBO) Prevention and Intervention Programming • Support Parent Liaison Approaches that Make Personal Contacts with Families • Increase Knowledge of and Access to Academic Supports and Community Resources • Increase Family Participation in School Activities and Events
#2 Families Have Social-Emotional Wellbeing.	**A. Feel You Have Someone to Turn to When You Need Help**	• Develop Family-to-Family Peer Support Networks • Increased Knowledge of and Access to Social Services, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment • Update and Utilize Resource Directories
	B. Satisfied With Overall Quality of Life	• Increase Informal Supports for Families • Law Enforcement/Community Relations • Develop Family-to-Family Peer Support Networks
	C. Domestic Violence or Intimate Partner Violence	• Work with Existing Initiatives

Result	Indicator	Strategies
#3 All Families are Equitably Supported by the Community.	**A. Going Without Basic Needs**	• Affordable Housing, Poverty Prevention and Job Creation • Increased Knowledge of and Access to Social Services, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment • Update and Utilize Resource Directories
	B. Discriminated Against	• Culturally Responsive Programming and Training • Staff Should Reflect the Diverse Populations that are Being Served, Including Culture and Language • Monitor Equal Access Laws and Policies Using Data to Track Progress • Free Trainings that Explain Equal Rights
	C. Access to Services	• Ensure Family/Population Served has Representation on Decision Making Boards • Target Responses to Specific Family Needs and Opportunities • Ensure Equal Access to Services • Increase Funding for Access to Services

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Section: Focus Area II: Ensure Supported and Functioning Families

Result #1: Families are connected, engaged and valued.

STEP 1: TARGET POPULATION

There were 22,285 families with their own children under 18 years old living in Santa Cruz County in 2013. Of those, 16,064 (72%) had at least one child 6-17 years old. Slightly more than a quarter (27%) of families with at least one child 6-17 years old were single parent households.
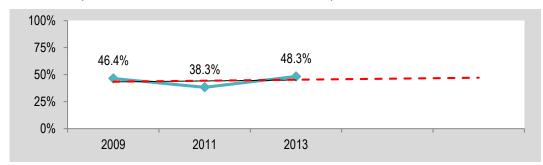
STEP 2: RESULT

Families are connected, engaged and valued.

When families are connected, engaged and feel valued, overall resiliency is increased. According to the Center for Study of Social Policy, social connections are one of five protective factors identified by the Strengthening Families approach. Social connections through neighborhood networks, with other members of the community and through schools, can decrease risk factors such as isolation and lack of resources. Social connections provide support with childrearing, assistance in times of need, in problem-solving, increasing knowledge of and access to resources, and can allow for socio-emotional support.[136] [137]

STEP 3: INDICATOR: A MEASURE OF COMMUNITY PROGRESS
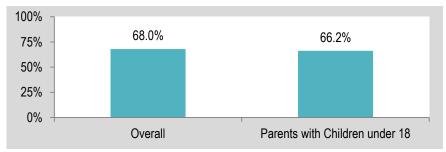
Headline Indicators

A. HOW OFTEN DO YOU FEEL THAT PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD HELP EACH OTHER? RESPONDENTS ANSWERING "OFTEN" (PARENTS WITH CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18)
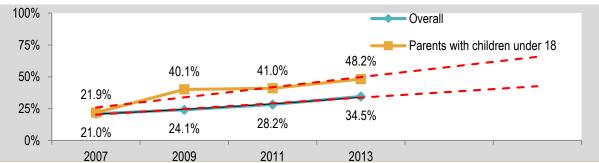

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2014). Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, Telephone Survey. Parent respondents. n: 2013=209, 2011=220, 2009=244.

Section: Focus Area II: Ensure Supported and Functioning Families

B. **H**OW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE STATEMENT, "**I** KNOW HOW TO MAKE A POSITIVE CHANGE IN MY COMMUNITY."? **R**ESPONDENTS ANSWERING "**S**TRONGLY **A**GREE" AND "**A**GREE" – 2013

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2014). Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, Telephone Survey. Parent respondents. Parents 2013 n=207. Overall 2013 n=682.

C. **H**OW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH OUR LOCAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION? **R**ESPONDENTS ANSWERING "**V**ERY **S**ATISFIED"

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2014). Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, Telephone Survey. Parent respondents. Parents n: 2013=195, 2011=248, 2009=212, 2007=168. Overall n: 2013=604.

Secondary Indicators

- Out of home placements – Foster Care

- Do you regularly do volunteer work in the community? (Parents with children under the age of 18)

Data Development

- Frequency of family meals

- Frequency of participation in family activities - potential CAP question

- Parents communicating expectations with their youth or young adult

- Parents volunteering in classrooms

- Parents help with school work

Section: Focus Area II: Ensure Supported and Functioning Families

STEP 4: THE STORY BEHIND THE TREND

Indicator A: People in Your Neighborhood Help Each Other

When neighbors are connected, they can provide an expanded network of support for families, to help with childrearing, assistance in times of need, social-emotional support, information exchange, and buffers to certain life stressors. When neighbors are connected, it creates a sense of community, where neighbors have watchful eyes on children playing outside and on residences when neighbors are out of town.[138]

Over the past several years, less than 50% of Santa Cruz County respondents indicated that they felt people in their neighborhood help each other. The community has indicated the following:

- When there is a disconnect between neighbors, a lack of trust and communication between each other, they are less likely to look after neighborhood kids or engage with them.

- Some believed that perception of an unsafe community prevents people from engaging with each other.

- Some neighborhoods and communities lack activities that allow neighbors to get to know each other; though, in other neighborhoods there has been an increase in activities.

- Families are busy and sometimes overwhelmed. Socializing with neighbors might not be prioritized.

- Some pointed out that some families want to turn to family rather than neighbors for help.

- In diverse neighborhoods, language barriers and cultural differences impact comfort levels in asking neighbors for help

- Apartments and higher density housing may promote neighbors helping each other.

- Trauma, mental health and substance use issues impact people's willingness to engage with their neighbors.

Indicator B: How would you rate your level of agreement with the statement, "I know how to make a positive change in my community."? (Parent respondents) – families compared to non-families

Feeling that one can make a positive change in their community is a protective factor. When families feel they have a role to play in making a change in their community, they have a greater sense of empowerment and accountability for their community.[139] Civic engagement and community participation creates a sense of self-efficacy, greater control over one's life, and a sense of participating in solutions. The community has indicated the following:

- When families work long hours and are overwhelmed by personal issues, community engagement may be negatively impacted.

- There are barriers in outreach to Latino families, and undocumented families my feel disconnected from community involvement.

Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

- Some community members felt that the underrepresentation of Latinos, African Americans, and Asians in government impedes comfort levels in participation.

- If youth are engaged in the community, making a difference, parents are more likely to become more involved.

- The community needs more education and awareness of opportunities to get involved in activism.

- Some families may not feel they have a voice in decision making in the community.

Indicator C: How satisfied are you with our local system of education? (Parent respondents) – families compared to non-families

The education system is an influential institution in a family's life. Education system collaboration with families is essential in supporting positive achievement with youth as families play a critical role in the success of the system. When families are involved in the schools, feel their voice is heard and feel their children are supported and have access to adequate resources, they are more likely to be satisfied with local education systems and feel connected and engaged overall.[140] As one local stakeholder said, "Schools can create a sense of community." The relationship families have with educators also impacts the children's perception of the school-system.[141]

Locally, families reporting satisfaction with our local education system has been on the rise. The community has indicated the following:

- Families that are engaged in their school report that they are happier with their education.

- At a family focus group hosted by a school district, families expressed the desire for family-support groups.

- Some families may not feel they have a voice in the school system

- Focus on standardized testing impacts satisfaction.

- Not all families are engaged in their schools for diverse reasons: personal issues, language barriers, work, etc.

- Students report that when there is a lack of educators of color, it impacts their families' trust and comfort level in engaging with staff.

STEP 5: PARTNERS WITH A ROLE TO PLAY

Civic-Oriented Organizations, City Governments, Community Members, Community-Based Organizations, County Health Services Agency, County Office of Education, Faith Community, Families, Libraries, Neighborhood Groups, Neighborhood Services/ Parks and Recreation, School Districts

Section: Focus Area II: Ensure Supported and Functioning Families

STEP 6: ACTION TO TAKE

Indicator A: People in Your Neighborhood Help Each Other

Priority Strategies

Utilize Schools as Venues to Reach Out to and Engage Families with Each Other, Especially in Isolated Communities

Through school activities and events, if encouraged, families can connect with each other and form informal social networks of support. Family support groups through the school district can bring families together to discuss shared challenges and offer solutions.

Increased Connectivity through Neighborhood-Based Supports and Events

Increasing social connectivity through informal supports can help families better manage challenges and solve problems. Creating informal networks of support for families through churches, schools or neighborhood-based groups can help build this social capital. Community stakeholders recommend strengthening existing or creating new neighborhood networks to reduce environmental risk factors and provide supportive environments for youth and families. This can be through:

- Organizing groups of residents interested in working together to improve the families and communities through models such as Neighborhood Associations and Community-Based Family Support Initiatives.

> *"If we strengthen the neighborhoods and bring families together, there are more people watching after the youth."*
>
> *Workgroup Participant*

- Encouraging a word-of-mouth community network so that youth and families know they are connected.

- Developing community spaces for neighbors to interact and build relationships, such as community gardens, community centers, community libraries, and parks.

- Increasing opportunities for neighbors to engage with and get to know each other, such as: National Night Out, Open Streets, and Neighborhood Block Parties.

Other Related Strategies

- Educate Landlords and Property Management About Tenant Engagement and Provide Incentives

- Outreach to Isolated Communities

- Latino Community Engagement

Indicator B: How would you rate your level of agreement with the statement, "I know how to make a positive change in my community."? (Parent respondents) – families compared to non-families

Priority Strategies

Inclusion of Families in Decision-Making

Create roles for families on decision-making and advisory committees. The more parents participate in the school environment, the higher the student achievement. Developing family leaders and representatives through proper training and capacity building can promote enhanced involvement and presence of families on school campuses.[142] [143]

Increase Access to Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteering "provides role models and passes on family values to children, provides new learning experiences and development of new skills, provides quality time for the family to spend together, increases interpersonal communication and problem-solving abilities of family members, and teaches social responsibility."[144] To increase access to volunteering, organizations should take into account language, different types of outreach, and provide incentives and free training to potential volunteers.

Civic Engagement Programs and Organizations

Increase knowledge of and participation in civic engagement organizations, encouraging families to become involved in the community, expand social networks, and engage in action. Community forums, events, and multi-media campaigns can be used to promote action.

Indicator C: How satisfied are you with our local system of education? (Parent respondents) – families compared to non-families

Priority Strategies

Family Engagement in Academics

Engage families to increase involvement in setting their children's annual academic, college and career goals, setting high expectations and providing ways for families to support those expectations and learning at home. When families are involved in their children's education and are seen as partners by the school, academic achievement is positively impacted. Parent-teacher collaboration is shown to increase the level of expectations that educators hold of the student. Families can be engaged through one-on-one meetings, home visits, workshops, and community-based organizations working directly with the schools.[145] [146]

Community-Based Organization (CBO) Prevention and Intervention Programming

The partnering of school and non-school learning opportunities provides a multifaceted approach to boosting youth's educational attainment—one that brings together key stakeholders (i.e., parents, educators and service providers), strengthening the connections among home, school and community. The goal is to provide seamless

learning opportunities and support for youth as they traverse the school, community and home environments. Having CBO programing on school campuses provides additional support for students, their families, and staff. CBO program staff are able to connect youth and their families with resources in the schools as well as in the community. CBO program staff provide additional protective factors for youth. Among many things, they are able to act as mentors for the youth, encouraging school attendance and supporting students' socio-emotional needs. They are also able to assist with conflict resolution, provide culturally-based programming, help students apply for college, and even develop job resumes.[147]

Support Parent Liaison Approaches that Make Personal Contacts with Families

Parent liaisons promote a connection between families and their children's school and facilitate family involvement. Liaisons are typically staffed through the school districts and responsibilities can include home visits, staffing parent centers, conducting family workshops, communicating with families about a child's academic performance and sharing community resources.[148] [149]

Increase Knowledge of and Access to Academic Supports and Community Resources for youth and families, while taking language and literacy-level needs into account

Some school districts utilize the "Resource Depot" model through their Student Services Departments. Resources provided include referrals for families and their children, such as homework support, community-based prevention and intervention programs, mental health and substance use disorder treatment, after-school activities, and other health and human services.[150]

Increase Family Participation in School Activities and Events

Provide transportation and child care to enable families to attend time-appropriate school-sponsored, family-involvement events. Provide translation services during school activities and events to support families that are not English speaking.[151] [152] [153]

Other Related Strategies

- School Staff to Make Personal Contacts With Families Through E-Mail, Phone Calls or Home Visits
- Increase Modeling of How Parents Can Help Children With Academic Learning and Progress
- Engage Families in School Planning, Leadership and Meaningful Volunteer Opportunities
- Provide Equal Representation for Parents on School Governing Bodies
- Offer Workshops to Inform Families of the High Expectations and Standards Children are Expected to Meet in Each Grade Level
- Partner With Local Agencies to Provide Regular Parenting Workshops on Nutrition, Family Recreation or Communication
- Cultural Responsivity Training for Schools
- Spanish Language Signage on School Campuses
- Capacity Building: Educational Advocacy and School Discipline Workshops

Section: Focus Area II: Ensure Supported and Functioning Families

Result #2: All families have social-emotional wellbeing.

