

# School Success Partnership Program Report 1

(FY2016 Appropriation Bill - Public Act 84 of 2015)

February 7, 2016

**Sec. 450.** (1) *From the funds appropriated in part 1 for school success partnership program, the department shall allocate \$450,000.00 by December 1 of the current fiscal year to support the Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency programming, which will take place in each county in the Governor's Prosperity Region 3. The department shall require the following performance objectives be measured and reported for the duration of the state funding for the school success partnership program:*

*(a) Increasing school attendance and decreasing chronic absenteeism.*

*(b) Increasing academic performance based on grades with emphasis on math and reading.*

*(c) Identifying barriers to attendance and success and connecting families with resources to reduce these barriers.*

*(d) Increasing parent involvement with the parent's child's school and community.*

**(2) *The Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency shall provide reports to the department on January 31 and June 30 of the current fiscal year on the number of children and families served and the services that were provided to families to meet the performance objectives identified in this section. The department shall distribute the reports within 1 week after receipt to the house and senate appropriations subcommittees on the department budget, house and senate fiscal agencies, and house and senate policy offices.***



Michigan Department of  
Health & Human Services

RICK SNYDER, GOVERNOR  
NICK LYON, DIRECTOR



**School Success  
Partnership Program**  
a division of  
**NEMCSA**  
Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency, Inc.

**Reporting Period: September 2015 – December 2015**  
January 30, 2016

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# I. Background and Purpose

## a. School Success Partnership Program Overview

The Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency Inc.'s School Success Partnership Program (School Success) serves school-aged children and youth from Pre-Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade who are at-risk for academic failure. Students served by School Success are referred to the program due to academic need, poor attendance, aggressive behavior, crisis situations, withdrawn behavior, or being untended. School Success workers provide ongoing assistance to students, parents, and teachers by managing students' problem areas with specific short- and long-term goals. Students with additional needs are provided supplementary referrals to community resources, such as educational services, community mental health clinics, shelters, private practitioners, the Department of Health and Humans Service, and Child and Family Services.

School Success began approximately two decades ago in response to community awareness that school failure was a complex, multi-faceted issue linked to chronic poverty, unemployment, juvenile delinquency, domestic violence, teen pregnancy, child abuse and neglect, and a lack of parent education. Students served by School Success experience a variety of issues and conditions that affect school performance and create barriers to academic success including family issues (e.g., divorce, unemployment, death, etc.), attendance issues, behavioral issues, transitional issues, and unmet mental health and/or medical needs. The program collaboratively works with students and their families, school administrators, teachers and staff, and community agencies in order to address presenting issues and meet students' needs. As a result of participating in School Success, students are expected to have increased school attendance; improved academic performance; an increase in parental involvement with their child's education; and family barriers identified and removed for student success.

School Success has become an integral resource for students, families, and schools in Northeast Michigan. As of the 2014-2015 Academic Year, School Success was active in 23 public school locations within eight (8) Northeast Michigan counties, including Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan,

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Iosco, Montmorency, Oscoda, Otsego, and Presque Isle. A 2014-2015 evaluation by the University of Michigan Curtis Center Program Evaluation Group, assessing the School Success Program, showed that approximately 62% of students participating in School Success demonstrated academic improvement. Parental involvement data indicated that 75% of parents participated in three or more school activities directly related to supporting their child's academics. School Success program administrators recently sought to extend their reach, with the goal of providing services to help more students in Northeast Michigan. Given the commitment to students and families and the positive impact that the School Success Program has had in Northeast Michigan, the State of Michigan recently allocated another \$150,000 to the already allocated \$300,000 equaling a total of \$450,000 for the support of existing program sites and expansion to three (3) new counties throughout 2015-2016.

## **b. Report Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to assess the current School Success Partnership Program and its expansion during the 2015-2016 Academic Year. The State of Michigan allocated \$450,000, 29% of the School Success Program's \$1.6 million annual budget, to support exiting programming and expansion efforts. This nine-month report intends to (1) document the support of existing schools with a School Success presence and expansion of the School Success Program into three new counties in Northeast Michigan; and (2) assess the impact of the School Success Partnership Program on four key performance objectives identified by the State in all program sites.

The performance objectives to be measured and reported include:

1. Increasing school attendance and decreasing chronic absenteeism;
2. Increasing academic performance based on grades with emphasis on math and reading;
3. Identifying barriers to attendance and success and connecting families with resources to reduce these barriers; and
4. Increasing parent involvement in child's school and community.

This report presents results based on School Success Program data from September 2015 through December 2015.

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## **II. Methodology**

### **a. Data Collection**

Data collection for the progress report was conducted through initial intake reports, exit reports, and monthly case reports completed by the School Success Liaisons.

The outcomes reported used School Success Liaison data collected between September 2015 and December 2015 including; monthly data reports, initial intake and exit reports and Results-oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) reports. School Success Liaisons completed these monthly forms for every formal caseload student served from the date they entered the program to the time they exited the program.

School Success administrators then entered, compiled and analyzed all the data. The administrative data includes well-established, validated measures to assess student academic performance, attendance, parental involvement and removal of barriers through community collaboration.

