School Success Partnership Program
Report 2

(FY2017 Appropriation Act - Public Act 268 of 2016)

June 30, 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 senate and house appropriations subcommittees on the department budget, the senate and house fiscal agencies, the senate and house policy offices, and the state budget office.

MDHHS

Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

RICK SNYDER, GOVERNOR
NICK LYON, DIRECTOR

NEMCSA School Success Partnership

Reporting Period: September 2016 – June 2017

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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 12th 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Success are referred to the program due to academic need, poor attendance, aggressive behavior, crisis situations, withdrawn behavior, or being untended.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 Liaisons 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 Human Service, and Child and Family Services.

School Success began approximately 25 years 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, 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. Because of our Program success and continued support from the State of Michigan and our other Partnerships the School Success Program is now (2016-2017) active in 30 public school locations covering 18 school districts and 10 counties. See Figure 1.

b. Report Purpose

The purpose of this report is to assess the current School Success Partnership Program during the 2016-2017 Academic Year. The State of Michigan allocated $450,000, 28% of the School Success Program's $1.6 million annual budget, to support existing programming and expansion efforts. This nine-month report intends to (1) document the support of schools, students and families of the program (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 2016 through May 2017.

II. Methodology

a. Data Collection

Data collection for the progress and outcomes of this report were compiled and analyzed through a web based database called Formstack.

The outcomes reported used School Success Liaison data collected between September 2016 through May 2017 including; monthly data reports, initial intake and exit reports, attendance letters and tracking as well as 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.

b. Data Analysis

Monthly comparisons will indicate improvements in Performance Objectives through a web based submissions process called Formstack.

III. Results

a. School Success Partnership Program

As of May 2017, School Success served 666 formal students and families and worked with and supported 2,257 informal students. School Success Liaisons developed and facilitated 210 groups that are extremely useful in engaging the success of the student's progress and ability to transfer skills learned in a group and individual settings. The groups also offer an opportunity for students to learn a host of new skills from team work, cooperation, listening, anger management and more. The School Success Program as a whole identified 3,808 barriers families faced, and with the assistance of the School Success Liaisons many of these barriers were either resolved or referred out to other community resources in an effort to

create long-term self-sufficiency. All School Success Programs, whether well-established or newly developed throughout expansion efforts, showed a high level of success with students and families in our four performance objective areas.

Figure 1. School Success Existing and Expansion Sites: 2016-2017

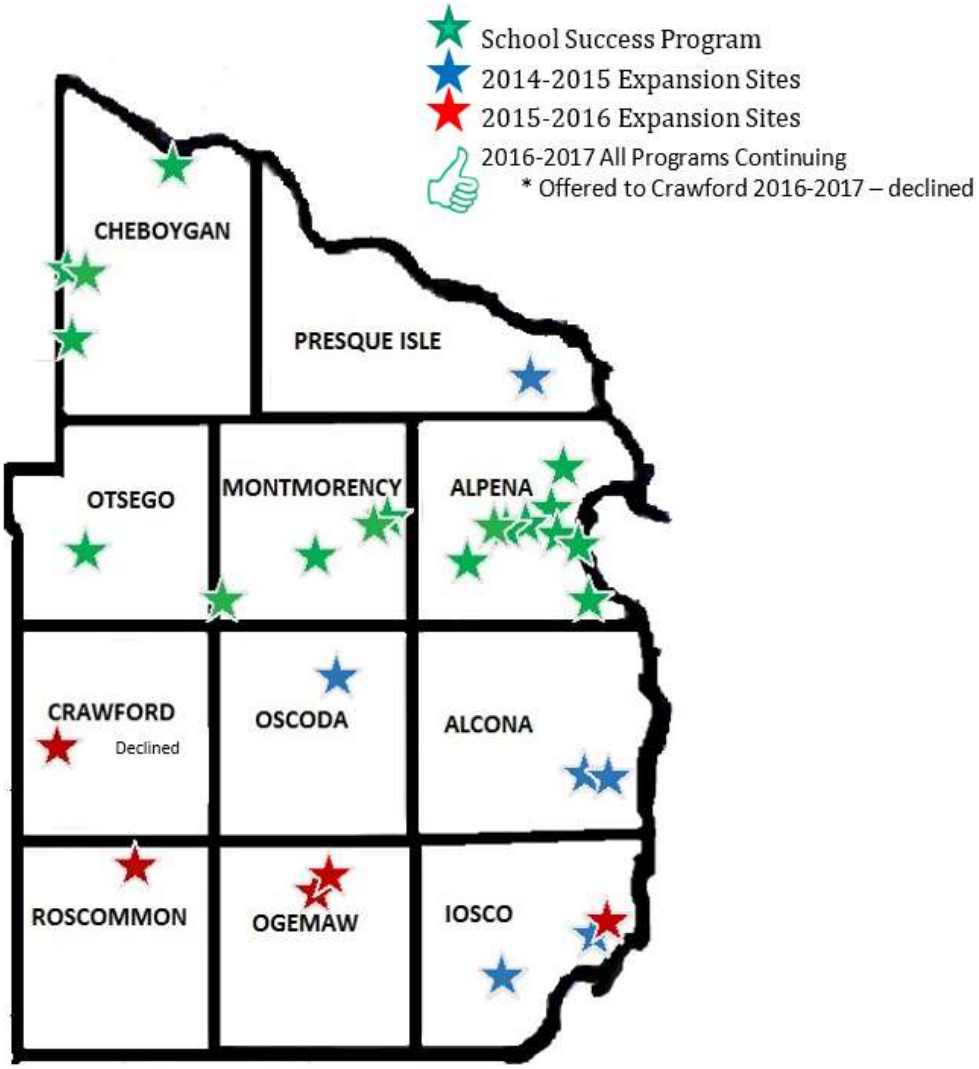


Table 1. School Success Partnership Program Sites: September 2016-May 2017					
County	**School Name**	**Number of Students in the School**	**Number of Students in School Success**	**Date Became School Success Site**	**Date Site Closed**
Alpena	Alpena High School	326	29	--	
	Besser Elementary	438	21	--	
	Ella White Elementary	478	28	--	
	Hinks Elementary	155	22	--	
	Lincoln Elementary	176	30	--	
	Sanborn Elementary	180	24	--	
	Thunder Bay Jr. High	863	47	--	
	Wilson Elementary	206	29	--	
Cheboygan	Inland Lakes Elementary	326	47	--	
	Inland Lakes Schools	399	25	--	
	Wolverine Schools	268	18	--	
Montmorency	Atlanta Schools	248	28	--	
	Hillman Elementary	207	25	--	
	Hillman Jr/Sr High	235	20	--	
	Lewiston Elementary	156	11	--	
Otsego	Johannesburg Middle School	313	19	--	
Expansion Sites 2014-2015					
Alcona	Alcona Elementary	357	28	9/2/2014	
	Alcona Jr/Sr High	349	24	9/2/2014	
Iosco	Hale Schools	381	19	9/2/2014	
	Richardson Elementary School	631	26	11/3/2014	
Oscoda	Fairview Schools	301	20	12/1/2014	
Presque Isle	Posen Schools	228	17	9/2/2014	
Expansion Sites 2015-2016					
Crawford	Grayling Elementary/Jr High	0	0	8/31/2015	10/1/2015
Iosco	Oscoda High School	533	30	8/31/2015	
Ogemaw	Surline Elementary/Jr High	1335	21	8/31/2015	
	Ogemaw Heights Jr/Sr High	0	0	8/31/2015	2/25/2016
Roscommon	Roscommon Middle School	308	11	8/31/2015	
Iosco	Whittemore-Prescott Elem.	430	24	1/25/2016	
Oscoda	Mio AuSable Elementary	220	23	4/25/2016	

i. History of 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 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 programs in the Prosperity Region 3 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 implemented the School Success Program. 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.

