SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH
ASSOCIATES

Evaluation of School-District-Based Strategies for Reducing Youth Involvement in Gangs and Violent Crime

Final Report
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2007, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) provided funding in the form of the School District Grant to five school districts so that the districts could improve services to youth who are involved, have been involved, or are at risk of involvement with gangs or the juvenile justice system.[1] The grantees used the funding to develop a variety of educational, employment, and violence-prevention programs and strategies designed to increase academic performance, lower the number of dropouts, and reduce youth involvement in crime and gangs.[2]

This *Final Report on School-District-Based Strategies for Reducing Youth Involvement in Gangs and Violent Crime* summarizes findings from a three-year evaluation that included three rounds of site visits to each of the five grantees between spring 2008 and winter 2010. These visits included interviews with grant administrators, teachers, principals, staff from partner organizations, and employers who had worked with participants. Further, 25 youth were interviewed in depth to understand their views of the services that they received; many of these individuals were interviewed during each round of visits. Additionally, data from the management information system (MIS) used for the grants was obtained and analyzed to summarize the characteristics of youth participants and the outcomes that resulted from this grant. Findings in this report are divided into several key areas: community context, characteristics of the school district grantees, partnership models, recruitment and enrollment procedures, services for in-school and out-of-school youth, and outcomes. The report ends with a discussion of grantees' plans for sustaining their projects and an examination of grantees' core accomplishments and challenges.

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[1] These school districts (the grantees) are the Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS), Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), the Orange County Public School System (OCPS), and the School District of Philadelphia (SDP).

[2] Most of these programs continue to operate as of the date of submission of this report, but in an effort to reduce complexity and enhance readability, we use the past tense to describe grantee efforts and activities in this Executive Summary.

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Community Context

The labor market conditions in each of the grantee cities deteriorated during the course of the grant period. General unemployment rates increased across the cities, and youth unemployment rates remained especially high—higher than the national average. As a result, young people struggled to find employment, and youth respondents noted that competition with adults greatly limited their ability to find work.

Although youth crime and gang activity are problems in all the grantee cities, data show that they have been in decline in most of the cities. Overall, there was a decline in the number of youth arrests in three out of the five grantee cities during the grant period. Baltimore showed a significant decline in youth arrests for both property crime (27 percent decline) and violent crime (28 percent decline) between 2006 and 2008. Youth arrests in Milwaukee and Orange County also decreased during this period. These reductions in youth arrests are most likely part of national declines in youth arrests over the past decade; they should not be taken as evidence of the efficacy of DOL's grant-funded programs and services at the target schools. Rather, statistics showing declines in—but relatively high levels of—youth crime provide an understanding of the community context in which grantee programs operate.

Despite the decreases in youth crime, several grantee cities experienced increases in violent and illegal activity from large, organized, nationally syndicated gangs such as the Bloods and the Crips.

Overview of Grantees

The School District grantees are large urban school districts that vary widely in size, the resources they have available for serving students, and existing systems/procedures for partnering with community agencies. Each grantee received an initial grant of $4.8 million and then an additional $1.06 million, for a total of $5.86 million. Overall, the grantees provided services at 41 schools and program sites and served 3,765 youth. All grantees provided services at traditional schools, and these schools made up the majority of the program sites (24 out of 41). The 2,295 in-school youth served at the traditional schools made up the bulk of the target population. Four grantees also provided services at 10 alternative schools and three grantees targeted 685 out-of-school youth at seven non-school program sites.

Grantees hired a total of 130 staff to manage this grant and provide direct services, the majority of whom (69 percent) were subcontract hires; the remaining staff were direct-hires. Case managers make up the bulk of the staff who were hired (32 percent), followed by administrative/management staff (22 percent), teachers/instructors (16 percent) and job

developers (13 percent). Grantees also hired other staff such as guidance counselors, mental health specialists, school resources officers, social workers, and gang specialists. Grantees were often delayed in hiring key staff to operate their projects due to bureaucratic delays at the district level. As a result, some project components were slow to launch.

Across grantees, grant funding is less than one percent of each district's budget. Although the grant is small relative to each district's overall budget, it represents a sizeable increase in per-student spending for those students who receive grant services. Estimated per-participant expenditures for this grant to date range from $2,528 at Chicago Public Schools to $7,067 at Milwaukee Public Schools. When this amount is added to the districts' regular per-pupil spending, grantees' overall per-pupil spending for grant participants is bumped up by an average of 42 percent.

As of fall 2009/winter 2010, grantees differed in the amounts spent, mainly because projects were launched and implemented at different times. To date, each grantee has spent between 51 percent and 89 percent of its original $4.8 million grant. The majority of funds were budgeted for personnel and/or contractual services, with the relative balance between the two depending on the degree of centralization of program services (at the decentralized end of the spectrum, represented by SDP, contractual services accounted for a full 93 percent of the budget).

Partnerships

Grantees are required to develop partnerships with the workforce investment system, the juvenile justice system, law enforcement, the local mayor's office, and the U.S. Attorney General's Office. In addition, grantees developed ties with community organizations in order to provide specialized supportive services to both in-school and out-of-school youth participants.

Grantees developed their strongest partnerships with the workforce investment system. All grantees but one entered into formal arrangements with the local workforce investment board, and some grantees also involved community-based organizations (CBOs) in the provision of workforce services. Given workforce partners' often pre-existing focus on serving out-of-school youth, school districts greatly benefited from these partnerships in their efforts to reach out to and serve this population. Furthermore, many local workforce entities play multiple, interrelated roles within the city that would make it difficult *not* to partner with these agencies.

Grantees' partnerships with the juvenile justice system (JJS) were more mixed in terms of strength and quality. Similar to workforce development partners, JJS partners have a natural role in dealing with the target populations—specifically, youth transitioning from detention back to the public school system. However, they are not traditional (nor desirable) service providers for

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these youth in the way that workforce partners are (e.g., they cannot provide academic and employment services). This helps explain why partnerships between school districts and local juvenile justice systems centered on information exchange (particularly referrals); it may also explain why partnerships that centered on service provision were particularly challenged.

The partnerships with law enforcement are perhaps the most disappointing of the required partnerships for the School District Grant. While the argument can be made that law enforcement should be expected to have the least intense partnerships with school districts (given that law enforcement is not typically involved with youth service planning), law enforcement was nevertheless expected to play important roles with regard to providing security (e.g., School Resource Officers) and intelligence (e.g., crime data). The experiences of grantees suggest that the "culture gap" between school districts and law enforcement may be at least partially responsible for the relatively weak nature of the partnerships that developed, and that bridging this gap may require more focused effort in future collaborative efforts.

Required partnerships with the U.S. Attorney General's Office generally did not yield much beyond shared updates on School District Grant implementation, while the involvement of the Mayor's Office was more substantial in some cases (e.g., co-located staff, overlapping initiatives). As a required partner, the Mayor's Office is an understandable choice given its position as the "CEO" of the locality as well as a leader of other, potentially overlapping initiatives. However, while grantees often discussed other local initiatives, there was little focused effort to ensure that these initiatives and the School District Grant supplemented or cross-fertilized one another.

Finally, the involvement of CBOs and faith-based organizations is decidedly mixed—being particularly strong in only two grantee sites, and not necessarily in the design phase. This appears to be a missed opportunity; although these organizations are not required partners, they perhaps should have been, as they are often grounded in at-risk communities in a way that public agencies cannot be, and often bring to the table unique and specialized resources (e.g., anti-gang and personal development services).

Recruitment and Enrollment

The School District Grant aims to reach the most vulnerable youth, who have been traditionally underserved in public schools and in youth programs. Accordingly, this grant targets in-school and out-of-school youth who are at risk of court or gang involvement, youth who have convictions and are currently involved or have been involved in the justice system, and youth who are currently incarcerated or were released from incarceration within 60 days of enrollment. Grantees used various other criteria to define their at-risk target populations; these criteria were

used to target, for example, in-school youth with high truancy rates, a need for academic remediation, and/or an excessive number of disciplinary referrals or suspensions. Grantees also aimed to serve ninth graders to provide interventions that will keep them attached to school. Grantees coordinated with feeder schools and key partners to identify youth from these target groups.

As of December 2009, grantees had enrolled 3,765 participants—3,123 in-school youth (83 percent) and 642 out-of-school youth (17 percent). OCPS had enrolled the largest number of participants, whereas MPS had enrolled the fewest. Approximately 20 percent of participants are youth offenders and incarcerated offenders, with OCPS serving the largest number of offenders (368, or 38 percent of its total youth population).

Grantees enrolled participants at different times. Because the first year of the grant was devoted to grant planning, few grantees enrolled participants during that year. The Orange County school district was the exception to this generalization: as the first grantee to launch its programs and thus the first to enroll participants, OCPS had enrolled 316 youth by December 2007. Most of the grantees began to enroll small numbers of participants between March and June 2008. These data show that grantees had different timeframes and foci for their projects; these differences are essential for understanding the outcomes achieved.

Overview of Programs and Services

The School District grant supported many schools and programs in their efforts to provide remedial academic, credit retrieval, job preparation, subsidized employment, case management, and violence-prevention services to in-school and out-of-school youth. At least 80 percent of in-school youth served by the grant were served within traditional schools (18 high schools and six middle schools). Grantees also created five alternative schools, three of which exclusively targeted youth offenders transitioning from detention. Three of the newly created alternative schools are "comprehensive" in that students can earn degrees from the program, while the other two are short transitional programs. The alternative schools use a team approach to teach and guide youth, maintain small class sizes to ensure that students receive individualized attention, offer online instruction so that students can complete units at their own pace, and connect students to wrap-around supportive services to help facilitate their success.

Three grantees funded specific programs for OSY. OSY programs generally serve youth age 16–21, have a strong focus on workforce services, and have open enrollment. Grantees funded well-established OSY programs with strong ties to the community; this strategy reduced the planning and oversight requirements for the school district, facilitated OSY recruitment and enrollment, and provided some insurance that services would be of high quality. To aid

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participant screening and retention, four of the five grant-funded OSY programs established an enrollment process with prerequisites (e.g., completion of job readiness training) and used incentives for program participation and completion (e.g. gift cards and stipends).

Grantees did not generally differentiate services for youth offenders; yet, across the board, youth offenders received lower per-participant instances of workforce services than at-risk youth. This may be because it is more difficult to place youth offenders into subsidized or unsubsidized employment than it is to place at-risk youth, or it may be because youth offenders are less likely to qualify for workforce services.

Grantees used the grant to create more personalized academic services for at-risk and adjudicated ISY. In traditional school settings, some grantees (BCPSS, OCPS, SDP) supplemented existing academic services for students in reading, math, or other core subjects. In alternative school settings, grantees (MPS, OCPS, SDP) sought to change students' perspectives of themselves as learners by connecting them with targeted academic support and providing opportunities to work on content at their own pace.

Job preparation classes and services were the most commonly provided workforce services. Grantees that were successful at developing subsidized employment relied on established workforce partners to provide this service. Programs that tried to develop internships independent of a workforce agency were less successful, because they lacked the expertise and networks to develop these opportunities.

Supportive services were a central aspect of grant-funded services. The quality and dedication of case management and counseling staff was a core asset for grant-funded programs, and something that youth participants consistently pointed to as a key strength. In most cases, grant-funded case management and counseling staff became core members of the school community, helping to improve the school climate and prevent violence within otherwise under-resourced schools.

Three grantees (BCPSS, MPS, and OCPS) contracted with partners to provide gang- and violence-intervention services. Although these programs were launched late in the grant cycle and therefore do not factor strongly into initiative outcomes, they showed promise for reaching gang members and reducing violence.

Outcomes

Grantees achieved outcomes that fall into three major categories: educational, employment-related, and juvenile justice-related. Outcomes data for reading and math gains among grantees

that reported this data show that approximately 40 percent of youth achieved increases of two grade levels in each subject. BCPSS showed the largest gain in reading and math, whereas MPS made small gains in these areas. It appears that BCPSS's program was strong for several reasons. First, BCPSS delivered the most instances of services per participant, especially in reading and math remediation. Second, BCPSS's intensive case management approach meant that participants in the Future Works! program received services from Futures Advocates for three years.

Youth offenders—both in-school and out-of-school youth—showed noticeably lower gains in reading and math skills, suggesting that intensive, targeted support in basic skills remediation for these groups is vital. Grantees provided second chances for youth offenders by offering safe and nurturing environments in which they could learn and using alternative methods of instruction, such as on-line learning, independent study, and project-based learning. These tactics were intended to encourage youth offenders to remain engaged and attached to school so that they could succeed.

Educational outcomes in other areas were very modest. For instance, among the three out of five grantees that reported the ninth-grade retention rate, there was little change in this rate from the grantees' established baselines. The Baltimore district was the exception; it achieved an almost six-percentage increase in the ninth-grade retention rate. Further, very few grantees showed significant gains in the number of students attaining high school diplomas, GEDs, and certificates (but this is primarily because most grantees served in-school youth who have not yet graduated).

Workforce outcomes were modest because most of the youth who were served by this grant are not yet old enough to graduate. However, about 22 percent of out-of-school youth were placed in unsubsidized employment. Because two grantees have not submitted outcomes data, this finding is preliminary.

Out of the 615 youth offenders who enrolled in the grant-funded activities, approximately 12 percent recidivated, a result that surpassed grantees' target goals for reducing recidivism.

Lastly, most of the grantees exited few participants as of winter 2010 because they are continuing to provide some form of follow-up support, even though this support is inconsistently available. The exception is CPS; a majority of participants have exited its YES program, which serves youth for only one year.

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Conclusion

School District Grantees have accomplished a great deal with this grant. As grantees wrap up their projects in 2010, they are working towards institutionalizing their grant-related efforts so that they can be sustained beyond the life of the grant. Continued funding of some of the services and programs depends on whether the school districts can leverage new funding and whether the projects align closely with each district's current priorities. Some districts (such as CPS, MPS, and OCPS) have secured district funding to continue to operate the alternative schools for youth offenders that were either wholly or partially funded by the School District Grant, because these schools filled a big service gap for youth offenders. This commitment is significant given the severe budget cuts that the districts faced in the 2009–2010 school year. In general, however, most other services that were available through this grant—such as gang prevention and case management—are unlikely to be sustained unless additional resources are secured.

While some programs and services will be difficult to sustain in such a difficult economic climate, it is likely that grantees *will* be able to sustain the knowledge and relationships that resulted from the work made possible by this grant. With regard to knowledge, a number of grantees described how the lessons they learned from the School District Grant—e.g., the importance of mentoring for at-risk youth, or how to best partner with other agencies—would be carried forward to future endeavors. With regard to relationships, grantees are optimistic that the connections they made with staff from partner agencies will continue beyond the life of this grant and facilitate future collaborative efforts.

In addition to taking steps to sustain some of the grant-funded project components, school district grantees made a number of significant accomplishments throughout the life of the grant. They successfully mobilized core community partners to participate in grant activities, gained the support of local school leaders and staff for implementing new programs or expanding existing ones, and provided much-needed services to some of the most vulnerable youth in their schools and communities. Grantees developed some noteworthy practices for reaching at-risk youth (including youth offenders, over-age and under-credit youth, and out-of-school youth) by creating alternative pathways for them to resume their education and remain attached to school and programs. These pathways include alternative schools and special programs that supplement youths' academic schedules (examples of the latter are SDP's Bridge and Learning-to-Work programs). Grant resources also reached a significant number of schools and programs, enabling grantee staff to serve approximately 3,765 participants in just under three years. At the same time, grant resources provided additional staffing to under-resourced schools and community programs. This grant enabled grantees to hire a total of 130 staff who provided essential services to students despite drastic budget cuts across grantee districts. Lastly, several grantees (BCPSS,

MPS, and SDP) overcame the difficult hurdle of sharing participant data across systems by developing inter-agency MOUs and methods of securing parental consent.

Although grantees achieved a great deal of success with the School District Grant and will likely carry the lessons they learned from this grant to other initiatives at the district level, they also faced significant challenges. Some of these challenges were related to the school district context, some to grant implementation, and others to partnerships. The school district context is an important factor that influenced grantees' abilities to implement their projects. All of the school districts were facing severe budget cuts, which meant that in at least three districts project staff (including teachers) were unable to be hired in a timely manner. As a result of budget cuts and other factors, some schools were closed, which meant that attendance boundaries for some of the target schools changed. As a result, rival gangs were suddenly attending the same schools, thereby increasing violence in the target schools. Lastly, the economic downturn of 2009–2010 made it difficult to place participants, especially adjudicated youth, into employment.

Grantees also faced challenges in grant implementation. Even though grantees met their enrollment goals for this grant, they struggled to recruit sufficient numbers of out-of-school youth, despite concerted efforts to do so. To address this challenge, grantees subcontracted with partners who had expertise in serving out-of-school youth, such as the YO! Centers in Baltimore, the E3 Power Centers in Philadelphia, and the Metropolitan Orlando Urban League in Orange County. In addition, many grant-funded activities had low attendance. Much of this challenge has to do with the population that grantees are serving—youth who have historically been truant or disinterested in structured programs. Further, follow-up services were difficult to provide consistently, especially as students left the target schools where project staff worked. As a result, few staff offered follow-up services on a consistent basis.

Lastly, grantees had mixed success in linking with the grant's required partners. Grantees sometimes struggled to adjust to the different organizational cultures of their partners. For instance, some school districts had difficulty reconciling their philosophies with law enforcement officials' punitive approach to dealing with youth. This philosophical/cultural difference played a role in the communication gaps that developed between agencies. In addition, grantees that hired subcontractors to deliver services at target schools and programs sometimes struggled to have all parties coordinate successfully with one another and with the school staff, especially around the scheduling of services and activities. Further, while several grantees made important breakthroughs in developing procedures for sharing participant data, confidentiality issues and data-sharing challenges continually plagued a number of grantees and partners. These challenges often slowed down the process of efficiently providing services to youth.

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Despite these challenges, school district staff and their partners were energized by the prospect of continuing to serve the most vulnerable youth through the alternative schools that were developed with the generous support from this grant. Grantees have already begun to think about how to make use of the lessons they learned from this grant and are excited to continue the momentum that has been created by the School District Grant.

I.   INTRODUCTION

In 2007, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) provided funding in the form of the School District Grant to five school districts to enable them to improve services to youth who are involved, have been involved, or are at-risk of involvement with gangs or the juvenile justice system. These school districts (the grantees) are the Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS), Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), the Orange County Public School System (OCPS), and the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). The grantees are using the funding to develop a variety of educational, employment, and violence-prevention strategies designed to increase academic performance, lower the number of dropouts, and reduce youth involvement in crime and gangs. DOL contracted with Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) to evaluate how these five school districts have designed and implemented their programs and services and to examine the outcomes that resulted from these efforts. This *Final Report on School-District-Based Strategies for Reducing Youth Involvement in Gangs and Violent Crime* summarizes findings from a three-year evaluation that included three rounds of site visits to each of the five grantees and an analysis of management information systems (MIS) data collected by the grantees. In this chapter, we provide an overview of the evaluation and the framework that guided the project, describe the research questions, the data collection methods and our approach to data analysis.

Overview of the Evaluation

This evaluation is an implementation study, relying heavily on qualitative data gathered from three rounds of site visits to each grantee. The primary goal of this evaluation is to assess the design and implementation experience of the five school districts that received funding. Thus, the evaluation identifies common patterns and themes and summarizes what grantee staff and partners believe to be important for improving youth's academic performance, reducing youth violence and gang involvement, and preparing youth for the workforce.

This evaluation is guided by a conceptual framework that focuses on several key aspects of the initiative, including the context in which grantees operate their projects, the partners that are involved, the grantees' implementation experience, and their outputs and outcomes. We

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presented the conceptual framework in the Design and Interim Reports, and summarize its key portions below.

- **Community context**. The evaluation examines both the school and community contexts, to understand how these factors influence grantees' implementation experiences and students' engagement in school-based interventions. The school context includes the presence of enrichment activities, the degree of parent involvement, the quality of teaching, and linkages with community organizations. We also examine the community factors that are external to the school, including the presence of crime and gangs and employment opportunities.

- **Partnership model.** An important goal of this initiative is to promote strong partnerships between the school districts and community agencies and organizations, including the workforce investment system, the Mayor's Office in each city, the juvenile justice system, and other community partners. We examined core features of the partnerships that have been developed in order to assess grantees' experiences mobilizing partners, coordinating referrals, and coordinating grant activities.

- **Grant implementation.** A core feature of the evaluation is an examination of grantees' implementation experiences, including the ways in which they identified and recruited the most needy participants, their assessment and enrollment processes, and their approaches to serving youth and the quality of grant-funded services that were available through target schools and community programs.

- **Outputs and outcomes.** The context in which grantees operate, the partnerships that they formed, and their implementation experiences lead to participant outcomes. Although this evaluation is not designed to capture long-term outcomes, we are documenting the intermediate outcomes that grantees are achieving with regard to education, employment, and juvenile justice involvement. This study does not attempt to discern the impacts of grant-funded services on youth outcomes. Rather, it identifies trends and patterns across the five grantees and summarizes grantees' approaches to improving educational and workforce outcomes of target youth.

Research Questions and Overview of Report

The framework described above serves as the basis for the major research questions for this project. A modified list of research questions, which are mapped to the chapters in this report, is included below. For a complete list of research questions, see Appendix A.

Exhibit I-1:
Research Questions and Overview of Final Report

Chapter	Research Questions
Chapter II: Community Context	• What contextual factors are important for understanding the design, implementation, and outcomes for the grants?
Chapter III: Overview of Grantees	• What are the organizational and operational models for providing services? What challenges did grantees experience in implementing these models? • What is the leadership/management structure of the grant, including the areas of key staff and budget? What methods are used to manage the program and coordinate contracts among partners? • What is the scope of the program (e.g., district-wide, several high schools, one high school; expected number of participants)?
Chapter IV: Partnership Models	• Who are the key partners in this effort (required and non-required)? How were they selected and mobilized? What are their specific roles in this project? • What partnership arrangements have been established and how are resources being leveraged to achieve the grant's objectives? • What types of linkages have been established between the grantee and the local juvenile justice system, including the police department? What types of linkages have been established with other required partners—the city's Mayor's Office, the local workforce investment board, and the U.S. Attorney's Office? • What partnership models are effective in designing and implementing an initiative that aims to reduce dropouts and youth involvement in crime/gangs? • What have been the barriers and best practices for inter-partner communication and coordination (different philosophies toward youth, MIS issues, etc.)? • What have been the partnership-level outcomes of the grant project?
Chapter V: Recruitment and Enrollment	• How are youth recruited and/or identified for services? • How effective are outreach and recruitment services for in-school and out-of-school participants? For at-risk and adjudicated youth? For younger and older youth?
Chapter VI: Services for In-School- and Out-of-School Youth	• What is the full range of education, employment, gang prevention, and supportive services available to youth, and how do they vary by status (e.g., younger vs. older youth, at-risk vs. adjudicated)? • What is the proportion of participants who take part in the various education, employment, gang reduction, and supportive services? • What practices are successful for serving in-school and out-of-school youth?
Chapter VII: Youth Outcomes	• What are the characteristics of participants enrolled in the program? • What education, employment, and justice outcomes have program participants achieved? • To what extent are recidivism rates lower? • How do outcomes vary by program design and implementation elements? • How do outcomes vary by different types of participants (e.g., at-risk vs. adjudicated youth, younger youth vs. older youth)? • Have there been any significant unanticipated outcomes for participants? • What are the key characteristics of successful approaches for reducing youth involvement in gangs/crime and preventing dropouts?

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	• How much variation is there in overall grantee performance after considering differences in local context and participant characteristics?
Chapter VIII: Conclusion	• What are strategies to sustain grant-funded services? What have been the most significant accomplishments that grantees achieved through this grant? What are they major challenges that grantees and partners have faced? What strategies were used to overcome these challenges, and with what success?

Data Collection Methods

This evaluation draws primarily on qualitative data to understand the ways in which grantees planned, designed, and implemented their grants. Qualitative data is drawn from three rounds of site visits to each grantee. In addition, we examined data from the MIS to summarize youth characteristics, the services received by youth, and grantee outcomes. Below we provide a brief overview of these data collection methods.

Site Visits

Three rounds of site visits were conducted to capture the contextual variables described above, the approaches and interventions that grantees implemented, and the barriers and facilitators to project implementation. The first round of visits was conducted in the spring 2008; the second of round of visits was conducted in the fall 2008; and the third round of visits was conducted in the fall and winter of 2009–2010. The first round focused on the grantees' planning and design phase, which included the documentation of the goals and objectives of the projects and the key partners that were involved in them. The second round focused on project implementation, which included the topics of recruitment, assessment, and enrollment procedures; the specific services available; the partnerships developed; and the key challenges and facilitators that may have affected the grantees' implementation experiences. The third round continued to document the implementation of key services and included an examination of grantee and partner outcomes and plans for sustainability.

Each round of site visits lasted three and a half days. In general, research staff spent approximately half of their time in the target schools and programs to understand the interventions that were developed through the DOL grant. The remainder of the time was spent interviewing youth and partners. Individuals in the following roles were interviewed during each round of site visits:

- **School district personnel, the grant administrator, and school staff**. We interviewed principals, teachers, case managers/counselors, career specialists, outreach/intake/recruitment staff, and others to obtain a good understanding of how the projects were developed, administered and managed. These interviews solicited information on organizational and governance issues, as well as staffing and leadership. We asked these respondents about several programmatic issues:

(1) how youth access services, (2) how services are coordinated with those available through the workforce and justice systems (e.g., aftercare and alternative sentencing), (3) how services are tailored for youth offenders, and (4) how services are delivered (e.g., in-house, through referrals, or a combination of both).

- **Community partners.** We interviewed a number of relevant partners, including service providers, workforce development partners, juvenile justice staff, supportive service providers, law enforcement officials, and other community-based organizations, to understand procedures for communication and coordination and the partners' roles in project design and service delivery.

Further, research staff observed project activities and classrooms where interventions were being held. At the target schools, research staff observed student interactions in the hallways during passing time and during lunchtime, and teacher and student interactions in the classrooms and program activities. Observations allowed us to get a sense of the school climate, including the interactions between students and teachers and between students and student resource officers. These observations enabled us to better understand the factors that may contribute to school violence and youth crime/violence occurring at the schools.

We visited approximately 33 schools and programs, and conducted 292 in-person interviews of grantee, project, and partner staff across the five grantees throughout the course of this evaluation. Appendix B lists the schools and programs that were visited during each round of visits.

The schools and programs we visited were selected to represent the grantees' overall service strategy. We tried to visit the same schools or programs in each round of visits. In some grantee sites, we visited different schools or programs in the second and/or third site visit because services were not yet launched at the time of the first site visit. At the same time, we did not revisit some of the schools that we visited in the first visit either because the grantee shifted its program structure or because we selected schools or programs that were more representative of grantees' service designs.

Case Study Youth

We collected in-depth, individual-level data on 25 case study youth. Four to five youth, representing both the in-school and out-of-school populations, were interviewed in each grantee community, for a total of 25 case study youth. These youth were selected purposively by the target school and program staff based on our recommendation that the youth represent the diversity of participants that they are serving. The youth case-study subjects, therefore, were not randomly selected. These interviews focused on youths' educational experiences, contact with the juvenile justice system, perspectives on community influences (including the prevalence of

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gangs), and family influences. We also asked youth to describe and assess the quality and adequacy of the services received through the school and project. These interviews were intended to provide rich stories of youths' experiences in the program interventions that would illustrate the effects of grantees' approaches and their successes and challenges. Exhibit I-2 summarizes the number of youth who were interviewed in each round of site visits.

We conducted in-depth interviews with the youth during each round of site visits.[1] During these interviews, youth were asked to describe and assess the quality and adequacy of the services they received at their school or through their program. We made an effort to interview the same youth during each round of site visits in order to track youths' progress over time. However, this was not always possible because some of the youth moved out of the area, enrolled in a different school, were incarcerated, and/or could not be located during subsequent rounds of site visits. As a result, not all 25 youth were interviewed in three rounds of visits; nine youth were interviewed twice and six youth were interviewed three times.

Exhibit I-2:
Number of Youth Participating in Case Study Interviews

	Round One Site Visit		Round Two Site Visit		Round Three Site Visit		Total Number of Case Study Youth[2]
	ISY	OSY	ISY	OSY	ISY	OSY	
BCPSS	0	0	2	1	2	0	3
CPS	0	0	6	0	4	0	6
MPS	2	0	2	2	1	1	4
OCPS	5	0	4	0	3	0	5
SDP	3	1	3	2	2	1	7
Total	**9**	**1**	**17**	**5**	**12**	**2**	**25**

In addition to gathering data from the interviews themselves, we gathered data from academic and/or program files for all 25 case study youth. These files included information about youths' academic performance, such as their grades and GPA; attendance, such as absences and tardies; and behavioral incidents, such as suspensions, fights, and other infractions. Data about case

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[1]   We did not interview youth at BCPSS and CPS during the Round 1 site visits because the grantees had not yet enrolled any youth.

[2]   The total number of youth is a tally of all the unique individuals who were interviewed.

study youth were also gathered from checklists that site visitors completed about each youth based on the information obtained during interviews and from case files. These data are used to learn about the services that youth received, their family and housing situations, their contact with law enforcement, their involvement in gangs, and changes in their academic performance and behavioral incidents throughout the life of the grant. A summary of the characteristics of the youth participating in the case studies is included in Chapter VII.

Quantitative Data

The second primary data collection and analysis effort for this evaluation was quantitative in nature. Specifically, we analyzed grantees' quarterly MIS data submissions and social indicator data, including youth arrest data and dropout data.

MIS Data

Grantees collected MIS data on participants starting in the last quarter of 2007 (October to December).[3] Each quarter, demographic data about enrolled youth were compiled and entered into an Excel template that was created for the grant. The template is organized to report on program participants in three categories: at-risk of court/gang involvement, offender, and incarcerated offender. Youth are further divided into in-school and out-of-school sub-categories. The template is also divided into three major sections: enrollment data, project activities, and outcome information. Grantees submitted these aggregate-level participation data to DOL on a quarterly basis.

Our analysis of the grantee quarterly report data is limited considerably by the fact that grantees submitted only aggregate-level data due to various privacy and data collection concerns. Without individual-level data, we cannot conduct an outcomes analysis that would allow us to explore the factors that affect participants' outcomes, such as demographic attributes and services received. Thus, we use this program report data to help us understand broad patterns of enrollment, implementation, and outcomes at each grantee site, as well as to compare patterns among grantee sites. For example, in terms of enrollment, we examined each grantee's trends in enrolling youth of particular racial/ethnic backgrounds, age groups, living arrangements, at-risk/offender status, gang experience, and school status (in-school versus out-of school). In terms of outcomes, we analyzed grantee trends in reading and math scores, as well as in various educational and workforce achievements, such as the number of participants securing a high school diploma or first-time unsubsidized employment. We examined how these numbers vary by participant type (e.g., at-risk/offender status, in-school/out-of-school status).

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We also examine outcomes achieved by the case study students—based on in-depth interviews and case file reviews—to understand the changes in their academic progress, attendance, and behavior. Where possible, we weave in the outcome stories of the case study youth to illustrate the kinds of outcomes achieved as a result of this grant.

Youth Arrest Data

We gathered social indicator data on youth arrests in the areas where the majority of the students reside. The data was collected from local arrest records completed by local police departments. All states and localities getting federal funds use the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) System to classify and report offenses. Building off the UCR categories, we analyzed youth crime data in two major categories—property crime and violent crime.[4] The data were then aggregated and analyzed to further contextualize the communities in which the participants live and provide additional information about the community-level factors that may affect their success in the interventions.

The ways in which local areas enter crime data differ widely. Typically, arrests are recorded by street address, ZIP code, scout car, and/or precinct number. The address recorded in these data (and its associated zip code/census tract) most often represents where an arrest occurred; however, it also may signify where the crime occurred or, in a few instances, the place of residence of the perpetrator. Thus, the youth arrest data in this report reflect only the fact that arrests were *made* in the area(s) of interest, not necessarily that the youth arrested were *from* the area(s). Youth arrest data in this report were collected for three years—2006, 2007, and 2008. These data are summarized in Chapter II.

In addition, we collected high school dropout data for each of the five school districts as a whole, as well as for those individual schools that are participating in the grant, in order to get a broad sense of dropout trends in the local community. The primary purpose of collecting dropout data is to document changes within a particular grantee site as a part of the community context, rather than to compare one grantee site against others. These data—presented in Chapter III—are collected from state department of education websites or local district data systems for the period covering the 2006–2007 school year until the 2009–2010 school year.

The analysis of the social indicator data helps illustrate changes in each grantee's community context over time, with particular regard to increases or decreases in the high school dropout rate

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[3]   However, because of differing start dates, not all grantees had data to report at that time.

and number of youth arrests. As discussed in Chapter II, these data are useful only for conveying the larger environments in which the grantees are operating; it cannot be used to make causal attributions (e.g., a reduced number of youth arrests attributed to the success of grantee programming).

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[4] Violent crime refers to crimes that involve aggravated assault, robbery, rape or murder. Property crime refers to crimes that involve burglary, theft, or larceny.

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II.   COMMUNITY CONTEXT

In this chapter, we describe the community-level factors that may have affected the ability of the grantees to meet their goals. Specifically, we discuss the labor market conditions and the presence of youth crime and gang activity in the grantee cities.

Labor Market Conditions

One of the goals of the School District Grant is to engage youth in workforce services so that they are sufficiently prepared to enter the workforce. The labor market conditions in each grantee city, therefore, are an important external variable that may influence the grantee's ability to place youth in unsubsidized employment.

A primary indicator of labor market conditions is the unemployment rate. Exhibit II-1 shows, for each grantee city and the U.S. as a whole, the average 2006–2008 unemployment rates for 16- to 19-year-olds, 20- to 24-year-olds, and the working-age population overall.

As shown in this exhibit, all grantee cities have unemployment rates higher than the national average. Orlando (the largest city in Orange County Public Schools) has the lowest unemployment rate of all the cities, at 7.2 percent, while Baltimore has the highest unemployment rate, at 18.1 percent. In three of the cities (Baltimore, Milwaukee, and Philadelphia), the citywide unemployment rate is 10 percent or higher. Although not shown in the exhibit, unemployment rates have steadily increased since 2008, indicating that the unemployment problem in these cities is now even more pronounced than the exhibit suggests. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics,[1] the national unemployment rate grew by more than one-third between 2008 and 2009. A rate of growth in unemployment at least this high was felt in all grantee cities except Philadelphia, where unemployment grew by just under one-third. In Orlando, unemployment increased 45 percent between 2008 and 2009.

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[1]   Bureau of Labor Statistics – Unemployment Tables

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Exhibit II-1:
Youth Unemployment Rates in Grantee Cities[2]
2006–2008
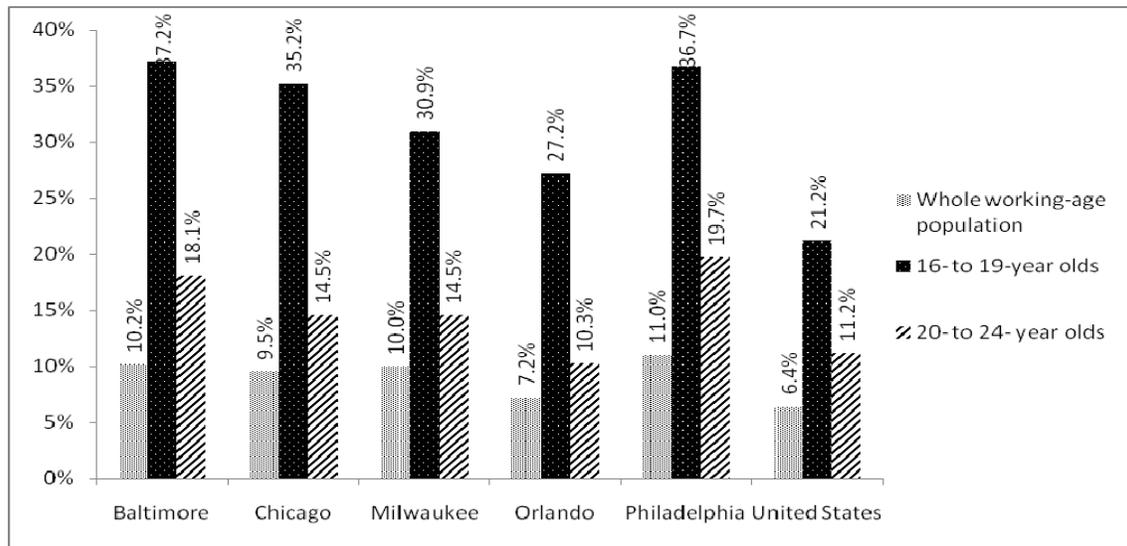
The unemployment rate for youth from 16 to 19 years old—the age group that represents the largest number of participants served through the School District Grant—is higher than the national average of 21.2 percent in all the grantee cities, and higher than 30 percent in four out of the five cities. The unemployment rate for 20- to 24-year-olds—some of whom are included in the School District Grant's target population—is also especially high in the grantee cities, ranging from 10.3 percent in Orlando to 19.7 percent in Philadelphia. In four out of the five grantee cities, the unemployment rate for the 20- to 24-year-old age group is higher than the national average of 11.2 percent. Although data showing the most recent trends in youth unemployment are not available, site visit respondents noted that unemployment rates for youth were likely higher in 2009 than they were in previous years, due to the recession. Our interviews with grantees and program staff confirm that even for youth actively seeking employment, finding a job has proven to be very difficult. One 16-year-old described his experience looking for employment:

> *I tried, but mostly they just turned me down…Most of the stuff they have*
> *on the paper, I don't have…It's mostly do I have experience with grills or*
> *cleaning or stuff like that.*

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2   2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

High unemployment rates have not only made it extremely difficult for youth to find jobs on their own, they have also made it difficult for job developers to find jobs and internships in which to place youth. One program manager explained the situation:

> *As we've looked at ways to get young people employed...[one of things we've] struggled with is that our young people are competing for jobs with people who've been laid off who have a track record of being employed, showing up on time, but have a mortgage to pay so will work at McDonald's, Target, Wal-Mart, some of the jobs that our young people would typically get their foot in the door to start a career path.*

Overall, the current labor market conditions have made it extremely difficult for youth to find jobs, even with job readiness training and the support of job developers. This is a key contextual factor to consider when examining the workforce outcomes in Chapter VII.

Youth Crime

DOL seeks to reduce youth crime and gang involvement in the areas where the majority of youth live. According to the performance goals DOL established for this grant, grantees were each expected to reduce established gang and crime baselines by 20 percent by the end of the project's first 12 months. SPR staff collected social indicator data in each of the five grantee communities on youth arrests in two categories—violent crime and property crime—to see whether there were changes in youth arrests over time.[3] These data are intended to help illustrate the community contexts in which grantees are operating their projects; the data are not meant to be used to make causal attributions (e.g., a reduced number of youth arrests attributed to the success of grantee programming). As mentioned above, we focused the data collection in geographic areas in which the majority of target students lived. These data were derived from local arrest records completed by police officers of local police departments. We requested data from local law enforcement agencies to gather youth arrest data by police beat or district and mapped these data to the zip codes where the majority of participants lived. These data reflect only the fact that arrests were *made* in the area(s) of interest, not necessarily that the youth arrested were *from* the area(s). Although juvenile arrests are the most readily available measure of youth crime, it is also an imperfect measure. Juvenile arrests tend to over-estimate the extent to which youth are involved in crimes relative to adults because youth are more likely than adults to be detained for low-level offenses, get multiple arrests for a single crime, and to be cleared of their offenses.

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[3] Violent crime refers to crimes that involve aggravated assault, robbery, rape, or murder. Property crime refers to crimes that involve burglary, theft, or larceny.

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The evaluation was also charged with collecting data on youth gang-related crimes. These data are difficult to collect for several reasons. The UCR System has not designated specific categories for some common youth offenses, including gang-related violence. As a result, SPR staff were unable to isolate youth arrest data specifically concerned with gang-related violence. Because of this challenge, SPR staff learned about youth gang activity from local law enforcement officials, who collect information about the membership, activities, and strength of various gangs in their jurisdictions. Although this information paints a good picture of youth gang activity, it is often anecdotal and descriptive, is not standardized, and is collected differently across the five grantee cities.

Below we describe the youth arrest data for all grantees from 2006–2008. We then describe the patterns of youth arrest and gang activity in each grantee city.

Youth Arrests Across Grantees

Exhibit II-2 summarizes the number of youth arrests for property and violent crime between 2006 and 2008. Because the School District Grant was awarded in 2007, the evaluation tracked the changes in youth arrests between 2006 and 2008. These data show that there has been a decline in youth arrests in three out of the five cities. Baltimore showed the largest decline in youth arrests for both property crime (27 percent) and violent crime (28 percent). Youth arrests in Milwaukee and Orange County also decreased between 2006 and 2008.

Exhibit II-2:
Youth Arrests for Property Crimes and Violent Crimes in Grantee Cities
2006 to 2008[4]

	2006		2007		2008		% Change 2006–2008	
	Property	Violent	Property	Violent	Property	Violent	Property	Violent
Baltimore	1413	772	1195	625	1029	556	-27.2%	-28.0%
Chicago	3413	7788	3200	7596	3553	8459	4.1%	8.6%
Milwaukee	829	905	837	808	751	768	-9.4%	-15.1%
Orange County[5]	1686		1539		1396		-17.2%	
Philadelphia	3870	3447	3532	3374	4721	3861	22.0%	12.0%

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[4]   The age range for what is considered juvenile varies widely by city. Baltimore: 8 to 17; Chicago: 14 to 21; Milwaukee and Orange County: 17 and under; Philadelphia: 21 and under.

[5]   Orange County does not break out its youth arrests by crime category.

There are likely multiple factors responsible for the decrease in youth arrests observed in Baltimore, Milwaukee, and Orange County, including declining violence associated with drug gangs, effective community-oriented law enforcement efforts, and the existence of numerous school and community-based efforts to prevent violence.[6] Several communities in Milwaukee, for instance, have been actively organizing to address youth crime, and several neighborhoods have developed community-based programs to specifically address gang violence. Other factors, such as fluctuations in the juvenile population, may also be in play, but it should be noted that the youth population *increased* in these three cities during the period in question.

Chicago and Philadelphia, in contrast, are experiencing a steady increase in the number of youth arrests for both property and violent crime. In Philadelphia, arrests for violent crimes increased by 22 percent, the largest increase among the grantee cities. Chicago's increase in the number of youth arrests was moderate by comparison, but it was an increase nonetheless. As explained below, some of these arrests are tied to gang-related crimes, which are on the rise in Chicago.

The next section describes youth arrest patterns and gang activity in each grantee city. Included is this section is a map of each city that shows the changes in youth arrests by geographic area between 2006 and 2008.

Baltimore

The overall crime rate has decreased in Baltimore since the start of the grant. At the same time, however, respondents noted an increasing prevalence of activity associated with highly systemic gangs such as the Bloods and the Crips.

Juvenile Arrests

The number of juvenile arrests in Baltimore decreased steadily between 2006 and 2008. As shown in Exhibit II-2, the number of youth arrests for property and violent crimes decreased by about 10 percent in most of the city's zip codes. The exceptions were in areas of north Baltimore and the areas around the target schools for this grant—Forest Park High School (HS) and Garrison Middle School (MS), where property crimes increased by more than 10 percent.

In general, law enforcement officials attribute citywide decreases in crime to several tactics, including the creation of the Gun Offender Registry Unit in 2008. This unit is the only one of its kind in the State of Maryland and is modeled after the concept of requiring sex offenders to register with police departments so they can be monitored. In this case, offenders who have been

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[6] Jeffrey Butts, "Youth Crime Drop." Urban Institute, December 2000.

convicted of certain gun crimes are required to register with the Baltimore Police Department. Since its inception, the Gun Offender Registry Unit has registered more than 500 gun offenders, nine of whom have violated the terms of their registration. The city also continues to build community linkages to improve the communication and understanding between community members and police officers. For instance, the city hosted a National Night Out in 2008, in which police officers "took to the streets" to meet community members.

Exhibit II-3: Percent Change in Juvenile Crime from 2006 to 2008 by Zip Code in Baltimore

Property Crime

Violent Crime

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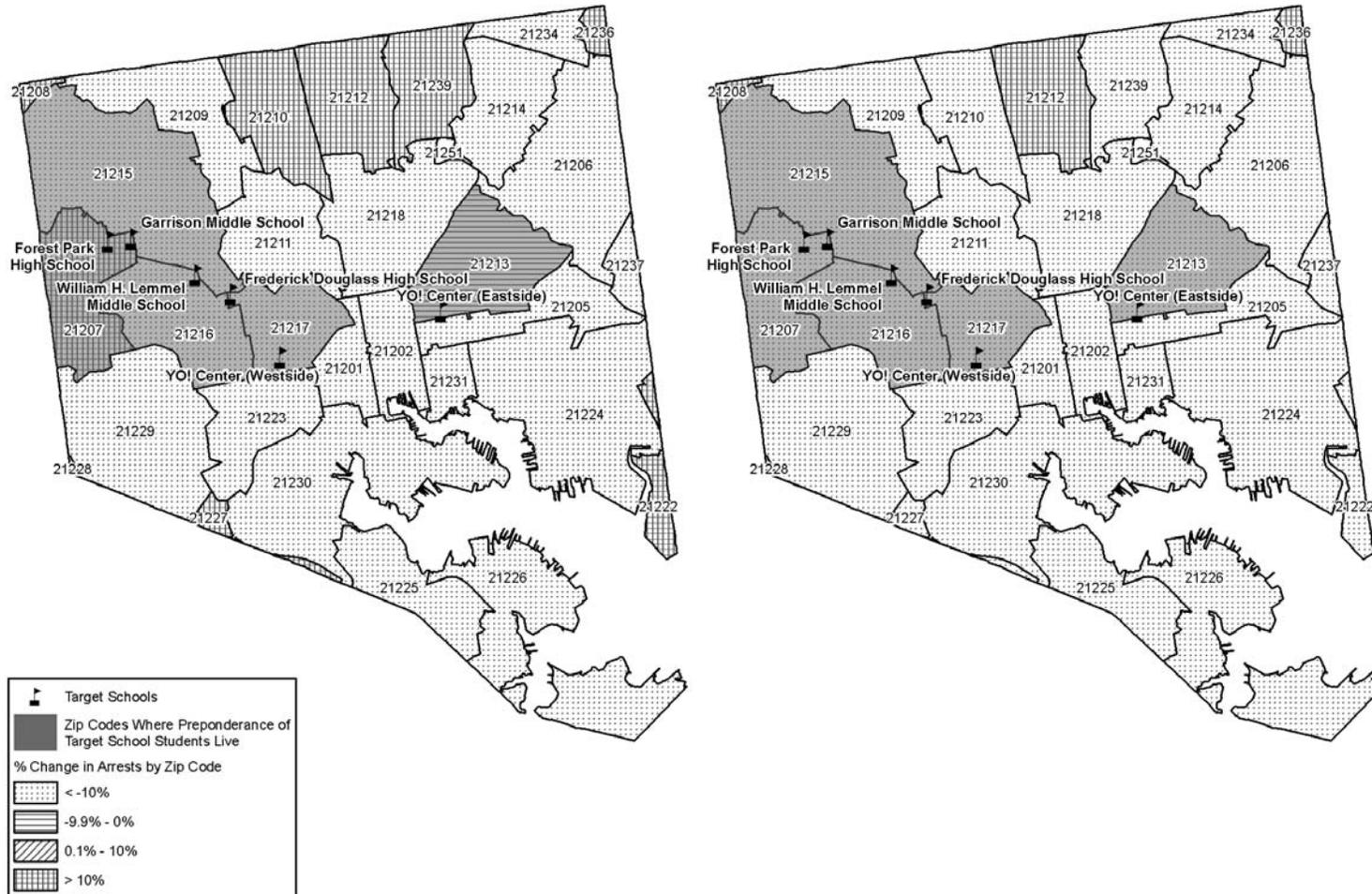
Gangs

Despite the decreases in youth crime, Baltimore is experiencing an increase in violent and illegal activity from large, organized, nationally syndicated gangs such as the Bloods and the Crips. Respondents noted that gang presence grew from neighborhood "crews" and "sets" in the early 1990s to larger organized gangs by 2003–2004. By 2006, the Baltimore Police Department estimated that the city had about 1,300 street gang members, including more than 400 Bloods and 100 Crips whose ages ranged from the early teens to the mid-thirties.[7] Juvenile gangs are present in many of Baltimore's public schools. In 2006, the Baltimore City School Police estimated that there were more than 50 different gangs in the public schools, comprising 450 to 500 youth members.[8]

Gang activity has increased significantly since 2006. Based on current estimates, there are approximately 45 known criminal street gangs with more than 1,800 members, including more than 900 Blood and 300 Crips members. Some of these gangs are primarily youth gangs and others are more highly organized drug gangs. The number of youth gangs has risen since 2006; officials estimate that there are approximately 60 different gangs in the high schools and 50 in the middle schools and that these gangs boast about 1,200 members. In addition, there are 150 known members of motorcycle gangs and 250 gang members in the Baltimore City Detention Center.[9] One 22-year-old out-of-school youth commented on the prevalence of gangs around him:

> *They have Purple City. They have Bloods. They have Crips. It's really a dominant thing because everybody wants to rep a certain territory. They feel like if you in a gang, it's a unity I guess. But it's not really a unity because they kill each other and they kill people for no reason.*

Chicago

The city of Chicago and its public schools have been plagued by continued violence and gang activity since the beginning of the grant period. Law enforcement officials estimate that about 55 percent of the crimes in Chicago are committed by youth, many of whom attend Chicago Public Schools. During the 2008–2009 school year, 36 Chicago public school students were killed, up from 31 during the 2007–2008 school year and 27 during the 2006–2007 school year.

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[7] The Baltimore City Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. "The Baltimore City Gang Violence Reduction Plan," November 15, 2006.

[8] Ibid.

[9] http://gangs.umd.edu/wfrmByLocationDetail.aspx?county=Baltimore%20City. Retrieved on April 14, 2010.

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These murders tend to happen on the way to or from school and are turf- or gang-related. As of April 2010, 24 public school students had been killed during the year, a record high number for a four-month period.[10]

As shown in Exhibit II-4, statistics from the CPD about youth violence show an increase in youth arrests during the last three years. Between 2007 and 2008 alone, there was a 15 percent increase in homicides. We provide more details about these crime trends below.

Youth Arrests

As shown in Exhibit II-4, youth arrests for both property and violent crime have increased in most areas of the city, especially in the areas where the majority of students live, which in Chicago is also where they attend school. Arrests for property crimes have increased by more than 10 percent in most of the areas surrounding the target schools. Exhibit II-4 shows that there has also been an increase in youth arrests for violent crime throughout the city, but this increase is not as great that for property crime.

According to site visit respondents, much of the violence near Chicago schools has to do with passage to and from school. The problem of "safe passage" came to national attention in September 2009 when an honors student was beaten to death a half-mile from Fenger HS, one of the schools targeted by this grant. According to the police, the fight was the result of ongoing tensions between youth from a particular housing project, many of whom transferred to Fenger HS after their neighborhood school was converted into a military academy. As a result of this incident and others, students and parents at this school see the trip to and from school as laden with potential danger. Respondents reported that this has affected the attendance of after-school grant-funded activities, including the School District Grant-funded YES project. One 15 year-old tenth grader explained his view of the situation:

> *I feel like it's hard for people to go to school and actually get an education with all this happening around. Some kids are transferring because they're scared to come to school, like what happened to that boy at Fenger High School. People feel unsafe because of all the things that's going on.*

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[10]   Ibid.

Exhibit II-4: Percent Change in Juvenile Crime from 2006 to 2008 by Police District in Chicago

Property Crime	Violent Crime

Legend:
- Target Schools
- Zip Codes Where Preponderance of Target School Students Live

% Change in Arrests by Police District
- < -10%
- -9.9% - 0%
- 0.1% - 10%
- > 10%

Labels on maps: 24, 20, 17, 31, 16, 19, 23, 25, 14, 18, 13, 15, 11, 01, 12, 10, 09, 02, 21, 08, 07, 03, 06, 22, 04, 05

Clemente Community Academy High School
Crane Technical Prep High School
Nancy B. Jefferson Alternative School
Manley Career Academy High School
Dyett High School
Hirsch Metropolitan High School
Fenger Academy High School

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Gangs

Respondents noted that much of the youth violence in Chicago stems from gang wars. The Chicago Police Department estimates that there are approximately 70 to 100 different gangs in the Chicago metropolitan area, including the Latin Kings, Black Gangster Disciples Nation, Latin Disciples, and Vice Lords, among many others. Police estimate that there are more than 100,000 gang members in Chicago.[11]

Grantee staff report that gang violence has increased since they received the DOL grant. They attribute this increase to several factors. First, a number of neighborhood schools have recently closed, forcing students to travel outside their neighborhood boundaries and into gang territory. As a result, members of rival gangs are now attending the same schools. In addition, respondents attributed the upswing in crime and violence to the emergence of new, "rogue" gangs. Chicago has historically had several major gangs with established rivalries and relationships that each control a certain territory. These newer gangs have disrupted the established boundaries and relationships of the older major gangs, making it more difficult for police to predict when gang violence will occur. As a result, grantee staff think it is unrealistic to expect youth violence to decrease as a result of this grant. As one staff said, "We chose six schools in six tough areas. We can't control whether a kid will shoot someone a block away."