### **b. Data Analysis**

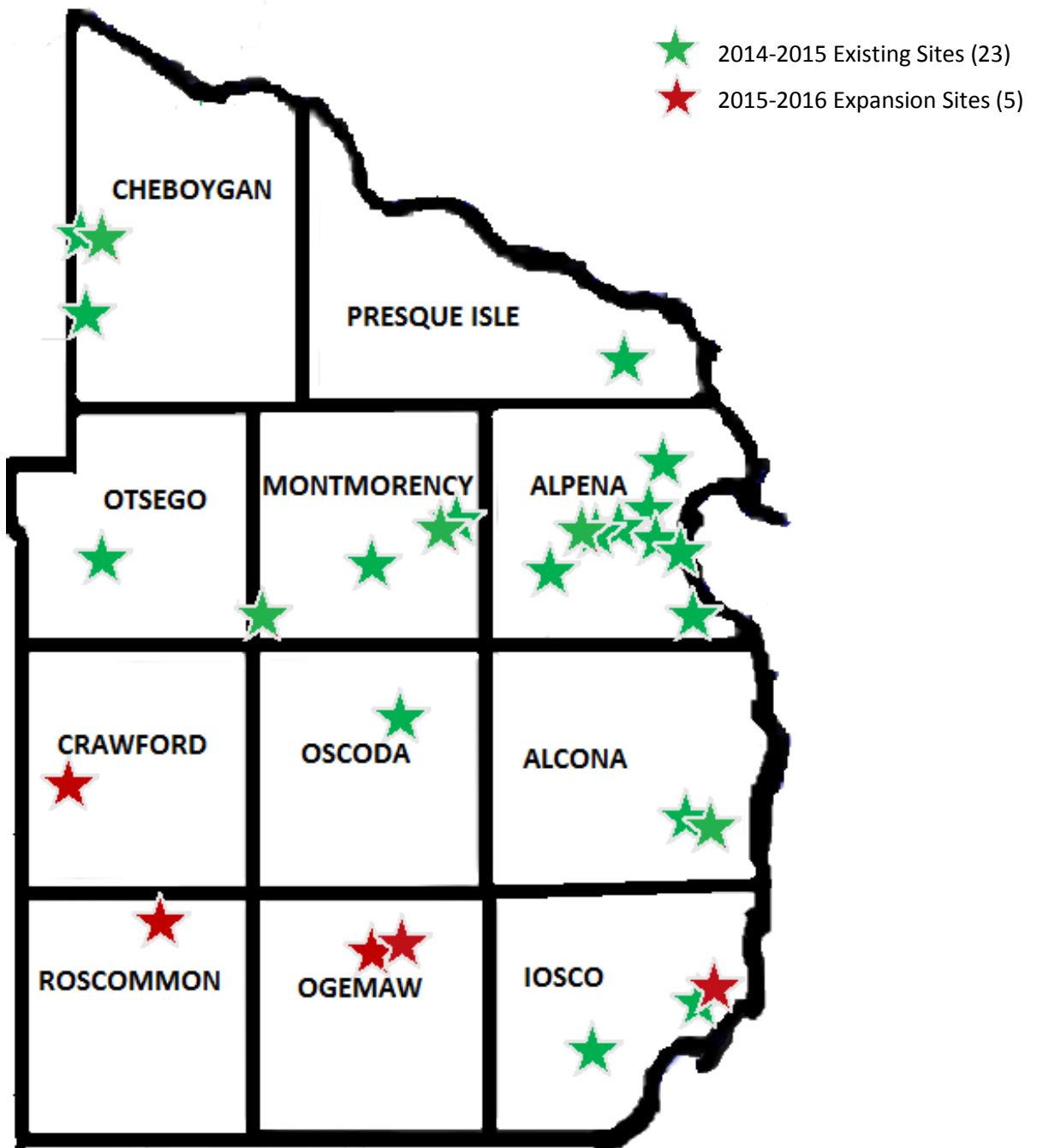
Monthly comparisons will indicate improvements in Performance Objectives.

## **III. Results**

### **a. Expansion of the School Success Partnership Program**

The School Success Partnership Program has expanded the program into three (3) new counties within Northeast Michigan: Crawford, Ogemaw and Roscommon. School Success implemented its program in four (4) sites within the three (3) county expansion area as well as one (1) new site in an existing county between September 2015 and December 2015. As of December 31, 2015, School Success was serving 490 students, 75 of whom attended one of the expansion sites (see Figure 1/Table 1).