STEP 1: TARGET POPULATION

There were 22,285 families with their own children under 18 years old living in Santa Cruz County in 2013. Of those, 16,064 (72%) had at least one child 6-17 years old. Slightly more than a quarter (27%) of families with at least one child 6-17 years old were single parent households.
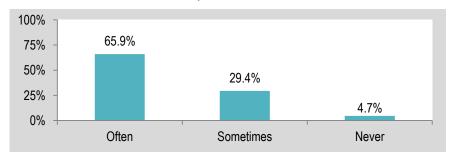
STEP 2: RESULT

All families have social-emotional wellbeing.

Early attachments between children and adults help to set the foundation for positive self-identity and confidence as a child becomes a youth. Some families face challenges that can strain family social-emotional wellbeing and parent-child attachments. Stressors such as family violence and poverty can lead to unresolved post-traumatic stress and other serious long-term consequences (e.g., problems with interpersonal and cognitive functioning, mental health and substance use disorders) into and throughout adulthood. Protective factors such as having access to support and someone they can turn to can help mitigate the impact of these challenges.[154]

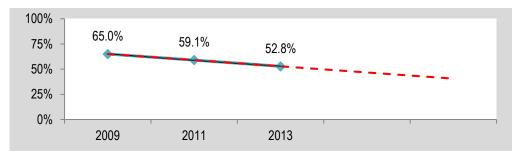## STEP 3: INDICATOR: A MEASURE OF COMMUNITY PROGRESS

Headline Indicators

A. HOW OFTEN DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE SOMEONE YOU CAN TURN TO WHEN YOU NEED HELP? (PARENTS WITH CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18) – 2013
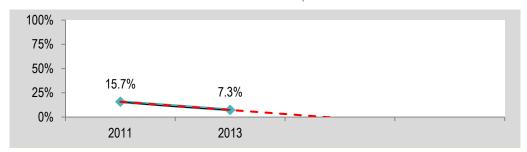

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2014). Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, Telephone Survey. Parent respondents. 2013 n=211.

Section: Focus Area II: Ensure Supported and Functioning Families

B. How satisfied are you with your overall life? Respondents answering "Very Satisfied" (Parents with children under the age of 18)

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2014). Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, Telephone Survey. Parent respondents. n: 2013=212, 2011=220, 2009=249.

C. Have any of your family members or friends in Santa Cruz County experienced domestic violence or intimate partner violence in the last year? (Parents with children under the age of 18)

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2014). Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, Telephone Survey. Parent respondents. n: 2013=205, 2011=216.

Secondary Indicators

- Have you needed mental health treatment in the last 12 months? Did you receive it? Why didn't you receive it? (parent respondents)

- Symptomatic Depression: During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities? (Parents with children under the age of 18)

Data Development

- Broader drug/alcohol use

- Meaningful relationships

- How well are you able to manage stress?

STEP 4: THE STORY BEHIND THE DATA

Indicator A: How often do you feel that you have someone you can turn to when you need help? (parent respondents)

Family integration in a neighborhood or community is critical to their social-emotional wellbeing and the success of their youth. If families become socially isolated, they may not have access to the knowledge, information and resources needed to adequately foster prosocial behavior, supervise and support their youth. Emerging studies of family social capital have found that socially isolated families rely more heavily on institutions such as schools or the juvenile justice system as "surrogate parents."[155] The community indicated the following issues regarding families having someone they can turn to locally:

- Some families feel isolated when they do not know where to turn when they need help.

- There is a cultural norm of individualism.

- There are barriers to accessing services: language, financial, location, etc.

- There is stigma in asking for help.

Indicator B: How satisfied are you with your overall quality of life? (parent respondents)

According to the CDC, overall satisfaction with life is an indicator of wellbeing. This often includes having good living conditions such as adequate housing and employment as well as quality relationships and positive emotions. Families who are more satisfied with their overall quality of life often also have important protective factors from isolation, poverty, family violence and other challenges.[156] The community indicated the following issues regarding families' satisfaction with overall quality of life Santa Cruz County:

- Poverty, institutional racism, access to resources, mental health issues, and substance use disorder impact overall wellbeing.

- Some families feel isolated.

- There are barriers to supportive services form some families: referral, location, financial, language, stigma, etc.

- There is a lack of services for undocumented families.

Indicator C: Have any family members or friends in Santa Cruz County experienced domestic violence or intimate partner violence in the last year? (parent respondents)

Children and youth that live in homes where there is domestic violence between adults have a higher chance of also being abused themselves. Research shows that 50% of men who frequently abuse their wives also abuse their children. Even in families with domestic violence and no child physical abuse, children who witness the abuse between their parents frequently suffer behavioral and emotional problems such as aggression towards others, withdrawal, low self-esteem, and lower school achievement. Domestic violence is underreported to law enforcement, and as such the number of cases should be viewed with caution as being unrepresentative of the

actual number of cases.[157] The community indicated the following issues regarding Domestic Violence in Santa Cruz County:

- Domestic violence is impacted by: substance use disorder, historical trauma, mental health issues, life stressors (poverty, employment, oppression).

- There are barriers to participating in domestic violence programs: financial, location, time.

- Knowledge and practice about self-calming/coping mechanisms is not wide spread.

- Undocumented families may fear contacting law enforcement due to fears of deportation.

- There are financial barriers for offenders to participate in and benefit from the required batterer's classes.

- The County needs a plan with all key stakeholders in collaboration (including survivors and offenders) using the principles of collective impact and results based accountability

- County needs to help connect the dots between what happens in Family Court and Criminal Court (we often don't know which cases are also being dealt with in Family Court or even if there are conflicting protective orders in place)

- Ensure that every victim/survivor of DV has an advocate or at least is aware of her resources in the community

- Shift the public perception that a domestic violence issue is not an urgent or serious matter through a media campaign

- Develop Tracking System to Monitor Child Witnesses to Domestic Violence – create understanding and pursue interest in monitoring child witness to domestic violence

STEP 5: COMMUNITY PARTNERS WITH A ROLE TO PLAY

Board of Supervisors, Community Members, Community-Based Organizations, County Health Services Agency, County Office of Education, Faith Community, Families , Law Enforcement, , School Districts, Service Providers who Serve Families , Santa Cruz County Domestic Violence Commission

STEP 6: ACTION TO TAKE

Indicator A: How often do you feel that you have someone you can turn to when you need help? (parent respondents)

Priority Strategies

Develop Family-to-Family Peer Support Networks

Many families in the Family Focus Groups conducted by the YVPT indicated a desire for peer support to discuss and address common challenges, especially related to education. One successful model of peer-to-peer support

Section: Focus Area II: Ensure Supported and Functioning Families

for families is "School-Based Mutual Support Groups," made up of family members who share a common situation, challenge, heritage or goal.[158] These self-reliant groups are free to attend and are often face to face or over the phone to maximize access. These groups help build trust and a sense of empathy and belonging among peers while supporting problem solving and coping strategies.

Increased Knowledge of and Access to Social Services, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment

A community needs "a full continuum of interventions—ranging from primary prevention through early interventions to treatment of individuals with severe, pervasive, and chronic problems," in order to create widespread wellbeing.[159] Community members must know about what resources are available to them and then they must be able to access these services when needed to ensure successful and equitable results. Barriers to accessing services exist on an institutional level where policy, accountability, time, space and budget are factors and on an individual level with practical barriers such as transportation or lack of knowledge of services available. The YVPT recommends working with the Human Care Alliance, Children's Network, County's Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Intervention Strategic Plan and Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency's Mental Health division to address some of these issues. Community stakeholders stated the following issues in regards to social services, mental health supports, and substance use disorder treatment in Santa Cruz County:

- Referral Barriers

- Financial Barriers

- Location Barriers - Services brought directly to neighborhoods. It should be noted that the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency's Mental Health division is coordinating a strategic planning process, and plans to expand mobile crisis services as well as an integrated health/behavioral health clinic in both north and south regions. YVPT will work to coordinate with this existing effort.

- Language Barriers

- Cultural Competency

- Reduce stigma when asking for help

Update and Utilize Resource Directories

In order to increase knowledge of existing resources and support services there are multiple resource directories available to community members. Ensuring that these directories are optimized for relevant searches or queries and up to date and accessible in multiple forms allows community members to take advantage of the services they need.[160] Increased distribution of this knowledge helps maintain integrity, in equitably supporting all community members. Individuals and families must first know that these directories exist and then they must utilize them to gain further knowledge of what resources are available to them. Santa Cruz County stakeholders indicated the following opportunities and gaps in regards to the availability and use of resource directories: Utilize directories such as 211 and the BASTA Guide; Use avenues for promotion of these directories through school districts and media; Give specific attention to promotion through Spanish language radio.

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Indicator B: How satisfied are you with your overall quality of life? (parent respondents)

Priority Strategies

Increase Informal Supports for Families

Informal supports are those individuals who make up a family's social network, including extended family, friends, members of their faith community and work colleagues. Increasing access to social connectivity through informal supports can help families better manage challenges and solve problems. Creating informal networks of support for families through churches, schools or neighborhood-based groups can help build this social capital.

Law Enforcement/Community Relations

Interacting with youth is an integral aspect of policing duties, which presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges.48 Lack of trust and positive relationships between law enforcement and youth impacts the perceived legitimacy of the law, and therefore increases the likelihood that youth will engage in delinquent behavior.[161]

According to a brief published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, in order to ensure positive outcomes between youth-law enforcement interactions, "law enforcement officers need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively interact with youth in any situation."[162] Law enforcement strategies to improve interactions with youth include trainings on: adolescent development, how to approach and interact with youth both verbally and nonverbally, Trauma Informed Care practices and policies, as well as opportunities for youth and law enforcement to interact in a non-suppression focused/nonthreatening situation such as through Police Activities Leagues.[163]

Develop Family-to-Family Peer Support Networks

"A thread is drawn through families from multi-generations of violence. As a community there are opportunities to change the trajectory – families need to heal & get support."

CBO Stakeholder

Many families in the Family Focus Groups conducted by the YVPT indicated a desire for peer support to discuss and address common challenges. One successful model of peer-to-peer support for families is "School-Based Mutual Support Groups", made up of family members who share a common situation, challenge, heritage or goal.[164] These self-reliant groups are free to attend and are often face to face or over the phone to maximize access. These groups help build trust and a sense of empathy and belonging among peers while supporting problem solving and coping strategies. These peer networks can also help advocate for

Section: Focus Area II: Ensure Supported and Functioning Families

education goals across different educational institutions within one community, such as across public, private and alternative education schools.

Other Related Strategies

- Help Foster Quality Family Time

- Trauma Informed Care

- Incentives for Landlords to Bring Their Properties Up to Code and to Maintain in a Safe and Clean Condition

Indicator C: Have any family members or friends in Santa Cruz County experienced domestic violence or intimate partner violence in the last year? (parent respondents)

Priority Strategies

Work with Existing Initiatives

The YVPT will coordinate with existing initiatives such as the Santa Cruz County Domestic Violence Commission to communicate and address the gaps identified by the community input process to appropriate stakeholders. YVPT will also work with existing initiatives to explore interest in monitoring child witness to domestic violence through law enforcement.

Result #3: All families are equitably supported by the community.

STEP 1: TARGET POPULATION

There were 22,285 families with their own children under 18 years old living in Santa Cruz County in 2013. Of those, 16,064 (72%) had at least one child 6-17 years old. Slightly more than a quarter (27%) of families with at least one child 6-17 years old were single parent households.

STEP 2: RESULT

All families are equitably supported by the community.

The greater community as a whole can act as a safety net for families facing hardship and unmet needs by providing services, resources, and support when needed. According to the CDC, "social determinants of health are life-enhancing resources, such as food supply, housing, economic and social relationships, transportation, education, and health care, whose distribution across populations effectively determines length and quality of life."[165] It is imperative that support services be provided to families in an equitable way in order to avoid systematic and avoidable disadvantages for segments of the community. When all families have access to support services without disparity, the community is more likely to thrive equitably. A supportive community allows families to better support their children and reduce risk factors associated with youth violence.
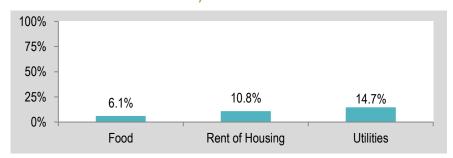
> *"We need to have better support for families in the community."*
>
> *Justice Stakeholder*

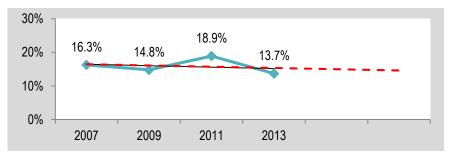## STEP 3: INDICATOR: A MEASURE OF COMMUNITY PROGRESS

Headline Indicators

A. **IN ANY GIVEN MONTH IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, DID YOU FIND YOURSELF GOING WITHOUT…? 2013 (PARENTS WITH CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18) – 2013**

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2014). Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, Telephone Survey. Parent respondents. 2013 n: Food=212, Rent of Housing=212, Utilities=211.