Chicago is taking steps to address youth violence, however. The new superintendent, Ron Huberman, has a plan for ending youth violence that involves counselors and social workers in the most dangerous public high schools. He wants to create a "culture of calm" in the schools by retraining security guards and by de-emphasizing suspensions and expulsion in favor of peer mediation. The district is also coordinating with police districts to ensure safe passage for students as they travel between home and school. As an example of the coordination that is occurring citywide, grantee staff are participating in a local task force on how to create safe passage for students, focusing specifically on improving communication and responses to the problems that arise in areas surrounding the school. For example, the representative from the park district assured CPS that it had space set aside for afterschool programs and hired a part-time police officer to provide extra support so that students could hang out in the parks after school. In addition, the representative from the Chicago Transit Authority was able to add more buses to the routes serving high-need schools so that students did not have to wait too long for buses or get on crowded buses. This representative ensured that the bus for Dyett HS, one of the

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[11] Estimate of Chicago gang members provided by U.S. Department of Justice in 2008. Reference found at: http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs27/27612/estimate.htm

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target schools, would go straight to the front of the school to pick up students and run express through the parks and neighborhoods of rival schools in order to avoid potential gang conflict.

Milwaukee

According to respondents, many communities throughout the city of Milwaukee are struggling with high unemployment, poverty, the presence of gangs, and the drug activity that is associated with gangs. Despite these challenges, crime in the city as a whole has decreased over the past three years. However, respondents noted that some parts of the city continue to battle with youth crime and the presence of youth gangs that are growing in membership.

Youth Arrests

The number of youth arrests for property and violent crime decreased in most areas of the city—including the areas surrounding most of the target schools—by at least 10 percent between 2006 and 2008. One exception is the area north of the city, where property crime increased by more than 10 percent. This area, one of the most impoverished parts of the city, is also where one of the target schools, James Madison HS, is located. This school was closed in 2008 due to persistently low academic performance and was reopened in 2009 as a charter school.

Exhibit II-5: Percent Change in Juvenile Crime from 2006 to 2008 by Police District in Milwaukee

Property Crime   **Violent Crime**

Legend:
- **Target Schools**
- **Zip Codes Where Preponderance of Target School Students Live**

% Change in Arrests by Police District
- < -10%
- -9.9% - 0%
- 0.1% - 10%
- > 10%

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Gangs

Gangs and gang-related violent crimes are challenges that continue to affect communities and schools throughout the city of Milwaukee. Respondents reported that a number of gangs prevalent in the city of Chicago have expanded to the Milwaukee area, and have continued to grow. Known gangs include The Latin Kings, Gangsta Disciples, Mexican Potsy, Black Stone Angels (formerly known as Brothers of the Struggle), Vice Lords, Cobras, and El Ruckins. A number of small gangs have grown out of these larger gangs, further expanding the gang networks. Respondents explained that the majority of the Latin gangs are located on the south side of Milwaukee, near target schools South Division High School and Bradley Tech, while the majority of the black gangs are located on the north side, near target schools North Division High School/Transition High School.

As a result of the large number of gangs throughout the city, youth experience some territorial issues in their neighborhoods. Youth respondents indicated that neighborhood cliques such as the "4 Boys" and "Trey's" commit most of the crimes in order to claim and protect their territory.

To address youth crime, the city has selected some of the "hot spots" where most of the crimes occur for participation in the city's Safe Streets Common Ground Initiative.[12] These "hot spots" include areas where a few target schools are located. In addition, several communities with gang issues have begun organizing a number of community coalitions and neighborhood block clubs, often in collaboration with faith-based organizations, law enforcement, and other community-based organizations.

Orange County

Crime in Orange County and the Orlando area has reportedly gone down. According to the FBI, Orlando violent crime rates are down 30 percent and homicide is down 43 percent in 2009. Although Orlando had 127 murders in 2008—a record high—the number of murders dropped back down to 74 in 2009.[13]

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[12]   This local initiative was implemented in December of 2006 as part of the U.S. Department of Justice Project Safe Neighborhoods program to address gang violence in the city of Milwaukee. The idea is that Milwaukee can reduce its violence and rebuild its community by finding one place from which law enforcement, the faith community, prosecutors, elected officials, residents, and community-based organizations can stand and work together. Funds are being used in two north and south side Milwaukee Police Districts where gang crime and associated violence are most severe.

[13]   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orlando,_Florida

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While juveniles commit few of the murders in Orange County, according to respondents, most violent crime happens in the neighborhoods where target schools are located. Murder hot spots include the Parramore and Pine Hills areas, both of which are served by the grant. A couple of students noted that there was a drop in crime over the last several years, due primarily to an increase in police presence. One case study student described the change:

> *In the area that I live, it used to be one of the most violent areas to live—but now they have a police officer right at the entrance—so violence has died down.*

Youth Arrests

Youth arrest data for Orange County differs from the data collected from other grantee cities in two respects. First, Orange County provided only youth crime data in the aggregate, rather than by type of arrest (property or violent crime). Second, despite multiple requests, we did not receive the zip codes for where the majority of students live. As a result, Exhibit II-5 shows only the overall youth crime patterns throughout the city. The data provided by the county indicate that juvenile crime in the areas surrounding the target schools has dropped over the last three years by at least 10 percent.

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Exhibit II-6: Percent Change in Juvenile Crime from 2006 to 2008 by Police District in Orange County

Meadowbrook Middle School

12, 12A, 12D, OCO12   Evans High School

Orlando Metropolitan Urban League

34, 34A, 34B, ORL34   Colonial High School

25, 25A, 25B, 25C

Jones High School   Stonewall Jackson Middle School

Memorial Middle School

43, 43A, 43B

Walker Middle School

Oak Ridge High School

44, 44A, 44B, 44C

20A, 20B, ORL20

Target Schools

% Change in Arrests by Police District

No Data

< -10%

-9.9% - 0%

0.1% - 10%

> 10%

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Gangs

Gang activity in Orange County includes both entrenched multi-generational gang activity and less serious and informal "gang" activity on the part of disenfranchised youth. Respondents identified at least eight large gangs in Orlando; these include the Latin Kings, the Pine Hill Gang, the Mercy Hills Drive gang, the Snakes, and the L-Dogs, as well as a number of smaller gangs. According to respondents, violence has increased as gangs have become more prevalent. As reported above, the number of murders decreased in 2009, implying perhaps a drop also in organized gang activity. Gangs continue to be an issue, however. For instance, on February 2, 2010, the FBI collaborated with Orlando County police to arrest multiple members of the Latin Kings in Orlando.

Some of the target schools have experienced considerable gang activity around the community, but school leaders noted that they do not have gang activity on campus. One school leader reported that some of the students come from gang families but they leave their gang activity outside of the schoolyard. At another school, youth reported that while gang activity is minimal on school grounds, it is a pervasive part of life within the surrounding community. One youth indicated that he was constantly harassed by gangs and felt that gangs were threatening his safety.

Philadelphia

Youth arrests in Philadelphia increased throughout most of the city between 2006 and 2008. Perhaps as a result of the increase in youth crime in the city, the number of schools identified as "persistently dangerous" in Philadelphia increased from 20 in 2008 to 29 in 2009.

Youth Arrests

The number of youth arrests for both property and violent crime increased by at least 10 percent in many areas of the city. Pockets of the city with the largest increases in arrests include those in the northeastern and western sections of the city. The western part of the city is also home to many of the schools targeted for this grant, including Overbrook HS, University City HS, and the E^3 Power Center, West Branch. Decreases in youth arrests can be seen in the area surrounding the newly created North Philadelphia Community HS, an alternative school for youth offenders and other at-risk students.

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Exhibit II-7: Percent Change in Juvenile Crime from 2006 to 2008 by Police District in Philadelphia

Property Crime   **Violent Crime**

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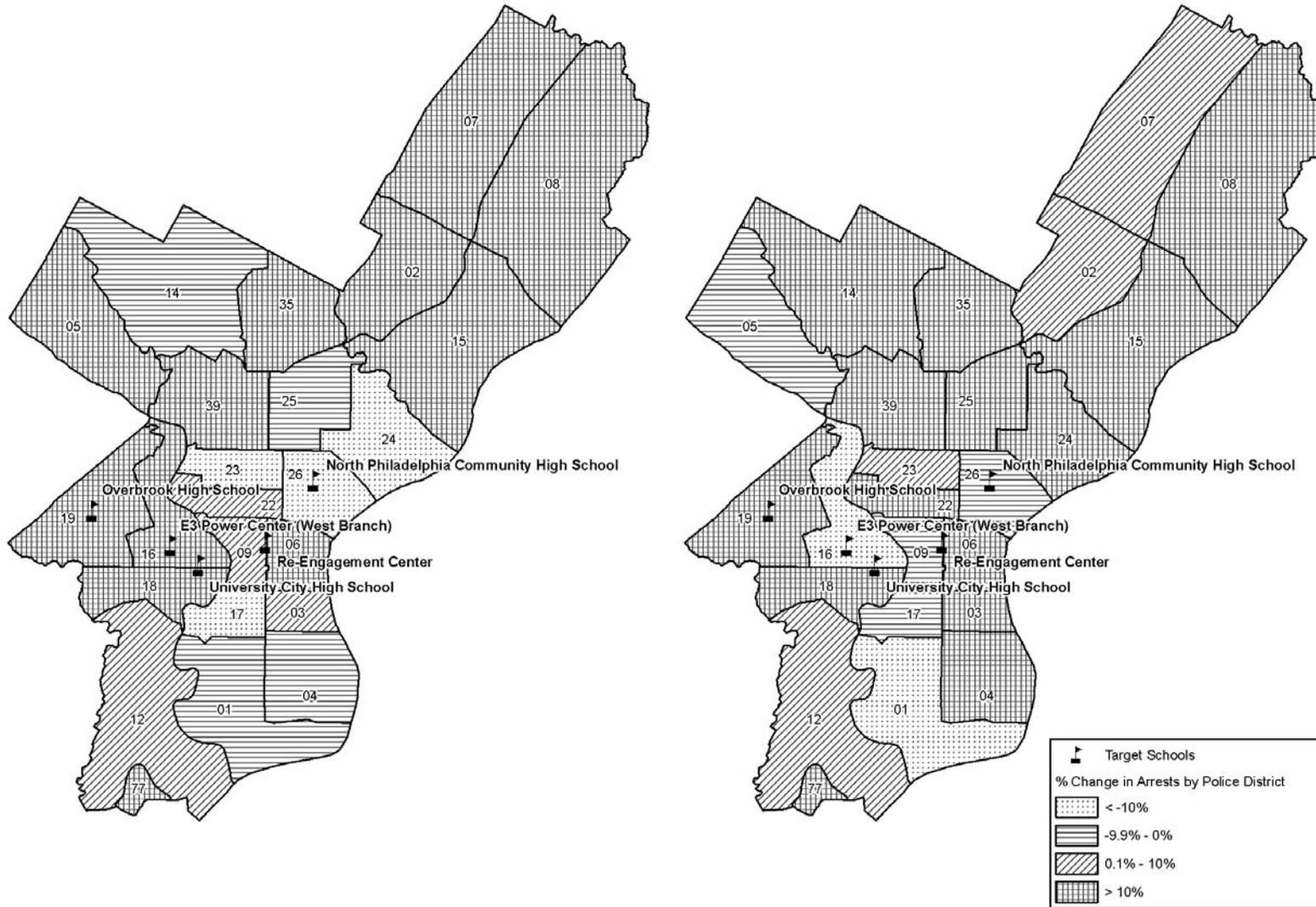
Gangs

Respondents noted that highly organized gangs are generally very rare in Philadelphia, but small gangs are increasingly growing in size and influence. Some of these smaller gangs, often referred to as "squads," "crews," or "cliques," identify themselves by certain neighborhoods. They view themselves as groups offering a form of social support.

Summary

In sum, this chapter summarizes the conditions under which grantees operate their programs and services. The labor market conditions in each of the grantee cities have deteriorated since the start of the grant, showing increasing unemployment rates across the cities. The youth unemployment rate in the grantee cities is especially high, and higher than the national average. As a result, youth respondents are struggling to find employment, noting the competition with adults as an important barrier to their ability to find work. This chapter also provides data on youth arrests and gang activity in the areas where the majority of students live. Overall, there was a decline in the number of youth arrests in three out of the five grantee cities. The fact that youth crime is declining in most cities suggests that this decline may be related to national declines in youth arrests over the past decade. This finding does not provide evidence regarding whether DOL's grant-funded programs and services at the target schools have caused these declines. Rather, they contextualize the types of communities where youth live and the kinds of challenges they face each day as they seek to better their lives.

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III.   OVERVIEW OF GRANTEES

To provide a context for the partnerships, services, and outcomes discussed in the remainder of the report, this chapter gives an overview of the grantees. The chapter begins by describing each district that received the School District Grant, highlighting characteristics that affected grant design and implementation. Next it discusses the schools and program sites selected by each district to be part of the grant. Following this topic, the chapter details the goals for this grant, the approaches grantees took to meet these goals, and each grantee's scope of work for the grant. The chapter concludes by describing each grantee's administrative structure for the grant and its budget.

District-Level Context

Five large, urban districts were chosen to receive the School District Grant. Although the districts share a demonstrated need to provide additional services to youth who are involved, have been involved, or are at risk for being involved with gangs or the juvenile justice system, they vary widely in size, resources available to serve students, and existing systems/procedures for partnering with community agencies. These differences must be taken into account when considering each grantee's partnerships, services, and outcomes. Below we summarize the most important and grant-relevant aspects of each grantee.

Enrollment and Demographics

All the grantees serve large, diverse student bodies that are typical of urban school districts. Exhibit III-1 provides an overview of each district's student enrollment and demographics.

Exhibit III-1:
School District Demographics (SY 2009–2010)

	Total Enrollment			Limited English Proficiency	Low Income or Eligible for Free/ Reduced Lunch
	06–07[1]	09–10	Race/Ethnicity[2]		
Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS)[3]	84,396	82,266	African American: 87.8% White: 7.8% Latino: 3.1% Asian: 0.9% Amer Indian: 0.3%	3.2%	83.6%
Chicago Public Schools (CPS)[4]	390,243	409,729	African American: 45.0% Latino: 41.0% White: 9.0% Asian: 3.6% Amer Indian: 0.2%	12.2%	86%
Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)[5]	90,925	82,444	African American: 56.6% Hispanic: 22.6% White: 11.9% Asian: 4.8% Other: 3.2% Amer Indian: 0.8%	9.5%	80.9%
Orange County Public Schools (OCPS)[6]	175,155	175,363	White: 64% Hispanic: 32%[7] Black: 28% Asian: 4% Multicultural: 3% Amer Indian/Alaskan Native: 1%	19.4%	48.6%
School District of Philadelphia (SDP)[8]	177,431	163,064	African American: 61.2% Hispanic: 17.6% White: 13.3% Asian: 6.2% Other: 1.6% Amer. Indian: 0.2%	7%	76.7%

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[1]   See footnotes 10-14 for sources of 2006–2007 enrollment figures.

[2]   May not equal 100% due to rounding.

[3]   http://www.bcps.k12.md.us/news/PDF/FastFacts2009_10.pdf

[4]   http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/At-a-glance/Pages/Stats_and_facts.aspx

[5]   http://mpsportal.MPS.k12.wi.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=367&mode=2&in_hi_userid=2& cached=true

[6]   Total enrollment and race/ethnicity data from https://www.ocps.net/Documents/pocketfacts2009.pdf for school year 2009–2010. All other data is from, Education Information & Accountability Services, Florida Department of Education for school year 2008-2009.

[7]   In OCPS, Hispanic is not its own racial/ethnic category, and can be chosen in combination with any other category. Therefore, the total for OCPS is over 100%.

[8]   Total enrollment and race/ethnicity for 2009–2010 from http://www.philasd.org/about/; All other data from PreK-12 School Statistics, Pennsylvania Department of Education. Limited English Proficient data from 2006–2007 school year. Free and reduced lunch data is from October 2009.

Exhibit III-1 shows that the districts range in size from just over 82,000 students in BCPSS and MPS to more than 400,000 students in CPS. Despite the fact that all the districts serve a large number of youth, in three out of the five districts—BCPSS, MPS, and SDP—enrollment numbers have dropped in recent years. This has led to decreased district funding, forcing districts to lay off teachers and/or reconfigure schools. In contrast, CPS's enrollment has increased in recent years while OCPS's has remained relatively unchanged.

African Americans and Latinos make up the majority of students in all the districts except OCPS. Students in the Baltimore district are predominantly African American (87.8 percent) while the other districts' populations are more diverse. For example, the student body in the Milwaukee district is 56.6 percent African American, 22.6 percent Hispanic, 11.9 percent white, and 4.8 percent Asian. The grantees are also serving significant numbers of low-income students, ranging from 48.6 percent in OCPS to 86.0 percent in CPS. Finally, in the Orange County district, where almost one-third of the student population is Hispanic, 19.4 percent of the district's students are classified as limited English proficient.

Trends in Performance

Grantees were selected for the School District Grant based on their high dropout rates. Accordingly, one of the intents of the grant was for the districts to use funds to design interventions that focus on the youth at a high risk of dropping out. To provide a sense of the severity of the dropout problem in each district, Exhibit III-2 shows trends in dropout rates and graduation rates in comparison to state averages.

Grantees are facing many of the issues that other large, urban districts are facing, specifically relatively high dropout rates and low graduation rates. It is important to interpret these rates with caution because the reporting of dropout and graduation rates varies by state, making cross-district comparisons problematic.[9] State averages and longitudinal figures provide a more accurate point of comparison for each district. That being said, all districts have dropout rates above the state average except for OCPS. However, two of the districts with dropout rates higher than the state average—BCPSS and SDP—have each decreased the dropout rate in recent years.[10] MPS's dropout rate, on the other hand, has increased since the 2006–2007 school year.

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[9] For more information on variations in how dropout and graduation rates are calculated, see The Urban Institute's Education Policy Center (2004). *High School Graduation, Completion, and Dropout (GCD)* Indicators*: A Primer and Catalog.* Washington DC: Christopher B. Swanson. Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411116_GCDCatalog.pdf

[10] Because dropout data was not available for 2008–2009 for SDP, this only represents a one-year change.

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Trends in CPS's dropout rate are less clear. The 2008–2009 rate is lower than the 2007–2008 rate, but higher than the 2006–2007 rate. Additionally, all grantees have graduation rates below the state average. With the exception of OCPS, this difference is more than 15 percentage points. On a more positive note, three districts show improved graduation rates since 2006–2007, with OCPS making especially sizeable gains towards meeting the state average. However, in the Philadelphia and Milwaukee districts, graduation rates have worsened.

Exhibit III-2:
District Performance Trends

	Dropout rate				Graduation rate			
	06-07	07-08	08-09	State Ave.[11]	06-07	07-08	08-09	State Ave.
BCPSS[12]	9.4%	7.9%	6.2%	2.8%	60.1%	62.7%	62.7%	85.2%
CPS[13]	8.3%	12.5%	9.7%	3.5%	66.0%	68.7%	69.8%	87.1%
MPS[14]	5.8%	6.0%	6.5%	1.6%	68.6%	67.7%	67.2%	89.4%
OCPS[15]	1.7%	1.5%	1.1%	2.3%	68.6%	72.9%	75.3%	76.2%
SDP[16]	7.9%	5.7%	n/a	1.8%	n/a[17]	73.0%	67.0%	89.0%

Overall, while some districts have shown improvements in performance in recent years, all the districts continue to struggle to engage students in a meaningful way, as evidenced by their relatively high dropout rates and low graduation rates. In this context, this grant presented a unique opportunity for focusing on youth who have traditionally been the most difficult to engage in school. However, it is nearly impossible to make causal links between the School District Grant and changes in the district-wide dropout and graduation rates. A host of factors affect these rates, including shifts in student demographics and resources and other district

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[11] All state averages are from 2008–2009, except for Pennsylvania's dropout rate which is from 2007–2008.

[12] 2009 Maryland Report Card (http://www.mdreportcard.org/).

[13] 2009 Interactive Illinois Report Card.

[14] Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools.

[15] Florida Department of Education, Education & Accountability Services Data Publications and Reports.

[16] Graduation rate from 2008–2009 District Report Card.
Dropout rate from Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Data Quality.

[17] District level data were not available for the 2006–2007 school year.

efforts. Additionally, because the grant is serving a relatively small number of students in each district, it is unlikely that effects will be evident when looking at district-wide data.

Key Changes in District Context

During the life of this grant, a number of key district-level factors changed, affecting grant implementation. These factors—most notably budget deficits and leadership turnover—are not uncommon in urban districts. For example, one study of urban district superintendents found that only 18 percent had been in the office for five or more years.[18] As will be discussed below, budget deficits tended to make grant implementation more difficult, but leadership turnover, in some cases, actually improved district conditions for the grant.

Budget Deficits. All of the districts faced budget deficits during the life of this grant that affected grant implementation in key ways. For example, BCPSS faced a $76.9 million deficit in 2008, and CPS faced a $475 million deficit in 2010. Although this grant can be considered a "separate" funding stream for the districts, budget shortfalls still had negative repercussions for grant-funded programs. For example, district-wide hiring freezes in CPS, BCPSS, and OCPS led to delays in hiring key staff for grant programs, ultimately delaying program implementation.

In other cases, budget shortfalls lead to changes that affected the overall context in which grantees were providing services, most notably by reducing the number of other, pre-existing supportive services available to youth. For example, as a strategy to address its budget shortfall, BCPSS underwent a decentralization process, drastically cutting central office staff and shifting the majority of resource distribution responsibility from the central office to individual schools. As a result, school principals had increased oversight of their budgets and were often forced to choose between funding teacher salaries or supportive services, resulting in many cuts to the latter. To meet its own budget deficits, OCPS cut 642 teaching positions for the 2009–2010 school year, leading to larger class sizes and less individualized support for students. In both of these examples, budget deficits did not affect grant implementation directly, but rather created environments in which less support was available for students overall.

Leadership Turnover. Three of the five districts received new district leadership during the life of the grant or shortly before, leading to major reforms and administrative restructuring that affected the implementation of the grant. In the Philadelphia and Chicago districts, leadership turnover improved the district-level context for grant implementation in important ways. A new

superintendent started at SDP in 2008, leading to the restructuring of the district's central and regional offices. As a result, the Office of Multiple Pathways (OMP), which housed this grant, was moved to the Office of School Operations. Because of this move, OMP gained a direct link to the Alternative Schools Region. This aligned the focus of alternative education with the overall vision of teaching and learning throughout the district and removed bureaucratic barriers to providing services supported by the School District Grant. Under CPS's new CEO, a variety of reforms were instituted at the district level, including restructuring district management and creating a new Chief Area Officer position for alternative schools. According to respondents, this new position created more emphasis and focus on alternative schools and serving youth offenders. Grant-funded programs will strongly inform this work as it moves forward and receives increased visibility.

In contrast, the reforms resulting from the Baltimore district's 2007 leadership turnover were more of a hindrance to grant implementation. The new superintendent led an initiative to decentralize the school district, which included cutting 25 percent of the district's central office administrators. This greatly disrupted the planning and implementation of grant programs because most of the grant administrator's chain of command changed dramatically.

As demonstrated above, the district context affects grant design and implementation in significant ways, and grantees had to be flexible in their responses during the life of the grant. In the next section, we examine the schools and program sites selected by grantees to be part of the School District Grant and highlight relevant contextual factors at this level.

School- and Program-Level Context

School district grantees selected schools and programs that had access to and an ability to serve in-school and out-of-school youth at high risk for involvement in gangs and/or the juvenile justice system. In order to provide context for grantees' approaches discussed throughout this report, we summarize grantees' services and programs in Exhibit III-3. Detailed information about services and programs is available in Chapter VI.

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[18] Council of Great City Schools (2008/2009). *Urban Indicator: Urban School Superintendents: Characteristics, Tenure, and Salary Sixth Survey and Report.* Retrieved from http://www.cgcs.org/Pubs/Urban_Indicator_08-09.pdf.

Exhibit III-3:
Summary of Grantee Programs

	Major Program Features	Target Group
BCPSS		
Futures (Future Works!)	• Traditional schools offer afterschool dropout prevention services (academic, workforce, enrichment activities) and intensive case management services through Futures Advocates.	Eighth and ninth graders at two middle schools (Garrison and Lemmel Middle School[19]) and two high schools (Douglass HS and Forest Park HS).
New Visions for Youth Services (NVYS)	• Gang prevention and mediation services and mentoring to Future Works! Participants at target high schools.	Ninth and tenth graders at Douglass HS and Forest Park HS.
YO! Centers (Westside Center and Eastside Center)	• YO! Centers provide academic services (pre-GED or GED classes) and workforce services (job readiness training, internships, vocational training).	Out-of-school youth ages 16–22.
Department of Juvenile Services (DJS)	• DJS plans to provide employment services and internships for participants enrolled in the city's Operation Safe Kids Program, an intensive case management program for youth that have been detained.[20]	Youth offenders
CPS		
YES Program	• Participants attend afterschool Freshman Seminar class, based on Johns Hopkins Talent Development School Reform model during the 9th grade. Participants receive job readiness training and will participate in internships during Year 3 of the grant. "Student Engagement Specialists" provide case management services.	Ninth graders at six traditional high schools (Clemente HS, Crane HS, Dyett HS, Fenger HS, Hirsch HS, and Manley HS).
Banner Schools (Banner South and Banner North)	• Banner Schools are transitional schools created by the School District Grant to provide temporary academic services for students who are typically over the age of 17 and transitioning from detention to their home schools. Workforce services such as internships will become available in 2010.	Youth offenders transitioning out of detention.

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[19] Lemmel MS closed down during the grant period and was replaced by Dukeland Campus, which houses three alternative schools.

[20] This approach was modified from DJS's original contract. DJS was initially contracted to recruit 100 youth with a record in the Juvenile Justice System and enroll them in school or the YO! Program.

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	Major Program Features	Target Group
MPS		
Futures First Initiative (FFI)	• Intensive case management services offered to students through site-based teams, which include a social worker, guidance counselor and youth career development specialist, provide case management services as needed.	Ninth to twelfth graders at four traditional schools (N. Division HS, S. Division, James Madison, Bradley Tech HS).
Transition High School	• Transition HS provides services to youth offenders looking to re-engage with an educational pathway. Students receive employment services from an employment specialist who is located on site.[21]	Youth offenders
OCPS		
YES program	• "Intervention Specialists" provide case management and supportive services. Services are offered in unstructured format during the school day.	Eighth and ninth graders at four middle schools (Meadowbrook MS, Memorial MS, Stonewall Jackson MS, Walker MS), and four high schools (Colonial HS, Evans HS, Jones HS, and Oakridge HS)
YES Positive Pathways Transition Center	• The YES Positive Pathways Transition center is a multiple pathways program for students transitioning from detention.	Youth offenders
Five School To Work (STW) alternative Schools	• Students apply for these selective alternative schools, which are for students who are over-age and under-credit.	Over-age, under-credit youth
Workforce Central Florida (WCF)	• WCF provides academic and employment services for out-of-school youth 18–21. Participants can receive training in the National Retail (NRF) Customer Service Certification program, and are placed into jobs or other training programs.	Out-of-school youth ages 18-21
Metropolitan Orlando Urban League (MOUL)	• MOUL provides GED and workforce services (job readiness training and internships) for out-of-school youth that are gang-involved or adjudicated, ages 16–21.	Out-of-school youth ages 16-21
Parramore District Recreational Center	• Grant funds one outreach worker to mentor youth and connect them to community services such as career and recreational activities.	In-school and out-of-school youth

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[21] This aspect of the program has been slow to start.

	Major Program Features	Target Group
SDP		
Learning to Work (LTW) Program	• LTW provides college and career-related services and receive job preparation and internships in a structured classroom format.	Ninth graders at Overbrook HS and University City HS
North Philadelphia Community High School (NPCHS)	• NPCHS is an alternative, project -based educational program for youth aged 17–21 with 13 or fewer credits.	Over-age and under-credit youth
E^3 Bridge Program (E^3=Education, Employment & Empowerment)	• The program is a "bridge" program for students to earn credits while waiting to transfer to an accelerated high school. Participants also receive academic remediation when necessary.	Out-of-school youth ages 14–21
Occupational Skills Pathway Program (Community College of Philadelphia and NPower)	• Participants participate in occupational skills training (automotive, hospitality, IT) at existing programs such as the Community College of Philadelphia and NPower. Participants are placed into subsidized employment after their training.	Participants at the E^3 Centers who are over 18, have their GED or are enrolled in GED courses, and have completed job readiness training.

Grantees offer these services at a number of traditional schools, alternative schools, and other program sites, as described below.

Traditional Schools

Traditional schools served by this grant were chosen for a number of reasons, including the presence of gangs, crime, under-achievement, and readiness to implement new programs. In general, schools were chosen based on both their need for additional student services and their readiness to implement these services. In the Milwaukee district, for example, schools were chosen based on the presence of school- or neighborhood-based efforts to improve outcomes for students most in need of additional support. These efforts included the Safe Streets Initiative[22] and school-level reforms involving the creation of small learning communities. In the Chicago district, schools were chosen through a proposal and interview process based on factors such as a high incidence of youth violence/crime, the strength and commitment of the school leadership,

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[22] The Safe Streets Initiative is a cross-sector effort to reduce gang- and drug-related violence in targeted neighborhoods in Milwaukee.

the presence of a freshmen team to support incoming ninth graders, schools' experience with or exposure to restorative justice practices, and the presence of community partners.

Appendix C provides detailed information on each of the traditional schools that are targeted by this grant. In general, the schools tend to have exacerbated performance challenges compared to the districts as a whole. In particular, they all have very high dropout rates. For example, in the Milwaukee district, with a district-wide dropout rate of 6.5 percent, all of the targeted schools have dropout rates of nine percent or more. Similarly, in the Chicago district, where the dropout rate is 9.7 percent overall, three out of the five schools targeted by this grant have dropout rates of more than 12 percent. The Orange County district is an exception to this pattern; the dropout rates of its targeted schools are the same as or less than the district's overall dropout rate.

The differences in performance between the districts and the schools are less pronounced for graduation rates. Only in the Chicago and Orange County districts do a majority of the traditional target schools have a lower graduation rate than the district average. In the Milwaukee district, most schools targeted by the grant actually have higher graduation rates than the district average, and in the Baltimore and Philadelphia districts, half the schools have higher graduation rates and half have lower.

These traditional schools also have a disproportionately large number of minority students compared to the overall student bodies of their districts. In the Philadelphia district, where 61.2 percent of the student body is African American, the two traditional schools served by this grant have an African American population of 97 percent or above. Similarly, in the Orange County district, where white students make up 64 percent of the district as a whole, all of the traditional target schools are predominantly minority, and in all except one white students make up less than three percent of the student body.

Several traditional schools underwent major changes after the start of the grant that affected grant implementation. In many cases, these changes led to climate management challenges. In at least two districts, students increasingly attend schools outside of their neighborhoods as districts closed or combined schools and shifted school enrollment boundaries in response to declining enrollment, poor performance, or an increase in the number of charter schools. As a result, youth from different neighborhoods have to cross several gang territories to get to school and come together in one building, both of which are potentially dangerous situations. In the Chicago district, this danger came to a head in the fall of 2009, when an honors student at Fenger HS, a school targeted by this grant, was beaten to death a half-mile from school. According to the police, the fight was the result of ongoing tensions between youth from a particular housing

project—many of whom transferred to the target school after their own neighborhood school was converted into a military academy—and youth from the community surrounding the target school. The Baltimore district closed Lemmel MS—partly in response to a murder that took place on campus—and moved three alternative/charter schools into the building. In order to proactively address any potential climate challenges, the grant provided funding for five New Vision Youth Services[23] advisors to work in the building. Additional climate management challenges arose from some schools having to close off entire portions of their buildings because of declining enrollment. This made managing the flow of student traffic more difficult and resulted in giving students places to "hide" and potentially cause trouble between and during classes.

Other types of school-level changes also affected the context for grant implementation. For example, in the Philadelphia district, two targeted schools implemented OASIS, a new program serving over-age, under-credit ninth graders. Because Learning to Work, the district's workforce readiness program, targeted a similar group, the two programs were merged. A targeted school in the Milwaukee district—Madison HS—was closed due to a district intervention and reopened as a charter school with funding from the Gates Foundation. Several targeted schools also experienced principal turnover during the life of the grant.

Alternative Schools

All grantees except for BCPSS also targeted in-school youth at alternative schools. Detailed demographic information, dropout rates, and graduation rates were not available for the majority of alternative schools, mainly because a number of these schools were newly created through this grant. However, based on respondents' reports, we know that many of the students in alternative schools are over-age, under-credit, and/or former dropouts. Students at these schools have struggled in traditional school environments and, as a result, their behavior and attendance often pose problems for traditional school staff. Finally, alternative schools are also serving larger proportions of youth offenders than traditional schools.

Other Program Sites

Three grantees are using the grant to provide services to out-of-school youth at other program sites, most commonly youth or community centers. The out-of-school youth program sites in the Philadelphia and Baltimore districts are similar. In both cities, these program sites are run by the

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[23] New Vision Youth Services' youth advisors provide intensive one-on-one case management services, violence prevention programs, and climate management support.

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district's workforce partner for the grant. Additionally, the centers have been open for many years, and therefore have long histories of serving out-of-school youth, including dropouts and youth offenders. Although these centers are located in neighborhoods known for gangs and violence, these issues tend not to spill over into the centers, according to respondents, because of zero-tolerance policies and the respect youth have for the staff. Program sites for out-of-school youth in the Orange County district are slightly different. The grant funds services at three sites—Workforce Central Florida, the Metropolitan Orlando Urban League, and the recreation center at the Parramore Kidz Zone.

Overview of Grant Goals and Services

DOL's School District Grant funds services for at-risk youth so that they can successfully complete school and obtain long-term employment. This grant focuses on youth, both in-school and out-of-school, who are at-risk for dropping out or have already dropped out, are at-risk for gang involvement or already involved in gangs, or are youth offenders. Exhibit III-4 below provides a summary of district goals and DOL performance goals for this grant.

Exhibit III-4:
Overview of District Goals and DOL Performance Goals

	District Goals	**DOL Performance Goals[24]**
Education	• Improve participants' reading and math basic skills • Reduce the dropout rate by providing supportive services to youth • Develop alternative educational pathways for youth who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out • Increase the number of participants who recover credits, obtain a GED, and/or graduate from high school	• **Literacy and numeracy gains:** Increase math and/or reading scores for those youth served by the grant who have a demonstrated deficiency in either or both areas • **Long-term placement rates:** Improve employment and education outcomes for out-of-school youth offenders • **Youth offender rate:** Reduce the number of formerly incarcerated youth offenders who drop out of high school • **Ninth grade retention rate:** Reduce the number of students in the total ninth grade class who drop out in the ninth grade
Workforce	• Prepare participants to successfully find, apply for, and remain in a job • Provide job readiness training to participants to develop the soft skills needed for employment • Provide internships and/or job placements for youth as a means of career exploration	• **Long-term placement rates:** Improve employment and education outcomes for out-of-school youth offenders
Juvenile Justice	• Create stronger pathways between youth detention centers and schools • Reduce the dropout and recidivism rate for youth offenders by providing intensive supportive services	• **Youth recidivism:** Reduce the recidivism rate of participating youth • **Youth offender rate:** Reduce the number of formerly incarcerated youth offenders who drop out of high school • **Juvenile crime reduction and gang incident rates:** Reduce the number of youth involved in gangs and crime

In order to meet these goals, grantees provide a variety of services. The majority of services fall into the categories of case management/supportive services, education services, or workforce services. Not all grantees use every approach described below, but the services highlighted in the list represent major themes across grantees. Chapter VI provides more detailed information on the services provided by grantees.

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[24] Some of DOL's performance goals fall into more than one category.

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- **Grantees take an intensive case management approach to serving youth.** Fundamental to the approach of most grantees is providing personalized and individual case management support. Given that the population targeted by this grant is one of the hardest to engage in schools, intensive, individualized support is deemed to be a key strategy in engaging this population. Specifically, grantees match youth with advocates who help them navigate through the challenges they face in their schools, jobs, and/or lives.

- **Grantees provide support to improve basic literacy and numeracy skills.** Recognizing that many of the participants do not have the basic skills needed to be successful in high school or beyond, grantees provide services to improve participants' literacy and numeracy skills. These services take the form of both group classes with a focused curriculum as well as individualized tutoring.

- **To meet the workforce goals, all grantees provide job readiness training to participants.** Grantees recognize that without the proper preparation, participants will not be ready to successfully join the workforce. To address this problem, grantees provide training on topics such as how to find a job, how to interview successfully, how to create a resume, and how to behave on a worksite. Additionally, some grantees also match youth with paid internships and jobs— both as a means of workforce exposure and as an incentive for participation in the academic components of the grant.

- **Grantees provide re-entry and transitional support for juvenile offenders.** Knowing that the transition back to the community for youth exiting juvenile placement can be difficult, grantees offer several types of services designed to ease this process. Specifically, grantees created "pathways" for juvenile offenders as they exit placement and transition back into an academic setting. Often these pathways take the form of specialized schools or transition centers designed to help participants re-enter academic settings; they may also consist of vocational and job readiness training to help juvenile offenders secure meaningful employment.

- **Grantees help over-age, under-credit youth get back on track through credit retrieval programs.** To address the fact that many participants are not on track to graduate on time, grantees offer programs that allow participants to obtain credits at an accelerated rate so that they may graduate directly from the given program or else enroll in a traditional or alternative school at the appropriate grade level.

Grant Programs

In order to get a sense of the scope of each grantee's work to provide the services outlined above, Exhibit III-5 provides an overview of the schools and programs where grantees are providing services and the number of youth targeted at each as of Fall 2009/Winter 2010. In total, grantees are providing services at 41 schools or program sites, targeting 3,505 youth. Given that the grantees are school districts, it is not surprising that traditional schools make up the majority the

schools/program sites (24 out of 41), and that all grantees provide services at traditional schools. Consistent with these facts, the 2,295 in-school youth at traditional schools make up the majority of the target population. Four grantees are also providing services at alternative schools; targeting a total of 525 youth at 10 alternative schools. Finally, three of the grantees are targeting out-of-school youth at other program sites; these grantees are targeting a total 685 youth at seven program sites.

Exhibit III-5:
Schools, Programs, and Youth Targeted (as of Fall 2009/Winter 2010)

	Traditional schools[25]	Target # Youth	Alt. schools	Target # Youth	Program sites	Target # Youth	Total Schools/ Program Sites	Total Target # Youth
BCPSS	4	705[26]	0	0	2[27]	250	6	955
CPS	6	750	2	200	0	0	8	950
MPS	4	140	1	125	0	0	5	265
OCPS	8	500	6	100	3	210	18	810
SDP	2	200	1	100	2[28]	225	5	525
Total	24	2,295	10	525	7	685	41	3,505

Grantees vary somewhat in the number of schools/program sites served. While four out of the five grantees are providing services at between five and eight schools/program sites, OCPS is the outlier at 17 schools/program sites. One reason that OCPS is reaching many more schools/program sites is that fewer staff are at each location and therefore less intensive services are provided at each site. For example, one intervention specialist serves each of the eight traditional schools served by the grant, and three sheriff deputies rotate among the schools. By comparison, in the Baltimore district, the grant supports 10 staff positions at two of the traditional schools and five positions at the third traditional school. Another reason for the

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[25] In both BCPSS and OCPS, three of the targeted traditional schools are located in one building.

[26] Up to 225 of these youth may be counted twice, although exact numbers are unknown.

[27] DJS also plans to provide workforce services to an additional 100 OSY, but this component had not yet been implemented at the time of the site visit. However, these youth are included in the target number.

[28] A small amount of the grant also supports the district's Re-Engagement Center, but because no specific target numbers have been set for this Center, it is not included in this count.

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variation in the number of schools/program sites is the variation in grantees' program models. Some grantees chose to use this grant to create new alternative schools, which requires a much higher level of investment than merely providing supplemental services at pre-existing schools.

Across sites, there is also variation in the number of youth targeted, ranging from 265 youth in MPS to 950 in CPS. Much of this variation is also due to differences in intensity of services. For example, although CPS is targeting 750 in-school youth at traditional schools, a new cohort of 50 ninth-graders is enrolled each year of the grant at each of these schools. CPS does not provide follow-up services for youth after this initial year. Therefore, at any given time, CPS is only targeting 300 youth at traditional schools. In contrast, although MPS is only targeting 140 youth at traditional schools, these students are enrolled in the program for the entire length of the grant unless they graduate or transfer out of the school. Unlike CPS, MPS does not re-enroll a new cohort of youth each year. Therefore, while Milwaukee is targeting much fewer youth than CPS, it plans on providing services to each youth for a longer period of time. As evidenced above, target numbers therefore do not necessarily provide a complete sense of each grantee's scope of work. Other factors discussed in detail in Chapters V and VI—such as length of enrollment and intensity of services—provide a more comprehensive picture of the reach and depth of services that each grantee is providing.

Despite differences in each grantee's scope of work, there are some important similarities in terms of how grantees structure grant programs at traditional schools, alternative schools, and other program sites.

- **The majority of services at traditional schools focus on intensive case management/supportive services.** Specifically, grantees designed these services to be a means of promoting school success and reducing participants' likelihood of dropping out. For example, MPS is using grant funding to support school-based teams consisting of a guidance counselor, a social worker, and a career development specialist to provide academic, social, and workforce supportive services to at-risk youth at four traditional schools.

- **All grantees except for BCPSS are using grant funding to create new alternative schools.** In addition to providing services at traditional schools designed to supplement pre-existing services and programs, all grantees but one are using the grant to provide seed funding for new alternative or transition schools.[29] (CPS, OCPS and MPS used the grant to open schools specifically for youth transitioning out of detention.) Therefore, while the overall number of alternative schools served by this grant is less than the number of traditional

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[29] OCPS also provided services at five existing alternative education sites in addition to opening the YES Positive Pathways Transition Center.

schools served, the impact that the grant has at each new alternative school is arguably much greater than the impact at each traditional school because the alternative schools represent whole new structures intended to serve a hard-to-reach population.

- **Three grantees are using the grant to provide additional services and enroll more youth at out-of-school youth program sites**. Specifically, BCPSS used the grant to fund an additional literacy specialist and job developer at each of the two YO! Centers. SDP expanded the occupational skills training program and created a new credit recovery program at E^3 Power Centers, and OCPS provided educational and employment support to out-of-school youth at three different program sites (the Metropolitan Orlando Urban League, Workforce Central Florida, and the Parramore Kidz Zone).

Changes Made to Grant Plans and Programs

In response to changing circumstances, all the grantees ended up shifting grant components in one way or another to ensure that their programs remained feasible.[30] A detailed summary of changes from the original grant plans is provided in Appendix D, and a detailed summary of additional changes that occurred during implementation is provided in Appendix E. Grantees changed their scope of work for several common reasons:

- **Grantees were forced to shift their grant plans in the face of budget cuts and/or (resulting) hiring freezes.** All of the districts faced budget cuts that affected the grant in important ways. First and foremost, budget cuts meant reduced staffing across the district, even for grant-funded programs. For example, in the Baltimore district, due to a district-wide hiring freeze, plans to hire eight math and reading remediation teachers had to be scaled down to only four teachers. As a result of similar budgetary challenges, the Orange County district decided to create a Transition Center rather than a Consequence Center,[31] because the latter would have required extensive and cost-prohibitive security.

- **Three grantees shifted their grant plans as part of continual program improvement.** In some cases, as grantees started implementing services, it became clear that the original program model needed to be modified in order to achieve better results. Three examples follow: (1) BCPSS moved its reading and math remediation program to a time during school hours in order to encourage more consistent attendance. (2) Staff from Philadelphia had to find a new location for the district's Occupational Skills Pathways Program after they concluded that serving out-of-school youth on a high school campus posed too

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[30] All changes were approved by the federal program officer for the grant.

[31] The concept of the Consequence Center was tied to a statute in Florida state law that allowed judges to use Consequence Centers as an alternative to detention for youth offenders. The legislation, however, does not provide any funding for the creation of Consequence Centers.

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many challenges. (3) CPS extended the length of time students stay at its transitional schools—from 10 weeks to 30—after realizing that youth needed more time to prepare to return to traditional schools.

- **In a few cases, grantees changed plans in order to be in better alignment with DOL's performance goals for the grant.** Reasons for needing better alignment include misunderstanding DOL's classification for out-of-school youth and realizing that current program plans were not sufficient to meet all of DOL's performance goals. As an example of the former reason, Workforce Central Florida in OCPS erroneously classified youth with a high school diploma or GED as out-of-school youth and thus had to expunge 70 youth from its records and shift its focus to only serving youth without a high school diploma or GED. As an example of the latter, gang reduction/violence prevention services in the Baltimore district were expanded midway through the grant after the grant administrator realized that the district was not on track for meeting the community-wide performance goal for DOL.

- **Grantees had to change their plans due to various other unforeseen circumstances.** Occasionally, obstacles arose during the implementation of the grant that impeded grantees' ability to implement services as originally intended. For example, in the Baltimore district, the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) was supposed to refer adjudicated youth for services, but was not able to do this in a timely manner. As a result, DJS changed its scope of work to provide employment services to adjudicated youth already enrolled in the city's Operation Safe Kids initiative. In another example, because of a riot at Chicago's youth detention center in February 2008, residents of the facility were not allowed to attend Nancy B. Jefferson Alternative School, a site where CPS had planned to provide services. In response, the district decided to open two transitional schools to facilitate the process of youth returning to traditional schools from the detention center.

In general, although grantees are providing similar types of services in order to meet DOL's performance goals for the School District Grant, the *specifics* of these services—such as intensity and program length—vary across grantees. Each grantee also chose to provide services at a different number of schools/program sites and target a different number youth with this grant. Similarly, grantees are taking different approaches to grant administration, as discussed in the following section.

Approaches to Grant Administration

Each grantee differed in how it administered the School District Grant. Specifically, grantees took different approaches to grant management structure, leadership, and staffing arrangements. In the following section, we discuss each of these aspects of grant administration in detail and the implications for grant implementation.

Grant Management Structure

Each grantee chose to house the grant within a specific district-level department. Typically, but not in all cases,[32] these departments oversee the districts' alternative education programs. Beyond that, each grantee's management structure varied according to the degree of centralization. Exhibit III-6 illustrates the different models in conceptual terms along a continuum from centralized to decentralized and locates grantees along this continuum according to which model each grantee most adhered.

Exhibit III-6:
Management Structure for the Grant
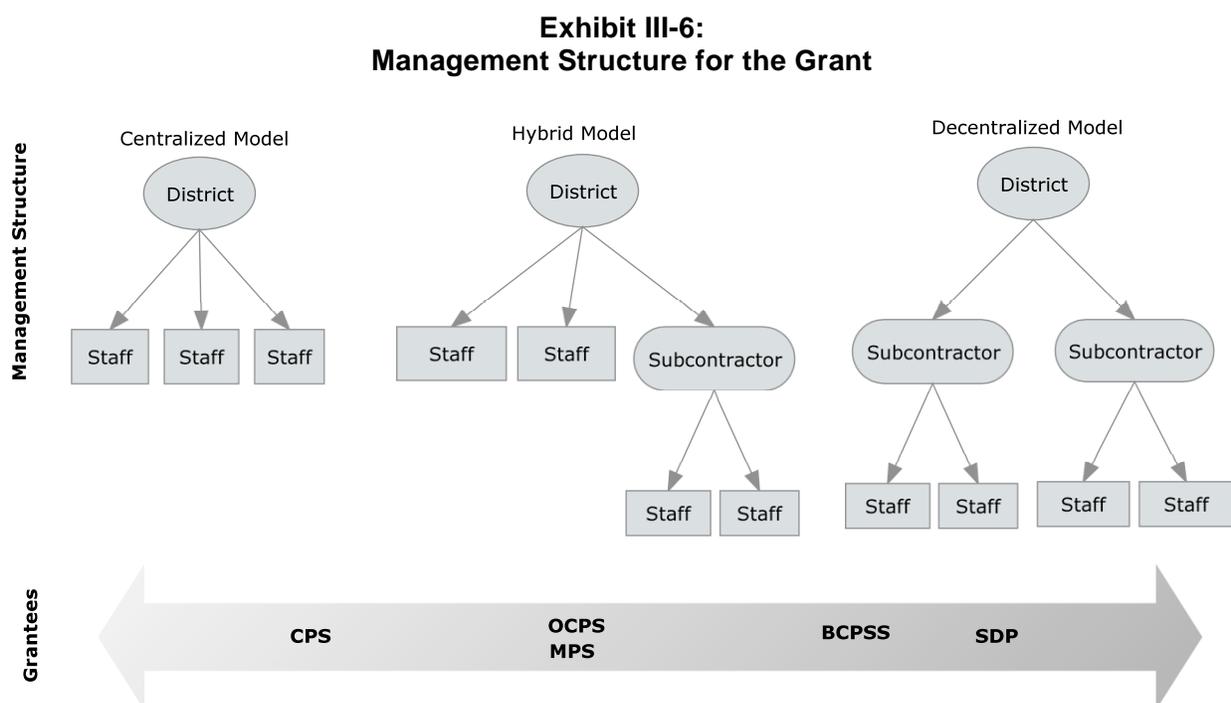
In a centralized model, the district hires program staff directly. In a decentralized model, a district contracts with partners or community-based organizations that in turn hire program staff. In a hybrid model, districts hire some program staff directly but also contract with other organizations to run programs and hire staff. In actuality, no grantee is using a *completely* centralized or decentralized model to run and staff grant programs. In many cases, however, their hybrid models lean heavily toward either the centralized or decentralized ends of the

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[32] BCPSS housed the grant in its Office of Safe and Supportive Schools, which oversees grants to reduce gangs, youth crime, and drug use. CPS housed the grant in its Office of Pathways to Graduation, which oversees all high schools in the district.

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continuum. As discussed below, each of these program models has its own set of advantages and disadvantages, which were often contingent on the larger district context.

Centralized model. In the centralized model, grant leadership has direct oversight over program staff and design. This model ensures that district staff are closely connected to grant activities and are kept abreast of implementation status and challenges. It also allows the district to provide direct support when needs arise. Additionally, positions directly supported by the district tend to have better prospects for sustainability. To date, the grant-funded positions that have already been integrated into districts' budgets, and therefore will be sustained, have tended to be positions directly supported by the district. For example, in Orlando, the teacher positions at the Positive Pathways Transition Center were grant-funded for the first nine months of the center's existence but are now funded through Title I funds. This centralized model also has its drawbacks, however. Direct district hires are often delayed because of hiring freezes, union requirements, and/or district hiring cycles, as was the case for three districts.

At the start of the grant, CPS used a highly centralized model, hiring all program staff directly. Only later in the grant period were subcontractors brought on to run the district's transition schools. This highly centralized model led to the district having a large amount of responsibility for program design and staff hiring, and district staff were in regular communication with school principals. Even in the transition schools run by a subcontractor, the district retained a high level of program oversight, as the grant administrator meets weekly with transition school staff.

Decentralized model. Districts with a decentralized grant management structure, such as BCPSS and SDP, chose to contract out the majority of services to grant partners and/or community-based organizations (CBOs). In many cases, these partners and CBOs have longstanding relationships with the districts and experience working in district schools. By contracting with these organizations, grantees are able to work around the district hiring impediments mentioned above. This is particularly the case in the Philadelphia district, where stringent union requirements make direct district hiring especially difficult. Additionally, by contracting with other organizations, grantees are able to leverage these organizations' expertise in areas such as juvenile offenders, workforce development, and gang-involved youth. For example, to run its transitional schools, CPS contracted with Banner Schools, an organization that has experience operating transitional high schools, alternative schools, and therapeutic day schools for "low credit" and overage youth and youth offenders.

The decentralized model is not without its own set of challenges. Many of the grantees using this model faced delays in putting out RFPs and/or setting up contracts, as these decisions often have to be approved by high-level district leadership, such as the school board. Although these

districts tend to play a less hands-on role in grant management, allowing the contractor to sort out the "nuts and bolts" of program implementation, having to manage contracts—including, in some cases, renewing contracts on a yearly basis—creates an extra level of coordination for grant administrators. Finally, subcontractors are not guaranteed to lack their own internal strife, and problems such as budget-related hiring freezes can slow down grant implementation.

BCPSS is an example of a grantee that faced considerable challenges in working with subcontractors. In this district, the school board must approve all contracts, and this ultimately caused much delay. Additionally, the school board deemed that the district's original RFP for a mentoring provider did not properly follow bidding guidelines and therefore the RFP had to be re-issued. Finally, in contracting with the Department of Juvenile Services for job developers, a state-level hiring freeze meant that special permission was required to hire staff, delaying the process greatly. These staff were also subject to state-wide furlough days, even though their positions were grant funded.

