Promising Approaches to Interrupting the School to Prison Pipeline

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Workshop Goal:

This session will provide an overview of several innovative models that aim to interrupt the school to prison pipeline, reduce reliance on arrest as a response to disruptive school behavior, and reduce disproportionate minority contact (DMC).
Planned Agenda

• Creating a Context: The School to Prison Pipeline and Its Impact on DMC

• Promising School-Based Models Utilized in New York State

• The YAP Program Model

• Common Elements of Success

• Questions & Answers
School to Prison Pipeline

Youth (inappropriate behavior) + System Involvement/Incarceration =
Inappropriate Behaviors

Negative School Climate

Disconnection from School

Youth “Flushing”

“Blanket” Responses

Unclear Roles & Responsibilities

System Involvement
Academic Achievement

“Tough” School Discipline Policies

Academic Achievement
What is the Purpose of “Tough” or “Zero Tolerance” Policies?

• To keep drugs and weapons out of schools

• To provide consistent consequences in proportion to harm caused

• To emulate retributive justice interventions such as mandatory minimums and structured sentencing

* Adapted from Mara Schiff, Ph.D., and Gordon Bazemore, Ph.D., Florida Atlantic University presentation, “School Environment & Discipline: Model Approaches.”
What are the Real Results of “Zero Tolerance” Policies?

Tougher policies ≠ safer schools
Tougher policies ≠ increased academic achievement (APA, 2008)

Tougher policies = decreased connectivity to school
→ increase participation in risky/illegal behavior
→ poor academic achievement (Boccanfuso and Kuhlfield, 2011; Cassalla, 2003)

* Adapted from Mara Schiff, Ph.D., and Gordon Bazemore, Ph.D., Florida Atlantic University presentation, “School Environment & Discipline: Model Approaches.”
What is the Impact of Greater Numbers of School Suspensions?

→ increased likelihood of being held back (Fabelo et al, 2011)
→ decreased chances of graduating on time or increased likelihood of not graduating at all
→ increase likelihood of subsequent suspensions, expulsion, and dropping out (Osher, 2010; Balfanz and Boccanfuso, 2007; Skiba and Rausch, 2006)
→ lower academic achievement and standardized test scores even when controlling for factors such as race and socioeconomic status (Davis et al, 1994; Mendez, et al, 2003; Skiba 2006)

* Adapted from Mara Schiff, Ph.D., and Gordon Bazemore, Ph.D., Florida Atlantic University presentation, “School Environment & Discipline: Model Approaches.
Where are the “Tough” Policies?

- Larger, poorer, more urban school districts
- Overwhelmingly, these districts also have greater concentrations of students of color than others
The school experience for too many children has been criminalized.

In NYC alone, more than 90,000 students each day must pass through permanent metal detectors to enter their school buildings each day.
Who is being suspended?

- Students suspended and expelled for minor infractions are more likely to be Black and those with disabilities. (Advancement Project, 2005; Losen and Skiba, 2010)
- Black students represented only 17% of public schools enrollment in 2000 but accounted for 34% of suspensions; special education students represented 8.6% of public school students, but 32% of youth in juvenile detention nationwide
  (Advancement Project, 2005; NAACP, 2005)
Who is being suspended?

• Black students with learning disabilities are three times more likely to be suspended than similarly situated white students and four times more likely to end up in correctional facilities (Poe-Yamagata and Jones, 2000)

* Adapted from Mara Schiff, Ph.D., and Gordon Bazemore, Ph.D., Florida Atlantic University presentation, “School Environment & Discipline: Model Approaches.
There are programs/services that can positively affect the safety and learning environments of troubled schools.
(And they’re not always expensive!)