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B. HAVE YOU FELT DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS? (PARENTS WITH CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18)
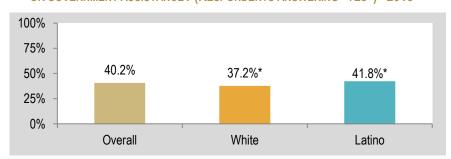

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2014). Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, Telephone Survey. Parent respondents. n: 2013=211, 2011=220, 2009=250, 2007=190.

B. FOR WHAT REASON DID YOU FEEL DISCRIMINATED AGAINST? (TOP RESPONSES) (PARENTS WITH CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18)

Reason	2007	2009	2011	2013
Ethnicity/race	59.4%	51.6%	51.9%	59.3%
Appearance	1.1%	2.5%	8.8%	7.4%
Gender	5.0%	7.3%	10.1%	7.4%
Language	56.5%	21.7%	13.2%	7.4%
Socioeconomic Status	2.0%	2.8%	22.7%	3.7%
Respondents	**29**	**32**	**40**	**27**

Source: Applied Survey Research. (2014). Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, Telephone Survey. Parent respondents.

Note: This was a multiple response question. Respondents were able to choose more than one response.

C. ACCESS TO SERVICES: IF YOU WENT WITHOUT BASIC NEEDS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, DID YOU APPLY FOR PUBLIC OR GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE? (RESPONDENTS ANSWERING "YES") - 2013
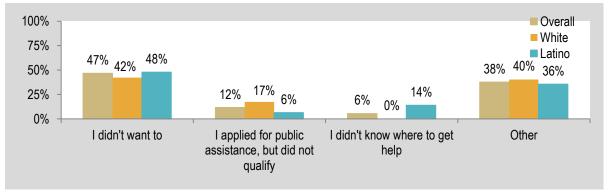

Sources: Applied Survey Research. (2013). 2013 Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, Telephone Survey.

*Significance testing: Latino respondents were significantly more likely than White respondents to have applied for public or government assistance in the past 12 months in 2013.

Overall 2013 n: 138; White 2013 n: 71; Latino 2013 n: 52.

Section: Focus Area II: Ensure Supported and Functioning Families

C. ACCESS TO SERVICES: WHY DID YOU NOT GET HELP FROM ANY SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAM? - 2013

Sources: Applied Survey Research. (2013). 2013 Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, Telephone Survey.

Overall 2013 n: 77 respondents offering 78 respondents; White 2013 n: 41 respondents offering 40 responses; Latino 2013 n: 30 respondents offering 31 responses.

Secondary Indicators

- How satisfied are you with our local system of education?

- Do you feel like you have opportunities for employment?

- Generally speaking, what contributes most to your quality of life?

- How often do you feel you have someone to turn to when you need help?

STEP 4: THE STORY BEHIND THE DATA

Indicator A: Going Without Basic Needs

Families in poverty face greater stressors as they have difficulties meeting basic needs such as housing, food, medical and dental care, and child care. In California, 19% of families with children under the age of 18 were living in poverty in 2012. At that same time in Santa Cruz County, 12% of families with children under the age of 18 were living in poverty. Despite the fact that Santa Cruz County has reported lower poverty levels than the state overall, there are pockets of concentrated poverty in the county that should be addressed when looking at youth violence prevention. Ensuring that families have their basic needs met strengthens their capacity to prevent youth violence, by decreasing the trauma induced stressors and risk factors and increasing protective factors. Addressing a youth's needs within the family setting allows for a more holistic approach to violence prevention and contributes overall to a thriving community. The community indicated the following:

- There is a lack of knowledge regarding services in the community.

- Santa Cruz County is an expensive community to reside in.

- Undocumented families have a harder time accessing services.

Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

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Indicator B: Have you felt discriminated against in Santa Cruz County in the last 12 months? (parent respondents)

Santa Cruz County has a diverse and changing demographic. In 2012, more than half of the total population (59%) identified as White, while another 33% were Latino, 4% were Asian, and 1% was African American. By 2060, the racial/ethnic distribution in Santa Cruz County is projected to change to where more than half (51%) of the population will identify as Latino and one-third (35%) will identify as White. This diverse landscape of cultures and backgrounds creates a vibrant environment, but also faces hardships when inequities exist as a result of discrimination. Feedback from the community indicates the following issues in regards to discrimination in Santa Cruz County:

- Unconscious bias, as well as interpersonal and institutional racism, exists in our community.

- Those that were previously incarcerated face discrimination – in seeking housing and employment opportunities.

- Underrepresentation of Latinos, African Americans, and Asians in social services, education, government, and law enforcement.

Indicator C: Access to Services

In order for a community to thrive, all members must be able to achieve wellbeing and feel connected and safe. One key strategy in helping a community achieve these goals is through access to appropriate and necessary support services when needed. The community indicated the following issues regarding access to services in Santa Cruz County:

- There are barriers to families accessing services: language, financial, location, etc.

- Families communicated that they feel like their child has to get into trouble before the family can access services.

- Families often do not know where to turn to when they need assistance.

STEP 5: COMMUNITY PARTNERS WITH A ROLE TO PLAY

Businesses, City and County Government, Community-Based Organizations; County Health Services Agency, County Human Services Department, Faith Community, Families, Law Enforcement, Neighborhood-Based Groups, Neighborhood Services/Parks and Recreation; Planning Departments, Social Service Providers

Section: Focus Area II: Ensure Supported and Functioning Families

STEP 6: ACTIONS TO TAKE

Indicator A: In any given month did you find yourself going without basic needs? (parent respondents)

Priority Strategies

Affordable Housing, Poverty Prevention and Job Creation

Poor economic climate in communities has been proven to increase risk factors that contribute to youth violence. Having safe spaces for habitation and recreation, as well as opportunities for productive economic growth can increase protective factors for individuals and families. Economic stability attracts families and business growth, and it creates an environment that is capable of investing in the prosperity of the community.[166] There are other initiatives in Santa Cruz County that are working to meet these basic needs for local families and individuals. It is recommended that the YVPT work with other existing efforts that address poverty, housing and jobs in order to most efficiently address these issues and their effect on youth violence prevention.

Increased Knowledge of and Access to Social Services, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment

A community needs "a full continuum of interventions—ranging from primary prevention through early interventions to treatment of individuals with severe, pervasive, and chronic problems," in order to create widespread wellbeing.[167] Community members must know about what resources are available to them and then they must be able to access these services when needed to ensure successful and equitable results. Barriers to access of services exist on multiple levels including the institutional level where policy, accountability, time, space and budget are factors. On a personal level, there is an array of practical barriers as well as lack of knowledge that can factor into whether or not community members are adequately being supported. The YVPT recommends working with the County's Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Intervention Strategic Plan and Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency's Mental Health division to address some of these issues. Community stakeholders stated the following issues in regards to social services, mental health supports, and substance use disorder treatment in Santa Cruz County:

- Referral, Financial, and Location Barriers - Services should be brought directly to neighborhoods. It should be noted that the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency's Mental Health division is coordinating a strategic planning process, and it plans to expand mobile crisis services as well as an integrated health/behavioral health clinic in both North and South regions. YVPT will work to coordinate with this existing effort.

- Language Barriers; Cultural Competency; Reduce stigma when asking for help.

Update and Utilize Resource Directories

In order to increase knowledge of existing resources and support services, there are multiple resource directories available to community members. Ensuring that these directories are optimized for relevant searches or queries and up to date and accessible in multiple forms allows community members to take advantage of the

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services they need.[168] Increased distribution of this knowledge helps maintain integrity in equitably supporting all community members. Individuals and families must first know that these directories exist, and then they must utilize them to gain further knowledge of what resources are available to them. Santa Cruz County stakeholders indicated the following opportunities and gaps in regards to the availability and use of resource directories: Utilize directories such as 211 and the BASTA Guide; Use avenues for promotion of these directories through school districts and media; Give specific attention to promotion through Spanish language radio

Indicator B: Have you felt discriminated against in Santa Cruz County in the last 12 months? (parent respondents)

Priority Strategies

Culturally Responsive Programming and Training

Research shows a lack of cultural responsiveness contributes to reluctance for participation in social services and supports. Cultural competency in support services allows for alignment with the cultures and values of the people they are serving in order to promote effective use of resources available. Ensuring that interactions with community members use appropriate language, metaphors, and respect for differences can foster

> *"When a youth is 'walking-away' from the gang lifestyle, culturally-based interventions can create a new identity."*
>
> *CBO Stakeholder*

inclusion and build trust.[169] Stakeholders in the community noted that Cara y Corazón and El Joven Noble were examples of culturally responsive programs. They also noted that training in cultural responsivity was needed for social services, schools, law enforcement and community members.

Staff Should Reflect the Diverse Populations that are Being Served, Including Culture and Language

Fostering trust and ensuring value for all members of a community can begin by seeing the cultural makeup of a community reflected in the agency staff serving community. When students and families can relate to the people in the positions providing services, they will feel more comfortable accessing services. This can also help to curb issues surrounding systematic discrimination. One way that this strategy can be achieved is through having intentionality in hiring practices. This starts by having a diverse hiring panel, seeking local applicants, and building strong relationships with other agencies with diverse staffing. Community stakeholders referenced the following areas where they want to see this change reflected: Resource Centers, Community-Based Organizations and Schools; Tracking data on organizational staff demographics as well as the demographic of the population served.

Monitor Equal Access Laws and Policies Using Data to Track Progress

In order to ensure that issues of systematic discrimination do not exist, there must be monitoring of the laws and policies in place. Data tracking plays a key role in analyzing the effects of laws and policies on equity in the community. According to the CDC, it is necessary to "expand and enhance data systems on youth violence and risk/protective factors and improve data integration and dissemination. Accurate and timely information is crucial

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to planning, implementing, and evaluating youth violence prevention strategies. Particular attention can be given to integrating or creating information resources about circumstances of violence and contributing factors, establishing procedures to improve the efficiency of data sharing through secure, web-based systems, and analyzing data by neighborhood. This information should be shared to inform local prevention approaches."[170]

Free Trainings that Explain Equal Rights

Knowledge of equal rights can help inform service providers and contribute to creating equity in the community. For community members, trainings on equal rights can help empower them while accessing support systems. Making the trainings free and accessible in multiple languages ensures that everyone has access to the information. An example of a successful effort addressing this need is the Equal Rights Center. They offer "Know Your Rights" workshops that explain civil rights law, teach self-advocacy, and give examples of individual's rights under the law to make the information more understandable. They provide these workshops to community groups, advocates, and government officials.[171] Similar efforts could be put into practice locally in the community and schools to help facilitate more equitable access to services.

Indicator C: Access to Services

Priority Strategies

Ensure Family/Population Served has Representation on Decision-Making Boards

Having representatives of the population serve in leadership roles in community agencies and decision-making bodies ensures inclusion of the perspectives that are present in the community. In principle, family programs should have family representation on their boards. Ensuring that the family perspective is represented could prove to be a successful move in increasing equitable access by community families needing services. Ideally, this principal should be practiced in other types of organizations as well. This practice can build trust and work to challenge systematic disparities.

Target Responses to Specific Family Needs and Opportunities

For the utilization of resources to be most efficient and effective the response needs to fit the needs of the families receiving support. Efforts must be appropriate and relevant to the families being served to be most successful. Different family structures, different age ranges of the children in the family, and geographic location are just a few examples of what could affect the potential needs of families. By utilizing targeted responses that meet specific needs rather than broad on-going assistance, agencies can tailor their services and help to build the capacity of the families receiving services. Opportunities for targeted response can lead to intensive support and positive outcomes in changing conditions for families in a meaningful way.

Ensure Equal Access to Services

Equitable support starts with equal access to services. Community stakeholder feedback indicated the following areas that need to be addressed in order to ensure equal access to services in Santa Cruz County:

- Transportation services available to get to and from service providers

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- Languages spoken in agencies and organizations that cater to the languages spoken by community members.

- Hours of operation that take into account parents' limited time not spent working.

- Provide incentives such as childcare and food in order to reduce barriers to accessing services.

Increase Funding for Access to Services

Successful access to services that help to improve conditions for families and their children is important in addressing risk and protective factors that contribute to youth violence. Funding is critical to organizations' ability to carry out their missions. Funding can be sourced publicly or privately through grants and fundraisers. Increasing funding builds the capacity of providers to better serve to the community's needs.[172] Community stakeholders felt that this should be a priority in addressing youth violence prevention in Santa Cruz County.

