

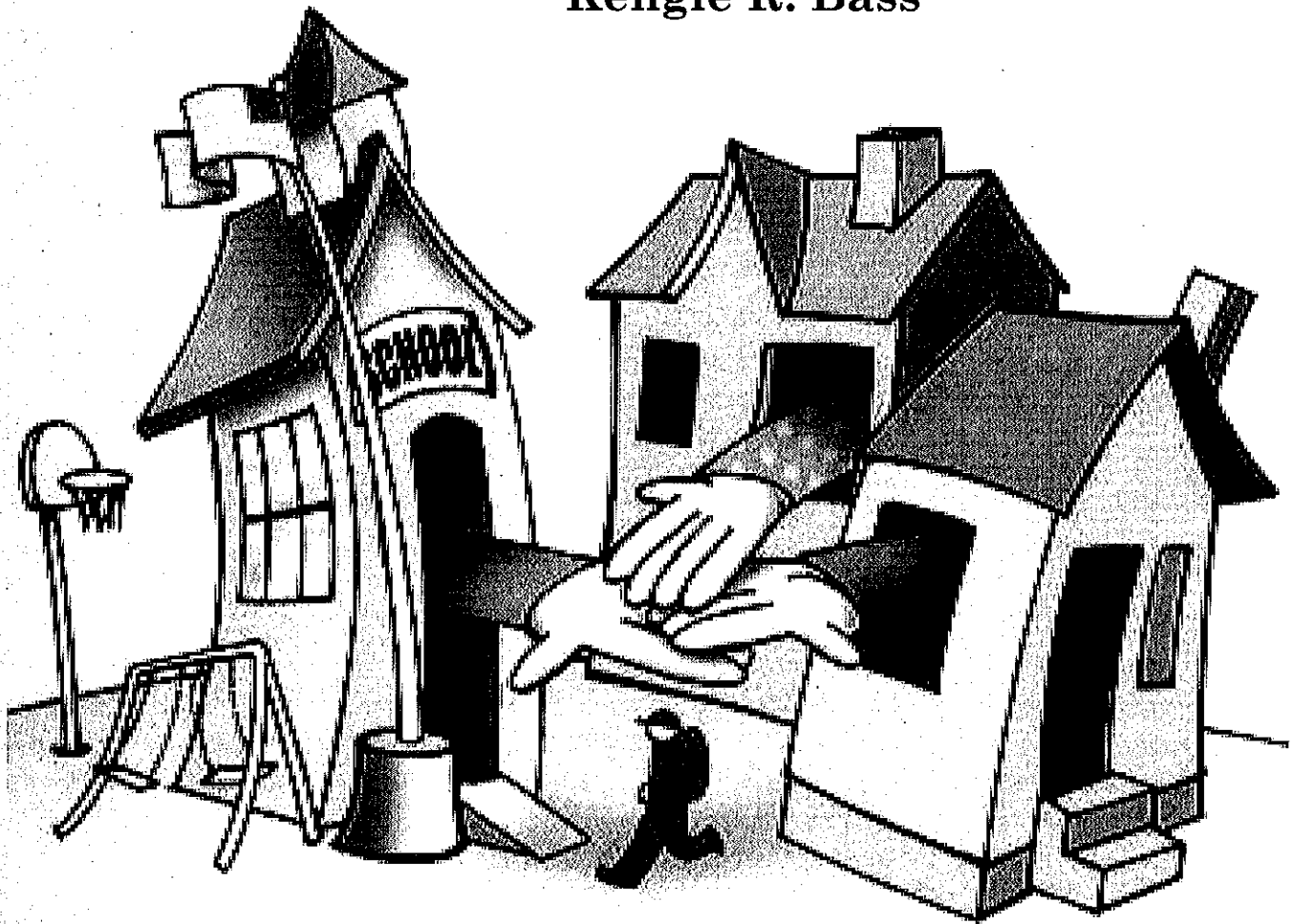


VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

WHATEVER IT TAKES:

*Examining the Impact of Youth Service Centers in
Jefferson County (KY) Public Schools*

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“Whatever it takes’ is the unofficial slogan of FRYSCs. You have to do whatever it takes . . . I wear a lot of hats around here every day. I’m a momma, I’m a guidance counselor, I’m a dance teacher, I’m a member of the Admin Team, I’m a coordinator, I’m a cheerleader for our students . . .there is just so much to do.”

- Youth Service Center coordinators

Capstone Project

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Executive Summary

The focus of this Capstone is to examine the impact of Youth Services Centers (YSCs) on middle schools and middle school faculty members in Jefferson County, Kentucky. Presently, Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) has 95 Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (FRYSC) serving the student population comprised in 131 of the school district's schools. JCPS has developed five fundamental goals to assist in achieving the FRYSCs mission. These goals include: (1) improve attendance; (2) decrease behavior and suspension issues; (3) increase academic support; (4) improve physical and mental health; and (5) improve parent relations, support, and assistance.

Site coordinators, whose professional experience and background are varied, are charged with the administration of programming through referral to community-based organizations or the direct provision of services at the school site. Each Youth Services Center (YSC) is given state grant money, using a standardized formula, based on the number of students the center will serve.

This Capstone Project focuses on the goals relating to behavior and academic support (Goals #1, #2, #3) to assess the impact of Jefferson County Public Schools' Youth Services Centers on middle schools. Specifically, I explore how the Youth Services Center, the programs and services it offers, and the evolving role of the YSC coordinator are influencing the middle schools in which they operate and the roles of the school personnel within these schools.

To this end, the inquiry focuses on three project questions:

1. How are the Youth Services Centers in Jefferson County middle schools meeting their intended goals? (behavior and academic support)
2. What is the relationship between individual Youth Services Centers' program design, program type, and student participation?
3. How has Youth Services Center programming affected the roles and responsibilities of the site coordinator and other school faculty?

A total of 16 interviews were conducted with youth service site coordinators, teachers, site level administrators, guidance counselors, and the JCPS district coordinator of FRYSCs. Interviews were designed to examine



the operation of Youth Services Centers, gain understanding of the feelings, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs of school stakeholders, and identify the contextual elements that shape the stakeholders' actions.

Key Findings:

- *Student and family connectedness has been enhanced through the ongoing services and programs offered at Youth Services Centers. Site coordinators provide timely programs, link students and their families to resources, and build relationships with school and community stakeholders to ensure that students are engaged in and feel a sense of belonging in their school.*
- *Site coordinators work diligently to achieve all district YSC goals; however, some goals take a larger emphasis based on school and student needs. Site coordinators create programs and organize services that fit the unique needs of the student population at their respective schools.*
- *The Youth Services Center's yearly budget is a perennial issue for the service center. The Youth Services Center coordinators struggle to ensure that programming is available for all students in need and that the offered services are far-reaching enough to be beneficial for students.*
- *Though the most common student visit to the Youth Services Center is for basic needs and supplies (e.g., clothes, hygiene items, school supplies), mental health counseling is the largest need. Students need more ongoing counseling from therapists to help them cope with life events.*
- *The role of site coordinator is well- defined by state legislation but many site coordinators take on a variety of duties that were traditionally assigned to other school personnel. Site coordinators are generally asked to complete tasks that are not addressed by other school personnel.*
- *The traditional role of guidance counselors has shifted, directly impacting the role of the site coordinator. The school district has redefined the responsibilities of guidance counselors and moved many of their prior roles and responsibilities to the Youth Services Center coordinator.*

- *There is no apparent negative stigma or social impact on students who frequent the Youth Services Center or participate in center services. Students do not feel stigmatized to visit the Youth Services Center and regularly attend its programs.*
- *There are no measured effects of YSC programs on student behavior or academic performance. No data exist that measures the influence of Youth Services Centers on behavior or students' academics but all school personnel agree that the service centers are positively impacting students.*
- *Site coordinators maintain a "whatever it takes" attitude in regards to programming and meeting participant needs. Site coordinators utilize a myriad of methods, techniques, and means to ensure participants' needs are met.*
- *The importance of Youth Services Centers in achieving the spirit of the "No Child Left Behind" Act has been underestimated. Site coordinators and leaders understand how Youth Services Centers can impact portions of the law (such as student attendance) but have not tapped into using community connections to improve academic achievement.*

Recommendations:

At the Youth Services Center Level

- 1) *Create more ongoing programs.*
- 2) *Develop a long-range parent involvement plan*
- 3) *Continue to try to build community in the school.*

At the School level

- 1) *Ensure the facilities for the Youth Services Center are adequate and meet the unique needs of its users.*
- 2) *Continue to subsidize funding for the Youth Services Center.*
- 3) *Begin/ continue to float school support staff to assist the Youth Services Center coordinator in any way possible.*



- 4) *When possible, streamline the programming and expectations of Youth Services Center coordinator.*

At the District level

- 1) *Analyze "dean" and counselor roles within the system.*
- 2) *Create a "Coordinator's Guide"; develop a catalog of "best practices" among the Youth Services Center coordinators.*
- 3) *Use the group coordinator meetings for more professional development and less administrative work.*
- 4) *Continue to build partnerships with outside agencies that would be beneficial for all Youth Services Centers.*
- 5) *Locate grant money, etc. that can help augment the funding source for Youth Services Centers.*

Introduction

According to the Jefferson County Public Schools 2008- 2009 data book, the school system serves more than 98,000 students in 155 schools. Student demographics include 52% White, 35.9% African American, 5% Latino, and 4.4% from other races and cultures. Over half (57%) of the student population is eligible for Free and Reduced Meals (FARM). Because it is a consolidated city and county system, the district includes urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Of the 98,000+ students that go to public schools in Jefferson County, just over 20,000 students are in JCPS 24 middle schools. The student demographics of the entire school system are mirrored in its middle schools, where approximately 54% of the students are White; 36.2% are African American; 4.5% are Latino; and 2.8% are of mixed race or "other". Nearly 58% of all JCPS middle school students qualify for Free and Reduced Meals. The middle school FARM rate ranges from 18.5% to 91.3% with a mean and median FARM rate of 59.6% and 61.5% respectively (JCPS, 2009).

The Kentucky Family Resource and Youth Services Center (FRYSC) initiative was established with the passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990. The mission of these school-based centers is to enhance students' abilities to succeed in school by developing and sustaining both formal and informal relationships that promote early learning and successful transition into school, academic achievement, and overall well-being, culminating in graduation and transition into adult life (Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, 2008). Each center has a unique blend of program components depending on location, available resources, local needs, and community input. The goal of the FRYSC is to meet the needs of all children and their families who reside in the community or neighborhood served by the school in which the center is located (Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, 2008).

Schools with at least 20 percent of the student population eligible for free or reduced-price lunch may apply for a state grant to support a resource center.¹

¹ There has been much question about the "20 percent" threshold that was established. According to Michael Denney, the state director of FRYSCs, when the original bill that created FRYSCs was written, the threshold was set for schools with "20 percent of the student population receiving free school meals" because the information that was available predicted about 500 schools statewide would qualify for the grant money. This information proved to be incorrect; it was discovered that over 1,100 schools met the threshold. In the 2000 session of the General Assembly, there were a number of schools that were in danger of losing their resource centers and the criteria was changed to a minimum of 20 percent of the enrolled population had to be eligible for free or reduced school meals. The resulting effect not only prevented those schools from losing their centers but also expanded the number of schools



Presently, Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) has 95 Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (FRYSC) serving the student population enrolled across 131 schools. The state awarded the school system \$7.8 million in grant money to operate the 95 resource centers in the district. The Family Resource and Youth Services Centers' program mission is to enhance students' abilities to succeed in school by developing and sustaining partnerships that promote:

- Early Learning and successful transition into school
- Academic Achievement and well-being
- Graduation and transition into adult life

The Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS, 2009) has established four recommended goals for Youth Services Centers. These include:

- To promote young people's progress toward capable and productive adulthood by assisting them to recognize their individual and family strengths and to address problems that block their success in school;
- To promote supportive peer group relationships among young people, and supportive relationships among young people, their families, and persons in the school and community, in order to develop positive self-esteem and competence;
- To generate optimal parental and family involvement by offering learning and service opportunities that will enable parents and other family members to participate in center, school and community activities as providers, participants and volunteers; and,
- To assist young people to make effective use of community resources, including employment and training resources, and health, mental health and social services resources as necessary.