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. As of 2016-17 all existing and program expansions sites have been maintained and successful and expansion per the State requirements have been completed.

ii. History of Hiring and Training Additional School Success Worker

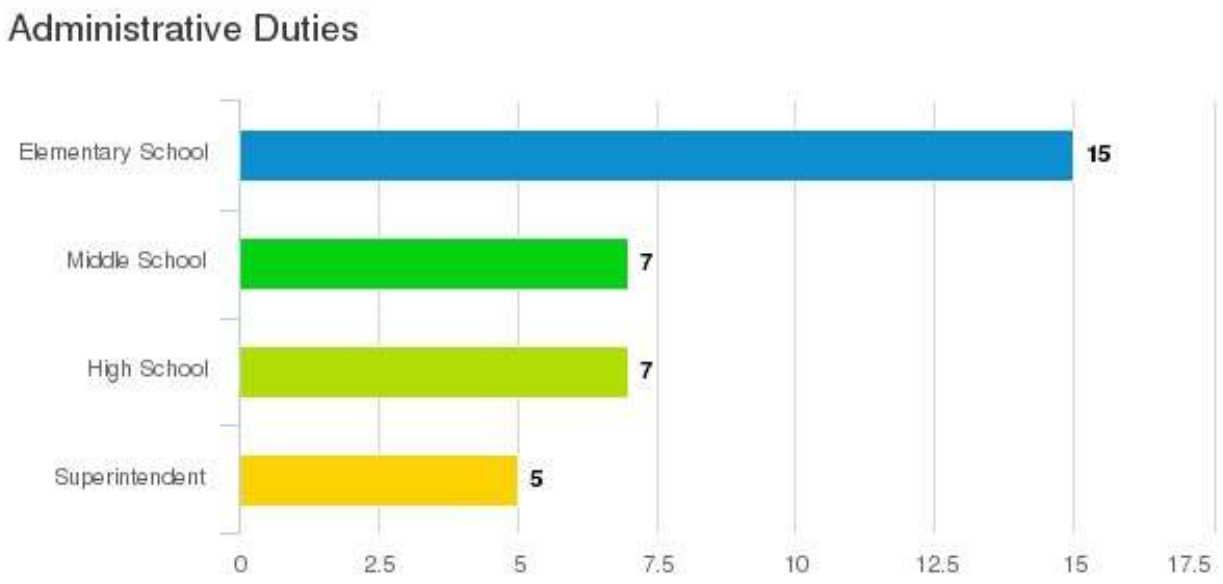
In preparation for the expansion, School Success administrators described making substantial changes to their employee training process. School Success administrators and liaisons collaboratively developed a formal employee handbook, which became the basis for a full-day training, and initiated a mentorship 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. The School Success position required a Bachelor Degree in the human service field. This process will remain in effect moving forward.

iii. Principal Survey Results

This section of the report presents results of the post-test survey administered to Principals and Superintendents in April 2017.

Sample Characteristics

Of the 24 surveys sent out, 24 (100%) of principals and superintendents responded via online submission. Respondents most frequently identified their administrative duties as:



Implementation of the School Success Partnership Program

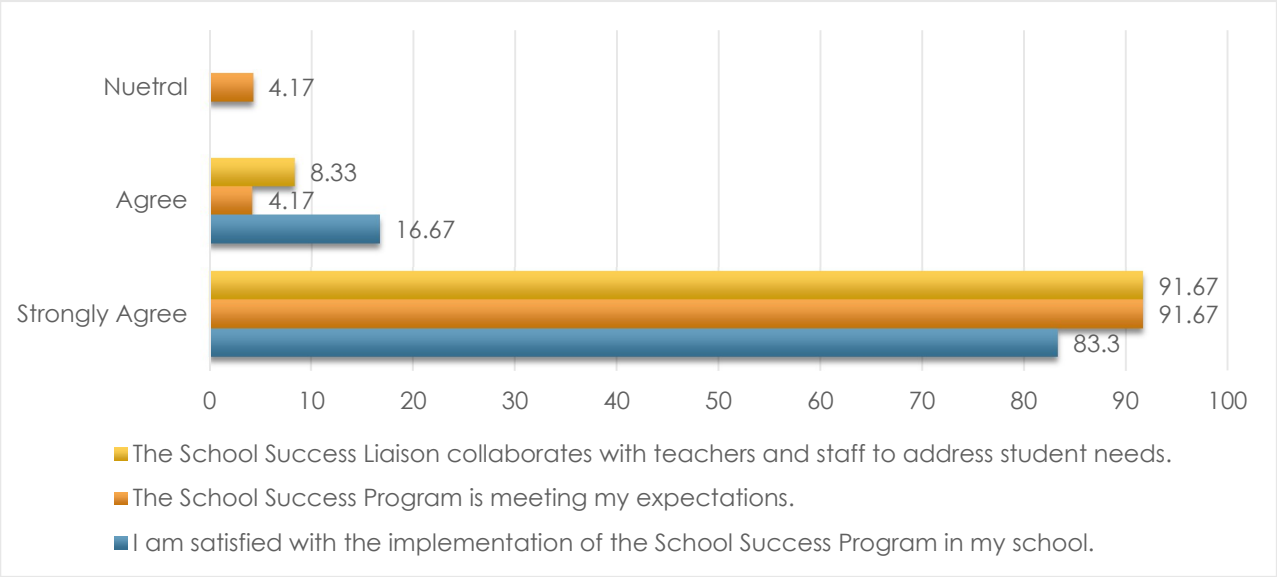
Principals were asked five questions to assess the execution and performance of the School Success Partnership Program at their schools. Items related to principals' satisfaction with implementation, whether School Success met principals' expectations, and principals' perceptions of the interaction and collaboration between School Success liaisons, teachers, and staff. Principals were also asked whether they would recommend the School Success Program to colleagues at other schools.

"SCHOOL SUCCESS LIAISONS HAVE BECOME AN INDISPENSABLE COMPONENT OF OUR OVERALL INTERVENTION EFFORTS FOR IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE, INTERVENING WITH STUDENTS IN CRISIS, DIFFUSING AND RETAINING BEHAVIOR PATTERNS AND SUPPORTING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.