Figure 1. School Success Existing and Expansion Sites: 2015-2016



<b>Table 1. School Success Partnership Program Sites: September - December 2015</b>				
<b>County</b>	<b>School Name</b>	<b>Number of Students in the School</b>	<b>Number of Students in School Success</b>	<b>Date Became School Success Site</b>
Alpena	Alpena High School	364	21	--
	Besser Elementary	426	15	--
	Ella White Elementary	471	27	--
	Hinks Elementary	161	15	--
	Lincoln Elementary	175	15	--
	Sanborn Elementary	179	15	--
	Thunder Bay Jr. High	885	31	--
	Wilson Elementary	224	21	--
Cheboygan	Inland Lakes Elementary	314	16	--
	Inland Lakes Schools	439	18	--
	Wolverine Schools	280	16	--
Montmorency	Atlanta Schools	258	17	--
	Hillman Elementary	249	27	--
	Hillman Jr/Sr High	226	18	--
	Lewiston Elementary	177	19	--
Otsego	Johannesburg Middle School	306	18	--
<b>Expansion Sites 2014-2015</b>				
Alcona	Alcona Elementary	372	16	9/2/2014
	Alcona Jr/Sr High	370	17	9/2/2014
Iosco	Hale Schools	240	15	9/2/2014
	Richardson Elementary School	654	23	11/3/2014
Oscoda	Fairview Schools	304	20	12/1/2014
Presque Isle	Posen Schools	235	15	9/2/2014
<b>Expansion Sites 2015-2016</b>				
Crawford	Grayling Elementary/Jr High	1041	4	8/31/2015
Iosco	Oscoda High School	541	16	8/31/2015
Ogemaw	Surline Elementary/Jr High	971	18	8/31/2015
	Ogemaw Heights Jr/Sr High	923	20	8/31/2015
Roscommon	Roscommon Middle School	329	17	8/31/2015

### **i. Identifying and Collaborating with Expansion Sites**

School Success administrators implemented rigorous outreach efforts to identify new counties, and schools within those counties, for the program's expansion. In order to meet the goals of



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expanding into three (3) new counties (five new sites), School Success administrators directly contacted four (4) school districts in three (3) Northeast Michigan counties. Crawford, Ogemaw and Roscommon counties were selected for expansion as they were the last three (3) counties in Prosperity Region 3 without School Success programming and of these counties all but one was in alignment with Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency Inc.'s (NEMCSA) service area. An additional site was added in Iosco County due to the student/liaison ratio. Given the persistent poverty and high unemployment rates, this rural region of the state is in high need of resources and programming aimed at improving the quality of life of children and families. As NEMCSA remains the School Success program's home, it is important for School Success administrators and liaisons to be able to engage and collaborate with one another. Finally, one of the most common reasons students leave the School Success Program is that they move out of the district into a new district that does not have the program as a resource. However, School Success students frequently move to nearby districts. Therefore, increasing the availability of the School Success program in the region increases the opportunity for continuity of services for these students.

Of the four (4) school districts in the three (3) counties that School Success reached out to, three (3) school districts became partners and have implemented the School Success Program this academic year. Before reaching out to potential expansion sites, School Success administrators researched the districts, in terms of their geographical catchment area and the number of students, and documented needs as demonstrated by KIDS Count information (Annie E. Casey Foundation) and Michigan's Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI). School Success administrators' strategy for outreach to potential expansion sites consisted of email, postal mail, telephone, and in-person contact to superintendents and principals. Administrators also presented information about School Success to School Boards and County Boards of Commissioners. Many of the school districts approached already knew about the program from word of mouth and media attention. Once the planned expansion of the School Success Program became public knowledge, some schools outside of the designated expansion area contacted the Program Director and meetings were conducted at the school request. School Success administrators establish partnerships on a first come, first served basis.

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Once the three (3) counties and five (5) expansion sites were identified, School Success began reaching out to teachers and staff, as well as parents, to inform them about the program and its services. School Success administrators began introducing the program to teachers and staff in multiple venues. Parents were informed via School Open Houses held prior to the first day of school, Parent Teacher Organization meetings, school newsletters, and newspaper articles.

## **ii. Hiring and Training Additional School Success Workers**

The School Success Program expansion resulted in the hiring of five (5) new School Success Liaisons. This included five (5) full-time, part-year School Success Liaisons recruited through advertisements in local newspapers, on the NEMCSA website and by word of mouth. The positions required, at minimum, a Bachelor's degree in a human service field. Experience with at-risk populations was preferred. School Success program administrators also looked for individuals knowledgeable about and invested in their communities. Newly identified partner schools assisted with the interview process.

In preparation for the expansion, School Success administrators described making substantial changes to their employee training process. School Success administrators and liaisons collaboratively developed a formal employee handbook, which became the basis for a full-day training, and initiated a mentorship program to assist and support new workers. All newly hired School Success Liaisons were paired with a mentor, who was an experienced School Success Liaison. Before serving students, new School Success employees shadowed their mentors, and once new School Success Liaisons started serving students, mentors went on periodic site visits to provide guidance and ensure the program was implemented as intended. School Success Liaisons also received the standard new employee training from NEMCSA, including workplace violence training, as well as standard training on School Success Program requirements. On-going training and support is provided to School Success Liaisons through monthly staff meetings, job-specific conferences and mentorships.

## **iii. Strengths of Expansion Effort**

The School Success Program was able to expand into three (3) new counties within the first three months of the 2015-2016 Academic Year as well as adding support to an already existing

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school. The expansion resulted in a 15% increase in the number of students served by School Success.

Administrators spent a substantial amount of time learning about communities before implementing their program in new sites, which helped create new partnerships and successful transitions into new schools. In fact, the Program Director hired another Coordinator to do substantial research on each new county and presented this research to superintendents in those counties as well as to state leaders such as Mr. Tim Becker (Chief Deputy Director DHHS) and Mr. Steve Yager (Executive Director, Children's Services Agency, DHHS.)

Additionally, School Success administrators recognize the program's local reputation as being an important strength of the expansion. Given that School Success is well known in the community and has been shown to improve outcomes for the students and families served, many schools and districts were eager to partner with the program and provide a proven, needed service to their students. Rural communities in Michigan have limited access to services and to dollars for those services, so being able to implement a known commodity with a track record of success was important for the new service sites.