Jefferson County Public Schools has developed five fundamental goals to assist in achieving the FRYSCs mission in all of the district's elementary, middle, and high schools served by a family resource center or Youth Services Center. These goals are to (1) improve attendance; (2) decrease behavior and suspension issues; (3) increase academic support; (4) improve physical and mental health; and (5) improve parent relations, support, and assistance (Jefferson County Public Schools (KY), 2008).

which were eligible. The actual 20 percent designation was an arbitrary number chosen at the time based on faulty information.



Though the goals of Family Resource Centers and the Youth Services Centers are the same, the components of these two entities are different. Family Resource Centers serve one or more elementary schools and focus on the pervasive needs of students under the age of twelve. Youth Services Centers (YSC) serve one or more middle and/or high schools. The core components of Youth Services Centers include:

- career exploration and development;
- summer and part-time job development;
- substance abuse education and counseling;
- family crisis and mental health counseling.

Site coordinators of Youth Services Centers in Jefferson County Public Schools reflect a variety of professional and educational backgrounds. Former teachers, school counselors, businesspeople, and social service workers currently serve as site coordinators of centers across the district. According to the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (2008), these site coordinators are charged with “the administration of programming through referral to existing services or by direct provision and to provide additional services as needed.” Site coordinators are district employees who are paid using state-issued FRYSC funds.

Framing the Inquiry

Several studies have been conducted since the inception of Kentucky's family resource centers and similar entities around the country as well resource centers that assist high school students. Very little research, however, exists on resource centers specifically designed to serve middle schools in Kentucky and middle school students. This Capstone centers on Youth Services Centers at the middle school level and how these Centers are impacting the schools in which they are housed. Specifically, the influence of the Youth Services Center on the roles and responsibilities of school faculty and the influence on the school will be examined. There is a gap between the information that is available for elementary school resource centers, information for school-linked service programs for high school students, and data for middle school service programs. This small exploratory study hopes to fill this discontinuity with useful information for educators and other school stakeholders.

Some of the essential questions that will be examined:

1. How are the Youth Services Centers in Jefferson County middle schools meeting their intended goals? (behavior and academic support)
2. What is the relationship between individual Youth Services Centers' program design and student participation?
3. How has Youth Services Center programming affected the roles and responsibilities of the site coordinator and other school faculty?

Young Adolescent Development and the Middle School Framework

Young adolescence (between the ages of 10 and 15 years) can be both an exciting and tumultuous time for children. Students begin this period of human growth and development with hopefulness as they seek their place of belonging. However, this soon changes as issues relating to anxiety, peer relations, low self-esteem, and withdrawal begin to emerge. Recognizing and understanding the unique development characteristics of early adolescence and their relationship to the structure of the middle school and its educational program are essential principles of middle grades education (NMSA, 2007).

Many educators believe that the distinctive needs of the young adolescent—social development and refinement, promotion of physical and mental health, development of self-concept and self-acceptance, academic adequacy, and aesthetic stimulation—must be accommodated separately, in middle schools, from other students (Howley et al., 1996; Wiles & Bondi, 2001).

From their research of middle school students, Wiles and Bondi concluded that the largest divergences of physical, social, and intellectual growth are found in middle school students. The middle school framework recognizes these discrepancies and individual differences with programs adapted to meet the needs of each student.

The framework of the middle school movement has not been sufficiently addressed in current literature. The emergence of the middle school has often been attributed to reasons directly related to the socialization and social capital attainment of young adolescents. Scales (1991) identified seven key developmental needs specifically for early adolescence: (1) positive social interaction with adults and peers; (2) structure and clear limits; (3) physical activity; (4) creative expression; (5) competence and achievement; (6) meaningful participation in families and school communities; and (7) opportunities for self-direction. The middle school emerged and exists to provide 10- to 14-year-old students a transitional school between childhood and adolescence to help them bridge the gap in their development (Wiles & Bondi, 2001). Middle school, therefore, exists to serve as a place where "lives are strengthened, hope recaptured, and intellectual, social, emotional, and physical changes are celebrated and not condemned" (Shackleford, 1992). This is achieved by empowering middle school leaders to design developmentally appropriate programs and challenging environments that are conducive to the maturing of adolescents (Howley et al., 1996).

Due to the isolation that middle schools create, the middle school framework insists that middle school educators must build meaningful partnerships with parents, policy makers, community members, social service agencies, and other organizations that are concerned for young adolescents. The middle school may be the best vehicle for family-school-community partnerships geared to promoting the healthy development of young adolescents (Finks, 1990). Since schools represent only one mechanism for preservation and adaptation, partnerships that are formed must include goals for academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and access to social capital—all embedded elements of the middle school framework—fostered and realized in each middle school (Swaim, 1998). Programming administered after school can also be vital to the development of middle school students. Larner et al. (1999) found that after school programs assist in shielding children against these problems by supporting skills acquisition that will assist in the passage through early and middle adolescence (Larner et al., 1999).

School-Based and School-linked Services

The concepts of school-based and school-linked services are seeded in the work of Urie Bronfenbrenner's much cited theoretical perspective for research in human development. Fundamental to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) perspective is the interconnection between developing individuals and the ecological environments in which they are members. The ecological perspective views schools and families as interdependent and nested within each other. Bronfenbrenner stated that one's ecological environment consists of three levels, each embedded in the next.

The innermost level (the *microsystem*), is the immediate environment of the developing person (i.e., the classroom, or the home). The second level (the *mesosystem*) involves transcending single settings to the relationship or interconnectedness among these settings, such as an analysis of the ties between the home, the school, and the community. The outer layer (the *exosystem*), is fixed in the notion that an event occurring in settings in which the person is not present has a profound influence on the development of the person. This may include the impact a parent's inability to pay the bills has on a child.

Dovetailing off of Bronfenbrenner's emphasis on the ecological environment are Hobbs' views on importance of the community in aiding individuals and the family. Families are the critical element in the rearing of healthy, competent, and caring children. Hobbs et al. (1984) suggested that not all families can perform this function successfully without support from a caring and strong community that provides both informal and formal supplements to a family's own resources.

Bronfenbrenner's views serve as the backbone to several other school reforms, including school-linked, school-based, integrated school services, and full service schools. According to Smrekar (1996), improved care and enhanced student performance may result from an ecological perspective reinforced by a better understanding of the context of children's lives.

School-based services, integrated services, and full service schools are linked but not identical (Smrekar, 1996). She states that school-based integrated services describe arrangements in which schools serve as the central organization for the location, management, and integration of social services while school-linked integrated services describe programs in which schools are equal partners along with other human service agencies involved in the collaborative arrangement; services may be delivered at the school or at a site located near the school. Finally, full-service schools describe integrated

services that are provided within the school, with the school serving as the central partner in collaborative effort.

Waldfoegel (1997) analyzed state and federal policies, incentives, and innovations related to integrated services. These patterns are also visible at the school level. She described "two waves" of service integration. Waldfoegel's first wave was formed during the 1970s and the early 1980s by top-down directives for integration of services. This wave continues presently in several states such as Kentucky, where KERA mandates that schools work in cooperation with community organizations to assist its students. State agency heads in other states now regularly convene in pursuit of better coordination and integration, perhaps leading to significant structural changes. In first-wave thinking, structural changes and new policies at the top "trickle down" through top level leaders and middle managers, eventually changing and improving front-line practice.

The second wave came later and accompanied the reinvention of government and the devolution of authority and responsibility. Whereas the first wave was top-down, the second wave was bottom-up. Second-wave initiatives developed because of the limitations associated with "trickle-down thinking". Front-line practitioners, whether working alone or in teams structured by top-down mandates, did not receive all of the information and assistance they needed, nor did they always understand and accept what they heard and learned. Moreover, problems related to effective bottom-up communication channels impeded service integration and systems change initiatives. Although this second wave involved some school, in reality a limited number were involved. According to Lawson and Sailor (2000), some full-service schools developed because of these second wave initiatives. Similarly, a resurgent community schools movement received boosters in this second wave policy context (Melaville & Blank, 1998).

Lawson and Sailor (2000) further expound upon the two waves described by Waldfoegel and propose a third wave. It is their belief that the third wave has already formed. This wave began as states cultivated targeted service integration initiatives. These initiatives were targeted in the sense that they had to be linked to schools. The appealing idea of school-linked services is promoted in this wave. Kentucky's advent of Family Resource and Youth Services Centers are a direct example of this third wave. School-linked services were structured to promote learning readiness by addressing barriers to learning and healthy development (Lawson, 1999). Twin claims were made: (a) that school-linked services were examples of integrated services; and (b) that service providers would collaborate as they integrated services.

Lawson and Sailor also note a burgeoning fourth and fifth wave of integrated services involving schools. The fourth wave, which is still forming, is concerned with expanding the boundaries of school improvement. Several national school reform efforts, including Success For All, schools for the 21st century, and community schools, include school-linked services in their structured approaches. The fifth wave, which is still in its fledgling stages, is focused on revitalizing neighborhoods, promoting civic engagement, and relying on indigenous support and helping systems. Colleges and universities play pivotal roles in fostering new approaches to teaching and learning, research, scholarship, and community service. This fifth wave is associated with the concept of community collaboration and with university-school-community-family partnerships. Evidence of this fifth wave is in many of the Family Resource Centers and Youth Services Centers in Jefferson County. Several resource center coordinators have developed a partnership with the University of Louisville to enhance the services and programs offered to students at their respective schools.

The underlying principle behind the concept of the full-service or extended school is founded on the recognition that schooling, for many, can only be approached "once a range of welfare and health services were in place" (Smith, 2001a). Disadvantage must be addressed in order to effectively address educational underachievement (Olasov and Petrillo, 1994; Carlson et al., 1995; Raham, 1998; Smith, 2001). Combined with rising concerns about the "fragmentation" of services, it has been argued that the possibility of "one-stop shopping", where prevention, treatment, and support services are all provided on the school site, has opened up (Smith, 2001a).

Many contributors to the literature proposed that the ideas underpinning the concept and approaches to the full-service school were not new (Walker et al., 2000; Tett, 2000; Raham, 1998, 2000; Smith, 2001). Calfee et al. (1998) suggested that the notion of schools, community, social, welfare, and health agencies working together had previously been known by many other names, including school-linked services, school-based services, assessment centers, community education, and family service centers. Dryfoos (1993; 1994) noted that integration of education, health, social, and human services at the heart of a full-service school can be traced back to work undertaken in the 1980s.

The actual term 'full service school' was said to have originated in Florida legislation, which required the State Board of Education and the Department of Health to "jointly establish programs in local schools to serve high risk students in need of medical and social services" (Dryfoos, 1995). Dryfoos (1994) contended that the initial responses to the challenge of meeting students' needs, such as the school-based clinics approach of the 1980s, have



evolved and developed into more comprehensive models of coordinated integrated school-based service delivery. Consequently, full service schools are not necessarily a new concept, but one that reemerged.

Full service schools also vary in the degree to which they employ school-based or school-linked service delivery strategies (Whalen, 2002). School-based initiatives focus on locating a wide range of services and providers within the school building as a way of enhancing the access of residents and school families (Cowen, 1996; Melaville, 1998). School-linked approaches build the capacity of schools to establish relationships with local service providers and enhance the access of students and families to their services (Cibulka, 1996).