Principals reported a high level of satisfactions with the implementation of the School Success Partnership Program at their schools. In fact, **100% of principals and superintendents (N=24) strongly agreed or agreed that they felt satisfied with the implementation of School Success. 96% of principals and superintendents who responded (N=24) strongly agreed or agreed that the School Success Program was meeting their expectations.**

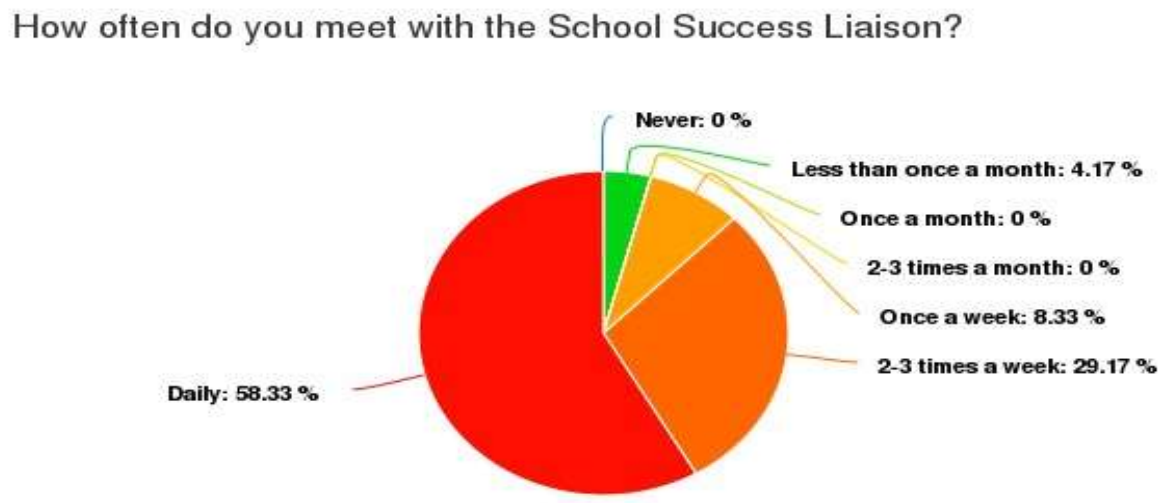
Principals and superintendents also overwhelmingly endorsed collaboration between School Success Liaisons, teachers, and staff, with **100% of administrators reporting that they strongly agreed or agreed**

that School Success Liaisons collaborate with teachers and staff to address student needs. Principals and superintendents rated their level of agreement on a five point scale that ranged from zero (0) strongly disagree to five (5) strongly agree.



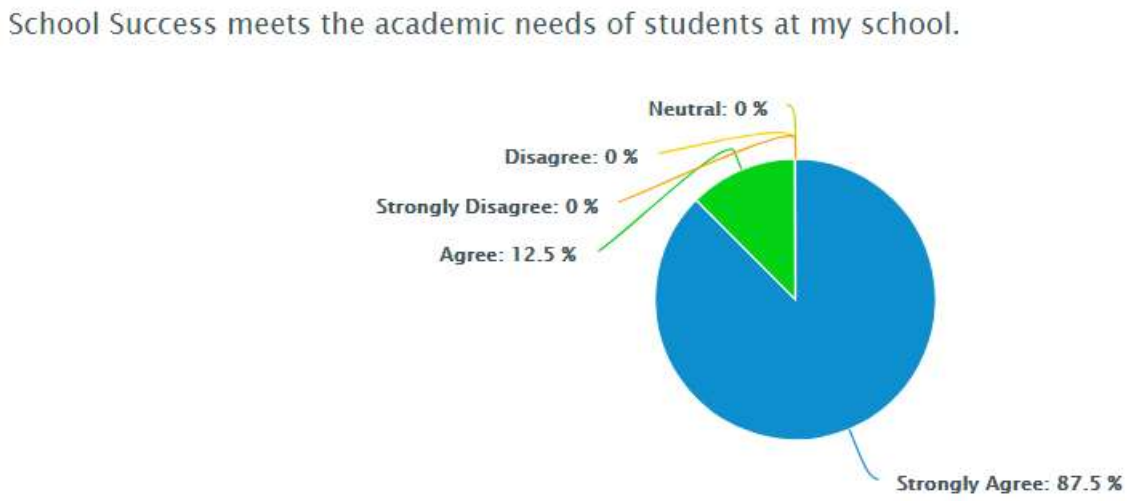
Principals and superintendents were also asked about the frequency of their own interactions with School Success Liaisons. Both principals and superintendents alike rated the frequency of their interactions on a seven point scale that ranged from zero (0) never to seven (daily).

Fifty-eight percent (58.33%) of principals and superintendents reported ***daily*** personal interaction with the School Success Liaison in their building with twenty-nine percent (29.17%) meeting 2-3 times per week.



Perceived Impact of School Success Partnership Program on Students Served

Principals and superintendents were also asked about the impact of the School Success Partnership Program on students receiving services at their schools. Specifically, school administrators were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements asking if the School Success Program addressed attendance-related concerns and met the academic needs of their students. Principals rated their level of agreement on a five point scale that ranged from zero (0) strongly disagree to five (5) strongly agree.



Principals and superintendents overwhelmingly indicated that School Success positively impacted attendance-related concerns among students at their school, **with 95.83% of respondents reporting that they strongly agreed or agreed that School success addresses attendance-related concerns.** Responses

also indicate that School Success addresses students' academic needs, 100% **of principals and superintendents strongly agreed or agreed that the program meets the academic needs of students at their schools.**

Principal Perceptions of the School Success Program

Results presented in this section of the report focus on three open-ended survey questions in order to provide School Success administrators and stakeholders with important insight to implementation facilitators and barriers. Principals were asked to identify what was working well with the school success Program, as well as areas for improvement. Finally, principals and superintendents were asked whether they would recommend the School Success Program to a colleague at another school, and why or why not.

Program Strengths

Principals and superintendents identified three core strengths of the School Success Partnership Program, including improved engagement with at-risk students and families; the cohesive integration of School Success Liaisons within their school; and the quality of training and services being provided to students, families and schools.

Improved Engagement with At-Risk Students and Families

Principals and superintendents commonly mentioned the School Success Program's ability to improve engagement with at-risk students and families as a strength. Most notably, principals often explained that School Success Liaisons act as a link between families and school, connecting with families who have not previously been involved with their children or the school and bringing them to the table. To this end, one principal noted "*School Success does an outstanding job supporting our students with academics, attendance and behaviors. She has implemented a peer mentoring program, which has been a success. She works closely with admin, counselors, teachers and other staff members ensuring that communication is occurring on students and works well with our team. She is an asset to our team and we would be lost without her. She is always willing to go above and beyond and makes the students' needs a top priority. She always follows through on her plans and holds students accountable. She is sought out by students - she is someone they can trust and confide in. Lastly, (School Success Liaison) always has a smile, is positive and kind. She is genuine and sincere*"!! Another principal shared that

> **SCHOOL SUCCESS IS AN EXEMPLAR PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES TREMENDOUS SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES**

the School Success Program has "*Made a huge impact in the lives of many of our students. Our Liaison is able to make connections with students and their families that others have not been able to do. The services she provides enables our students that struggle the opportunity to succeed in areas that they have typically struggled in. The connection she makes between the family and school is such an important link.*"

The services she provides enables our students that struggle the opportunity to succeed in areas that they have typically struggled in. The connection she makes between the family and school is important such an important link."

Cohesive Integration of School Success Liaisons within the School Setting

School Administrators also identified the cohesive integration of School Success Liaisons with the school setting as a program strength. Many principals placed high value on the way in which the School Success Program addresses a broad range of student and family needs by having the knowledge and resources to provide appropriate referrals. As a principal shared, "*…Our School Success Worker is such an integral part of our school. She is simply the best: skilled, caring and aware of resources and pedagogy.*" Finally, principals and superintendents feel that their schools would not have the capacity to address the needs of at-risk student without the School Success Partnership Program. Specifically, administrators believe that the quality of training and services being provided has been critical to student success.

Areas for Program Improvement

When asked about areas for improvement for the School Success Partnership Program, principals most noted they would like additional School Success Liaisons, for them to continue to be fully integrated into the school district.