The School Success Program was developed in the rural context, and is therefore responsive to unique needs of communities in rural Michigan. Particularly, School Success provides services to students and families primarily at school, with home visits as needed. Therefore, the School Success Program lessens transportation barriers, as the ability to participate is not contingent on the ability of parents and students to secure transportation to and from services. Further, School Success does not utilize income-based eligibility criteria. This lessens stigma among rural populations that place high value on independence and self-reliance.

Finally, another positive impact of the School Success Program is its presence in all 11 counties of Prosperity Region 3. For those families who are more transient, moving from one school to the next or one county to the next, accessing the program or continuing School Success services means students can continue to succeed no matter where they live. School Success Liaisons are able to transfer student case files and information to each other thereby eliminating communication barriers between schools. This continuity of services and lifeline between

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School Success Liaisons creates a stronger program and smoother transition for students and families as they move.

#### **iv. Challenges of Expansion Effort**

The major challenge of the expansion effort was securing funding from partner schools. This was primarily due to the timing of the expansion in relation to budget years. When School Success partners with a school, both NEMCSA and the school provide funds to support the program. The School Success expansion effort began in the summer of 2015, and as the new budget year for schools began on July 1, 2015, it was difficult for expansion sites to readjust their budgets in order to partner with School Success. Schools were motivated to implement School Success, so the expansion sites worked to allocate monies to support the program. In some cases, schools were able to utilize Title I and other county funding streams to support School Success. The need to modify budgets that were already in place complicated the preparation of budgets, and subsequently complicated billing and contract information, at each new expansion site.

Finally, although School Success recognizes that a ratio of 450 students per School Success Liaison creates better services for students and families, the Crawford-AuSable School District in Crawford County was only able to provide funding for one liaison. Unfortunately, school administration expected NEMCSA's School Success Liaison to work with over 1000 students. School Success Program administration requested a compromise to focus services on the 600 students located at the elementary level. Since no resolution could be reached, the program contract was dissolved. School Success administrators are still working towards obtaining enough funding to put two School Success Liaisons in the school district to resolve this issue.

### **b. Students Served**

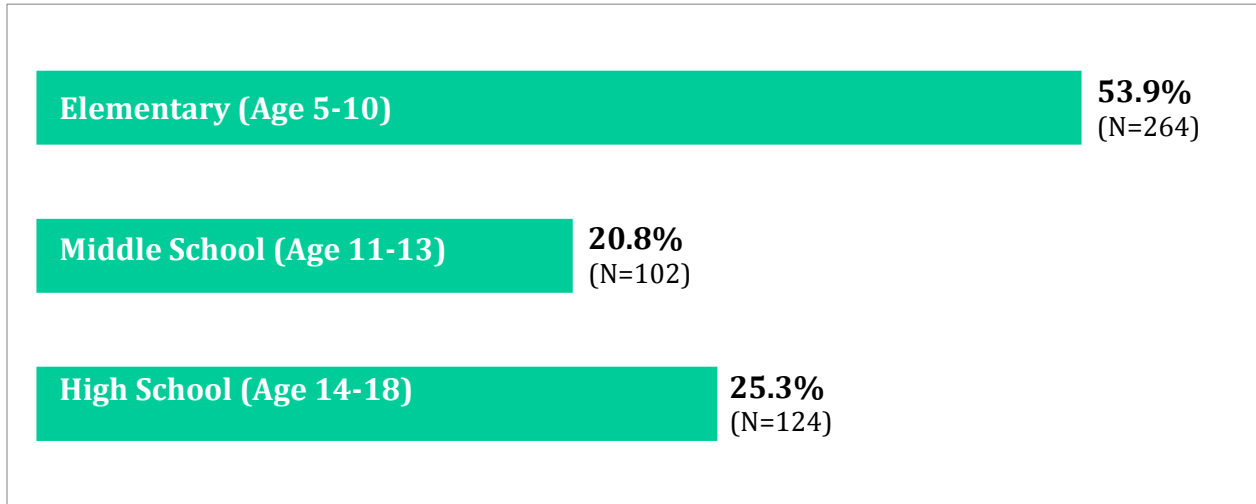
#### **i. Student Characteristics**

As previously stated, between September and December 2015, the School Success Program has served 490 students on a formal caseload basis and served 908 students informally across 29 schools within eleven counties. More than half of the students served (N=264; 54%) by School

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Success are in elementary school, while 25% (N=124) are in high school. Slightly more than 20% of students served are in middle school (N=102); see Figure 2. The majority of students served by School Success are male (58%).

**Figure 2. School Success Students by Age**



Though the School Success program does not have income-based eligibility criteria, 77% of students served are eligible for free and reduced lunch. In the State of Michigan, 46.7% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch (Michigan Department of Education, 2014), suggesting a substantially higher proportion of students served by the School Success Program are economically disadvantaged when compared to students across the state.

## **ii. Reason for Referral**

Almost two-thirds (65.3%; N=320) of the students who entered the School Success Program between September and December 2015 were referred for services by their teachers (43.1%; N=211) or parents (22.2%; N=109). School Success Liaisons and other community partners, including probation officers, school counselors, family members other than parents, and school secretaries were responsible for slightly over 26% of referrals. School principals referred the balance of the student participants which was nearly 9% of students. See Table 4.