Hybrid model. The Orange County and Milwaukee districts both chose to use more of a hybrid approach to providing services. Structuring grant administration in this way gave the districts flexibility to hire a combination of district staff and subcontractor staff as needed. In the case of MPS, district staff and subcontractor staff work together directly on school-based teams. These teams are comprised of a guidance counselor and a social worker hired directly by the district and an employment specialist hired through the workforce development partner. OCPS chose to parse out its staffing in a different way. In general, direct hires were responsible for in-school youth services while subcontractor staff provided services to out-of-school youth.

Overall, grantees used some combination of direct hires and staff hired through subcontractors to deliver services, although the balance between these two models varied by grantee. In all cases, however, district-level leaders played a key role in overseeing grant programs. Below, we discuss each grantee's leadership for this grant.

Grant Leadership

In each district, designated staff in the department where the grant is housed were responsible for overseeing grant design and implementation. In most cases, this leadership has remained fairly stable over the life of the grant, although there has been some turnover.

- **BCPSS.** Due to district-level changes, April Lewis, the original grant administrator, was moved to a new position in July 2008. As a result, Alice Cole, who previously held the position of project coordinator for the grant, became the new grant administrator and assumed the responsibilities of both positions. Alice Cole is a natural fit for this position because of her vast experience with DOL

youth programs. She is the school district's liaison with the city's workforce agency, runs the WIA youth programs for the district, and is the leader of the local WIB's Youth Council.

- **CPS.** Carmita Vaughan, a recent MBA graduate and head of the Department of Pathways to Graduation provided high level oversight for the grant until her departure from the district in April 2009. Molly Burke, whose previous work with the district focused on dropout prevention and recovery, has served as the project director since the start of the grant. Both joined the district through the Broad Residency in Urban Education, a program that places participants with private-sector experience into managerial positions in school districts. The district also employs three other administrative staff responsible for this grant. One such staff person is Kahldun Everage, the Student Engagement and Community Outreach Manager. His background is as a gang specialist, having worked with the city police and the CPS Crime Commission.

- **MPS.** Several key staff members have overseen the grant in the Milwaukee district. Marty Lexmond, the Director of School Innovation, and Kristi Cole, the project director for the MPS Safe Schools/Health Students initiative, initially oversaw the grant. Then, Jim Koleas, a former police officer, was hired as the project coordinator in the spring of 2008. His position became part-time in the summer of 2009, and his responsibilities now include coordinating with external partners and developing the quarterly reports for DOL. At this time, Diane Rosado was brought on as the project director. As a former principal and grant coordinator for MPS, she is able to efficiently work within the district's systems and structures.

- **OCPS.** Margaret Gentile, the Senior Director of Student Services, is the director for the grant. She has worked for 14 years as the supervisor of alternative education in the school district. Shirley Johnson-Delgado, the grant administrator, is responsible for the day-to-day coordination of the grant. She has over 30 years experience in working both with juvenile justice and school-to-work programs. Immediately prior to this project, she worked as a senior administrator for the Department of Student Advocacy and has also worked as an assistant principal at the school located at the local juvenile detention facility.

- **SDP.** Courtney Collins-Shapiro, the Director of the Multiple Pathways to Graduation department, is the director for this grant. Nihessah Almond serves as the project coordinator, and is responsible for managing and overseeing the implementation of the grant. Ms. Almond was hired to work on this grant because of her previous experience with Project U-Turn, the citywide campaign to reduce the high dropout rate.

In summary, individuals who had experience working in their particular districts, expertise in the content area of the grant (e.g., gangs, juvenile offenders, dropout prevention), pre-existing relationships with grant partners, experience working with DOL, or some combination thereof were chosen to lead the grant in each district. Often grant leaders have been able to leverage these aspects of their experience in managing the various grant components. For example, in

OCPS, Ms. Johnson-Delgado's strong personal relationships with staff at the Department of Juvenile Justice and the sheriff and police departments are critical in coordinating work under this grant. In BCPSS, Ms. Cole's involvement with the local WIB's Youth Council allows her to funnel key pieces of labor market information, such as training alerts, to the job developers at the YO! Centers.

All grantees are required to engage a variety of community partners,[33] some of whom also play leadership roles in the grant. Several grantees convene partners on a regular basis to help design, plan, and oversee grant components, or have formal coordinating committees that fulfill this function. MPS has a particularly strong committee structure, which includes a coordinating committee and numerous subcommittees consisting of management staff, line staff, and/or students. For some grantees, particular partners play especially strong leadership roles. The Orange County district's juvenile justice partners, for example, played a large role in launching the new transition center for this grant. In two other examples, SDP and BCPSS both rely heavily on their workforce system partner to provide leadership for this grant. Philadelphia Youth Network's extensive experience with DOL and its reporting requirements made the organization a natural leader for this grant in the Philadelphia district. The organization is responsible for training and convening partners as well as managing the MIS system and reporting data to DOL. Similarly, in the Baltimore district, the Mayor's Office of Employment Development is responsible for reporting to DOL. Overall, the level of leadership that partners assume depends on their actual roles in the grant, how relevant the grant programs are to their work, and whether they have any previous experience with DOL-funded programs. Chapter IV provides more detail on the role of each community partner.

Staffing

As shown in Exhibit III-7, grantees hired a total of 130 staff to manage this grant and provide direct services. These numbers include all staff hired for this grant at 50 percent or more full-time equivalency[34] in both the administrative/management and line/program categories. The majority of these staff (69 percent) are subcontract hires; the remaining staff are direct-district hires. All but 11 staff are full-time.

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[33] Required partners include the local workforce investment system, juvenile justice, law enforcement, the Mayor's Office, and the U.S. Attorney's Office.

[34] In some cases, the grant minimally supplement funding for other staff positions. Because such a small amount of these staff's time is dedicated to grant activities, they are not included in this count.

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Exhibit III-7:
Summary of Project Staffing as of Fall 2009/Winter 2010[35]

	Total # of Staff		Direct Hires	Subcontract Hires
BCPSS	50	(47 FT, 3 PT)	5	45
CPS[36]	20	(19 FT, 1 PT)	14	6
MPS	10	(9 FT,1 PT)	6	4
OCPS	24	(24 FT)	14	10
SDP[37]	26	(20 FT, 6 PT)	1	25
Total	130	(119 FT, 11 PT)	40	90

The staffing level of each grantee depends on a number of factors, including the number of youth served, the number of schools/program sites, and the intensity of services. BCPSS hired 50 staff persons, the highest number among the grantees. Consistent with the large number of staff, there are high concentrations of staff at each program site. On the other end of the spectrum, MPS hired a total of only 10 staff. This lower number is a reflection of the fact that MPS is targeting the least number of youth; it is also a result of budgetary constraints causing decreased staffing levels for the extension year of the grant. The number of staff hired by the other three grantees—20 for CPS, 24 for OCPS, and 26 for SDP—is about halfway between these two extremes.

Staffing arrangements depend on the level of centralization or decentralization of each grantee's management structure. In CPS, where the management structure is the most centralized of the grantees, 70 percent of staff are hired directly by the district. MPS and OCPS, which use more of a hybrid approach, direct-hire 60 percent and 58 percent, respectively, of their staffs. At the other end of the spectrum, the vast majority of staff are hired by subcontractors in the Philadelphia and Baltimore districts. As will be discussed below, the level of centralization or

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[35] These numbers include both staff hired directly through the district and staff hired through subcontractors. CPS, MPS, and SDP all hired some of its subcontractors based on a per pupil cost, so staffing levels are difficult to determine. Only in CPS's case were grant administrator able to give us reasonable estimates of staffing levels for these contractors.

[36] CPS's contract with Banner Schools is based on a per-pupil cost, but reasonable estimates of staffing levels given by the grant administrator are included.

[37] SDP's contract for North Philadelphia Community High School is based on per-pupil costs. Accurate estimates of staffing levels were not available, so staff at this school are not included in this count.

decentralization of each grantee's administrative structure did not have a large effect on staffing levels, beyond the number of administrative/management staff hired.

In some cases, grantees are providing funding for additional staff to expand existing services. For example, BCPSS provided funding to two YO! Centers to hire an additional literacy instructor and job developer so the centers could serve more youth. In other cases, grant funding created staff positions to provide entirely new services. OCPS's intervention specialists are an example of this. While the staff who filled these positions were not all new to the district—many had been guidance counselors or held other positions in the district—the services they provide as intervention specialists are new. Whether the services provided by grant staff are expansions of previous services or entirely new, this grant allowed districts and their subcontractors to "staff-up" in order to better reach a traditionally hard-to-serve population.

Shifts in Staffing

It is important to note that the numbers in Exhibit III-7 only represent staff positions as of the third round site visit in fall 2009/winter 2010. While the number of staff overall increased as the grant progressed and program components were implemented, staffing levels decreased in a few instances as the grant progressed. Below are key reasons why some grantees reduced staffing levels.

- At the district level, hiring freezes caused delays in hiring staff and some grantees eventually eliminated staff positions as a result. For example, BCPSS intended to hire eight teachers for math and reading remediation, but was ultimately only able to hire four.

- In other cases, staff positions were not eliminated per se, but rather the grant no longer provided funding for them. For example, the teacher positions at OCPS's Positive Pathways Transition Center were grant-funded for the first nine months of the Center's existence, but are now funded through Title I funds. Therefore, while at one point in time the grant funded 31 full-time staff, it now funds only 24.

- Finally, a few grantees made the programmatic-level decision to eliminate staff positions. MPS eliminated the positions of two career specialists and a guidance counselor for the extension year of the grant because of budget constraints. SDP eliminated the Microsoft Office Occupational Skills teacher position because few students were completing the certification process and grant administrators felt the program model could be improved.

Type of Staff Hired

Districts used grant funding to support a variety of positions to staff grant programs. Exhibit III-8 provides a detailed look at each grantee's staffing structure, breaking staff out by

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administrative/management staff and program staff. Across grantees, the majority of staff hired were program staff, although districts did hire a sizeable number of administrative staff as well.

Exhibit III-8:
Types of Staff Hired by Grantees as of Fall 2009/Winter 2010

| | Administrative /Management Staff | Program Staff | | | | | | | | Total |
		Case Managers/ Intervention Specialists	Teachers/Instructors	Job Developers	Guidance Counselor	Mental Health Specialists	School Resource Officers	Social Workers	Other[38]	
BCPSS	10	23	6	5	-	4	-	-	2	50
CPS[39]	6	8	4	-	2	-	-	-	-	20
MPS	2	-	-	3	3	-	-	2	-	10
OCPS	2	10	2	4	-	-	3	-	3	24
SDP	8	1	9	5	-	-	-	-	3	26
Total	*28*	*42*	*21*	*17*	*5*	*4*	*3*	*2*	*8*	*130*

Administrative/Management Staff. Administrative/management staff positions make up a sizable portion of staff hired (22 percent). These staff positions include the district-level leadership staff discussed previously,[40] managerial staff at subcontractors and partners, and administrative staff whose responsibilities include tasks such as data entry. BCPSS and CPS support the greatest number of administrative/management staff positions. This is partly due to the fact that they have the most subcontractors, who each require in-house managerial and administrative support for their specific grant components.

Program Staff. Grantees chose to hire a variety of program staff, but the majority of program staff hired by this grant fall into three categories: case managers/intervention specialists, teachers/instructors, and job developers.

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[38] Includes gang specialists, conflict resolution specialists, AmeriCorps interns, etc.

[39] CPS also funded school social workers and guidance counselors on a per hour basis, but these positions are not included in this count.

[40] In a few cases, high level district leadership staff are not supported directly by grant funds, but still provide oversight for the grant.

- **Case managers/intervention specialists.** Making up 32 percent of all staff, these positions are by far the most commonly funded. These staff provide intensive, one-on-one and group services to participants. The majority of case managers/intervention specialists work with in-school youth. In OCPS, for example, intervention specialists work in schools to connect youth with additional academic services, keep regular contact with students' teachers and parents, and assist with credit retrieval. MPS is the only grantee that did not hire case managers/intervention specialists with this grant, although their school-based support teams of guidance counselors, social workers, and job developers provided similar individualized support to students.

- **Teachers/instructors.** These positions make up 16 percent of all staff. These staff most commonly provide individualized and group support to youth for basic skills remediation, credit recovery, and/or GED preparation. In Baltimore, teachers lead Voyager remediation courses at traditional schools. Other teacher/instructor positions are housed in transitional schools, such as CPS's Banner Schools. Finally, other teachers/instructors provide services to out-of-school youth, such as for GED preparation in OCPS. MPS does not support teachers/instructors with this grant because its program model focuses on providing other supportive services to students rather than supplementing the academic services already provided by the schools.

- **Job developers.** These positions comprise 13 percent of all staff. Job developers' responsibilities include providing workforce readiness training to youth and developing and placing youth in internships. Like teachers/instructors, job developers provide services to both ISY and OSY. For example, SDP funds several job developers for its in-school Learning to Work program, but also provides funding for a job developer for OSY involved in the Occupational Skills Pathway Program. CPS is the only grantee not to hire job developers because its job readiness training program is taught by teachers at each school.

Grantees also hired other types of staff under this grant. MPS and CPS both fund guidance counselors for in-school youth. Mental health specialists, school resources officers, and social worker positions are also funded by one grantee each. Grantees also used this funding to support other positions such as gang specialists and conflict resolution specialists.

Grantees were thoughtful about hiring staff who they felt would work well with the target population for this grant. Grantees hired staff with backgrounds and life experiences that were similar to those of targeted youth so that they would be able to relate to youth in a deep and meaningful way. In many cases, this meant hiring staff who grew up in the community and/or attended the school. These staff are also able to integrate more easily into participants' social structures outside of the school/program site when needed. As such, they are able to provide support to participants in additional ways, such as working in conjunction with participants' families towards common goals, or mediating conflict between participants and other community

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members. The text box below provides two examples of program staff who have been especially successful in providing services under this grant.

Examples of Strong Project Staff

BCPSS. Staff from New Vision Youth Services (NVYS) provide services to particularly hard-to-reach in-school youth from a unique vantage point. The staff themselves are predominantly young African American men and former gang members who know the "ins and outs" of gang culture in Baltimore. The Executive Director of the organization, Billy Stanfield, is a former gang member who served time in federal prison and later became a pastor. NVYS takes a unique, asset based-approach to its gang reduction work called "Growing a New Generation" (GANG). Rather than focusing on getting youth out of gangs, NVYS's approach focuses on redirecting gang-involved youth away from violence. Mr. Stanfield explains:

> You can't go to kids and say, 'You gotta leave gangs.' That will cost them their lives. Our main concern is to stop the killings and the violence. Being in gangs is not wrong. It's the intent that's wrong.

NVYS staff draw on the connections they have from their former lives as gang members to mediate conflicts as needed. As one staff member explained,

> We know people, so if there's beef going on and we can't get to the bottom of it, we get a hold of their homies and call them and say, 'Hey man . . . we're trying to do this program. Can you tell them to slow down?'

NVYS's connections with the faith-based community, ability to successfully mediate conflict in the community, and asset-based approach to reducing youth violence are all important aspects of its promising work.

OCPS. The Parramore Kidz Zone used funding from this grant to hire Stanley Comartie as an outreach worker. Although Mr. Comartie does not have a background in this type of work— he was an athlete early in life and later a college basketball coach—he truly believes that he has found his calling. As an outreach worker, he has been able to make connections with neighborhood youth and provide them with much-needed services. Others in the district point to him as a case study of what is working under this grant.

Mr. Comartie is able to leverage his life experience to engage youth in a unique way. He used his connections with the NBA to secure the construction of a new basketball court at Jackson Neighborhood Center and has set up a very popular basketball league. Mr. Comartie started this league with the understanding that the center needed something attractive to draw in and build trust with the out-of-school youth in the community, and participation levels have been high. Through this league, the Center has been able to engage older youth who previously would not come to the Center. Once this initial connection is made, Mr. Comartie is able to build trust with the youth, talk to them about their lives and career goals, and connect them to appropriate services. Respondents report that Mr. Comartie is a particularly strong role model for young African American men in the community.

Budget

Each grantee received an initial grant of $4.8 million. In 2009, this grant was supplemented by an additional $1.06 million. Therefore, in total, grantees received $5.86 million each. Exhibit III-9 compares this grant amount to each district's overall budget to give a sense of its relative size.

Exhibit III-9:
Overview of School District Grantees' Budgets

	FY 2010 District Annual Budget	DOL Grant as Percentage of Budget	District Per-Pupil Expenditure[41]	Estimated Per-Participant Grant Funding[42]
BCPSS	$1.265 billion	0.15%	$15,265	$5,581
CPS	$5.328 billion	0.04%	$13,018	$2,528
MPS	$1.072 billion	0.18%	$13,012	$7,067
OCPS	$1.321 billion[43]	0.12%	$7,533	$3,488
SDP	$2.192 billion[44]	0.09%	$11,490[45]	$5,931

The School District Grant represents less than one percent of each district's annual budget. However, since each district is using the grant to serve a relatively small proportion of its students, comparing each district's per pupil expenditure with the estimated per-grant-participant funding provides a more accurate picture of the value of this grant. The per-grant-participant funding ranges from just under one-fifth to two-thirds of the district's per pupil expenditure. In other words, although the grant was small relative to each district's overall budget, it represents a sizeable increase in per-student spending for those students who receive grant services. Grant participants in the Milwaukee district, for example, enjoy annual per-pupil expenditures topping an estimated $20,000 when the grant funding is factored in. (Note, however, that the high estimated per-grant-participant expenditure in MPS is due in part to the district serving a

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[41] This was calculated by dividing the annual budget by number of students.

[42] This number was calculated by dividing the budget expended to date by the number of participants served to date at the time of the third round site visit. It is important to note that this is only an estimated amount and represents average cost per participant.

[43] The FY 2010 budget was not available. This number represents the FY 2009 budget.

[44] The FY 2010 budget was not available. This number represents the FY 2008 Operating Budget.

[45] Based on Fiscal Year 2006 Actual Budget including categorical funds.

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relatively small number of participants to date.) Even in the Chicago district, where a relatively large number of participants have been served by the grant, the grant funding bumps up per-pupil spending for grant participants by an estimated 19 percent.

As of fall 2009/winter 2010, grantees differed in the amount spent to date, mainly because projects were launched and implemented at different times. Exhibit III-10 details how much each grantee has spent to date; it also includes the estimated end date for the grant.

Exhibit III-10:
Budget Expenditures to Date
(Fall 2009/Winter 2010)

	Amount Spent	% of Original Grant	Estimated end date of grant
BCPSS	$3,600,000*	75%	9/30/2010
CPS	$2,450,000	51%	12/31/2010
MPS	$3,149,513	66%	6/30/2010
OCPS	$4,260,000	89%	8/31/2010
SDP	$3,600,000*	75%	6/30/2010

* These numbers are based on estimates given during the third-round site visit.

To date, grantees have spent between 51 percent and 89 percent of the original $4.8 million grant. All grantees except for CPS have an estimated end date for the grant some time in summer 2010. CPS has spent the least amount of the grant (just over half), but it is also planning to continue to provide services until December 31, 2010. This relatively low expenditure amount is due to the fact that CPS experienced a number of delays in grant implementation and has had to modify its work plan drastically since the start of the grant. In comparison, SDP and MPS— which experienced fewer delays in implementation and deviated less from their original work plans—have the earliest estimated end dates for the grant (June 30, 2010). Although BCPSS has spent a relatively large amount of its grant to date, it requested a contract extension through September 30, 2010, in order to hold a summer bridge program and expend all funds.

As previously mentioned, each grantee received an additional $1.06 million in 2009. All grantees are using at least a portion of the additional funding to lengthen the timeline for providing grant services. Two grantees (SDP and BCPSS) are also using the additional grant funding to expand services. Below we detail how each grantee is using the additional funding:

- BCPSS is using the additional grant funding to continue and expand services. A portion of the additional funding is used to continue Futures Works! case management services and mental health services, both of which would have been

spent out without the additional funds. The rest of the additional funding went to hiring a gang specialist to coordinate a community-wide gang reduction plan, a new program component.

- CPS is using the additional grant funding to extend the traditional school program until June 2010 and the transitional school programs until December 2010.

- MPS is using the additional funding to support staff positions and contract services for an additional year, through June 2010.

- OCPS is using the additional grant to extend services through August 2010.

- SDP is using the additional grant funding to provide services beyond the original grant completion date, to June 2010. Without the additional grant, services would have ended in December 2009. In the final year of the grant, SDP also expanded its Learning to Work program to one additional school.

Grantees also differed in how they spent their funds. Exhibit III-11 provides a breakdown of grantee budgets by key categories.

Exhibit III-11:
Overview of Grant Budgets[46]

	Personnel	Fringe Benefits	Travel	Equipment/ Supplies	Contractual	Indirect charges	Other
BCPSS	11%	4%	0%	2%	76%	7%	0%
CPS	34%	10%	1%	1%	36%	1%	16%[47]
MPS	19%	7%	1%	0%	71%	2%	0%
OCPS	34%	12%	5%	10%	38%	3%	2%[48]
SDP	2%	1%	0%	1%	93%	3%	0%

By far, the majority of funds were budgeted for personnel and/or contractual services, with the relative balance between the two depending on the degree of centralization or decentralization. In SDP, which is contracting out most of its services, the vast majority of the budget (93 percent) went to contractual services whereas only two percent went to personnel. Somewhat similarly, BCPSS budgeted 76 percent of its grant to contracts and 11 percent to personnel. In contrast, the personnel and contractual line items were fairly equal for both CPS and OCPS (34 percent/36

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[46] For all grantees except MPS, the budget includes the original plus the additional grant amount. Only MPS's budget for the original grant was available.

[47] This includes the following line items from CPS's budget: administration and other.

[48] This includes the following line items from OCPS's budget: training stipends, rentals, and purchased services.

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percent and 34 percent/38 percent respectively). For CPS, this balance is reflective of the fact that the district had a fairly centralized grant structure for the first two years of the grant and then began working with a subcontractor once it decided to use grant funding to open transition schools. For OCPS, the balance can be attributed to services being provided by a combination of district and subcontractor staff throughout the life of the grant.

Related Initiatives and Programs

Efforts funded by the School District Grant were often supplemented by existing programs and initiatives dealing with dropout reduction, violence prevention, or gang reduction. Because of these programs, most grantees were able to build off and coordinate with work already occurring in their schools, districts, and communities. Specifically, initiatives that pre-dated the grant helped to inform grantee plans and provided lessons on which grantees could base their work. At times, concurrent initiatives also provided services complementary to grant-funded services, adding value to both. Finally, some grantees were able to use grant funds to expand on work that was already occurring in the community by providing funds for additional staff. Overall, where strong, pre-existing initiatives existed, grantees did not have to "reinvent the wheel," but were rather able to leverage and expand upon promising work and fill in any gaps. The bullets below provide a brief summary of other relevant work occurring in each of the districts and target cities:

- **BCPSS.** The Baltimore district was able to expand two of the city's gang-reduction initiatives using grant funding. The grant also allowed the district to continue a previously existing dropout prevention program in four targeted schools.

- **CPS.** In the Chicago district, the grant does not directly build on existing initiatives per se, but incorporates some of the principles of anti-gang work that the city is promoting.

- **MPS.** Milwaukee has several, violence prevention initiatives in place and grant funded-programs both expand and compliment these initiatives. These initiatives include Safe Streets Common Ground, the Violence Prevention Program, the MPS Violence Free Zone, and Safe Schools/Healthy Students.

- **OCPS.** A key component of OCPS's grant program, the Positive Pathways Transition Center, grew out of the work of the Juvenile Justice Taskforce, whose members included the district, the juvenile justice system, and the police department. OCPS has also been able to use grant funding to complement the

anti-gang and violence prevention work of the Orlando Police Department's Gang Unit[49] and of the city's Parramore Kidz Zone.

- **SDP.** Grant-funded programs align with and add value to the Youth Violence Reduction Partnership program, which previously had a hard time focusing on school and career opportunities for its youth. Additionally, grant programs expanded Project U-Turn, a citywide campaign to reduce the dropout rate.

Overall, the School District Grant represents an important opportunity for districts to focus on a specific population as a means of reducing the dropout rate. As shown in this chapter, each grantee chose to structure the grant in a slightly different way in response to its own needs, opportunities, and strengths. The next chapter on partnerships details how each grantee was able to work with the required community partners and engineer key partnership outcomes.

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[49] Although funding for the formal gang unit ended early in the grant, the sheriff's department continues to have an *ad hoc* gang unit.

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IV. PARTNERSHIP MODELS AND OUTCOMES

Given the multiple and interrelated service needs of the target youth population, an important goal of the School District Grant is to facilitate strong links between school districts and various local partners—particularly the workforce investment system, the Juvenile Justice System, law enforcement, the local mayor's office, and the U.S. Attorney's Office. In addition to these required partners, it is anticipated that grantees will develop ties with other community organizations in order to provide specialized, supportive services to both in-school and out-of-school youth participants.

In this chapter, we first summarize each grantee's partnership arrangements, focusing on their partnership outcomes and prospects for sustainability. (Appendix F provides the complete partnership profiles for all five grantees.) We then analyze key partnership themes, outcomes, challenges and lessons *across* grantees, before concluding with final thoughts and implications.

Summary of Grantee Partnership Profiles

Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS)

Initiative Name: Workforce Development Initiative to Reduce Youth Gangs and Violent Crime

Partnership Model: A focus on social service partnerships

Capsule Summary: The Baltimore City Public School System's initiative is designed to serve in-school youth at the middle- and high-school level, primarily with the expansion of the Futures program—a dropout prevention program. Out-of-school youth are provided additional services—including literacy and GED instruction, job development, and paid work experiences—at local YO! Centers. Mentoring, mental health, and anti-gang services are also key features of the design for both in-school and out-of-school youth.

While Baltimore City Public School System is characterized by a strong link with workforce development, its partnership model stands out more because of the emphasis on social service

partners. Specifically, BCPSS emphasizes anti-gang, mental health, and mentoring services as key features of its partnership and intended service design.

Key Partnership Outcomes

One significant partner- and system-level outcome from the School District Grant was a new arrangement allowing BCPSS, the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) and the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) to share youth data. Data-sharing challenges and processes emerged as BCPSS and MOED were trying to get DJS to verify youth's offender status so that they could verify their eligibility for grant services. Given confidentiality and privacy concerns, DJS developed a waiver form that students must sign in order to receive grant services. The waiver allows the various partners to share data on the youth's arrest records, school information, and progress in school district programs.

With regard to sustainability, BCPPS is attempting to plan for the continuation of core partnerships, though a number of these center on particular program components that are heavily or wholly dependent on grant contract funds. Since the district is facing severe budget cuts, many of these partnerships are likely to dissolve with the end of the grant. However, gang prevention and intervention services from the CBO New Visions Youth Services (NVYS) will continue in the schools due to a grant that the district secured from the Open Society Institute. To date, no alternate funding sources have been identified to continue providing mental health services at the same level supported by the School District Grant, though mental health specialists will likely continue working at the schools at a lower capacity.

Chicago Public Schools (CPS)

Initiative Name: Project Youth Engaged in School (YES)

Partnership Model: Centralized

Capsule Summary: Chicago Public Schools' (CPS') Project YES is a dropout prevention effort with two main target groups and service components: (1) incoming ninth graders at six traditional high schools who are served by the YES Afterschool Program, and (2) youth offenders transitioning out of detention (whose home school is one of the six traditional high schools) who are served by the CBO, Banner Schools.

Chicago Public Schools' Project YES represents a relatively centralized model of partnership that stems partly from the district's style of administration and service provision. The four-person grant team at CPS provides oversight for nearly the entire grant. CPS also provides nearly all of the grant services itself, rather than relying on a team of subcontractors as other

grantees have done. The major exception is Banner Schools. CPS contracted with Banner Schools late in the grant initiative to launch Banner South and Banner North Transitional Schools for youth transitioning from the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center back to their home schools.

Key Partnership Outcomes

Key partner-and system-level outcomes occurred for CPS in three areas: increased coordination between CPS and the Juvenile Justice System (JJS); increased attention to student transfer and data-sharing challenges; and increased attention to serving CPS's youth offender and at-risk populations.

The Banner Schools that were implemented in Year Three allowed for new levels of coordination between CPS and the JJS. The YES team members who are co-located at the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center implemented a multi-step process to identify, recruit, and enroll eligible youth in the Banner Schools. The success of this process depends on data sharing with the JJS, particularly around youth's upcoming court dates and lengths of stay at the detention center, so that YES staff can recruit and enroll youth in the Banner Schools before they leave detention. CPS leaders are currently considering ways to sustain and expand this transitional school model throughout the city so that an increased number of youth offenders can be served.

Grant program activities also resulted in greater attention to two key transfer and data-sharing challenges. The first challenge was ensuring the accuracy of the projected number of entering ninth grade students transferring from middle school to any given high school. Eighth graders who choose to proceed to a charter school do not have to inform CPS of their decision to enroll in these schools. As a result, CPS high schools often have inaccurate projections for their ninth grade enrollment figures. A solution proposed by the YES program is currently being considered by the Mayor's Office: to have eighth graders formally commit to a secondary school by a certain point in the academic year.

As a result of YES activities, another data-sharing issue to receive more attention was the transition of youth offenders back to their traditional high schools upon release. Schools are often inadequately prepared for the re-enrollment of released youth offenders: they do not know when these students will arrive or what educational activities they completed while in detention, and often the necessary paperwork—such as the alternative school at the detention center formally dropping the youth—has not been completed. As a result of the grant, the Banner Schools offer an alternative model and transition point for this difficult process. As previously mentioned, CPS leaders are currently considering ways to sustain and expand the transitional school model throughout the city, thus demonstrating sustained attention to this issue.

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Finally, the YES program has allowed CPS to focus as never before on serving its special population of youth offenders and gang members. The still-nascent Banner School model in particular performs three important functions: (1) facilitates data-sharing and coordination between CPS and the JJS to ease the transition of youth offenders to traditional school; (2) allows youth to make up lost credit with online instruction so they may return to their home schools on schedule; and (3) helps avoid the return of youth to detention for parole violations by helping to ensure their academic engagement and success.

Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)

Initiative Name: Futures First Initiative (FFI)

Partnership Model: CBO-partner involvement

Capsule Summary: Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) has implemented the Futures First Initiative, which includes funding for Transition High School, a new school for students transferring out of detention, as well as services in five traditional high schools for at-risk students. Both programs include case management, academic support, and employment services. The grant approach consists of the use of School-Based Teams (SBT) as well as contracted life skills and enrichment services.

MPS's partnership model for the Futures First Initiative is most distinguished by its strong relationship with CBOs as service providers, as well as a relationship with the local workforce investment system that has been substantial in nature, even from the initial design and proposal stage.

Key Partnership Outcomes

MPS's most notable system-level outcome is that Transition High School, launched as a part of the School District Grant, will be sustained by district funds after the grant has ended. This school provides a critical alternative for youth who are transitioning from detention back to school. The value of this school is made particularly clear by the district's decision to absorb the school's costs despite facing dramatic budget cuts. Other system-level outcomes are simply the lessons learned by this grant's implementation and partnership experience—which include, according to respondents, the importance of mentoring for at-risk youth, the need for schools to have gang reduction plans in place, and the ability of MPS to partner with other agencies in terms of increased communication and mutually informed decision-making.

Orange County Public Schools (OCPS)

Initiative Name: Youth Enrichment Services (YES)

Partnership Model: Fast-track

Capsule Summary: Orange County Public Schools' (OCPS') goals for the YES initiative are to reduce the number of juveniles engaged with the Juvenile Justice System; increase the percentage of students who complete high school; and provide extra support to youth struggling with academic achievement. In order to provide individualized attention and care to these youth, OCPS-funded staff—including the Intervention Specialists—provide counseling and supportive services at four middle schools and four high schools, the Positive Pathways Transition Center (where youth leaving detention can earn their GED/degree or earn credits needed to transition back to their home schools), the Juvenile Assessment Center (where youth are first taken upon arrest), and at recreational centers within target communities.

Relative to other grantees, Orange County Public Schools enjoyed a much quicker start-up of grant services. The district's success in this area was due in part to strong, pre-existing relationships with a number of the key grant partners. This foundation allowed OCPS and its partners to fast-track from grant planning to grant implementation.

Key Partnership Outcomes

The key partner- and system-level outcomes are clustered around two critical partnerships: that between OCPS and Workforce Central Florida (the local workforce investment agency), and that between OCPS and the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).

In addition to being very pleased with WCF's services and youth outcomes under the School District Grant, OCPS administrators and line staff have gained critical knowledge of WCF programs and strategies for serving youth, and WCF employees have gained a broader perspective on youth issues by working with a broader youth population than they are accustomed to. As one local respondent noted,

> *[WCF has] typically served an older youth population. This grant has provided them the opportunity to work with 18-year-olds and that has changed their perspective on youth. They have also provided support to in-school youth, because they have worked closely with the Intervention Specialists.*

The grant has also led the staff of the two agencies to form strong interpersonal ties, which appear to be critical to successful inter-agency partnerships in Orlando. In fact, stakeholders consider the strengthened relationship between OCPS and WCF to be one of the most significant outcomes of the School District Grant. OCPS now views WCF as more of a working partner in

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serving Orlando's vulnerable in-school and out-of-school youth populations. However, despite the strengthened ties between the two agencies, the actual *work* of the partnership is not necessarily sustainable. Although all partners would like the work of WCF to continue at the Jackson Recreation Center, WCF has made it clear that this will not occur, due to a lack of resources after the end of the grant.

The School District Grant allowed OCPS and DJJ to deepen a relationship that was already strong when the grant began. This occurred partly through mutual education; for example, joint trainings allowed for each agency to better understand the other. The Positive Pathways Transition Center in particular allowed the two agencies to really come together over a common concern with youth coming out of detention and returning to school. While the two agencies might have previously shared data—such as sending over requested attendance information—now there are more sit-down conversations, joint planning, and coordination on how to best transition youth. OCPS is participating more consistently in commitment hearings, and OCPS and DJJ are more coordinated in working with parents. For example, probation officers are now participating more in parent-teacher conferences. The Positive Pathways Transition Center is expected to continue as a primary mechanism for the OCPS-DJJ partnership, as the center will be sustained after the grant with Title I funds. However, the OCPS counselor position at the Juvenile Assessment Center will be discontinued due to lack of funding.

School District of Philadelphia (SDP)

Initiative Name: Project U-Turn Expansion

Partnership Model: Complex

Capsule Summary: The School District of Philadelphia (SDP) is implementing multiple programs to expand Project U-Turn, an initiative to address the city's high dropout rate. For in-school youth, the district created North Philadelphia Community High School (an accelerated school serving court-involved, dropout, overage and under-credit youth) and implemented a Learning to Work strategy at this school, Overbrook High School, and University High School. Implemented at six high schools is the OASIS program, which uses an accelerated school model to target overage, under-credit ninth graders at a "school within a school." Out-of-school youth are being served by the Bridge Program housed at the E^3 Power Center (which helps skill- and credit-deficient youth attain the competencies needed to enter an educational pathway), the Occupational Skills Pathway Programs for older and formerly incarcerated youth, and the newly launched Student Re-engagement Center (which provides various services, including assessments, to connect out-of-school youth to an appropriate educational/Project U-Turn pathway).

The linkages formed under the School District Grant by the School District of Philadelphia represent a highly complex model of partnership. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that SDP contracts out the majority of grant services to a significant number of CBOs,[1] which, in turn, often provide services for more than one major service component and/or to more than one of the grant's service sites. The contracted partners have also developed various relationships amongst themselves, rather than manifesting the more typical partnership arrangement in which the school district is at the center, or hub, of otherwise unconnected partners. Philadelphia's effort also represents an expansion, as well as an extension, of previous, large-scale efforts—namely Project U-Turn and the Re-Entry Transition Initiative–Welcome Return Assessment Process (RETI-WRAP).[2] The district's previous involvement with these initiatives introduces additional layers and players to the partnership model.

Key Partnership Outcomes

SDP realized a number of key partner- and system-level outcomes in the areas of referral mechanisms, changes in district practices, and data sharing.

One of the most significant outcomes of the grant was the creation and institutionalization of the Re-Engagement Center, which allowed for a more streamlined referral process for out-of-school youth and youth transitioning from detention. Although SDP had begun this work before the expansion of Project U-Turn, the School District Grant provided the seed funding for the Re-Engagement Center that really allowed for a more coordinated referral process to the Bridge Program, North Philadelphia Community High School, and other district schools and programs. The coordination is facilitated, in part, by co-located city staff: two Department of Human Services case managers and two behavioral health specialists from the Office of Mental Health. Sustainability of the Re-Engagement Center is assured, as its funding has been assumed by the district.

The School District Grant also led to the creation of a sustainable accelerated high school model that, in turn, has led to an expansion of efforts in this area. North Philadelphia Community High School was launched with School District Grant funds and its success, as well as the success of

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[1] The Philadelphia School District has such strong unions, that it's easier to contract out to CBOs for services rather than try to get district staff to perform functions outside of union contracts.

[2] Project U-Turn is a dropout prevention collaborative made up of district officials, the Department of Human Services, the Juvenile Justice System and other key organizations. RETI-WRAP is a collaborative that provides transitional support and education and workforce development activities for youth returning to the public school system from residential delinquent placement. By bringing together representatives from the SDP, Juvenile Probation, Department of Human Services, Behavioral Health Services and the Defender Association, the

earlier efforts at the Fairhill Community High School, led the district to realize the strength of the accelerated school model—identifying youth in greatest need, placing them in a smaller cohort, and providing needed services. From the successes at these two schools, the idea for OASIS—an accelerated "school within a school"—was born and implemented. Sustainability for North Philadelphia Community High School is assured as the district has assumed funding responsibilities; the school will continue to offer 180 slots for youth and is applying for additional grants, including a 21st Century Skills grant, to continue its Learning to Work component and Center for Literacy work.

A third major system-level outcome was simply that the School District of Philadelphia agreed to give credit to youth for work completed as part of the Bridge Program, which operates outside the district school setting in the E[3] Power Center. This development furthers the aim of the Bridge Program—to assist out-of-school youth in transitioning back to an educational pathway.

Finally, on both the system and partner levels, there were also breakthroughs with regard to data sharing and usage. As of December 2009, SDP, the Department of Human Services, and the Division of Juvenile Justice Services' Court and Community Services were poised to sign a memorandum of understanding that would allow these three parties to share youth case management data on a sustained basis. Although not completely attributable to the School District Grant, this agreement is considered groundbreaking. The School District Grant administrator also developed informal mechanisms for sharing data with DJJS, though it is not clear to what extent these mechanisms will be formalized and sustained. Also, staff at partner North Philadelphia High School reported that the School District Grant led to an increased proficiency with and reliance on quantitative data that helped it better document and illustrate their success with students.

Cross-Site Analyses of Grantee Partnerships

Given the summaries above of grantee partnership models, we now turn to cross-site analyses that allow us to examine key findings and outcomes across grantees.

Workforce Development Partnerships

School districts have most commonly established linkages with the workforce development system by subcontracting with local workforce investment boards (LWIBs) to provide academic and employment services for out-of-school youth—a population with which LWIBs typically

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program works to ensure youth receive a full range of supports (including academic, health, mental health, life skills, and social services).

have significant experience. However, the intensity of these partnerships naturally varies, with some grantees choosing to capitalize on workforce partners' expertise and staff in different ways, and for different youth sub-populations. Following are key findings with regard to grantees' partnerships with workforce partners.

- **All grantees but one (CPS) have a contracted partnership or MOU with the local workforce system.[3]** However, the intensity level of these contracted partnerships varies. Three grantees in particular (BCPSS, SDP, and MPS) involved their local workforce partners in substantial ways from the earliest stages of grant planning and proposal-writing. For example, Philadelphia Youth Network (as the workforce partner) identified and convened partners for the School District Grant, selected CBOs to deliver services, developed a data tracking system to record participant data, and provides overall oversight and communication among partners. The workforce partner in Baltimore, the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED), helped determine which partners should be at the table and how the different service components should be structured for the in-school and out-of-school youth populations. The Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board wrote the employment portion of the proposal and was initially slated to be the school district's partner in overall grant management.

- **Two grantees (MPS and OCPS) have co-located workforce staff as part of their partnerships.** MPS has five Youth Career Development Specialists co-located at the target schools serving in-school youth. These specialists provide youth with job readiness, career counseling and job search assistance services. OCPS has two job recruiters co-located at a recreation center serving older, out-of-school youth with soft skill workforce trainings and subsequent connections to employment, the armed forces, Job Corps and/or additional career training. While Baltimore City Public School System's workforce partner does not provide *co-located* staff, it provides staff and direct services for out-of-school youth at its two well-established YO! Centers. YO! is providing training in several high-growth industries (such as hospitality and healthcare) and offers a number of employment services such as work readiness training, job search assistance, and subsidized employment opportunities.

- **Only two grantees provide relatively strong workforce services for in-school youth.** For three of the grantees, limited services for in-school youth are due to budget shortfalls and/or incomplete implementation of project plans. However, Milwaukee Public Schools and School District of Philadelphia both have a relatively strong focus on workforce services for in-school youth. In Milwaukee, dedicated specialists from the local workforce investment board provide employment readiness and training activities, as well as paid work experiences as part of the five School-Based Teams. Unlike other grantees that have the LWIB serve in-school youth, School District of Philadelphia contracted with three CBOs

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[3] Orange County Public Schools is the only grantee with a MOU (instead of a contract) with its workforce partner.

to provide job readiness skills, career planning assistance, and paid work experiences at three schools as part of a larger Learning To Work (LTW) program.

- **Workforce services for out-of-school youth are provided by CBO partners, as well as local workforce entities.** As previously discussed, all but one grantee has an established relationship with the local workforce entity to provide workforce services. Baltimore City Public School System and School District of Philadelphia also capitalize on strong, pre-existing programs at the YO! and E³ Power Centers. However, CBOs also play an important role in providing workforce services, particularly to out-of-school youth. In Chicago, a CBO (A Knock At Midnight) provides youth transitioning from detention to traditional school with various skill-building activities such as resume writing and career exploration. In Orlando, in addition to job developers from the LWIB, out-of-school youth are served by a CBO (Metropolitan Orlando Urban League or MOUL), which provides two job developers who are responsible for placing youth in paid work experiences at local CBOs or faith-based organizations. MOUL specializes in serving gang-involved youth and/or youth with criminal records. Philadelphia works with Community College of Philadelphia and a CBO (NPower) to provide older, formerly incarcerated youth with automotive, hospitality industry, and information technology training as part of a larger Occupational Skills Pathway Program (OSPP).

Juvenile Justice Partnerships

The transition process from juvenile detention back to the public school system is often a challenging one. Schools are sometimes reluctant to re-enroll youth offenders; school staff and programs have inadequate capacity to provide all the needed services to successfully transition youth offenders; schools and detention centers do not communicate well about when and how these students will return (e.g., when in the academic year and to which grade); and many students return with incomplete documentation (e.g., academic records, re-enrollment forms, etc.). Confidentiality guidelines within the Juvenile Justice System (JJS) can also make coordination with the public school system difficult or impossible. Given these challenges, the School District Grant called for school districts to partner with JJS to better coordinate the transition process and ensure a smoother return to an educational pathway.

The most typical *forms* of the linkages between these two systems are data-sharing agreements and joint participation on advisory groups or commissions aimed at coordinating services between youth-serving systems. We can also make an observation about how these linkages are typically *used*: they frequently focus on securing youth referrals, though other forms of important data sharing are occurring as well. We also see that while these partnerships are most concerned with sharing information rather than providing direct services, they are also greatly strengthened by concrete and jointly-created structures, as discussed further below.

- **Co-located school district staff play an important role in facilitating the referral- and information-sharing-based partnerships with the JJS.** For three grantees, co-located school district staff help facilitate the partnership with the JJS. For example, Chicago Public Schools has staff co-located at the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center that allows the two entities to share data and for the detention center to ultimately help grant staff identify and enroll eligible youth at the Banner Schools. Orange County Public Schools has a guidance counselor co-located at the Juvenile Assessment Center that helps inform Department of Juvenile Justice Staff about youth's academic status and how they might best return to an educational pathway. While School District of Philadelphia does not make use of co-located JJS staff to procure referrals, they nevertheless are able to work closely with Philadelphia Juvenile Probation and pre-existing programs (Philadelphia Reintegration Initiative[4] and RETI-WRAP) to identify eligible juvenile offenders and transition them to grant-funded schools and programs, such as Learning to Work and Occupational Skills Pathways Program. The remaining two grantees intended that the JJS would serve as a prime source of youth referrals, but this arrangement was stymied by confidentiality and information-sharing challenges, as well as cloudiness around eligibility and target group criteria.

- **While providing youth referrals is the most notable intended and actual aspect of JJS partnerships, JJS representatives also provide other forms of information**. For example, Chicago Public Schools and School District of Philadelphia significantly capitalized on the expertise of JJS representatives in the early grant-design and proposal-writing phases. In Chicago, the project director met with a number of representatives of the city's Juvenile Justice System to secure advice on how to structure a program that would support youth offenders. In Philadelphia, SDP worked closely with representatives from the Philadelphia Reintegration Initiative and Philadelphia Juvenile Probation to integrate their expertise in working with court-involved youth and to draft portions of the grant proposal. Finally, Orange County Public Schools engages in critical information sharing with the JJS in the form of shared training opportunities that allow each agency to learn more about the youth population and services of the other. For Chicago Public Schools, the School District Grant has led to similar inter-agency education—through the school district's and the JJS' participation on a community task force dedicated to improving relationships between CPS and the court system, and coordinating the transition process between detention and school.

- **While a number of grantees planned for their JJS partners to share youth recidivism data, School District of Philadelphia appears to be the only grantee able to secure this data.** SDP receives this information from Philadelphia Juvenile Probation through a shared spreadsheet. This school district

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[4] Philadelphia's Reintegration Initiative is a program launched by the Philadelphia Family Court and the Department of Human Services to support youth as they transition out of residential placement.

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is also able to secure incarceration data for enrolled youth from Division of Juvenile Justice Services.

- **Service-centered partnerships with the Juvenile Justice System generally have not materialized**. As discussed above, most of the partnerships with the JJS center on providing referrals and other forms of information, not services. However, two grantees (Baltimore City Public School System and Milwaukee Public Schools) had intended for their JJS partners to provide more direct services. In Baltimore, the Department of Juvenile Services was to hire three workforce specialists to provide job readiness and job development services for adjudicated youth. However, these staff were not hired until January 2010, and, while potential youth participants have been identified, planned internships have not. In Milwaukee, it was anticipated that the Children's Court Center would not only have the primary responsibility of identifying and referring youth, but also the shared responsibility (with the school district) of providing case management and service planning for youth. This did not occur due to various challenges, including the logistics of dividing service responsibilities and sharing youth information.

- **A joint project serves as one of the strongest mechanisms for creating an effective school district-juvenile justice partnership**. Though only partially funded by the School District Grant, the launching of the Positive Pathways Transition Center in Orlando served as a way to greatly enhance the partnership between the school district grantee and the Department of Juvenile Justice. The Transition Center allowed these two agencies to collaborate on successful transitions for youth leaving detention and returning to school. Likewise, the initiation of Chicago Banner Schools allowed for new levels of coordination between the school district grantee and the JJS. However, in this case, the level of partnership is less intense given that a CBO is in fact operating the transitional schools, and there is no formal partnership agreement in place between Chicago Public Schools and the JJS.

Law Enforcement Partnerships

To some extent, it is understandable that partnerships with law enforcement would be less intense than those with other required partners. While law enforcement agencies possess critical expertise on youth violence and gang activity, including within the specific environment of school campuses, they are much less involved than the Juvenile Justice System with regard to case management and service planning. School districts' linkages with law enforcement (for the purposes of the School District Grant) often took the form of joint participation on local violence-reduction initiatives and the planned provision of SROs at the school level. However, the roles anticipated for law enforcement in the area of information exchange generally did not occur as planned.

- **Overall, grantees have very weak partnerships with law enforcement for the purposes of the School District Grant.** While a number of grantees enjoyed

positive, pre-existing relationships with law enforcement (e.g., from joint participation on city commissions, or from the provision of SROs at schools), for the specific purpose of the School District Grant, links are relatively superficial or non-existent. To the extent these links did occur, they included grant staff meeting with police officers to share local gang developments, a new SRO being established at a target school, and grant staff working with law enforcement on safety task forces at high-need schools.

- **Anticipated roles for law enforcement, primarily in the area of information exchange, were generally not realized.** At least three grantees *planned* on linking with law enforcement for the purposes of securing data on youth crime, gang-involved youth, and encounters between enrolled youth and law enforcement, for training in anti-gang strategies, and for receiving advice on the types of services needed by youth exiting detention. However, these types of information exchanges did not, for the most part, occur as planned, sometimes due to bureaucratic obstacles within law enforcement. Orange County Public Schools had the most significant anticipated relationship with law enforcement, as officers were to meet regularly with participating youth and school staff. However, staff turnover, as well as a revision of grant plans, challenged the full implementation of this partnership.

Partnerships with the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Mayor's Office

While the School District Grant requires that grantees partner with the U.S. Attorney's Office and each city's mayor's office, the Interim Report found that these partners were generally more involved during planning than they were during the implementation stages. Typical among grantees is a relationship whereby the Attorney's Office is "kept in the loop" on grant activities and developments. The involvement of the mayor's office is a bit more diverse, given the varied roles, responsibilities and pre-existing programs of this office among grantee sites. For example, in Chicago, the Mayor's Office controls the school district and thus there is, by default, a tighter relationship between these two partners. In Baltimore, the Mayor's Office of Employment Development is the local workforce entity and runs the two YO! Centers, as well as the Futures dropout prevention program. The involvement of the Baltimore Mayor's Office was thus assured on multiple levels.

However, when we look for evidence of new connections or functions of the mayor's office for the purposes of the School District Grant, two grantees stand out due to co-location and other resource-sharing arrangements: the School District of Philadelphia and Orange County Public Schools. In Philadelphia, city staff is supplementing district staff at the Re-Engagement Center. The Mayor's Office of Mental Health co-locates two behavioral health specialists at the center one day a week and two full-time case managers from the Department of Human Services are also co-located there full-time. The partnership with the Mayor's Office in Orlando represents a unique intersection between a neighborhood-based initiative to reduce crime (Parramore Kidz

Zone) and a traditional government agency (two job recruiters from Workforce Central Florida funded by the School District Grant). The School District Grant supports the job recruiters in providing mobile One-Stop services in the troubled neighborhood and coordinating with a Parramore Kidz Zone outreach coordinator—a position also supported by grant funds. The Mayor's Office is also providing in-kind resources in the form of recreation center space for the two job recruiters.

Other Community Partnerships

In the design of their initiatives, many grantees anticipated the involvement of CBOs and faith-based organizations (FBOs), particularly for the delivery of various supportive services to in-school and/or out-of-school youth. However, grantees ultimately were quite varied in terms of how much they involved these organizations and other social service agencies.

- **Baltimore City Public School System is the only grantee that planned for the *significant* involvement of mental health and anti-gang/anti-violence partners.** This finding is surprising, given that all the grantee districts have target populations that could significantly benefit from the involvement of such partners. While the School District of Philadelphia's grant allowed for two behavioral specialists to be co-located at the Re-Engagement Center once a week,[5] BCPSS dedicated more than $600,000 of its grant budget to Baltimore Mental Health Services to expand mental health clinician positions to full-time at YO! Centers and at target schools—thus focusing on the mental health needs of both out-of-school and in-school youth. While previously discussed implementation challenges prevented the realization of this plan, BCPSS's plan nevertheless reflected the high priority it gave to addressing of youth's mental health needs.

- **Baltimore City Public School System is also the only grantee to significantly involve a CBO (New Visions Youth Services) in the provision of specific anti-gang/anti-violence services at *multiple* schools**.[6] While law enforcement arguably also provides anti-gang/anti-violence services, CBOs offer unique advantages in this area. At-risk youth who are not open to a positive relationship with law enforcement may not view CBOs in the same negative light. CBOs can also offer specialized services such as providing non-violent conflict resolution trainings and information about the local gang landscape. Finally, CBO staff may be more grounded in the local community, with positive implications for building trust with local youth and becoming integrated into the school. For example, New Visions Youth Services is led by a local pastor and businessman who spent time in a federal prison, and most of its staff are former offenders who can relate to the

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[5] Two full-time case managers from another social service agency (Department of Human Services) were also co-located at the Re-Engagement Center.

[6] Milwaukee Public Schools worked with a CBO partner, Ambassadors for Peace, to provide youth with peer mediation and non-violent conflict resolution services at one of its five target schools.

students in a personal way. The organization provides climate management and intensive services to hard-to-reach, gang-involved youth within three target schools, and also leads an effort to develop a community-wide gang reduction strategy on the city's Westside.