The term "full service school" denotes a wide range of initiatives designed to enhance the lives of students and families through effectively integrating school resources and community services (Dryfoos, 1994; Dryfoos, 1999). Full service or community schools vary widely in size, scope, and structure but they typically expand their missions from traditional academic goals to a broader focus on youth development and family services (Whalen, 2002). As a result, full service schools are similar in nature to community centers.

Although the merits of full service schooling have been argued, Whalen (2002) believes that there are three contentions in support of expanding the amount of full service schools. Whalen suggests that schools are well-provisioned and are the most intact public facilities present in disadvantaged communities. He points out that schools are underutilized, particularly during the after-school hours when youth and the surrounding community are most at risk for anti-social or criminal behavior. School buildings provide a familiar, safe, and accessible place to provide integral services that support youth and families.

Whalen also states that children learn more effectively when a larger range of their personal interests and developmental needs are addressed. Comer, et al. (1996) believe that when schools provide students with recreational resources, caring relationships, and enriched learning opportunities, attachment to school increases and the climate of school improves. The confluence of the close proximity of services that address a myriad of student needs may also reduce barriers to learning.

Whalen (2002) believes that schools teach more effectively when both the family and the community take ownership. As schools welcome participation from other community entities, information about matters affecting students and families is more available and resources to support



learning are more forthcoming (Rigsby, Reynolds, & Wang, 1995; Ryan, Adams, Gullotta, Weissberg & Hampton, 1995).

School-linked Services

Kentucky's Youth Services Centers are a model within the larger idea of school-linked services. During 1980s and 1990s this concept was the subject of much research and debate; however, school-linked services have not been addressed in current literature. School-linked services provide centralized access to an array of programs and supports and are seen by many experts as methods to assist at-risk students and families in being successful.

A Brief History of School-Linked Services

According to Smrekar (1998), the concept of school-linked social services is not a new idea. Its origins can be traced back more than 100 years during the Progressive Era when philanthropists and reformers sought to improve the lives of immigrant families in urban schools by linking schools with targeted social service initiatives such as health and mental health programs, nutrition and housing assistance, and employment training. This expanded role for schools took on new strength during the 1960s War on Poverty when family-focused efforts were re-established that targeted particular groups for compensatory aid. In the 1970s, the "Cities in Schools" program was created. This landmark program identified problems of neglect, abuse, emotional stress, and undernourishment as interrelated problems that often occur in students' private lives but have a profound effect on in-school performance.

Educational reform and coordinated services between schools and the larger community flow from the confluence of four key movements in an earlier, multi-faceted attempt to strengthen community connections in urban schools. These four movements include: 1) parent involvement in school governance, 2) instructional partnerships, 3) school-to-community outreach, and 4) children's service coordination. These movements are interconnected and were seen as integral factors in the overall improvement of education, especially in urban areas (Crowson and Boyd, 1993).

School-Linked Services Coordination Efforts

Wang (1993) identifies four levels of service coordination. The first level describes interagency collaboration at the administrative level, often at top managerial levels. This level often results in the creation of task forces, coordinating councils, changes in staff organization, or incentives and job evaluation systems that promote interagency collaboration. The second level of collaboration involves providing incentives to service delivery workers for

working jointly with staff in other agencies. At this level service workers develop a knowledgebase about other resources in the community available to meet the needs of clients. The third level of collaboration involves changes within a single agency. At this level service workers are encouraged to assist clients by transcending procedures and rigidly applied rules. New policies are established that allow service workers and their supervisors to interact collegially and handle individual cases in ways that promote a balance of a responsibility and authority. This increases the capacity of service workers to collaborate successfully with clients and invoke a more diverse range of services than typically available. The fourth level of collaboration exists between the client or family and service workers. In this type of collaboration the service worker and the client work jointly to identify needs and set goals in order to increase the self-sufficiency of the client. This level of collaboration often requires creative problem solving and cannot be accomplished in rigidly bureaucratic systems. Although collaboration often occurs first at the top management level or at the fourth level reflecting worker-client relationships, it can begin at any of the levels.

Service coordination efforts across the nation vary in scope. In some states, efforts toward service coordination have remained state-level programs, with interagency cabinets or councils working to blend programming. In some states, such as Kentucky, the programs include encouraging corresponding development of local interagency councils, with the idea of extending the latitude of service coordination vertically from state to locality. Other states have promoted local service coordination, but without a parallel development among the state agencies themselves. Some service coordination efforts have been locally initiated, with little to no participation at the state level (Crowson and Boyd, 1993).

The Rationale for School-Linked Services

Schools have become the location of choice for collaborative programs. Larson et al (1992) explained why schools should serve as the central location for a multitude of agencies that provide services for children. They argue that schools are enduring institutions that play a critical role in the life of communities. Schools have played this role in the past (Smrekar, 1998), and thus can deliver these services to children and their families in a less stigmatizing manner than most other present institutions.

Wang describes the relationship between educational achievement and students' at-risk status. According to Wang, because education is an integral component in children's future economic success and personal welfare, many individuals support the location of non-educational services in the local school. These services can help guarantee the educational accomplishments of



students. Wang contends schools are the prime vehicle for delivering academic services and therefore should be a central location for these programs.

Schorr (1988) clearly set forth the belief that current multifaceted social problems can be improved through school-social services partnerships. Based on her research on risk and protective factors, she identified risks that affect the lives of children, including premature birth; poor health and nutrition; child abuse; teenage pregnancy; delinquency; family stress; academic failure; persistent poverty; inaccessible social and health services; and inadequate housing, medical treatment, and schools. She argues that these risks require a societal response, not simply a response from the at-risk student or family. Schorr contends that there is ample evidence and information available on both risk factors and effective interventions to guide action. She distinguishes three principles that encapsulate the role and function of collaborations in breaking the cycle of disadvantage: (1) a call for intensive, comprehensive services that address the needs of the "whole" child and community; (2) a recognition that the family should be supported, not displaced, by other social institutions; and (3) a shift in efforts from remediation to early intervention and eventually to prevention.

Perceived Weaknesses in School-Linked Services

Not everyone believes school-linked services are a cure-all to meet the needs of at-risk students. In the book Losing Ground, Charles Murray argues that government services, including partnerships between schools and social service agencies, generated long-term negative consequences for recipients. He maintains, for example, that raising welfare benefits increased the number of welfare recipients and school-based health clinics contributed to the increase in the number of teenage pregnancies. Murray cautions policymakers of the unintended effects that may emerge as government services multiply (Wang, 1993).

School-linked coordination of services is not foolproof and there is little tangible evidence available that associates gains in academic achievement or status improvement with participation in a school-linked program. "What careful evaluation exists shows a history of experimentation colliding with ubiquitous problems of institutional deficiencies, professional training differences, resource constraints, communication gaps, authority and turf issues, and legal and leadership problems" (Crowson and Boyd, 1993).

Kentucky Youth Resource Centers

Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (FRYSC) were installed in Kentucky public schools that had at least 20 percent of the student population

eligible for free or reduced-price lunch via the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990.

The Kentucky Education Reform Act and FRYSCs

According to David (1993), leading up to KERA there were six years of intense public agitation regarding the state equality of education in Kentucky's public schools. This civic pressure created a climate favorable to the landmark court decision that was rendered and it encouraged the legislature to react in a positive way rather than fight the decisions as other state legislatures had. In 1989, responding to a lawsuit brought by former Governor Bert Combs for 66 poorly funded school districts seeking financial equity, the Kentucky Supreme Court had declared the state's system of common schools to be unconstitutional and ordered the legislature to rebuild it within a year. "Lest there be any doubt," wrote Chief Justice Robert Stephens, "the result of our decision is that Kentucky's entire system of common schools is unconstitutional. This decision applies to the entire sweep of the system—all its parts and parcels"

The state legislation also moved beyond a production of financial equitability in public education and focused on other elements that impact a child's education. These legislators realized that the task of educating children extends beyond the schoolhouse. The Task Force on Education Reform fully understood that when it wrote the following as a preamble to KERA:

The General Assembly recognizes that public education involves shared responsibilities. State government, local communities, parents, students and school employees must work together to create an efficient public school system. Parents and students must assist schools with efforts to assure student attendance, preparation for school and involvement in learning. The cooperation of all involved is necessary to assure that desired outcomes are achieved (David, 1993).

KERA created three new programs specifically designed to focus on environmental conditions generally thought to contribute to poor academic performance. Among these new programs were human resource centers located at or near schools to connect them with community agencies serving children with emotional and health problems.

Family Resource and Youth Services Centers have been a part of Kentucky Public Schools for over fifteen years and serve as a model for many other states and school districts. Though there have been several studies on Family Resource Centers, the elementary-aged counterpart to Youth Services



Centers, there have been very few studies that focus on Youth Services Centers or other school-based programs for middle school students.

Researchers John Kalafat and Robert Illback (1998) completed a three-wave qualitative evaluation of 32 Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (FRYSCs) across the state of Kentucky. This study, completed in the beginning stages of FRYSC adoption statewide, helped create program descriptors and implementation strategies that were used as a basis for training new FRYSC program coordinators. The Kalafat and Illback study identified a key outcome of the FRYSC model: improved parental interaction in multiple site coordinator roles. The study suggested that coordinators may be overwhelmed with the variety of hats they must wear to ensure students feel connected, parents are receiving needed services (i.e., clothing donations or school supplies), and school personnel are linked with students' parents.

Some findings from research on Family Resource Centers may be valuable in the study of Youth Services Centers. Smrekar (1994) found that FRCs are established as separate entities from schools. By design, these centers have a separate entrance from the school and site coordinators are not considered to be school employees. "The irony", Smrekar notes, "rests in the fact that the centers were created to help link families with the social services that would enhance family functioning, with schools as the linkage point and nexus for intervention" (Smrekar, 1994). Smrekar goes on to point out that having the center be physically separated from the school furthers the disconnection between parents and the school; parents are more connected to this center whereas teachers find the location too distant. On the other hand, this symbolic removal from the school establishes a sense of confidentiality for parents, especially when many of the services the parents may inquire about are sensitive and deeply personal.

Conceptual Map

The available research on young adolescent development within the middle school framework, school-based and school-linked services, and resource and Youth Services Centers together laid out the conceptual framework of Youth Services Centers. The model shown in Figure 1, which represents five areas central to Youth Services Centers, helps to explain the Youth Services Center program design and the outcomes of Youth Services Center programming. These areas are (A) the context in which the Youth Services Center operates; (B) the implementation of the Youth Services Center programming itself; (C) the family, individual, and community conditioning factors that influence Center programming and that, in turn, affect (D and E) student and school personnel immediate and long-term outcomes. The map does not spell out the work of the Capstone but does highlight how Youth

Services Center programming is embedded in the larger constellation of school, community, and family influences that contribute to student outcomes in and out of school.

A. Context

Youth Services Centers are implemented under a variety of unique conditions. These circumstances include the educational and policy climate, perceptions about safety, community relationships, and demographic characteristics of the school, district, and community.

B. Youth Services Center Program Implementation

To help uncover which practices and approaches are effective in different settings and for different student groups, it is necessary to know the details of how the programs operate. The following measures of program implementation assist in understanding how programs were executed and structured: student participation, program content and structure, collaboration with host schools and community organizations, and efforts toward sustainability.

Intermediate and Long-Term Impacts

Because Youth Services Centers provide many services and activities, the programs could impact a variety of factors, including better student academic performance, positive behavioral changes, and increased personal competence. As the Youth Services Center takes on programs and services there is a shift in roles, responsibilities, and job duties among school personnel. The conceptual map separates effects into intermediate effects and long-term effects that are presumed to follow; for example, if students attend school more often and become more engaged in the classroom (intermediate effects), they are more likely to improve their grades and test scores (long-term effects). Similarly, if students exhibit greater personal responsibility, risky behaviors are more likely to decline. As the Youth Services Center becomes more involved in students' daily lives (intermediate effect), the site coordinator becomes responsible for maintaining students' social and mental well-being (long-term effect).