<b>Table 4. School Success Partnership Program Referral Sources (N=490)</b>		
<b>Referral Source</b>	<b>Total</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Teacher	211	43.1%
Parent	109	22.2%
School Success Worker/Other Partners	128	26.1%
Principal	42	8.6%

This academic year to date, students were most commonly referred to School Success for academic concerns (N=306), followed by crisis (N=129), attendance concerns (N=124), and aggressive behavior (N=121). Almost as many students were referred due to withdrawn behavior (N=100), as to the opposite, aggressive. Fewer students were referred as untended (N=47) or other (N=38). It is important to note that students were referred to the School Success Program for more than one reason so the reasons for referrals total more than the number of students served (N=490). See Table 5.

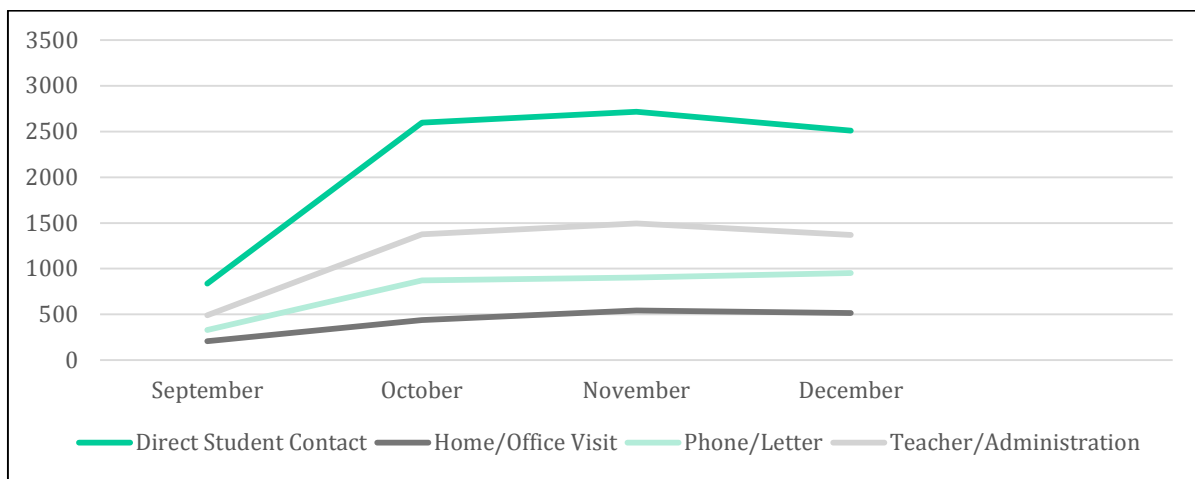
<b>Table 5. School Success Partnership Program Reasons for Referral</b>	
<b>Reasons for Referral</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>N</b>
Academic Concerns	306
Crisis	129
Attendance Concerns	124
Aggressive Behavior	121
Withdrawn	100
Untended	47
Other	38

### iii. Contacts

From September to December 2015, School Success Liaisons had 18,153 contacts related to students they serve. See Figure 3. Almost half of these contacts (N=8,661) were direct, school-

based interactions, in which the School Success Liaison met with the student at school to achieve Action Plan goals. Parents and/or guardians meeting with the School Success Liaison made up nearly 10% (N=1,705) of the School Success contacts. Almost 17% of School Success contacts (N=3058) consisted of phone calls and letters related to the case. These calls and letters were direct contacts with parents and sometimes consisted of emails, text messages, and other forms of social media. Contacts with teachers and administrators comprised approximately 26% (N=4729) of related student case interactions.

**Figure 3. School Success Program Contacts: September – December 2015**



## c. Performance Objectives

### i. Increasing School Attendance and Decreasing Chronic Absenteeism

School Success believes that consistent school attendance is the single most important factor in making sure a child receives the best education possible. Since its inception, the School Success Program has worked with school systems, law enforcement agencies, court systems and other agencies to address student attendance. As a result of this belief and community collaboration, the School Success Program has developed and implemented a process to address this concern.

School Success Liaisons monitor attendance in their respective buildings and if a student has eight (8) absences the parent is notified by the liaison through a letter or documented phone call. Should the student continue to miss and have 12 absences, the parent is again notified by

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mail and the liaison continues to work informally with the parent to address the truancy and remove any barriers that may exist. Should the student reach 15 absences, a face-to-face meeting is held with the parent, student, the building principal and the assigned law enforcement liaison. At this meeting a formal action plan is developed, signed and a release of information is also signed by the parent so any other professionals involved may provide information. If the plan is not followed, local family court personnel will conduct a Preliminary Inquiry to attempt to gain compliance. If necessary, formal court action through a petition and formal court proceedings may be requested if truancy continues.

From September through December of 2015, 612 first letters were sent out to parents indicating an attendance concern. With contact and interventions from the School Success Liaison, only 170 second letters were necessary and of those only 59 third letters were needed – a 90% decrease of students with truancy concerns. With continued planning and interventions, only 13 Preliminary Inquiries have been held resulting in a 98% decrease in the number of students identified to date with truancy concerns. Only **one** (1) student identified as having attendance concerns has been petitioned to the court system formally for truancy. It is a protocol that works and is based on building relationships between the school and home and not on punitive measures. Our final report in June will chart each individual school as well as total number of letters sent.