- **Most grantees expected youth mentoring to occur on a relatively informal basis**. Orange County Public Schools expected the SROs (who are not grant-funded) to work with the intervention specialists and deans at the target schools on mentoring programs. (In its grant proposal, OCPS also listed one of its partners as a community college that has access to mentors for youth.) Milwaukee Public Schools also expected its SROs (grant-funded) to mentor students at target schools, but only one of the five target schools ended up with SROs and it is unclear to what extent they ultimately provided such counseling/mentoring services there. The only grantee to feature mentoring services prominently in its initiative design was the Baltimore City Public School System; however, even in this case mentoring services ended up figuring less prominently in the implementation phase. (Due to contracting difficulties and the desire to mentor more youth than initially planned, BCPSS was delayed in finally contracting with a provider.)

- **CBOs play a particularly strong role in the Milwaukee and Philadelphia school districts.** Milwaukee Public Schools contracted with several CBOs to provide youth with a range of academic, life skills, supportive, and enrichment services. Local respondents, including youth, indicated that these CBO partners are among the strongest components of the School District Grant. The School District of Philadelphia is notable in contracting out services to more CBOs than the other grantees. These CBOs were contracted not only to provide supportive services, but also core education and workforce services. For example, SDP contracted with three CBOs to implement its Learning to Work program, a fourth CBO to implement the OASIS program, and a fifth to help provide workforce training under the Occupational Skills Pathways Program. SDP involved three additional CBOs in designing, managing and/or providing technical assistance on school models or programs (e.g., the Bridge Program and the accelerated high school model at North Philadelphia Community High School).

Key Outcomes

Across grantees, the most significant and sustainable partner- and system-level outcomes are related to the creation and/or expansion of new schools or program models. All grantees but BCPSS used School District Grant funds for new schools or program models that served as critical mechanisms for and manifestations of inter-agency partnership. Furthermore,

despite funding challenges and the discontinuation of many grant-funded program elements, all of these sites have chosen to sustain their new schools or program models.[7]

The other key sustainable partner- and system-level outcome across grantees is augmented inter-partner relationships. In some cases this augmented relationship takes the form of enhanced data sharing. For example, for Baltimore City Public School System, a major outcome from the School District Grant is the ability to share youth data with the Mayor's Office/LWIB and the Juvenile Justice System through a student waiver form. Likewise, in Chicago, district staff and JJS staff implemented a multi-step information sharing process to identify and enroll detained youth in the Banner Schools. In other cases, the augmented inter-partner relationship takes the form of enhanced knowledge of another agency's culture and operations. The most notable example of this is in Orlando, in the partnerships between the school district and Workforce Central Florida, and between the school district and the JJS. In both cases, through staff presentations and mutual education activities such as shared trainings, staff acquired a deep-level knowledge and understanding of the other partner's target populations, services, and modes of operation.

The augmented inter-partner relationships also simply take the form of closer personal ties—which can be critical to effective business relations and potential future collaboration. Orlando County Public Schools, for example, now views Workforce Central Florida as more of an ongoing working partner in serving the city's vulnerable youth populations. Orlando County Public Schools and the Department of Juvenile Justice now have more interpersonal "sit-down" conversations that facilitate joint planning and coordination for transitioning detained youth. From its experience with the School District Grant, Milwaukee Public Schools now has greater confidence in its ability to partner with other agencies in terms of increased communication and mutually informed decision-making. While arguably a "softer" outcome, closer interpersonal and inter-agency ties can be critical because even if the substance of the current partnership ceases with the end of School District Grant funds, a sustained relationship can lead to future collaborations serving the same target populations.

Other key partner- and system-level outcomes vary by grantee and ranged from a school district agreeing to grant academic credit for non-district courses to heightened awareness among partners of the data-sharing challenges involved with transitioning youth offenders from detention to their home schools.

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[7] Chicago Public Schools' Banner Schools; Milwaukee Public Schools' Transition High School; Orange County Public Schools' Positive Pathways Transition Center; and School District of Philadelphia's Re-Engagement Center.

Overarching Partnership Challenges and Lessons Learned

In this final section of the chapter, we use a broader lens to look at partnership challenges and lessons learned that are not specific to a particular type of partnership (e.g., workforce partnerships), but are rather more overarching in nature.

Challenges

- **Variations in grantees' definitions of their out-of-school youth target populations raised questions about the appropriateness of required partners.** Grantees varied in terms of how they defined their target out-of-school youth population. Two grantees (Milwaukee Public Schools and Chicago Public Schools) chose to focus their out-of-school youth efforts on youth who were transitioning from detention back to a traditional or alternative school environment. Thus, in these two sites, partnership efforts for out-of-school youth actually took place in new transitional schools launched with School District Grant funds. The School District of Philadelphia, Orange County Public Schools, and Baltimore City Public School System define out-of-school youth using a combination of criteria that include age, involvement with gangs, involvement with the courts, former incarceration, and reading level. Because of this considerable variation, it is not clear to what extent grantees should have had different sets of required partners to effectively reach these youth. For example, perhaps it makes sense to require the involvement of a CBO partner with gang expertise if a grantee defines its target out-of-school youth population as gang-involved. On the other hand, a literacy partner might be required for a grantee that defines its target out-of-school youth population as below a certain reading level threshold.

- **When grantees were not specific about their out-of-school youth target group, there were implications for recruitment practices and service provision.** For example, a key challenge for one grantee's partnership with the JJS was that it was unclear which specific groups of youth JJS should be targeting and referring for grant services (e.g., youth with which levels of offense). Likewise, another grantee and its JJS partners had different understandings of the appropriate out-of-school youth population to be referred to a transition center, with serious implications for the center's ability to provide appropriate services and resources (e.g., security and behavioral health specialists).

- **Confidentiality issues and data sharing challenges plagued a number of grantees and partners.** These challenges not only made partner operations less efficient, but also challenged their effectiveness. For example, YO! Center staff in Baltimore had to secure signed waivers from youth attending their orientations before sending their names to the Department of Juvenile Services to determine which of these youth were eligible for grant-funded services. The Department of Juvenile Services then had to send the list back to YO! staff. In Milwaukee, information about youth's criminal records is confidential and not shared with the Youth Career Development Specialists, which means that these staff may place

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youth in inappropriate job situations. Youth Career Development Specialists also do not always receive data/paperwork from a youth's intake process, thus risking the possibility of duplicated assessments of that youth's skills and interests. Bureaucratic obstacles with regard to data sharing also occurred with law enforcement partners. In Philadelphia, for example, these obstacles stymied plans to secure data from police on gang-involved youth. Finally, School District of Philadelphia described data sharing as a challenge across multiple agencies, specifically citing the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

- **School districts sometimes experienced challenges in working with agencies possessing philosophies, cultures, and practices different from theirs.** The primary example of this was in the partnership between a school district and law enforcement. In this case, respondents felt that, compared to the school district, law enforcement had more of a punitive culture and orientation toward youth. This philosophical/cultural difference played a role in the communication gaps between agencies, particularly with regard to clarifying expected partner roles and responsibilities for the School District Grant. Grant-funded law enforcement representatives from this site also described a traditional tension between schools and police/SROs, as principals are often mistrustful of law enforcement representatives and may "hide" negative incidents on campus in order to avoid publicity. A subtle or overt power struggle may also be present between the principal and SROs, who do not fall under the principal's authority.

  Differences in agency culture and practices also posed some challenges in the relationships between school districts and workforce development agencies. For example, in Orlando, these two agencies had different philosophies on the provision of student stipends. While such stipends are common in youth workforce programs, the school district initially held back, given the negative implications in the education arena of paying youth to learn. For another grantee, the main confrontation of cultures occurred between the school district and city government (Mayor's Office)—not only because the two agency cultures are inherently quite different, but also because of a largely negative history of interaction. As one local respondent stated,

  > *I'd say 75 percent of our challenge is getting people to overcome prejudices over what the systems can and can't do, how reliable they are, how trustworthy, whether it's worth putting time into collaborations because people have [been] burned in the past.*

  Finally, school districts sometimes faced *internal* challenges with regard to agency practices and restrictions. For example, in Philadelphia, two of the community college instructors teaching workforce training courses could not (because of union contracts) work during school holidays, which raised the problem of students possibly dropping out over the long winter and spring breaks.

- **Grantees that contracted out a majority of services sometimes faced coordination and sustainability challenges due to the multiplicity of layers involved**. For example, in Philadelphia there are three sets of organizational staff

involved with running the Learning to Work/OASIS program, in addition to school administrators and district staff. Having this many layers of partnership has raised questions of efficiency in looking toward sustainability. It also raises the possibility of managing a more complex partnership dynamic, in that the many different partners may develop relationships amongst themselves, and not just with the prime school district partner.

- **Performance measures posed a challenge in terms of coordination among School District Grant partners and coordination with other systems' measures.** Grantees sometimes struggled with the definitions of various performance measures, as well as coordinating the logistics of collecting and entering accurate program activity and outcome data from multiple partners. In some sites, grantees addressed this challenge by charging the local workforce entity with this responsibility, given this partner's experience with DOL performance measures. Philadelphia Youth Network partly addressed this challenge by providing trainings to providers on performance outcomes, how to use the MIS system accurately, and how to manipulate and utilize the data in the MIS for their own organizational purposes and everyday use. Some grantees also reported that they have "multiple masters" because of the need to meet different sets of performance measures—e.g., one for the school district and one for DOL. As one grant administrator observed, "It made us shift our focus a little bit and say, we can accomplish both, but how do we translate? It's basically serving two masters." For School District of Philadelphia, the need to meet multiple sets of performance measures had implications for selecting partners. In order to meet the district's goals for academic credits and graduation rates, while also honoring DOL's focus on literacy and numeracy, the school district contracted a CBO, Center for Literacy (CFL), to provide instruction in foundational skills while also offering district credit for the CFL coursework.

Lessons Learned

- **"Super-partners" that brought to the table their own networks of partners and resources played an important role in creating effective collaborative models.** In many cases, these "super-partners" brokered relationships with other key stakeholders and/or helped facilitate connections between the School District Grant and other related initiatives. Philadelphia Youth Network serves as a prime example of a "super-partner" as it identified and convened partners for the School District Grant and selected CBOs to deliver services to out-of-school youth during the planning phrase, and then took responsibility for overseeing subcontractors and coordinating partner communication. Outside of the School District Grant, some of PYN's key functions include staffing the Philadelphia Youth Council (the council responsible for launching Project U-Turn), managing WIA and TANF youth funds, convening and overseeing the Project U-Turn Collaborative, and leading WorkReady Philadelphia (the city's workforce development system). Therefore, PYN already had strong and numerous local partnerships that they

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were able to leverage for this grant.[8] For other grantees, "super-partners" were either departments or individuals. The Mayor's Office helped the Milwaukee School District identify partners to address gang and crime issues and identified common goals between the School District Grant and the Safe Street Common Ground Initiative. An individual consultant in Baltimore connected the school district with some required partners, including the Attorney General's Office, and identified overlap between the School District Grant and other city work, particularly under the Office of Crime Control and Prevention. Finally, the YO! Centers in Baltimore and the E^3 Power Centers in Philadelphia also served as "super-partners," in that they brought considerable and well-established resources to bear for the out-of-school youth population, including connections to supportive services in the community.

- **Partner integration is key to program coordination and success.** This was a rich lesson, learned in different ways at different sites. For some sites, this simply meant that different partner staff needed to interact with one another more purposefully in order to coordinate schedules and services. For example, in order to overcome challenges related to scheduling workforce-related activities around school schedules, Milwaukee Public Schools' Youth Career Development Specialists developed closer relationships with schoolteachers to coordinate schedules for students inside and outside the classroom. Sites that suffer from a lack of partner integration demonstrate the flip side of this lesson. It may be, for example, that grant-funded staff from different agencies at the same school do not have regular meetings or formally collaborate, and thus miss opportunities to supplement one another's work. At one particular grantee site where grant-funded staff are not well integrated into the school, services for youth are fairly light-touch (e.g., checking attendance, informal lunch meetings with students). This is partly attributable to the need for more relationship building between the grant-funded staff and the school administration, and for more participation by grant-funded staff in school activities (such as attending staff meetings and extracurricular activities).

- **Partner integration is exemplified by a relationship in which both parties let go of ownership and work as a team rather than as separate agencies.** On the topic of ownership, one partner of the School District of Philadelphia observed,

  One of the things we realized is that you really have to ground the work in a mission that's directly connected to the young people you're serving. In doing that, it helps people let go of 'We as an organization have a policy that it should be done this way'…and really come to a consensus about how it should be done.

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[8] PYN's traditional role in the city has been as a neutral party or convener, but this is only one of the roles PYN plays for the School District Grant, which has created some degree of confusion among other stakeholders. PYN has addressed this challenge by providing multiple staff with different roles/functions at School District Grant meetings (e.g., one staff as convener/facilitator and another staff as contract provider).

Both the Philadelphia and Baltimore school districts have learned important lessons about the importance of teamwork in partner integration. In Baltimore, teamwork is exemplified by the way the CBO, New Visions Youth Services, has integrated itself into the three target schools. Rather than approaching its work as a contracted service provider, NVYS first builds relations and consensus about its approach with school staff and students. As the NVYS Director describes,

> *The success of the program is totally linked to the collaboration with the school. Even though we have a contract with the school, we still need an MOU with the principal…We first meet with the principal to get the needs of that school. We need to make it specific to the principal what we do. Then we ask for an introduction to the entire staff. Then we ask for a school assembly so the children know what we do…that allows the entire student body to make a connection with us.*

- **CBO staff can be so successfully integrated into a target school that they seamlessly coordinate with school staff and don't appear to students as being part of a different organization**. For example, at North Philadelphia Community High School, Center for Literacy staff are not identified as the CFL math or reading specialists, but rather as math or English teachers. This CBO has integrated itself not just into the classroom, but also into the "fabric" of the entire school by participating in school staff meetings and school-wide activities. As the principal observed of CFL,

> *They participate in all school activities. They do after school clubs. They've gotten into the school spirit. They aren't just here to do their little part in English and then go home. They are a part of the school.*

The principal also observed that her involvement in the CBO interview and hiring process was key to ensuring their integration in the school, and that their deep level of integration allows her to address issues with them directly, rather than with their organizational supervisors.

Conclusion

From our case studies and analysis, we have seen that grantees vary tremendously in terms of their overall partnership approach as well as in terms of their individual partnerships. Overall partnership approaches range from the centralized, self-providing model of Chicago Public Schools to the complex, multi-layered model of School District of Philadelphia. Partnerships with individual agencies also range widely—from non-existent to inextricably linked. Overall, of the required partnerships for the School District Grant, the workforce development partnerships appear strongest in that all grantees but one had formal arrangements with the local workforce investment board, and some grantees also involve CBOs in the provision of workforce services. Given workforce partners' often pre-existing focus on serving out-of-school youth, it is perhaps not surprising that school districts are most likely to link effectively with these partners.

Furthermore, many local workforce entities play multiple, interrelated roles within the city that would make it difficult *not* to partner with these agencies.

As we have seen, grantees' partnerships with the Juvenile Justice System are more mixed in terms of strength and quality. Similar to workforce development partners, JJS partners also have a natural role in dealing with school district target populations—specifically, youth transitioning from detention back to the public school system. However, they are not traditional (nor desirable) service providers for these youth in the way that workforce partners are (e.g., they cannot provide academic and employment services). This helps explain why intended partnerships between school districts and the JJS centered on information exchange, particularly referrals; it may also explain why intended partnerships that centered on service provision are particularly challenged.

The partnerships with law enforcement are perhaps the most disappointing of the required partnerships for the School District Grant. While the argument can be made that law enforcement should be expected to have the least intense partnerships with school districts given that law enforcement is not typically as involved with youth service planning, law enforcement was nevertheless expected to play important roles with regard to providing security (e.g., SROs) and intelligence (e.g., crime data). The experiences of grantees suggest that the "culture gap" between school districts and law enforcement may be at least partially responsible for the relatively weak partnerships, and the bridging of this gap may require more focused effort in future collaborative efforts.

Required partnerships with the U.S. Attorney's Office generally did not yield much beyond shared updates on School District Grant implementation, while the involvement of the Mayor's Office was more substantial in some cases (e.g., co-located staff, overlapping initiatives). As a required partner, the Mayor's Office is an understandable choice given its position as the "CEO" of the locality, as well as a leader of other, potentially overlapping initiatives. However, while grantees often discussed other local initiatives, there was little focused effort to ensure these initiatives and the School District Grant supplemented or cross-fertilized one another.

Finally, the involvement of CBOs/FBCOs is decidedly mixed—being particularly strong in only two grantee sites, and not necessarily in the design phase. This too appears to be a missed opportunity; although these organizations are not required partners, they perhaps should have been, as they are often grounded in at-risk communities in a way that public agencies cannot be, and often bring to the table unique and specialized resources (e.g., anti-gang and personal development services).

Across grantees, many of the School District Grant program components are unlikely to continue. As we have seen, those components most likely to continue are those that can be described as new structures or program models that often represent a mutually beneficial overlap between agencies' interests. However, given the unsustainable nature of many other program components, the question is raised of whether partnerships arranged for grant-funded services can be considered true partnerships if they end with the grant. To what extent must these contracted arrangements grow into something stronger and more sustainable in order to be considered true partnerships? A partial answer to these questions lies in one of the key outcomes of grantees' partnerships—augmented inter-agency and inter-personal ties. Though these ties can be intangible and informal in nature, they are nevertheless real outcomes that can facilitate continued collaboration outside the scope of the School District Grant, but for the same at-risk youth populations.

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V. RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT

This chapter provides details on the specific types of youth that are targeted for services under the School District Grant, the recruitment practices that grantees use to reach their intended target groups, and the enrollment that has occurred at the grantee sites.

Target Populations

This grant is designed to serve the following types of in-school and out-of-school youth, as defined by DOL:

- **Youth at risk of court or gang involvement.** These youth have no history of court involvement, but demonstrate risk factors for becoming court- and/or gang-involved. These risk factors, as defined by DOL,[1] include poor school attendance, low grade-point average, low standardized test scores, discipline problems or suspension from school, special education placement, and low reading and math skills.

- **Offenders.** These youth have convictions and are currently involved or have been involved in the justice system.

- **Incarcerated Offenders.** These youth are currently incarcerated or were released from incarceration within 60 days of enrollment.

Consistent with the goals established for this grant, all grantees target youth who fall into these three categories. All grantees established additional criteria as well, so that they could more narrowly define their target groups and thereby better plan program services and use resources most efficiently. These additional criteria were typically related to grade level, age, basic skills level, and offense history.

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[1] US DOL ETA Notice of Availability of Funds and Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) for Building School District-Based Strategies for Reducing Youth Involvement in Gangs and Violent Crime through a Workforce Development Approach.

In-School Youth (ISY)

The target group that DOL established for this grant provides a solid foundation upon which grantees can build in order to meet their goals. Using a variety of different criteria to target the DOL-identified youth populations and in some cases specifying particular sub-groups, grantees are targeting in-school youth at different grade levels who are "at-risk," such as those youth who have high truancy, are in need of academic remediation, and/or have an excessive number of disciplinary referrals or suspensions.

Exhibit V-1:
ISY Target Group

	Grade Level			
	Eighth	**Ninth**	**Tenth**	**Eleventh and Twelfth**
BCPSS	X[2]	X	X	
CPS		X		
MPS		X	X	X
OCPS	X	X	X	X
SDP		X		
Total # of grantees targeting these ISY	*2*	*5*	*3*	*2*

Exhibit V-1 shows that two grantees—BCPSS and OCPS—target eighth graders (in addition to those in other grades). OCPS targets eighth graders at four middle schools; BCPSS targeted eighth graders at two middle schools for the Futures Works! Program in the 2008–2009 school year. The Baltimore Futures Works! Advocates are following these eighth graders as they transition to the ninth grade, and did not re-enroll new eighth graders in SY 2009–2010.

All of the grantees aim to serve ninth graders because the ninth grade is a time when many students struggle academically and socially and are therefore at the highest risk of dropping out of school. Chicago's YES program is targeting ninth graders (and ninth graders only) at six traditional high schools. Similarly, the School District of Philadelphia funds Learning-to-Work interventions for over-age and under-credit ninth graders (i.e., repeating ninth graders) at two

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[2] Baltimore targeted eighth graders at two middle schools (Garrison and Lemmel) for its Futures Works! Program in the school year 2008–2009. Lemmel Middle School closed at the end of the 2009 school year, due to poor academic achievement. The Futures Advocates then followed these eighth graders as they transitioned to the ninth grade, and did not re-enroll new eighth graders in the 2009–2010 school year.

high schools and is not targeting students in other grades. Baltimore's Futures Works! Program targeted ninth graders at two high schools in the 2008–2009 school year and continued to provide services to these same students as they transitioned to the tenth grade in the 2009–2010 school year. The Milwaukee Public Schools and Orange County Public Schools aim to serve ninth graders as part of a broader intervention strategy that targets at-risk high school students of any grade level (grades nine through twelve).

Consistent with the grant goals, grantees seek to serve youth who are either already involved in the juvenile justice system or are showing signs of gang involvement (i.e., affiliating with known gang members, using gang signs, etc.)[3] Chicago, Orange County, and Milwaukee are targeting adjudicated ISY by creating transitional schools that link directly to the juvenile justice system.

Out-of-School Youth (OSY)

All grantees except for CPS are targeting out-of-school youth up to age 21. In general, youth are considered OSY if they had dropped out of school without obtaining a high school diploma or a GED at the time of enrollment. However, all the grantees specify further criteria that more narrowly define the out-of-school youth whom they are targeting, as shown in Exhibit V-2.

Out-of-school youth who have been adjudicated make up the bulk of the OSY population that is being targeted for services. For example, in the Baltimore district, the YO! Centers target youth who are at risk of court involvement or who are on probation or formerly incarcerated. As discussed in Chapter IV, although the YO! Centers originally intended to serve only adjudicated youth, challenges with the DJS referral mechanism prevented this vision from being realized. Similarly, OCPS's Homebuilder's Institute exclusively targets youth involved with the Department of Juvenile Justice.

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[3] This includes juvenile offenders who have been adjudicated and have been or are currently on probation, and incarcerated youth, who have been or are currently in a committed residential program.

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Exhibit V-2:
OSY Target Group

	OSY Target Population
BCPSS	
YO! Centers	Youth who are either at-risk of court involvement, on probation, or were formerly incarcerated
Operation Safe Kids	Adjudicated youth who have been arrested for drugs, violence, and/or gun possession and youth who are most at-risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of violence
MPS	
Transition High School[4]	Youth who have dropped out and are six or fewer credits away from graduation
OCPS	
Metropolitan Orlando Urban League	Youth aged 16–21 who are gang-involved or have criminal records
Workforce Central Florida	Youth from a downtown recreational center aged 18–21
Homebuilder's Institute	Youth involved in the Department of Juvenile Justice
Parramore Kidz Zone	Youth who live in a 10-square-block-area of the Parramore District and are at least 14 years old
SDP	
Bridge Program	Youth aged 16–21 in need of skill remediation or credit attainment and who are performing below the 6th-grade level
Occupational Skills Pathway Program	E^3 Power Center youth over age 18 who are currently or were previously enrolled in GED courses and who have completed or are currently enrolled in Job Readiness Training and who have an eighth-grade or higher reading level

Recruitment

In general, grantees have been successful in recruiting youth. Many of them have met or exceeded their enrollment goals. To understand how they did so, it is important to examine the specific recruitment strategies that grantees used. At the most general level, these strategies naturally differed for in-school youth and out-of-school youth.

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[4] Although MPS did not specifically target OSY, grant-funded staff provided follow-up services to youth who had graduated from Transition HS and thus classified them as OSY.

Recruitment Methods

To recruit in-school youth, grantees work with teachers and guidance counselors at the middle- and high-school levels to identify students who could benefit from grant-funded services. For example, in the Chicago, Milwaukee, and Orange County districts, school-based teams at target schools (composed of counselors, social workers, and teachers) identify students whose academic performance, attendance, and behavior suggest that they are at risk of school failure. In the Chicago district, high school staff also examine student-level data from their feeder middle schools to identify incoming ninth graders who, based on attendance and academic performance, have the most need. Baltimore Futures Works! staff also look at student data to identify at-risk students, looking specifically for students whose test scores put them two or more grade levels behind in math and reading.

Grantees' success in recruiting in-school youth varied depending on their program models. Grantees that offer afterschool programs (e.g., CPS and BCPSS) tended to have a tough time motivating students to enroll because of competition with other extracurricular activities. In contrast, the Orange County district's program has not faced challenges recruiting in-school youth, probably because services are offered to students during the regular school day and students do not perceive them as being optional.

To recruit out-of-school youth, grantees rely on a combination of word-of-mouth referrals and targeted outreach activities. OSY programs such as Philadelphia's E[3] Centers and Baltimore's YO! Centers have been able to make good use of word-of-mouth referrals because of the programs' strong reputations in their communities. For example, one YO! participant described how he heard about the program:

> *My cousin told me about the center. He came to me one day and said,*
> *'If you are trying to do something better with yourself, go to the YO!*
> *and they'll help you out.'*

In another example, a case-study youth learned about MPS's Transition School at his local church. He and his uncle were talking about enrolling him back in school when a member of the congregation, who happened to be a teacher at the school, overheard and told him about the program.

Grantees realize, however, that in order to reach the youth who can most benefit from their services, they also need to be *strategic* about their recruitment, by securing referrals from key partners and investing in designated staff who can focus on recruiting out-of-school youth. As an example of this strategy, grantees are working to varying degrees with juvenile justice and community-based partners in order to recruit adjudicated youth to grantee-funded programs. The Orange County district's grant staff, for instance, receive lists of the youth offenders attending grant-funded high schools so that these students can be targeted for services. The Orange

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County district also coordinates recruitment with DJJ to refer youth to the Positive Pathways Transition Center. Prior to being released, youth at the detention center meet with a case manager who refers them to appropriate schools or programs so that youth can resume their education. Philadelphia's E^3 Centers, which are home both to the Bridge program and the Occupational Skills Pathway Program, have a steady stream of potential out-of-school youth participants because they are designated "Welcome Home Centers" for youth who are released from placement. As a final example of this strategy, the Milwaukee district worked informally with key individuals from local correctional and detention facilities to refer court-involved youth to Transition High School.

Some grantees, such as the Chicago, Milwaukee, and Orange County districts, have created staff positions at juvenile facilities whose role is to recruit youth for grant-funded interventions. OCPS hired a guidance counselor to work at the Juvenile Assessment Center, while at CPS intervention specialists are co-located at the juvenile detention center to meet with youth and assess their interest in attending the Banner Schools (transitional schools for adjudicated youth). Having designated staff responsible for conducting outreach to out-of-school youth gave these grantees an assured method of reaching their target population.

Recruiting Out-of-School Youth from a Transition Center

The Re-Engagement Center (REC) is a city entity housed at the School District of Philadelphia's administrative building. The REC is a one-stop shop for former SDP students, a place where they can go to receive information and placement services that will reconnect them to an educational pathway (e.g., traditional school, accelerated school, career or technical school, etc.). The center is staffed with a specialist who reviews students' academic histories; conducts basic skills, bio-psychosocial and behavioral assessments; and makes academic and supportive service referrals. Key partners of this center include the School District of Philadelphia, the City of Philadelphia, and the Philadelphia Youth Network.

At the Re-Engagement Center, youth can have their Individual Education Plans (IEP) updated, complete academic and career-interest inventories, and obtain transcripts and other pertinent academic documents (e.g., test scores). After completing these activities, out-of-school youth can be connected to one of the target interventions that are supported by the School District Grant.[5]

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[5]   This includes North Philadelphia Community High School, E3 West Power Center, Occupational Skills Pathways Program, Overbrook High School, and University City HS.

Recruitment Challenges

A number of core challenges surfaced as grantees conducted outreach and recruitment.

- **Grantees are unable to predict which students will enroll in target high schools, despite efforts to recruit them in middle school.** Even though grantee staff work closely with middle schools to identify incoming ninth graders who could benefit from program services, the staff are not able to reliably predict whether these youth will attend the target schools because students often decide to enroll in charter schools or other schools outside their neighborhoods. As a result, project staff do not always know the exact number of youth who will enroll in program services, which resulted in lower-than-expected enrollment at the beginning of the grant period.

- **As described in Chapter IV, grantees have weak partnerships with their juvenile justice partners and this has made it difficult for grantees to coordinate recruitment**. For instance, at the onset of the grant, Baltimore Futures Works! staff anticipated that they would be able to use information from DJJ to identify and recruit youth offenders. Futures Work! staff provided DJJ with a list of more than 1,200 students who were behind two grade levels and asked them to identify the youth offenders on this list so that the program could target those youth for services. But DJJ delayed the identification process for so long that Futures Work! staff were unable to verify youths' offender status prior to enrolling them.

- **Contact information for potential participants often changes frequently, making it difficult to reach youth who are targeted for services.** Grantees noted that even if they are able to obtain a list of potential program participants from the schools, the contact information for these youth is often outdated, usually because of the transient nature of many of these youth and their families.

- **Youth offenders are sometimes reluctant to enroll in transitional schools after leaving detention, preferring instead to return directly to their home schools.** A few grantees, such as Chicago, Milwaukee, and Orange County, struggled to recruit youth offenders for their programs. Chicago, for instance, had trouble reaching enrollment targets for its Banner schools due to the small number of youth transitioning out of detention and reluctance on the part of these students to attend the schools because they felt like the schools were extensions of their prison sentences.

Despite these recruitment challenges, grantees have enrolled sufficient numbers of youth, as discussed below.

Enrollment

According to DOL's guidelines, a youth is enrolled into grant-funded services when he or she has completed the entire application process and has begun to receive services. In order to receive services, youth must complete the required paperwork and those under 18 must obtain

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parental consent. Some grantees also require youth to complete waiver forms that allow release of information from DJJ.

As of December 2009, grantees enrolled 3,765 participants—3,123 in-school youth (83 percent of the total) and 642 out-of-school youth (17 percent of the total). OCPS has enrolled the largest number of participants and MPS the fewest. Grantees vary in the relative proportions of in-school and out-of-school youth that they enrolled, suggesting differences in program focus. CPS is serving the largest proportion of in-school youth (100 percent), followed by MPS (89 percent), and OCPS (80 percent). On the other hand, SDP enrolled the largest proportion of OSY (37 percent), followed by BCPSS (26 percent), and OCPS (20 percent).

Exhibit V-3:
ISY and OSY Enrollment by Grantee
July 1, 2007–December 31, 2009[6]
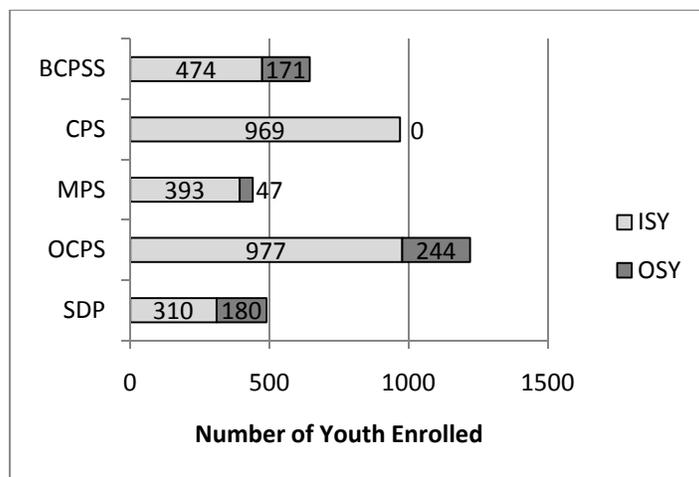
Exhibit V-4, below, shows that the vast majority (84 percent) of ISY served by the grant are categorized as "at risk" of court or gang involvement. Youth offenders and incarcerated youth offenders make up about 16 percent of the ISY served by the grant as of the end of December 2009. Exhibit V-4 also shows that grantees vary considerably in the numbers of at-risk vs. offender/incarcerated ISY that they enrolled. Orange County has identified and enrolled a very high number of ISY offenders (62 percent of the number of all youth offenders served by the grant), due at least in part to the strong working relationship between the OCPS and the DJJ. In contrast, Philadelphia and Baltimore have enrolled few ISY offenders to date, due to delays in the launch of programs and in difficulty accessing data on the offender status of ISY.

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[6] Between July 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008, Baltimore submitted two quarterly reports, Chicago submitted one, Milwaukee submitted two, Orange County submitted four, and Philadelphia submitted three.

Exhibit V-4:
Enrollment of In-School Youth
July 1, 2007–December 31, 2009
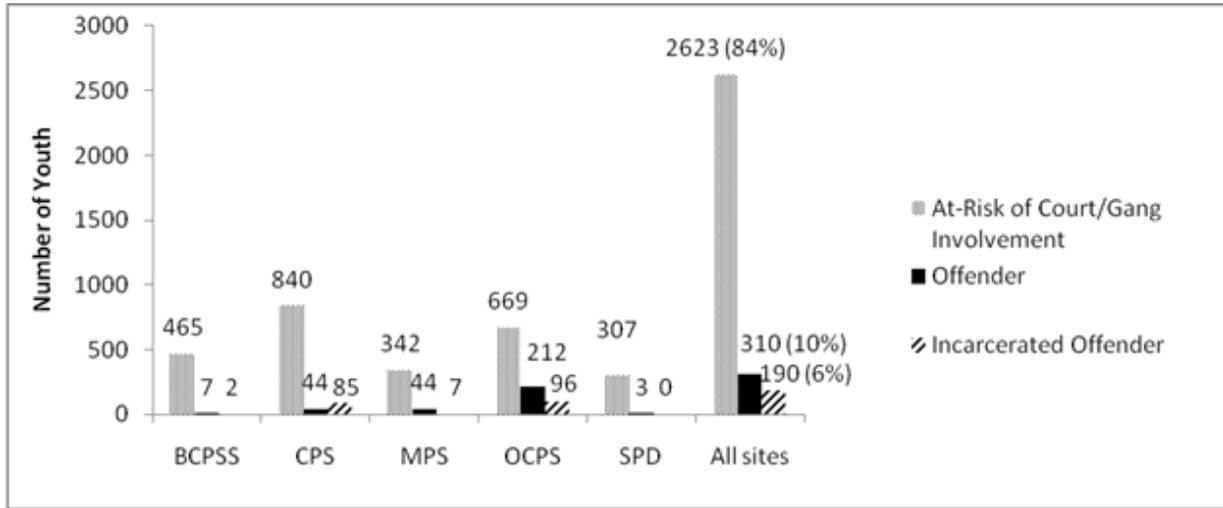
Similar to the situation with the in-school youth population, the vast majority of out-of-school youth (82 percent) are considered "at-risk" of court/gang involvement, as shown in Exhibit V-5. Just under a fifth of OSY are either youth offenders or incarcerated offenders (18 percent). Given that this grant aims to serve the most at-risk youth, including offenders, the actual number of offenders served is small. It is possible, however, that more youth offenders will be enrolled as grantees continue to roll out their projects, especially grantees that were slow to launch their projects. CPS, for example was delayed in launching its transitional school program (Banner Schools) and expects to enroll more youth offenders by the end of the summer.

Exhibit V-5:
Enrollment: Out-of-School Youth
July 1, 2007–December 31, 2009

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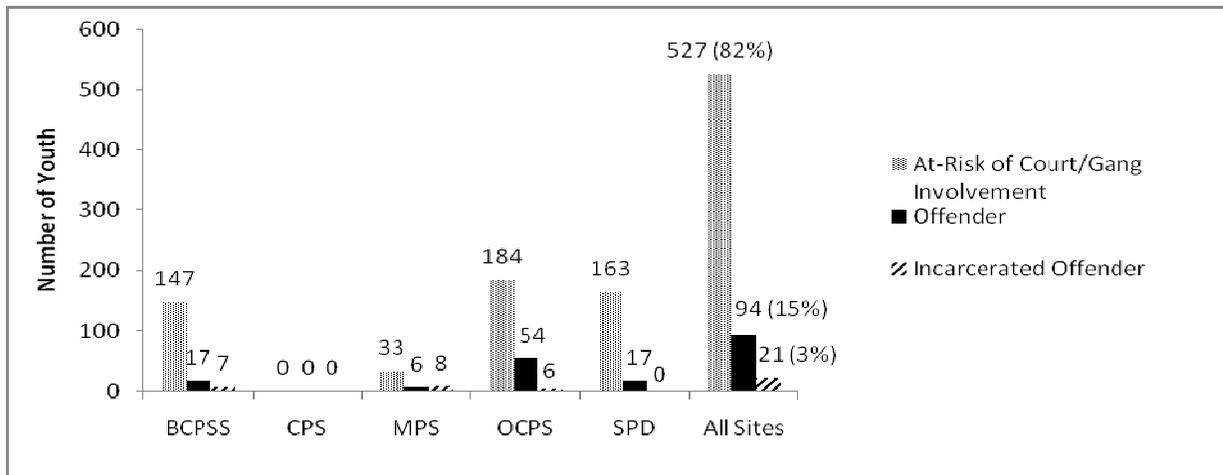
Exhibit V-6 displays the cumulative number of enrollments from September 2007 to December 2009, the last month for which we have data. As the exhibit shows, enrollments were slow to start but jumped significantly in the fifth quarter (July to September 2008), when the grantees added about 1,264 participants. Enrollment numbers continued to climb steadily into 2009 as grantees rolled out their projects and subsequently reached more youth. By September 2009, two years after grant funds were awarded, grantees had enrolled more than 3,000 participants. This is a remarkable achievement given the slow pace of enrollment during the first year of project implementation.

Exhibit V-6:
Participant Enrollment
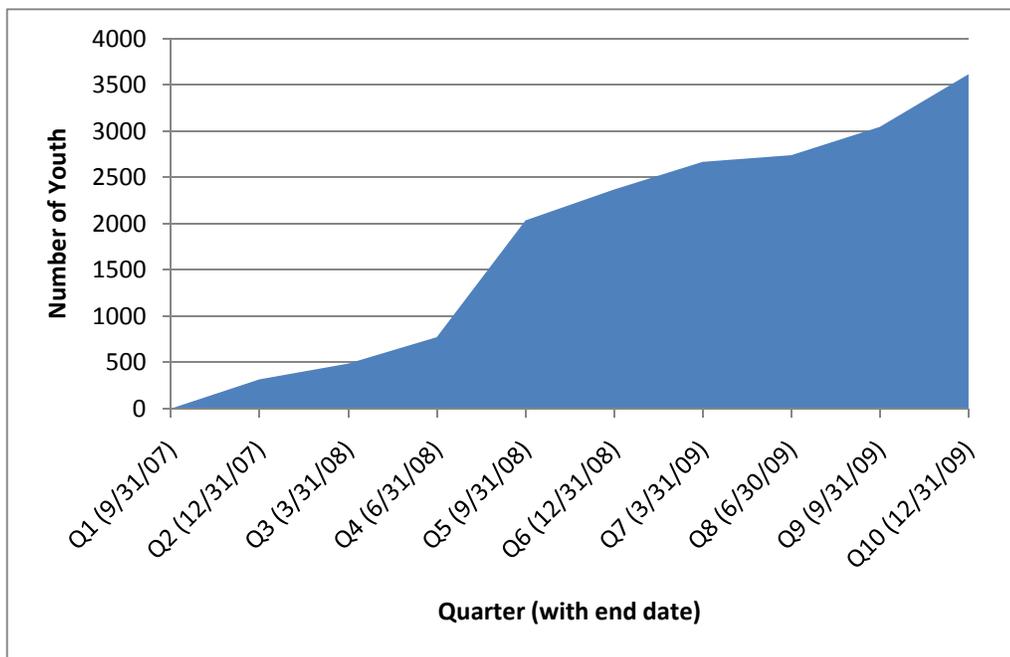
Exhibit V-7 shows that grantees enrolled participants at different times. Because the first year of the grant was devoted to grant planning, few grantees enrolled participants during this year. The Orange County school district was the exception to this generalization: as the first grantee to launch its programs and thus the first to enroll participants, OCPS had enrolled 316 youth by December 2007. Most of the grantees began to enroll small numbers of participants between March and June 2008. The exception is the Chicago Public Schools, which was the last grantee to begin enrolling participants.

Exhibit V-7:
Enrollment Patterns Across Grantees
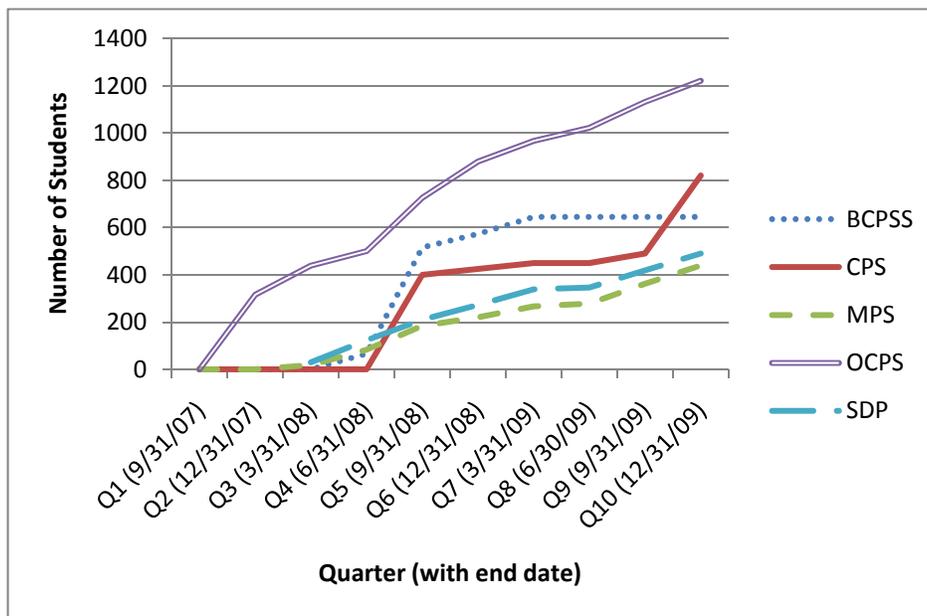
These data show that grantees differ greatly in their projects' scale and focus. The school district in Orange County has served about 1,221 participants, while the Milwaukee and Philadelphia districts have served just a little under 500 participants each. (In terms of focus, it has already been noted, in relation to Exhibit V-3, that grantees differ in the extent to which they focus on in-school or out-of-school youth.)

The length of program enrollment also varies significantly by individual grantee. The Chicago district's programs last from 20 weeks (Banner Schools, maximum length) to one year (YES program), while Philadelphia's programs last anywhere from 12 weeks (Learning to Work program) to 10 months (North Philadelphia Community High School and the E³ Power Centers). OCPS's YES program, BCPSS's Futures Works! program, and MPS's Futures First Initiative all made a significant effort to keep students enrolled in the program over the length of grant. In the case of Orange County and Baltimore, case workers followed up with youth at regular intervals even after they had moved on to non-grantee schools and programs. These differences in projects' scale and focus are essential for understanding the types of outcomes—such as workforce outcomes—that can be expected. (See Chapter VII for a discussion of outcomes.)

Summary

This chapter discussed the types of youth that grantees aim to serve, the ways in which they identified and recruited these youth, and the numbers and types of youth they actually enrolled.

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We documented the tremendous effort grantees undertook to ramp up their programs in order to enroll youth from the start of the grant period to the end of December 2009. Few grantees enrolled participants in the first year of the grant period because they devoted their time to design tasks and mobilizing partners. Towards the beginning of the second year, however, grantees enrolled more than 2,000 participants, suggesting that grantees were gaining momentum around project implementation.

While grantees enrolled youth who they set out to serve, they enrolled smaller proportions of out-of-school youth than may have been expected based on the grant's focus on serving youth with the greatest needs. While grantees made a concerted effort to reach and serve OSY by linking with core partners, ultimately grantees enrolled, overall, a fairly small percentage of OSY (17 percent). As grantees move into the last stages of grant implementation, program enrollment numbers will likely continue to rise and there may be some shifts in the types of youth served. The next chapter describes the services available to youth.

VI.   PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The School District Grant is funding interventions for youth offenders and youth who are at risk of becoming involved in violence. To meet the needs of these youth, and to reduce violence in the target schools and communities, grantees have developed and implemented a range of educational, employment, case-management, and violence-prevention strategies. Grantees have used the School District Grant to create new programs and structures to meet the needs of the target population, providing services within traditional schools, alternative schools, and community-based programs. This chapter provides an overview of grantee programs for in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY), and then presents in-depth data on the types of services that grantee programs provide and the frequency with which participants receive those services.

ISY Programs within Traditional Schools

Grantees have created a range of programs within traditional schools, all of which share the goal of creating a more personalized learning environment for at-risk and adjudicated students. Exhibit VI-1 provides an overview of these programs.

The exhibit shows that grant-funded programs are active at 18 traditional high schools and six traditional middle schools. Ninth graders are the most common target group, though the grant serves grades eight through twelve. The length of programs within traditional schools varies by site. Two of the programs (those of CPS and SDP) last for one year, with new cohorts of students enrolled at the beginning of each new school year. The other three grantees (BCPSS, MPS, and OCPS) enroll youth for two to three years in order to provide continuity and support over time.

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Exhibit VI-1:
Overview of Traditional School Programs

	Major Program Features	**Schools**	**ISY Served**	**New w/ Grant?**	**Program Length**
BCPSS					
Futures (Future Works!)	• Students earn academic credit for attending afterschool program. Services are offered in a structured, classroom format. • Program "advocates" provide case management, job preparation, and academic support.	Two middle schools Two high schools	450 Grades: 8–10	No[1]	Two to three years
CPS					
YES Program	• Students earn academic credit for attending afterschool Freshman Seminar series, based on Johns Hopkins Talent Development School Reform model. Services are offered in a structured, classroom format. New cohorts of students are recruited each academic year. • "Student Engagement Specialists" provide case management services.	Six high schools	800 Grade: 9	Yes	One year
MPS					
Futures First Initiative (FFI)	• Students are exposed to a range of enrichment and life skills classes, most focused on violence prevention. Services are offered in an unstructured format during the school day and afterschool. • Site-based Teams, which include a social worker, guidance counselor and youth career development specialist, provide case management services as needed.	Four high schools	250 Grades: 9–12	Yes	Two to three years

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[1] The Futures initiative has a long history in BCPSS, but was implemented at middle schools for the first time with the School District Grant.

	Major Program Features	Schools	ISY Served	New w/ Grant?	Program Length
OCPS					
YES program	• "Intervention Specialists" provide case management and supportive services. Services are offered in unstructured format during the school day.	Four middle schools Four high schools	700 Grades: 9–12	Yes	Two to three years
SDP					
Learning to Work (LTW) Program	• Students earn credit for enrolling in the OASIS credit retrieval program and receive job preparation and internships in a structured classroom format.	Two high schools	200 Grade: Repeating 9	Yes	One year

The structure of the programs varies. Two of the five grantees (BCPSS and CPS) offer afterschool programs, where students attend structured classes after school and are exposed to a mix of job readiness training, life skills training, and academic tutoring or remediation. In the Chicago district, for example, the afterschool program follows the Talent Development curriculum and includes topics such as introduction to high school, study skills, social skills, conflict resolution, career exploration, post-secondary decisions, technology, and work-readiness skills. The class lasts about one and a half hours. In contrast, programs offered by the other grantees are fairly unstructured. In the Milwaukee and Orange County districts, for instance, grant-funded staff pull students from their classes to provide counseling and to address behavioral or attendance issues as they arise.

The MIS aggregates the data on ISY, so it does not provide information on exactly how many ISY received services in traditional schools versus alternative schools. Qualitative data indicate, however, that at least 2,400 ISY youth received services in traditional schools, representing more than 75 percent of all ISY served by the grant.[2] The total number of ISY influenced by the grant is larger than this figure indicates, however; this is because some grantees used the School

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[2] Because we rely on conservative qualitative estimates for program enrollment, our estimate for the number of ISY served by traditional schools and alternative schools combined equals only 84 percent of total ISY enrollment.

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District Grant to fund staff and services that benefit the whole school (this topic is discussed later in this chapter).

While the programs that grantees implemented differ widely, they share the following overarching goals:

- **Facilitate trusting relationships among school staff and target youths.** As will be discussed further in the case management section of this chapter, grantees hired staff to act as counselors, monitor student attendance and behavior, and connect youths to resources. Grantees share the goal of making sure that students have at least one strong connection with an adult within the school, someone to whom they can turn as an advocate and resource.

- **Create small-scale supportive peer environments for students within larger comprehensive schools.** Four of the grantees (BCPSS, CPS, MPS, and SDP) hold classes for students either after school or during the school day.[3] In many cases, grant-funded staff at target schools facilitate same-gender peer support groups and enrichment activities. Grantees are engaging students in a range of trust-building and relationship-building exercises designed to enhance peer relationships, improve students' communication skills, and reduce interpersonal conflicts.

- **Connect youth to academic services, workforce services, and other supportive services**. Because programs are offered within traditional schools that already provide extensive academic services to students, most grantees (CPS, MPS, OCPS, SDP), through the use of case managers, are connecting target ISY to academic services that are already offered by the school. For instance, students are assigned to afterschool tutoring or to classes that provide academic remediation. BCPSS is the only grantee to fund additional remedial services for students in traditional schools, but other grantees connected students to existing services within the target schools. Four grantees (BCPSS, MPS, OCPS, and SDP) used the grant to create additional workforce services for ISY, while the other (OCPS) connected target students to workforce opportunities in the community. Grantees also connected students to other supportive services, such as drug and alcohol counseling.

- **Increase communication among school staff about how to address the needs of at-risk and adjudicated students**. One goal of the grant is to systematically enhance structures and processes within traditional schools designed to identify and serve at-risk students and to improve the overall climate of peer relations at the school. To further this aim, grant-funded staff worked closely with teachers, SROs, and other school counselors to address the needs of enrolled students. For instance, case managers at the Chicago Public Schools receive attendance data

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[3] SDP's school-based LTW program is somewhat different in that it provided services to students enrolled in the OASIS program, which operates as a small school-within-a-school for students who are over-age and under-credit. In the case of SDP, therefore, the LTW program serves students who are already in a smaller environment and are not attending regular classes at the comprehensive high school.

from the office each day and review it carefully to see whether participants are absent. When a student is not in class, either a member of the school staff or the case manager calls the student's home. The case manager then informs the student's teachers why the student is absent.

Scheduling grant-funded services is more challenging for programs operating within traditional schools than it is for alternative schools or programs for OSY, because the traditional schools have limited authority over how the school day is structured. To address this issue, most grantees (BCPSS, CPS, and OCPS) offered services either afterschool or informally during the school day (during students' study periods and passing periods, for example). Grantees that offer afterschool programs sometimes have low attendance, because many students, particularly at-risk students, do not want to stay after school. Average daily attendance in the Chicago district's YES program's Freshman Seminar afterschool program, for example, is only 40–60 percent.

Example of Integrated Services in a Traditional School:
The Multiple Roles of a Case Manager

Ms. Cruz is an intervention specialist at a school in Orange County, Florida. She is a vital member of the school community who plays multiple roles within the school. Ms. Cruz does the following:

- Works on interventions to improve school climate. She and the SRO consider themselves a "team" in helping to address issues of school climate. Ms. Cruz and the SRO designed a school-wide curriculum for Anti-Violence Month, which included cross-curricular lesson plans for all grade levels, oriented towards the Civil Rights Movement.

- Monitors students on her caseload. She meets with students one-on-one during their "research period," observes their classes, attends their parent–teacher conferences, and keeps regular contact with students' parents. She also participates in the teachers' "Team Meetings" where strategies for meeting the needs of "challenging" students are raised and addressed.

- Develops students' organizational skills. She reported that many youths do not complete or turn in their work because they lack the organizational skills needed to manage multiple classes and assignments at once. During her first meeting with a student, therefore, she and the student organize a binder for the student's schoolwork.

- Conducts team-building exercises with small groups of 8–10 youth on her caseload. Team building exercises are approaches she uses to help enhance students' trust and communication skills.

- Runs the afterschool tutoring program at her school, which is open to all students. She encourages all of the students on her caseload to come to afterschool tutoring to get one-on-one help.

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ISY Alternative School Programs

Creating alternative schools is a core strategy that grantees are using to help meet the unique needs of two target sub-populations: youth offenders who are transitioning out of juvenile placements and students who are over-age for their grade level and low on academic credits. Alternative schools differ from traditional schools in that they adopt nontraditional curricula and teaching methods, and often offer a more flexible program of study. Four grantees (MPS, OCPS, SDP, and CPS) have used the School District Grant as seed funding to create alternative schools, and OCPS has also used grant funds to support case management at five existing alternative schools. While each of the newly created alternative schools has a specific focus on youth offenders, SDP and MPS have funded schools that are also open to out-of-school youth who are looking to reconnect to an education pathway. OCPS and CPS, on the other hand, are funding schools designed exclusively for school-age offenders transitioning out of a residential placement. Exhibit VI-2 provides an overview of the alternative school models that have been funded by the grant.