Focus Area III: Foster Safe and Vibrant Neighborhoods

FOCUS AREA III: FOSTER SAFE AND VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOODS

SUMMARY TABLE

Result	Indicator	Strategies
#1 The community is safe and thriving.	**A. Youth/Young Adult Crime Rates** **B. Youth/Young Adult Arrest Rates** **C. Youth/Young Adult Homicide**	• Use of Effective Alternatives/Diversion Programs for Low-Level Offenders • Effective Law Enforcement Strategies • Neighborhood-Based Strategies • Multidisciplinary Approaches • Reduce Access to Guns Through Safe Storage Campaign • Reduce Youth Access to Alcohol and Other Drugs • Increase Access to Effective Substance Use Disorder Treatment • Increase Access to Effective Mental Health Services • Law Enforcement/Community Relations • Probation/Juvenile Hall • Street Outreach • Examine the Issue of Trying Youth as Adults
	D. Reported Youth Gang Activity	• Targeted Gang Involvement Intervention Strategies • Access to Alternatives to Gang Involvement • Effective Law Enforcement Strategies • Neighborhood-Based Strategies

Result	Indicator	Strategies
#2 Community is culturally and racially aware and responsive.	**A. Race/Ethnicity of Probation Youth Proportionate to Population in County**	• Collaborative Initiative to Address Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Justice and Education Systems • Culturally Responsive Programs • Law Enforcement-Community Relations • Best-Practices through Probation to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities • Increased Knowledge of and Access to Prosocial Activities
	B. Race/Ethnicity of Youth Arrested Proportionate to Population in County	• Collaborative Initiative to Address Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Justice and Education Systems • Increased Knowledge of and Access to Prosocial Activities • Law Enforcement-Community Relations • Restorative Justice • Targeted Gang Involvement Intervention Strategies

Result #1: The community is safe and thriving.

STEP 1: TARGET POPULATION

There were an estimated 264,808 people living in Santa Cruz County in 2013 (based on 5-year estimates). Santa Cruz is the largest city with 61,245 people, followed by Watsonville City (51,544). The city of Capitola has 9,982 people and the city of Scotts Valley has slightly more people at 11,618. Almost half (49%) of people in Santa Cruz County live in the unincorporated areas.
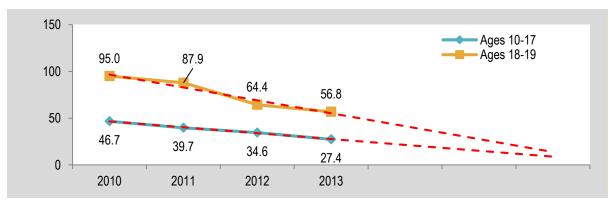
STEP 2: RESULT

The community is safe and thriving.

"Community safety is achieved when community members live in peace, harmony and mutual respect, and when citizens and community groups feel that they personally can help prevent and control crime." Communities that feel a greater sense of cohesiveness, can access ample prosocial opportunities and feel a greater sense of safety are more likely to report crime and less likely to experience incidents of crime and violence. These community conditions can help cause feelings of stability, belonging and connection for youth growing up there. Conversely, communities that report feeling less safe in their neighborhood, more neighborhood disorganization, increased access to alcohol or other drugs and high arrest rates, for example, experience higher rates of crime and violence and can lead to feelings of vulnerability among youth as well as promoting a culture of antisocial norms.

STEP 3: INDICATOR: A MEASURE OF COMMUNITY PROGRESS
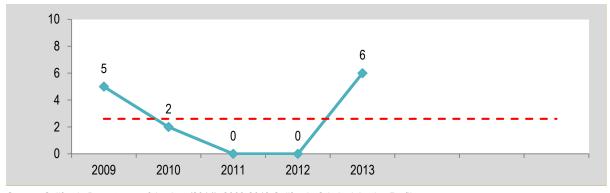
Headline Indicators

A. ARREST RATE PER 1,000, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Source: California Department of Justice. (2014). 2009-2013 California Criminal Justice Profile. California Department of Finance. (2014). E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State.
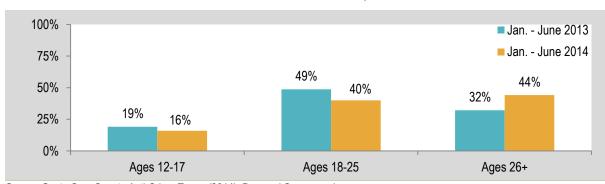*Ages 10-17: 2010 n=1,185; 2011 n=1,011; 2012 n=876; 2013 n=686. Ages 18-19: 2010 n=1,112; 2011 n=995; 2012 n=755; 2013 n=674.*

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B. NUMBER OF YOUTH BOOKED (OR CHARGED) WITH HOMICIDE IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Source: California Department of Justice. (2014). 2009-2013 California Criminal Justice Profile.

C. AGE OF UNDUPLICATED ARRESTEE AMONG GANG RELATED CASES, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
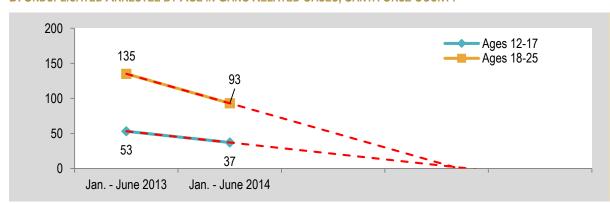

Source: Santa Cruz County Anti-Crime Team. (2014). Personal Correspondence.

Note: These numbers are the first half of the year, January through June, and do not reflect the entire year.

2013 n: Ages 12-17=53; Ages 18-25=135; Ages 26+=89; 2014 n: Ages 12-17=37; Ages 18-25=93; Ages 26+=103.
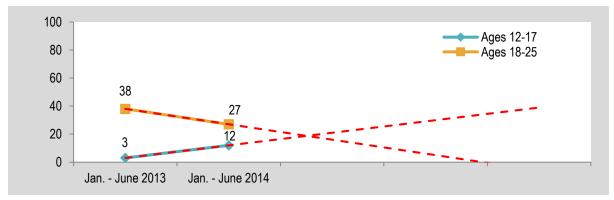
D. UNDUPLICATED ARRESTEE BY AGE IN GANG RELATED CASES, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Source: Santa Cruz County Anti-Crime Team. (2014). Personal Correspondence.

Note: These numbers are the first half of the year, January through June, and do not reflect the entire year.

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Section: Focus Area III: Foster Safe and Vibrant Neighborhoods

E. UNDUPLICATED ARRESTEE BY AGE IN GANG RELATED CASES, NORTH COUNTY

Source: Santa Cruz County Anti-Crime Team. (2014). Personal Correspondence.

Note: These numbers are the first half of the year, January through June, and do not reflect the entire year.

F. UNDUPLICATED ARRESTEE BY AGE IN GANG RELATED CASES, SOUTH COUNTY

Source: Santa Cruz County Anti-Crime Team. (2014). Personal Correspondence.

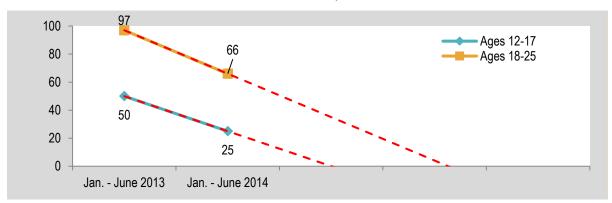*Note: These numbers are the first half of the year, January through June, and do not reflect the entire year.*

Secondary Indicators

- Juvenile Hall Booking Rate per 1,000

- Concern about crime in Santa Cruz County

- Feeling safe in your neighborhood

- Concern about gangs in your neighborhood

- Concern about violence in your neighborhood

- Officers per capita (or patrol officers per capita)

- Youth recidivism

- Rate of youth on probation

STEP 4: THE STORY BEHIND THE DATA

Indicator A: Youth/Young Adult Crime Rates

According to the 2014 Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Report, overall crime rates across the country have been on the decline since 2006. Crime contributes to poorer physical and mental health for victims, perpetrators and community members. Witnessing and experiencing violence in a community can cause long-term behavioral and emotional problems in youth including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression and perpetration of violence.[173] Locally, the community has indicated the following additional issues regarding youth and young adult crime rates:

- Actual crime rates and people's perceptions of community safety are different (feeling vs. reality).

- There is a lack of trust between youth and law enforcement, which impacts crime.

- Youth of color come from poorer neighborhoods with less resources, less opportunities for prosocial activities – impacts youth behavior.

- Substance use is a factor in crime. The County lacks in substance use disorder treatment for youth.

- Families feel unsupported and that they lack in resources/skills for handling their high-risk children

- There is a lack of adequate communication between agencies and stakeholders (law enforcement, community-based organizations, service providers) which leads to not being on same page (e.g., lack of collaboration/coordination; finger pointing; and mistrust).

- The policy of trying youth as adults is something the County needs to look at.

Indicator B: Youth/Young Adult Arrest Rates

Following National trends, arrests for youth ages 10-17 and young adults 18-19 in Santa Cruz County has been steadily decreasing since 2010. Without adequate intervention after arrest, arrest is a risk factor for the beginning of a long-term pattern of involvement with the criminal justice system.[174] The community has indicated the following additional issues regarding youth and young adult arrest rates:

- Not all youth are treated equally and do not experience the same consequences for similar behavior (due to unconscious bias, geography, socio-economic status).

- When parents work long hours and/or suffer from substance use disorder, parental supervision is impacted.

- There is a lack of prevention and intervention programs for youth and their families.

- Many communities lack prosocial activities that are engaging and diversified, that are offered afterschool and on weekends, and that are structured.

Section: Focus Area III: Foster Safe and Vibrant Neighborhoods

Indicator C: Youth Homicide

The impacts of youth homicide are far-reaching, affecting victims' families, friends and communities. Youth homicide undermines community cohesion and feelings of safety and wellbeing, increases the expense of health and law enforcement, and decreases property value. As with all violence, witnessing homicide in a community can cause long-term behavioral and emotional problems in youth including PTSD, depression and perpetration of violence.[175] The community has indicated the following additional issues regarding youth and young adult homicide:

- Most youth homicides are gang related.

- Gang retaliation impacts youth homicide.

- There is a lack of prevention and intervention, including restorative justice, conflict resolution, and anger management programs.

- Violence is normalized for youth in today's society.

- Weapons are easily available.

Indicator D: Gang Activity

Individuals identified as being gang involved by law enforcement are responsible for the majority of serious violence committed by youth. There is an estimated 756,000 youth involved in gangs in the U.S. and most gang members join between the ages of 12 and 15. One in ten local 9th graders reported gang involvement in 2011, which is higher than the state average. A CDC study of youth and gangs, however, showed that when youth had more protective factors, they had a much lower rate of gang involvement. Protective factors may include good parent supervision, a supportive family, social skills, and an ability to cope with conflict. Youth who had seven or more protective factors had a 2% chance of joining a gang, compared to youth who had 0-3 protective factors who had a 26% chance of being in a gang. Research also suggests that a comprehensive approach to gangs involving prevention, intervention, and suppression efforts works better than suppression efforts alone.[176] The community indicated the following issues regarding youth and young adult gang involvement:

- Youth join gangs for various reasons: safety, identity, to obtain a sense of belonging, status and respect, peer and familial influence, and "forced choice."

- Violence is normalized for youth in today's society.

- There is a lack of culturally-based prevention and intervention programs – in schools and in the broader community.

- More support is needed for those that want to "walk away" from gangs (differentiated from "dropping out").

- There is intergenerational gang involvement in families and neighborhoods.

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- Youth and broader community expressed concerns with over-labeling/identification of youth being gang involved, by educators, law enforcement, and broader community (e.g., self-fulfilling prophecies).

- Single-parent households and working long hours impacts parental engagement and ability to supervise children. Parents may not know if their child is engaging in risky behavior.

- Families of youth who are at-risk of being gang involved feel under-supported. Some families expressed frustration that they felt that their child(ren) had to get into trouble before they were able to access supportive services.

- Poverty

- Youth use social media for gang related activities.

STEP 5: COMMUNITY PARTNERS WITH A ROLE TO PLAY

BASTA, City and County Government , Community Members, Community-Based Organizations County Administrative Office, County Health Services Agency, County Office of Education, District Attorney, Families, Law Enforcement, Faith Community , Libraries, Neighborhood-Based Groups, Neighborhood Services/Parks and Recreation, Probation, Planning and Public Works Departments, Santa Cruz County Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission, School Districts, Social Service Providers Youth

STEP 6: ACTIONS TO TAKE

Indicators A, B, & C: Youth/Young Adult Crime Rate; Youth/Young Adult Arrest Rate; Homicide Rate

Priority Strategies

Use of Effective Alternatives/Diversion Programs for Low-Level Offenders

Youth often experience the best outcomes when involvement in the justice system can be avoided.[177] Most youth will age out of delinquent behavior without a justice system intervention. Examples of effective programs include:

- Pre-arrest diversion: An example of this is community service. In Florida, pre-arrest programs called "civil-citations" for youth have saved the state more than $50 million in five years.

- Post-arrest diversion from court: Case management with service referral or restorative justice programs like Neighborhood Accountability Boards and Victim-Offender dialogue.

Effective Law Enforcement Strategies

Law enforcement plays a critical role, not only in suppression activities, but also in prevention and intervention. The following are both recommended by community stakeholders and are considered evidence-based policing strategies.

Community Policing: Relationships are the key to this approach. Solving any problem in a community involves building relationships across sectors and with all layers of the community. This helps encourage community members to trust law enforcement, feel comfortable reporting crime and creates an environment conducive to collaboration. When law enforcement goes beyond their traditional role to help prevent, raise awareness and solve problems with the community, they can play a critical role in the prevention of future crime.