Staffing and Funding Constraints

Principals commonly suggested that staffing was an area for improvement within the School Success Program, many principals and superintendents reported that they would like to have more School Success Liaisons serving in their schools. As these administrators clearly stated, "*…Our school could use an additional School Success worker - there is need*"! Funding constraints, and the need for increased funding for the School Success Program was identified by principals and

"WE NEED MORE OF YOU! YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE!"

superintendents as an area for improvement – as noted by one principal "*If the budget can support a School Success program, I believe it is beneficial to students and the community through the reduction of academic barriers.*" Administrators perceived a direct connection between funding constraints and the staffing constraints. It is important to note that of the 24 respondents to the question regarding areas of improvement, 21% (N=5) entered any type of response with the remainder of respondents with either no entry or "nothing needs improving".

IT PROVIDES NEEDED RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES THAT THE SCHOOL CAN NOT PROVIDE. ADDITIONALY, THIS PROGRAM PROVIDES CONNECTIONS FOR FAMILIES TO OTHER AGENCIES THAT CAN HELP FAMILIES BE SUCCESSFUL.

Recommending School Success Program to Colleagues

Principals and superintendents were asked whether they would recommend the School Success Partnership Program to colleagues at other schools, and why or why not.

All administrators responding to this question (N=24) reported that they would recommend the School Success Program to their colleagues at other schools.

When asked why they would recommend the program, principals and superintendents once again focused on the positive impact School Success has on at-risk students and families, as well as the need the program fills within their schools. The general tone of the responses is captured by this principal, who said, "*I sincerely don't know how schools survive without a School Success program*".

Finally, principals discussed their willingness to recommend the School Success Program to colleagues because of the nature of the School Success Program itself, identifying qualified staff and the proactive approach as particularly important factors. One principal shared, "*It provides needed resources for families that the school can not provide. Additionally, this program provides connections for families to other agencies that can help families be successful*." Another explained, "*They are a great asset to building bridges between home and school as well as helping to promote positive behavior interventions and supports to*

100 %

OF PRINCIPALS AND SUPERINTENDENTS WOULD RECOMMEND THE SCHOOL SUCCESS PROGRAM TO COLLEAGUES AT OTHER SCHOOLS.

students who need them." School administration as well as the School Success Program director agree this program is a cost effective way to create a direct link for students and families

iv. Parent Survey Results

Findings from parent surveys administered to 140 randomly selected families who were collected through a web-based data collection service called Formstack.

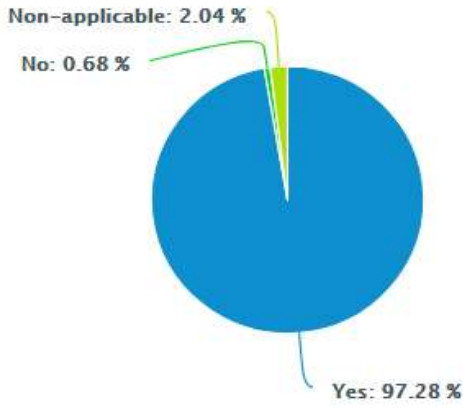
Sample Characteristics

Parents responding to this survey represented children and families served in the 10 counties where the School Success Program has been implemented.

Parent Involvement with the School Success Partnership Program Worthwhile

On average, parents reported their involvement and time spent with the School Success Program as being worthwhile. A little more than 97% (N=143; 97.28%) of parents indicated that they felt their involvement and time spent with the School Success Program was worthwhile.

My involvement and time spent with the School Success Program was worthwhile.

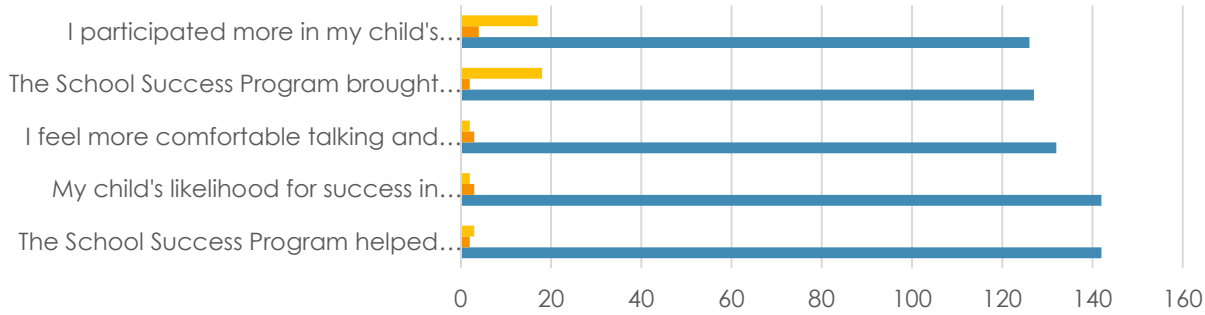


It should be noted that some students and families automatically receive services because of truancy-related issues based on The Michigan Compulsory Attendance Law.

Parent Perceptions of the School Success Program

This section of the report focuses on parent perceptions of the School Success Program, as assessd via specific survey questions, as well as an open-ended survey question. Parent perception questions related to survey questions asking; whether the program helped in dealing with their child's difficulties, the likelihood that their child's success in school has improved, parent is more comfortable talking with people at school, the program brought together the necessary people to help their child succeed, whether parent participated more in their child's education and would the parent recommend the program to family, friends or coworkers. One open-ended question was asked of all respondents regarding what improvements could be made to the program along with space for parents to add any additional comments about the program that may not have been covered in the survey questions.

Findings related to the survey questions provide School Success administrators and stakeholders important insight into parent perceptions of the program, facilitators and barriers.



	The School Success Program helped me in dealing wi...	My child's likelihood for success in school has im...	I feel more comfortable talking and working with p...	The School Success Program brought together the p...	I participated more in my child's education.
Not Applicable	3	2	2	18	17
No	2	3	3	2	4
Yes	142	142	132	127	126

Not Applicable No Yes

Of the 147 parents who responded to perception survey questions, slightly more than 96% (N=142; 9.6.2%) felt that the School Success Program helped them deal with their child's difficulties while 1.36% (N=2) felt the program did not help them and 2.04% (N=3) felt the

question did not apply to them. Equally, 96.6% (N=142) of parents felt that the School Success Program improved their child's likelihood for success in school and 89.9% (N=132) of parents responded that they felt more comfortable talking and working with people at school. Nearly 86.39% (N=127) of parents also responded positively to the School Success Program's ability to bring together people needed to help their child, specifically community resources or interventions. Although, 85.71% (N=126) of parents felt they participated more in their child's education, slightly more that 11% (N=17; 11.56%) responded that this question did not apply to them and a mere 2.72% (N=4) felt that they did not participate more in their child's education. Again, it's important to note that of those parents who responded that they did not participate more in their child's education, included those parents who were already highly involved and could not be *more* involved as they were already at the peak of involvement.

"THE SCHOOL SUCCESS PROGRAM MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN MY CHILD BEING ABLE TO STAY IN SCHOOL AND RECEIVE THE HELP WE NEEDED."

Parents clearly identified three ways in which the School Success Program helped their children. Parents indicated that School Success {program provided Academic Support; Behavior Management Strategies; and Assistance with Crisis Situations.

Parents overwhelmingly identified the academic support provided by School Success Liaisons as helping their children succeed in school. Parents discussed academic support as it realted to both academic performance and attendance.