**Models:**
- School-based crisis response teams
- Building school capacity through training
- Trauma focused cognitive behavioral therapy (plus community service)
- Wrap-around case management (and peer mediation)
Crisis Mental Health Response Team

• Crisis intervention at 2 high schools
• Mental health assessments and service linkages
• Training for school counselors, social workers, para-professional staff, and youth aide detectives
• Rooted in MacArthur Models for Change work
NYC Promise Zone

• Cross-system initiative to create learning environments that engage students

• Components:
  1. External Change Partner
  2. Vibrant school support team and clinical social worker
  3. Broad community services support network

• State Partners
  State Education Department
  Council on Children and Families
  Office of Mental Health
  Office of Children and Family Services
  Department of Labor
  Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services
  Department of Health
  Department of Criminal Justice Services
  Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives
  Department of Labor
NYC Promise Zone

• Building school capacity through training
  – Improve the identification of high-risk students in need of mental health and other community support services
  – Improve access to available mental health and other community support services
  – Improve behavior management
  – Create a more engaging school culture
NYC Promise Zone

• **Resource Guide to help meet students’ needs**
  – Orient clinical and student support staff on use of the guide and referral procedures

• **Professional Development Trainings**
  – Behavior management techniques rooted in positive youth development.
    • Topics: De-escalation, Crisis Intervention, Child and Adolescent Development, Social Emotional Learning
  – Life Space Crisis Intervention
    • Turning crisis situations into learning opportunities for youth with self-defeating behaviors
NYC Promise Zone

**School impact:** Teachers have responded favorably in written evaluations of trainings.

- 153 teachers trained in disruptive behavior/de-escalation; child development and SEL topics
- Over 90% endorsed 4 or 5 as to relevance of topics
- Avg. responses to knowledge gained 3.9 - 4.75 out of 5
- “Very informative and useful in the classroom”; “Great exercises”; “Excellent reinforcement of work done in grad. school and got me thinking of how to interact with kids and understand my students’ motivation.”
Utica Wise Program(s)

A youth diversion program designed to meet the goals of reducing and preventing crime through wise decision making and linking children with services, so that we can “reduce the barriers to learning and keep kids in school, where they belong.”

Utica Safe Schools Healthy Students Partnership, Inc.
Utica Wise Program(s)

Pre-arrest diversion:

• Targets youth who have committed a low-level arrestable offense on school grounds
• Referred by school district and police department
• 2 middle schools and 1 high school
• Wrap-around case management
  – Daily check-ins
  – Underground Café
Utica Wise Program(s)

What is the program designed to do?

“Give kids a better way of life. Put them down a different path so they don’t go down a troubled path.” – 17, Junior

“Help kids stay in school and stay out of trouble.” – 17, Junior
Utica Wise Program(s)

Peer conflict mediation:
• Targets youth who are having conflict: bullying, “he said/she said,” theft, verbal and physical
• Based on restorative justice principles
• Mediation sessions
  – Conducted by trained peer mediators (27)
  – Signed agreement/confidentiality
  – Follow-up
Utica Wise Program(s)

Peer conflict mediation:
• Peers Making Peace (PMP) model
• Recognized as a promising programs by
  – SAMSHA
  – OJJDP
  – U.S. Department of Education
• Demonstrated to reduce disciplinary referrals, school assaults and expulsions
Utica Wise Program

What is the program designed to do?
“It’s a way for the kids to get involved to keep the rest of the kids out of trouble so it doesn’t go on paper and all that --‘cause you know how that goes.”
-17, Graduating Senior

“It helps people solve their differences without having to resort to violence or if it already did, bringing it back and saying, well, maybe I did get out of line and next time, maybe I can handle things this way.”
– 18, Graduating Senior
## Intake Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Arrest Diversion (40)</th>
<th>Peer Mediation (55)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean age</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean # disciplinary referrals @ baseline</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean GPA @ baseline</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean absences @ baseline</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Students of color</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infraction: Harassment</td>
<td>35% (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infraction: Fighting</td>
<td>23% (9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infraction: Disorderly Conduct</td>
<td>13% (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Utica Wise Arrest Program

**Outcomes Measurement:**
- Baseline year AY 09-10
- Comparison year AY 10-11
- Sources of data: police department, school district
- Outcomes: disciplinary referrals, absences, GPA, school arrests diverted
Utica WISE Arrest Diversion

Outcomes:
- 40 students diverted from school arrest
  - (2 arrested later)
- 48% reduction in arrests total

AY 09/10→ 10/11
- 33 → 13 at high school (-61%)
- 0 → 4 at middle school #1
- 0 → 0 at middle school #2 (0%)
Utica Arrest Diversion

Other Outcomes*:

- 50% (17) had fewer disciplinary referrals
- 57% (20) improved their GPA
- 57% (20) had fewer absences

* Based on 35 students with data
Utica Peer Mediation

Outcomes:

- 55 students (27 mediation sessions)
  - None arrested during follow-up period
- 49% (27) had fewer disciplinary referrals
- 67% (37) improved their GPA
- 57% (20) had fewer absences
Feedback from Students

“They showed me something different than what I was used to. I was always used to ___ (neighborhood name). And I’m used to just actin’ crazy, havin’ fun, not caring about my responsibilities... And when I got to the program, they showed me there’s a life beyond where you come from, and to get there, you got to take responsibility and understand rules and laws ...and you gotta respect the people that enforce them.”