Conditioning Factors

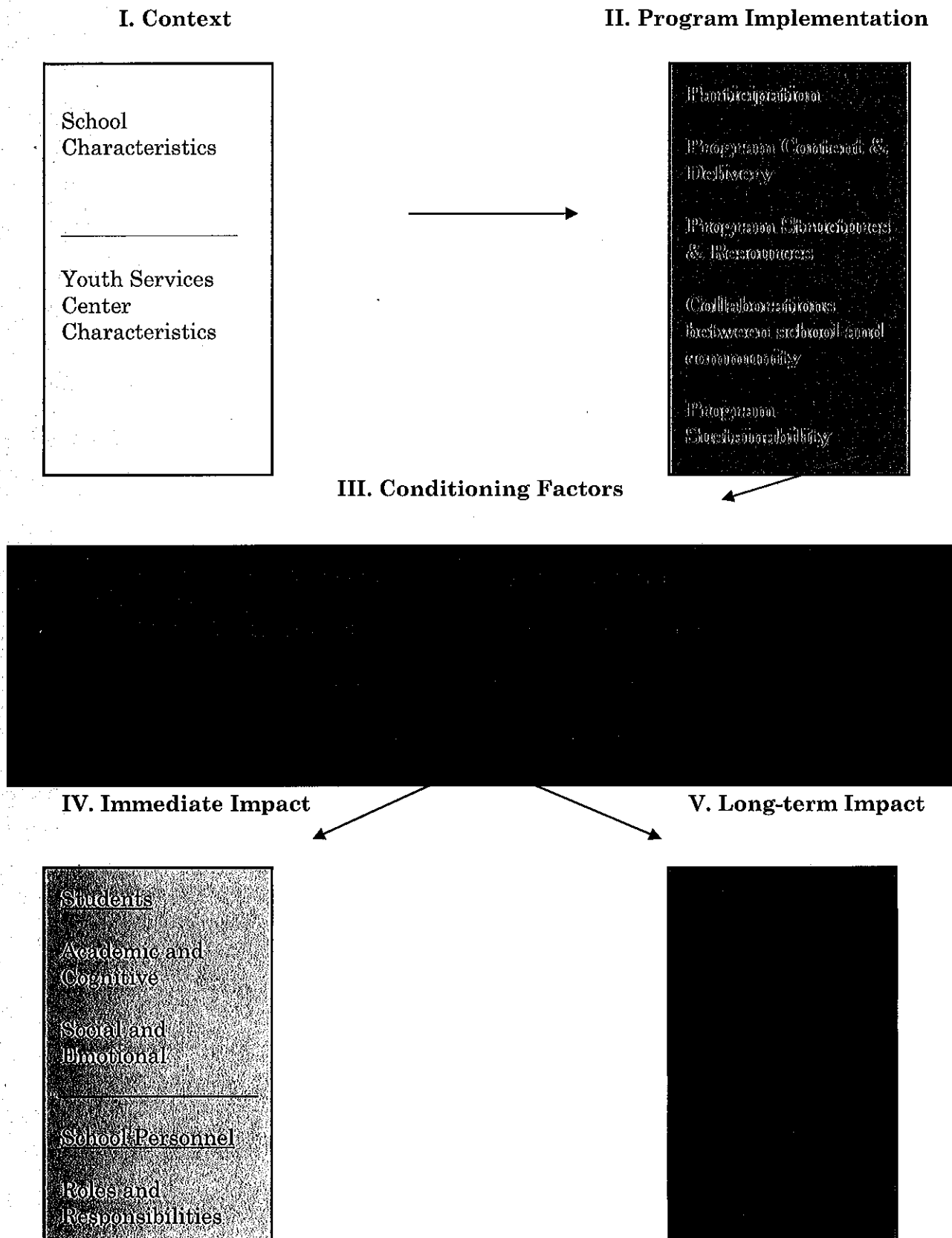
External factors and relationships may influence the effects of Youth Services Center programming on students. For example, students from impoverished backgrounds may benefit more from Youth Services Center programs than students whose families are more financially viable.

Students whose parents are less connected to the school may profit more from Center services than those students whose parents or guardians are more visible.

As stated, this conceptual map does not delineate the work of this small, exploratory Capstone but it does create a framework for which Youth Services Centers are currently operating. This helps to create an understanding of the Youth Services Center nomenclature, which aids in understanding its influences on schools and school faculty.



Figure 1: Conceptual Map of Youth Services Centers





Settings

Interviews were conducted at three JCPS middle schools that housed a Youth Services Center. One middle school with a “low” FARM (free and reduced meals) rate, one middle school with a “moderate” FARM rate, and one middle school with a “high” FARM rate were selected.²

Demographic Analysis of JCPS Middle Schools and Sampled Middle Schools³

School Name	School setting	FARM rate	Enrollment	% of White students	% of African American students	% of Latino students	% of Mixed race or “Other” students
<i>All Jefferson County Middle Schools</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>57.8%</i>	<i>20,439 students</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>36.2</i>	<i>4.5</i>	<i>2.8</i>
Panther Creek Middle	Suburban/City	55.8%	959 students	40.4	50.6	3.5	2.9
North Ridge Middle	Suburban/Town	66.3%	904 students	62.8	32	1.7	2.5
Timber Drive Middle	Industrial/Rural	79.3%	724 students	60.4	29.8	5.2	3

² The terms ‘low’, ‘moderate’, and ‘high’ can be seen as relative, as all schools that are served by a Youth Services Center must have a FARM rate of at least 20 percent. All JCPS middles were rank ordered by FARM rate. The ‘low’ FARM middle school is located in the top third; the ‘moderate’ FARM middle school is in the central third; and the ‘high’ FARM middle school is in the bottom third of JCPS middle school rankings.

³ The names of the middle schools have been changed.

Each Youth Services Center has a site coordinator who is charged with implementing and maintaining programs and services within the center. Interviews were conducted with all three of the YSC site coordinators in the sample. Their years of experience as a site coordinator, professional background, and years of experience at their current site all varied.

Youth Service Center site coordinator information

School site	Coordinator's Name ⁴	Professional background	Years of experience as a YSC site coordinator	Years at current YSC site
Panther Creek Middle School	Cindy Bond	Former Child Protective Services case manager	2 years	14 years
North Ridge Middle School	Patricia Jones	Licensed school therapist	8 years	8 years
Timber Drive Middle School	Rita Carlisle	Former drug abuse counselor	14 years	14 years

⁴ All Youth Services Center coordinators in the sample were given a pseudonym.



Panther Creek Magnet Middle School

Panther Creek Magnet Middle School sits in a middle class neighborhood not far from one of the busier thoroughfares in its community. The school, a two-story, U-shaped design, appears to be of relative new construction and seems to be adequate size for its nearly 1000 students. Trees line the fields surrounding the school as well as litter the school's campus. Panther Creek's green roof and manicured front lawn bordering the main entrance bespeak the modern focus of the school's programming. Inside, the school is illuminated by bright lighting and colorfully painted walls. Technology abounds around the school and in every classroom. Hallways of classrooms veer off in multiple directions separating the varying grade levels Panther Creek Middle serves. Panther Creek Middle serves a large minority population (nearly 60 percent) and has a relatively high FARM rate (almost 56 percent) but has a relatively high daily attendance rate (95 percent). The school boasts its 16 partnerships and collaborations with outside entities, including four universities, which help augment its instructional program, as well as having nearly 91 percent of its teachers having a Master's degree or higher.

Panther Creek Facts	
959 students	
50.6% Black	
40.4% White	
3.5% Latino	
2.9% Mixed/Other	
55.8% FARM	

The school's website states that Panther Creek's Youth Services Center is open from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. during school days and is run solely by Cindy Bond. Like many other Youth Services Centers across the district there is no full- or part-time administrative assistant to aid in managing the Center. Panther Creek Middle's Youth Services Center sits right beside the main entrance to the school and adjacent to the front office and is clearly marked by a sign near the door. The Center is an inviting place, complete with Ms. Bond's office, a meeting room, a lobby area containing a couch, a classroom for self-contained exceptional children, and a smaller room that houses several large cabinets containing clean school uniforms, hygiene products, and school supplies. Ms. Bond, who has worked at this particular Youth Services Center for two years, takes pride in its ambiance and its size. "I've got the largest office in the building, even bigger than the principal's", she jokes. "I guess that means I need to keep working hard so I can feel like I earn it!" Ms. Bond estimates that nearly three-fourths of the students use the Youth Services Center or its programming per year and she comes in contact with at least 20 to 30 students per day.

Every space within the Center is utilized by Ms. Jones regularly throughout the day to meet the needs of the students within the school. Students and teachers saunter in and out constantly seeking assistance from



the Youth Services Center or Ms. Bond, making the Center and its coordinator bustling and quite full of activity. Bond stated, "If you're not busy, then there is no reason to be here. This has got to be your calling. You have got to love kids to do this."

North Ridge Middle School

North Ridge Middle has three academies that encompass the gamut of student interests. North Ridge Middle pulls from 13 feeder elementary schools, making the student population diverse and initially unfamiliar to one another. The multi-storied school sits in front of an economically-priced apartment complex in a quiet suburb of Metro Louisville. A couple of miles east of the school sits a new housing development with posh homes; homes that seem like they are a world away from the nearly 900 inhabitants of North Ridge Middle, where over 66 percent of the student body receives free or reduced lunch. The modest brick building itself appears to be at least 30 years old and looks very similar to others in the surrounding area that were undoubtedly constructed during the same time period. All parents and visitors must press an intercom button, identify themselves and their business at the school, and wait to be buzzed into the front entrance. Narrow hallways and stairwells lead to dated classrooms. Students can be seen ambling to class in their uniforms as you enter into the front office.

North Ridge Facts

904 students

62.8% White

32% Black

1.7% Latino

2.5% Mixed/ Other

66.3% FARM

North Ridge Middle's Youth Services Center is located on the other side of the main corridor at the front of the school. A blue sign extends from the wall identifying the Youth Services Center to all its visitors. Flyers and posters line the walls advertising an ongoing program for boys at the school that is co-sponsored by the service center. The center looks to have been a large classroom in its former life, complete with a sink and a bathroom. The site coordinator for the Center, Patricia Jones, is a licensed school therapist but has served as the site's coordinator for eight years. The school furnishes Ms. Jones use of a school secretary for a few hours daily and her desk sits at the front of the service center. A large table sits in the middle of the room with a futon and Ms. Jones's desk. Bookshelves, supply closets, and magazine racks line the walls with materials advertising community services and programs that the center has. Ms. Jones observed:

(This job) is kinda challenging because you are the only person at the school who does what you do. I have to explain what I do a lot to parents. It might be easier if I just say, 'I do a little bit of everything'.



Timber Drive Middle School

Timber Drive Middle is located on the outskirts of town. Those who live in the city must drive past the airport and down seemingly isolated roads. A small sign on the road directs you to the school which is situated in the rear of a lower middle class housing development. Despite the school's environmental focus, the all brick school building is surrounded by very little greenery. Its industrial appearance matches its blue collar surroundings and the school's nearly 80 percent FARM rate. The PTA membership rate at Timber Drive Middle is among the lowest in the county, with only 75 members during the last school year. The school is equipped with a buzzer and intercom that visitors must use to gain entry into the school. Though the 700+ students at Timber Drive Middle live in a variety of different areas across the city, the school has a palpable community atmosphere.