In regards to academic achievement, one parent shared about their child, "*I think our school success program is invaluable. As a parent, I have seen how it impacts students' well-being and helps them be successful at both home and school. This year, our family experienced a crisis that affected our daughter in all areas--socially, emotionally and academically. Our SSW went above and beyond to meet with her and plan special activities that greatly improved the situation. We were seeking professional counseling at the same time, which we later discontinued as the time spent with [School Success] was more effective. Our students and families are fortunate to have such an awesome program"!*

Parents also noted how the School Success Program helped them to engage and support their children. Many parents believed that their children's academic progress would not have occurred without the services they receive from School Success. Parents also commonly perceived the School Success Program as providing improtant behavioral management strategies that assisted their children both at school and at home as noted by this comment, "*yes my son has learned to control his anger and I see better behavior both home and school".*

Finally, parents reported that School Success helped their children and families get through times of crisis and choas as noted in these comments by surveyed parents, "*Yes,my son has had a lot of trauma in his life and the school success program worked with me to get him through some difficult times*" and "*they have a genuine concern for my child and it has been greatly appreciated! I need to feel confident and trusting of those that my children spend majority of their time with outside of home and you all have done just that for me*"!

> ***THIS PROGRAM HELPED MY CHILD BECOME A BETTER STUDENT.*** HE LOVES SCHOOL AGAIN LIKE HE DID WHEN HE WAS YOUNGER. SCHOOL SUCCESS HELPED HIM GAIN HIS CONFIDENCE BACK. IT CAN HELP EVERYONE.

Parents had very limited feedback when asked what about the School Success Program could be improved. In fact, many parents indicated that they didn't feel there was anything that needed to be improved. The feedback that was shared regarding potential improvements focused on increasing the scope of exissting services. One parent shared, "b*ring more School Success Workers to the school*". It was clear that parents viewed the need for more staff as improtant , as it impacted the intensity of services.

Recommending the School Success Program to Family, Friends and Coworkers

Overwhelmingly, almost 98.64% (N=145) of parents responded that they would recommend the program to their family, friends and coworkers.

When asked why they would recommend School Success to a friend, parent discussed the positive impact that the program had on their children. As stated by one parent, *"I couldn't have done it with my boys if it wasn't for the School Success Program*", or another who said, "*Because it provides one on one and peer interaction to help my kids with practical issues affecting their school success as they happen. Our worker appreciates their uniqueness and is always caring toward them*".

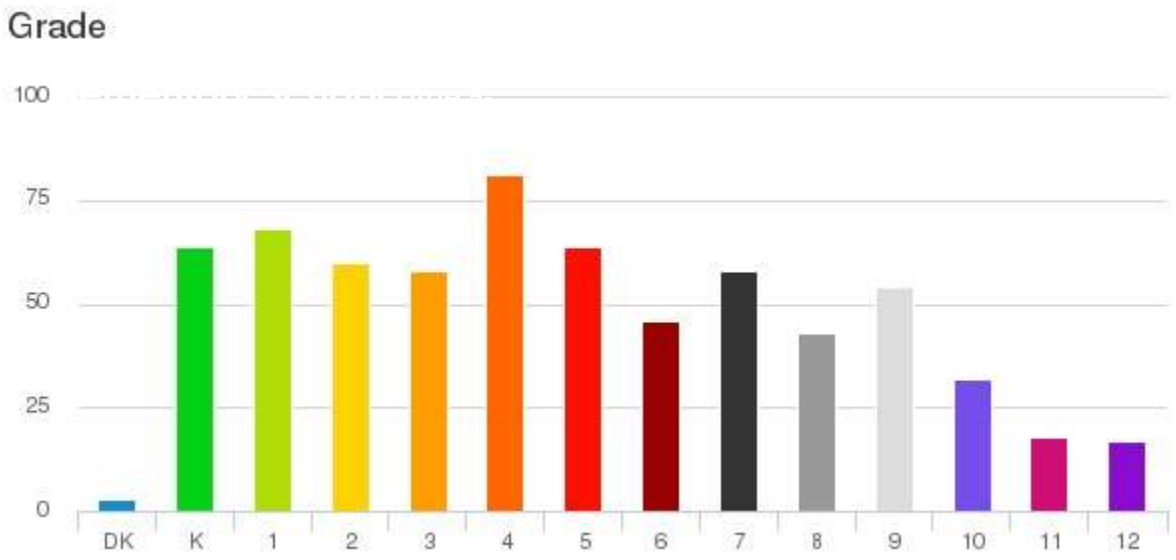
c. Students Served

i. Student Characteristics

As previously stated, between September 2016 and May 2017, the School Success Program has served 666 students on a formal caseload basis and served 2,257 students informally across 28 schools within ten counties. More than half of the students served (N=398; 59.7%) by School Success are in elementary

school, while almost 22% (N=142) are in middle school. Slightly more than 18% of students served are in high school (N=121); see Figure 2. The majority of students served by School Success are male (61.3%).

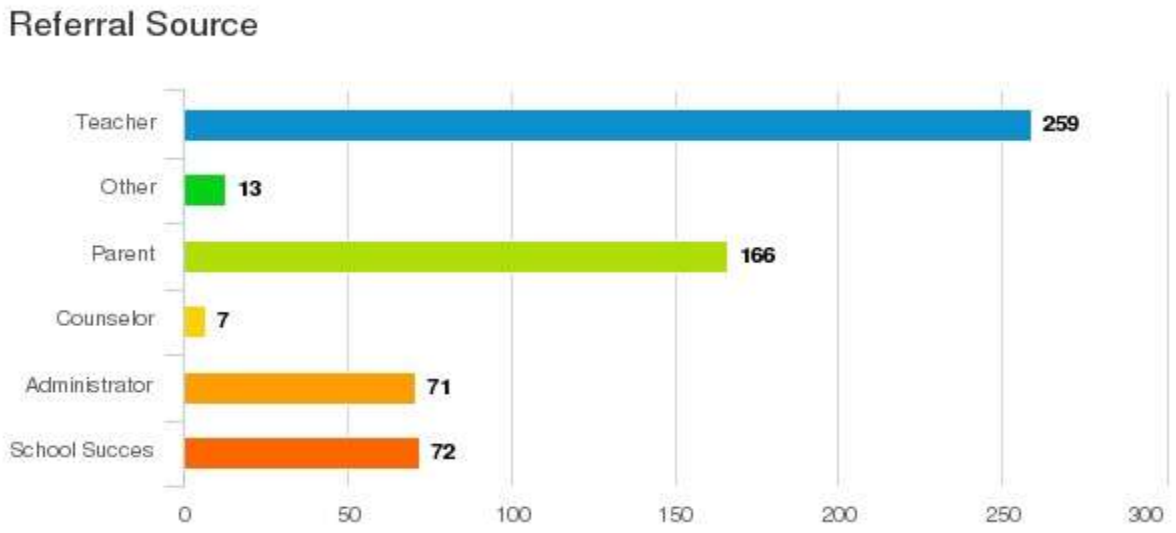
Figure 2. School Success Students by Grade