As is illustrated in Exhibit VI-2, the alternative schools funded by the grant are generally very small, serving between 50 and 180 students. With the exception of the Banner Schools that were launched late in the grant cycle, the programs are reaching full enrollment. Although the MIS does not provide information on the specific programs that ISY are enrolled in, our qualitative data indicates that at least 350 students (11 percent of all ISY) were being served by the grant at the time of the third evaluation site visit.[4]

Eight of the ten alternative schools are "comprehensive," in that they provide a comprehensive set of services, including credit retrieval and coursework that can lead to a HS diploma. Only one alternative school (OCPS) provides GED preparation. CPS's Banner Schools act as short transitional programs and do not award degrees. MPS's Transition High School is also a time-limited program, as youth can earn a degree only if they can complete the coursework in one year or less. Students at time-limited schools can earn accelerated credits while they are waiting for a natural break in the academic calendar to begin classes at either a traditional high school or another alternative program.

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[4] Because we rely on conservative qualitative estimates for program enrollment, our estimate for the number of ISY served by traditional schools and alternative schools combined equals only 84 percent of total ISY enrollment.

Exhibit VI-2:
Overview of Alternative School Program Models

	Major Program Features	Enrollment as of 12/09	New w/Grant?	Type Program	Program Length
CPS					
Banner Schools (Banner South and Banner North)	• Banner Schools provide temporary academic services for students who are typically over the age of 17 and transitioning from detention to their home schools. • Students gain credits through self-paced online learning curriculum, attend life skills training, and receive employment services.[5]	Goal: 120 (60 per school) Actual: 43 (21 Banner North, 22 Banner South)	Yes	• Credit retrieval	10–30 weeks
MPS					
Transition High School	• Transition HS provides services to youth offenders and OSY students looking to re-engage with an educational pathway. • Students receive an individual education plan and use an online curriculum to earn credits in an accelerated manner. • Students receive employment services from an employment specialist who is located on site.[6]	Goal: 175 Actual: 100	Yes	• Credit retrieval • High school diploma[7]	One year
OCPS					
YES Positive Pathways Transition Center	• The YES Positive Pathways Transition center is a multiple pathways program for students transitioning from detention. • Students attend five classes a day, and can earn credits in an accelerated manner through an online curriculum. Some students are placed into subsidized employment.	Goal: 60 Actual: 54	Yes	• Credit retrieval • GED • High school diploma	Variable, depending on student

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[5] The employment aspect of the Banner Schools' programs has been slow to start. It is expected that once the program launches, students will receive $450 to attend the workforce component at the transitional Banner Schools.

[6] This aspect of the program has been slow to start.

[7] A student can graduate from Transition High School but only if he or she has one year of work to complete before graduation. It is not designed for students who need an extended period in order to complete their degree.

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	Major Program Features	**Enrollment as of 12/09**	**New w/Grant?**	**Type Program**	**Program Length**
Five School To Work (STW) alternative Schools	• Students apply for these selective alternative schools, which are for students who are over-age and under-credit. • Students spend the first half of the day earning accelerated academic credits and then spend the second half of the day in subsidized work experience.	Goal: 50 (across all five schools) Actual: 65	No[8]	• Credit retrieval • High school diploma	One year
SDP					
North Philadelphia Community High School (NPCHS)	• NPCHS is an alternative project - based educational program for youth aged 17–21 with 13 or fewer credits. • Students earn the credits they need to graduate at an accelerated rate. Students can earn up to 2.75 units for each eight-week session. • Students attend Learning To Work (LTW) for one period every day, which provides job readiness training. They are also assigned to internships in the summer.	Goal: 180 (100 are supported by School District Grant) Actual: 90 (Supported by School District Grant)	Yes	• Credit retrieval • High school diploma	Variable, depending on student

Three of the comprehensive schools (OCPS's Positive Pathways Transition Center, MPS's Transition High School, and SDP's NPCHS) create distinct educational pathways for students depending on their age and academic needs. For instance, at the Positive Pathways Transition Center in Orange County, students who are 15 and under are generally encouraged to return to a regular high school, while those who are 18 and older are encouraged to complete their diplomas or GEDs at the Positive Pathways Transition Center. Students who are 16–17 are given the option of (1) catching up on credits and returning to their home school, (2) remaining at the Transition Center until they graduate, or (3) transitioning to another academic program.

The youth attending these alternative schools have varying skill levels, and face a number of barriers that prevent them from performing at their potential. Some have life responsibilities (e.g., children or a sick parent) or face other challenges that make it difficult for them to focus on

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[8] The five alternative schools existed prior to the School District Grant. The grant funded an intervention specialist, however, who was new to the school.

their education. Many students are in alternative schools because they have had a negative experience with regular schooling. Recognizing this challenge, grant-funded alternative schools have implemented the following core strategies.

- **Use a team approach to teach and guide youth**. This team typically includes teachers in the core subjects, reading and math specialists, social workers, guidance counselors, and mental health providers. These teachers and staff work with the youth one-on-one, using a multi-disciplinary approach to meeting their needs. The team also works to connect students as needed with a full range of wrap-around services. For instance, at CPS, the entire team of case managers and reenrollment specialists work closely to enroll youth at the Banner Schools and coordinate their service plans.

- **Maintain a small class size to ensure that students get individualized attention.** As described previously, alternative schools are characterized by their small student bodies, with three of the schools having an enrollment of 35–60 students. The small class sizes allow teachers and staff to provide youth with the individualized support and instruction they need. Within classes, teachers used a variety of education techniques, including individual and group instruction. For example, at Transition High School (MPS) teachers work on credit retrieval with groups of three to five students.

- **Offer online instruction so that students can complete units at their own paces.** With the exception of North Philadelphia Community High School, the grant-funded alternative schools offer self-paced computer-based instruction so that students can work independently and begin coursework the day they enroll. Teachers, staff, and youth all spoke highly of these online learning programs, because the assignments are tailored to students' levels. These programs are described in detail later in this chapter.

- **Connect students to wrap-around supportive services that help ensure their success.** Grantees are also collaborating with a number of community partners to provide employment and supportive services (e.g., job readiness training, restorative justice, mental health, life skills, etc.) to enrolled youth at the alternative schools. These services have also allowed grantees to address barriers that prevent youth from attending school. For instance, students at alternative schools often receive bus passes that help to address transportation barriers.

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Example of an Alternative School:
Transition High School in Milwaukee

Transition High School opened March 2008 as a part of the Futures First Initiative (FFI). Students are eligible to enroll at Transition High School if they have been incarcerated, have had contact with JJS, or are a known gang member. Students are also eligible if they show signs of potential school failure, such as significant truancy and/or low academic credits. The goal of Transition High School is for students to receive a high school diploma and to transition into employment and/or a post-secondary education program.

Each student at Transition High School has a personalized educational plan structured around virtual learning, employment, and community service. Students complete online coursework, with in-person instruction by MPS teachers. Students participate in workshops and classes led by community-based partners that are focused on conflict resolution (Ambassadors for Peace) and leadership and life skills training (Urban Underground).

Josh Smith is an example of a student who benefited from Transition High School's supportive and self-paced environment. Josh enrolled in Transition HS after having been released from a residential juvenile facility. The staff at Transition HS pushed him to do his best and helped him to get back on his feet. Josh explained:

> *This is not the school for you if you don't want to succeed…if you're not determined, if you're not motivated, this is not something that you want to do. Because they're going to push you, because they know it's in you and they want the right stuff for you…This is not your typical normal high school.*

Josh graduated from Transition HS with his high school diploma and found a job with the help of the Futures First Initiative (FFI) employment services. He said,

> *Transition [High School] just helped me get my life together. It helped me see who I was and who I can be.*

One of the core challenges facing transitional schools, particularly the two that are exclusively for youth offenders (Banner Schools in Chicago and Positive Pathways Transition Center in Orange County), is that students often view the school as an extension of their juvenile placement. As a result, programs that are recruiting students, such as the Banner Schools in Chicago, are finding it difficult to reach their enrollment targets. To address this problem, DJJ is requesting that judges require that students attend OCPS' Positive Pathways Transition Center. A DJJ staff member described the situation:

> *Students would say, 'show me on this court order where it says that I have to go this school.' We had no orders saying that they needed to go there. So, that's why we had to build it in as a [court] order at the beginning of the program.*

The court order facilitates enrollment of ISY offenders in the schools, but in some cases students remain very resistant, attending school only because it is a condition of their parole. A teacher at a Banner School in Chicago said,

> *The only issue that I think is different from us [as a transitional school for offenders] and the traditional schools is the anger. They come here with a lot of anger.*

In short, the older youth offender population is a challenging population to reach, even in the smaller and more supportive settings of the alternative schools. A grant staff person in Orange County explained:

> *When kids get out of commitment, they aren't cured. It's a wonderful opportunity for them, but some of them are just not taking advantage of that.*

Despite the challenges of working with the target population, local stakeholders see the alternative schools as one of the lasting outcomes of the School District Grant. For CPS and OCPS, the schools represent a new level of synergy and coordination between the school district and the department of juvenile justice. Likewise, the other alternative schools that have been funded are offering students a second chance to complete their education and get on a path towards employment.

OSY Programs

Programs for OSY differ from those for ISY because they are targeted towards an older youth population and are generally more oriented towards workforce services. Three grantees (BCPSS, OCPS, and SDP) funded specific programs for OSY, while the other two (CPS and MPS) serve primarily ISY.[9] Grant-funded programs for OSY are described below in Exhibit VI-3.

The OSY interventions funded by BCPSS, OCPS, and SDP share many commonalities. First, all grantees contracted with established partners to deliver OSY services. This was primarily because, as school districts, grantees felt that CBO partners are better positioned to provide these services. The most common target group for OSY programs is youth between 16 and 21. Furthermore, OSY programs all have open enrollment and because the programs are self-paced the length of the program varies from participant to participant. Although the MIS does not provide enrollment information for specific programs, our qualitative data suggests that OSY programs have served at least 550 youth.

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[9] Although MPS did not fund programs specifically for OSY, MPS enrolled 47 OSY into Transition High School, an alternative school model described in the previous section of this chapter.

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Exhibit VI-3:
Overview of OSY Program Models

Program and Partner	Major Program Features	Enrollment 1/10	New w/Grant?	Program Length
BCPSS				
YO! Centers (Westside Center and Eastside Center)	• Participants are OSY, ages 16–22. Participants go through an orientation, take a TABE test, and attend a four-day job readiness training prior to enrollment. • Participants attend pre-GED or GED classes four days a week and are also placed on an employment track. Participants in the internship track work 15 hours a week at $7.25/hour. Participants also receive supportive services and wraparound services.	Goal: 150 (75 per center) Actual: 143	No	Varies by participant; open enrollment
Department of Juvenile Services (DJS)	• DJS plans to provide employment services and internships for participants enrolled in the city's Operation Safe Kids Program, an intensive case management program for youth that have been detained.[10]	Goal: 100 Actual: 0[11]	Yes	Varies
OCPS				
YES Program: Workforce Central Florida	• Participants are OSY, ages 18–21. Participants attend an orientation, take a TABE test, and attend three YES workshops prior to enrollment. • Participants attend job preparation training, can receive training in the National Retail (NRF) Customer Service Certification program, and are placed into jobs or other training programs. Students receive incentives for achieving milestones, such as obtaining NRF certification.	Goal: 100 Actual: 169 youth[12]	Yes[13]	Varies by participant; open enrollment

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[10] This approach was modified from DJS's original contract. DJS was initially contracted to recruit 100 youth with a record in the Juvenile Justice System and enroll them in school or the YO! Program.

[11] BCPSS had not yet implemented this program as of January 2010.

[12] Seventy youth did not technically fit the criteria for OSY, because they had earned a GED or diploma, but were unemployed and looking for job training.

[13] The YES program is newly created with the School District Grant, but it was built on an established model that WCF uses to provide workforce services.

Program and Partner	Major Program Features	Enrollment 1/10	New w/Grant?	Program Length
YES Program: Metropolitan Orlando Urban League	• Participants are gang-involved or adjudicated OSY, ages 16–21. All participants take TABE test and receive an Individual Career Plan prior to enrollment. • Participants work towards GED completion and are placed in a part-time subsidized employment. Participants receive stipends for participating in different program elements, and receive supportive services (clothes, food, transportation assistance).	Goal: 60 Actual: 52 youth	No	Varies by participant; open enrollment
Parramore District Recreational Center[14]	• Grant funds one outreach worker to mentor youth and connect them to community services such as career and recreational activities.	Goal: 50 Actual: 51 youth	Yes	Informal
SDP				
E^3 Bridge Program (E^3=Education, Employment & Empowerment)	• Participants are OSY, ages 14–21. The program is a "bridge" program, as the goal is for students to earn credits while waiting to transfer to an accelerated high school. Participants take a TABE test and go through an orientation prior to enrollment. • Once enrolled, participants earn up to five credits in twelve weeks via an online curriculum. Participants also receive academic remediation when necessary.	Goal: 150 (35 at a time) Actual: 157	Yes[15]	Varies by participant; cohorts participate in 12-week training intervals.
Occupational Skills Pathway Program (Community College of Philadelphia and NPower)	• Program targets participants at the E^3 Centers who are over 18, have their GED or are enrolled in GED courses, and have completed job readiness training. • Participants undergo occupational skills training (automotive, hospitality, IT) at existing programs such as the Community College of Philadelphia and NPower. After training program, participants are placed into subsidized employment.	Goal: 150 Actual: 29[16]	No	Varies by training program

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[14] This intervention is discussed in more depth later in this chapter in the section on violence prevention programs. Although the intervention is targeted at OSY, the outreach worker serves both ISY and OSY.

[15] The E^3 Programs existed prior to the grant, but the Bridge Program is new.

[16] The Occupational Skills Pathway program faced challenges in the start-up phase of the grant, including difficulty locating space to operate the program. As a result, the program was slow to start providing services.

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OSY participants spoke very highly of program staff and services, and both participants and staff highlighted the following as best practices.

- **Grantees contracted with well-established OSY programs with strong ties to the community.** This approach reduced planning and oversight requirements for the school district, facilitated youth recruitment and enrollment, and provided some insurance that services would be high quality. Thus, though contract negotiations contributed to a generally slow launch of OSY services, most programs rapidly reached or exceeded enrollment targets.

- **OSY programs have strategies to screen and retain students.** The majority of OSY is over the age of 16 and therefore not required to attend school. As a result, OSY programs are more likely than those for ISY to assess participants' commitment to the program prior to enrollment, for instance by requiring that they attend a series of workshops. Several programs also provide financial incentives to encourage participation. One OCPS provider, Workforce Central Florida (WCF), offers participants $100 for obtaining National Retail Customer Service Certification, $100 for completing an online mentoring program, $150 for obtaining employment, $50 for retaining employment for 45 days, and $100 for retaining employment for $90 days. Youths also can earn $1,200 through a WCF work experience position and $50 for referring other eligible youth to the program.

- **Program staff prioritize youth leadership and encourage participants' sense of autonomy and voice in the program.** In interviews, youth within OSY programs frequently drew sharp contrasts between their experiences within the program and their experiences in traditional schools. As emerging adults, participants particularly valued that program staff treated them with respect, listened to their ideas, and provided opportunities for them to provide input. Program staff said that they encourage participants to take responsibility for their success in the program, and to communicate with staff regarding what they need in order to be successful. E[3] Bridge Program staff, for instance, encourage participants to be their own "social agents" and make an effort to regularly have conversations with participants about "what works and doesn't work" in order to improve the program.

- **Programs provide wrap-around services in order to address employment barriers.** The YO! Center in Baltimore, for instance, is a comprehensive community center with many onsite resources, including health and childcare services. Participants can also receive drivers' training through the center. The Metropolitan Urban League program in Orange County is a small program, but it raises money from the community so that it can provide participants with clothing, regular food baskets, and transportation assistance.

Example of a Comprehensive Program for OSY:
BCPSS's YO! Program

My cousin told me about the center. He came to me one day and said, 'if you are trying to do something better with yourself, go to the YO! and they'll help you out.'

– Participant, YO! Westside Center

Although the YO! Westside Center is located in a neighborhood with relatively high rates of violence, the atmosphere inside the center is warm and inviting. A participant at the center said, "the neighborhood is a bad drug area, but when I'm inside the [YO!] Center I feel safe." The YO! Center has a gym, a recording studio, a recreation room that has video games and a pool table, and several large rooms for classes and activities.

Participants at the YO Center receive at least 20 hours of education services a month. Participants take a TABE test that places them in one of the following educational tracks: adult basic education, Pre-GED, GED, or online credit recovery. Academic classes for each track are held four days a week. One participant said of the educational services, "The teachers in high school, they teach more out of the book, less real life. Here, they interact with students. The teachers [at the YO! Center] have more of a passion for teaching."

In addition, participants at the YO! Center receive at least 10 hours of workforce services a month. Because most participants do not have work experience, they are initially placed into four-month internships, where they work for 15 hours a week at $7.25 an hour. For example, the YO! Center has worked with Baltimore City's Department of Transportation (DOT) to develop internships for participants as general laborers and administrative aids. Approximately 15 Westside Center youth have been placed into these internships.

Finally, YO participants receive extensive case management from YO! Advocates. YO! Advocates develop an Individual Opportunity Plan for each participant and refer them to in-house services such as the drivers' education program, parenting support groups, or legal aid. One YO participant described the role of the advocate in the following way:

My advocate came to my house one time because my phone was off. He was like 'What's going on. I have all these opportunities. Come to the Center.' The [advocates] always ask about your barriers, what's stopping you from what you want to do, and they jump right on it and help you out with it.

The economic recession of 2009–2010 created challenges for OSY programs, as job developers found it increasingly difficult to locate jobs and internships for program participants. According to staff, participants are competing for entry-level jobs with "people who've been laid off and who have a track record of being employed, showing up on time, and have a mortgage to pay." The lack of employment opportunities contributed to a sense of urgency among OSY in the target communities. For instance, when walking in the target community with one of the evaluation's site visitors, a youth worker was approached by three separate youth who asked

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plaintively, "When are you going to get me a job?" Program staff discussed how difficult it was for them to watch youth search for work during the recession. For example,

> *We've seen people week after week after week looking for jobs. It breaks*
> *your heart, because we have done everything we feel that we can do to*
> *arm them and you want that success. You know that they are trying, but*
> *the jobs are not there. They really are not there. You wish that you could*
> *just hand them one.*

Despite the challenging economic climate, targeted programs for OSY were successful at engaging OSY in education, training, and enrichment activities. The textbox in this section highlights in more detail the types of services that the YO! program in Baltimore provided to OSY.

Service Type and Frequency for ISY and OSY

This section is oriented around an analysis of the "instances" of services, as they are reported by grantees in the MIS. To provide a context for this discussion, Exhibit VI-4 gives an overview of core services, broken out by service strategy and grantee.

We focus on "instances" of participation rather than the "total number of youths" served for a particular service because the numbers in the MIS system are duplicative. That is, grantees report the total number of times a service is delivered for every month of the grant, even if that service is received by the same youth multiple times.[17] To ease cross-site comparison, service data are reported as the average instances of service per participant.[18] It is important to recognize that differences in service approach may lead to grantee-level differences in what constitutes an "instance" of service, thus, the "dosage" or intensity of an "instance" of service may vary from grantee to grantee or between different types of service for the same grantee. For example, in some cases an individual "instance of service" may represent attendance at a two-hour workshop on job preparation, while in others it may represent 60 hours of subsidized employment (i.e., 15

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[17] Total instances of services participation were calculated by summing the participation numbers for each month the grantees reported in their quarterly report submissions. In a given month of participation, grantees report instances of service received, not a count of unduplicated participants. Therefore, in a single month of reporting, the count of the instances of a given service may exceed the total number of unduplicated participants served in that month.

[18] The "per-participant instances of service" is calculated by summing the total instances of services and dividing it by the "unduplicated number of youth served." This number is an average across all participants in a given service category and does not reflect the service mix of the "average participant." Thus, individual participants may have received more or fewer services than what is represented by the number for average instance of service per participant.

hours a week for one month). They both represent one "instance" of service, even though subsidized employment is a more intensive level of service than the workshop.

Exhibit VI-4
Summary of Services

Service Strategies	BCPSS	CPS	MPS	OCPS	SDP
Academic Services					
Credit Retrieval	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reading Remediation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Math Remediation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Academic Tutoring	✓	✓			
GED Prep	✓			✓	
Workforce Services					
Vocational Training/Certificate-Based Programs				✓	✓
Other Job Preparation Class/Activity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community Service	✓			✓	
Subsidized Work Experience/Internships	✓		✓	✓	✓
Unsubsidized Work Experience	✓			✓	
Life Skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Supportive Services					
Case Management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Substance Abuse Counseling	✓	✓	✓		
Mental Health Counseling	✓		✓		✓
Mentoring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gang and Violence Services[19]					
Conflict Resolution	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
School Resource Officers			✓	✓	

Exhibit VI-5 provides an overview of the average per-participant instances of academic, workforce, and supportive services provided by each grantee. In order to illustrate the overall mix of services provided by each grantee, Exhibit VI-5 groups together services of each

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[19]   Gang and violence prevention services are not tracked as a separate service category in the MIS.

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particular type (academic, workforce, and supportive). Academic services, for instance, include instances of reading remediation, math remediation, academic tutoring, and credit retrieval.

As illustrated in the exhibit, all grantees provide a mix of academic, workforce, and supportive services. In general, grantees are providing more instances of academic services per participant than they are workforce or supportive services. The School District of Philadelphia appears to be providing more instances of academic services per participant (18.8), on average, than others. Meanwhile, BCPSS appears to be providing more than two times as many instances of workforce services per participant than other grantees.

Exhibit VI-5:
Per-Participant Instances of Academic, Workforce, and Supportive Services
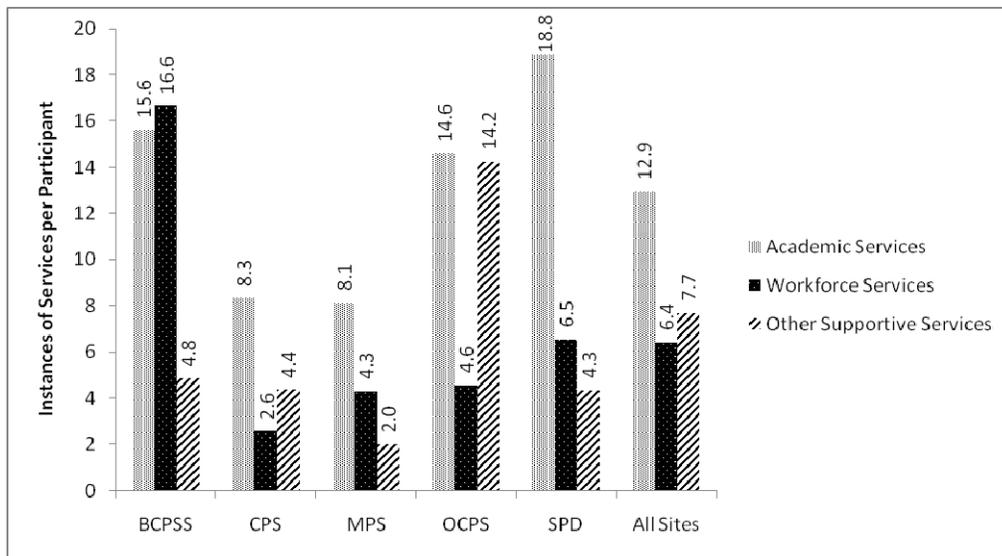
Differences in the level of services that grantees provide is based to a large degree on grantees' service design. The next sections provide in-depth information on the types of services that grantees provided.

Academic Services

Grantees provide two different types of academic services. First, they provide academic remediation, which includes reading remediation, math remediation, and academic tutoring. Second, they provide credit retrieval services, which are targeted at over-age and under-credit ISY and OSY.

Academic Remediation Services

One of the performance goals for the grant is that students increase two or more grade levels in math and reading ability. Given this goal, literacy and numeracy remediation, along with academic tutoring, is a common emphasis of grant-funded programs because target students are often below grade level. Exhibit VI-6 provides an overview of the instances of academic remediation services (reading remediation, math remediation, and academic tutoring) provided by each grantee, broken out by ISY and OSY.

Exhibit VI-6:
Per-Participant Instances of Academic Remediation Services by Grantee[20]
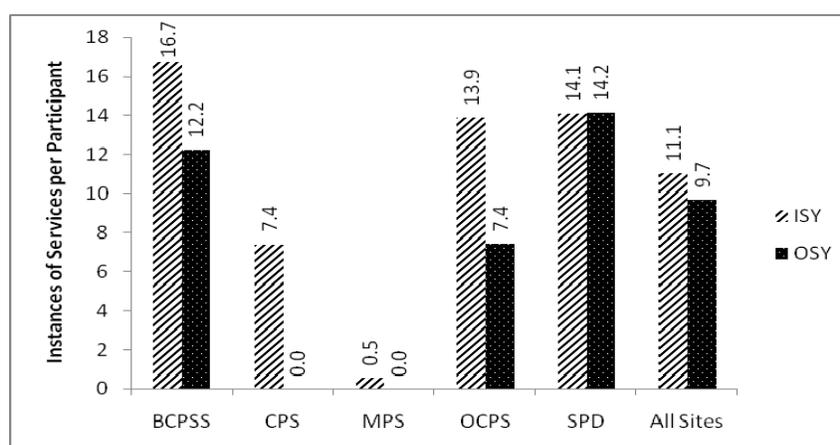
BCPSS, OCPS, and SDP provided more instances of academic remediation per participant than other sites. As illustrated in Exhibit VI-6, MPS provided relatively few instances per participant of academic remediation to ISY, and no academic remediation to OSY; this is because MPS focused primarily on providing credit retrieval services. Below are descriptions of some of the interventions that grantees are using to provide remediation services.

- **BCPSS provides intensive academic remediation services to ISY and OSY.**
  BCPSS provided the highest number of per-participant instances of remedial service to ISY and relatively high instances of service to OSY. BCPSS provides academic remediation using the Voyager curriculum, with two grant-funded teachers at each target school to deliver this curriculum. The Voyager math and English classes combine individual work, group work, and online work. Teachers track student progress through a series of online assessments and benchmarks, and have access to detailed information regarding individual student progress.

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[20] Includes reading remediation, math remediation, and academic tutoring

Teachers also aim to integrate real-world applications for math and English into classroom activities. In 2008–2009, this class was available to all eighth graders at the target middle schools. In 2009–2010, the class was available to ninth grade Futures Works! participants performing below grade level. BCPSS provides academic remediation to OSY through the YO! Centers. The Adult Basic Education classes at the YO! Centers are offered four days a week, with ninety minutes of direct instruction and thirty minutes in the computer lab. Each week, there is one class session on language arts, one on reading and writing, and two on math. The teacher provides one-on-one tutoring two days a week, which is mostly geared towards students who struggle with reading.

- **SDP partnered with Center for Literacy (CFL) to provide academic remediation to ISY at North Philadelphia Community High School (NPCHS) and OSY at the E^3 Bridge Program**. For the literacy component at the Bridge Program, CFL instructors work with youth who are reading below an eighth-grade level in small classes of about five students per class. For the numeracy component, CFL instructors work with up to fifteen students at a time whose numeracy skills are at the sixth grade level or below. At NPCHS, CFL instructors operate as regular math and English teachers, but work in small classes with students who test below a fifth-grade level. In both settings CFL instructors focus on establishing a strong, personal connection with the students, tailoring instruction to individual student needs based on diagnostics, using games and real-world examples to make the curriculum engaging and relevant, and on using "high interest, low-level" texts for reading. One CFL staff said,

  When they relate to it, that's when you can start the real education…You can teach them the things that they need to know, but in a context they can relate to.

- **OCPS connected ISY to academic remediation services within its traditional schools**. Most of the instances of remediation recorded for OCPS occurred when case managers for the YES program connected ISY to tutoring or remedial services already offered by their traditional middle or high schools. When students are enrolled in the YES program, they take a TABE test. If they score below grade level, the case manager enrolls the youth in additional remedial and tutoring services offered by the school, and then follows up with youth to make sure that they are attending regularly. Also, YES case managers sometimes work one-on-one with students on their homework.

Credit Retrieval Services

Credit retrieval is a core component of alternative programs and interventions for over-age and under-credit students. As is illustrated in Exhibit VI-7, MPS, SDP, and OCPS have a strong focus on credit retrieval services, which are provided mostly within grant-funded alternative schools. BCPSS is not providing credit retrieval services at the same rate as other grantees, largely because BCPSS is not using the grant to fund an alternative school. CPS has not provided many instances of credit retrieval services to date, because the Banner Schools launched in Fall 2009.

Exhibit VI-7:
Per-Participant Instances of Credit Retrieval Services by Grantee
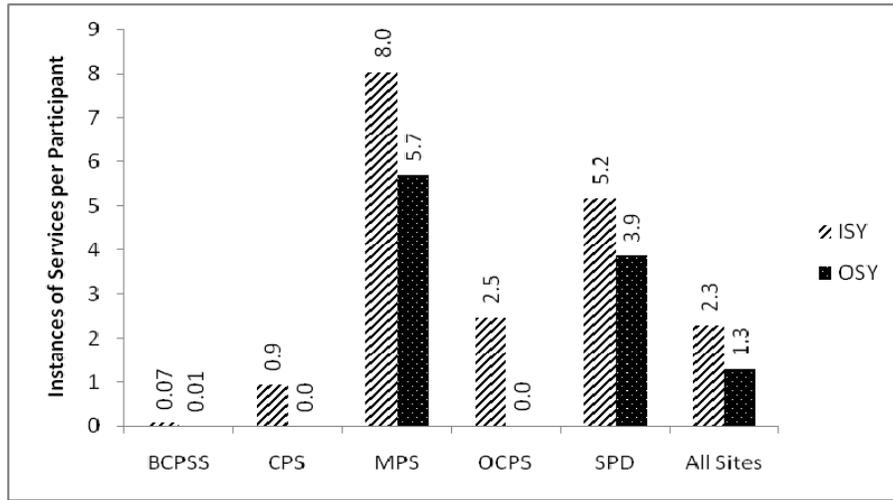
Most of the alternative schools use a combination of online curriculum and small group instruction to guide credit retrieval. Highlighted below are some specific examples of the credit retrieval strategies adopted by grantees.

- **At Transition High School in Milwaukee, students work on credit retrieval using the online curriculum Class.com**. Each teacher is assigned to a caseload of 5–6 youth, and is responsible for monitoring students' progress, assessing students, and providing targeted one-on-one instruction. The Class.com curriculum requires youth to work on content in one subject at a time, and then take an exam at the end of each subject to show that they have mastered key skills.

- **OCPS's Positive Pathways Transition Center and SDP's Bridge Program offer credit retrieval coursework online via APEX**. APEX learning provides a comprehensive curriculum to meet high school graduation requirements in math, science, English, social studies, world languages, and selected electives. The curriculum is designed to support academic success for students at a range of academic levels. Students have the opportunity to earn five credits in 12 weeks. Students take these courses in a computer lab, and have instructors available to assist them.

- **The Banner Schools in Chicago use Aventa, an online curriculum that is tailored to students' individual progress and that gets increasingly more demanding as the student moves forward**. Staff view the online medium as effective at addressing the auditory, visual, and kinesthetic needs of these students. Students take their courses online in distinct sections and at the end of each section take a quiz. If they pass the quizzes, they take a unit exam. In addition to the core content sections, the Banner instructors hold remediation

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sessions, in which they work with all the students together to address common issues with the content.

As illustrated in the examples above, computer-based learning programs are an advantage in schools that must teach students who are at very different academic levels. Because students can work through content independently, instructors are free to move around the room and work with students in a one-on-one format. For instance, one student said,

> *I was embarrassed [at my other schools] to say if I didn't know something. So what I liked about [this school] is that I could email my teacher to tell them to come over and help me with something. They wouldn't be loud about it and be like 'oh you didn't know that?'…I didn't have to raise my hand or go get her. People didn't know that I didn't know stuff.*

An instructor at the Banner Schools indicated that most students attending the school have about a sixth-grade reading level and have a wide range of proficiencies in math. Thus, teachers at the grant-funded alternative schools have to strike a balance between remediation, content instruction, and basic skills development, while moving students closer to the goal of graduating. A principal of a Banner School said,

> *They're getting hit from all angles academically to address their basic skills as well as their content knowledge and abilities.*

Other Academic Services

Grantees provide additional academic support services for students, including academic coaching and group study sessions. These services are typically available to all students in the grantees' target group. SDP has a strong emphasis on academic coaching at the NPCHS, where "academic advisors" act as teaching assistants or mentors to target students. Each academic advisor is assigned to a specific class, and assists students with academic and other needs (e.g., behavioral, organizational, etc.) to help them succeed in school. In addition, staff at NPCHS implemented a school-wide reading program, in which every student in the school is required to read every day for a half an hour.

As demonstrated by the academic services described above, grantees used the School District Grant to create a more personalized academic experience for at-risk and adjudicated ISY. In traditional school settings, grantees are supplementing existing academic services for students who need additional support in reading, math, or other core subjects. In alternative school settings, grantees sought to change students' perspective of themselves as learners by connecting them with targeted academic support and providing them opportunities to work on content at their own paces. The following text box explains how North Philadelphia Community High School creates a school culture that values hard work and supports students to do their personal best.

> **Example of an Alternative School Providing Personalized Academic Services:**
> **North Philadelphia Community High School**
>
> North Philadelphia Community High School (NPCHS) was launched in 2008 with seed funding from the School District Grant. NPCHS is an alternative project-based educational program for youth aged 16–21 who have 13 or fewer credits. Students can earn the credits they need to graduate at an accelerated rate. Each student attends the following core courses: English, Math, Science, Humanities, Art, and Learning To Work (LTW), the career development course. Classes are broken up into eight-week sessions, and students have the opportunity to earn 0.25 to 0.5 credits at the end of each session.
>
> The principal said that approximately one-third of NPCHS's students are youth offenders exiting placement who are required to attend NPCHS as a condition of probation. Because of this, the principal said that teachers have to work hard to win students over once they get to NPCHS.
>
> > *When [youth offenders exiting placement] go to interviews at the school*
> > *district and the school district is saying this is where we're placing you, they*
> > *kind of interpret us as an extension of placement. They come in angry and*
> > *hard, and once they get here and see it's not like that, that hardness and*
> > *streetness, it falls away.*
>
> One way that NPCHS staff earn students' trust is by taking special care to celebrate students' successes and reward them when they work hard. They have found that this helps to motivate other students and create a supportive school culture. For instance, students are recognized with "pins" if they make the honor roll, demonstrate good attendance, or increase their TABE scores by one or two grade levels. Students put the pins on their school ID badges and call the pins "school bling." School staff also invite parents to attend regular ceremonies at which student success is acknowledged. At one type of regular ceremony, the school recognizes students with an ADA of 85 percent or above.

Workforce Services

Grantees varied considerably in the types of workforce services that they provided. The breadth of services depended on the quality of relationships between the school district and workforce partners. This section of the report describes the job preparation services, subsidized employment, vocational training, and other workforce services provided by grantees.

Job Preparation Services

> *A lot of the skills I learned in [the LTW program], I'm going to remember*
> *the rest of my life: social skills, public speaking, interviewing, job*
> *applications and how to do a resume.*
>
> – Student, LTW program (SDP)

The most common workforce services provided by grantees are job preparation services, which include activities such as career exploration, resume development, and interview preparation. As illustrated in Exhibit VI-8, BCPSS's Futures Works! and YO! programs provided the most

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instances of job preparation per participant, more than double that of the other grantees. In contrast, CPS provided few instances of job preparation services per participant due to delays in launching workforce services.

Exhibit VI-8:
Per-Participant Instances of Job Preparation Services by Grantee
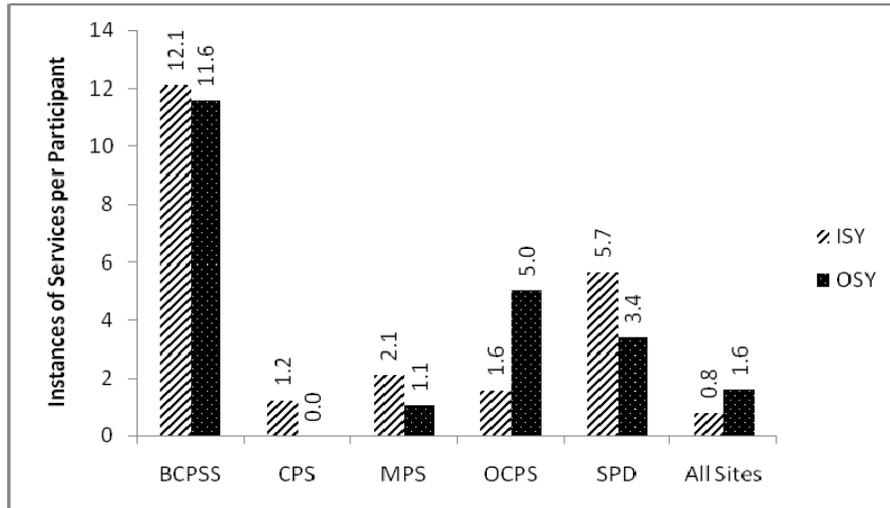
Below we highlight the specifics of grantee services in this area, with a focus on those grantees that provided the most extensive services.

- **Advocates in Baltimore provide job preparation services to ISY and OSY**. Advocates create workshops on interviewing, dress for success, and resume writing, and also help students fill out job applications for the summer jobs program. For ISY, workforce training occurs during students' afterschool class and tends to be informal in nature. Youth who are enrolled in the YO! program through the School District Grant are required to complete a four-day work readiness training, which includes resume writing, job search skills, and guidelines for how to dress for an interview.

- **ISY and OSY enrolled in SDP's Learning-to-Work program are exposed to many different careers.** Students complete career interest surveys, participate in job soft-skill workshops, and build a career portfolio (e.g. resume, cover letter, project work, letters of support, internship assessments, etc.). The LTW program at NPCHS has a guest speaker series, which features professionals who have a background similar to that of the students. LTW students are chosen to attend these presentations based on grades, attendance, and attitude. Each guest speaks for 15 minutes and then answers questions for 15 minutes. In the following quote, one student who attended these presentations describes how they helped motivate him.

> *They bring in speakers who do the jobs that we want to do. They tell you what their circumstances were, how they came up, what college they went to, how it was hard. But they all basically send the same message: just don't quit . . .It helps me a lot because their words are inspirational and sometimes a lot of what they went through we're going through right now.*

- **Workforce Central Florida (WCF) provides job preparation services to OSY and ISY in Orange County**. Participants in WCF's YES program are required to go through a series of workshops on job preparation, which include a career assessment and workshops on preparing resumes, managing time, interviewing, and job search. In addition to providing grant-funded services for OSY, WCF takes in-school youth from targeted schools in Orange County district on a tour of the local One-Stop Center. During this tour, students receive lunch and general information about how to apply for a job. WCF also facilitated workshops for OCPS staff on youth employment opportunities and services available at One-Stop Centers.

- **MPS hired five Employment Specialists to work with students at its high schools**. The Employment Specialists provide students with soft skills training and connect them to paid internships. Each student receives an Individual Employment Plan (IEP), a career assessment, eight hours of work readiness training (held on a weekend), and case management support to address personal and family barriers to employment.

Subsidized Employment/Internships

> *I was mainly interested in Futures First because of the job program. They find a job for you through the…workforce agency. I just got out of jail and I needed some money. I was pretty broke.*
>
> – Student, FFI (MPS)

As illustrated by this quote, job opportunities are a major draw for the programs for at-risk and adjudicated youth. For this reason, some grantees use subsidized employment (internships) as an incentive to encourage youth to attend other program activities such as tutoring. All grantees are working to create internship opportunities for ISY and OSY that will provide students with hands-on experiences in fields such as customer service, equipment maintenance, and sales. However, Exhibit VI-9 shows that instances of subsidized employment per participant are low (ranging from 0.1 to 2.1 instances per participant) when compared to other types of grantee services. One reason for this is that grantees sometimes were slow to launch subsidized employment opportunities, and therefore had less time for instances to occur. A second reason is that paid internships are expensive for grantees and can therefore be offered to only a relatively small number of youth.

Exhibit VI-9:
Per-Participant Instances of Subsidized Employment by Grantee
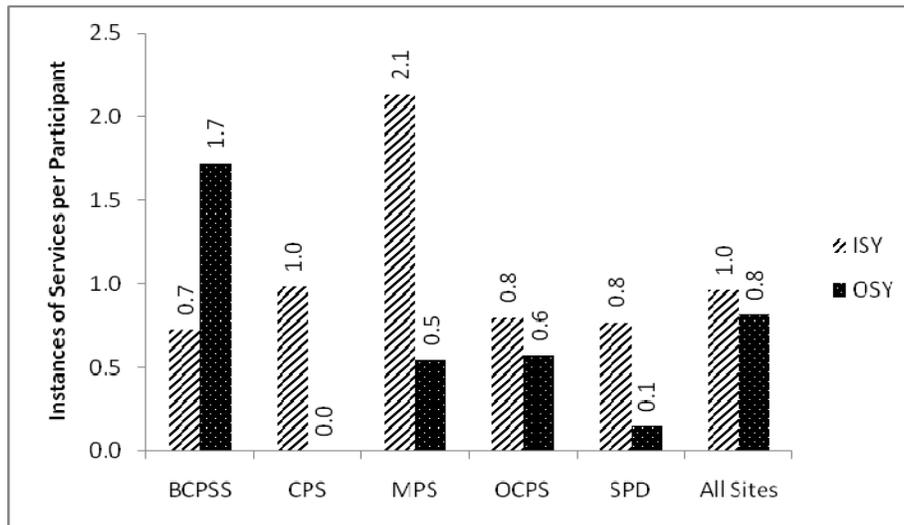
Grantees that were the most successful at placing youth into subsidized employment relied on established workforce providers to develop these opportunities. For instance, the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB) developed a number of internships for ISY in Milwaukee, and YO! Center staff (in partnership with MOED) placed a number of OSY into internships in Baltimore. Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) also developed a number of internships for ISY and OSY.[21] Details about two of these programs are highlighted below.

- **MPS partnered with MAWIB to offer subsidized employment to FFI students.** MPS' strong partnership with MAWIB has resulted in a high number of paid internships for participants. Eighty percent of students who are enrolled in the FFI are placed into subsidized employment. Although the majority of these internships take place in the afternoon, some students work as teachers' aides during the school day. The students are being paid $7.25/hour for 15 hours a week, working between November 2009 and the end of June 2010. MAWIB identified 151 subsidized internship positions, with employers like the Bicycle Federation, MPS, YWCA, and the Milwaukee Christian Center.

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[21] SDP faced some data reporting issues, which is one reason that MIS data on subsidized employment does not match well with the qualitative data.

- **SDP partnered with PYN to create internships and vocational training opportunities for students in the LTW and E³ Bridge Programs**.[22] At NPCHS, for instance, LTW students are required to participate in at least two internships to graduate. During the school year, the internships are 50 hours over a six-week period. During the summer, they are 80 hours. Students are paid a minimum of $7.25 an hour. Placements included law offices, city hall, summer camps, doctor's offices, a rehabilitation center, and a mechanic. Students who are placed in internships complete weekly journals, so that staff can closely monitor and address any challenges students may face in their positions. Youth enrolled in the Bridge Program at the E³ Center have the option to participate in a 12-week "Job Readiness Training" program that the center already has in place. Once students complete this 12-week training program, they are placed in an eight-week paid internship. Last summer, 170 of the LTW students at Overbrook and NPCHS (about 75 percent of the total number of students) completed internships.

Programs that tried to develop internships independent of a workforce agency were less successful, because they lacked the expertise and networks to develop these opportunities. The age of target youth is another factor that contributed to the relatively low level of subsidized employment opportunities. Programs that target older youth generally placed more youth into subsidized employment than those that targeted younger participants.

Vocational Training Services

Vocational training creates alternative career pathways for at-risk and adjudicated youth. As illustrated in Exhibit VI-10, however, the instances of vocational training provided by School District Grantees are relatively few (less than 1.0 instance per participant). SDP has the highest instances of vocational services, which it provides to students through the Occupation Skills Pathway Program. This program had just launched at the time of the third evaluation visit, so it is likely to serve many more youth in 2010. In contrast, two grantees (CPS and MPS) provided no instances of vocational training.

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[22] Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) oversees the administrative side of the internship component for all the sites, including making sure the necessary paperwork is collected (W-4, I-9, waiver, etc.) and processing the payroll. Students are paid every two weeks on a debit card and submit timesheets to get paid.

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Exhibit VI-10:
Per-Participant Instances of Vocational Training by Grantee
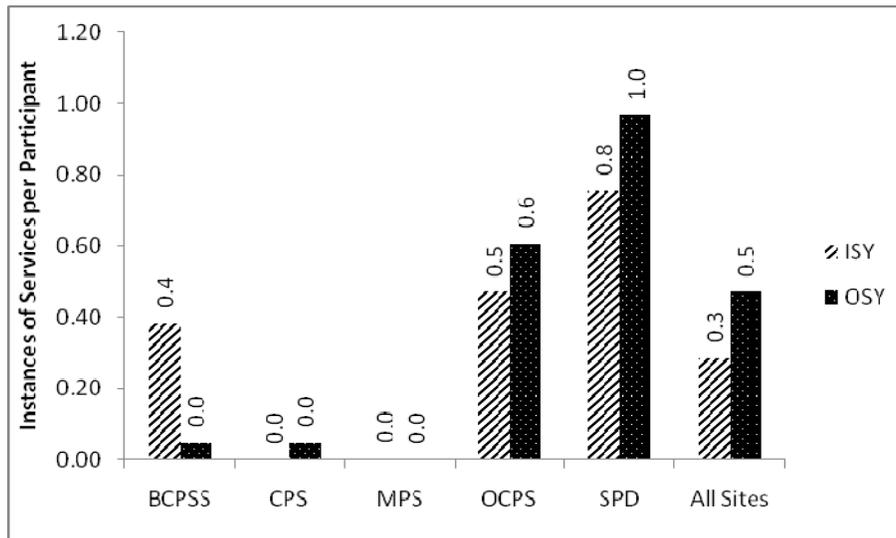
As was true for unsubsidized work experience, the grantees that provided the most per-participant instances of service in vocational training (OCPS and SDP) relied on established workforce partners to provide this key service. The specific interventions are highlighted below.

- **Philadelphia's Occupation Skills Pathway Program.** The OSPP Program targets out-of-school youth enrolled at the E^3 Power Centers for training in a variety of fields. Youth can enroll in automotive, hospitality, or IT training through PYN's partnerships with the Community College of Philadelphia and NPower, a CBO. Youth have the opportunity to earn professional certificates through these programs and are guaranteed a six-week paid internship upon successful completion of the training program.

- **OCPS' vocational training options.** OCPS has partnered with multiple organizations to provide vocational training to out-of-school youth. Workforce Central Florida, the primary employment service partner, provides a job readiness curriculum that develops youths' soft skills and prepares them to look for jobs. Upon completion of this training, youth can be placed in a National Retail Customer Service Certification training and from there into employment. In addition, OCPS has partnered with the Home Builder's Institute (HBI). At HBI, adjudicated youth participate in a six-month construction job training program, where they can receive a certificate in construction trades.

Other Workforce Services

In addition to the core workforce services highlighted above, grantees sought to enhance students' work readiness by connecting them to community service opportunities and

unsubsidized employment. Across all grantees, the instances of service per participant for these other workforce services are low, primarily because grantees did not have a systematic approach for providing these services. For instance, Futures Works! advocates connect students to community service opportunities so that they can get a "head start" on satisfying BCPSS's 75 - hour community service requirement for HS graduation, but this was not a central aspect of BCPSS's service design. Some programs, particularly those for OSY, tried to place youth into unsubsidized employment. In almost all cases, however, the recession made it very challenging to place youth into jobs and as a result the per-participant instances of unsubsidized employment are low.

Supportive/Case Management Services

> *We serve as an anchor for the kids. We give them a reason to stay in school. For the first time, they have someone to talk to and provide them things that they are missing from home, like love and care.*
>
> – Futures Works! Advocate (BCPSS)

One of the core functions of the School District Grant is to provide targeted case management and wraparound supportive services for at-risk and adjudicated youth. Although case managers had different titles at different sites (i.e., Advocate, Intervention Specialist, or Student Engagement Specialist), they all had similar roles vis-à-vis youth. Case managers assess students' needs, monitor academic performance and attendance, interface with parents, and connect students to wraparound supportive services as needed. The MIS did not track case management services per se, but instead tracked instances of mentoring, follow-up mentoring, substance abuse counseling, health, and follow-up developmental services. In almost all cases, case managers either provided these services or connected youth to these services, and thus instances of supportive services is also a measure of case management.

As illustrated in Exhibit VI-11, grantees consistently provide more supportive/case management services to ISY than to OSY. This is because ISY programs fund staff whose specific role is to provide case management and connect youth to services, whereas programs for OSY often provide these types of wraparound services in a less formal way. Case management services are central to OCPS's service design, explaining the high number of instances of supportive services reported by this grantee. Case management is also a core service provided by BCPSS and CPS.

Exhibit VI-11:
Per-Participant Instances of Supportive/Case Management Services by Grantee[23]
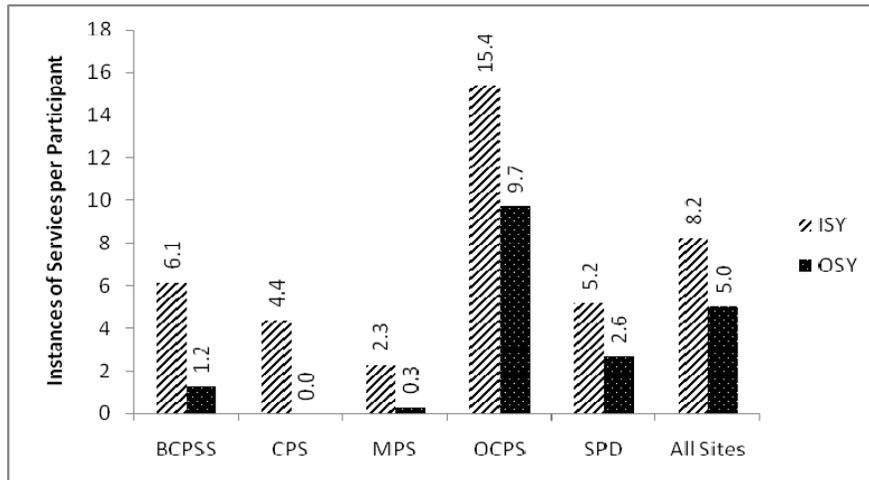
The role of case managers in connecting youth to supportive services at these sites is described in detail below.

- **At each of its target schools, OCPS's YES program employs Intervention Specialists (ISs), whose caseloads range from 50 to 90 students in grades nine through 12.** ISs have a caseload of adjudicated or at-risk students, whom they meet with three times weekly. ISs monitor attendance and students' grades, have regular phone contact with students' parents, observe students during their classes, and help to connect students with wraparound support services. Because OCPS is serving a relatively high number of youth offenders through the YES program, ISs work closely with parole officers, the School Resource Officers (SROs), and the SAFE coordinators[24] at the school. Students in OCPS are enrolled in the YES program until they graduate or move out of the district. ISs continue to follow up at least monthly with students who have changed schools, have dropped out of school, or are in juvenile placements. According to one youth offender who participated in the YES program, his relationship with his IS made a big difference in his life:

  [My IS] helped me because, if you think about it, all the other years I was in school, I didn't have somebody checking in with me, asking me how I'm

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[23] Includes mentoring, follow-up mentoring services, substance abuse, follow-up development services, health services, and 'other' services.

[24] SAFE Coordinators run the Student Assistance and Family Empowerment Program (SAFE program) at each of the OCPS target programs. The SAFE program provides prevention and intervention services for students and their families, with a focus on alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and violence prevention.

doing, asking me if I needed any help keeping up. Telling me, 'you got to do better in these classes. I want to see you do better.' She was giving me advice. If I was about to do something wrong, I was always thinking, 'what is [my IS] going to do when she finds out?' 'What would [my IS] do?'

- **At each of its high schools, CPS's YES program employs Student Engagement Specialists (SESs), whose caseloads range from 40 to 140 ninth-grade students**. An SES helps coordinate all YES activities within the school (including Freshman Seminar), watches over all students on his or her caseload, and provides more intensive case management to a few of the 25 very high-risk ninth grade students in the school. Students on this "hot 25" list receive daily check-ins and have individual success plans. For the rest of the students on his or her caseload, an SES monitors attendance, grades, and behavior and has weekly check-ins. When necessary, SESs work with teachers on how to address the needs of specific caseload students, sometimes observing the student in his or her classes. SESs are committed to doing all that they can to help their students succeed. For instance, one SES reported that he calls students with poor attendance at 6:30 every morning to encourage them to come to school.

- **BCPSS's Futures Works! program employs Advocates, who work with caseloads of 50 to 60 ISY in ninth and tenth grades and with OSY at the YO! program.** Futures advocates act as mentors, counselors, and "mom, dad, uncle" to the students. Advocates at the high schools meet with students regularly to monitor their progress in school and check their grades and attendance. One student in the program described the role of his advocate in the following way.

  My advocate came to my house one time because my phone was off. He was like 'What's going on? I have all these opportunities. Come to the Center.' They always ask about your barriers, what's stopping you from what you want to do, and they jump right on it and help you out with it.