Of the 490 formal School Success cases, 124 had attendance related referrals. Of these referrals, 112 were identified as having an attendance concern along with other referral reasons and 12 referrals were for attendance concerns alone. Of those 12 referrals for only attendance reasons, six (6) cases have been closed – five (5) showing improvement and successful completion of their case plan and one (1) moving out of the area prior to closing.

In conjunction with monitoring student attendance, as part of the monthly reporting process to School Success administrators, School Success Liaisons were also asked to report on increased student attendance in class. Of the 490 students in the School Success Program, 45% (N=221) of students stayed in class more often, 42% (N=206) students were not a concern and less than 8% (N=38) of students were observed as not being in class more often. Ensuring that students stay in class more often is just as important as having regular school attendance. School Success

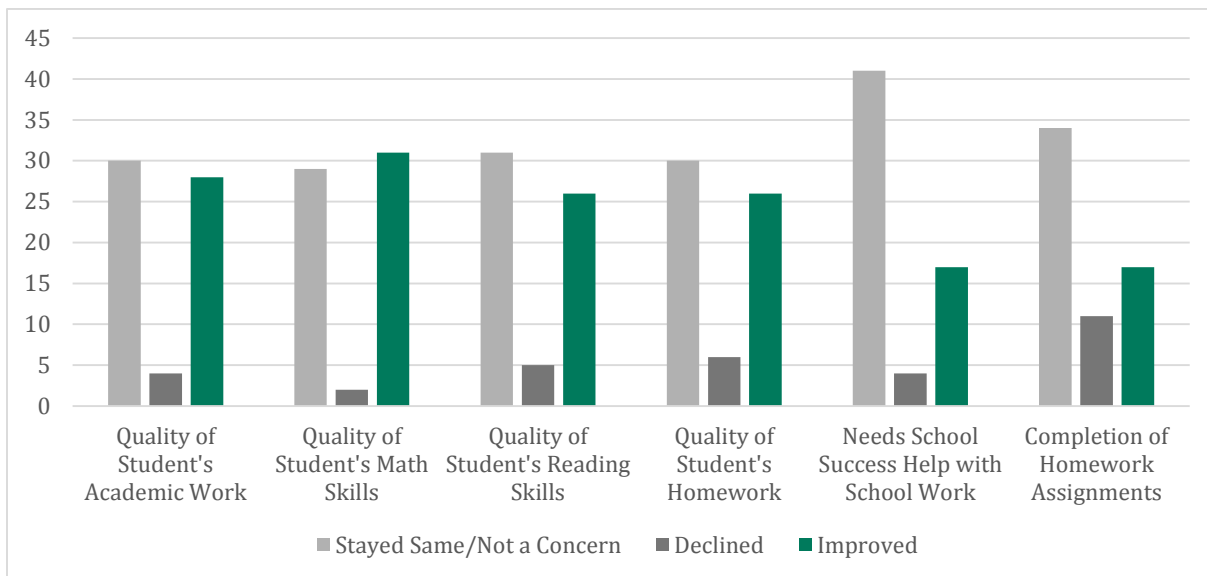


Liaisons approach class attendance using a team approach with staff, student and parents to determine the reasons for class absences and assist in creating a plan to improve student outcomes.

## ii. Increasing Academic Performance Based on Grades with Emphasis on Math and Reading

Results suggest that of the 62 formal cases closed to date, 45% (N=28) of School Success students demonstrated an improvement in the overall quality of their academic work with 48% (N=30) either staying the same or not a concern and only four (4) students not improving between September and December 2015. Additionally, 50% (N=31) of School Success students improved the quality of their math skills, 47% (N=29) stayed the same or were not a concern and two (2) students did not improve. Quality of student reading skills improved by 42% (N=26) with 50% (N=31) of students staying the same or not a concern and five (5) students showing no improvement. Furthermore, completion of homework assignments improved by 27% (N=17) and quality of homework completed improved by 42% (N=26). It is also important to note that two thirds, 66% (N=41), of students did not need School Success Liaison help with school work and only 27% (N=17) required School Success assistance with school work. See Figure 4.

**Figure 4. Academic Performance: September – December 2015**



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Further, the data indicates that of those students who showed a decline in academic performance targets, five (5) students moved to other schools or school districts after the initial intake was complete. The School Success Action Plan was unable to be implemented due to family relocation. In addition, two (2) students transferred to Alternative Ed programs, one (1) student was referred for Special Education evaluation, one (1) student successfully transferred in-district, and one (1) student was placed in foster care in another county.

Student grades, including overall GPA and grades in Math and Reading will be assessed as an indicator of academic performance for the final report in June 2016.

### **iii. Identifying Barriers to Attendance/Success and Connecting Families with Resources to Reduce these Barriers**

Each month, School Success Liaisons document barriers to academic success experienced by the students they serve. Historically, data suggests that family issues, behavior issues, and mental health or learning disability-related issues present substantial barriers to academic achievement for students served by School Success. This school year was no exception. Academic and crisis issues, the top two reasons for referral to the program, emerged as barriers to student success as well.