Timber Drive Facts	
724 students	
60.4% White	
29.8% Black	
5.2% Latino	
3% Mixed/ Other	
79.3% FARM	

Next door to the front office is the Timber Drive Middle's Youth Services Center. It is composed of a front office, the coordinator's office, a smaller workroom, and a conference room. The site coordinator, Rita Carlisle, and other teachers make mention that the Center's location has switched places recently with the principal's office into a smaller office area. The Youth Services Center has a strong "student-friendly" feel. The Center secretary sits at the front entrance of the YSC and greets every visitor with a warm smile and calls all of the student visitors by name. The workroom contains a bookshelf that houses literature regarding outside counseling programs and other services offered by the school district and the site Youth Services Center. The site coordinator's office has a large couch and contains some of the basic resources (i.e., food) that students often seek out. Ms. Carlisle does all of her student mediation in her office but transitions around the school throughout the day. To her the Youth Services Center program is more than worthwhile:

We pull students from all over Metro and all of our students here need so much. We are fortunate to be able to give them some of the things that they wouldn't ordinarily have. You would be surprised at how much a new shirt or another pair of shoes means to a child.

Findings and Discussion

I. Youth Services Center Programming

The state of Kentucky and the school district's earmarked goals are the cornerstone of all of the programming that occurs in the Youth Services Centers. These goals are designed to improve student well-being and to strengthen connections between students and their environment. YSC site coordinators are required to know and use these goals in all of their work. Each site coordinator interviewed could recite verbatim the five current goals for Youth Services Centers in Jefferson County Public Schools. The district and the state require YSC site coordinators to maintain activity logs to identify the varying ways in which they are attending to these goals. Yearly, YSC site coordinators compile these data and create a report of the activity within their service center. All observed service centers offer physical assistance to families in crisis and work regularly with parents on the myriad of issues that arise on a day-to-day basis. Some of the services and activities that occur in all Youth Services Centers include:

- *Health services and referrals.* These include dental health and nutrition.
- *Family crisis and mental health counseling and referrals*
- *Drug and alcohol counseling and referrals*
- *Summer and part-time job development.* This occurs mostly in the high school ranks.
- *Educational support*
- *Character Education*
- *Basic needs* (school supplies, food, etc.)
- *Classes for parents*
- *Holiday assistance.* Giving resources for families in need during Thanksgiving and winter holidays.
- *Reading programs and activities*
- *Grandparent support groups.* These programs and services are designed to assist grandparents who are the guardians of school-aged children.
- *Tobacco prevention*
- *Families in Training* (new and expectant parents)
- *After school and/or summer program*
- *Peer mediation*
- *Conflict resolution*
- *Service learning*
- *Job shadowing.* This occurs mostly at the high school level.
- *Mentoring*
- *Tutoring*

- *Back to School event*
- *Newsletters*

During the 2007-2008 school year there were 146,988 referrals to Youth Services Centers in Jefferson County Public Schools (see Appendix G). Nearly 22% of these referrals were for basic needs; 14% of the referrals were for “academic support or academic issues”; over 15% were attendance referrals; and over 16% were parent contact referrals. These specific referrals, which all directly correlate with YSC goals, take up over 65% of the YSC site coordinators work.

Various goals take on a bigger focus at each observed site depending on (1) the needs of the students within the school and (2) the interrelatedness the site coordinator found within the goals and issues. Site coordinators tend to design and implement programs or activities that meet the needs of their students. These needs also include those centered on academics and behavioral issues, such as workshops on bullying or interpersonal relationships.

The Youth Services Center at Panther Creek Middle had 3,764 referrals during the 2007-2008 school term (see Appendix H). Cindy Bond, the site coordinator at Panther Creek, worked with her principal to identify student attendance as the largest issue when she first inherited the position at the middle school. Based on the accountability standards outlined in the “No Child Left Behind” Act, they realized that tackling the attendance problem would improve students’ achievement and help the school meet state and federal requirements. She stated:

Some kids were missing 90 or 100 days a year when I got here. You can't tell me a child can learn when they aren't even at school to learn anything . . . So I made phone calls. I made home visits. I created programs . . . whatever it took to get these kids in school. Now we have an attendance rate of over 95 percent.

These home visits and programs have instituted a sense of belonging and responsibility for the students. According to Bond, “They know that we expect them to be at school and they know that someone cares if they don’t show up.” Her efforts and these results coincide with recent research, which states that middle school students who feel a connection with their school or an employee within the school were 75 percent more likely to do well on attendance measures (Blum, 2005). As of last school year, her attendance referrals had dropped to 335, less than 10 percent of all the referrals she received.

Based on the needs assessment each Center participant completed, Patricia Jones, the YSC site coordinator at North Ridge Middle, has placed more of an emphasis on meeting the social and emotional needs of the students in her school. Her Youth Services Center has instituted a comprehensive mental wellness program entitled Promoting Education, Achievement, Compassion and Encouragement (PEACE) that addresses a wide range of student needs. In addition, Ms. Jones oversees several mentoring programs (see Appendix I) designed for girls and for boys respectively and manages grade level-specific programs that concentrate on unique issues for students in that class.

Large Goals, Larger Needs

Each Youth Services Center has a closet or room filled with basic resources (i.e., shoes, uniforms, hygiene products, school supplies etc.) for students. Students come in and out using or borrowing these stored up materials as they are needed. Much of these supplies have been donated by community agencies, families, students, or purchased with YSC money. These resource closets are the most used service that the Youth Services Center offers. Based on JCPS data, almost 51% of all referrals to the Panther Creek YSC, over 21% of all referrals to the North Ridge YSC, and over 25% of referrals to the Timber Drive YSC were for basic needs (see Appendices G, H, and I).

The needs of students, however, are changing. The depressed economy, divorce, death, and the coping skills it requires to endure these events have had a direct impact on Youth Services Centers. All of the site coordinators noted that there has been a shift from solving immediate problems with consumable materials (such as giving a student a new uniform) to having to find ongoing assistance for issues that are intangible. One site coordinator stated, "As society and the economy are deteriorating, the need (for counseling) is going up." Every site coordinator interviewed agreed that counseling is the biggest need that the students have and that it is not always adequately addressed. Ms. Bond has secured a licensed therapist that comes on-site to Panther Creek at least two times a week to meet with students who have immediate and pressing needs but she wishes, "We could have one out here every day. We definitely need one". Not all Youth Services Centers are so fortunate. Tight budgets and heightened needs have taken their toll on many sites and site coordinators. Ms. Jones, who formerly worked as a school therapist, has tried to pool as many resources together as possible to meet the mental health needs of her students at North Ridge but knows she needs more. She asserted:

I see these kids struggling with so many issues . . . it's hard not to take it home with you every day. These kids need a lot but what they really need we can't give them much of. Our resources just cannot meet our need.

Measuring Success

At present, there is no solid data that quantitatively illustrates that Youth Services Centers are meeting their intended goals; however, the perception among the district FRYSC director, the three site coordinators, teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators is that the Youth Services Center is being successful in meeting the needs of students, families, and schools. Dr. Carol Bartlett, the director of FRYSCs in Jefferson County Public Schools observed:

I can remember how it used to be before FRYSCs came about. I can honestly say that [Family Resource Centers and Youth Services Centers] have helped out a lot of families and a lot schools. It is all about continuous improvement. We have come a long way but we have a long way to go.

The confluence of assistance and programming from the Youth Services Centers are thought to have an impact on student achievement and student behavior (as measured through student suspensions) but no hard data exist to confirm this theory. Youth Services Centers are a tool to foster a sense of belonging for students who are typically isolated from the prevailing culture of school. Blum (2005) found that students who felt engaged with their school are more likely to receive higher marks and test scores.

Students are undoubtedly being positively affected by their experiences with Youth Services Center-sponsored programs and the availability of basic needs, such as food, school supplies, and clothing. Some teachers thought that meeting the immediate needs of students allows the students to function at a higher level while in school. An English teacher from Timber Drive observes:

I can't say it (the Youth Services Center) makes them act better in my classroom but I can say that knowing that you won't get picked on 'cause your uniform is dirty makes a kid more likely to not get in trouble.

Site coordinators mark the impact of their service center on student-school relations based on individual case studies and student participation in programs offered by the center. Programs designed for girls or boys only or "Father-Son/ Mother-Daughter nights" are always well attended. Other programs that seem to be popular are reproduced quite often and many become a part of the school's culture.

The influence of the Youth Services Center is also illustrated through the many success stories of students who have benefited from a center program or resource. During my time at Timber Drive Middle I observed a student walk in to say hello to Ms. Carlisle and a teacher who also serves on the school's Youth Services Center advisory board. From the outside the student looked well-adjusted and well-kept. It was only after the student went back to class and the interview reconvened that the teacher relayed to me the following:

He's an example of what the Youth Services Center does for these kids. He lived in a house with no water and no electricity for God knows how long. His parents couldn't afford to pay up their bills. He was ashamed to come to school 'cause his clothes weren't clean. We (the advisory council of the service center) were able to help him and his family make it through. For a whole month afterwards it seemed like he would come by and say 'thank you' to us. There are more kids at our school like (him).

II. A Transition in Roles and Responsibilities

The Youth Services Center has become a "one stop shop"; a place where a myriad of students' issues are expected to be handled. Accordingly, Youth Services Centers function as a modified organic management system (Keller, Slocum, and Susman, 1974). Youth Services Centers, like the organic management system described by Keller, Slocum, and Susman, are continually adjusting and redefining tasks; have lateral rather than vertical direction of communication with students, parents, school faculty, and outside agencies; and have frequent conversations between people at different strata within the school, district, and community.

As a result, the role of the YSC site coordinators, as noted by Wang (1993), has morphed to transcend written policies and responsibilities. Site coordinators have been compelled to learn how to be jacks of all trades and have taken over a wide range of responsibilities within their schools from teachers and guidance counselors. Patricia Jones observed, "We [site coordinators] bridge the gap. We do anything to make students thrive in and out of school . . . the service center has to be a safe haven for kids." Mirroring this sentiment, Cindy Bond stated her job is "to do whatever I can to reduce barriers so kids are successful."

According to the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, the state agency that oversees Family Resource and Youth Services Centers, FRYSC site coordinators "must spend 100% of their time paid with FRYSC funds in job duties directly related to the operation of the center and center

programs” and “school districts shall not assign Coordinators duties unrelated to the implementation and/or operation of the center” (CHFS, 2008). Oftentimes making students ‘thrive’ or be ‘successful’ requires site coordinators to complete duties and tasks that have traditionally been assigned to other school employees. These responsibilities may occur by happenstance or they may be imposed by site based administrators. Patricia Jones is in charge of storing and disseminating medicine to all students who have a prescription at North Ridge Middle. Rita Carlisle mediates most student conflict at Timber Drive Middle. Cindy Bond performs morning and afternoon bus duty. All three site coordinators that were interviewed are expected to help administrators cover extracurricular events, such as performances and athletics. Bond observed:

I wear a lot of hats around here every day. I'm a momma, I'm a guidance counselor, I'm a dance teacher, I'm a member of the 'A Team' (administrative team), I'm a coordinator, I'm a cheerleader for our students . . . there is just so much to do. My job allows me to be a part of just about everything in this school and community . . .

The Changing Role of the Guidance Counselor

There has been a transformation in the role of the guidance counselor as Youth Services Centers have emerged. The middle school guidance counselor’s traditional emphasis on students’ social well-being has been replaced with more administrative duties. Patricia Jones observed, “Counselors are doing a lot of paper work and testing. We handle most of the social stuff. That’s just the nature of Jefferson County. It’s not like that in every county in Kentucky.” In recent years Jefferson County Public Schools has shifted the responsibilities of the guidance counselor district wide. Some schools within the school district no longer have “guidance counselors” or “assistant principals” but instead have “deans”. These deans are in charge of managerial tasks typically assigned to assistant principals and school counselors, such as discipline policy and scheduling. In other schools where traditional guidance counselors continue to exist, their roles have shifted as well. Their main responsibility is school-wide testing, managing programs for exceptional children, and other organizational tasks.