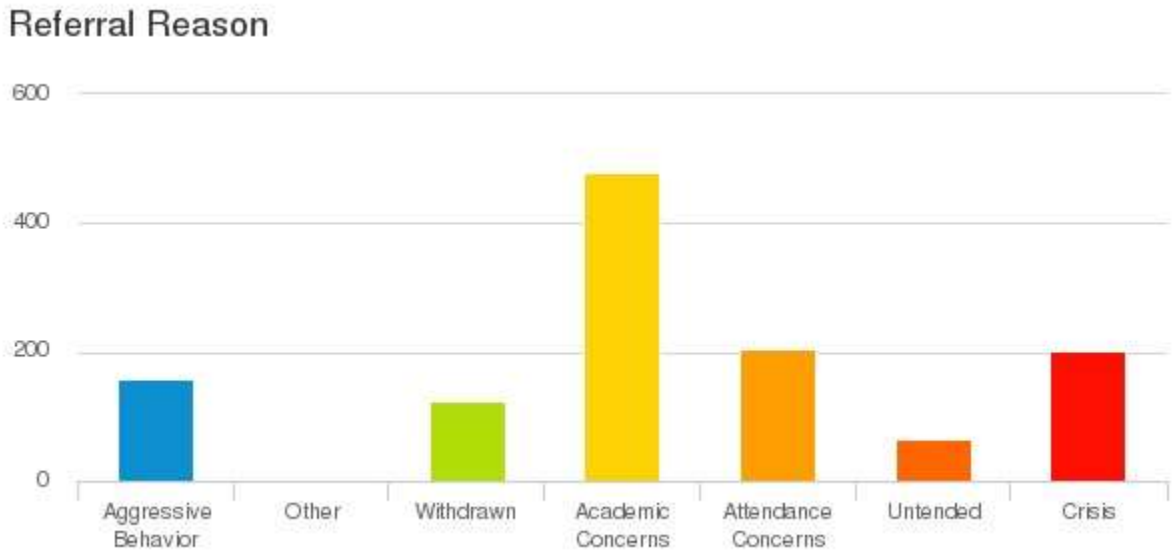
Though the School Success Program does not have income-based eligibility criteria, 86.8% of students served are eligible for free and reduced lunch. In the State of Michigan, 46.7% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch (Michigan Department of Education, 2014), suggesting a substantially 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 (64.1%; N=445) of the students who entered the School Success Program between September 2016 and May 2017 were referred for services by their teachers (39%; N=260) or parents (25.2%; N=168). 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 24% of referrals. School principals and counselors referred the balance of the student participants which was nearly 11.4% of students. See table on next page:



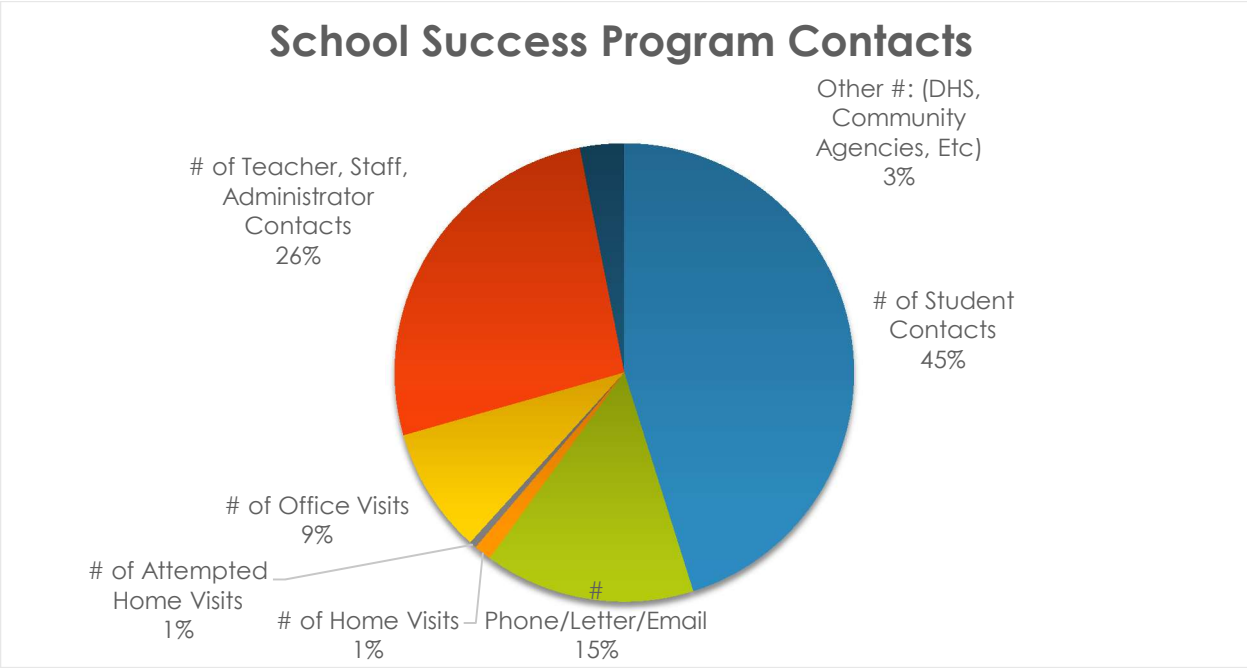
During this academic year, students were most commonly referred to School Success for academic concerns (N=479), followed by attendance (N=205), crisis (N=201), and aggressive behavior (N=159). Twice as many students were referred due to withdrawn behavior (N=123) than for students were referred as untended (N=65) or other (N=29). 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=666). See Table 5.



iii. Contacts

From September 2016 to May 2017, School Success Liaisons had 65,115 contacts related to students they serve. See Figure 3. Almost half of these contacts (N=29,397) 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 8.8% (N=5,775) of the School Success contacts. Slightly more than 14.8% of School Success contacts (N=9,648) 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 29.4% (N=19,158) of related student case interactions.