  Advocates also provide or organize enrichment activities such as field trips after school and are an integral part of the school team. As was true of the Intervention Specialists in OCPS's YES program, Futures Works! Advocates continue to track their caseload students over time. The Futures Works! program also has four "traveling advocates" who follow up with students who have graduated from the program's two target middle schools. The "traveling advocates" go to more than 30 schools in Baltimore to meet with and provide case management services to students. Students consider the Futures Works! office to be a "safe haven." As one advocate noted,

  Students know that there is a person in the building that they can go see and [who will] advocate for them.

In the Philadelphia, Milwaukee, and Baltimore districts, social workers and mental health counselors also provided grant services. In each of these cases, grant-hired staff are an integral part of the team of specialists who address the needs of at-risk students within the target schools. In Baltimore, for instance, a mental health specialist initially conducted screenings for all of the

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Futures Works! students and has since provided group and individual counseling on anger management, conflict resolution, interpersonal skills, and relationships. Staff stressed that in order to build trust with students, counseling and support staff need to have opportunities to interact with students over time.

> *Most kids if you say 'you are going to be sent to a mental health person,' they'll say 'I'm not crazy. I don't need to talk to anyone.' But if you have someone who is at your building and they're doing group activities with you, you're familiar with that person, you see them all the time, if you're having a problem at home, you're having a relationship problem, whatever it is, you can go talk to them because it's not a new person. So we're trying to raise that comfort level and also dispel the myth that there's something wrong with you if you need to talk to a [mental] health clinician.*

Grantee staff spoke of the pressing need for this type of support given the challenges faced by the target population. In particular, the need for grief counseling arose at multiple sites, particularly in communities with high rates of gang violence.

Another example of a counseling model is the use of "discussion circles" at the Banner Schools in Chicago. The Banner Schools use the Johns Hopkins University Talent Development Curriculum to work on life skills and conflict resolution. The instructors lead the students in discussion circles, which allow the students to release some of the issues and stress that they deal with in their daily lives. In some cases, students provide advice and feedback to their peers on how to handle certain situations. One Banner Schools teacher said,

> *The students really enjoy the circle portion…It surprises me; some students actually give other students positive feedback on how to handle certain situations so it's not just us teachers [giving the advice].*

Instructors report that students are very engaged in this component and that at times it can be difficult to stop the circles and move onto other parts of the program.

The supportive service aspects of grantee programs are particularly strong and well-developed. The quality and dedication of supportive service and counseling staff is a core asset for grant-funded programs, and something that youth participants consistently point to as a strength. Among program stakeholders, there is a near unanimous consensus that supportive services are key to creating a more personalized and connected school environment for at-risk and adjudicated students. Further, in most cases, grant-funded supportive service staff are core members of the school community, helping to improve the school climate and prevent violence within otherwise under-resourced schools.

Gang and Violence Prevention Services

> *You can't go to kids and say, 'you gotta leave gangs.' That will cost them their lives. Our main concern is to stop the killings and violence.*
> – Staff member, New Visions for Youth (BCPSS)

One of the core goals of the School District Grant is to reduce violence in the target communities. All of the grant-funded services discussed previously in this chapter seek to reduce violence *indirectly*, by providing youth with viable and concrete alternatives to the gang lifestyle. Although violence prevention is a core priority of all grantees, only three— BCPSS, MPS, and OCPS—used the grant to fund programs focusing explicitly and directly on gang and violence prevention. Exhibit VI-12 provides an overview of these grant-funded services.

Exhibit VI-12
Overview of Gang and Violence Prevention Services

	Services	Sites
BCPSS		
New Vision Youth Services	Intensive case management, gang intervention, mentoring, and conflict mediation.	Three traditional high schools
MPS		
Urban Underground (Flood the Hood with Dreams)	Leadership and life skills training to students, tied to a framework of individual and community change.	Five traditional high schools and Transition HS
Ambassadors for Peace	Training for youth leaders in conflict mediation and nonviolence.	Five traditional high schools and Transition HS
OCPS		
One officer from Orlando Police Department and three officers from Orange County Sheriffs Department	Officers work with case managers at target schools and on the truancy and Orange County Sheriff Department gang task force.	Eight traditional schools and the Positive Pathways Transitional Center
YES program, Outreach Worker, Parramore Kids Zone, City of Orlando	Outreach worker organizes basketball league, teen nights, and college fairs from downtown recreation center.	Downtown Recreation Center, Orlando

All three grantees funded partners to provide the gang and violence intervention services. Due to the slow pace of contract approval for CBO partners, these services were generally slow to launch. For instance, the Baltimore-based program New Visions for Youth Services (NVYS) did not begin working in the schools until Fall 2009. Although these programs were launched late in the grant cycle and therefore do not factor strongly into initiative outcomes, they show promise for reaching gang members and reducing violence.

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BCPSS contracted with NVYS to provide comprehensive gang prevention and intervention at three target high schools.[25] NVYS has placed five staff, called advocates or urban specialists, at each school. The leaders and staff of NVYS are former gang members themselves and thus understand the pressures that students are under to join gangs. Although NVYS staff work with all students, they also have caseloads of students who have been identified by school administrators as being gang members or "tough kids." According to the principal at one of the target high schools, having staff who understand students' experience is key to reaching those who are most at risk:

> *In order to change or help the situation, you have to understand that situation or come from that situation. This is what New Visions has. They're from what our kids are from...they've been through bad times and all kind of situations...The kids see themselves in them. Real recognizes real. If you tell these kids something they don't know...they won't trust you.*

One aspect of NVYS's program that stands out is that it operates as a fully integrated and valued partner within the school environment, rather than a separate program. NVYS staff meet with the school principals regularly, greet the students every day as they enter the building, and monitor the hallways during lunch periods and immediately after school to "maintain order." NVYS staff work to develop caring and positive relationships with students so that they can identify conflicts in the early stages, hopefully early enough to prevent them from leading to violence in the school or in the community. At the time of the third site visit, NVYS was serving a caseload of 42 students at Forest Park High School, with plans to reach its enrollment goal of 75 by the end of March 2010.

Starting in January 2010, BCPSS also contracted with NVYS to develop a community-wide gang strategy on the Westside of the city, so that prevention and intervention services for youth gang members are coordinated. A NVYS staff member explained the importance of this effort:

> *There is a lot of good work in Baltimore [on how to address gangs] but it's fragmented and there are territorial issues. It takes someone with authority to pull people together, someone like an officer. That's because each church and each non-profit is doing their own thing to address crime and gangs, so New Visions is looking to bring these efforts together. We want to have a large group to strengthen these efforts and have strength in numbers.*

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[25] Target high schools include Forest Park High School and Douglass High School, where the Futures program operates. Another target school is the Dukeland Campus, which is a high school that was created in the building formerly occupied by Lemmel Middle School (the Futures Works! middle school that was closed in the summer of 2009).

By addressing gang-related issues at the school and community level, BCPSS is hoping that the city will be able to address this issue in a more seamless fashion.

MPS also has used the School District Grant to complement existing efforts to address gang violence within target schools.[26] The CBO partners in Milwaukee provide workshops and activities on topics such as youth leadership, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and trust building. One such project is Flood the Hood with Dreams, which is a sub-project of the Urban Underground. Flood the Hood with Dreams offers conflict resolution training to students who face behavioral challenges. Students attend a workshop once a week for five weeks. The training is titled, *"Rewriting Your Story—A Journey from Tragedy to Triumph."* The class provides a space for students to talk about the painful experiences of their lives, let go of their loss and anger, and determine how they want to live their lives moving forward. MPS also has funded the Ambassadors of Peace program, which strives to make students aware of how to resolve conflict nonviolently in their daily lives.

OCPS used the School District Grant to fund additional deputies who rotated through various schools to provide services. The role of grant-funded officers is to counsel and mentor students engaging in violent acts, to build relationships with the school staff, to educate school staff about when to call law enforcement, and to decrease law enforcement's response time to violent school incidents. Although officers assigned to work with schools as SROs or deputy liaisons often have backgrounds similar to those of the students, students often have such a strong mistrust of the police that it is difficult for police to develop trusting relationships with them. The School District Grant provided officers an opportunity to interact with youth in a new way and to help improve youths' perception of the police.

Finally, grantees provided enrichment activities for youth in an attempt to engage them positively and reduce violence. OCPS, for instance, is supporting a position for an outreach worker in a high-crime and high-poverty neighborhood. The outreach worker, who is a former college basketball coach, created a "Blacktop Basketball" league that attracts crowds of youths and other community members to the center and has contributed to a revitalization of the recreation center's park and sports facilities. Although Blacktop Basketball is unique, all grantees have created enrichment activities for ISY and OSY, including camping trips, field

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[26] All of the target schools in Milwaukee, with the exception of Transition High School, are participating in a Violence Free Zone initiative. The Violence Free Zone initiative funds two youth advisors at each school who provide conflict resolution, mentoring, and other supportive services. The goal of this program is for youth advisors to identify emerging conflicts between students and intervene before they turn violent.

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trips, fairs, and other events designed to reduce violence and provide youth with positive and pro-social activities.

One challenge in providing violence prevention services is that it can be difficult to document the outcomes of these programs. The types of outcomes that the MIS is tracking for this initiative (i.e., math and reading scores, employment outcomes) are unlikely to change immediately because students learned how to negotiate conflict better or became better listeners. Grantee staff also said that they need more assistance in understanding best practices for violence prevention programs and designing programs accordingly. Although grantees received technical assistance from DOL on gang intervention services, at least one grantee indicated that this assistance came too late in the project to influence its service design. Still, the School District Grant has given all grantees an enhanced capacity to systematically address these issues.

Services for Youth Offenders

One of the primary goals of the School District Grant is to target youth offenders for services, particularly those transitioning to their home schools from juvenile placement. As described in Chapter V, grantees developed a range of strategies for targeting youth offenders. With the exception of the alternative schools created by CPS and OCPS, however, grantees did not differentiate services for youth offenders from the services directed toward the other youth targeted by this grant. That is, most youth offenders served by the grant have access to the same set of services as at-risk students.

Exhibit VI-13 compares the per-participant instances of services for youth offenders to those of at-risk students (across all grantee programs). The exhibit shows that the overall per-participant instances of service for youth offenders are the same as those for at-risk youth in the area of academic services, fewer in the area of workforce services, and greater in the area of supportive services. The fewer per-participant instances of workforce services and the greater instances of supportive services hold true regardless of whether the youth offender is an ISY or OSY.

Exhibit VI-13:
Per-Participant Instances of Services for Youth Offenders and At-Risk Youth
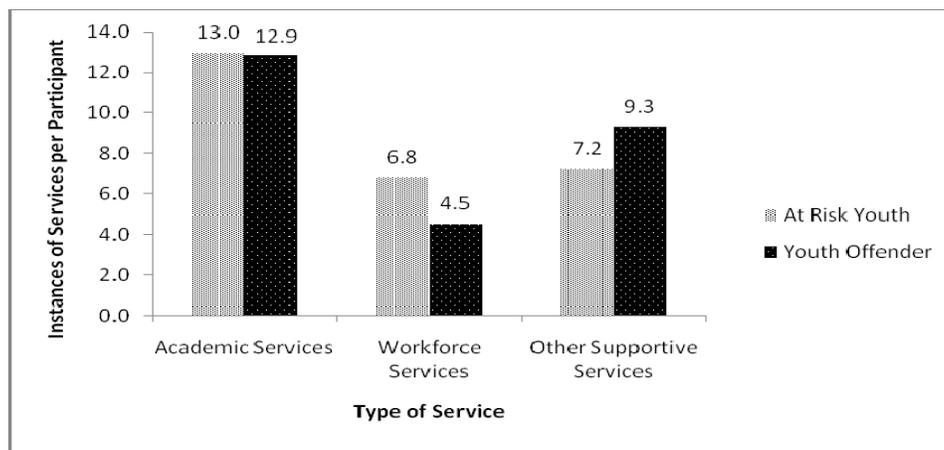
A further analysis of the data shows that the greater per-participant instances of supportive services for youth offenders are due primarily to the influence of OCPS. OCPS served approximately half (51 percent) of all the youth offenders served by the grant and also provided the highest per-participant instances of supportive services. When OCPS is removed from the analysis, it can be seen that youth offenders received supportive services at a rate similar to that of at-risk youth.

The lower levels of workforce services for youth offenders, however, hold true regardless of whether OCPS is included in the analysis or not and is consistent across all grantees. Qualitative data suggest two potential reasons for the fewer per-participant instances of workforce services for offenders. First, respondents indicated that youth offenders are more difficult to place into subsidized or unsubsidized employment, which suggests that the fewer instances of workforce services for youth offenders may reflect low rates of placement in these opportunities. Second, some grantees use workforce services, particularly internships, to reward students' participation in other grant activities. In this case, the reduced instances of workforce services may derive from youth offenders having a more difficult time qualifying for workforce services, due to academic or behavioral challenges.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

As discussed throughout this chapter, grantees implemented a diverse range of educational, workforce, and violence-prevention service in traditional and alternative school settings for in-school and out-of-school youth. The grantees' implementation process continues to move

forward in the final year of grant funding. Throughout the implementation process, grantees reported a number of challenges and lessons learned that surfaced as they aimed to provide comprehensive wraparound services to the most at-risk youth.

Challenges

- **Several of the grant-funded programs had low rates of attendance**. Staff report that achieving good attendance is a challenge both within programs and more broadly within the target schools. Programs that operated after school often had particularly low levels of attendance, partially because parents encouraged their children to come home directly after school. In addition to student-level factors leading to poor attendance, poor weather in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Chicago caused attendance rates to plummet during the winter months. Many staff also reported that while youth on probation attend regularly when required, they stop attending as soon as they are off probation. To address challenges with attendance, many of the programs provided incentives to participants in the form of bus passes, movie tickets, and so on.

- **Some sites have difficulty recruiting youth offenders to alternative schools**. Juvenile Justice and grantee staff noted that some students are resistant to attending alternative schools because they view their assignment to the school as continued punishment. To address this problem, Juvenile Justice staff in some cities are working with judges to make sure that court orders include requirements that students attend transitional schools. Meanwhile, school staff are working closely with students to help them see the transitional schools as vehicles for achieving their goals.

- **Follow-up with students is logistically difficult, particularly in large school districts.** Both OCPS and BCPSS have created systems for following up with students who have transitioned from grade eight to grade nine or who have left their schools to attend other programs. Follow-up is challenging for a number of reasons, but mostly because students are located at a number of different high schools and alternative schools. BCPSS has addressed this issue by creating "traveling advocates" whose job consists entirely of following up with students who are spread across thirty high schools in the district.

- **The economic downturn of 2009–2010 made it difficult to place participants into employment**. Placing at-risk and adjudicated youth into employment is difficult in the best economic climate. The economic downturn exacerbated obstacles to employment for this population. Grantees that were more successful at placing youth into employment relied on established workforce partners to provide this service.

Lessons Learned

- **Long-term case management is a key strategy for ensuring that youth remain attached to schools and programs**. Case management is a central aspect of grantees' interventions, and program stakeholders often viewed this aspect of

grant-funded programs to be the most influential. Stakeholders also agreed that case management is most effective when it happens consistently over time.

- **Alternative schools and programs are a key strategy for engaging at-risk and adjudicated youth**. These youth benefit from the small class sizes, individualized attention, and self-paced instruction that are available in these settings.

- **Contractor staff who work within traditional schools are most successful if they are able to become an integral part of the school team**. In order to build solid relationships and become core resources for teachers, other school staff, and parents, grant-funded staff need to be on-site full time and have job responsibilities that include school-wide outreach.

- **The most meaningful workforce opportunities are provided when school districts partner with established workforce providers**. Grantees that tried to develop internships or vocational training opportunities independent of a workforce agency were less successful, because they lacked the expertise and networks needed to develop these opportunities.

- **The lower rate of participation of youth offenders in workforce services suggests that this population requires a more targeted set of workforce services.** For the most part, grantees did not differentiate services for youth offenders, and this approach proved inadequate for addressing the exceptional barriers to employment faced by this population.

In conclusion, the School District grant is supporting many schools and programs in their efforts to provide remedial academic, credit retrieval, job preparation, subsidized employment, case management, and violence-prevention services. Grantees have created new mechanisms for identifying and serving at-risk and adjudicated students and are providing students with multiple pathways for achieving their goals. The next chapter summarizes youth outcomes arising from grantees' efforts.

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VII. OUTCOMES

This chapter summarizes the outcomes information captured in the grantees' management information systems (MIS) and through youth case studies. We begin with a discussion of the characteristics of all the youth participants and the case study youth. We then provide a descriptive overview of the outcomes for the overall youth population and the case study youth. We end the chapter with an analysis of the factors that may have influenced outcomes.

Participant Characteristics

A summary of participant characteristics is included in Exhibit VII-1. As of December 2009, grantees enrolled 3,765 youth. This number represents significantly more than originally planned because of the additional $1 million in funding from DOL in the final year of the grant. The majority of participants are African American (82 percent), more than half are male (57 percent), and 59 percent are between 15 and 17 years old. Hispanics make up about one-fourth of the participants in the Orange County and Philadelphia districts, reflecting the racial diversity in those local communities. More than half of the participants (56.9 percent) were deficient in reading and only slightly fewer (54.3 percent) were deficient in math at the time of enrollment. The Baltimore district enrolled the highest percentage of youth who are deficient in reading (69 percent) and Orange County Public Schools enrolled the lowest percentage of students who are deficient in reading (47 percent). The finding that over half of the youth served by grantees are skill deficient in at least one area suggests that grantees are reaching their target group—youth who are in need of academic remediation or support. Lastly, the majority of the youth participants live in stable housing arrangements (97 percent);[1] few participants (one percent) are living in temporary housing or are homeless.

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[1] Having stable housing means living in a stable household with a parent or relative at time of enrollment.

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Exhibit VII-1:
Demographic Characteristics of All Youth Enrolled

	Total (All Sites)	BCPSS	CPS	MPS	OCPS	SDP
Number of Enrolled Youth	3765	645	969	440	1221	490
Gender						
Male	57.0%	52.8%	59.8%	62.7%	59.2%	46.6%
Race/Ethnicity						
White (non Hispanic)	3.4%	0.3%	0.1%	3.3%	8.7%	1.0%
African American (non-Hispanic)	82.2%	99.5%	93.2%	82.4%	67.9%	73.0%
Hispanic	12.4%	0.0%	6.3%	10.7%	20.7%	21.9%
Other Groups[2]	2.0%	0.2%	0.4%	3.6%	2.7%	4.1%
Age at Enrollment						
Age 14 and under	25.9%	53.3%	32.3%	1.3%	26.1%	0.2%
Age 15 to 17	59.3%	31.3%	67.7%	67.6%	52.0%	89.4%
Age 18+	14.9%	15.3%	0.0%	31.2%	21.9%	10.4%
Academic Skills[3] at Enrollment						
Skills Deficient, Reading	56.9%	69.1%	49.1%	65.0%	57.8%	46.9%
Skills Deficient, Math	54.3%	60.0%	45.5%	65.7%	57.7%	45.5%
Housing at Enrollment						
Stable Housing Arrangements	97.3%	97.8%	97.7%	90.4%	98.0%	100.0%
Foster Care	1.0%	0.5%	1.2%	3.6%	0.7%	0.0%
Independent Living	0.7%	0.0%	0.6%	2.2%	0.7%	0.0%
Temporary Housing/ Homeless	1.0%	1.7%	0.4%	3.8%	0.6%	0.0%

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[2]   Includes Native American, Asian Pacific Islander, multi-racial, and other.

[3]   Skills deficient, reading, and skills deficient, math, are not mutually exclusive.

Exhibit VII-2:
Demographic Characteristics of In-School Youth (ISY)

	Total (All Sites)	BCPSS	CPS	MPS	OCPS	SDP
Number of Enrolled In-School Youth	**3123 (83%)**	**474**	**969**	**393**	**977**	**310**
Number of "At-Risk" In-School Youth	**2623 (84%)**	**465**	**840**	**342**	**669**	**307**
Age at Enrollment						
Age 14 and under	34.9%	72.9%	36.4%	1.1%	41.6%	0.0%
Age 15 to 17	59.1%	27.1%	63.6%	69.7%	54.4%	92.5%
Age 18+	6.0%	0.0%	0.0%	29.2%	4.0%	7.5%
Academic Skills[4] at Enrollment						
Skills Deficient, Reading	56.8%	76.1%	45.7%	72.8%	57.5%	38.4%
Skills Deficient, Math	52.4%	56.1%	41.3%	73.4%	59.2%	38.8%
Number of Youth Offender In-School Youth	**500 (16%)**	**9**	**129**	**51**	**308**	**3**
Age at Enrollment						
Age 14 and under	10.8%	55.6%	5.4%	1.9%	13.3%	0.0%
Age 15 to 17	81.6%	44.4%	94.6%	73.1%	78.6%	100.0%
Age 18+	7.6%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	8.1%	0.0%
Academic Skills[5] at Enrollment						
Skills Deficient, Reading	69.4%	44.4%	71.3%	62.7%	71.1%	0.0%
Skills Deficient, Math	65.8%	22.2%	72.9%	64.7%	64.9%	0.0%

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[4]   Skills deficient, reading, and skills deficient, math, are not mutually exclusive.

[5]   Skills deficient, reading, and skills deficient, math, are not mutually exclusive.

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As shown in Exhibit VII-2, a substantial majority of participants (83 percent) are in-school youth. Among the in-school youth, 84 percent are classified as at risk of court/gang involvement,[6] and 16 percent are classified as "offender or previously incarcerated offender." Among the in-school youth who are offenders or have previously been incarcerated, higher percentages of them are deficient in reading and math—69 and 66 percent, respectively, than the youth that are at risk of court/gang involvement. The Orange County and Chicago districts serve the greatest numbers of in-school youth (977 and 969, respectively). OCPS's in-school population makes up 80 percent of its total participants, while all of the Chicago district participants are in-school youth. Serving the majority of in-school youth meant that the bulk of the interventions focused on helping students succeed in school, such as intensive case management support, mentoring, and academic tutoring.

As shown in Exhibit VII-3, grantees serve fewer out-of-school youth—642 or 17 percent of the total participant population. More than half of the out-of-school youth (57 percent) are over 18 years old and about half of the youth are deficient in reading and math. There is also variation in the number and types of out-of-school youth that grantees are serving. Orange County Public Schools serves the largest number of out-of-school youth (244), followed by Philadelphia (180) and Baltimore (171). Almost three-quarters of the out-of-school youth served in the Baltimore district are deficient in math, which is why the district has hired a basic skills instructor to serve them at the YO! Center.

Exhibit VII-4 summarizes the core differences between the in-school and out-of-school youth served by the grantees. The major difference between these two groups is age—out-of-youth are older than in-school youth. Differences according to the other dimensions displayed—housing status, race/ethnicity, academic skill deficiencies, and gender—are much smaller.

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[6] Youth classified in this way are not offenders, past or present, but have risk factors that clearly indicate a risk of court and/or gang involvement.

Exhibit VII-3:
Demographic Characteristics of Out-of School Youth (OSY)

	Total (All Sites)	BCPSS	CPS	MPS	OCPS	SDP
Number of Enrolled Out-of-School Youth	**642**	**171**	**n/a**	**47**	**244**	**180**
Number of "At-Risk" Out-of-School Youth	**527**	**147**	**n/a**	**33**	**184**	**163**
Age at Enrollment						
Age 14 and under	0.2%	0.0%	n/a	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%
Age 15 to 17	45.7%	41.5%	n/a	50.0%	10.3%	88.3%
Age 18+	54.2%	58.5%	n/a	50.0%	89.7%	11.0%
Academic Skills[7] at Enrollment						
Skills Deficient, Reading	45.4%	43.5%	n/a	6.1%	42.4%	58.3%
Skills Deficient, Math	54.8%	72.1%	n/a	6.1%	45.7%	59.5%
Number of Youth Offender Out-of-School Youth	**115**	**24**	**n/a**	**14**	**60**	**17**
Age at Enrollment						
Age 14 and under	0.9%	0.0%	n/a	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Age 15 to 17	28.7%	45.8%	n/a	35.7%	16.7%	41.2%
Age 18+	70.4%	54.2%	n/a	57.1%	83.3%	58.8%
Academic Skills[8] at Enrollment						
Skills Deficient, Reading	59.1%	100.0%	n/a	21.4%	40.0%	100.0%
Skills Deficient, Math	45.2%	75.0%	n/a	21.4%	40.0%	41.2%

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[7]   Skills deficient, reading, and skills deficient, math, are not mutually exclusive.

[8]   Skills deficient, reading, and skills deficient, math, are not mutually exclusive.

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Exhibit VII-4
Characteristics of In-School and Out-of-School Youth

Housing

ISY — OSY

Total youth served = 3,765 youth
Total ISY served = 3,123 youth (83%)
Total OSY served = 642 youth (17%)

	Stable Housing Arrangements	Foster Care	Independent Living	Temporary Housing/ Homeless
ISY	97.7%	1.1%	0.5%	0.7%
OSY	95.3%	0.8%	1.2%	2.6%

Race/Ethnicity

	White (non-Hispanic)	African American (non-Hispanic)	Hispanic	Other Groups
ISY	3.6%	80.1%	14.2%	2.0%
OSY	2.5%	92.2%	3.8%	1.6%

Age

	Age 14 and under	Age 15 to 17	Age 18+
ISY	31.1%	62.7%	6.2%
OSY	0.3%	42.6%	57.1%

Academic Skills

	Skills Deficient, Reading	Skills Deficient, Math
ISY	58.8%	54.5%
OSY	47.8%	53.1%

Gender

	Male	Female
ISY	57.6%	42.4%
OSY	56.4%	43.6%

Because youth offenders are a prime target group of this grant, we also examine their key characteristics, as shown in Exhibit VII-5. OCPS serves the highest number of offenders (368, or 38 percent of its total youth population) and the School District of Philadelphia serves the

fewest number of offenders (20, or six percent of its total youth population).[9] ISY offenders are predominantly ages 15 to 17, while OSY offenders are older. About two thirds of ISY offenders are deficient in reading or match, while rates of skills deficiency are a little lower among OSY offenders.

Exhibit VII-5:
Characteristics of Youth Offenders

	Total		BCPSS		CPS		MPS		OCPS		SDP	
	ISY	OSY	ISY	OSY	ISY	OSY	ISY	OSY	ISY	OSY	ISY	OSY
# of offenders (% of youth)	615 (20%)		33 (7%)		129 (13%)		65 (17%)		368 (38%)		20 (6%)	
	500	115	9	24	129	0	51	14	308	60	3	17
Age (%)												
14 and under	11%	1%	56%	0%	5%	0%	2%	7%	13%	0%	0%	0%
15 to 17	82%	29%	44%	46%	95%	0%	73%	36%	79%	17%	100%	41%
Age 18+	8%	70%	0%	54%	0%	0%	25%	57%	8%	83%	0%	59%
Academic Skills (%)												
Skills Deficient, Reading	69%	59%	44%	100%	71%	0%	63%	7%	71%	100%	0%	100%
Skills Deficient, Math	66%	45%	22%	75%	73%	0%	65%	21%	65%	40%	0%	41%

Characteristics of Case Study Youth

Exhibit VII-6 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the case-study youth.

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[9] SDP staff noted during the site visits that they faced challenges categorizing youth offenders because they had difficulty verifying participants' offender status. According to the principal at the North Philadelphia Community High School (NPCHS), about a third of the students are offenders even though the MIS data reflects a much smaller percentage.

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Exhibit VIII-6:
Demographic Characteristics of Case-Study Youth

	Percent of Case-Study Youth	Percent of Enrolled Youth Served by Grant
	N=25	N=3,765
Male	60%	57%
Race/Ethnicity		
White	4%	4%
African American	80%	82%
Hispanic	16%	12%
Age		
Age 14 and under	16%	26%
Age 15 to 17	60%	59%
Age 18 +	24%	15%
Living situation		
Living with both parents	20%	--
Living with one parent[10]	48%	--
Living with spouse/partner	16%	--
Living with extended family (no parent)[11]	16%	--
Transience		
Moved at least once in the past year	80%	--
Suspensions		
Suspended (2006–2008)	60%	--
Gang Involvement		
Ever in a gang	36%	--
Currently in gang (at time of visit)	8%	--
Contact with Police		
Ever stopped by police	68%	--
Ever arrested	44%	--
Ever incarcerated	40%	--

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[10]   This could include living with any one of the following: one biological parent, a stepparent, siblings and extended family.

[11]   This includes those living only with extended family and no parents.

As shown in the exhibit, the case-study youth are similar to the overall youth population that grantees are serving. In both cases, most youth are African-American males between the ages of 15 and 17.

Although not shown in the exhibit, in several other respects the case-study youth are representative of the type of youth that grantees are targeting. The majority of the case-study youth were ninth graders at the time of their first interview (seven out of 11 youth in Round 1).[12] Two grantees—the Baltimore and Orange County districts—targeted eighth graders, so a small number of case study students (three) were eighth graders at the time of their first interview. Further, many of the case study youth are over age for their grade level: seven out of 10 ninth graders were 15–17 years old at the time of the first interview.

Although housing was not the core focus of the case studies, the housing situations among the case study youth are broadly similar to those of the overall youth population, but have a higher incidence of transience and higher likelihood of not living with parents/guardians.[13] Among the youth who were interviewed, about half (48 percent) reported living with one parent or guardian—usually their mother, grandmother, stepparent, or siblings—and few youth (20 percent) were living with both parents. Further, transience is common among case study youth—more than three-fourths of them reported that they moved at least once in the past year, often because financial stress forced youths' families to move in with extended family, or because youth chose to move into their own apartments. A few youth also reported that they moved because of chaotic home environments, such as not getting along with their guardians.

Most of the case study students struggled in school and were frequently cited for various infractions. For instance, at least 15 of the youth (60 percent) were suspended at some point over the course of the three-year evaluation. Many were suspended multiple times; on average, each was suspended about three times.[14] Youth reported a number of reasons why they were suspended, but one common reason was for fighting.

About a third of the case-study youth (36 percent) reported that they were either currently or previously in a gang. It is possible that more of the case study youth were involved in gangs, because it was clear they were uncomfortable about disclosing this information. Among the

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[12] Because many of the same youth were interviewed over a three-year period, we give their age and grade status as of the time of the first interview.

[13] Data for the overall youth population show that 97 percent of youth live in "stable housing" which, as defined by DOL, means that youth are living with a parent or relative at time of enrollment.

[14] In total, the 15 youth received about 47 suspensions.

reasons youth cited for joining gangs were the following: to have a sense of belonging and friendship, to gain protection and respect, and to make money through the drug trade.

Youth Involved in a Gang

Ben Jones[15] is a 19-year-old youth who enrolled in one grantee's alternative school for out-of-school youth. Ben reported that he has been part of a specific gang his whole life. Not only did both of his parents also belong to this gang, but many of the older youth that he looked up to when he was growing up were also in a gang. He explained the situation:

> *As far as anybody that was of age and was older than you, you looked up to them. Either they was doing something good or they was doing something bad. It was the road you wanted to choose. So, the road I chose was that I wanted to do bad.*

Ben's gang involvement resulted in his being imprisoned for two and a half years, but now that he has two children and another on the way, he no longer considers himself an active member of this gang. Most of the members of his gang have been killed or imprisoned, and many of the remaining members have chosen to focus on taking care of their families instead of actively participating in the gang. However, Ben still has ties to this lifestyle and still feels a sense of allegiance to the gang:

> *I can't say I'm part of it because I got my family. But if a major issue kicked off, like somebody was trying to kill me or kill my brothers or my kids or something like that, then it would be serious.*

Many youth reported living in neighborhoods where gangs or violence are very prevalent, a factor that restricted some participants' movement or activity in their communities, and threatened their safety. Several youth mentioned knowing gang-affiliated family members and peers.

Local police officers are often present in many of the communities where youth live and many youth have mixed opinions about the role of the local police in their communities. Sixty-eight percent of case study youth indicated that they had some contact with the police within the last year. Some youth felt harassed by the police due to racial profiling, suspected gang affiliation, and/or suspected involvement in drug-related activities. As a result, many youth tried to avoid contact with the police by going straight home after school or avoiding activities at the school that would require them to stay late.

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[15]   All youth names are pseudonyms.

Youth Outcomes

This section discusses the youth outcomes for all grantees combined, and highlights the variation in outcomes across the different grantees. For most outcomes categories, data from the quarterly reports are available through the fourth quarter of 2009, though as noted below some data are missing for some grantees.

The outcomes discussed below align with the performance measures DOL established for this grant, which fall into three major categories: educational, employment-related, and juvenile justice-related. As was discussed in more detail in Chapter III, the educational outcomes are concerned with improving literacy and numeracy for in-school youth and increasing ninth-grade retention. The employment outcomes are concerned with improving employment outcomes, either by providing job placements or long-term education or training placements for out-of-school youth offenders. The juvenile justice outcomes are concerned with reducing recidivism and reducing the dropout incidence among youth offenders.

As stated in Chapter I, the MIS data provide information about the patterns of participant enrollment, trends in reading and math gains, and various other educational and workforce achievements. While these data provide descriptions of outcomes in the core areas of interest, they are limited by the fact that grantees submitted the data only in the aggregate. Without individual-level data, we are unable to conduct analysis of how services received and demographic attributes may be associated with outcomes. Similarly, while the data are disaggregated by the type of youth served (at risk of court/gang involvement, offender and incarcerated offender, and in-school versus out-of-school), they are not disaggregated by participants' age. This limitation may have some implications for the measurement of outcomes, because grantees noted that older youth are generally more difficult to engage in school and programs. Further, because the data are aggregated, outcomes cannot be discussed based on the program components and sub-components (i.e., educational services and reading and math remediation) in which youth participated. Thus, it is difficult to know whether gains in reading in math, for example, are associated with youth receiving intensive supports in reading and math remediation. Because of these limitations, relations between variables are difficult to tease out and comparisons across grantees are subject to uncertainty as to their meaning. However, we can generate some hypotheses on why outcomes for some grantees or programs are more positive than those of others; these are discussed at the conclusion of this chapter.

Completion Status

Exhibit VII-7 shows data for program completion status, as of the end of December 2009. Approximately 17 percent of participants have completed the programs while two-thirds of the participants are still enrolled and receiving services. This finding is consistent with the fact that

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all grantees were still operating their programs at the end of 2009 and some will not complete them until the end of 2010. Grantees have also experienced some attrition; overall, 15 percent of youth have either dropped out of their programs or have not been participating in program activities since they enrolled.

Exhibit VII-7:
Program Completion and Exit[16]
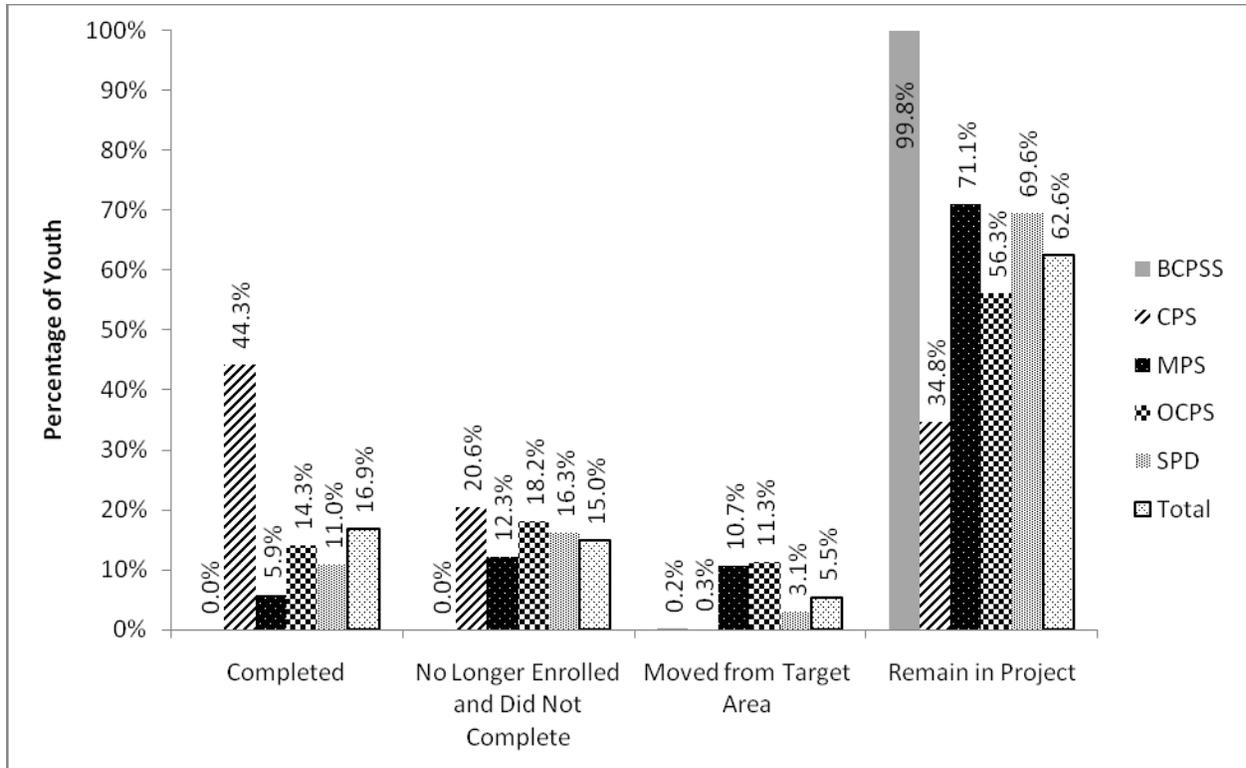
Baltimore City Public Schools is still serving the majority of its participants, who are the same individuals as those enrolled at the beginning of the grant. As discussed in Chapter VI, BCPSS is serving participants throughout the life of the grant because of staff's strong belief that at-risk youth need follow-up support as they transition to high school. Chicago Public Schools, in contrast, has exited a significant percentage of participants (44 percent) because its program model serves youth for one year only, during the ninth grade, and does not provide follow-up to students once they exit the program. These differences in approach may affect outcomes, as discussed below.

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[16] Please note that numbers for "completed or no longer enrolled" were corrected for Milwaukee because the grantee reported this field without including the number of participants who were "no longer enrolled."

Educational Outcomes

Completing the program is not the only goal of the interventions. Grantees hope that participants make gains in reading and math and obtain high school diplomas, GEDs, or certificates. As mentioned above, many participants are still receiving academic services, which will likely affect the educational outcomes discussed below.

As shown by the basic-skills-gains data contained in Exhibit VII-8, more than 40 percent of the participants who were skills deficient in reading and math at enrollment increased their scores by at least two grade levels in each subject area. The Baltimore district is showing the largest gains in reading and math, with 77 percent and 88 percent of its participants showing two-grade increases in reading and math, respectively. This is significantly better than the other grantees. One possible reason for BCPSS' high reading and math gains may have to do with the fact that BCPSS is delivering a large number of instances of services *per participant* in the category of academic services, including reading and math remediation (see discussion in Chapter VI).

Exhibit VII-8:
Basic Skills Gains by Grantee

Grantee	# Skills Deficient at Enrollment, Reading	% Showing Two-Grade Increase, Reading	# Skills Deficient at Enrollment, Math	% Showing Two-Grade Increase, Math
BCPSS	446	76.7	387	88.1
CPS[17]	476	--	441	--
MPS	286	3.1	289	3.1
OCPS	706	32.3	704	35.7
SDP	230	42.2	223	35.4
Total w/out CPS	1668	40.5%	1603	42.4

Exhibit VII-9 shows reading and math gains by type of youth, including in-school and out-of-school youth who are at risk of court involvement and youth offenders. The data show that youth offenders and previously incarcerated offenders who are skills deficient at the time of enrollment are having more difficulty achieving reading and math gains than the general at-risk youth population, despite the fact that youth offenders are receiving about the same instance of academic services per participant. The difference in outcomes between these two groups among

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[17] Chicago has not tested its participants on basic skills gains as of December 2009. This grantee is using the district's standardized test and plans to test students in the near future.

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ISY is about 31 percentage points in reading and 17 percentage points in math. This finding highlights the challenges that youth offenders face. According to grantee staff, youth offenders tend to have low attendance and be difficult to engage in school and programs, factors that may contribute to difficulties in achieving gains in reading and math skills. To address these and other challenges, four out of five grantees have created specific pathways for youth offenders by developing new schools for youth offenders and other out-of-school youth. Moving forward, grantees will need to reflect on what they have learned about helping youth offenders stay attached to school and make gains in academic performance.

Exhibit VII-9
Basic Skills Gains by Type of Youth[18]
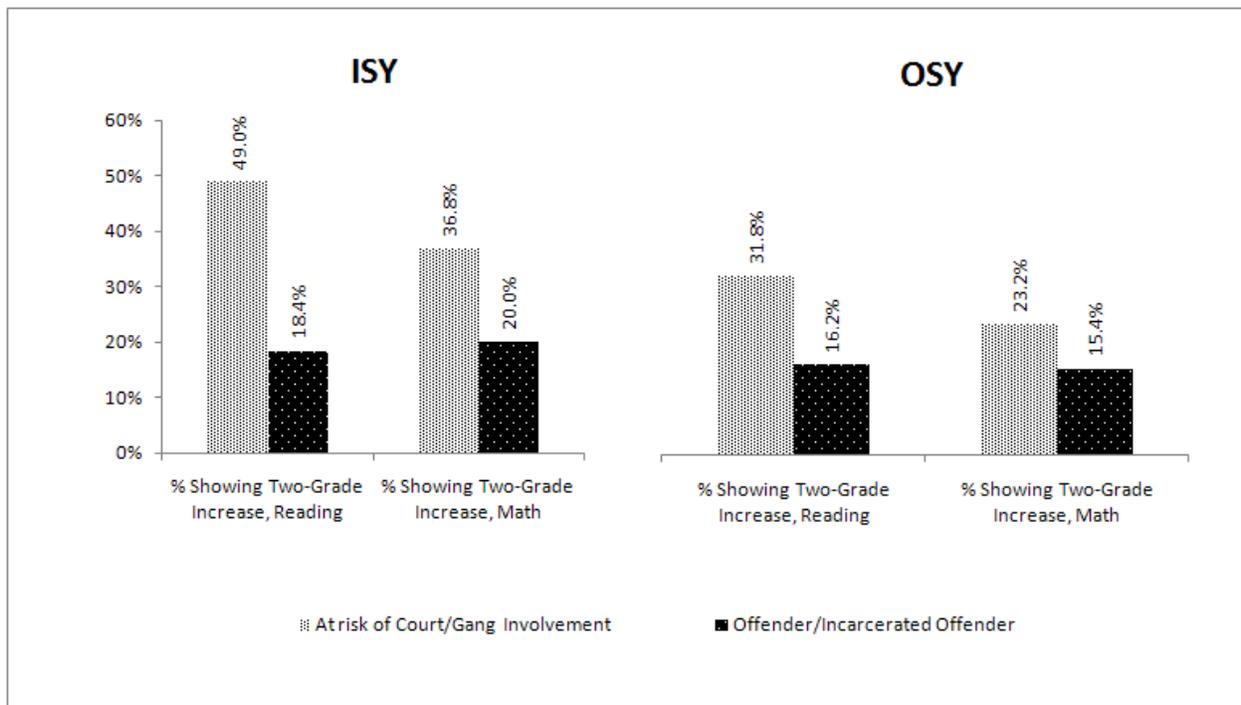
Other outcomes that grantees are reporting include the attainment of a high school diploma, GED, or certificate; these results are reported in Exhibit VII-10. Not surprisingly, since most grantees serve in-school youth who have not yet graduated, very few grantees show high gains in any of these areas. Further, some programs for out-of-school youth were slow to launch, so they

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[18] This data represents the basic skills gains by type of youth of those that were basic skills deficient at enrollment. This exhibit does not include data for Chicago Public Schools, because it has not yet tested its participants in reading and math gains.

did not have much time to show gains in this area. The exception is in the Milwaukee district, where about 11 percent of the participants obtained a high school diploma through the Transition High School, a school for over-age, under-credit, and/or adjudicated youth. A small percentage of youth received certificates in the Baltimore and Orange County districts. The School District of Philadelphia had hoped to make greater progress in providing occupational skills training programs that would lead to certificates, but was slow to launch these programs due to delays in hiring staff.

Exhibit VII-10:
Degree Attainment

Grantee	% Obtained HSD	% Obtained GED	% Obtained Certificate
BCPSS	0.0	2.3	1.2
CPS[19]	0.0	0.2	0.0
MPS	10.7	0.5	0.0
OCPS	8.0	4.7	3.3
SDP	3.5	0.0	0.0
Total w/out CPS			

This grant also seeks to improve the ninth-grade retention rate of all youth entering the ninth grade. Each grantee established a baseline rate for retention based on the number of youth who entered the ninth grade at participating schools in the fall of the 2006–2007 school year and were still retained in school in the fall of the 2007–2008 school year.[20] Exhibit VII-11 summarizes grantees' retention goals and their outcomes under this grant. Among the grantees that submitted data for this category, the ninth-grade retention rate stayed about the same as the baseline rate. The exception is the Baltimore district, which showed a small increase of six percentage points in retained ninth graders. There are several reasons why BCPSS may be showing an increase. First, BCPSS is serving mostly ninth graders through its Futures Works! program and providing intensive case management support through the use of Futures Advocates, who closely monitor students' academic progress, check up on their attendance, and intervene when there are behavioral incidents. BCPSS has experienced little staff turnover among the Futures Advocates, enabling students to form strong bonds with their advocates, who, according to staff, also serve

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[19]   Chicago has not tested its participants on basic skills gains as of December 2009. This grantee is using the
        district's standardized test and plans to test students in the near future.

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as mentors and surrogate moms and dads. These features within BCPSS's approach may be positively affecting its ninth grade retention rate.

Exhibit VII-11:
Ninth-Grade Retention Rate

Grantee	Baseline % of Ninth Grade Students Retained	# of Students Entering Ninth Grade	% Retained in School	Percentage Point Change
BCPSS	84.9%	238	90.8%	5.9%
CPS	87.3%	1894	86.2%	-1.1%
MPS	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
OCPS	89.5%	2992	89.7%	0.2%
SDP	89.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a

On the other end of the scale, the ninth-grade retention rate for CPS is slightly lower than its baseline rate. CPS recognizes this as a problem and has decided to focus its efforts on the "hot 25" students, who have been identified as the most at-risk of school failure. This shift in focus occurred midway through the grant period, suggesting that CPS may not yet have had time to show the effects of this strategy in its ninth-grade retention rate.

While the MIS data are intended to capture the core educational outcomes that the DOL grant aims to achieve, there are other outcomes that the performance measures may not be capturing. Chief among these is students' engagement in school and connectedness to caring staff who were hired by this grant to motivate youth to succeed in school and beyond. Our interviews with case-study youth show evidence of the programs' success in other areas. Below are some examples.

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[20] Milwaukee did not provide data on ninth-grade retention for the baseline or the grant participants. While Chicago provided a baseline ninth-grade retention rate, it did not report a rate for the grant participants.

Youth Reengaging in School

- Miranda Jones[21] was an over-age sophomore when she was first interviewed. She had a criminal record, mostly for drug-related charges and car theft. She was out of school for a year, in and out of youth detention centers. As a result, she was very behind on credits and was skeptical about catching up. When we met her during the second interview, things had turned around for her. Through the onsite credit retrieval program that was funded by DOL, she had caught up on units and was scheduled to graduate on time. She was working closely with the intervention specialist to make plans to attend college. This connection to the case manager was critical to her reengagement in school.

- Claudio Ramos was a sophomore when he was first interviewed and a senior during the last interview. He was a very troubled young man in the first interview, having been harassed by gangs to join, and saying that he didn't trust any adult at the school. He said,
  "But, me, I don't trust nobody. The way I see it, everybody has got a gun. You either avoid that or you get shot. That's how I see the world. It's either live or die."

By the third interview, Claudio had put the gang issues behind him, was in honors classes, had formed a very trusting relationship with his case manager, and had only a few more units to earn in order to graduate on time with his class. He attributed his turnaround largely to the assistance of his case manager:
Ms. Stone did help me get through school last year. To tell you the truth, she did. Last year was the first year that I ever got through the whole year, until the very end, without getting a referral. This year, I ain't got no referrals.

Workforce Outcomes

In this section, we examine the workforce outcomes for out-of-school youth. Exhibit VII-12 summarizes these outcomes,[22] which are defined in the following ways in the MIS:

- Youth who obtained unsubsidized employment, including a formal apprenticeship, for the first time since program enrollment.

- Youth who entered the military.

- Youth who entered long-term occupational training.

- Youth who entered full-time post-secondary school.

- Youth who are placed in a job *and* enrolled in post-secondary education.

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[21] All youth names and the names of their schools have been disguised to protect their anonymity.

[22] The Philadelphia district did not report on workforce outcomes in its quarterly report submissions. Therefore, Philadelphia participants are not included in the discussion of workforce outcomes.

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Exhibit VII-12 shows that for all grantees combined about 140 of the 642 out-of-school youth (22 percent) have been placed in unsubsidized employment. A small percentage of out-of-school youth have pursued additional educational opportunities, including long-term training or postsecondary education.[23]

Exhibit VII-12:
Workforce Outcomes for OSY[24]
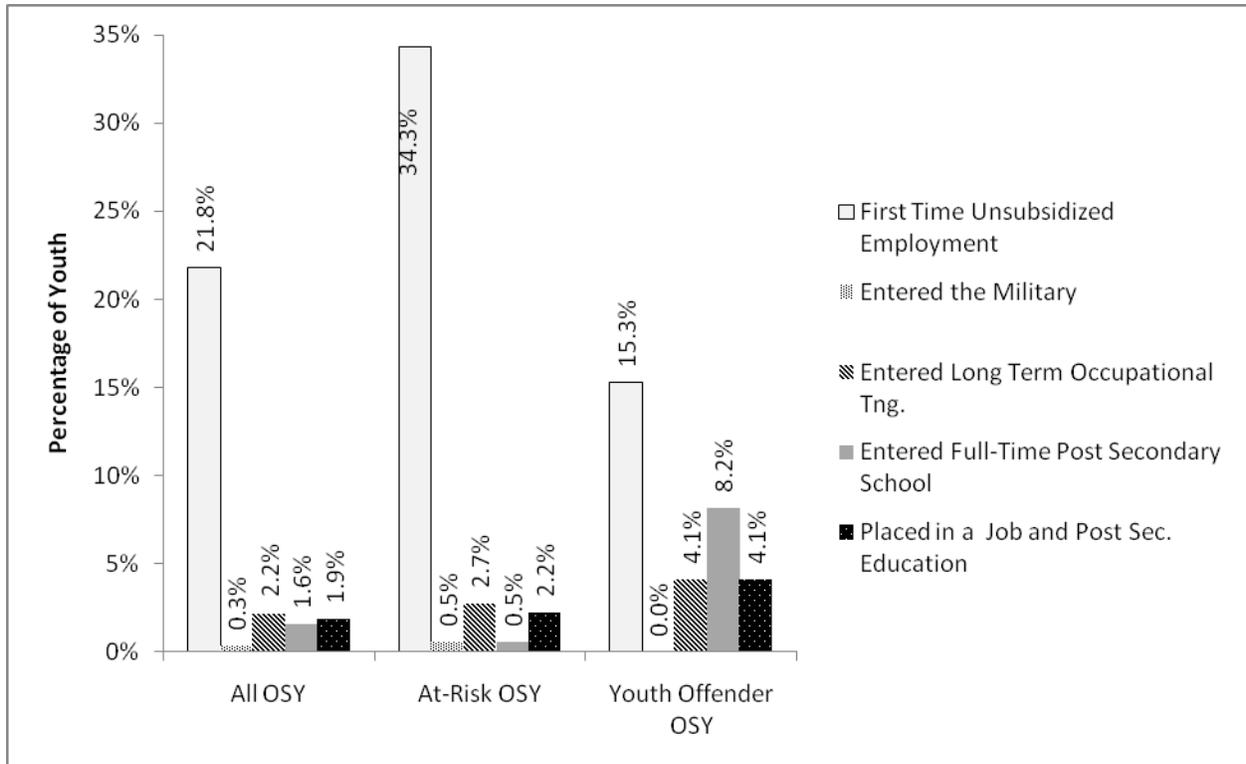
Exhibit VII-12 also shows workforce outcomes by subgroups of out-of-school youth. The outcomes for the at-risk out-of-school youth population are higher than those of the overall youth population, with about a third of them (34 percent) having been placed in unsubsidized employment. However, a smaller percentage of out-of-school youth with an offense record (15 percent) have achieved the same outcome. Interestingly, a good proportion of out-of-school

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[23] The MIS reporting template was not designed to capture outcomes data for program "exiters" and "non-exiters." The inability to do so is the likely reason for the low outcomes reported in this section.

[24] Because the Philadelphia district did not report workforce outcomes the "All" category in Exhibit VII-12 does not include participants from Philadelphia. The Chicago district did not serve any OSY and its participants are therefore not represented in this graph.

youth offenders (eight percent) have pursued postsecondary education, suggesting that some youth are pursuing an additional pathway to meeting their career goals.