Foot Patrol: Foot patrol is an aspect of community policing that, according to the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services, can help curb crime, strengthen community relationships, keep officers in touch with what is happening in a neighborhood, and reduce fuel costs.[178] It is especially effective in combination with data driven strategies to help proactively deploy resources to areas of need identified by both law enforcement and the community rather than only in response to an incident.

Hot Spot Policing: Also known as place-based policing, this has proven to be one of the most effective policing approaches. It involves focusing police efforts on small geographic targets known to be high crime areas. This approach is especially effective for long-term change when combined with Problem Oriented Policing in the identified hot spots.[179]

Development of a Law Enforcement Referral System: The majority of gang and crime resources acknowledge that partnership with service providers is an essential component of any comprehensive plan. Access to making referrals was also a consistent theme reported by police officers during our ride-alongs in both North and South County. Officers want the resources and knowledge at their fingertips to make quality referrals to service providers that can help a youth they have come in contact with. Police Chief Magazine highlights that creating a referral system can help police take proactive steps for troubled youth to turn their lives around.[180] A successful system requires leadership to support utilizing the system consistently and training for officers. In Hollywood, Florida an officer fills out a youth referral form which is then given to a trained officer that can determine which services to fax the form to. Services work in partnership with this system, contacting the family within 48-72 hours of receiving the referral form. In Redwood City, California they use their system to divert 50% of first-time youth offenders. There are dozens of additional promising programs to draw from.

Targeted Suppression through Gang Task Force: The National Gang Center points out that when part of a larger strategy that includes prevention and intervention activities, suppression strategies such as directed patrols to known gang hot spots and strategies to address gang-related crimes can help to hold targeted individuals who are gang involved accountable.[181]

Section: Focus Area III: Foster Safe and Vibrant Neighborhoods

Neighborhood-Based Strategies

Neighborhood residents can play a critical role in crime prevention and reduction through reporting crime, taking pride in their neighborhood and helping to clean up blight. Strategies identified by evidence-based practice and supported by community stakeholders include:

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED): CPTED refers to changing the physical environment in the community to address elements that are known to add to risk of crime. These include poor lighting, graffiti, and empty lots. The Bureau of Justice Assistance recognizes CPTED as a promising practice with evidence to support its use in crime reduction. CPTED can be implemented through resident groups such as Neighborhood Watch or Neighborhood Services. YVPT recommends that Santa Cruz County communities adopt CPTED ordinances, as recommended by the National Crime Prevention Council. These would include CPTED training for planning, zoning, police and other relevant departments in each jurisdiction as well as developing a list of prioritized initiatives to address lighting, street and building access, visibility and landscaping in identified high risk areas.[182]

Neighborhood Watch: This involves neighborhood residents watching out for criminal or suspicious behavior and reporting it to local law enforcement. Volunteer neighborhood leaders help coordinate the effort, which may involve creating a communications system among neighbors, organizing "night walks," organizing trainings with law enforcement and sharing information.[183]

Safe Haven Programs: A Safe Haven provides a young person with a safe place to go if they need help in the community. Safe Haven programs can be developed in partnership with law enforcement and churches, community libraries, or businesses. Staff are trained to know how to call for emergency services or other help when a young person approaches them.[184]

Safe Routes to School: In many communities, walking and bicycling are major ways youth get to school. The danger of gang recruitment, intimidation, bullying and violence discourages youth from walking to school, increasing truancy, and the likelihood that youth will feel that they need to protect themselves. This was confirmed in our focus groups with youth and our interviews with educators. Developing safe routes to schools may include strategies such as establishing school carpool lists, using techniques of (CPTED), encouraging local neighbors and business to serve as "eyes on the street," utilizing Street Outreach Workers, and identifying safe havens, such as specific houses, businesses, community libraries, and churches where youth can go in case of emergencies while going to and from school.[185]

Multidisciplinary Approaches

Many stakeholders that participated in the YVPT planning process indicated a need for increased collaboration and communication between stakeholders, including law enforcement, community-based organizations, schools, service providers and elected officials. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) recommends a collaborative infrastructure consisting of client information exchange, cross-agency client referrals, a networking protocol, interagency councils, and service integration. In a study out of the University of

Illinois on public safety partnerships, inclusivity was their biggest barrier to success.[186] It is recommended that existing local collaborative efforts such as BASTA, CJC and YVPT are expanded to be inclusive of all of the relevant stakeholders where possible, as this can be their greatest strength.

Reduce Access to Guns through Safe Storage Campaign

Guns have been identified as a consistent problem in our community regarding youth violence. Guns show up on school campuses and are often used in violent incidents. Local law enforcement report that guns are mainly accessed in other communities or through the black market. Gun buy-back programs and other efforts are not evidence-based. The National Crime Prevention Council recommend Lock-It-Up campaigns as a best practice: "According to a study by the RAND Corporation using statistics from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 1.4 million homes have firearms stored in a way that makes them accessible to the wrong hands – children, at-risk youth, potential thieves, and those who intend to harm themselves or others".[187]

Reduce Youth Access to Alcohol and Other Drugs

Substance Use Prevention is crucial in addressing the inextricable link between substance use disorder and delinquency. Research and local data shows that when youth use substances, they display behaviors that increase the demand for juvenile and criminal justice services. Santa Cruz County Community Prevention Partners (CPP) utilizes evidenced-based environmental prevention strategies, focused on enhancing local policy, to limit availability and youth access to: alcohol, marijuana and prescription drugs. This is an integral part of the solution in tackling youth violence, and the YVPT will coordinate with the CPP to address these challenges.

According to local law enforcement, alcohol fueled violence has brought about serious concern, with reported stabbings, fights, and other types of crime taking place either in or around establishments with licenses to sell alcohol. Extensive research confirms the link between alcohol, violence, and community safety. Enhancing policy to decrease the number, density, and location of alcohol outlets and improving operational practices of outlets directly affects the level of community violence.

Marijuana impairs motor coordination and reaction time and is the second most prevalent drug (after alcohol) implicated in automobile crashes. One in six youth using marijuana become habitual users and often move onto use of other drugs. Limiting distribution, sales, and cultivation of marijuana through dispensaries and community-based operations is vital to limiting youth access and decreasing availability.

Over fifty percent of all overdose related deaths in the first six months of 2014 in Santa Cruz County were connected to prescription drugs. Of people who take non-medical prescription pain relievers, 1 in 15 will try heroin within 10 years. Strategies to address prescription drug use include: decreasing access through proper storage and disposal; adopting ordinances that require manufacturer funded take back programs; and decreasing over-prescription by healthcare providers.

Increase Access to Effective Substance Use Disorder Treatment

Four of every five young people in state juvenile justice systems are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs while committing their crimes, test positive for drugs, are arrested for committing an alcohol or drug offense, admit having substance use and addiction problems, or share some combination of these characteristics, according to a 2010 report by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University. The report found that 1.9 million of 2.4 million juvenile arrests, nearly 80%, had substance use and addiction involvement and that only 68,600 juveniles, less than 4%, receive substance use disorder treatment.[188] Drug and alcohol use impacts a young person's behavior in a variety of ways, including impaired decision making, reduced self-control, increased impulsivity and reduced ability to recognize potentially dangerous situations.[189] Locally, Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency, Behavioral Health Division's Alcohol and Drug Program recently produced a Countywide Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Intervention Services Strategic Plan to address Substance Use Disorder and Co-Occurring Mental Health Disorder. The YVPT will work to coordinate with this existing effort.

Increase Access to Effective Mental Health Services

The term "mental health" historically has been used in reference to mental illness; however, mental health is increasingly now viewed as a state of wellbeing. This new framework for mental health includes a focus on resilience, and having certain family and community supports that help improve wellbeing such as youth having adult mentors, participating in after-school activities and volunteer and leadership opportunities in the community. Nearly one-third of ninth graders in Santa Cruz County have reported feeling so sad for two weeks or more that they stopped doing regular activities, and our hospitalization rates of youth for mental health issues is higher than the state average.[190]

New Mental Health Parity laws, and the Affordable Care Act, now require behavioral health services to be provided by insurers on par with other health concerns. While youth with Medi-Cal (38% in the county) have access to a range of therapy and case management services through County Mental Health and their contract partners, youth with

> "*We need to increase positive relationships between the community and law enforcement.*"
>
> *Watsonville Family Focus Group*

insurance/uninsured (62%) need access to a broader array of therapy and support options by providers.47 The Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency's Mental Health division is coordinating a strategic planning process, and it plans to expand mobile crisis services as well as an integrated health/behavioral health clinic in both North and South regions. The YVPT will work to coordinate with this existing effort.

Law Enforcement/Community Relations

Interacting with youth is an integral aspect of policing duties, which presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges.[191] Lack of trust and positive relationships between law enforcement and youth impacts the perceived legitimacy of the law, therefore increasing the likelihood that youth will engage in delinquent behavior.[192]

According to a brief published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, in order to ensure positive outcomes between youth-law enforcement interactions, "law enforcement officers need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively interact with youth in any situation."[193] Law enforcement strategies to improve interactions with youth include trainings on: adolescent development, how to approach and interact with youth both verbally and nonverbally, Trauma-Informed Care practices and policies, as well as opportunities for youth and law enforcement to interact in a non-suppression focused/nonthreatening situation such as through a Police Activities League.[194]

Probation/Juvenile Hall

The use of secure detention must be reserved for only the most serious offenders based on the results of an objective detention risk assessment instrument. These tools ensure that only those youth that are at risk to recidivate pending court and/or fail to appear for court are held in secure detention until an initial hearing. Youth who can be safely released according to the objective detention risk assessment instrument should be released either to a detention alternative or released without conditions. Research indicates that reliance on unnecessary detention for youth increases the probability of future recidivism, incarceration and poor life outcomes.[195]

According to Santa Cruz County Probation, best practices include continued utilization and implementation of: objective detention Risk Assessment Instrument, Juvenile Assessment Intervention System, Violation Response Grid; and Alternatives to Detention through programs such as the Evening Center, Home Supervision, Electronic Monitoring, Parent-Teen Mediation, and Restorative Justice programs.

Street Outreach

Nationally, street outreach programs have emerged as an important component in addressing youth violence. A key element in street outreach programs is the ability of outreach workers to connect with and engage the most at-risk youth and young adults in the community who are "typically not served by mainstream service-oriented approaches". A street outreach model should take a multidisciplinary approach, where outreach workers work with law enforcement, probation, service providers and the community to target and mentor youth and young adults most at-risk. They work to build one-on-one relationships, provide connections to services, and provide crisis response with other agencies following a violent incident.[196]

In order to gain credibility in the community, street outreach workers should have lived experience and be familiar with and knowledgeable of the neighborhoods and community. Workers also must trust and be trusted by law enforcement personnel. Potential street outreach workers must be screened and undergo proper training. Outreach workers and partnering agencies "need to clearly understand each other's roles so that they do not violate information sharing boundaries." It is very important that community members, Intervention Team members, and those that are gang involved themselves see the outreach workers as intervention-focused, and not as law enforcement adjuncts."[197]

Examine the Issue of Trying Youth as Adults

Community stakeholders consistently recommended that the YVPT look at the issue of trying youth as adults. The YVPT will coordinate with an existing effort to look at this issue being conducted by the Santa Cruz County Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission (JJDPC). This commission is dedicated to the promotion of an effective juvenile justice system operated in an environment of credibility, dignity, fairness and respect for the youth and other citizens of the county. The Commission consists of 15 members appointed by the presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court. Two members are nominated by each of the five members of the Board of Supervisors to represent each Supervisorial district. There are also three general at-large members and two at-large members, ages 14-21 years, representing youth in our community.

In 2013, the JJDPC created a subcommittee to look at the issue of trying youth as adults in Santa Cruz County. Between January 2014 - February 2015, the subcommittee interviewed the following stakeholders: District Attorney, Public Defenders, Juvenile Court Judge, Chief of Probation, Program Manager of Children's Mental Health, and 6 youth currently being tried as adults. The subcommittee also conducted a site visit to two Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Facilities in Stockton, California.

The Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission voted on the following recommendations:

- Juvenile justice stakeholders convene a roundtable to discuss issues and concerns of charging youth as adults, to include, but not limited to: District Attorney, Public Defender, Juvenile and Adult Court Judges, Chief of Probation, Superintendent of Juvenile Hall, Juvenile Division Director, and Mental Health.
- Justice stakeholders conduct a site visit to a DJJ facility.
- Increase utilization of fitness hearings.
- Establish transparent criteria for gang identification and gang affiliation.
- Increase clinical mental health assessments and treatment.
- Appoint a probation officer specifically for direct file youth.
- Establish criteria and develop appropriate programming specifically designed for trying youth as adults.
- Expedite adjudication of cases where youth are being tried as adults.

Other Related Strategies

- Community-Based Programs that Support Youth and Families
- Culturally Responsive Programs
- Early Prevention Activities
- Gang Involvement Strategies

Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

Section: Focus Area III: Foster Safe and Vibrant Neighborhoods

- Increase Victims Awareness

- Individual Interventions

- Family Support and Engagement

- Prosocial Activities: Youth Empowerment Programs; Programs that Increase Self-Esteem; Civic Engagement, Leadership, Culturally-Based

- Trauma Informed Care

- Utilizing Those With Lived Experience to Share Their Stories and Insights

- Youth Employment Strategies

- Expansion/Education of Nixle System in Schools and the Workplace

Indicator D: Reported Youth Gang Activity (Gang Violence)

Priority Strategies

Targeted Gang Involvement Intervention Strategies

Community stakeholders identified the importance of providing supportive services for individuals who are involved in a gang but want to "walk-away" from the life-style. This includes: access to immediately available tattoo removal services; early identification of youth who are involved in a gang and referrals to community-based intervention programs such as BASTA; and Gang Interventionists to provide supportive services such as mentoring, counseling and referrals to other services in the community. Interventionists are trained individuals who have lived experience of gang lifestyle and can therefore more easily build trust and rapport with those that are gang involved.