--18, Senior, arrest diversion program
Feedback from Students

“I got somebody older than me, helping me with my life, trying to get me on the right path.” 19, Graduating senior

“It takes a lot of stress off my mom, not getting a call saying your son’s in trouble.” 14, Freshman
Feedback about Staff

“You don’t want to let someone down who put himself on the line for you.” --18, Senior

“Since I met him, he brought me a long way, showed me the right path and stuff...You can tell him stuff... he’s like a brother.” – 18, Senior

“Before I came to the caf, my grades were down and stuff and like, they helped me out. I used to get in a lot of fights and stuff, and they calmed me down.” – 17, Junior
Moving Ahead Positively (MAP) Program

A partnership with the City of Syracuse, the Center for Community Alternatives, Huntington Family Centers, the Syracuse Model Neighborhood Facility, the Syracuse City School District and the Syracuse Police Department
Moving Ahead Positively (MAP) Program

- Targets students in 6 middle schools (1 K-8) in Syracuse school district
- 3 Master’s-level social workers – half-time at each school
- Annual case load of 15-20 youth & families per social worker
- Disruptive behavior stemming from trauma
- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Community service component
Moving Ahead Positively (MAP) Program

- Referred by school administrators, SROs, behavioral support teams
- Extensive assessment process
  - UCLA PTSD Index (stress and anxiety)
  - MAP Youth Questionnaire (based on Modified Aggression Scale)
- Weekly sessions (target: 12-16 weeks)
  - Stress/anger management techniques
  - Trauma-focused activities like “what color is your hurt”
“There was a boy down the street that my brother, sister and I would play with.

One day we were playing hide and seek and he told me to hide behind the shed in the backyard.

He came behind the shed and molested me. He did it to my brother too.

That night we told our foster mother and father and they got us counseling that went on for two years.

That boy still lives down the street. I am still afraid of him and worried that he might try something again.”
I was 10 or 11 when my grandmother died.

I asked myself, “Why did it have to be her?”
Even though I knew she was going to a better place,
I also knew I would miss her.

We all stood around hugging each other.
Our physical reaction at the time was that everyone just cried.

We couldn’t do anything to save her.
It was sad. She was 76 years old.
“My dad got a new van. He told me I was a good son.

My biggest worry is that I will never get my mother to love me.

She doesn’t love me anymore.

The one thing I could do if she loves me is to love her back by kissing her on the cheeks.”
Student Feedback

What do you think this program is designed to do?
To get kids to listen.
Okay. To listen to what?
Adults.
Adults? Okay. To get kids to listen to adults; what kind of kids?
Like kids that get angry fast.
Okay. Kids that get angry fast. And so it’s to work with kids that get angry fast to help them –
To help them calm down when they're angry.

- 6th grade (11)
Risk/Need Profile

• 33% have poor school attendance
• 85% have a previous history of school suspensions
• 14% had previous juvenile justice system involvement
• 23% have a parent who is incarcerated
• 95% exposed to violence including witnessing murder, shootings or domestic violence
• Approximately 75% live in poverty and the other 25% are in low income families
Program Outcomes for the 2010-2011 school year

- Referrals: 142
- Youth accepted to the program: 102
- Arrests Diverted: 60
- Successfully completed: 34 of 53 (64%); 49 students active
- Youth arrested while in program: 1
- Youth arrested within 6 months after the program: 1
## School Based Arrest Reductions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>% reduction in arrests</th>
<th>2009-2010 school year</th>
<th>2010-2011 school year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blodgett</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danforth</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clary</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellevue</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I think the program has helped me because before this, I was getting in trouble, I was doing a lot of things that I shouldn’t have been doing...I relied on violence a lot to fix my problems. And after I joined this program, I’ve been taught how I can, instead of relying on violence, I can use techniques to kinda just help me out. So when I know that I’m gonna get into a fight or something, I can just be the bigger person and walk away or just try those techniques where I just tense up and then I just let it out, breathe in and out.” – 6th grade (12)
Interviewer: Are there other ways that you think the program has helped you? Like differences that you see or feel in yourself?