Once School Success Liaisons identify barriers to a students' academic achievement, they utilize a team approach to resolve barriers and increase students' ability to succeed in school. This team includes, and is not limited to, school personnel, the student, parent(s) and other community resources. The most common approach to resolving barriers involves creating a plan or system with the student and/or parent or guardian. The plans often consist of strategies that students and parents can employ to overcome barriers. For example, a School Success Liaison worked with an anxious student to reduce anxiety by creating a plan that involves a "special job" to do when the student arrives each morning thus reducing the anxiety and increasing a positive atmosphere and attitude between school and student.

Meeting and talking with students also emerged as an important strategy for overcoming barriers to academic achievement. These meetings provide an opportunity for students to share feelings or discuss issues they are having, as well as provide a venue for School Success Liaisons

to offer important guidance and information. Additionally, School Success Liaisons described educating students and parents, by sharing information and building skills, as a way to overcome barriers. This information and associated skills are often used to support the plans collaboratively developed to assist students and families. Finally, School Success Liaisons provide referrals to help students and families resolve identified barriers that are beyond the scope of the School Success program. See Table 6.

Table 6. School Success Referrals/Contacts: Connecting Students and Families to Community Resources September - December 2015	
Referral Type	Total
	N
Education Services	174
Private Practitioner/Counselor	152
Department of Human Services	146
Community Mental Health	89
School-Based Health Clinic	82
NEMCSA Programs NOT including School Success	73
Homeless Services	53
Mentoring	42
Child and Family Services	32
Employment Services	17
Salvation Army	16
Shelter Services	5
Substance Abuse Services	3
Other	336
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1,258</b>

Providing referrals and connecting students and families to needed community resources represents an integral part of the School Success program. In fact, from September to December 2015, School Success Liaisons reported making 1,258 either referrals and/or direct contacts to community resources. While School Success connects with a wide range of community resources, as summarized in Table 6 above, School Success students were most commonly referred to and/or liaisons directly connected with Education Services (N=174), followed by Private Practitioners/Counselors (N=152) and the Department of Health and Human Services

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(N=146). This may reflect the barriers related to mental health, learning disability-related issues, and crises in the family found among students served. These barriers often prevent student success in the classroom and emerge in poor school attendance, poor class attendance and poor grades.

#### **iv. Increasing Parental Involvement in Child's School and Community**

School Success Liaisons reported engaging with parents 4,763 times from September 2015 through December 2015 through home visits, office visits, phone calls, letters and school meetings. Most commonly, School Success Liaisons and parents collaborated to implement a plan to improve the student's behavior or academics. Through these plans, parents often employed strategies to help their child succeed, thereby increasing their involvement in their child's daily life both at home and at school. School Success Liaisons often provided parents with information and education about their child's needs. Liaison reports indicate that parents sometimes are not sure how to get involved or what is needed to help their child. By offering this information, School Success helps to increase parental involvement.

Additionally, many liaisons noted that with the support of School Success, parents took an active role in participating in meetings with teachers, principals, and other providers in order to collaboratively address their child's needs. School Success Liaisons also documented that parents increased their involvement with their children and other family members by attempting to better understand their perspectives. Liaisons were able to facilitate productive discussion or dialogue between parents and children, or provide small group sessions for families to share and discuss issues they were having at home. Finally, some parents sought referrals from School Success to help themselves or other family members.

Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency requires all of its programs to complete annual Results-Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) reports. The system requires each of the 38 programs operated through NEMCSA to set milestones to achieve and then compares annual accomplishments to projections. The School Success Program uses their performance objectives as milestones so that they measure increased communication between home and school; increased school attendance; and setting and achieving action plan goals. For each

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milestone a projection of how many children/families will achieve that goal is set at the beginning of the school year. Progress is monitored throughout the year and then annual achievements are compared to annual projections. The School Success Program has met or exceeded their performance targets (within the range of +/- 10%) for every year in the program's history. Some programs collect data quarterly to assist in the annual roll-up. Because School Success is a school-year based program, they have set their quarters to be September-November; December-February; and March-May.

Documentation from the first quarter ROMA report (September-November 2015) indicates that while in the School Success Program approximately 89% of parents identified family needs, developed an action plan and agreed to the action plan in conjunction with the School Success Liaison. Furthermore, 82% of parents advocated for their child in at least one school meeting and 65% of parents participated in an initial home visit. Since this reporting is done quarterly and only two reports are required for the State, the balance of the data collected will be reflected in June's year-end report.

In order to determine the extent of the parental engagement by families participating in the School Success Program, School Success Liaisons also documented school activities each family participated in at least one time as well as the number of families participating in three or more school activities. Data demonstrates that, of the 490 students/families participating in the School Success Program, slightly more than 85% (N=418) of parents participated in a home/office visit. In addition, 57% (N= 279) attended parent/teacher conferences, almost 38% (N=185) attended a holiday dinner or program, and slightly less than 25% (N=120) met with the principal or teacher to address student concerns. Other (N=85) school activities were defined as participation in classroom activities, dropping off homework/medication, transportation, school sporting events, etc. This engagement directly demonstrates an increase in parental involvement with their children and school. See Table 7.