Further, workforce outcomes differ widely by grantee, as shown in Exhibit VII-13. The Baltimore district reported a relatively high percentage of youth placed in unsubsidized employment (54 percent).

Exhibit VII-13:
Workforce Outcomes for OSY By Grantee[25]

	BCPSS	MPS[26]	OCPS
Total OSY Enrolled	171	47	244
First-Time Unsubsidized Employment	54.4%	0.0%	19.3%
Entered the Military	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%
Entered Long Term Occupational Tng.	3.5%	0.0%	3.3%
Completed Long Term Occ. Tng.[27]	1.2%	0.0%	---
Entered Full-Time Post Secondary School	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%

Because age is likely to be a key determinant of workforce outcomes, we present these outcomes for out-of-school youth who are 18 years old and older in Exhibit VII-14. For these youth, BCPSS is showing the highest percentage of placement in jobs, long-term training, military service, or postsecondary school (90 percent). At least two factors may be contributing to these outcomes. First, BCPSS has contracted with the YO! Center, a program with a long-standing history of job placement for out-of-school youth. BCPSS has also developed a strong linkage with the Department of Transportation, which places youth in internships, with the expectation that youth will be hired by this agency upon program completion.

While BCPSS's placement rate is impressive, especially considering the national recession, workforce outcomes for OSY overall are fairly modest compared to those of other programs such as YouthBuild.[28]

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[25] Philadelphia is omitted from these tables due to lack of data/data quality issues.

[26] Out-of-school at MPS did not achieve any workforce outcomes as of December 2009.

[27] Orange County is omitted from this field because of data quality issues.

[28] In the Evaluation of the YouthBuild Youth Offender Grants conducted by Social Policy Research Associates (SPR), approximately 52 percent of participants were placed in unsubsidized employment upon program completion.

Exhibit VII-14:
Placement in Job, Long-term Training, Military Service, or Full-time Post-Secondary School for OSY Age 18+

	18+ OSY Enrollees	% Placed
BCPSS	99	89.9%
CPS[29]	0	n/a
MPS	26	0.0%
OCPS	215	14.4%
SDP[30]	n/a	n/a
Total	340	35.3%

Youth spoke at length about the challenges of finding employment. These challenges are exacerbated by youths' limited work experience. One 18-year-old high school senior related his experience:

> *I've been looking in the newspaper. I've been going on-line. I've been going in places. I've been talking to friends. I've been talking to my coach, but nothing seems to be working...I tried out a lot, McDonalds, Wendy's, Best Buy, Toys R Us, Boston Market. I basically went for anything I could fill out. Sometimes I put homework aside to fill out applications.*

Youth with an offense history face a particularly tough time finding work, as noted by this 21-year-old out-of-school youth:

> *When I go for an interview, I know how to talk, I know what to say, I know what not to say, I know how to present myself, I know all those things. So when I do go into an interview...as soon as we start talking about the felony, that's when everything changes, their whole demeanor changes on me. At first it was, 'Hey...I think you're going to do good with this company,' and then as soon as we start talking about the felony it's, 'Okay, we're going to get back to you.' The felony is really beating me up hard right now.*

Despite these modest outcomes overall, some of the youth who we interviewed are showing noteworthy successes after long and uncertain paths of gang involvement and crime. Josh Smith

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[29] Chicago did not enroll any OSY.

[30] Philadelphia did not report these data.

is a good example of someone whose life took a positive turn after enrolling in an alternative high school that was funded by the School District Grant.

Youth Offender Achieving Educational and Workforce Goals

Josh Smith had spent one year in prison on an armed robbery felony charge and was placed in a traditional high school upon his release. He struggled with the transition back to his home school and did not have much support there. He was eventually referred to the local alternative school that had received seed funding from DOL.

At this alternative high school, Josh reported that the staff provided extensive counseling and helped him earn credits and improve his reading and math skills. He said that after years of struggling and being too embarrassed to ask questions in a traditional school environment, the alternative high school's online program and small class size helped him realize that he was an intelligent person who could succeed in school.

> *And now since hooking up with [this school], I feel so great about myself.*
> *I feel like I'm actually going to do something with my life. I got my own*
> *apartment. I pay my own bills. I feel good. I'm not depressed anymore.*
> *I don't have low self-esteem. I think I'm somebody now…I have*
> *standards now. I feel like I'm worth something. I think I'm valuable. I*
> *think now when I say something, it means something.*

The school staff helped Josh find work after he graduated. He was working as a youth advisor at a nearby school until the position was eliminated due to discontinued grant funds. He continues to look for work and lives with his girlfriend and son, and is optimistic about the future.

Juvenile Justice Outcomes

Other goals for this grant are to reduce the recidivism rate of participating youth and to reduce the dropout rate among former youth offenders. To meet these goals, grantees are offering a host of wraparound services, including case management, supportive services, and transitional support for youth who are leaving detention. As discussed in Chapter VI, grantees also coordinate aftercare services with parole officers to ensure that youth transition smoothly back to their schools or community programs.

Each grantee was asked to provide a baseline rate of juvenile recidivism for its community. Per DOL instruction, grantees were to provide either state or local juvenile recidivism rates for the

most recent period available.[31] DOL determined that each grantee's target recidivism rate for its participant youth offenders should be 20 percent less than the baseline recidivism rate for its community. Exhibit VII-15 displays the baseline recidivism rate, the target recidivism rate, the number of youth offenders enrolled, and the actual recidivism rate achieved for each grantee.

Initially DOL instructed grantees to define recidivism as they felt appropriate as long as this definition was consistent in the baseline and follow-up periods. However, in March of 2009, DOL established more formal guidelines for calculating recidivism rates, which included calculating recidivism only for participants who had enrolled in the grantees' program within three months of release and who had reached the 12-month post-release point. However, because the data-reporting format was fixed to include all enrolled youth offenders in the recidivism calculation regardless of their program entrance date, it seems highly unlikely that recidivism was calculated for participants at the 12-month post-release date. Instead, the recidivism calculations included all enrolled youth offenders, even those who had begun in the most recent reporting quarter.[32] Thus, these recidivism rates should be considered provisional.

Exhibit VII-15:
Recidivism for All Offenders[33]

	Baseline Recidivism Rate	Target Recidivism Rate[34]	# Enrolled	% Recidivated
BCPSS	53.0%	42.2%	33	6.1%
CPS	39.0%	31.2%	129	15.5%
MPS	n/a	n/a	65	15.4%
OCPS	30.0%	24.0%	368	11.1%
SDP	25.0%	20.0%	20	5.0%
Total Enrolled	n/a	n/a	615	12.0%

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[31] To date only Chicago and Philadelphia have provided explanations of the sources of baseline recidivism data. The baseline rate supplied by Chicago is the recidivism rate for juvenile offenders in Cook County during 2007. Philadelphia's baseline is the recidivism rate for juvenile offenders in Philadelphia from 1997 to 2005.

[32] Grantee quarterly reports define recidivating youth offenders as those who were (1) convicted of a crime after entering the project, but not incarcerated, (2) convicted of a crime after entering the project and incarcerated, or (3) had their parole or probation revoked after entering the project and incarcerated.

[33] Includes incarcerated offenders.

[34] Per DOL instruction, these rates are 20 percent less than the corresponding baseline rates.

Keeping in mind these caveats, all of the grantees that provided target recidivism rates reported that the recidivism rates for their enrolled youth offender participants were substantially lower than their targets. In total, the recidivism rate for all grantees was 12 percent,[35] and no grantee reported a recidivism rate above 16 percent.

There is no national recidivism rate for juveniles and thus no ready benchmark against which to compare grantees' recidivism rates. However, one report including multi-state data estimated that within one year, 55 percent of juveniles released from state incarceration were re-arrested, 33 percent were re-convicted or re-adjudicated, and 25 percent were re-incarcerated or re-confined (including revocations of parole/probation).[36] While these figures provide a general context for juvenile recidivism rates, they are not directly comparable to grantee recidivism rates because the grantees' rates were not necessarily calculated using a 12-month follow-up period.

Among the case study youth, four have either been arrested or incarcerated—two were incarcerated and the other two were arrested. Below is a brief summary of one of the youth who recidivated.

Youth Offender Achieving Negative Outcomes

At the time of his interview, Jamie Rawlings was an over-age freshmen who had just been released from juvenile detention and placed in his home school. He was in a known gang, having been initiated into the gang by his older brother. As part of his gang life, he had committed a number of offenses, mostly related to possession of stolen goods, car theft, drug sales, and assault. As a result, he had been in and out of juvenile hall since he was 13 years old. At the time of his interview, his brother had been recently murdered by a rival gang member, shot to death a few blocks from the target school. Jamie did his best to come to school every day and meet with his case manager despite this tragedy. However, he was severely traumatized by his brother's death and was unable to focus in school. Eventually, Jamie sought revenge for his brother's murder by attacking a rival gang member; Jamie was soon rearrested. The research staff were unable to locate Jamie for another interview because he dropped out of school. Grantee staff believe he moved out of state and may be incarcerated.

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[35] In SPR's Evaluation of the YouthBuild Youth Offender Grants, 25 percent of grantees had negative justice outcomes, meaning that at least 25 percent of youth re-offended or had their probation or parole revoked after entering the YouthBuild Program.

[36] Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice. 2005. "Juvenile recidivism in Virginia." *DJJ Research Quarterly*. Richmond, VA: VDJJ; cited in Snyder, Howard N. and Melissa Sickmund. 2006. *Juvenile offenders and victims: 2006 national report.* Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

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Jamie's story is an example of the kinds of challenges that grantees face in attempting to reduce recidivism. Jamie's case also confirms other research findings, which indicate that offenders with former gang ties and a history of crime are more likely to recidivate.[37]

The School District Grant also seeks to reduce the dropout rate among youth offenders. We examined the youth offender school retention rate to understand the extent to which grantees met this goal. Unfortunately, OCPS is the only grantee that reported these data as of December 2009. As shown in Exhibit VII-16, OCPS has retained about 61 percent of the 70 youth offenders that it enrolled, a change of 2.3 percentage points from baseline.[38]

Exhibit VII-16:
Youth Offender School Retention Rate[39]

Grantee	Baseline % of returning YO retained	# of YO returning to school	% retained in school	Change
BCPSS	11.1%	n/a	n/a	n/a
CPS	49.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
MPS	72.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a
OCPS	59.1%	70	61.4%	2.3
SDP	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Summary

This chapter summarized the core youth outcomes that grantees achieved and reported in the MIS. We also included outcomes data from the 25 case-study youth who we tracked over a three-year period. In examining these data sources, we made the following core observations:

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[37] Huebner, B., Varano, S., Bynum, T. "Gangs, Guns and Drugs: Recidivism Among Serious, Young Offenders." *Criminology & Public Policy*, Volume 6, Number 2, May 2007. pp. 187-221(35). http://www.umsl.edu/~ccj/pdfs/CPP_Huebner.pdf   Accessed April 20, 2010.

[38] Per DOL instruction, grantees were to establish a baseline measure of the rate of grant-participant youth offenders returning to schools. This baseline rate is the percentage of youth offenders who returned to school from a correctional facility in either the 2005–2006 school year or the 2006 calendar year who remained in school 12 months later. The youth offender retention rate for grant-funded programs used a similar calculation. The rate is the percentage of returning youth offenders who have reached their first anniversary of enrollment who are still enrolled in school.

[39] Only Orange County reported data for this measure.

Participant Characteristics

- Grantees are serving primarily in-school youth between 15 and 17 years old. These youth represent some of the most at-risk youth populations within the target schools and programs, facing multiple barriers to employment and school success. More than half of the youth were identified as deficient in reading and math at the time of enrollment. Consistent with this finding, many youth are over-age for their grade and under-credit, requiring specialized interventions to help them get back on track for school completion. In addition, grantees are serving a good proportion of youth offenders (20 percent), most of whom are in-school youth who will require focused support in order to successfully resume their educations after leaving detention. Most youth (97 percent) live in stable housing arrangements

- The 25 case study youth are similar to the overall youth population that grantees are serving in most respects. These youth are about the same age as the overall youth population and are over-age for their grade. Many also struggle in school and were suspended a number of times for misconduct. About a third of the case-study youth participants admitted to being in a gang, and these youth said that being in a gang provides a sense of brotherhood and camaraderie.

Program Outcomes

- Most of the grantees have exited few participants because they are continuing to provide some form of follow-up support, even though this support is somewhat inconsistently available. The exception is CPS; a majority of participants have exited its YES program, which serves youth for only one year.

- Outcomes data for reading and math gains among grantees that reported this data show that approximately 40 percent of youth achieved increases of two grade levels in each subject. BCPSS is showing the largest gain in reading and math, whereas MPS made small gains in these areas. It appears that BCPSS's program is strong for several reasons. First, BCPSS is delivering the most instances of services per participant, especially in reading and math remediation. Second, BCPSS specifically targeted youth who were two grade levels behind, allowing it to focus its interventions on students' academic needs. Third, BCPSS's intensive case management approach means that participants in the Future Works! program have been receiving services from Futures Advocates for the last three years.

- Youth offenders—both in-school and out-of-school youth—are showing noticeably lower gains in reading and math skills, suggesting that intensive, targeted support in basic skills remediation expressly for these groups is vital. Grantees are providing a second chance for youth offenders by offering safe and nurturing environments for them to learn using alternative methods of instruction, such as on-line learning, independent study, and project-based learning. These tactics are intended to encourage youth offenders to remain engaged and attached to school so that they can succeed.

- Educational outcomes in other areas are very modest. For instance, among the three out of five grantees that reported the ninth-grade retention rate, there has been little change in this rate from the grantees' established baseline. Baltimore is

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the exception, which achieved an almost six percentage point increase in the ninth grade retention rate. Further, very few grantees show significant gains in the number of students attaining high school diplomas, GEDs, and certificates (but this is primarily because most grantees serve in-school youth who have not yet graduated).

- Workforce outcomes are modest because most of the youth who are served by this grant are not yet of age to graduate. However, about 22 percent of out-of-school youths were placed in unsubsidized employment. Because two grantees have not submitted outcomes data, this finding is preliminary.

- Out of the 615 youth offenders who enrolled in the grant-funded activities, approximately 12 percent recidivated, which is lower than grantees' target goal for reducing recidivism. Among the 25 case study youth offenders, four of them recidivated (16 percent).

As discussed throughout this chapter, grantees differ in the types of outcomes that they achieved. There may be a host of reasons why these differences exist, some of which may be related to the program features or the district and school contexts. For instance, some grantees experienced delays in hiring project staff and in approving contracts for service providers, due to the bureaucracy at the district level. As a result, the implementation of some project components— such as mentoring, academic remediation, and workforce services—was slow to launch. In a few grantee sites, some aspects of the projects were not launched until the second year of grant funding. At MPS, for example, the school-based teams that are responsible for recruitment, developing individual service plans, and connecting youth to supportive services were not hired until midway through the project. As a result, participants did not receive the full array of grant services until Year Three of the grant. Further, there is some variation in the intensity and duration of services offered by grantees. One grantee offers services for one year without providing follow-up services. Several other grantees offer services to the same youth for the duration of this grant, or three years. As a result, youth participants overall are receiving not only different types of services, but also different intensities of services. Further, as discussed in Chapter V, participants differ in the length of time that they were exposed to program services. Participants who have been enrolled for longer periods are likely to have received more instances of services than those who have enrolled more recently. Lastly, grantees were universally affected by the declining national and local economy, which made it extremely challenging to find unsubsidized employment for out-of-school youth. For this and other reasons discussed above, grantees are showing mixed outcomes for job placement.

Conclusion

In sum, grantees designed programs and interventions that would enable them to meet DOL's performance goals. As mentioned in Chapter VI, the primary focus of the interventions and

programs is on providing personalized supports through intensive case management. Accordingly, grantees invested heavily in hiring case managers, who are also called advocates, intervention specialists, or student engagement specialists. By connecting at-risk youth to caring adults, grantees believe that youth will engage better in school and become attached to the institutions of which they are a part. Given the tremendous obstacles facing the participants, this approach makes sense. An abundance of research shows that youth fare well in school and programs when they have strong relationships with caring adults.[40]

At the same time, however, it is not clear whether there is a direct link between this approach and some of the core outcomes that DOL has established for the grant. For instance, DOL has placed a strong emphasis on achieving two-grade-level gains in reading in math. While all grantees reported providing basic skills remediation, not all of them focus specifically on structured reading and math remediation. Orange County Public Schools provides some form of educational support through GED classes, credit retrieval, and tutoring, but formal classes and other interventions focused on reading and math support are not provided through this grant. The Chicago School District is using the Talent Development curriculum through Johns Hopkins University, but reading and math remediation is not a core focus of this curriculum. The decision that the majority of grantees made not to focus heavily on reading and math intervention has to do with the perception that these supports are adequately provided at the target schools. While we can expect that target middle schools and high schools offer core classes that may contribute to achieving two-grade-level gains in reading and math, we cannot be assured that such supports are focused sufficiently on the special needs and barriers of the target groups, particularly in-school youth offenders.

On the other hand, case management support can lead to increased attachment to school and programs, as we have noticed among many of the case study youth. Youth made it clear that they valued the support that they received from their case managers and, after working closely with them, youth saw that school had meaning in their lives. Some of the youth also realized that their education was important to them as a gateway to independence, opportunities, and material goods. In spite of adversity and challenging life circumstances, these youth expressed a desire to better their lives through connections to their schools, case managers, teachers, and other school staff. Qualitative outcomes demonstrate youths' ability to develop positive relationships with adults, solicit help from them about schooling choices and career pathways, and gain skills that can contribute to success in adulthood. Thus, while improvements related to learning, employment, and staying out of trouble with justice system may be modest among the grant

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[40] *Trends in Youth Development: Visions, Realities, Challenges*. Benson, P. and Pittman, K. (eds). Kluwer Academic Publishers: Norwell, MA. 2001.

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participants, qualitative data show that grantees appear to be making a difference in the lives of some of the youth they served.

VIII.   CONCLUSION

This evaluation set out to explore the strategies that school district grantees developed to improve the educational pathways for at-risk youth and reduce youth's involvement in crime and gangs. The specific goals of the evaluation were to learn about best practices for serving these youth, to identify the barriers that grantees faced in designing and implementing services for their target populations, and to document youth outcomes. In this report, we provided a description of the community context, an overview of the school district grantees, an examination of partnership models, an analysis of recruitment and enrollment practices and challenges, an overview of the core service approaches that grantees are using, and a summary of youth outcomes. In this final chapter, we discuss grantees' plans for sustaining the services that were developed through the School District Grant, summarize the core accomplishments of grantee schools, and review the challenges grantees faced as they designed and implemented their projects.

Sustainability

Grantees are working towards institutionalizing their grant-related efforts so that they can be sustained beyond the life of the grant. Grantees are mindful of the need to sustain their projects, but are understandably concerned about their ability to do so because of the uncertain economic context in which their school districts operate. Budget cuts across the school districts likely mean that it will be impossible to sustain all grant-funded activities, even with newly identified funding sources, forcing school leaders to make difficult decisions about where to devote their limited resources. Those components that are most likely to continue are those that can be described as new structures or program models, particularly those that represent a mutually beneficial overlap between school districts and partners. Below is a summary of each grantee's key project components and their prospects for sustainability.

Baltimore City Public School System. BCPSS hopes to continue core grant programs, but the severe budget cuts at the district level are going to make it difficult to sustain many of the programs that were funded by the School District grant. For instance, the Futures Works! program faces considerable sustainability challenges because of dramatic district restructuring

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that gives BCPSS schools and principals much more autonomy with regard to how to use their financial resources for programs and staff. Thus, it is unclear whether leadership at the target schools will continue the Future Works! program, unless other grant funds become available. To date, no alternate funding sources have been identified to continue providing mental health services at the same level supported by the School District Grant, though mental health specialists will likely continue working at the schools at a lower capacity. Mentoring services from Community Law in Action will not likely be sustained, but will be provided in another form through the work of staff from New Visions for Youth Services (NVYS).

Some of the services that will be sustained include those offered by NVYS, which will be funded by a grant that the district secured from the Open Society Institute. Celebrating its ten-year anniversary, the YO! Center (Westside) expects the majority of its services to continue, though some may be scaled back next year for budgetary reasons. Nevertheless, youth served under the School District Grant will still be able to receive services from the YO! Center because, as one staff said, "once a YO! member, always a YO! member."

Chicago Public Schools. The new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of CPS is looking to the YES program as a model for new initiatives in the upcoming school year. Because the CEO recently created a new Chief Area Officer position dedicated to alternative schools, transitional schools and services for youth offenders will likely receive increased attention, with the YES program strongly informing this work. The district is currently exploring ways to sustain and expand the Banner Transitional Schools implemented as part of this grant. In addition, early discussions with grantee staff about sustainability suggest that the district believes the YES' Student Engagement Specialists—who provide intensive case management services to keep youth engaged in school—are key in the district's effort to effectively serve at-risk youth. Thus, the positions that were created specifically through the YES program will likely be expanded to more, if not all, schools in the district.

At the school level, at least two of the target high schools (Crane HS and Hirsch HS) reported that they are proposing a continuation and/or expansion of YES program elements as part of their individual proposal for the "Culture of Calm" initiative—a $30 million, district-wide initiative to reduce violence and create serene atmospheres in schools.

Milwaukee Public Schools. MPS' most notable accomplishment under this grant is the creation of the Transition High School, a school that provides critical alternative education services for youth who are transitioning from detention back to school. This school will be sustained by district funds after the grant has ended. The district's decision to absorb the school's costs despite facing dramatic budget cuts gives a clear indication of the perceived value of this school.

No other Futures First Initiative (FFI) program components will be sustained, although some of the employment services component will be maintained as part of another contract at the district, and CBO providers may be retained at the discretion and funding capacity of individual schools. With regard to the administrative staff hired through this grant, the current grant manager and Intervention Coordinator have been retained in positions with MPS. It is likely that the Intervention Coordinator will be able to continue certain components or strategies of the School District Grant. She may also be motivated to apply what the district learned through this grant's implementation and partnership experiences: that it is important to mentor at-risk youth, have gang reduction plans in place, and partner with other agencies to enhance communication and mutually informed decision-making.

Orange County Public Schools. OCPS is expected to continue to operate the Transition Center with Title I funds after the School District Grant ends. Because it allows OCPS and the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to do joint planning and coordinate services, this center is likely to continue to serve as the primary mechanism for partnering between the school district and the DJJ. However, the OCPS counselor position at the Juvenile Assessment Center will be discontinued due to lack of funding. Sustainability of other grant components is uncertain. Although the Metropolitan Orlando Urban League is considered a strong partner and provides valuable GED and work training to out-of-school youth, the relationship is not likely to be sustained without another grant, as Orange County Public Schools is not a core funder of these types of out-of-school youth programs. Resource officers from the Orlando Police Department (OPD) and Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) will continue to work for their agencies on youth-related issues, but will not be supported to continue grant-related functions. Because the intervention specialists are considered one of the most successful components of the grant, OCPS is currently exploring the possibility of sustaining these staff with Title I funding.

School District of Philadelphia. SDP is hopeful that all School District Grant components can be continued and has identified preliminary sustainability plans. One identified challenge in this area was simply that the many layers of partnership involved in SDP's service delivery approach—there are, for example, three different sets of staff involved with the Learning To Work (LTW) program at University City and Overbrook High Schools—might not be the most efficient way to sustain services.

Because PYN already manages WIA youth funds for the city, its staff are looking at potentially harnessing this funding stream for continuation of some of the School District Grant elements. However, issues of eligibility for WIA youth funds—and how they intersect with the target populations being served by the School District Grant—may pose a challenge.

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With specific regard to the sustainability of the LTW program at University City and Overbrook high schools, grant staff hope that the program will become permanently embedded as part of the OASIS model, assuming it remains successful. The internship component of the LTW program will be sustained by youth participating in PYN's other internship programs in its youth readiness portfolio. The program director of the Bridge Program at the E^3 Power Center hopes that funding will be sustained directly by the Public Health Management Corporation (parent organization of the Bridge Program), rather than being funneled through PYN. Other funding possibilities are being explored: raising funds by offering drug and alcohol rehabilitation services on-site and asking the district's accelerated schools to purchase slots for students in the Bridge Program. To sustain the Occupational Skills Program, PYN recently applied for another U.S. Department of Labor grant to continue serving E^3 Power Center youth.

In sum, the decision to continue to fund some of the services and programs depends on whether the school districts can leverage new funding and whether the projects align closely to the district's current priorities. Some districts such as CPS, MPS, and OCPS have secured district funding to continue to operate the alternative schools for youth offenders that were either wholly or partially funded by the School District Grant because of the service gap these schools fill for youth offenders. This commitment is significant given the severe budget cuts that the districts are facing in SY 2009–2010.

Lastly, when discussing sustainability, we must not only cover sustainability of funding and program components, but also sustainability of knowledge and relationships. With regard to knowledge, a number of grantees described how the lessons they learned from the School District Grant—e.g., the importance of mentoring for at-risk youth, or how to best partner with other agencies—would be carried forward to future endeavors. Sometimes this scenario was made more plausible by the continuation of key grant staff in new school district positions, as is the case in Milwaukee, where the Intervention Coordinator will continue to work at other schools in the district, in the hope of applying the lessons learned from this grant. On the other hand, sustaining ideas, knowledge, and relationships will not be easy. One grantee pointed out the relative danger of having key grant staff who are in contracted positions (rather than permanent staff at a partner organizations) since knowledge gained from the grant experience is lost with the individual at the end of the grant rather than being sustained within organizational memory.

Accomplishments

In addition to taking steps to sustain some of the grant-funded project components, school district grantees achieved a number of significant accomplishments throughout the life of the grant. They successfully mobilized core community partners to participate in grant activities,

gained the support of local school leaders and staff for implementing new programs or expanding existing ones, and provided much-needed services to some of the most vulnerable youth in their schools and communities. Below we highlight other key findings.

- **Grantees developed some noteworthy practices to reach at-risk youth**, including youth offenders, over-age and under-credit youth, and out-of-school youth. Some of the strategies include personalizing services for youth by connecting them with mentors and other caring adults, and creating specific pathways for youth offenders to resume their education after they leave juvenile detention.

- **As a result of grantees' work, grant resources reached 34 traditional and alternative schools and eight program sites and served about 3,765 youth.** The programs and services in which youth participated appear to be making a big difference in the lives of these youth, as shown by the stories of the case study youth whose lives were transformed by the services that they received.

- **Grantee programs served mostly in-school youth (83% of the total served)**. By reaching so many in-school youth, grant resources effectively augmented the resources that are available to struggling schools and the students that participated in grant-funded services.

- **Grant funds significantly increased the per-pupil spending for the students who were enrolled in grant-funded activities**. Estimated per-participant expenditures for this grant to date range from $2,528 at Chicago Public Schools to $7,067 in Milwaukee Public Schools. When this amount is added to the districts' regular per-pupil spending, grantees' overall per-pupil spending for grant participants is bumped up by an average of 42 percent.

- **Grantees are providing multiple pathways for youth offenders to resume their educations**. The School District Grant provided an opportunity for grantees to develop special programs and alternative schools so that youth can successfully transition from detention to the public schools. Grantees used seed funding from the School District Grant to develop four new alternative schools for youth offenders—at Chicago Public Schools, Milwaukee Public Schools, Orange County Public Schools, and School District of Philadelphia. Within these schools and at target schools, grantees developed specialized educational and workforce programs that are geared towards offenders, such as the Learning to Work and Bridge programs at SDP. School districts are pleased with the work that is currently being done at these alternative schools and as mentioned above, are planning to sustain them after the sunset of this grant.

- **The grant has provided additional staffing to under-resourced schools and community programs.** This grant enabled grantees to hire a total of 130 staff,[1] including case managers, administrators, teachers and job developers. Other staff who were supported through this grant include school resource officers, gang

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[1] The 130 staff positions include both full-time and part-time positions.

specialists, counselors, social workers, and mental health specialists. Grantees such as Chicago Public Schools and Milwaukee Public Schools were comprehensive in their approach to staffing their projects, making use of a specialized team of staff made up of teachers, counselors, social workers, mental health specialists, and career development specialists in order to sufficiently address students' needs. Given that many of the districts have faced staffing cuts and imposed hiring freezes over the past three years, injecting additional staff into schools enables the lowest performing schools to continue to provide essential services to students.

- **Grantees were able to convene and mobilize diverse ranges of influential stakeholders who brought to the table their own networks of partners and resources.** As discussed in Chapter IV, "super-partners" were able to broker relationships with other key stakeholders and/or helped facilitate connections between the School District Grant and other related initiatives. As a result of increased connections with community partners, grantees noted that they are able to leverage new resources and valuable information about how to best serve vulnerable youth.

- **Partnerships with the workforce investment system appear to be the strongest of all the required partners for this grant.** All grantees but one have formal arrangements with the local workforce investment board, and some grantees also involve CBOs in the provision of workforce services. Given workforce partners' often pre-existing focus on serving out-of-school youth, it is perhaps not surprising that school districts are most likely to link effectively with these partners. Furthermore, many local workforce entities play multiple, interrelated roles within the city that would make it difficult *not* to partner with these agencies.

- **Several grantees developed formal procedures for sharing participant data.** Because data sharing is a complicated and difficult challenge to overcome, grantees worked hard to address this challenge at the onset. Three grantees in particular—BCPSS, MPS, SDP—successfully created formal procedures to share participant data across systems by having youth's guardians sign waivers that would give consent to grantee staff to share information about youths' background and service plans with relevant partners. At BCPSS, gaining the ability to share data between the district, the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, and Department of Juvenile Services qualifies as a major accomplishment.

As described above, grantees have achieved considerable success in creating systems and procedures to continue supporting youth beyond the life of the grant. As grantees wrap up their projects in 2010, additional accomplishments, and perhaps renewed prospects for sustainability, are likely to surface.

Challenges

Although grantees achieved a great deal of success with the School District Grant and will likely carry their lessons learned from this grant to other initiatives at the district level, they also faced significant challenges. These challenges are clustered into three major categories: (1) contextual challenges, (2) implementation challenges, and (3) partnership challenges.

Contextual Challenges

- **Budget cuts and leadership changes at the district level delayed the implementation of key grant-funded activities**. Project activities were affected by these changes in significant ways. For instance, at least three school district grantees imposed hiring freezes, which meant that project staff, including teachers, were unable to be hired in a timely manner. As a result, BCPSS, for instance, was unable to implement the Voyager Curriculum and hire a mentoring provider until the second year of the grant. The large-scale budget shortfalls at OCPS resulted in a number of teacher layoffs, cuts in student services, and a hiring and spending freeze at the district level. Although one might expect the School District Grant to be immune to financial uncertainties at the district level, project staff noted that many aspects of the grant were indeed affected.

- **Changes in the attendance boundaries at several of the target schools led to increased gang violence and conflicts**. The budget cuts at the district level meant that some schools within some of the districts were closed, due to low attendance and/or persistently low performance. Because of the school closures, attendance boundaries for some of the target schools changed, which meant that rival gangs were suddenly going to the same schools. As a result, project staff needed to pay special attention to community conflicts that might spill over into the school.

- **Changes in school leaders required grantees to rebuild relationships and regain buy-in for programs and interventions**. Many of the target schools struggle with high turnover among their principals. It is therefore not surprising that the principals at some of the target schools shifted during the course of this grant (e.g., Manley High School in CPS, Forest Park High School in BCPSS). When principals changed at the target schools, project staff needed to "start fresh," to establish trust and gain buy-in from the school leaders and their new staff. One school, for instance, hired a new principal who supported the grant-funded project but wanted to change how it was operated. This required some discussion and coordination with grantee staff, who were not expecting to make changes to the projects that were designed under this grant.

- **The economic downturn of 2009–2010 made it difficult to place participants into employment**. Placing at-risk and adjudicated youth into employment is difficult in the best economic climate. The economic downturn exacerbated obstacles to employment for this population. Grantees that were most successful at placing youth into employment relied on established workforce partners to provide this service.

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Implementation Challenges

- **Although grantees met their overall enrollment goals for the grant, some of them struggled to recruit youth whom they targeted, particularly out-of-school youth**. Grantees acknowledged the critical importance of serving out-of-school youth, especially those who are transitioning back into the community. However, reaching out-of-school youth proved challenging because the school district grantees have limited experience serving this population, and as such, needed to develop new strategies to reach them. To address this challenge, grantees subcontracted with partners who have expertise in serving out-of-school youth, such as the YO! Centers in Baltimore, the E^3 Power Centers in Philadelphia, and the Metropolitan Orlando Urban League in Orange County.

- **Attendance in program activities has been inconsistent and difficult to maintain.** Many grant-funded activities have low attendance. Although we do not have exact attendance figures for program activities, grantee staff indicated that achieving consistent attendance in program activities has been a struggle from the onset. Much of this challenge has to do with the population that grantees are serving—youth who have historically been truant or disinterested in structured programs. To address this challenge, case managers closely monitor participants' school attendance, and call students in the morning to remind them to come to school. In addition, grantees are offering various incentives such as bus passes and gift certificates to encourage youth to attend school and their programs.

- **Follow-up services are difficult to provide consistently, especially as students leave target schools where project staff work**. A student's ability to succeed in school and the workforce may depend on maintaining an ongoing connection to the staff person with whom he or she has developed a positive relationship. Thus, follow-up services are important for ensuring that participants stay focused on their academics and their search for employment. All grantees except one are providing follow-up services. However, many youth are difficult to reach (they often move to different schools, for example) and the case managers are mixed in their ability to reach youth and build connections with the school staff to coordinate case management services. As a result, the provision of follow-up services has been spotty at best.

- **Gang and violence prevention services are not a *core* feature at most grantee sites.** Although many project activities provide youth with alternatives to violence and gang life, only three grantees are intentionally offering anti-violence/anti-gang services as part of their scope of work. Of the grantees that are offering such services, some of them are "light touch" in nature, because they were either offered one-time only, or in at least one grantee site, such services are indirect in nature, as project staff gather information and share knowledge about gang activities by participating in a community-wide gang task force.

Partnership Challenges

- **Grantees sometimes struggled to adjust to their partners' cultural and philosophical differences.** For instance, grantees differed with law enforcement

officials, who took a punitive approach to serving youth. This philosophical/cultural difference played a role in the communication gaps between agencies, particularly with regard to clarifying expected partner roles and responsibilities for the School District Grant.

- **Grantees that contract out most of their services faced coordination challenges.** Grantees that hired subcontractors to deliver services at target schools and programs sometimes struggled to coordinate successfully with one another and with the school and/or program staff. The target schools in one grantee site for example, had multiple contractor staff to provide counseling, employment services, and case management services. At times, these staff had difficulty coordinating students' service plans, and coordinating with school counselors and teachers to make sure that students' schedules would enable them to participate in grant-funded services such as internships and meetings with case managers.

- **Sharing participant data across systems has proven to be difficult.** While several grantees made important breakthroughs in developing procedures for sharing participant data, confidentiality issues and data sharing challenges continually plagued a number of grantees and partners. These challenges often slowed down the process of efficiently providing services to youth. For example, in Baltimore, YO! Center staff must secure signed waivers from youth attending their orientations before sending their names to the Department of Juvenile Services to determine which of these youth are eligible for grant-funded services. In Milwaukee, information about youth's criminal records is confidential and not shared with the Youth Career Development Specialists, which means that these staff may place youth in internships that are inappropriate.

Our evaluation of the School District Grant has been exciting and rich in lessons learned. The grantees' work under this grant confirmed the extraordinary importance of reaching at-risk youth, including youth offenders who may otherwise get lost in the system as they navigate their way through schools, the juvenile justice system, and workforce programs. By designing programs and services geared towards at-risk youth, school district grantees are demonstrating their commitment to enhancing the supports that these youth need to be successful. Efforts from the School District Grant have yielded numerous promising practices and lessons learned for how to best support at-risk youth and coordinate between school districts and community partners. Moving forward, DOL can build from the lessons learned presented in this report to continue to support multiple pathways of success for the most vulnerable youth.

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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Context

- What contextual factors have been important for understanding the design, implementation and outcomes of the program, including the school district and community context?

Design

- What was the grantee planning and design process?

- What is the *scope* of the program (e.g., district-wide, several high schools, one high school; expected number of participants)?

- What is the *nature* of the program, including target groups and strategies for improving academic achievement and reducing youth crime/gang involvement?

- How does the program align with and bring value-added to the school district's dropout prevention plan and the city's gang reduction plan?

- What initial plans for sustainability (after federal funds end) were developed during the design phase?

- How were appropriate partners/providers selected for participation in the program, including during the planning/design phase?

- What is the leadership/management structure of the grant, including key staff and budget? What methods are used to manage the program and coordinate contracts among partners?

- What were the challenges and effective strategies of the planning and design process?

Partnerships

- Who are the key partners in this effort (required and non-required)? How were they selected and mobilized? What are their specific roles in this project?

- What partnership arrangements have been established and how are resources being leveraged to achieve the grant's objectives?

- What is the nature of the grantee's referral system with partners to ensure that participants' various needs are met?

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- How well have these partnerships worked overall and how have they evolved over time?

- To what extent are these partnerships formalized (e.g., memoranda of understanding, letters of commitment, cost-sharing agreements, referral systems, etc.)?

- What have been the barriers and best practices for inter-partner communication and coordination (different philosophies toward youth, MIS issues, etc.)?

Service Delivery/Implementation

- What are the characteristics of participants enrolled in the program?

- How are youth recruited and/or identified for services (e.g., using indicators such as chronic truancy, discipline problems, special education placement, low reading and math scores)?

- How effective are outreach and recruitment services for in-school and out-of-school participants? For at-risk and adjudicated youth? For younger and older youth?

- What types of basic intake services, such as assessments of needs and interests, are provided and how do they vary by participant-type?

- How is ongoing case management provided to participants, and by which specific provider(s)?

- What is the full range of education, employment, gang prevention and supportive services available to youth, and how do they vary by status (e.g., younger vs. older youth, in-school vs. out-of-school, at-risk vs. adjudicated)?

- Which services are available to participants through the local One-Stop Career Center system? Which of these services are actually used by participants?

- To what extent do partners effectively coordinate education services with workforce services?

- How well do the education, employment, gang reduction and supportive services meet the needs of different participant-types (e.g., in-school vs. out-of-school, younger vs. older youth, adjudicated vs. at-risk)?

- What are the primary challenges in working with these groups of youth? What are the facilitators? What practices are particularly effective?

- What strategies does the program use to promote high expectations among program participants?

- What strategies does the program use to ensure that staff are appropriately equipped to work with program participants (e.g., professional development, training in gangs and the juvenile justice system, how to intervene with youth, etc.)?

- What data collection and reporting procedures have been implemented by the grantee? What challenges have they faced in implementing the management

information system (including reporting on those fields required by the DOL template)?

- What types of coaching and technical assistance (TA) did grantees receive? What are the benefits and drawbacks of extra coaching and TA?

- What have been the most significant implementation issues that grantees and partners have faced? What strategies were used to overcome these challenges, and with what success?

Attributes of Effective Programs

- Does the program promote high academic standards and a culture of high expectations?

- What types of applied learning opportunities are available in the programs?

- Do programs provide opportunities for youth catch up academically and have individually tailored learning?

- Does the program have, and promote, high-quality teachers through institutional practices?

- What is the physical layout of schools and programs? What types of security measures are in place? What practices do schools and programs use to promote safety?

- Does the program's leadership have administrative autonomy over the program's design? Do they have flexibility in how they operate the program?

Outputs and Outcomes

- What is the number of participants in the program?

- What is the proportion of participants who take part in the various education, employment, gang reduction and supportive services? The proportion who complete particular services?

- What is the typical duration of services?

- What education and employment outcomes have program participants achieved?[1]

- What recidivism rates have been achieved? Why do they recidivate (e.g., new crimes versus parole violations)? What factors affect recidivism?

- What is the offense rate among participants who were *not* previously involved with the juvenile justice system?

- Has the number of participants with self-professed gang associations decreased?

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[1] As will be discussed later in the report, our ability to detail participant-level outcomes will be greatly limited by the nature of available MIS data. However, we will be able to examine participant-level outcomes in more detail among our case study youth.

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- How do outcomes vary by program design and implementation elements?

- How do outcomes vary by different types of participants (e.g., at-risk vs. adjudicated youth, younger youth vs. older youth)?

- Have there been any significant, unanticipated outcomes for participants?

- To what extent are grantees able to effectively capture, track, and report participant outcomes, including those required by the DOL template? Major challenges?

- What have been the partnership- and system-level outcomes of the grant project?

- How much variation is there in overall grantee performance after considering differences in local context and participant characteristics?

- How do grantees that are successful differ from those that are not (e.g., in design, implementation, contextual factors)?

APPENDIX B: SCHOOLS/PROGRAMS VISITED IN ROUNDS 1,2,3

Baltimore	• Garrison MS (1,2) • William H. Lemmel MS/Dukeland Campus (1,3) • Douglass HS (2,3) • Eastside YO! Center (1) • Westside YO! Center (1,2,3) • Forest Park High School (3)
Chicago	• Clemente HS (2) • Dyett HS (1,2,3) • Hirsch HS (1,2,3) • Manley HS (1,2,3) • Nancy B. Jefferson Alternative School (2,3) • Banner School South (3)

Milwaukee	• Bradley Tech HS (2,3)
	• North Division/Multiplex – Genesis HS, Truth Institute HS, Milwaukee African American Immersion HS (1,2,3)
	• South Division HS (1,2)
	• Transition HS (1,2,3)
	• CBOs:[1]
	  — Ambassadors for Peace (1)
	  — Flood the Hood with Dreams (2)
	  — Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (1,2,3)
	  — New Leaf Coaching (1,2)
	  — Urban Underground (2)

Orange County	• Meadowbrook MS (1,2,3) • Stonewall Jackson MS (1)

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[1] We interviewed staff from these CBOs at the four schools visited.

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	• Jones HS (1,2,3)
	• Dr. J.B. Callahan Neighborhood Center (2)
	• Juvenile Assessment Center (1)
	• Positive Pathways Transition Center (2,3)
	• Orlando Downtown Recreational Center (1,2)
	• Orlando Metropolitan Urban League (2,3)
Philadelphia	• North Philadelphia Community HS (1,2,3)
	• Overbrook HS (1,2,3)
	• E3 Power Center - West Branch (1,2,3)
	• Re-Engagement Center (2,3)
	• CBOs:[2]
	— Center for Literacy (1,2,3)
	— Communities In Schools (1,2)
	— Education Works (1,2)
	— International Education and Community Initiatives (1,2,3)
	— Philadelphia Academies, Inc. (1,2,3)
	— Philadelphia Youth Network (1,2,3)
	— PYN's Occupational Skills Pathway Program (3)

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[2]   We interviewed staff from these CBOs at the four schools/centers visited.

APPENDIX C: TARGETED SCHOOLS

Baltimore[1]

School	Demographics	# of Students	% Eligible for Free/ Reduced Lunch	% Limited English Proficient	Dropout rate 2006-7	Graduation Rate 2006-7[2]	Dropout rate 2007-8[3]	Graduation Rate 2007-8	Dropout rate 2008-9	Graduation Rate 2008-9
Forest Park HS	97.7% Afr. Am. 0.3% Asian/Pac. Isl. 0.3% Hispanic 1.6% White	753	69.9%	0.0%	5.6%	68.9%	5.7%	65.5%	9.6%	68.7%
Frederick Douglass HS	98.8% Afr. Am. 0.8% White 0.2% Hispanic 0.2% Asian	1,010	68.0%	0.0%	9.0%	43.4%	10.9%	57.0%	10.9%	54.9%
Schools at the Dukeland Campus										
ConneXions Community Academy	99.1% Afr. Am. 0.4% Asian/Pac. Isl. 0.4% White	239	66.1%	0.0%	N/A[4]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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[1]   Data are drawn from Maryland State Department of Education - 2009 Maryland Report Card for the 2008-2009 school year unless otherwise noted.

[2]   Data are drawn from Maryland State Department of Education - 2007 Maryland Report Card for the 2006-2007 school year.

[3]   Data are drawn from Maryland State Department of Education - 2008 Maryland Report Card for the 2007-2008 school year.

[4]   Data marked "N/A" were either not available or not applicable, if the school has not yet been founded.

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School	Demographics	# of Students	% Eligible for Free/ Reduced Lunch	% Limited English Proficient	Dropout rate 2006-7	Graduation Rate 2006-7[2]	Dropout rate 2007-8[3]	Graduation Rate 2007-8	Dropout rate 2008-9	Graduation Rate 2008-9
Institute of Business and Entrepreneurship High	98.6% Afr. Am. 0.1% Asian/Pac. Isl. 1.2% White	631	62.6%	0.0%	15.8%	84.0%	11.0%	82.7%	12.1%	73.1%
Liberation Diploma Plus HS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Chicago[5]

School name	Demographics	# of Students	% Low-income	% Limited English Proficient	Dropout rate 2006-7[6]	Graduation Rate 2006-7	Dropout rate 2007-8[7]	Graduation Rate 2007-8	Dropout rate 2008-9	Graduation Rate 2008-9
Clemente HS	Hispanic 63.9% Black 33.6% White 2.3% Asian 0.1% Amer Indian 0.1% Multi-racial 0.1%	1,942	84.5%	8.8%	8.7%	55.2%	15.7%	67.7%	18.6%	51.6
Crane HS	Black 97.5% Hispanic 1.9% White 0.5% Asian 0.1%	755	86.8%	0.1%	6.5%	60.8%	20.8%	61.1%	12.1%	64.5%
Dyett HS	Black 99.8% Hispanic 0.2%	583	80.3%	.5%	14.3%	31.4%	20.2%	63.0%	12.2%	40.9%
Fenger HS	Black 99.2% White 0.1% Hispanic 0.4% Asian 0.1% Amer Indian 0.2% Multi-racial 0.1%	1,291	97.8%	0.2%	22.8%	55.2%	16.0%	63.4%	13.1%	47.1%
Hirsch HS	Black 98.8% Hispanic 0.9% White 0.2% Amer Indian 0.1%	1,003	86.4%	0.8%	15.9%	54.8%	18.2%	64.3%	9.9%	46.5%
Manley HS	Black 99.5% White 0.2% Hispanic 0.3% Multi-racial 0.8%	1,108	0.0%	91%	1.5%	60.7%	13.0%	76.7%	8.3%	74.7%

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[5]   Data are drawn from Illinois State Board of Education - 2009 Illinois School Report Cards for the 2008-2009 school year unless otherwise noted.

[6]   Data are drawn from Illinois State Board of Education - 2007 Illinois School Report Cards for the 2006-2007 school year.

[7]   Data are drawn from Illinois State Board of Education - 2008 Illinois School Report Cards for the 2007-2008 school year.

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Banner YES North	N/A[8]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Banner YES South at AKAM	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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[8] Data marked "N/A" were either not available or not applicable, if the school has not yet been founded.

Milwaukee[9]

School	Demographics	# of Students Enrolled	% Eligible for Free/ Reduced Lunch	% Limited English Proficient	Dropout rate 2006-7	Graduation Rate 2006-7	Dropout rate 2007-8	Graduation Rate 2007-8	Dropout rate 2008-9	Graduation Rate 2008-9
Bradley Tech HS	74.7% Black 14.3% Hispanic 9.0% White 1.4% Asian 0.6% Amer Indian	1,385	73.9%	3%	2.8%	88.2%	3.8%	89.1%	4.3%	82.6%
James Madison HS/ Madison Academic Campus	87.5% Black 6.7% Asian 4.4% White 1.3% Hispanic 0.2% Amer Indian	1,029	82.5%	1.7%	N/A[10]	N/A	8.4%	96.4%	14.4%	79.8%
South Division HS	52.1% Hispanic 33.4% Black 9.6% Asian 4.3% White 0.6% Amer Indian	1,386	80.7%	33.5%	4.7%	68.2%	7.5%	70.0%	9.2%	64.7%
Transition HS	93.1% Black 1.7% Asian 3.4% Hispanic 2.2% White	58	22.4%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	16.3%	83.3%
Schools at N. Multiplex/N. Division)										
Genesis HS	99.5% Black 1.7% White 0.9% Am Ind. 0.9% Hispanic	234	88.3%	0.4%	8.5%	93.0%	7.0%	58.9%	17.1%	49.4%
Truth Institute HS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7.6%	76.3%	N/A	N/A

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[9] Data are drawn from the Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools. All data, except dropout and graduation rates, are for the 2009-2010 school year. Dropout and graduation rates are for the school years noted.

[10] Data marked "N/A" were either not available or not applicable, if the school has not yet been founded.

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School	Demographics	# of Students Enrolled	% Eligible for Free/ Reduced Lunch	% Limited English Proficient	Dropout rate 2006-7	Graduation Rate 2006-7	Dropout rate 2007-8	Graduation Rate 2007-8	Dropout rate 2008-9	Graduation Rate 2008-9
Milwaukee African American Immersion HS	96.9% Black 1.5% White 0.2% Asian 1.3% Hispanic	457	78.3%	0.4%	N/A	N/A	14.2%	93.8%	19.2%	65.4%

Orange County[11]

School name	Demographics	# of Students	% Eligible for Free/ Reduced Lunch	% Limited English Proficient	Dropout rate 2006-7[12]	Graduation Rate 2006-7	Dropout rate 2007-8	Graduation Rate 2007-8[13]	Dropout rate 2008-9	Graduation Rate 2008-9
Meadowbrook MS	77.7% Black 17.0% Hispanic 2.2% White 1.2% Asian 0.6% Amer Indian	1114	88.1%	2.5%	N/A[14]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Memorial MS	87.3% Black 8.7% Hispanic 2.5% White 1.4% Asian	797	91.2%	37.1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stonewall Jackson MS	9.3% Black 71.2% Hispanic 13.5 % White 2.9% Asian	1202	85.4%	46.4%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Walker MS	15.5% Black 53.5% Hispanic 22.6% White 5.6% Asian	1057	79.7%	39.5%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Colonial HS	9.3% Black 65.9% Hispanic 19.4% White 2.7% Asian 0.1% Amer Indian	1984	62.1%	27.0%	2.7%	67.8%	2.8%	71.9%	1.1%	75.7%
Evans HS	86.0% Black 7.5% Hispanic	1083	72.0%	14.8%	8.9%	51.0%	2.2%	67.6%	0.3%	72.3%

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[11] Data are drawn from Florida Department of Education, Education & Accountability Services Data Publications and Reports and Adequate Yearly Progress Report for the 2008-2009 school year.

[12] Data are drawn from the Great Schools website for 2006-2007.

[13] Data are drawn from Florida Department of Education, Education & Accountability Services Data Publications and Reports and Adequate Yearly Progress Report for the 2007-2008 school year.

[14] Data marked "N/A" were either not available or not applicable, if the school has not yet been founded.

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School name	Demographics	# of Students	% Eligible for Free/ Reduced Lunch	% Limited English Proficient	Dropout rate 2006-7[12]	Graduation Rate 2006-7	Dropout rate 2007-8	Graduation Rate 2007-8[13]	Dropout rate 2008-9	Graduation Rate 2008-9
	3.0% White 1.5% Asian 0.6% Amer Indian									
Jones HS	95.9% Black 3.2% Hispanic 0.4% White	518	47.4%	8.3%	2.5%	58.0%	0.3%	66.0%	0.7%	72%
Oak Ridge HS	47.8% Black 38.2% Hispanic 10.0% White 2.6% Asian 0.2% Amer Indian	1204	71.1%	31.2%	0.6%	55.0%	0.5%	65.2%	0.5%	69.1%
Transition High School	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Philadelphia[15]

School	Demographics	# of Students	% Eligible for Free/ Reduced Lunch	% Limited English Proficient	Dropout rate 2006-7	Graduation Rate 2006-7	Dropout rate 2007-8	Graduation Rate 2007-8	Dropout Rate 2008-9	Graduation Rate 2008-9
North Philadelphia Community HS	N/A[16]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Overbrook HS	98% Afr. Am 1% White 1% Latino	1697	83%	0%	N/A	N/A	9%	N/A	N/A	69%
University City HS	97% Afr. Am 1% White 1% Asian 1% Latino 1% Other	1034	89%	2%	N/A	N/A	16%	N/A	N/A	52%

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[15] Data are drawn from Pennsylvania Department of Education PreK-12 School Statistics Reports, Academic Achievement Report: 2008-2009, and School District of Philadelphia websites. Data marked "N/A" were not available.

[16] Data marked "N/A" were either not available or not applicable, if the school has not yet been founded.

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APPENDIX D: COMPARISON OF PLANNED ACTIVITIES SERVICES IMPLEMENTED

Glossary:

- **Not implemented:** None of this grant component was implemented

- **Partially implemented:** At least one part of this grant component was not implemented or not implemented to the degree stated

- **Fully implemented:** All parts of this grant component were implemented to the degree stated.

- **Expanded:** All parts of this grant component were implemented beyond the degree stated.