These shifts suggest that an array of responsibilities formerly ascribed to counselors now fall to Youth Services Center coordinators. In two of the schools where interviews were conducted the Youth Services Center coordinator was chiefly responsible for making referrals to the Department of Social Services—a task generally assigned to guidance counselors in other school districts. One principal noted that many “deans”- formerly school counselors- now refer students to Youth Services Centers for counseling. The



site coordinator, in turn, implements counseling techniques or refers the student to one of the outside agencies in which the Youth Services Center has a partnership. The guidance counselor at North Ridge commented:

(The site coordinator) has a great relationship with our students. Most of them go to her about any problem they have. Her background and her warm nature make it easy for kids to feel comfortable around her. She has definitely made my job easier.

Another responsibility customarily assigned to guidance counselors or teachers that now rests with YSC site coordinators is student mediation. In the past, teachers have intervened in student disagreements in the classroom or referred these students to a guidance counselor. Improving “peer relations” is one of the sub-goals for Youth Services Centers in Jefferson County (JCPS website, 2009). In this present social climate, all three site coordinators noted that the need for mediation has expanded. Rita Carlisle serves as mediator for most, if not all, of students’ conflicts at Timber Drive, a school with over 600 students. During her interview Carlisle was interrupted at least twice for her to work in closed session with groups of students who were arguing with one another. Their teachers, as is generally the case, sent these students specifically to Ms. Carlisle so that she could handle the situation. Carlisle stated:

Yes, that [student mediation] happens a lot. Our students are going through a lot at home and at school. Sometimes they just take it out on each other. My background [in agency and school counseling] has helped me a lot...

The Changing Role of Teachers

Some teacher roles have also shifted to YSC site coordinators. Teachers must often assume the role of a student’s guardian while the child is at school. This sometimes includes attending to their social needs, chastising them when they behave inappropriately, and giving them encouragement when required. Several teachers interviewed discussed how being seen as a student’s “surrogate parent” now rests with the site coordinator at the school. A North Ridge teacher stated:

The students we serve come from broken homes [. . .] I can’t even say non-traditional homes anymore because this is a growing tradition [. . .] where dad isn’t around and mom might be at work or just can’t be a mom. [The site coordinator] has to be momma for these students. She’s the one that gives them a new shirt when they need one. She’s the one that gives them their medicine. She’s the one that tells them ‘Now, you

know better!' For some, she's the closest thing to a mother that they got . .

Because of the parent and community connections that are obligatory in Youth Services Centers, many teachers have been able to focus more on their instruction. Beyond sending students to the Youth Services Center to obtain school supplies or articles of clothing, teachers rely on YSC site coordinators to assist them in making connections with parents and guardians of their students. Often, site coordinators have cultivated a better, abiding relationship with parents and can serve as the conduit between the school and the family to schedule conferences or relay information. A Timber Drive teacher commented, "There have been plenty of times when I haven't been able to get up with a parent. [The site coordinator] has stepped in and made the parents aware of whatever I needed them to know."

The Youth Services Center intercedes in many of the issues that students experience, reducing teachers' attention to matters outside of teaching. Youth Services Center coordinators take pride in assisting teachers. Rita Carlisle stated:

Teachers are here to do a job—teach. One of my responsibilities is to make sure that happens. Whatever I can do to help them out I am willing to do. I want to be a resource not just for the parents and the students. I want to be a resource for the teachers, too. Their job is really important . . .

According to Cindy Bond, she has created a symbiotic relationship with the teachers at her school; she handles teachers' students whose success may have been derailed due to a variety of issues and they allow her to disseminate services to children who are in need.

She commented:

The biggest thing for me is building relationships with my teachers first . . . The teachers have got to see value in what you are doing or they won't refer kids to you and then there is no sense in you being here . . . Once the students make through the door some of their problems are alleviated and they can go back to class ready to learn and the teacher can continue teaching.

NCLB and Youth Services Centers

National trends and pressures are being felt by Jefferson County's Youth Services Centers and site coordinators as well. In the wake of the push for accountability for all students, Youth Services Centers are being asked to

boost the educational assistance they give to students. Collectively, the three Youth Services Centers studied received 612 referrals for academic support or other academic issues, or approximately 7% of all referrals. All three of the site coordinators have designed and implemented programs that concentrate on improving students' academic performance. Rita Carlisle has started to place an even larger emphasis on academic support for the students at Timber Drive Middle, whose school wide average standardized test scores are below district and state average. Like other site coordinators, she has begun building partnerships with other organizations and entities both internally and outside of the school to focus on increasing student achievement. Besides organizing tutoring efforts, such as an after school program, Ms. Carlisle has forged a relationship with an outside agency that specializes in remediation for students. Based on the free and reduced lunch rate at the school and the recent history of substandard test scores, she has arranged for students to receive free academic assistance from this company. Students have the opportunity to learn test taking strategies and get extra help on mathematics and reading from a nationally recognized business.

Though faced with the pressure to enhance academic supports and student achievement, site coordinators and teachers continued to focus on the social role of the center. The school faculty that was interviewed noted that the services provided by the center helped students meet their basic needs, which allowed them to function better in school. Administrators were able to pinpoint the law's focus on student attendance and the direct impact Youth Services Centers have on improving student attendance through home visits and other activities.

III. Students' and Parents' Involvement in Youth Services Centers

The CHFS Program Plan guide (2009) states, "It is very critical to the center's success that children, youth and families perceive the center as a non-threatening place where they can come to interact, receive support, and access needed services." To this end, Youth Services Centers are charged with eliminating or reducing the stigma a student may feel in visiting his or her school's service center. District and site coordinators are required by the state of Kentucky to provide a written explanation of how the Youth Services Center will be "a place where children, youth and families can have needs and problems addressed without being identified as a place or a service for 'problem kids' or 'poor families'" and are also asked to list the types of activities and services that are planned to encourage FRYSC participation by all members of the community (Program Plan, 2009).

Site coordinators eliminate or reduce students' stigma in visiting the school's Youth Services Center through the breadth of their programming.



One of the fundamental elements of Youth Services Centers is that its services are available to any student who attends a school that is served by a resource center. This also includes students who do not qualify for free or reduced meals. Patricia Jones stated:

That's what makes [Youth Services Centers in Kentucky] unique. [Site coordinators] don't offer services to just those students who come from underprivileged backgrounds. We serve everybody in this school; whether you are living with relatives or whether you are living in a \$300,000 house. Whoever walks through that door is gonna get helped . . .

Since all services are open to all students within the school, everyone interviewed agreed that there seems to be no stigma in going to the Youth Services Center and students enjoy the presence of it in their schools. In fact, a teacher stated that sometimes she has to prevent students from going to the Youth Services Center:

[The Youth Service Center] is probably the most popular place in our school. [The YSC site coordinator] has a great relationship with our students and a lot of them see her as a mom. A lot of our students like to come visit even when they don't have a need, which I have to stop sometimes. Who wouldn't want to come down here [to the YSC]? A nice couch, food if you really need it, an adult who will listen . . .

Parents are integral part of Youth Services Centers as well. Parent involvement is essential to the educational success of a young adolescent and yet generally declines when a child enters the middle grades (Epstein, 2005; Jackson & Andres, 2004; Jackson & Davis, 2000; NMSA, 2003). All three of the YSC site coordinators interviewed stated numerous times the importance of involving parents in their programming and their efforts to be a resource for the parents of students in the school they serve.

The Youth Services Center still remains the conduit between families, the school, and the community. Helping the students solely is not the only concern for the service centers. Coordinators also take into consideration the needs and flexibility of the parents. Each year every Youth Services Center conducts a needs assessment to identify focus areas for students and their families. Parents, therefore, have a voice in the programming each YSC offers. Research finds that parents who participate in decision making experience greater feelings of ownership and are more committed to supporting the mission of the school program (Jackson & Davis, 2000).

The flexibility and needs of the parents are a factor in virtually every program that is offered by the resource center. Ms. Carlisle's programming,



especially those programs conducted during the evening, is designed to meet the needs of both students and their parents. "Parents want their children to be successful", she states, "and I think it is my job to make sure that happens but that won't happen if we don't think about how pieces of our program affect parents." It seems, then, that the site coordinators must not only find the community resources that students need but also boost parental motivation to use these resources.

Types of parent involvement and the quality of parent involvement affect the results of students, parents, and teachers; as parents become involved and inculcated in the school program, students academic and emotion well-being improves and parents and teachers report better relations (Epstein, 1995). Each Youth Services Center site coordinator encouraged parents to be actively involved in the programming they offered. Rita Carlisle organizes evening programs designed to include parents in the education process while having an enjoyable evening with their child. These programs, usually centered on reading or math, give parents and their children the opportunity to spend quality time with one another in a carefree academic setting. She stated, "The kids look forward to having these nights and the parents do, too. They [parents and students] always ask me 'When is the next Fun night?'. Carlisle also observed that the teachers use these events to talk with parents about their child's progress, galvanizing a sound school-to-home connection.

Ms. Carlisle, as was the case with Patricia Jones at North Ridge Middle, has noticed that families are not actively using available resources offered by the Youth Services Center. Since Timber Drive has been deemed "in need of improvement" for the last three years, based on the "No Child Left Behind Act" many students qualify for free tutoring and test preparation at a nationally-recognized learning center through state and federal grant money; however, many are not taking advantage of these programs. Carlisle stated:

They (the students and their families) have a great opportunity to receive some free training and tutoring but not that many are using it. Some parents just don't know about it and some know about it but aren't using it. I have been spending a lot of time trying to figure out how to educate the parents on (these types of programs) and figuring out some programs we can have here that will help them out.

All three interviewed site coordinators utilize several methods to keep parents informed of the resources that are available to them. Each YSC site produces a regular parent newsletter that every student in the school receives outlining upcoming events, programs, and information. The "personal touch", or making an effort to have individual conversations with parents, has proven to be a successful technique. Personal telephone calls allow YSC coordinators

to give direct information to parents and answer any questions they may have. Cindy Jones occasionally uses the home visits to communicate with parents. She observed:

Sitting in a parent's living room, looking them in the eye, and telling them that you are there to help or you have access to things that can help their child is best way to get parents on board and build that relationship with them

Section IV- Context Matters

All Youth Services Centers across the state of Kentucky must meet some minimum space and location requirements. According to Dr. Carol Bartlett, the director of FRYSCs in JCPS, all resource and service centers must be located in or near a school, must be at least 300 square feet, must be easily accessible to parents, and must have a sign outside of the door or building that clearly marks the location of center. Each of the Youth Services Centers that were visited during this Capstone were clearly marked and located at the front of school building. In addition to meeting these requirements, every Youth Services Center had one other distinct commonality: it is a large, integral, and important part of its school. The principal of Panther Creek contends, "They're just indispensable for a school."

The framework of the Youth Services Center program allows all students who attend a school that houses a service center the opportunity to utilize its services regardless of their socioeconomic or free school meal status. This has created an atmosphere of openness for students to visit; there are no unlabeled rooms in the basement of the school or notes slid in boxes surreptitiously requesting help. Students are constantly coming in and out of the center facing no peer stigmatization for receiving a new shirt or personal hygiene product. Site coordinators keep logs of students who visit and estimate that anywhere from three-fourths of the school at Panther Creek to "just about everybody" at Timber Drive utilize some service or program that the Youth Services Center provides.

None of the Youth Services Centers, however, are the same. Each Youth Services Center across Jefferson County and Kentucky is unique; unique in its site coordinator, unique in its setup, and unique in its programming. The JCPS data on referrals during the 2007-2008 school year reflect that each of the three Youth Services Centers studied have very different student needs. For instance, student recognition seems to be prominent matter at North Ridge Middle (see Appendix H) but is rarely addressed at the two other sites; attendance is a concern at Panther Creek

Middle (see Appendix G) but is not one of the top five issues (based on number of referrals) at North Ridge or Timber Drive Middle.