Figure 3. School Success Program Contacts: September 2016-June 2017



d. Performance Objectives

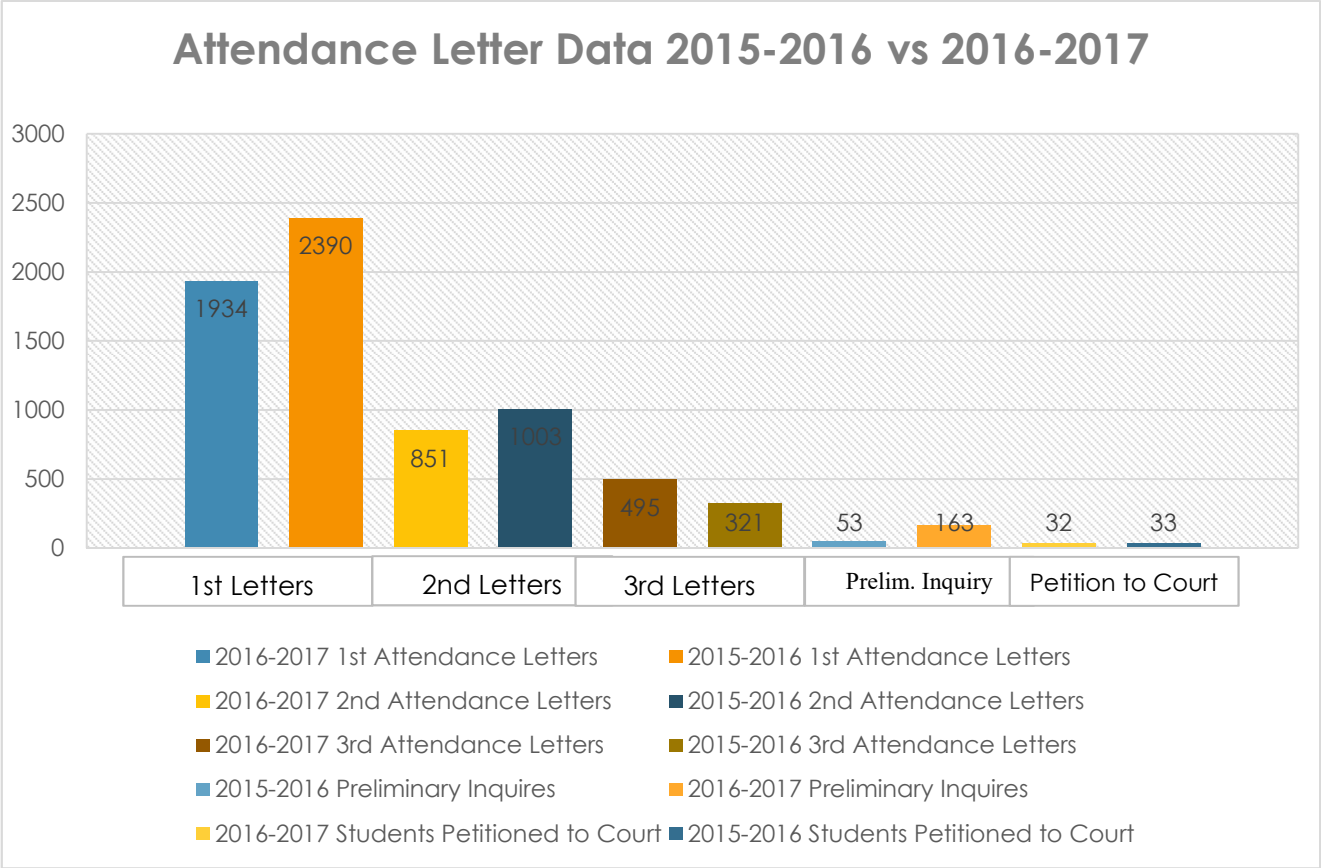
i. Increasing School Attendance and Decreasing Chronic Absenteeism

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

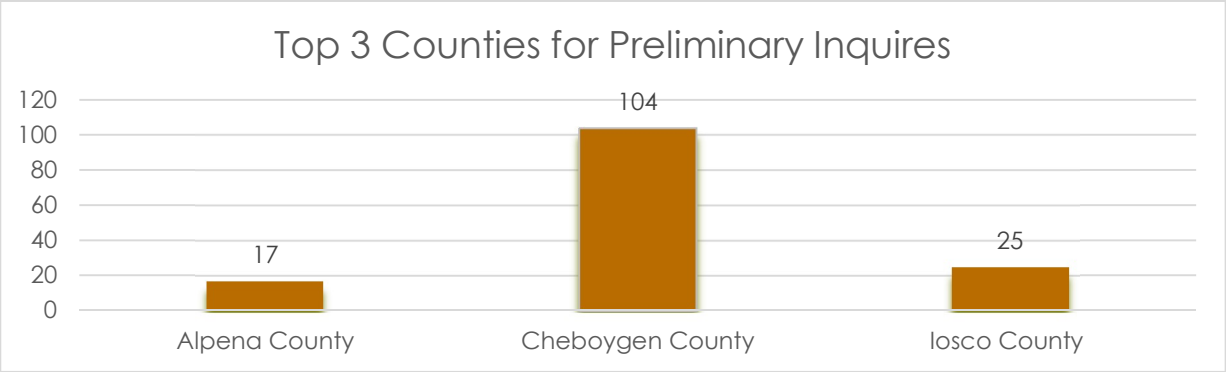
worked with school systems, law enforcement agencies, court systems and other agencies to address student attendance. As a result of this belief and community collaboration, the School Success Program has developed and implemented a process to address this concern.

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 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 2016 through May 2017, 1,934 first letters were sent out to parents indicating an attendance concern. With contact and interventions from the School Success Liaison, **851** second letters were necessary and of those only 495 third letters were needed—a 74% decrease of students with truancy concerns. With continued planning and interventions, only **163** Preliminary Inquiries have been held resulting in a 91.6% decrease in the number of students identified with truancy concerns. Of those 163 identified, only 32 (thirty-two) students were identified as having attendance concerns requiring petitions to the court system formally for truancy – a 98.3% improvement in those originally identified as truant. It is a protocol that works and is based on building relationships between the school and home and not on punitive measures.



School Success's program expansion sites are in their 2nd and 3rd year and it should be noted that with this presence, there has been a notable decrease in the overall amount of first letters sent (2015-2016, 2,390 letters) compared to current year (2016-2017 – 1,934 letters) and second letters sent (2015-2016, 1,003 letters) compared to current year (2016-2017 – 851 letters). You can see that the third letters, which are an indication of chronic absenteeism, are on the increase (321 vs. 495) along with Preliminary Inquiries (53 vs. 163) and petitions to the court staying fairly consistent. This is indicative of an overall proactive measure and attempt to intervene with families who are approaching a concerning level with attendance benchmarks. If those early notifications (letters) do not remedy the attendance concern, students and families will proceed to the final processes (third letter, preliminary inquiries and petitioning the court) in order to enforce and hold families accountable to the Michigan School Compulsory law.



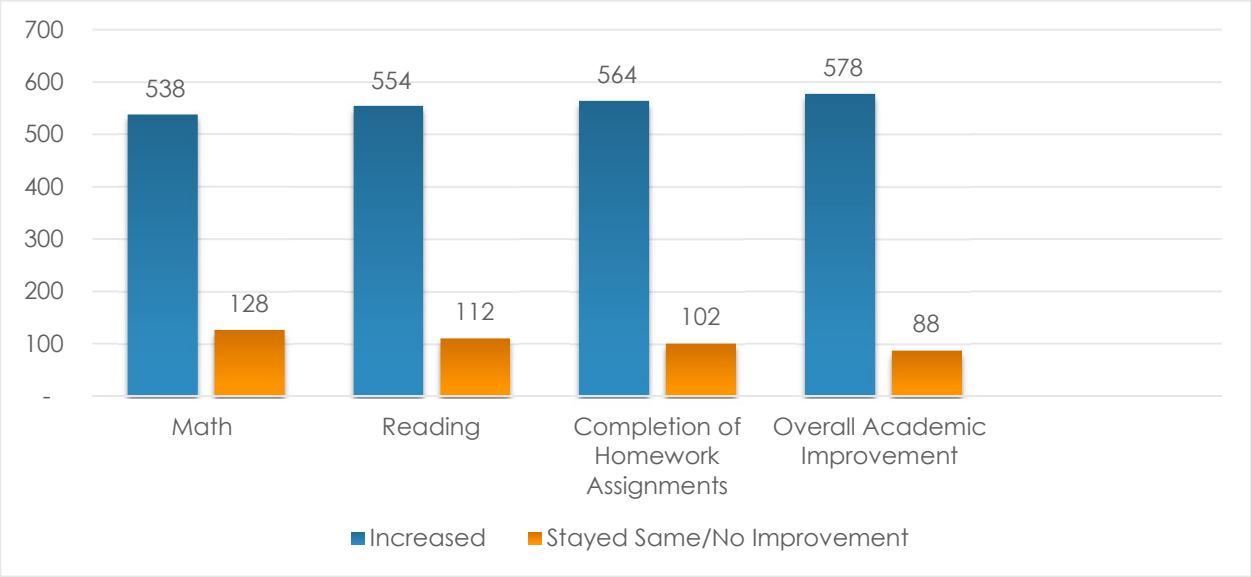
Of the 666 formal School Success cases, 205 had attendance related referrals. Of these referrals, 157 were identified as having an attendance concern along with other referral reasons and 48 referrals were for attendance concerns alone.