		Status of Implementation		
Planned Activities	Not implemented	Partially Implemented	Fully Implemented	Expanded
Baltimore				
Expansion of FUTURES, a dropout prevention program to 240 eighth and ninth graders. Additional reading specialists to improve basic skills.		X		
Two Youth Development alternative programs to serve 125 eighth grade students who are academically behind, returning from detention, and have a history of suspension/expulsion.	X			
Expedition of access to Twilight and Credit Recovery Program and the Alternative Options Program (AOP) by hiring additional reading and math specialists.		X		
Services to 150 out-of-school youth who participate in the YO! Program. Provide an additional literacy instructor and job developer at the two YO! Centers.			X	
Internships and paid work experiences for 320 out-of-school youth offenders.	X			
Additional half-time mental health clinician at two YO! sites.			X	

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Planned Activities	Status of Implementation			
	Not implemented	Partially Implemented	Fully Implemented	Expanded
Chicago				
Student advocacy periods addressing academic, career, and personal/social development, including gang and violence issues.			X	
Work experience opportunities, including paid and unpaid summer internships and jobs for students in ETC and alternative high schools.	X			
Advanced academics for ETC students taking college credit classes and support for taking honors and AP courses.	X			
Summer programs that (a) prepare ETC ninth graders with a counseling-career-academic focus and (b) help off-track entering tenth graders make up failed courses, and (c) additional counseling to target youth.		X		
Structured transitional programs for students in alternative schools that includes guidance, support, and monitoring to help them transition from alternative settings to regular school and/or postsecondary training		X		
Restorative justice program for incarcerated youth	X			
Professional development seminars and workshops for teachers.	X			
Milwaukee				
Academic and supportive services that (a) assist students with reading and math skills, (b) provide an individualized and self-paced learning environment, (c) GED/HSED placements, and d) mentoring and tutoring.		X		
Work readiness training, job placement, and support for youth participating in the initiative.			X	
Violence prevention programs and supports that provide peer mentors, peer role models, conflict resolution, and school resource officers.		X		
Restorative justice program that provides an alternative to traditional justice responses.			X	
Transitional programs for students reintegrating into a traditional high school setting.			X	
Professional development training for teachers.	X			
Orange County				
Academic intervention and support for youth offenders and at-risk youth improve students' attendance and academic achievement in reading and math. Eleven intervention specialists will work with youth transitioning from detention to schools and youth at risk of gang involvement.			X	
Employability skills training and paid work experience. Dropout specialist will coordinate services between the schools and the workforce system partners to support students returning to school and encourage them to complete training.		X		

Planned Activities	Not implemented	Partially Implemented	Fully Implemented	Expanded
Gang units in the Sheriff's Office and the Orlando Police Department will employ outreach workers to coordinate youth's transition to and service delivery with the school programs.			X	
Philadelphia				
An alternative school to enroll 100 court-involved youth, youth retuning from delinquent placement, former drop-outs, and/or overage, under-credit.			X	
The Bridge Program targeting 75 in-school and out-of-school youth reading below the sixth grade level.			X	
Learning to Work programs (LTW) at Overbrook HS and new accelerated school to serve 200 students				X
Augmentation of occupational skills training at E^3 Centers for 150 youth.		X		

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APPENDIX E: MAJOR CHANGES TO GRANT PLANS DURING IMPLEMENTATION[1]

Baltimore

In-School Youth

- **Education.** Baltimore changed its program design to provide reading and math remediation during school hours instead of before or after school. Although Baltimore planned to hire eight reading and math remediation teachers, delays were caused by a district wide hiring freeze and only four teachers were eventually hired.

- **Case management/ supportive services.** The majority of students who received case management services in the eighth grade did not attend one of the two targeted high schools as expected. Therefore, "travelling advocates" rotate among 30+ high schools in the district. Students at these schools receive less in-depth services than students at the two targeted high schools.

- **Gang reduction /violence prevention.** The original grant plan did not include a major gang reduction/violence prevention component. To address this, Baltimore contracted with New Visions Youth Services to provide intensive support to "deeper-in" youth at three schools and to coordinate a community-wide Westside gang reduction plan.

Youth Offenders

- **Workforce.** The Department of Juvenile Services was supposed to refer adjudicated youth to one of the two YO! Centers. This did not happen in a timely manner and the YO! Centers ended up recruiting youth on their own. DJS is now responsible for providing workforce services to out-of-school youth offenders involved in Operation Safe Kids

Chicago

In-School Youth

- **Education.** Intensive academic support services for youth at traditional schools were never implemented.

- **Workforce.** Chicago originally planned on contracting with Afterschool Matters, a CBO, to provide internships for youth. Afterschool Matters was unable to coordinate internships because of an internal budget crisis. Therefore, Chicago adopted Orange County's career exploration curriculum for its youth in the second year of the grant. Chicago currently has no plans to provide internships to youth.

Youth Offenders

- **Education.** Originally, Chicago planned to provide services to youth enrolled at Nancy B. Jefferson,

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[1] This table focuses on changes made between the first round of SPR's site visits (Spring 2008) and the third round (Winter 2009).

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a CPS school for youth detained at the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center. However, due to a riot at the Center that resulted in the temporary closing of the school, CPS was not able to implement services as planned. Instead, Chicago decided to contract with Banner Schools to open two transitional schools for youth as they come out detention. After opening these schools, Chicago increased the length of time students stay at the Banner schools from 10 to 30 weeks in order to better prepare students for the transition back to a traditional high school.

Milwaukee

In-School Youth

- **Case management/ supportive services.** Due to the budget, in the last year of the grant, the number school based support teams was reduced. Each of these teams now serves multiple schools.

  Plans to include a mentoring component as part of the grant were not realized.

Orange County

In-School Youth

- **Education.** Orange County originally intended to create a new consequence center that corresponded to state of Florida statutes. However, a Transition Center was opened instead. The Transition Center is different from a consequence center in important ways. First, it is not a place where truant students can be assigned or a place where suspended students can be assigned. The Transition center is only for those youth who are transitioning back to OCPS from detention/residential placement. Second, the transition center does not have the security requirements or supports that a consequence center would have. It is more like a regular school—though all students are youth offenders.

- **Case management/ supportive services.** The level of support that deputies from OCPS Sherriff Department and Orlando Police Department is not as in-depth as originally intended.

Out-of-school Youth

- **Workforce.** Workforce Central Florida had a misunderstanding regarding what constitutes an "out-of-school" youth. They thought that they could serve any youth, including those that had earned a degree or GED. This turned out to be out of step with the goals of DOL, and DOL asked them to expunge these 74 youth from their records. Thus, 74 youth were erroneously served, at a cost of $76,292. At the time of our third visit, WCF had removed these youth from their outcome measures and had applied to have the cost of these youth forgiven by DOL.

  Initially, the outreach worker at the Parramore Kidz Zone was supposed to connect with OSY and refer them to Workforce Central Florida and the mobile One Stop Center. This did not occur to scale.

Philadelphia

In-School Youth

- **Workforce.** Philadelphia expanded the Learning to Work program to a third high school for the last year of the grant.

Out-of-School Youth

- **Workforce.** The Occupational Skills Pathway Program went through many iterations. Original plans were to do skills training at the E^3 Centers, but facilities turned out not to be adequate. After an unsuccessful attempt to coordinate with a local high school, a Microsoft Office instructor was hired to rotate amongst the E^3 Centers to provide training. This program too was unsuccessful. In the fall of 2009, Philadelphia partnered with Philadelphia Community College to provide automotive and hospitality training. A nurse's aid program was also on track to be launched in early 2010.

APPENDIX F: GRANTEE PARTNERSHIP PROFILES

Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS)

Initiative Name: Workforce Development Initiative to Reduce Youth Gangs and Violent Crime

Partnership Model: A focus on social service partnerships

Capsule Summary: The Baltimore City Public School System's initiative is designed to serve in-school youth at the middle- and high-school level, primarily with the expansion of the Futures program—a dropout prevention program. Out-of-school youth are provided additional services—including literacy and GED instruction, job development, and paid work experiences—at local YO! Centers. Mentoring, mental health, and anti-gang services are also key features of the design for both in-school and out-of-school youth.

While Baltimore City Public School System is characterized by a strong link with workforce development, its partnership model stands out more because of the emphasis on social service partners. Specifically, BCPSS emphasizes anti-gang, mental health, and mentoring services as key features of its partnership and intended service design.

Workforce Development Partnerships

BCPSS's partnership with the local workforce system appears to be one of the most developed in terms of the length of collaboration, as well as the nature of the collaboration in place. The Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) is the local workforce entity in Baltimore and has worked with BCPSS from the earliest stages of grant planning and proposal writing. MOED is contracted to fulfill three major roles:

- **Administer the Futures (later, Futures Works!) program for in-school youth.** The Futures program, a dropout prevention program administered by MOED, has been offered at BCPSS high schools for more than 20 years. The School District Grant has allowed the Futures program to be offered at the middle school level for the first time. Although MOED was originally charged with providing internships and paid work experiences for in-school youth, full implementation of this component has not occurred. Overall, employment services for in-school youth

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are minimal; the job readiness training they receive is informal in nature, and varies widely by advocate[1] and school.

- **Oversee the two YO! Centers (Westside and Eastside).** Because MOED operates the YO! Centers, BCPSS contracted with MOED to serve out-of-school youth at these centers. MOED is responsible for providing educational and employment services, as well as internships, to participants. Out-of-school youth are thus served by a pre-existing and well-established program that did not require much in terms of planning by School District Grant stakeholders. The YO! Centers offer three paths for participating youth who are ready for employment: internship, trial employment, and direct hire. The YO! job developers work with local businesses to develop internship and employment opportunities. Internships have also been developed in partnership with the city's Department of Transportation.

- **Collect and manage the MIS data for reporting purposes**. MOED oversees the MIS data collection and reporting aspect for the grant, which includes preparing monthly grant activity reports to BCPSS and quarterly MIS reports for DOL. MOED is also responsible for MIS troubleshooting and training partner staff on how to report outcomes.

Juvenile Justice Partnerships

Due largely to personnel and data-sharing issues, BCPSS's partnership with the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) changed considerably from what was anticipated. Initial plans called for DJS to refer eligible youth leaving detention to the YO! Centers for out-of-school youth services, and to report data on the recidivism of program participants. DJS was also to hire three workforce specialists to provide job readiness and job development services for adjudicated youth. DJS leveraged grant funding to secure additional state funding that was to provide, in-kind, a new community services coordinator and two family liaisons to work with both in-school and out-of-school youth. Finally, DJS was to help support up to an additional 100 adjudicated youth not enrolled in target schools or YO! Centers by referring them to other programs and services. Instead, the DJS partnership unfolded as follows:

- Due to DJS delays in hiring staff, the YO! Centers spent a significant amount of time simply waiting for DJS to begin referring eligible youth and as a result, the out-of-school youth component was considerably delayed. Ultimately, DJS was not able to fulfill its obligation to serve as a new referral source for eligible adjudicated youth. Instead, the YO! Centers began recruiting their own out-of-school youth as they had before and then—through a DJS-MOED information-sharing agreement—checking with DJS to see whether these youth were eligible

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[1] As part of the School District Grant, the Futures program pairs each participant with an advocate who helps the youth stay in school and graduate.

for services under the School District Grant.[2] The agreement stipulated that youth who attend the regularly scheduled orientations[3] at the YO! Centers must sign information-sharing waivers, which YO! staff were then to send to DJS. DJS was then to look up each youth in its records in order to determine whether each youth was eligible for grant services by being classified as at-risk, adjudicated, or previously incarcerated. This information was then passed back to YO! Center staff. The process has proven to be imperfect (e.g., names of youth sent to DJS without their waivers) and time-consuming.

- As a result of its inability to serve as a primary referral source for the out-of-school youth component, DJS modified its scope of work in the third year of the grant by offering to provide employment services and internships to 120–130 youth who it was contracted to serve under the School District Grant. In January 2010, DJS hired three employment specialists to carry out this work. As a result of these changes, DJS will not be recruiting its own youth, but will work with youth identified as part of a pre-existing violence-prevention program, Operation Safe Kids. Participating youth will be compensated for subsidized training, internships or employment. Internships will need to be identified and completed by September 2010.

Part of the challenge for the DJS partnership may have been the specific office within DJS that was responsible for this grant: the DJS Office of Community Engagement. Having this state-level office oversee a local-level effort proved difficult, because staff from this office were unable to successfully coordinate with local probation officers to encourage them to refer large numbers of youth to the YO! Centers.

Law Enforcement

Although there was some discussion of contracting with the Baltimore City Police Department and the School Police Department for the purposes of reporting youth crime data and providing training to school staff on gang affiliation and activity, ultimately there was no formal partnership for the purposes of this grant. However, BCPSS as a whole works closely with the police department, as there are two police officers stationed at most high schools, and at least one police officer located at each middle school and elementary school. Police officers who are stationed at the schools see their role not just as law enforcers, but also as people who engage

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[2] The information-sharing agreement grew out of another challenge that delayed the implementation of out-of-school youth services. Initially, DJS was unable to report on the status and eligibility of specific students that MOED and BCPSS asked about because of confidentiality and consent laws that require youth and guardian consent for DJS to share their information with other agencies. Another related challenge was that, due to delayed data entry, DJS records with regard to youth's juvenile justice status may not have been accurate at the time of query.

[3] While the YO! Centers witnessed more youth attending these orientations, they did not know if these youth were coming from DJS referrals because they did not have a referral form.

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with youth and help them see police officers in a positive light. Police officers also keep school officials abreast of events in the local neighborhood that may impact the local school environment.

Other Partnerships

BCPSS's other partnerships for the School District Grant reflect its relative emphasis on social services—specifically on mental health, anti-gang and mentoring services.

- **Baltimore Mental Health Services (BMHS)** received a very significant portion of the School District Grant (approximately $650,000 over three years), thus reflecting the grantee's priority on addressing youth's mental health needs. The grant provides funds to extend mental health clinicians' time from part-time to full-time at YO! Centers and at target BCPSS schools. However, a number of challenges arose. First, contract delays meant that BMHS did not sign a contract with BCPSS or begin enrolling students until sometime between the first and second site visits. Second, due to cuts to outside funding that was paying for half their salaries, the mental health specialists were unable to go full-time at the target schools under the School District Grant. Third, due to relatively informal interactions, the mental health specialists were not able to fully coordinate with Futures staff at the schools in order to discuss their respective work functions, specific youth, and who might benefit from mental health services.

- In the third year of the grant, BCPSS acted quickly to provide missing gang prevention and intervention services in the target schools and in the community by contracting with **New Visions Youth Services (NVYS)**, a CBO led by a local pastor and businessman who spent time in a federal prison. NVYS began providing climate management and intensive services for at-risk youth during the 2009–2010 school year at three target schools: Douglass, Forest Park, and the Dukeland campus.[4] The target group is gang members or students who are considered potential gang members, and those who are considered "tough" and hard to reach. NVYS staff, who have expertise on local gang culture, get a list of these students to serve from the principal/administration. Key to NVYS' approach is ensuring that the school buys in to the NVYS program and that NVYS staff is well integrated into the school.

- NVYS was also contracted by BCPSS to lead an effort to develop a community-wide gang strategy on the west side of the city, so that prevention and intervention services for youth/gang members are coordinated. This strategy is an attempt to mirror the work that is currently underway on the eastside of the city, where a police lieutenant is leading an effort to bring together businesses, CBOs, and

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[4] Since the last site visit, BCPSS closed Lemmel Middle School (one of the target schools) because of low enrollment and underachievement. BCPSS opened the Dukeland Campus in its place, a facility that houses three alternative high schools.

faith-based organizations to participate in a task force that will develop a community development strategy that focuses on reducing gangs.

- Mentoring services have always featured prominently into Baltimore's grant design. However, these services have figured less prominently in the implementation phase. BCPSS was originally going to subcontract with **Big Brothers and Big Sisters** to provide 25 enrolled participants at each middle school with mentors. Mentoring had not begun by the time of the second site visit because BCPSS had to reissue a new RFP in order to adhere to the district's RFP procedures. Ultimately, **Community Law in Action** (CLIA) was chosen as the new provider and will serve 100 youth. As of January 2010, CLIA had matched 85 out of 100 youth with mentors.

Finally, another partner is a consultant from the Johns Hopkins University Urban Health Institute, who worked closely with BCPSS on previous projects to serve at-risk students. For the purposes of the School District Grant, this consultant attended planning meetings, assisted with the hiring process for a new program coordinator, and connected BCPSS with key required partners, such as the district attorney. The consultant also identified connections between the School District Grant and the city's work, particularly under the Office of Crime Control and Prevention.

Key Outcomes

One significant partner- and system-level outcome from the School District Grant was a new arrangement allowing BCPSS, MOED and DJS to share youth data. Data-sharing challenges and processes emerged as BCPSS and MOED were trying to get DJS to verify youth's offender status so that they could verify their eligibility for grant services. Given confidentiality and privacy concerns, DJS developed a waiver form that students must sign in order to receive grant services. The waiver allows the various partners to share data on the youth's arrest records, school information, and progress in school district programs.

With regard to sustainability, BCPPS is attempting to plan for the continuation of core partnerships, though a number of these center on particular program components that are heavily or wholly dependent on grant contract funds. Since the district is facing severe budget cuts, many of these partnerships are likely to dissolve with the end of the grant. However, services from NVYS will continue in the schools due to a grant that the district secured from the Open Society Institute. To date, no alternate funding sources have been identified to continue providing mental health services at the same level supported by the School District Grant, though mental health specialists will likely continue working at the schools at a lower capacity.

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Chicago Public Schools (CPS)

Initiative Name: Project Youth Engaged in School (YES)

Partnership Model: Centralized

Capsule Summary: Chicago Public Schools' (CPS') Project YES is a dropout prevention effort with two main target groups and service components: (1) incoming ninth graders at six traditional high schools who are served by the YES Afterschool Program, and (2) youth offenders transitioning out of detention (whose home school is one of the six traditional high schools) who are served by the CBO, Banner Transitional Schools.

Chicago Public Schools' Project YES represents a relatively centralized model of partnership that stems partly from the district's style of administration and service provision. The four-person grant team at CPS provides oversight for nearly the entire grant. CPS also provides nearly all of the grant services itself, rather than relying on a team of subcontractors as other grantees have done. The major exception is Banner Schools, a CBO that operates transitional high schools, alternative schools, and therapeutic day schools for low-credit and overage youth and youth offenders. CPS contracted with Banner Schools late in the grant initiative[5] to launch Banner South and Banner North Schools for youth transitioning from the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center back to their home schools. At Banner Schools, students receive academic remediation, credit retrieval, and case management and employment services, but cannot earn their GEDs or diplomas. Rather, students are expected to return to their home schools after they earn sufficient credits to resume their coursework.

Workforce Development Partnerships

Unlike other grantees that have formal, subcontracting arrangements with the local workforce investment system, CPS established relatively informal relationships with two CBOs that offer some degree of workforce training.

- For the six traditional high school sites, Chicago originally planned to partner with the CBO **Afterschool Matters**, an arts-based organization that connects students to a variety of recreational- and work-based programs, including paid internships. CPS did not provide funding for this partnership and due to severe budget cuts at Afterschool Matters, this CBO was ultimately able to provide

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[5] Original project plans called for youth offenders to be served at the Nancy B. Jefferson Alternative School, within the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center. However, unstable conditions at the school called for a revision of project plans; Banner Schools was not contracted until 2009 and has received a project extension until December 2010.

services at only one of the six schools. For workforce training at the other five traditional school sites, the same career exploration curriculum used by the Orange County Public Schools grantee was implemented during the 2009–2010 school year, though it is delivered by internal school staff rather than by a contracted partner.

- Workforce services at the two Banner Schools were not implemented until 2009 by **A Knock At Midnight** (AKAM), a subcontracted CBO that works with youth on resume building, career exploration, mock interviews, computer literacy and other skill-building activities. AKAM provides the teacher and curriculum, though the Banner educational teachers are also present.

While AKAM has conducted an assessment of the local job market, internship and job placement program components are still under development. As with the YES program in the traditional high schools, Banner Schools hopes to formally partner with other CBOs and local businesses in the future in order to create these paid opportunities for students.

Juvenile Justice Partnerships

CPS does not have a traditional out-of-school youth component for this grant, but instead focuses on serving youth offenders leaving detention and returning to their home schools. This transition process is often challenging due to schools' sometimes reluctance to re-enroll youth offenders, inadequate communication between schools and detention centers about when and how these students will return, as well as incomplete documentation (e.g., academic records, re-enrollment forms, etc.)

CPS does not have a formal MOU or subcontract with the local Juvenile Justice System (JJS) for its effort to serve youth offenders in transition. The partnership between these two entities has centered mostly on co-located staff and data-sharing at the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center and high-level information sharing at regular meetings between CPS and JJS. Highlights of CPS' links with JJS include the following:

- The School District Grant allowed CPS to hire co-located staff at the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center—a YES Counselor, a Re-Enrollment Specialist, and two Juvenile Justice Engagement Specialists (JJES). CPS's close relationship with the detention center allows for the two entities to share data and for the detention center to help YES staff identify and enroll eligible youth at the Banner Schools. Particularly critical to the YES staff is the ability to identify and recruit eligible youth before they transition out of detention. Because youth spend various lengths of time in detention (depending on their court dates), YES staff rely on the detention center to alert them of youth's scheduled departure dates.

- The two JJESs not only interface between the juvenile detention center and the Banner Schools, but also between the Banner Schools and the traditional home schools to which the students eventually return. With dedicated staff overseeing

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the students' transition from both a case-management and data-sharing perspective, students can return to their home schools with the appropriate notice and information, and thus receive the specialized support they need from the grant-funded Student Engagement Specialists (SESs) located there.[6]

- The Banner School model also affords the opportunity for CPS and juvenile probation to think differently about how probation officers' caseloads might be consolidated so that all the YES students do not have different officers. At one point during the grant period, one probation officer had five Banner School students on his caseload. This allowed the officer to spend more time and be more involved with the students and the school, thus facilitating more coordination between probation and CPS. The JJESs noted, however, that the strength of their partnership with probation varied by individual officer, and was more likely to succeed if the probation officer had more of a case-management approach than a compliance approach in working with youth.

- The School District Grant has also led YES staff to partner with the JJS through joint participation on a task force called the Community Partnership Team, aimed at improving relationships between CPS and the court system and coordinating the transition process between detention and school. Participation on the task force has led to increased communication between CPS and the Juvenile Justice System and a better understanding of CPS processes by the courts and juvenile probation office. The YES staff hope this improved understanding will lead to increased referrals of eligible students to the Banner Schools and successful transitions to traditional high schools, thus helping to reduce the number of youth re-arrests due to parole violations.

Law Enforcement Partnerships

CPS has not developed a formalized partnership with law enforcement for the purposes of the School District Grant. Prior to the grant, CPS and law enforcement were both involved in broader, citywide efforts to reduce violence in the schools that led to police officers being assigned to all schools. More recently, YES staff have been involved in relatively high-level meetings with law enforcement, as the following examples show:

- The YES Student Engagement and Community Outreach Manager meets weekly with the Chicago Police Department, CPS' Chief of Security, and other community agencies so that all can share information about the latest gang developments in Chicago.

- The YES Student Engagement and Community Outreach Manager and the director of CPS's Office of Safety and Security have also been working with law enforcement on several task forces at high-need schools to promote safe passage for students traveling to and from school. Respondents felt that these task forces

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[6] SESs are responsible for coordinating all YES activities in the schools, including provision of intensive case management services for target students.

have improved communication between partners and their collaborative responses
to challenges in the community, such as ensuring a police presence at a local park
so youth could safely spend time there after school.

As a former police officer and gang expert, the YES Student Engagement and Community
Outreach Manager was expected to serve as a critical link between CPS and law enforcement for
the purposes of this grant. Although this link was ultimately meant to inform the work of the
Student Engagement Specialists by keeping them informed of recent gang developments, it is
unclear to what extent this link had its intended impact.

Other Partnerships

During the third year of the grant, CPS began a partnership with Children's Memorial Hospital in
Chicago to determine how the program can be part of a larger effort to incorporate mental health
services into the school system—e.g., by training the SESs on the hospital's mental health
framework. This partnership is currently in development.

Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)

Initiative Name: Futures First Initiative (FFI)

Partnership Model: CBO-partner involvement

Capsule Summary: Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) has implemented the Futures First
Initiative, which includes funding for Transition High School, a new school for students
transferring out of detention, as well as services in five traditional high schools for at-risk
students. Both programs include case management, academic support, and employment
services. The grant approach consists of the use of School-Based Teams (SBT) as well as
contracted life skills and enrichment services.

MPS's partnership model for the Futures First Initiative is most distinguished by its strong
relationship with CBOs as service providers, as well as a relationship with the local workforce
investment system that has been substantial in nature, even from the initial design and proposal
stage.

Workforce Development Partnerships

MPS' partnership with the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB) extended
from design to implementation, and was formalized through a subcontract to provide co-located
staff and services to students at the target schools. Respondents considered MPS' partnership
with MAWIB to be the strongest partnership for this grant. Some of the highlights from this
partnership include the following:

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- The MAWIB worked closely with MPS during the School District Grant proposal-writing process. MAWIB wrote the employment and training section of the proposal and was initially slated to be a partner to MPS in the management of the overall grant. However, a required revision of the proposal led to MPS being the coordinator and MAWIB the provider of employment training and placement services—a revision that required some period of adjustment in terms of expected roles.

- Due to a lengthy contractual process, MAWIB was not formally on board as MPS' workforce partner until the time of the second site visit. As part of its contracted role, MAWIB is providing a Youth Career Development Supervisor and five Youth Career Development Specialists (YCDSs) to be a part of the School-Based Teams[7] located at each of the five traditional schools.[8] These specialists are responsible for providing employment readiness and training activities to in-school youth, as well as placing them in paid internships or jobs.

- The YCDS team leader, who is funded full-time by the School District Grant and is part of the grant's core leadership, acts as a liaison between MPS and MAWIB and attends all meetings of the Coordinating Committee, where members of partner agencies and others meet to provide guidance and problem-solving support related to the grant.

The challenges of this partnership have been related to intake, confidentiality laws, and scheduling. YCDSs are not involved in the FFI student intake process and students may be passed on to them without accompanying paperwork. YCDSs may therefore unnecessarily repeat initial assessments of youth skills. Confidentiality laws have also presented an information hurdle, in that school staff are prevented from sharing youth data with the YCDSs that might help the latter to better serve the youth (e.g., needing to know a youth's sexual offense history to avoid placing him in inappropriate employment). Finally, there have been challenges related to scheduling activities among students, schools, grant-funded staff, and partners. This has been partially addressed by a shared calendar in Microsoft Outlook and closer relationships between the YCDSs and teachers.

Juvenile Justice Partnerships

Although the Juvenile Justice System (JJS) was not involved in the design or planning for FFI, the Children's Court Center of the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is considered a critical potential partner, given that 85 percent of the Center's

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[7] The School-Based Teams coordinate and provide academic, employment and supportive services to targeted students at the five traditional schools. They are also responsible for identifying potential youth to be a part of FFI.

[8] Two of the five YCDS were released during the grant extension period.

youth are MPS students. For FFI, it was anticipated that the Children's Court Center would have the primary responsibility of identifying and referring youth involved with the JJS to FFI (as well as to other, non-FFI programs and supports). For those referred to FFI, the Children's Court Center was to share responsibility for case management/service planning as well as outcome information. However, the actual level of collaboration between MPS and the JJS for the purposes of this grant has been limited.

According to respondents, the main challenges to implementing the planned partnership are related to the logistics of targeting and serving youth enrolled in FFI. It is not necessarily clear which specific groups of youth the JJS should be targeting for FFI (e.g., youth with particular offense levels) nor what specific process should be used for determining those groups (e.g., by consulting with parole officers). JJS and MPS also did not specify which entity was responsible for providing which services to youth, and how information was to be shared between them.

Thus far, partnership between MPS and JJS has consisted of informal communication and interaction: occasional JJS participation in monthly FFI meetings, as well as meetings with MPS on an as-needed basis; FFI's project director includes JJS representatives on her weekly email updates; and JJS alerts the FFI project director when a youth is placed in an FFI school. When a JJS youth is placed in an FFI school, FFI staff will also coordinate with the youth's probation officer to ensure that the youth is receiving case management and other necessary services.

Law Enforcement Partnerships

As a partner, the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) brought considerable assets to the table: previous experience working with MPS (such as providing School Resource Officers to be located within the school district) and expertise in working with adjudicated youth. MPD also had experience working as part of another large-scale, local collaborative designed to reduce violence: the Safe Streets Common Ground Initiative.[9] Schools within police districts two and five are a part of this Initiative, as well as a focus of the School District Grant.

However, despite the fact that the FFI grant coordinator is a former MPD police chief, MPS's relationship with MPD was limited for the purposes of the School District Grant. Originally, MPS' partnership with the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) was intended to achieve three goals: to locate two School Resource Officers (SROs) full-time within FFI schools in order to mentor students and build relationships with school staff; to develop a notification system that

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[9]   This local initiative was implemented in 2006 as part of the U.S. Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods program to address gang violence in Milwaukee. Funding was targeted toward two police districts where gang crime and associated violence are most severe.

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would alert FFI staff when a FFI student has had contact with the MPD; and to provide gang and crime data, as well as expertise on the types of services needed by youth exiting detention. Thus far, only one of the FFI schools is served by SROs and the notification system has not been developed. It is unclear to what extent MPD has provided the expected gang/crime data and youth-serving advice, as part of the regular Coordinating Committee meetings or in any other way.

Other Partnerships

A more notable characteristic of MPS's partnership structure is the strong role played by CBOs in the implementation (but not the design) of the School District Grant. MPS contracted with a number of CBOs to provide youth with a range of academic, life skills, supportive, and enrichment services—including conflict resolution, restorative justice, self-esteem building, adventure therapy, and gang/violence prevention activities. Key CBO partners include the following:

- **New Leaf Coaching** is responsible for providing an experiential learning component by identifying partners who can provide youth with personal growth, leadership development, educational, and therapeutic outdoor activities.

- **Center for Neighborhood Enterprises** provides youth who can serve as advisors and role models. They also provide referrals to educational and employment opportunities, seasonal recreation, court advocacy services, prison awareness trips, and laser tattoo removal.

- **Urban Underground** is responsible for providing leadership and life skills training to youth enrolled at Transition High School. Workshop topics include sexual education, communication, and healthy decision-making.

- **Ambassadors for Peace** teaches youth peer mediation and non-violent conflict resolution at Transition High School.

- **Flood the Hood with Dreams** uses poetry, spoken word, and journaling to foster youth's personal development.

Respondents indicated that youth are extremely positive about the services provided by CBOs (in particular by Urban Underground and Flood the Hood with Dreams) and that the CBO providers are among the strongest components of the School District Grant. One youth in particular stated that Urban Underground and Flood the Hood with Dreams are the reasons he stayed at Transition High School, that they were more beneficial to him than the academic classes, and that they reduced his inclination to fight with his school peers since the CBO programs provided an opportunity to know them so well on a personal level.

Finally, MPS enjoyed a partnership with the City of Milwaukee, primarily during the design and planning phase. The City's Health Department was responsible for writing a portion of the

workforce section of the FFI proposal and helped MPS identify partners to address gang and crime issues. A representative of the Mayor's Office serves on the Coordinating Committee and helps identify common goals between the School District Grant and the Safe Streets Common Ground Initiative.

Orange County Public Schools (OCPS)

Initiative Name: Youth Enrichment Services (YES)

Partnership Model: Fast-track

Capsule Summary: Orange County Public Schools' (OCPS') goals for the YES initiative are to reduce the number of juveniles engaged with the Juvenile Justice System; increase the percentage of students who complete high school; and provide extra support to youth struggling with academic achievement. In order to provide individualized attention and care to these youth, OCPS-funded staff—including the Intervention Specialists—provide counseling and supportive services at four middle schools and four high schools, the Positive Pathways Transition Center, the Juvenile Assessment Center, and at recreational centers within target communities.

Relative to other grantees, Orange County Public Schools enjoyed a much quicker start-up of grant services. The district's success in this area was due in part to strong, pre-existing relationships with a number of the key grant partners. This foundation allowed OCPS and its partners to fast-track from grant planning to grant implementation.

Workforce Development Partnerships

OCPS has MOUs with three key agencies in order to provide workforce development services to both in-school and out-of-school youth: Workforce Central Florida, the City of Orlando, and the Metropolitan Orlando Urban League.

- Two job recruiters from **Workforce Central Florida (WCF)**, the local workforce investment agency, are serving youth ages 18–21 at the downtown Jackson Recreation Center in the troubled Parramore District of the city. Available services include career assessments, resume writing, interviewing skills, customer service certification, and job placement. This arrangement is a mobile One-Stop Center of sorts and represents a new tie between WCF and the **City of Orlando**. The recreation center is operated by the city, and the job recruiters are supposed to coordinate with the grant-funded outreach coordinator from Parramore Kidz Zone (a community-based, crime-reduction and revitalization project led by the Mayor's Office). WCF and the city have built a strong partnership through this grant. WCF has become very integrated into the recreation center by participating in a range of center events and activities, and the city has provided WCF with in-kind space to expand its program at the center. Challenges in the OCPS-WCF

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partnership included different agency philosophies on the provision of student stipends. While such stipends are common in youth workforce programs, OCPS initially refused to allow them because of the potentially negative implications of paying youth to learn, as well as tax issues. Another challenge was the extent to which WCF (in partnership with the city outreach coordinator) was able to recruit and serve youth from the target Parramore District.[10]

- Although very few employment services are provided for in-school students as part of the School District Grant, WCF played a valuable role in providing the intervention specialists with well-received trainings on available workforce services and supports for youth, as well as a resource guide on how to connect youth to these programs. Some intervention specialists—as well as groups of their OCPS students—were also given tours of the local One-Stop Career Centers. WCF has also helped connect in-school youth (those served by the intervention specialists) with special opportunities, including a tour of Lockheed Martin.

- **Metropolitan Orlando Urban League (MOUL)** is another core workforce partner that provides job orientation training (and GED) services to out-of-school youth, with a specific focus on gang-involved youth and/or youth with arrest records. MOUL provides two job developers responsible for placing youth in subsidized internships and on-the-job-training at local CBOs or FBOs while they also work on educational goals.

Juvenile Justice Partnerships

OCPS enjoyed a strong, pre-existing relationship with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). Both were core members of the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC), which aims to increase collaborative planning and coordination among agencies that work with at-risk youth. OCPS maintains full-time staff at the Juvenile Courthouse who work with DJJ staff on truancy issues, coordinate with judges, and provide school-related information for adjudicated youth. The Juvenile Justice Liaison at OCPS interfaces with DJJ and alerts school staff when students are arrested or when offenders are transitioning back to their home schools. (A pre-existing inter-agency agreement allows data on juvenile offenders to be shared between OCPS and DJJ.) OCPS also operates a school at the youth detention center. As part of the School District Grant specifically, OCPS partners with DJJ in the following ways:

- The grant funds an OCPS guidance counselor to be located at the Juvenile Assessment Center (where youth are first taken upon arrest). The guidance counselor informs DJJ staff about youth's academic status and counsels youth/families about how to return to an educational pathway.

- Though only partially funded by the School District Grant, the launching of the Positive Pathways Transition Center (Transition Center) is considered a banner

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[10] The city outreach coordinator worked to develop relationships with local employers and did place 10 students with Publix Grocery Stores in on-the-job training with the hope of permanent hire.

accomplishment and represents a heightened level of partnership with DJJ.[11] The Transition Center provides a critical support for youth offenders who are leaving detention facilities after a period of six to twelve months. The Transition Center allows them to either earn their GED/degree or earn the credits needed to transition back to their home schools. There are a few remaining challenges, however: asking judges to stipulate Transition Center attendance as mandatory in youth's court orders; clarifying the specific target population so that it is better suited to the resources and limitations of the Transition Center (e.g., the center is a low-security environment without behavioral specialists); and addressing high staff turnover.

- OCPS and DJJ have attended various trainings together. For example, OCPS held a training on various academic classifications and their implications for students (e.g., what it means for a youth to have an IEP, or which factors lead to a youth being classified as emotionally handicapped). OCPS has also benefited from DJJ trainings on such topics such as foster care youth and gang-involved youth that have helped school district staff understand the unique needs of at-risk/youth offender populations. Now whenever one of the agencies holds a training or professional development opportunity that involves a youth population of mutual interest, then staff from the other agency are invited as well, free of charge.

Law Enforcement Partnerships

Prior to the School District Grant, OCPS enjoyed a positive, long-standing relationship with both the Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) and the Orlando Police Department (OPD). The pre-existing relationship with OPD was due, in part, to the presence of SROs on all the OCPS campuses.[12] OPD and OCSD were also core members on the Juvenile Justice Commission, along with OCPS. For the specific purpose of the School District Grant, OCPS had MOUs with the two law enforcement partners to serve the following functions:

- The grant funds three deputies from OCSD and one officer from OPD to meet with and provide support to youth transitioning back to the target schools from detention. In this role, officers were to serve as a link between youth/families, the Juvenile Justice System, and the schools—where the officers were to work closely with the target schools' SROs and intervention specialists.

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[11] Creating the Transition Center was one of the core recommendations from the earlier work of the Juvenile Justice Commission, of which both DJJ and OCPS were lead members.

[12] Though not funded by the School District Grant, SROs work with grant-funded intervention specialists at the target schools on bullying-prevention programs, mentoring programs, and de-escalating student conflicts. SROs also help intervention specialists learn how to speak to students about gangs.

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- While there was some initial lack of clarity on the officers' roles under the grant,[13] the OPD officer works full-time at two target schools—meeting with students and working closely with the intervention specialists and SROs. The OCSD deputies initially spent most of their time at the detention center and checked in weekly with SROs/target schools by phone. After the second site visit, the OCSD deputies began visiting target schools twice a week and filing weekly activity logs. They also occasionally are asked by intervention specialists to help make house calls at students' homes, or to quietly arrest students who have violated probation or committed some offense. The OCSD deputies also are continuing broader-level work in the youth crime division of the Sheriff's Department—e.g., addressing truancy issues and working to reduce gang violence and juvenile crime. At the time of the third site visit, only one of the three deputy positions was filled.

Other Partnerships

OCPS's most significant other partnership for this grant is with the City of Orlando. As previously described, as part of the School District Grant, OCPS has an MOU with the city to support an outreach worker based at the Jackson Recreation Center in the Parramore District. Under the grant, the outreach worker is charged with working with out-of-school youth, though he works with in-school youth as well. Besides reaching out to youth, it is not clear what the formal strategy is in terms of the outreach worker formally connecting youth to particular services (e.g., to WCF's workforce services). Nevertheless, the outreach worker is unanimously viewed as a critical, positive role model and has successfully attracted Parramore District youth to the recreation center, in large part because of a basketball league he started. The outreach worker has also engaged in other successful activities for youth, including holding a college fair at the recreation center and accompanying youth on college tours. With regard to in-school youth, the outreach worker has formed relationships with the intervention specialists at the target middle schools and has connected some youth with tutoring services offered by the Boys and Girls Club at the recreation center. While the OCPS-city partnership is viewed very positively, it has not significantly altered or strengthened the relationship between these two agencies in a structural way.

Key Outcomes

The key partner- and system-level outcomes are clustered around two critical partnerships: that between OCPS and WCF, and that between OCPS and DJJ.

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[13] Turnover in Sheriff Department deputies, as well as a revision of original grant plans, contributed to this lack of clarity on roles.

In addition to being very pleased with WCF's services and youth outcomes under the School District Grant, OCPS administrators and line staff have gained critical knowledge of WCF programs and strategies for serving youth, and WCF employees have gained a broader perspective on youth issues by working with a broader youth population than they are accustomed to. As one local respondent noted,

> *[WCF has] typically served an older youth population. This grant has provided them the opportunity to work with 18-year-olds and that has changed their perspective on youth. They have also provided support to in-school youth, because they have worked closely with the Intervention Specialists.*

The grant has also led the staff of the two agencies to form strong interpersonal ties, which appear to be critical to successful inter-agency partnerships in Orlando. In fact, stakeholders consider the strengthened relationship between OCPS and WCF to be one of the most significant outcomes of the School District Grant. OCPS now views WCF as more of a working partner in serving Orlando's vulnerable in-school and out-of-school youth populations. However, despite the strengthened ties between the two agencies, the actual *work* of the partnership is not necessarily sustainable. Although all partners would like the work of WCF to continue at the Jackson Recreation Center, WCF has made it clear that this will not occur, due to a lack of resources after the end of the grant.

The School District Grant allowed OCPS and DJJ to deepen a relationship that was already strong when the grant began. This occurred partly through mutual education; for example, joint trainings allowed for each agency to better understand the other. The Transition Center in particular allowed the two agencies to really come together over a common concern with youth coming out of detention and returning to school. While the two agencies might have previously shared data—such as sending over requested attendance information—now there are more sit-down conversations, joint planning, and coordination on how to best transition youth. OCPS is participating more consistently in commitment hearings, and OCPS and DJJ are more coordinated in working with parents. For example, probation officers are now participating more in parent-teacher conferences. The Transition Center is expected to continue as a primary mechanism for the OCPS-DJJ partnership, as the center will be sustained after the grant with Title I funds. However, the OCPS counselor position at the Juvenile Assessment Center will be discontinued due to lack of funding.

School District of Philadelphia (SDP)

Initiative Name: Project U-Turn Expansion

Partnership Model: Complex

Capsule Summary: The School District of Philadelphia (SDP) is implementing multiple programs to expand Project U-Turn, an initiative to address the city's high dropout rate. For in-school youth, the district created North Philadelphia Community High School (an accelerated school serving court-involved, dropout, overage and under-credit youth) and implemented a Learning to Work strategy at this school, Overbrook High School, and University High School. Implemented at six high schools is the OASIS program, which uses an accelerated school model to target overage, under-credit ninth graders at a "school within a school." Out-of-school youth are being served by the Bridge Program housed at the E^3 Power Center (which helps skill- and credit-deficient youth attain the competencies needed to enter an educational pathway), the Occupational Skills Pathway Programs for older and formerly incarcerated youth, and the newly launched Student Re-engagement Center (which provides various services, including assessments, to connect out-of-school youth to an appropriate educational/Project U-Turn pathway).

The linkages formed under the School District Grant by the School District of Philadelphia represent a highly complex model of partnership. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that SDP contracts out the majority of grant services to a significant number of CBOs,[14] which, in turn, often provide services for more than one major service component and/or to more than one of the grant's service sites. The contracted partners have also developed various relationships amongst themselves, rather than manifesting the more typical partnership arrangement in which the school district is at the center, or hub, of otherwise unconnected partners. Philadelphia's effort also represents an expansion, as well as an extension, of previous, large-scale efforts—namely Project U-Turn and the Re-Entry Transition Initiative–Welcome Return Assessment Process (RETI-WRAP).[15] The district's previous involvement with these initiatives introduces additional layers and players to the partnership model.

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[14]   The Philadelphia School District has such strong unions, that it is easier to contract out to CBOs for services rather than try to get district staff to perform functions outside of union contracts.

[15]   Project U-Turn is a dropout prevention collaborative made up of district officials, the Department of Human Services, the Juvenile Justice System and other key organizations. RETI-WRAP is a collaborative that provides transitional support and education and workforce development activities for youth returning to the public school system from residential delinquent placement. By bringing together representatives from the SDP, Juvenile Probation, Department of Human Services, Behavioral Health Services and the Defender Association, the program works to ensure youth receive a full range of supports (including academic, health, mental health, life skills, and social services).

Workforce Development Partnerships

SDP's workforce development partnerships in particular embody the type of complexity described above in terms of the number of organizations involved and the types of interrelationships between them. The workforce development partnerships are also the most developed of SDP's partnerships for the School District Grant.

- **Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN)** is a major workforce player in Philadelphia and a major partner of the School District Grant. PYN manages WIA and TANF youth funds in the city, leads the city's workforce development system, and oversees the Project U-Turn collaborative. For the School District Grant in particular, PYN convenes stakeholders, oversees grant implementation, and navigates the various levels of partnerships involved with the School District Grant. PYN also manages the subcontractors for the Learning to Work and Bridge Programs, manages the Occupational Skills Pathways Programs (OSPP), and manages the grant data collection and outcomes tracking system, which it also designed (this task involves monitoring partners' performance outcomes and training them in the data system). PYN also played a significant role in the grant-writing and initial design process; for example, PYN visited a LTW program in New York that served as a model for the School District Grant's LTW program component.

- Three CBOs are responsible for implementing the LTW program at three school sites: **Philadelphia Academies Inc**. (at Overbrook HS); **Education Works** (at University City HS); and **Congresso** (at North Philadelphia Community High School). [16] The LTW strategy partners a CBO with an educational provider to enhance core academic learning with employment, internships, career and college planning, as well as additional support services, for under-credit and at-risk students. The CBOs provide staff and career/job readiness skills to the youth in the LTW program, identify local businesses that meet students' career interests, and collaborate with other organizations, universities and companies to provide additional resources and services to youth.

- SDP also partnered with **Communities in Schools** to implement the OASIS program at six selected high schools throughout the district. The OASIS program uses an accelerated school model to target overage, under-credit ninth graders at a "school within a school." (At two OASIS sites—Overbrook HS and University City HS—the LTW program has been merged with OASIS).

- For the Bridge Program, SDP is partnering with the **E³ Power Center** (West Branch)[17] to provide education and workforce services to 16- to 21-year-old out-of-school youth reading below the sixth grade level and in need of skill

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[16] Congresso staff reported that they have strong relationships with employers in many different sectors—arts, small businesses, non-profits—so they can cater the internships to student interest.

[17] E3 Power Centers are vocational training centers for youth ages 16–21 years.

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remediation, credit attainment, and supportive services. Although the School District Grant does not fund employment services for youth enrolled in the Bridge Program, workforce services are organized around a 12-week Job Readiness Program that the E^3 Center already has in place. The E^3 Power Center also offers youth a wide range of education and workforce services. The implementation of the Bridge Program builds off these services while also offering additional workforce services, such as internships. The goals of the Bridge Program and the E^3 Power Center are closely aligned as they both have a specific focus on educating and providing workforce skills to out-of-school youth.

- PYN is responsible for managing the OSPP for older, formerly incarcerated youth currently enrolled in Philadelphia's E^3 Power Centers. Since fall 2009, PYN has contracted with the **Community College of Philadelphia** and **NPower**[18] on a pay-per-slot basis to provide youth with automotive, hospitality industry, and information technology training. Participating youth who do not already have their GEDs must simultaneously attend GED classes at the E^3 Power Center.

- **Lehigh Center and Technical Institute** is a workforce partner that helped develop the Occupational Skills Pathways Program. The Institute provided technical assistance to the teachers and schools where the OSPP's credential-based programs would be housed (e.g., it helped implement a system that teachers could use to determine student achievement and mastery of skills).

Juvenile Justice Partnerships

SDP's partnerships with the Juvenile Justice System (JJS) have revolved around discussing best practices in serving court-involved youth and referring youth to appropriate programs of the School District Grant.

- SDP worked closely with representatives from the Philadelphia Reintegration Initiative[19] and Philadelphia Juvenile Probation to capitalize on their expertise in working with court-involved youth and to draft portions of the original grant proposal. Both are represented on the partner steering committee.

- SDP also works closely with representatives from the Philadelphia Reintegration Initiative and Philadelphia Juvenile Probation to identify youth eligible for grant services and to transition them from the Juvenile Justice System to target schools and programs, such as the Bridge Program and North Philadelphia Community High School.

- After a scaling-back of services by the Philadelphia Re-Integration Initiative eliminated services for incarcerated youth after their release, SDP was only able to identify juvenile offenders for grant programs/services following their release

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[18] NPower PA is an affiliate of the NPower Network, a national network of local nonprofits that help other nonprofits use technology to better serve their communities.

[19] Philadelphia's Reintegration Initiative is a program launched by the Philadelphia Family Court and the Department of Human Services to support youth as they transition out of residential placement.

through the 10-day RETI-WRAP program. Out-of-school youth who have been involved with the JJS are most likely to be connected to one of the grant programs by visiting the Re-Engagement Center.

- With regard to data sharing, SDP partners with Philadelphia Juvenile Probation to obtain recidivism data through a shared spreadsheet of grant program enrollees and with Division of Juvenile Justice Services (DJJS) to secure incarceration information for youth enrolled in grant services. SDP also worked with JJS representatives from residential treatment facilities to develop a common assessment tool that would help ensure that youth exiting detention and entering one of the grant-funded programs would not have to repeat courses taken while in detention. Finally, SDP is also working to sign a critical memorandum of understanding with DJJS' Court and Community Services and the Department of Human Services regarding the sharing youth case management data.

- Through steering committee meetings and regular phone calls, SDP partners with JJS representatives—namely Philadelphia Juvenile Probation and Philadelphia Re-Integration Initiative—to design effective ways to serve youth exiting juvenile detention and to discuss which grant-funded program would be appropriate for particular youth in the RETI-WRAP program.

Law Enforcement Partnerships

Law enforcement has not had a major role in the School District Grant. While SDP originally planned to work closely with the Philadelphia Police Department to obtain necessary information on gang-involved youth, bureaucratic obstacles with regard to data-sharing led SDP to look internally—to the Office of School Climate and Safety—to provide gang identification training to program staff and to serve as the grant's link to law enforcement, given the Office's pre-existing relationship with the police department.

The weak role of law enforcement appears to be a missed opportunity, particularly given the potential overlap between the School District Grant and the Youth Violence Reduction Partnership (YVRP)—an effort by an array of criminal justice, city, and non-profit groups to lower homicide rates in the most violent sections of Philadelphia by focusing on youth under age 25 who are at the highest risk of killing or being killed. The YVRP was initiated in 1999 in one of Philadelphia's police districts and is now active in approximately five districts. Because YVRP had a difficult time focusing on academic and career opportunities for youth, it could have benefited from partnering with SDP. SDP, in turn, could have benefited from YVRP/police district referrals.

Other Partnerships

Philadelphia benefits from a range of other partnerships with city agencies and CBOs.

- SDP partners with the **City of Philadelphia** to supplement district staff at the Re-Engagement Center. The Department of Human Services has two full-time case

managers located at the Re-Engagement Center and the Mayor's Office of Mental Health has two behavioral health specialists co-located at the Center one day a week.

- The CBO **International Education and Community Initiatives** (IECI) helps SDP manage and implement the accelerated high school model at North Philadelphia Community High School to serve out-of-school youth. IECI provides a principal and subject-matter teachers. This CBO also participates in partner-level meetings and provides best practices for serving out-of-school youth and youth exiting the JJS.

- The primary role of **Center for Literacy** (CFL) is to provide literacy and numeracy services to in-school and out-of-school youth at North Philadelphia Community High School and at the E^3 Power Center (West Branch). CFL has hired teachers at each site who are, in turn, responsible for developing course curricula. CFL works closely with school/organization staff at both sites to determine how services should be structured.

- The **Center for Social Organization of Schools** provided the model and technical assistance for developing the Bridge Program and accelerated school model at North Philadelphia Community High School.

Key Outcomes

SDP realized a number of key partner- and system-level outcomes in the areas of referral mechanisms, changes in district practices, and data sharing.

One of the most significant outcomes of the grant was the creation and institutionalization of the Re-Engagement Center, which allowed for a more streamlined referral process for out-of-school youth and youth transitioning from detention. Although SDP had begun this work before the expansion of Project U-Turn, the School District Grant provided the seed funding for the Re-Engagement Center that really allowed for a more coordinated referral process to the Bridge Program, North Philadelphia Community High School, and other district schools and programs. The coordination is facilitated, in part, by co-located city staff: two Department of Human Services case managers and two behavioral health specialists from the Office of Mental Health. Sustainability of the Re-Engagement Center is assured, as its funding has been assumed by the district.

The School District Grant also led to the creation of a sustainable accelerated high school model that, in turn, has led to an expansion of efforts in this area. North Philadelphia Community High School was launched with School District Grant funds and its success, as well as the success of earlier efforts at the Fairhill Community High School, led the district to realize the strength of the accelerated school model—identifying youth in greatest need, placing them in a smaller cohort, and providing needed services. From the successes at these two schools, the idea for OASIS—an accelerated "school within a school"—was born and implemented. Sustainability

for North Philadelphia Community High School is assured as the district has assumed funding responsibilities; the school will continue to offer 180 slots for youth and is applying for additional grants, including a 21st Century Skills grant, to continue its Learning to Work component and Center for Literacy work.

A third major system-level outcome was simply that the School District of Philadelphia agreed to give credit to youth for work completed as part of the Bridge Program, which operates outside the district school setting in the E^3 Power Center. This development furthers the aim of the Bridge Program—to assist out-of-school youth in transitioning back to an educational pathway.

Finally, on both the system and partner levels, there were also breakthroughs with regard to data sharing and usage. As of December 2009, SDP, the Department of Human Services, and DJJS' Court and Community Services were poised to sign a memorandum of understanding that would allow these three parties to share youth case management data on a sustained basis. Although not completely attributable to the School District Grant, this agreement is considered groundbreaking. The School District Grant administrator also developed informal mechanisms for sharing data with DJJS, though it is not clear to what extent these mechanisms will be formalized and sustained. Also, staff at partner North Philadelphia Community High School reported that the School District Grant led to an increased proficiency with and reliance on quantitative data that helped it better document and illustrate their success with students.

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