The interviews with school stakeholders reveal that service centers must provide programs that meet the needs of their students to ensure students actively participate. Each site coordinator conducts a needs analysis of their students yearly so that they can adequately plan and offer programs that are beneficial to their students. Youth Services Centers must strive to meet the distinctive needs of their students (Wang, 1993). This requires site coordinators and their advisory council to create ideas that attract students and their families using a context-specific approach. Oftentimes this requires extra effort, creativity, innovation, and diligence. Jones asserted:

'Whatever it takes' is the unofficial slogan of FRYSCs. You have to do whatever it takes. Some kids are just not connected to school, some aren't connected with the programs [. . .] you have to be creative. You have got to find something because you have got to get them here.

The composition, background, and makeup of the students of the school in which the Youth Services Center serves makes a difference in what type and when programs and events are implemented. Different student groups have different needs, parents have varying levels of involvement, and the school culture differs from campus to campus. YSC coordinators must know and understand all of these dynamics when implementing their catalog of services, programs, and events. Some Youth Services Centers offer one-shot programs (programs that occur once and focus on a single topic) while others utilize more ongoing programs. Many Youth Services Centers, like the center at North Ridge Middle, employ both methods equally. Others are required to utilize programming that gives them the biggest bang for their paltry buck. This also affects the hours of operation for the Youth Services Center and the hours a site coordinator works during the course of a day, requiring some coordinators to have early mornings, others to have late evenings, and many other coordinators to have both.

Rita Carlisle noticed that her parents wanted to be very active in their children's education. Many of the programs she offers are delivered during the evening when parents can accompany their children to "Girls Night Out" or "Family Fun Night". According to Carlisle, these are the most popular programs that she offers per year and have the largest turnout. Teachers use these opportunities to meet and greet parents and have informal conferences about the student's performance in class. Carlisle also uses more one-time offered programs so that she can attend to more students' needs.

Through her needs assessment, discussions with the principal of her school, and informally polling students and their parents, Cindy Bond recognized that utilizing the time immediately after school would be the best occasion for her to deliver Center programming. Besides the “one-shot” programs on topical issues, Bond has secured a grant to institute an after school program for students. She also encourages students who actively participate in the center to take part in the variety of extracurricular activities Panther Creek offers and even leads a club of her own. She is able to talk with parents about other issues when they come for an after school program, to see a game, or to watch a student performance.

Patricia Jones noted that transportation was an issue for students so she has scheduled most of her center’s programming to occur during the “Early Arrival” time period—the time right after buses arrive on campus before the school day begins. Jones oversees two ongoing programs, each designed exclusively for boys and girls, which require a select group of students to meet weekly. She also incorporates singleton programs, such as facilitating a night in which students may get physical examinations, in the evenings to meet the needs of parents.

Faculty Perceptions of the Youth Services Center

School personnel understand the value of the Youth Services Center but do not always fully recognize its purpose. All of the teachers, administrators, and counselors collectively expressed a sense of gratitude for the Youth Services Center in their school and the diligence of its site coordinator. An eighth grade teacher at North Ridge noted:

It’s great having a resource center at our school. You name it, she does it. If I can’t handle it then I send the student down to her [. . .] I know I can send a student down for just about anything and it will be handled. The kids like it and I know we (the teachers) do, too.

Each Youth Services Center must have an advisory council that consists of a community member, teachers, parents, and students. Only teachers, however, who serve on the advisory board of the Youth Services Center at their school, could identify what the district goals of the program entailed. Many interviewed teachers believed the Youth Services Center was in place to ensure that all students’ social and health requirements were being met. One Panther Creek teacher summed the main goal as, “The center meets the social needs of students. We (the teachers) meet the academic needs.” This sentiment, the delineation between academics and social wellness, was prevalent among the teachers interviewed.

Administrators, on the other hand, were able to clearly define and outline the Youth Services Center's work with attending to students' social issues as well as their work with issues that impact academics. Unlike most teachers, administrators have the ability to see the inner workings of the Youth Services Center frequently and meet with YSC coordinators often during the week. The principal at Panther Creek stated:

I talk with [the site coordinator] on a very regular basis. I don't micro manage but I like to know what she is doing. We work as a team to make sure that all of our students' needs, both social and academic, are addressed. They are all interrelated...

Responses revealed that most teachers have a limited role within the Youth Services Center. When asked about the function of teachers in the daily operation of the Youth Services Center on her campus, Jones observed, "The main function of the teachers is basically to make referrals. Not that many have an active role." Jones suggested that this is by the teachers' choice; "Teachers are always welcome here," she stated, "but most are busy handling their own responsibilities." Consequently, the teachers' understanding of the Youth Services Center centers on the division of resources, roles, and responsibilities.

Section V- Challenges and Constraints

One constraint that Youth Services Centers face is the wide range of abilities of the site coordinators. According to Carol Bartlett, the site coordinators of the resource centers across the school system have a vastly varied background. Unlike the YSC coordinators that were interviewed, many of these coordinators do not have a therapy or counseling background. Accordingly, other site coordinators without this counseling background are beholden to the "few and far between" professional development workshops or have to learn certain counseling skills on the fly, as needed. Patricia Jones observed:

My background [in therapy] does help me out a lot . . . We [site coordinators] are presented with a lot of different issues that require attention and though I definitely draw the line between site coordinator and therapist I recognize when some outside help might be needed . . . I don't know what it would be like if I didn't have my background. I guess that's why [site coordinators] networking can be so beneficial.

Across the board the site coordinators, teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors stated that funding was the largest constraint on service centers' ability to address all of the students' needs and program goals. Cindy

Bond observed, "I have done this (being a site coordinator) for two years here and sixteen years overall and I have lost money every year." At present, the state funds a school \$205 for each student who is eligible for free meals (Southern Region Education Board, 2001). The average Youth Services Center budget per school is less than \$83,000. The site coordinator's salary must come out of this pot of money, including paying for the site coordinator's fringe benefits. Youth Services Centers are not limited to serving those students and their families but are required to serve *all* students within the school with these funds. Site coordinators sometimes receive additional funding from their school site (via co-sponsoring programs, etc.) but this money is not guaranteed. Most site coordinators are required to organize fundraisers to supplement the money they receive from the state and from their school. The three site coordinators interviewed all characterized the budgeting process as very tedious and time consuming. Cindy Bond cannot afford the salary of a secretary so she does all of the paper work herself. "It was either have enough money for my students or me work harder," she declared. Patricia Smith is fortunate to have a North Ridge Middle support staff member who works with her two hours a day but stated:

I definitely have to think long and hard about how I want to spend my money. I always have to ask myself 'Is this program going to meet the needs of enough students to make it worthwhile financially?' There are a lot of programs that I didn't do because I just didn't have the finances.

Rita Carlisle echoed this perception:

The need of these students around here is so great. We can only meet some of the need that they have. We have to select those students with the greatest need. It's tough not being able to help everybody but we just can't do it.

Each year there are rumors that funding will be cut at the state level; each year site coordinators hold their breath hoping that they will receive enough money to make their programming and the center itself viable enough to cover at least the basic needs of the students it serves.



Conclusions

Project Question #1- How are the Youth Services Centers in Jefferson County middle schools meeting their intended goals? (behavior and academic support)

Site coordinators work diligently to achieve all district goals for Youth Services Centers; however, some goals take on a larger emphasis based on school and student needs. Each YSC coordinator uses the district goals as the baseline for all of the programs and services that they try to offer at their respective Youth Services Center. Much of the programming that is offered focuses on achieving one of the five JCPS goals; however, the site coordinators also create unique programs that meets the distinctive needs of the students and schools in which they serve. The implementation of these programs helps to bridge the gap between district targets and the tangible needs of Center clientele.

The data show that the most common referral that Youth Services Centers in Jefferson County Public Schools receives is for basic needs and supplies, e.g., clothes, hygiene items, school supplies). The YSC site coordinators each have closets of materials to address the various basic needs that students may have on a daily basis. Each YSC site coordinator, however, stated that the greatest student necessity that they are struggling to meet surrounds mental health counseling. According to those interviewed, students and their families are experiencing a wide range of life events that are impacting their mental health. Students regularly come into Youth Services Centers in need of counseling but the YSC site coordinators are not always able to address these students' needs. YSC site coordinators have developed partnerships with several outside community agencies that focus on mental wellness but the student need is far greater than the supply of therapists available.

There are no measured effects of Youth Services Center programs on student behavior or academic performance. No data currently exist that measures the influence of Youth Services Centers on behavior or students' academics but all school personnel perceive that the Youth Services Centers are positively impacting students. All YSC site coordinators and school faculty suggested that students who visited the Youth Services Center on a regular basis had improved scholastic and behavioral performance. Many interviewed persons identified that the Center's ability to address students' physiological needs helped to improve their classroom functioning and conduct.

In the wake of the push for accountability the importance of Youth Services Centers in achieving the spirit of the "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB)

Act has been underestimated. All school faculty and YSC site coordinators understand the significance of Youth Services Centers in addressing the attendance mandates of the federal law. One of the five goals for Youth Services Centers in Jefferson County Public Schools is to improve attendance, thus a portion of all YSC site coordinators' job is to ensure that students are attending school. Many site coordinators conduct regular home visits and make phone calls to assist schools in meeting their attendance requirement. This is just one aspect in which Youth Services Centers can aid in meeting the NCLB conditions. Youth Services Centers have not fully tapped into using the community connections they have cultivated to improve the academic achievement of students. The need or desire for academic support is present in each of the identified schools, where academic referrals make up nearly 10 percent of all referrals (see Appendices H, I, and J). Each identified school has partnerships with larger agencies and community institutions, such as churches, that may be willing to offer students tutoring, study skills workshops, or other activities that will improve or improve student achievement.

Project Question #2- What is the relationship between individual Youth Services Centers' program design and student participation?

As Patricia Jones phrased it, YSC site coordinators have to maintain a 'whatever it takes' attitude in regards to programming and meeting the needs of Youth Services Center participants. All YSC site coordinators must have a toolbox that is complete with a variety of skills, resources, and techniques to carry out the wide range of situations and issues they face on a regular basis. Oftentimes this requires YSC site coordinators to work beyond the stated Youth Services Center hours of operation and conduct activities and services that go beyond the scope of their work.

All school personnel and YSC site coordinators interviewed perceived that there is no apparent negative stigma or adverse social influence on students who frequent the Youth Services Center or participate in center services. YSC site coordinators interviewed estimated that at least two-thirds of all the students within their schools visit or partake in at least one Center activity during the course of the school year. The availability of the Youth Services Center to all students in the school and the open and welcoming design of the programs make participation appealing and engaging to the student population. As a result, there is clear perception that students do not feel stigmatized in visiting the Center and regularly attend its programs.

The Youth Services Center site coordinators, using a yearly needs assessment, provide programs throughout the year that focus on topical areas that are most beneficial to students. These programs are crafted to assist



students and provide resources and information on relevant matters that are currently impacting the school, students, and students' family. YSC site coordinators also infuse programming that heightens students' engagement and sense of belonging in the school. These services, such as programs devised for all girls or all boys, tie school personnel and students' families together to foster a closer relationship for all those who participate. Most programs that are offered, however, are "one shot" in nature; they are offered during one afternoon or evening and cover one subject. Youth Services Centers also offer more ongoing programs, such as mentoring, but only a limited number of students are involved in these activities.

Project Question #3- How has Youth Services Center programming affected the roles and responsibilities of the site coordinator and other school faculty?