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 666 students in the School Success Program, 72% (N=482) of students stayed in class more often, 17.2% (N=115) students were not a concern. 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 666 formal cases closed to date, 87% (N=578) of School Success students demonstrated an improvement in the overall quality of their academic work with and only eighty-eight students (13.34%) who either stayed the same or didn't show improvement between September 2016 and May 2017. Additionally, 80.66% (N=538) of School Success students improved the quality of their math skills, 19.37% (N=128) stayed the same or did not improve. Quality of student reading skills improved by 83.06% (N=554) with 16.94% (N=112) of students staying the same or not showing improvement. Furthermore, completion of homework assignments improved by 84.56% (N=564) and 15.44% (N=102) either staying the same or not showing improvement. See Figure 4.

Figure 4. Academic Performance: September 2016 – May 2017



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 (N=479), attendance (N=205) and crisis issues (N=201), the top three reasons for referral to the program, emerged as barriers to student success as well.

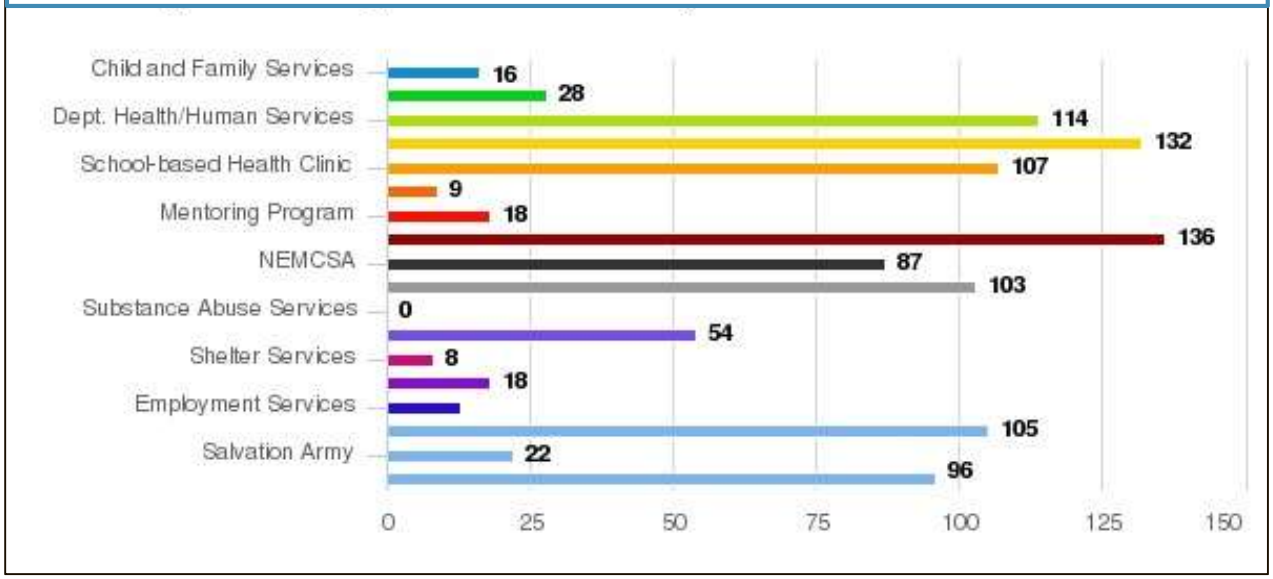
Once School Success Liaisons identify barriers to a students' academic achievement, they utilize a team approach to resolve barriers and increase the students' ability to succeed in school. This team includes, and is not limited to; school personnel, the student, parent(s) and other community resources. 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.

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 2016 – May 2017



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 May 2017, School Success Liaisons reported making 3,095 (1,066 in referrals and 2,029 in 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 Community Mental Health (N=136), followed by Family Court (N=136) and the Department of Health

and Human Services (N=114). 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 16,560 times from September 2016 through May 2017 through home visits, office visits and phone calls, letters, text or messaging services. 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.

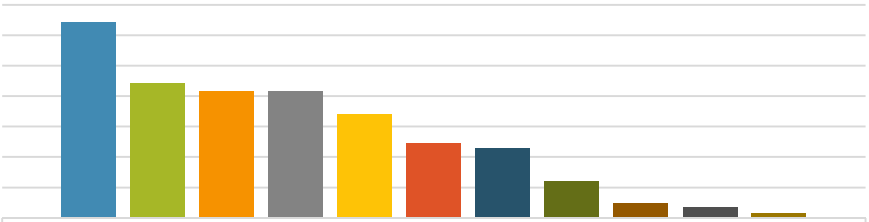
Additionally, many liaisons noted that with the support of School Success, parents took an active role in participating in meetings with teachers, principals, and other providers in order to collaboratively address their child's needs. School Success Liaisons also documented that parents increased their 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 28 Liaisons 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 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 2016 –May 2017) indicates the School Success Program fell short of the projected number of students by 53 students (-7%). This shortfall is likely due to one full time site becoming part-time, two liaison's hours were reduced from 40 hours to 35 hours per week. These reduction were due to the loss of blended funding through the state child care fund. Also two sites had turn-over resulting in approximately 4-6 weeks coverage by administration. Because of this 93% of projected referrals resulted in parents identifying family needs, developing an action plan and agreeing to this plan in conjunction with the School Success Liaison, 97% of parents advocated for their child in at least one school meeting and 90% of parents participated in an initial home visit. The remaining parents though not participating in a home visits due to multiple reasons (homeless, inability due to work schedule, etc) did come to the school for office visits with the Liaison with a result of 100% parent participation in a home visit and/or office visit with the School Success Liaison.

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 666 students/families participating in the School Success Program, slightly more than 96% (N=642) of parents participated in a home/office visit. In addition, 66.3% (N= 442) attended parent/teacher conferences, almost 34% (N=228) attended a holiday dinner or program, and a large portion 62.5% (N=416) met with the principal or teacher to address student concerns. Additionally, 62% (N=415) participated in three or more activities with their student over the course of the school year which were geared toward increasing 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. See Table 7.



	1
Home Visit/Office Visit	642
P/T Conferences	442
Principal/Teacher Mtg.	416
Participated in 3 Or More Activities	415
Signed Planner 50%	339
Signed Reading Log 50%	244
Holiday Dinner/Program	228
504/IEP Mtg.	119
Other	47
Field Trip	34
PAC/Parent Forum Mtg.	13

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 2015-2016, the School Success Program intensified its expansion efforts once again expanding to the last 3 counties in Prosperity Region 3, totaling 11 counties minus Crawford County who declined School Success Program Services (resulting in 10 active counties). The State funding increased from $300,000 adding an additional $150,000 totaling $450,000 for 2015-2016. Again in 2016-2017 the State Funding allocation for the School Success Program was $450,000 servicing all existing and expansion schools. As of June 2017, School Success was serving 666 students formally and 2,275 informally. The majority of those students are economically disadvantaged; 86.8% qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Students were most commonly referred to the School Success Program by parents and teachers (72.3%; N=425). The three primary reasons for referral was academic concerns, attendance and crisis concerns. School Success Liaisons made over 65,000 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 the 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 knows everybody.

References

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