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<b>Table 7. Parent Participated in at least one of the following:</b>	
<b>School Activity</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>N</b>
Home Visit/Office Visit	418
P/T Conferences	279
Holiday Dinner/Program	185
Principal/Teacher Mtg.	120
Signed Planner 50%	80
Attendance Mtg.	58
Signed Reading Log 50%	48
504/IEP Mtg.	45
Field Trip	10
PAC/Parent Forum Mtg.	4
Other	85

Further, data indicates that 54% (N=266) of families participated in three (3) or more school-related activities to increase their child’s academic success. Given that parental involvement tremendously increases the likelihood for student success, encouraging parents to get involved is a key component of the School Success Program model.

### III. Discussion

The School Success Program initiated a large scale expansion effort, doubling the number of Northeast Michigan counties served (from 4 counties to 8 counties) in between 2013-2015. The School Success Program met the State requirement of expanding into four new counties by December 2014, with the majority of schools implementing the program in September 2014. In 2015, the School Success Program intensified its expansion efforts once again. State funding increased from \$300,000 in 2014 to add an additional \$150,000 totaling \$450,000 for 2015-2016. With the increased funding, the State tasked the School Success Program with supporting existing schools as well as expanding into the three remaining counties (Crawford, Ogemaw and Roscommon) in Prosperity Region 3 that did not already have a School Success presence. As a result, the School Success Program has served students and families in five (5) additional schools, and increased the number of students served by 15% (N=75). As of December 2015,

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School Success was serving 490 students, the majority of whom are economically disadvantaged with 77% of those students in the School Success Program qualifying for free and reduced lunch.

Students were most commonly referred to the School Success Program by parents and teachers (65.3%; N=320). The primary reasons for referral were academic concerns and crisis concerns. In order to support and assist students and families in addressing these concerns and increasing academic performance, in the four short months between September 2015 and December 2015, School Success Liaisons made over 13,000 contacts with students and families. The majority of these contacts consisted of direct interaction with the students and families either at the school or at the student's home. It is important to note that the structure of the School Success Program likely decreases many substantial barriers faced by rural populations. Students and families do not have to secure transportation in order to receive services, as School Success Liaisons meet students at school, schedule home visits as needed, and take students and families to appointments. Further, the program is free for students and families, eliminating cost barriers, but does not have income-based eligibility criteria which lessens stigma that may be associated with utilizing public services. This stigma may be exacerbated by the rural nature of service delivery where everyone know everybody.

As of December 2015, students who had been served by the School Success Program since September 2015 were making significant progress related to the program's four performance objectives (1. improved attendance; 2. improved math and reading scores; 3. increased parental involvement; and 4. identifying barriers to success and connecting families with resources to reduce these barriers). Specifically, at this point, not even half way through the school year, schools collaborating with the School Success Program have seen a 98% improvement in truancy rates.

Additionally, of formal cases closed to date, 45% of School Success students demonstrated improvement in the overall quality of their academic performance, with 50% showing improvement in math skills and 42% showing improvement in reading skills.

Furthermore, School Success Liaisons are actively identifying barriers to students' academic achievement and linking students and families to community resources needed to resolve

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barriers beyond the scope of the program. Between September 2015 and December 2015, School Success Liaisons made 1,258 referrals to community resources on behalf of students and their families. Referrals were most frequently made to Educational Services, private practitioners/counselors, and Department of Health and Human Services.

Finally, School Success is strongly engaged with parents to help and support them as they increase involvement with their child, their child's school, and their community. School Success Liaisons reported parents engaged in 1,332 school-related events that demonstrated increased parental involvement from September to December 2015. School Success is actively helping parents to identify strategies to support their children's academic success and providing support in attending meetings and engaging with the child's school and community resources.

### **a. Limitations**

One limitation relates to the measures of this report. The performance objectives seek to assess an increase in academic achievement based on grades, with an emphasis on math and reading. Given the time period this report covered, improvement could only be documented on those cases that have been closed between September 2015 and December 2015. Along with that limitation, elementary students no longer receive letter grades and do not have grade point averages. Academic success will be determined by the number system now given to record student achievement with 1= Not Proficient to 4=Advanced.

Additional limitations are found within the program itself in regards to securing adequate funding to serve the large number of schools and students located in such a vast geographical area. Along with that limitation comes the number of students to School Success Liaison ratio (450:1) which is currently being exceeded in some schools due to lack of staff and/or funding.

Other constraints to the program are found in the lack of appropriate, affordable trainings for School Success Liaisons. Trainings that would be beneficial to liaison staff would include such topics as: childhood mental health issues, abuse and neglect, childhood trauma, and motivational strategies. Rarely are these types of trainings offered in the Prosperity Region 3 area.



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## IV. Next Steps

As the School Success administration continues assessing the School Success Partnership Program over the next six months, we plan to take the following steps:

1. Continuing to collect monthly data.
2. Surveying school principals in expansion sites as to their satisfaction of the impact of the program.
3. Randomly surveying a statistical sample number of parents regarding their involvement and perception of barriers to their child's success utilizing the Results Oriented Management and Accountability performance-based system in each School Success location.
4. Obtaining year-end data related to the School Success truancy program to be reported in June 2016.
5. Completing and submitting the second required report to the state by June 30, 2016.

## References

Michigan Department of Education. (2014). Free and reduced lunch counts. Retrieved from: <https://www.mischooldata.org/Other/DataFiles/StudentCounts/HistoricalFreeAndReducedLunchCounts.aspx>