“The difference in myself is that I feel good about myself, instead of thinking that I’m like a loser or something, like I’m a bad person. So that helps me a lot to realize that I’m a good person and not a bad person.” – 6th grade (12)
“The best part of the program for me was teaching me to stop...well, the pregnant part because I wanted to get pregnant. But I don’t no more because of what they were saying. People told me like – they told me that if I got pregnant, my whole life would change. Like and they said that I wouldn’t be able to finish school, it would be hard for me to do stuff that I could do now.” – 8th grade (14)
Feedback about Staff

“She never judges us. She just kinda corrects us politely and she never says, ‘Well, you shouldn’t do that. You’re wrong for doing that.’ She just kinda tells us, ‘Just try better next time, learn from your mistakes.’ And she teaches ways to learn from our mistakes.”

“So when, if I need to open up with somebody, I can open up to her. ...I can trust her keeping what I want confidential.” – 6th grade (12)
“Oh, I love her. Ms. Rose, she’s like – I don’t know she’s so nice. When I first met her, I was scared because I didn’t know what she would do. Because when I went up to people, they always leave me, so I cry. But she’s not like that; she was still there with me when she dropped me [from the program]. She’s a good person. ...I don’t know, I can’t explain it, but I just love Ms. Rose. She’s somebody I would want to be around for a long time. .”

– 8th grade (14)
Interrupting the School to Prison Pipeline

The YAP Approach: a Chicago Story
Our mission is to provide individuals who are, have been or may be subject to compulsory care with the opportunity to develop, contribute and be valued as assets so that communities have safe, proven effective and economical alternatives to institutional placement.
YAP Intro

• 37-Year history of deinstitutionalizing youth
• Started in Pennsylvania in 1975
• Now in 18 states and 26 major metro areas
• Serve 12,000 families a year
• Exclusively community-based, alternatives to institutions
Over 130+ Programs across the US; Urban (20 Major Metro Areas), Rural and Suburban

5,000 Families day/ Over 12,000 Families a year
Who We Serve

YAP, Inc. works with High Risk “System-Involved” Youth and Adults in the

- Juvenile Justice
- Child Welfare
- Mental Health
- Educational
- Disabilities
- Adult Corrections Systems
Program Model

• Community-based
  o Advocates
  o Community partners & collaborations
• Individualized
• Family-Centered
• Strength-based
• Wraparound
• Self Advocacy and Public Advocacy
YAP’s Guiding Principles

• Unconditional Caring by Trained Advocate
• Building Strong and Sustainable Relationships
• Community Based Care and Community Investment
• A Needs-Led and Strength-Based Approach
• Individualized and Flexible Service Planning
• Family Partnership and Empowerment
• Cultural Competence
• Flexibility and Optimism
• Giving Back
YAP’s Assessment
The 4 Questions

- What do you need?
- How can we help?
- How can we work together as equal partners?
- How can we give back to the community?
Who are the Advocates?

- Natural experts
- From GED to PH.D.
- Former “system-involved” youth and adults
- Paid staff
- 20 hour orientation and training program
- Weekly supervision and monthly training

Advocate work provides new jobs and positive economic trajectories for many poor community members
Examples of Advocate Roles

- Mentor
- Tutor
- Curfew checker
- Job skills developer
- Gang Intervener and Conflict Mediator
- Community Resource Specialist
- Recreation Specialist
- Anger and Behavior Management Specialist
- Transporter
- Relapse Prevention Specialist
- Homemaker
- Teacher Assistant
- Life Skills/Independent Skills Service Provider
Supported Work

• YAP funded employment (average 3-4 months)
• Designed as a “gateway service” to normalized employment
• Based on educational/vocational interests
• Job Coaching by advocate
• Monitoring of youth at site
• Safe, productive community employment
• Small Business Owner as Community Mentor/Role Model
Wrap Funds/Flex Dollars