> *"Most kids join gangs because they want to belong. They want to fit in. Everybody, and I don't care who you are, in some form or fashion, wants to be accepted socially. Everyone yearns for some type of acknowledgement and respect."*
>
> *Young adult*

Access to Alternatives to Gang Involvement

In addition to factors such as poverty, lack of parental supervision, intergenerational involvement in gangs and lack of school attainment, youth report they join gangs to gain status, gain a sense of family, or to fit in.[198] Community stakeholders identified the need to increase legitimate opportunities for youth to obtain status in the community. This may include jobs, leadership opportunities and positive adult mentors.

Effective Law Enforcement Strategies

Law enforcement plays a critical role, not only in suppression activities, but also in prevention and intervention. The following are both recommended by community stakeholders and considered evidence-based policing strategies.

Section: Focus Area III: Foster Safe and Vibrant Neighborhoods

Community Policing: Relationships are the key to this approach. Solving any problem in a community involves building relationships across sectors and with all layers of the community. This helps encourage community members to trust law enforcement, feel comfortable reporting crime and creates an environment conducive to collaboration. When law enforcement goes beyond their traditional role to help prevent, raise awareness and solve problems with the community, they can play a critical role in the prevention of future crime.

Foot Patrol: Foot patrol is an aspect of community policing that, according to the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services, can help curb crime, strengthen community relationships, keep officers in touch with what is happening in a neighborhood, and reduce fuel costs.35 It is especially effective in combination with data driven strategies to help proactively deploy resources to areas of need identified by both law enforcement and the community rather than only in response to an incident.

Hot Spot Policing: Also known as place-based policing, this has proven to be one of the most effective policing approaches. It involves focusing police efforts on small geographic targets known to be high crime areas. This approach is especially effective for long-term change when combined with Problem Oriented Policing in the identified hot spots.[199]

Development of a Law Enforcement Referral System: The majority of gang and crime resources acknowledge that partnership with service providers is an essential component of any comprehensive plan. Access to making referrals was also a consistent theme reported by police officers during our ride-alongs in both North and South County. Officers want the resources and knowledge at their fingertips to make quality referrals to service providers that can help a youth they have come in contact with. Police Chief Magazine highlights that creating a referral system can help police take proactive steps for troubled youth to turn their lives around.[200] A successful system requires leadership to support utilizing the system consistently and training for officers. In Hollywood, Florida an officer fills out a youth referral form which is then given to a trained officer that can determine which services to fax the form to. Services work in partnership with this system, contacting the family within 48-72 hours of receiving the referral form. In Redwood City, California they use their system to divert 50% of first-time youth offenders. There are dozens of additional promising programs to draw from.

Targeted Suppression through Gang Task Force: The National Gang Center points out that when part of a larger strategy that includes prevention and intervention activities, suppression strategies such as directed patrols to known gang hot spots and strategies to address gang-related crimes can help hold targeted individuals who are gang involved accountable.[201]

Neighborhood-Based Strategies

Neighborhood residents can play a critical role in crime prevention and reduction through reporting crime, taking pride in their neighborhood and helping to clean up blight. Strategies identified by evidence-based practice and supported by community stakeholders include:

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED): CPTED refers to changing the physical environment in the community to address elements that are known to add to risk of crime. These include poor lighting, graffiti, and empty lots. The Bureau of Justice Assistance recognizes CPTED as a promising practice with evidence to support its use in crime reduction. CPTED can be implemented through resident groups such as Neighborhood Watch or Neighborhood Services. YVPT recommends that Santa Cruz County communities adopt CPTED ordinances, as recommended by the National Crime Prevention Council. These would include CPTED training for planning, zoning, police and other relevant departments in each jurisdiction as well as developing a list of prioritized initiatives to address lighting, street and building access, visibility and landscaping in identified high risk areas.[202]

Neighborhood Watch: This involves neighborhood residents watching out for criminal or suspicious behavior and reporting it to local law enforcement. Volunteer neighborhood leaders help coordinate the effort, which may involve creating a communications system among neighbors, organizing "night walks," organizing trainings with law enforcement and sharing information.[203]

Safe Haven Programs: A Safe Haven provides a young person with a safe place to go if they need help in the community. Safe Haven programs can be developed in partnership with law enforcement and, churches, community libraries, or businesses. Staff are trained to know how to call for emergency services or other help when a young person approaches them.[204]

Safe Routes to School: In many communities, walking and bicycling are major ways youth get to school. The danger of gang recruitment, intimidation, bullying and violence discourages youth from walking to school, increasing truancy, and the likelihood that a youth will feel that they need to protect themselves. This was confirmed in our focus groups with youth and our interviews with educators. Developing safe routes to schools may include strategies such as establishing school carpool lists, using techniques of "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design" (CPTED), encouraging local neighbors and business to serve as "eyes on the street", utilizing Street Outreach Workers, and identifying safe havens, such as specific houses, businesses, community libraries, and churches where youth can go in case of emergencies while going to and from school.[205]

Other Related Strategies

- Alternatives/Diversion from Justice System

- Increase Access to Effective Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Mental Health Services

- Individual-Level Interventions, in Middle Schools, with Community-Based Organizations, and Through Probation

- Law Enforcement/Community Relations

- Probation/Juvenile Hall: Evidence-Based Programs at Juvenile Hall; Reduced Probation Caseload in Evidenced-Based Setting; Strict Adherence to the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument

- Utilizing Those with Lived Experience to Share Their Stories and Insights

- Restorative Justice such as Neighborhood Accountability Boards

Section: Focus Area III: Foster Safe and Vibrant Neighborhoods

Result #2: The community is culturally and racially aware and responsive.

STEP 1: TARGET POPULATION

There were an estimated 264,808 people living in Santa Cruz County in 2013 (based on 5-year estimates). Santa Cruz is the largest city with 61,245 people, followed by Watsonville City (51,544). The city of Capitola has 9,982 people and the city of Scotts Valley has slightly more people at 11,618. Almost half (49%) of people in Santa Cruz County live in the unincorporated areas.
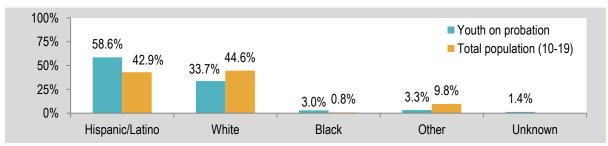
STEP 2: RESULT

The community is culturally and racially aware and responsive.

Culturally responsive practices and policies are intended to ensure that all youth have equal access to a successful transition into adulthood. Being culturally and racially responsive means being aware of cultural differences, being willing to examine data and unintended consequences of certain policies, and adapting programs and interventions to the specific needs of certain populations. It also involves asking the question of why some youth succeed and others do not. When the community is working on reducing racial and ethnic disparities, data tracking and analysis is increased, diversions and alternatives are promoted, and programs and services are culturally responsive. When a community promotes equity, trust within the community and sense of institutional legitimacy can be strengthened. [206] [207] [208] [209] [210] [211]

STEP 3: INDICATOR: A MEASURE OF COMMUNITY PROGRESS

Headline Indicators

A. RACE/ETHNICITY OF YOUTH ON PROBATION DURING 2011-12 COMPARED TO TOTAL POPULATION, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
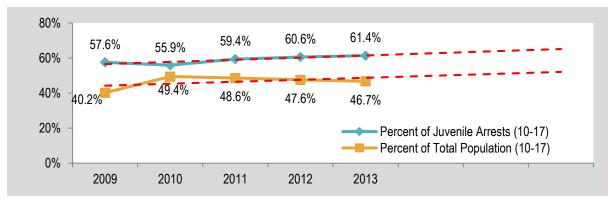

Source: Santa Cruz County Probation, 2013.

Youth on Probation: Hispanic/Latino n=464; White n=267; Black n=24; Other n=26; Unknown n=11.
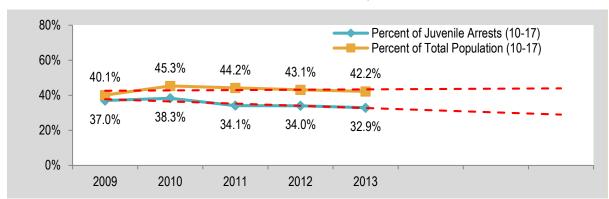
B. **HISPANIC/LATINO JUVENILE ARRESTS COMPARED TO JUVENILE POPULATION, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**

Source: California Department of Justice. (2014). 2009-2013 California Criminal Justice Profile. California Department of Finance. (2014). E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State.

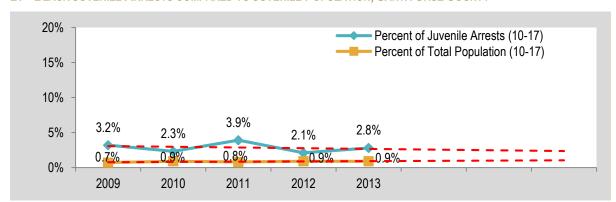*Arrests: 2009 n=964, 2010 n=662, 2011 n=579, 2012 n=531, 2013 n=421.*

B. **WHITE JUVENILE ARRESTS COMPARED TO JUVENILE POPULATION, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**

Source: California Department of Justice. (2014). 2009-2013 California Criminal Justice Profile. California Department of Finance. (2014). E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State.

Arrests: 2009 n=620, 2010 n=454, 2011 n=363, 2012 n=298, 2013 n=226.

B. **BLACK JUVENILE ARRESTS COMPARED TO JUVENILE POPULATION, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**

Source: California Department of Justice. (2014). 2009-2013 California Criminal Justice Profile. California Department of Finance. (2014). E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State.

Arrests: 2009 n=52, 2010 n=27, 2011 n=43, 2012 n=18, 2013 n=19.

Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

Section: Focus Area III: Foster Safe and Vibrant Neighborhoods

Secondary Indicators

- Have you felt discriminated against in Santa Cruz County in the past 12 months? Why?

- Discriminated against because of race/ethnicity on school property (youth self-reported)

STEP 4: THE STORY BEHIND THE TREND

Indicator A & B: Race/Ethnicity of Probation Youth and Youth Arrested Proportionate to Population in County

Nationally, Latinos and African American youth are disproportionately represented within the juvenile justice system. These rates are impacted by complex factors, such as risk and protective factors for youth and their families, unconscious bias of decision-makers and unintended consequences of institutional and justice system policies.[212] [213] [214]

Locally, Latino and African American youth are overrepresented both in probation and in arrest rates. Though the number and rates of juvenile hall bookings have been decreasing steadily since 2002, Latino youth continue to be overrepresented.

The community has indicated the following additional issues regarding disparities of youth on probation and arrest rates:

- Key Informant Interviews and focus groups reported racial and ethnic disparities in charges, offers and dispositions. Some of this can be explained by socio-economic status, but also by unconscious bias and "over-criminalization of youth of color." Some have reported that there is differential treatment in what communities get policed and who gets arrested.

- Some families of justice system involved youth said that they lack resources for best supporting their children prior to their child getting in trouble. They asserted that families should not have to wait until their children get involved in the system before they can access resources and services.

- Santa Cruz County Probation is a Juvenile Detention Alternatives (JDAI) model site in utilizing objective assessment tools and promoting alternatives to detention. Probation has also partnered with the W. Haywood Burns Institute to further address the issue of racial and ethnic disparities through the examination of data and best practices. Other justice system stakeholders have not participated with Probation and the Haywood Burns Institute.

- The community lacks a collaborative table that specifically looks at the issue of racial and ethnic disparities in our community.

- Some community members believed that forums that provide opportunities for community and law enforcement to communicate with each other, by sharing stories, concerns, challenges, will allow for healing within the community.

- Poverty correlates with race in our county, which impacts the social context of positive youth development.

Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

- There is a lack of engaging and culturally responsive prevention and intervention programming.

- There is a lack of trust between youth and law enforcement.

- When youth of color lack legitimate means of obtaining status, they will obtain status illegitimately. We live in a culture that values materialism, power and status, and when there is an unequal opportunity for obtaining those materials and status, youth will find illegitimate ways of obtaining status.