• Used to provide incentives for positive youth behaviors
• Used to meet immediate crisis needs (food, clothing, shelter)
• Used to build on individual interests/strengths
• Used to meet costs of such items as application fees for college, costs of training schemes, etc.
Partnership with Chicago Public Schools

• Local context
  ○ State age of jurisdiction
  ○ Problems in Chicago Public Schools
    ▪ Shortest school day
    ▪ Zero tolerance policies
    ▪ Kids who have been truant / gang-involved

• What our partnership looked like
  ○ Regression analysis
  ○ Intensive, purposeful planning with holistic goals
## CPS Shooting Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008-2009 School Year</th>
<th>2009-10 School Year</th>
<th>2010-11 School Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Shootings of CPS Students</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Non-Homicide Shootings of CPS Students</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Homicides of CPS Students</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Bad Apples”

Frequently kicked out

What happens when you pay attention to the “bad apples”:
- Pipeline interrupted
- Family strengthened
- School is safer
- Better outcome for student
- Self-Advocates
School Discipline Outcomes

Outcomes reported by the Chicago Public Schools (June 7, 2011):

• 46% decrease in serious misconducts leading to suspension and expulsions
• 26% decrease in minor misconducts
• Out of school suspensions decreased 58%; in-school suspensions decreased 7%
• 8% improvement in school attendance (some students had been absent for over a year)
Outcomes of 503 students served, including 417 discharged (through March 30, 2012):

- 165 students (33%)—chronically truant or suspended—were re-enrolled in high school
- 106 (82%) of seniors discharged from YAP graduated from high school; of these
  - 56 (53%) are enrolled in college
  - 26 (25%) are enrolled in trade school
- 24 YAP students (5%) achieved honor roll status; 65 (13%) made significant school progress
Outcomes of Pipeline Predictors

- 68 students (14%) were placed in GED programs; 51 students (10%) continued in alternative schools
- Only 21 students (4%) dropped out of school; 34 students (7%) moved out of the district
- 47 students (9%) were incarcerated
- 35 students (7%) were injured by gang shootings; all but 5 survived their injuries
Violence and Safety Outcomes

• 271 students (54%) experienced school/community conflicts; YAP staff responded with 763 gang conflict mediation sessions. Although statistically 20 times more likely to be shot, 93% of YAP program participants were not shot despite an increasing number of city-wide murders last year.

• 22 families targeted by rival gangs for retaliation by specific death threats were relocated from their homes and moved to safer neighborhoods.
Employment Outcomes

• 100 advocates and 15 case management staff were hired from the communities served, reflecting each neighborhood’s diversity and understanding of unique cultures—an economic investment in distressed communities and pivotal to the success of every student and family

• 300 youth were employed through our Supported Work Program
Keys to Success:

Strong School Justice Partnerships

- Law Enforcement
- Civic Organizations
- Schools
- Local Probation
- Community-Based Organizations & Service Providers
- Local Businesses
- Families
- Private Foundations
- Colleges
- State Agencies
- Mental Health Organizations
- Youth
Keys to Success:

**Shared vision**

**Education:** graduation rates, test scores, school safety, social/emotional learning

**Justice:** school attendance and achievement, crime rates, recidivism, prevention

**Health:** public health – healthy communities

**Social services:** poverty reduction, healthy development for at risk youth

**Labor:** job training and employment, reaching disconnected youth
Keys to Success:

Consolidated funding across funding streams or braided funding in support of comprehensive efforts.

– Promise Zone: mental health funding for crisis mental health services, strengthening linkages to existing CBO’s, training funding from juvenile justice funding
Keys to Success:

Flexible and individually tailored, strengths-based service models

– Avoid blanket program responses
– Recognize individual/family strengths and interests
– Activities should instill a sense of hope amongst participants, and bring opportunities for real change
– Recognize the power of relationships
Keys to Success:

**Data driven strategy development and monitoring**

– Educational and crime data are both critical, but both present their own confidentiality barriers.

– Use data to help structure program and provide evidence that strategies are working; enhances buy-in over time.
Keys to Success:

Evaluate and Disseminate Information

--Develop a research base on program model effectiveness

--Write up results; offer training and TA from successful providers
Contact Information

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