STEP 5: KEY PARTNERSHIPS

Community Members, Community-Based Organizations, County Office of Education, Courts, District Attorney, Families, Law Enforcement, Libraries, Probation, School Districts

STEP 6: STEPS TOWARDS ACTION

Indicator A: Race/Ethnicity of Probation Youth Proportionate to Population in County

Priority Strategies

Collaborative Initiative to Address Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Justice and Education Systems

Through a facilitated collaborative environment, community and system stakeholders can strategically examine policies and use data to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. Participants should include justice system stakeholders, such as law enforcement, probation, and the courts, education stakeholders, community advocates, and importantly, youth and family representatives.[215] [216] [217] [218]

> "*If you have money, you have more opportunities; you can get out of trouble easier.*"
>
> *SC High Youth Focus Group*

Culturally Responsive Programs

Culturally-based prevention and intervention programming in the community and juvenile justice system is one method of increasing cultural responsivity in our community. Culturally-based programming models use a strength-based approach that taps into the cultural values, principles, customs, and traditions of diverse ethnic groups, taking a holistic approach in enhancing protective factors of at-risk youth and their families. La Cultura Cura, a culturally-based healing approach, uses a trauma-informed approach that enhances cultural identity, self-development, and provides a sense of status and inclusion for youth.[219] [220] [221]

Section: Focus Area III: Foster Safe and Vibrant Neighborhoods

Law Enforcement-Community Relations

Interacting with youth is an integral aspect of policing duties, which presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges. Lack of trust and positive relationships between law enforcement and youth impacts the perceived legitimacy of the law, therefore increasing the likelihood that youth will engage in delinquent behavior.[222] [223] According to a brief published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, in order to ensure positive outcomes between youth-law enforcement interactions, "law enforcement officers need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively interact with youth in any situation." Law enforcement strategies to improve interactions with youth include trainings on: adolescent development, how to approach and interact with youth both verbally and nonverbally, Trauma-Informed care practices and policies, as well as opportunities for youth and law enforcement to interact in a non-suppression focused/nonthreatening situation such as through PALS.[224] [225]

Best-Practices through Probation to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities

The use of secure detention must be reserved for only the most serious offenders based on the results of an objective detention risk assessment instrument. These tools ensure that only those youth that are at risk to recidivate pending court and/or fail to appear for court are held in secure detention until an initial hearing. Youth who can be safely released according to the objective detention risk assessment instrument should be released either to a detention alternative or released without conditions. Research indicates that reliance on unnecessary detention for youth increases the probability of future recidivism, incarceration and poor life outcomes.

Best practices include continued utilization and implementation of the following: objective detention Risk Assessment Instrument; Juvenile Assessment Intervention System; Violation Response Grid; evidence-based practices in institutional setting; and Alternatives to Detention through programs such as: the Evening Center, Home Supervision, Electronic Monitoring, Parent-Teen Mediation, and Restorative Justice programs.[226]

Increased Knowledge of and Access to Prosocial Activities

A youth's ability to participate in activities in their communities can be thwarted by an array of barriers, both in knowledge of what is available and in their ability to actually attend. First and foremost, youth must know about what opportunities exist in order to want to participate. Once a youth knows about a program or activity, they can encounter other barriers. Needing a referral for participation can stop youth from gaining access even when they want to be involved because they are dependent on someone else to make the decision. Funding is often a barrier for participation which can often be seen in sports teams that require fees for equipment and uniforms. If the program/activity is not in a location that the youth can get to and from, then they will be unable to attend. If programs are not culturally responsive or do not operate in the language spoken by the youth, then they will not be able to participate in a meaningful way. It is also important that there be programs available that pique interest based on the youth's identity, whether that be their gender, sexual identity, or status in school.

Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

Ultimately, prosocial activities need to be inclusive in order to gain participation and reach youth that encounter some of the following barriers indicated:

- Referral Barriers

- Financial Barriers

- Location and Transportation Barriers - Programs brought directly to neighborhoods and transportations to bring youth to programs

- Language Barriers

- Cultural Competency in Programming

- Gender Specific Programming

- Special Focus on Youth from Nontraditional Schools

> *"We have to look at economic and racial inequalities if we are going to address youth violence in our community."*
>
> *School Stakeholder*

Other Related Strategies

- Raise Awareness of Unconscious Bias and Racial and Ethnic Disparities through Community Conversations and Trainings

Indicator B: Race/Ethnicity of Youth Arrested Proportionate to Population in County

Priority Strategies

Collaborative Initiative to Address Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Justice and Education Systems

Through a facilitated collaborative environment, community and system stakeholders can strategically examine policies and use data to understand and reduce racial and ethnic disparities. Participants should include justice system stakeholders, such as law enforcement, probation, and the courts, education stakeholders, community advocates, and importantly, youth and family representatives.[227] [228] [229] [230]

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Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

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Restorative Justice in the juvenile system is a balanced approach that focuses on three distinct goals: addressing individual accountability to victims and the community for offenses, competency development of offenders while in the juvenile justice system, and responsibility for community safety. Restorative Justice Practices can be used through the Juvenile Courts and with Probation. Interventions include restitution, community services, victim-offender mediation, community-based supervision, as well as competency development such as work experience and service learning.[235]

Targeted Gang Involvement Intervention Strategies

Community stakeholders identified the importance of providing supportive services for individuals who are involved in a gang but want to "walk-away" from the life-style. This includes: access to immediately available tattoo removal services; early identification of youth who are involved in a gang and referrals to community-based intervention programs such as BASTA; and Gang Interventionists to provide supportive services such as mentoring, counseling and referrals to other services in the community (Interventionists are trained individuals who have lived experience of gang lifestyle and can therefore more easily build trust and rapport with those who are gang involved).

Other Related Strategies

- Strategies from: Youth/Young Adult crime rates

Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

Implementation and Conclusion

IMPLEMENTATION

The Criminal Justice Council's Youth Violence Prevention Task Force is committed to moving from planning to action. Successful implementation will require action at the programmatic, policy and systemic levels using a multi-sector approach.

Implementation Planning

Successful implementation must occur at the neighborhood and community levels. YVPT will conduct implementation planning with Watsonville and Santa Cruz task forces to develop a 3-year work plan and budget based on prioritized action steps appropriate to the unique needs of each locality. This planning should include looking at the three key questions: how much do we need to do, for whom and by when? YVPT will host an informational meeting in other jurisdictions to help begin the action-planning process.

Short-Term Implementation Plans

- Package and make qualitative information collected from key informant interviews, youth and family focus groups, and workgroup member input accessible to partners and the community.

- Develop Spanish translation of the qualitative information packet.

- Conduct strategic plan launch event for the community and media in a mid-county location.

- Present to community partners of final plan (e.g., Children's Network, Chamber of Commerce, Watsonville Community Connections Collaborative, county commissions, Association of Faith Communities).

- Youth focused presentations and engagement (e.g., Youth City Councils, Youth N.O.W., local high schools).

- Launch a website home for the Strategic Plan, developed by youth at the Digital Nest, where resources, meetings and announcements can be posted and shared broadly.

- Support request for jurisdictional adoption: This will involve a report to each City Council and the county board of supervisors with a request for a formal resolution of support.

- Continue to convene and coordinate YVPT Steering Committee and its involvement in plan launch and roll out efforts.

Long-Term Implementation Structure

Watsonville and Santa Cruz

Implementation of this strategic plan will be most effective when applied at the neighborhood and city levels to meet the unique needs of each area. The YVPT is working with the cities of Watsonville and Santa Cruz for implementation of the strategic plan. City government and task force members in both jurisdictions have committed to creating local implementation groups to engage the appropriate stakeholders and partners in implementation in their area. Implementation will be expanded as resources are available.

Other Cities and Unincorporated Areas

The YVPT recognizes that implementation of this strategic plan will also be critical in other jurisdictions, including Scotts Valley, Capitola and unincorporated areas of our County. YVPT is committed to ensuring that these jurisdictions are supported in implementing the plan through representation on the Steering Committee, through hosting one meeting in each area for key stakeholders to learn about the plan, through ongoing key stakeholder engagement and additional strategies as they are identified by these areas.
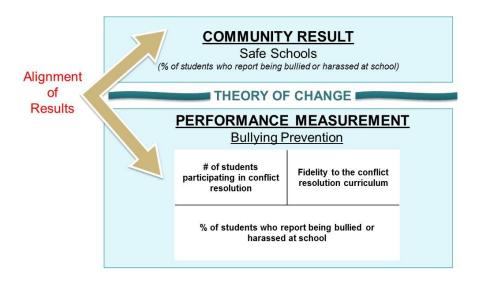
Implementation Staffing

The YVPT recommends that the current Youth Violence Prevention Task Force Coordinator help coordinate and support implementation in Watsonville and Santa Cruz as well as cross-county support and coordination through the Steering Committee. As resources become available, this position can be expanded to provide further support toward countywide implementation. Implementation support must also be imbedded in existing infrastructure of key organizations that play a role in violence prevention.

Implementation Measurement and Evaluation

The next step in the Results Based Accountability (RBA) model is performance accountability, commonly known as program evaluation. Performance accountability asks: How much did we do?; How well did we do it?; How hard did we try?; and What change did we produce?

RBA goes a step further by linking the performance accountability and population accountability. This link shows the impact that each of the strategies listed in this plan will affect the youth violence in Santa Cruz County. This framework is what has driven the plan. Below is an example of how these two are linked.

In order to accomplish this next step, YVPT will work to secure funding to support ongoing measurement, accountability, and reporting on stated results and indicators in the plan. Including developing performance accountability for implemented programs and developing additional data that can act as performance measures as resources become available.

Policy and Funding Support for Implementation

The YVPT recommends that policy and grant-writing support be provided by the Criminal Justice Council and the YVPT Steering Committee. Members of these organizations can:

- Serve as champions and advocates of policy, actions and responses that supports the strategies recommended in the plan
- Facilitate adoption of the plan by your individual organizations
- Examine policies and systems issues that are creating barriers to the issues raised in the plan
- Make efforts to help prioritize, coordinate, leverage and re-allocate existing resources to support the plan results and strategies.
- Aide in searching for and attaining new funding resources for plan implementation

CONCLUSION

A YOUTH'S PERSPECTIVE

The County's youth population ages 10-17 is approximately 26,131. With that in mind, there are plenty of countywide programs and opportunities youth can become involved with, but based on our study, there is still areas needing coverage. But before youth can become involved, they need encouragement and support, whether it be from family or positive mentors. Youth need to understand that they can learn beyond the classroom and feel motivated that they can succeed beyond high school in whatever their passion may be. I had the privilege and responsibility of being a youth representative on the Youth Violence Prevention Task Force Steering Committee and I would not be writing this piece if it weren't for all the mentors in my life, pushing me out of my comfort zone and supporting me every step of the way.

The commitment to youth development and engagement in the county is evident in the strategic planning process for the YVPT from youth focus groups and youth representatives on the Steering Committee. As one of the youth representatives, I was able to provide input into the plan on the strategic level. It was a positive experience, not only because of the respect I received from community members, but because the youth opinions were constantly sought out. There was not a meeting that occurred where I was not asked for my input on an issue or topic. But to be the youth representative, I had a much larger task than just stating my opinion. I had to conduct research on the history of youth violence prevention in Santa Cruz County and vigorously read through all the raw data. This extensive research had to be completed in order to ensure the utmost success in my contribution to the Steering Committee, and accurate representation of all youth, in the 3-5 year plan to end youth violence in our County. Essentially, I understood how important it was for me to insure that my input during this planning process was one that reflected the voice of youth in Santa Cruz County, and it is a role I did not take lightly.

In order to ensure that I understood the interests of the youth, the Youth City Councils of Watsonville and Santa Cruz, of which I am a member, sent out a 2015 Youth Safety Survey. This survey is for youth and by youth and will be a follow up survey of the 2013 Youth Safety Survey where over 1,400 surveys were collected. The intentions of the survey is to learn directly from youth and not make assumptions about what is generally true for youth; and to provide relevant peer-to-peer information for youth, parents, law enforcement, educators, and policy makers.

Santa Cruz County is a diverse community; environmentally and ethnically. We are surrounded by the beauty of lakes, mountains, and beaches. We should all be able to enjoy them. The County's future could be a positive or negative one, it all depends on the willingness of the entire community to unite and support the youth. With an empowered youth given the right opportunities, the future of the county will be nothing but good.

Verenise Valentin,
Youth Representative, YVPT Steering Committee
City Manager, Watsonville Youth City Council

Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN

The following table provides a graphic illustration of the strategic plan. Starting from left to right, it identifies strategies organized by result, these strategies will impact the results, which help support the goals, and end with the mission statement or vision for youth in Santa Cruz County.

YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION TASK FORCE – MAP OF CHANGE

STRATEGIES	RESULTS	GOALS	MISSION

Youth are life, college, and career ready
- Early identification of challenged/at-risk students
- Improve teacher-student-parent relationships
- Increase knowledge of and access to academic supports and community resources
- Safe routes to schools
- Continuum of responses
- Family engagement
- Data analysis and policy review
- School climate strategies
- Personalized education paths
- Targeted intervention for challenged/at-risk students
- Academic support
- Business engagement
- Youth employment services
- Outreach to disconnected youth and their families
- Diversion and alternatives to justice system involvement
- Multidisciplinary approaches

Families are connected, engaged, and valued
- Utilize schools as venues to reach out to and engage families with each other
- Increased connectivity through neighborhood-based supports and events
- Inclusion of families in decision-making
- Increase access to volunteer opportunities
- Civic engagement programs and organizations
- Family engagement in academics
- Community-based organization (CBO) prevention and intervention programming
- Support parent liaison approaches
- Increase knowledge of and access to academic supports and community resources
- Increase family participation in school activities and events

The community is culturally and racially aware and responsive
- Collaborative initiative to address racial and ethnic disparities in the justice and education systems
- Culturally responsive programs
- Law enforcement/community relations
- Best-practices through Probation to reduce racial and ethnic disparities
- Increased knowledge of and access to prosocial activities
- Restorative Justice
- Targeted gang involvement intervention strategies

Youth are supported by caring adults
- Social-emotional learning curriculums/programs
- Improve youth-teacher/education staff relationships
- Teacher engagement strategies
- School climate strategies
- School-based behavioral health services
- Community-based organization (CBO) prevention and intervention on school campuses
- Increased knowledge of and access to prosocial activities
- Law enforcement-youth relations
- Mentoring
- Street outreach

Youth are valued and have meaningful participation in their community
- Increased knowledge of and access to prosocial activities
- Program evaluations

All families are equitably supported by the community
- Affordable housing, poverty prevention & job creation
- Increased knowledge of and access to social services, mental health and substance use disorder treatment
- Update and utilize resource directories
- Culturally responsive programming and training
- Staff should reflect the diverse populations they serve
- Monitor equal access laws and policies using data to track progress
- Free trainings that explain equal rights
- Ensure family/population served has representation on decision making boards
- Target responses to specific family needs and opportunities
- Ensure equal access to services
- Increase funding for access to services

The community is safe and thriving
- Use of effective alternatives/diversion programs for low-level offenders
- Effective law enforcement strategies
- Neighborhood-based strategies
- Multidisciplinary approaches
- Reduce access to guns through safe storage campaign
- Reduce youth access to alcohol and other drugs
- Increase access to effective substance use disorder treatment and mental health services
- Law enforcement/community relations
- Probation/Juvenile Hall
- Street outreach
- Targeted gang involvement intervention strategies
- Access to alternatives to gang involvement
- Examine the issue of trying youth as adults

Youth are safe and feel safe at school
- Anti-bullying strategies
- Continuum of responses
- Family engagement
- School climate strategies
- Community-based organizational (CBO) prevention and intervention on school campuses
- Raise awareness about why students feel compelled to bring weapons to school
- Safe routes to schools
- Preventative evidence-based programming on school campus
- Develop a protocol to anonymously report weapons on school campus
- Targeted gang involvement intervention strategies
- Gang education in schools
- Increased knowledge of and access to prosocial activities
- Increase availability of a diverse array of options for activities
- Access to alternatives to gang involvement
- Family support and engagement
- Multidisciplinary approaches
- Capacity building for appropriate responses to actual or potential Violence
- Data analysis and policy review
- Bias-free classroom and respectful school environments
- Staff should reflect the diverse populations they serve

Families have social-emotional wellbeing
- Develop family-to-family peer support networks
- Increase knowledge of and access to social services, mental health and substance use disorder treatment
- Update and utilize resource directories
- Increase informal supports for families
- Law enforcement/community relations
- Work with existing initiatives

RESULTS
- Youth are life, college, and career ready
- Youth are supported by caring adults
- Youth are valued and have meaningful participation in their community
- Youth are safe and feel safe in school

- Families are connected, engaged, and valued
- All families are equitably supported by the community
- All families have social-emotional wellbeing

- The community is culturally and racially aware and responsive
- The community is safe and thriving

GOALS

Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

Ensure supported and functioning families

Foster safe and vibrant neighborhoods

MISSION

An equitable, united, and safe county where all youth are engaged in family, school and community, have a sense of safety and wellbeing, feel they have a voice and are empowered to use it, and are able to access opportunities for successful transition into adulthood.

APPENDIX I: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Criminal Justice Council

(Final Review and Adoption)

Process Team

(Probation, United Way, Applied Survey Research)

Steering Committee

(Oversight/Decision making)

Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

(Advisory – review/feedback)

Workgroups

Ensure Supported and Function Families

(Develop strategies and recommendations)

Foster Safe and Vibrant Neighborhoods

(Develop strategies and recommendations)

Promote Positive Child and Youth Development

(Develop strategies and recommendations)

Steering Committee Members

Process Team

5 Members of CJC

7 Members of YVPT

1 Member of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission

1 Member of Keeping Kids in School

4 Youth

Proposed Steering Committee Roles and Responsibilities

- Fund development and sustainability planning
- Data & evaluation
- Communications with media and public
- Community engagement event coordination & planning
- Collaboration & data sharing between stakeholder organizations
- Reviewing & approving workgroup recommendations
- Plan implementation
- Monitoring progress of plan

APPENDIX II: STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PROCESS TEAM

Abbie Stevens, Applied Survey Research
Susan Brutschy, Applied Survey Research
Fernando Giraldo, Santa Cruz County Probation
Megan Joseph, United Way of Santa Cruz County
Sarah Emmert, United Way of Santa Cruz County
Julie Burr, Project Intern, Youth Violence Prevention Task Force
Jorge Zamora, Watsonville Police Department

CRIMINAL JUSTICE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Dane Cervine, Santa Cruz County Mental Health (Public Health Representative)
Don Lane, Santa Cruz City Council (Elected Official – North County)
Joe Hernandez, Santa Cruz Police Department (Law Enforcement – North County)
Jorge Zamora, Watsonville Police Department (Law Enforcement – South County)
Valerie Thompson, Santa Cruz County Probation (Juvenile Probation)
Elected Official (South County) – not filled

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES

Verenise Valentin, City Manager, Watsonville Youth City Council

YVPT REPRESENTATIVES

Erin Nelson-Serrano, Community Action Board (CBO Representative)
Jacob Sidman, Community Member (Community Representative)
Jennifer Anderson-Ochoa, Community Bridges (CBO Representative)
Jennifer O'Brien Rojo, Walnut Avenue Women's Center (CBO Representative)
Kenya Edison, Pajaro Valley Unified School District (Education Representative)
Les Forster, Live Oak School District (Education Representative)
Martine Watkins, Santa Cruz County Office of Education (Keeping Kids in School Representative)
Mavel Armijo, Santa Cruz County Community Coalition to Overcome Racism (Community Representative)
Nicky McGivern Meza, Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission

APPENDIX III: WORKGROUP PARTICIPANTS

The following individuals participated regularly in one or more of our planning workgroups. The community is forever indebted to their selfless service over the last year.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Alain Desouches, Santa Cruz County Community Coalition to Overcome Racism
Alan Hicks, Peace and Unity Coalition
Christina Borberly, Community Member
Danny Contreras, Community Member
Deborah Elston, Santa Cruz Neighbors
Dennis Etler, Santa Cruz County Community Coalition to Overcome Racism
James Connery, Applied Survey Research
Marlena Dufresne, Community Member
Simba Kenyatta, Santa Cruz County Community Coalition to Overcome Racism
Tom Tatum, Community Member

EDUCATION

JoAnn Allen, Santa Cruz County Office of Education
John Armstrong, Santa Cruz County Office of Education
Mary Gaukel Forster, Delta School
Michael Paynter, Santa Cruz County Office of Education
Teresa Rodriguez, Pajaro Valley Unified School District

FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY

C. Stoney Brook, Peace United Church & COPA
Rev. Beth Love, Inner Light Ministries
Rev. Beverly Brook, Peace United Church
Rev. Florentino Cordova, First Christian Church

GOVERNMENT

Aimee Mangan, Santa Cruz County Alcohol and Drug Program
Ana Espinoza, Watsonville City Parks and Community Services Department
Bill Manov, Santa Cruz County Alcohol and Drug Program
Brenda Armstrong, Santa Cruz County Alcohol and Drug Program
Cathy Simmons, Santa Cruz County Children's Mental Health
Lowell Hurst, Watsonville City Council
Meg Yarnell, Santa Cruz County Children's Mental Health
Trina Coffman-Gomez, Watsonville City Council

JUSTICE

Julia Feldman, Santa Cruz County Probation
Mario Sulay, Santa Cruz County Gang Task Force
Michelle Lipperd, Santa Cruz County Public Defender's Office

Section: Appendix III: Workgroup Participants

NON-PROFIT SERVICE PROVIDERS

Bob Langseth, Boys and Girls Club of Santa Cruz
Carlos Cruz, Encompass Community Services
Christina Soto, Monarch Services
Deirdre Hickey-Sturm, Special Kids Crusade
Dominic "Buzz" Renda, Oceanseed Project
Elias Gonzales, Community Action Board
Felipe Hernandez, Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos
Javier Diaz, Community Action Board
Jen O'Brien-Rojo, Walnut Avenue Women's Center
Kate Hinnenkamp, Live Oak Family Resource Center
Laura Hinck, Monarch Services
Leigh Guererro, Encompass Community Services
Nicole Young, Optimal Solutions Consulting, First 5 & Triple P
Nik Martinelli, Mountain Community Resources
Phyllis Katz, California Rural Legal Assistance
Raymon Cancino, Community Bridges
Reyna Ruiz, Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos & Youth City Council
Shauna Mora, Conflict Resolution Center
Stefani Merlo, Youth N.O.W. Student Center
Stephanie Tamrosas, Positive Discipline Community Resources
Susan Mahan, IF

APPENDIX IV: OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY INPUT PROCESS

Event/ Group	Participant Profiles	Purpose of Engagement	# of Participants
Youth Summit	Community At-Large	Gauge perception of the issue of youth violence in the community, to define what success looks like. Identify common goals, values, available data and a set of common indicators.	120+
From Data to Action Summit	Community At-Large	Release Status on Youth Violence Data Report and gather input on making meaning of the data for our community.	125+
Plan Design Workgroups (3 Workgroups)	Leaders and front-line representatives	Participatory strategic planning	75+ (participating in multiple meetings)
Steering Committee	Leaders representing Criminal Justice Council and Youth Violence Prevention Task Force, as well as Youth	Oversight body for strategic planning process	20
Focus Groups (8)	Youth (Juvenile Hall, Watsonville Evening Center, Youth N.O.W., Santa Cruz High) Families- conducted in English and Spanish (migrant education families, families who have youth involved in juvenile justice system, are experiencing school attendance issues, or school disciplinary issues, Probation, Pajaro Valley Unified School District)	Gain insight on challenges youth and families are facing, input on opportunities addressing youth violence, and provide youth perspective as to why youth participate in violence.	60+

Event/ Group	Participant Profiles	Purpose of Engagement	# of Participants
Key Informant Interviews	Leaders and front-line representatives from: Business, Community-Based organizations, Education, Government, and Justice	Interview stakeholders regarding their perception and depth of youth violence in our community and how we might go about addressing this concern.	63
Law Enforcement Ride-Alongs (5)	Ride-alongs were conducted with Watsonville and Santa Cruz Police Departments.	Gain insight on how youth violence shows up for police at different times of the day, and their best ideas for addressing the issue.	5
Online Education Survey	Countywide Educational Leaders	Gauge utilization of best practices for addressing school climate, youth violence and related issues in schools across the county.	45
Focus Group Questionnaire	Individuals incarcerated at Correctional Training Facility, Soledad, CA	Gain insight from those with lived experience	11

Youth Violence Prevention Task Force

APPENDIX V: LOCAL PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

The Youth Violence Prevention Task Force (YVPT) has organized a resource and program list based on intentional research and community stakeholder input throughout the planning process. For more information on the programs and resources that have been compiled through the work of the YVPT please visit our website at www.sccyvpt.org.

Broad-Based Apprehension Suppression Treatment Alternatives (BASTA) Guide:
http://www.basta.santacruz.k12.ca.us/pdfs/gang_intervention_resources.pdf

This guide was designed for school staff and community partners to be a quick reference for prevention, intervention, and treatment services for gang involved youth. The guide gives school staff a brief description of gangs, risk factors and why youth join gangs. The guide provides a matrix of targeted local resources addressing gang prevention and intervention services, but is not all-inclusive.

Santa Cruz County Office of Education - Student Support Services Resource Directory:
http://www.sccstudentresources.org/

The purpose of this resource directory is to connect students and families to available community resources to meet the needs of all children from birth to college so that students can take full advantage of learning opportunities. This resource guide is for community, nonprofit, government, and social service agencies that provide low-¬cost, free, or sliding scale supportive services to children from birth to college. Entities must serve children, birth to college, in Santa Cruz County and enhance learning opportunities for student success.

211:
http://211bayarea.org/find-help/

211 is a resource for people who need help, but don't know where to start. By calling 211, people receive direct confidential help, 24 hours a day in 170+ languages, from a trained call specialist, finding the health and human services they need. 211 is easy, convenient, confidential and free. Residents who have trouble dialing 211 can call 1-800-273-6222 to reach the 211 call center in their area. You can also search the 211 database online. Some of the resources you can find information on are food, shelter, homeless services, healthcare / mental health counseling, disaster response, childcare, disability services, and employment assistance.

Santa Cruz City - County Public Libraries – Community Information Database:
http://php.santacruzpl.org/cid/public/

This database was developed in 1987 as a cooperative effort between five public agencies: Santa Cruz County Human Resources Agency, Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency, United Way, Watsonville Public Library, and the Santa Cruz City-County Library. The goal was to develop a comprehensive database of human service resources available to people in Santa Cruz County. Since that time, the database has been enlarged to include the following: environmental groups, hobby clubs daycare and preschools, political organizations, service organizations, social and fraternal organizations, and support groups.

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