The role of Youth Services Center site coordinator is well-defined by Kentucky legislation but many site coordinators take on a variety of duties that were traditionally assigned to other school personnel. Youth Services Center site coordinators are generally asked to complete tasks that are not addressed by other school personnel. YSC site coordinators that were interviewed have taken on several extraneous responsibilities, such as bus or lunch duty, mediation of student conflicts, housing and issuing students' prescription medicine, management of student behavior, and have even taken on the role of surrogate parent while the students are in school. Many of these tasks are outside of the range of services that are earmarked by the state and district but are perceived to be necessary for YSC site coordinators to be effective in their roles. As Dr. Carol Bartlett, the district FRYSC coordinator, observed, "They [YSC site coordinators] have to fit into the school and sometimes that means doing extra stuff that needs to be done."

Finally, the traditional role of the guidance counselor in Jefferson County Public Schools has shifted, directly impacting the role of the Youth Services Center site coordinator. Customarily, guidance counselors' work has focused on the social well-being of the student population. This includes counseling students who are having issues that are affecting their personal and academic lives and making referrals to outside agencies when student concerns are of a greater magnitude. According to Dr. Bartlett, in recent years the school district has redefined the responsibilities of guidance counselors, giving them more of a concentration on academic and administrative issues, such as testing, scheduling, and the Exceptional Children's program. Most of the duties formerly assigned to school guidance counselors in Jefferson County have moved to the Youth Services Center and its site coordinator. Some schools do not even have guidance counselors anymore but have employed "deans" who serve as grade level administrators and delegate all social matters



to the Youth Services Center. Teachers infrequently talk with the school guidance counselor about their concerns about a student's welfare, but voice their unease to the Youth Services Center coordinator. Students rarely go to their school guidance counselor when they are having a problem; instead, they go to their Youth Services Center. YSC site coordinators intercede and advise students who are having social issues and find external organizations or entities that may assist students or their families in handling difficult or sensitive matters.

What is the most pervasive issue facing all Youth Services Centers?

After a careful analysis of all of the interviews and data collected, the largest issue that Youth Services Centers in Jefferson County Public Schools face surrounds finances. The yearly budget for each respective center is a perennial issue. Yearly, site coordinators must cross their fingers in hopes of receiving adequate funds to cover all of the necessary programs and services their Youth Services Center offers. According to Dr. Bartlett, the largest FRYSC in the school district receives around \$96,000 to operate. Out of this pot of money the site coordinator's salary (including fringe benefits, such as insurance) must be paid, which may take two-thirds of the available funds. The Youth Services Center site coordinators struggle to ensure that programming is available for all students in need and that the offered services are far-reaching enough to be beneficial for students. Most Youth Services Center site coordinators have foregone the opportunity to have a clerical or administrative assistant to bolster their available money for Center programs and services. Many site coordinators have sought other funding sources to supplement the allocated money their Center receives from the state, including collecting and accepting money from the school in which their Youth Services Center serves. Even with these additional funds Youth Services Centers struggle to meet the growing necessities of the population it assists.

Recommendations

Recommendations have been delineated into three levels: the Youth Services Center level, the school level, and the district level.

At the Youth Services Center Level

1) Create more ongoing programs.

The vast majority of the programs that are offered in many of the Youth Services Centers only occur during one day or afternoon. This allows many students to participate in YSC programs but does not permit enduring or long-term effects as instituting more continual programming. In the Youth Services Center that has several ongoing programs, such as mentoring, the YSC site coordinator noted more enduring changes and progress in student participants.

2) Develop a long-range parent involvement plan.

At present, Youth Services Centers create one year plans that pinpoint the focus of the programming for parents for the year. Students (and their parents) typically spend three years at their middle school, thus YSC site coordinators usually have three years to work with most parents in the schools that they serve. Certain parental needs, such as enhancing the parents' connection with the school, are perennial issues and may take longer than one school year to fulfill. Developing multi-year plans for parent involvement may be of more benefit to parents, the school, and the Youth Services Center.

3) Continue to try to build community in the school.

Smrekar (1996) noted that resource centers often do not improve the relationship between parents and teachers but serve as a "go between" for parents and teachers to communicate. The Youth Services Center site coordinators oftentimes serve as the link between parents and the school. Though parents and teachers are able to communicate better they still have not cultivated a true partnership. This creates a linear school-family relationship with the site coordinator serving as the conduit between both entities. Youth Services Center coordinators should try to foster a more cyclical relationship in which parents, teachers, and the YSC coordinator communicate freely with one another.



At the School level

1) Ensure the facilities for the Youth Services Center are adequate and meet the unique needs of its users.

The state of Kentucky has mandated certain criteria for Youth Services Centers' size and location, but adhering to the minimum requirements may not always be favorable for YSC participants. Frequently, the Youth Services Center is the hub of a variety of activities and services that involve an abundance of people, supplies, and movement. Every school should evaluate the needs of the Youth Services Center it houses (and the community the YSC serves) to verify that the current space for the Youth Services Center is meeting these needs to the best of the school's ability based on its current location and area.

2) Continue to subsidize funding for the Youth Services Center.

Maintaining and implementing adequate programming using the allotted yearly budget is the greatest challenge for all Youth Services Center site coordinators. YSC site coordinators are forced to cut corners because of a lack of adequate funding. Many schools are able to help the Youth Services Center finance some of its programs and services using various budgetary line items. Others co-sponsor some Youth Services Center programs or events. Maintaining this funding source is critical to the vitality of the Youth Services Centers.

3) Begin/ continue to float school support staff to assist the Youth Services Center coordinator in any way possible.

Due to the tight budget many Youth Services Centers are not able to fund a clerical position to assist in some of the administrative tasks of the center, leaving the YSC site coordinator to implement programming, field all communication, and maintain all records. Some schools provide its Youth Services Center a member of its support staff on a regular basis to aid the YSC site coordinator in his or her administrative work. Allowing a school secretary, office assistant, or teacher assistant to work in the Center during a scheduled period of time daily or weekly will reduce the work load of the site coordinator and may enhance the efficiency of the Youth Services Center.



4) When possible, streamline the programming and expectations of Youth Services Center coordinator.

The mission and goals of the Youth Services Centers are clearly stated by the Kentucky Center for Health and Family Services. Oftentimes, site coordinators have tacitly taken on roles and responsibilities that are traditionally assigned to other members of the school's faculty. These duties are integral to the success of the school; however, this can prevent the site coordinators from focusing on the tasks and issues that are directly related to their position.



At the District level

Analyze “dean” and counselor roles within the system.

Several of the responsibilities that typically lie with guidance counselors and deans have been shifted to the Youth Services Center. Not all Youth Services Center site coordinators are trained in the same capacity as these members of the school faculty. There may be some discontinuity in the services students receive from a YSC site coordinator as opposed to a certified school counselor. In addition, the charge of the Youth Services Center is supplement, not supplant, the services offered by the school. YSC site coordinators should not be the sole providers of certain services and assistance provided by the school.

Create a “Coordinator’s Guide”; develop a catalog of “best practices” among the Youth Services Center coordinators.

Though the Youth Services Centers serve different student populations with differing needs, many needs are common throughout all Youth Services Centers. The district should consider recording some of the more well-established and reliable program ideas, resources, operating procedures, etc. and submit these to all site coordinators. This will extend the most innovative programs and events across the entire school district. The “Coordinator’s Guide” will also assist novice or less effective YSC site coordinators in improving the efficiency of the Youth Services Center, the school, and the participants they serve.

Use the group coordinator meetings for less administrative work and for more professional development.

The goal of all group coordinator meetings is to disseminate information, complete requisite paperwork, and to learn more about issues or methods that may influence the YSC site coordinators’ jobs. On occasion much of these meetings are focused on the required administrative tasks. Developing a standard meeting agenda that earmarks a bulk of the time for cultivating the professional skills of the site coordinators may be more advantageous. The district may also consider utilizing a “train the trainers” model. The site coordinators have a wealth of knowledge, relevant educational background, and professional expertise to design and implement much of the training or development.



Continue to build partnerships with outside agencies that would be beneficial for all Youth Services Centers.

Youth Services Center site coordinators cultivate partnerships with community entities (i.e., churches, small businesses, and/or local organizations) that will assist in meeting the needs of their students. These relationships are essential to Center and participant success. Some YSC site coordinators are more skilled at, or have more experience with, fostering these relationships than other site coordinators. At the macro level, the school system should maintain and create alliances with organizations that may benefit many of the Youth Services Centers in the district. Additionally, developing ties with larger organizations (i.e., United Way, Boys and Girls Club, colleges and universities) that have a wider range of services and locations across the school district would also facilitate valuable connections for Youth Services Centers.

Locate grant money, etc. that can help augment the funding source for Youth Services Centers.

Presently, the onus of finding additional resources to supplement state funding rests on YSC site coordinators. The school system should consider assisting these site coordinators by pinpointing and securing other potential sources of money.

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APPENDIX A: Research Strategies

To gain a better understanding of the influence of Youth Services Centers and its programming on middle schools and school faculty in Jefferson County Public Schools, a qualitative design was employed. Interviews were conducted with three teachers, the principal or lead administrator, a school counselor, and the Center coordinator from each of three middle school-based Youth Services Centers in the Jefferson County Public School system, and the District Family Resource and Youth Services Center (FRYSC) director.

Participant Sample

Participant Type	# of Respondents
Youth Services Center site coordinator	3
Teacher	6
Guidance counselor	3
Principal/ Lead administrator	3
District Director of FRYSC	1
Total	16

Site coordinators of each of the middle schools selected (n=3) were interviewed to give insight and information on how programming is implemented at each of the Youth Services Centers in which they serve and how the services and programs they offer vary from site to site. Middle school Youth Services Centers that represent varying regions of the school district were first examined. Second, schools were chosen that vary in their student populations and Free and Reduced Meals (FARM) rate in order to achieve a representative sample of middle school Youth Services Centers across the school system. Three middle schools and Youth Services Centers were selected that represented diversity on these two measures. Interviews of two teachers and a guidance counselor were conducted within each of the three middle schools (n= 9). The sample of teachers from each school included a cross-section from both classroom teachers and ancillary instructors.

An understanding of the contextual and institutional barriers and supports that impact Youth Services Center site coordinators' implementation of programs and services was sought. An interview was conducted with the district director of Family Resource and Youth Services Centers as well as with an administrator at each of the three middle schools (n=4). The principal (or lead administrator over Youth Services Center within the school) holds

positional authority which could support or constrain implementation of the program as enacted by the site coordinators. The district director supervises all site coordinators within the district and manages the FRYSC budget for the school system.

Each school represents a "low", "moderate", and "high" free and reduced lunch population based on county data. These terms are relative as all middle schools receiving programming from a Youth Services Center must have at least 20 percent Free and Reduced Meals (FARM) rate. Sites selected for the research reflect district-wide differences in size of the school as measured by student population, community surroundings (suburban versus rural), and coordinator experience. The school sites were identified with the assistance of JCPS central office officials. School employees were identified with the assistance of the Youth Services Center coordinator at each respective school.

Interviews were conducted in the respondent's work area, office, or in a neutral location at the respondent's leisure. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes and was audio taped with participants' permission and transcribed. Interview protocols were constructed for each group of participants. Each protocol was informed by extensive analyses of the literature around (1) school-based and school-linked services; (2) the impact of the Youth Services Center on students who attend the school, their parents or families, and school faculty; and (3) the developmental needs of middle school students. The interview protocols were designed to gather information on the respondents' knowledge of state and district goals of Youth Services Centers; school and faculty supports that affect Youth Services Center programming; decision-making in the cultivation and implementation of programs, events, and services; and the respondents' perceptions of program effects. Interview protocols are included in Appendix A- E.

In addition, data were collected via informal observations while at each middle school and Youth Services Center and informal conversations with service center support staff while shadowing the site coordinators as they performed extemporaneous tasks. The researcher intermittently "walked the walls" of the school and the resource center, and noted posters, advertisements, and any material that was posted. Relevant documents, such as pamphlets, flyers, and handouts were also collected to supplement recorded interviews.

The multifaceted approach of interviews, informal observations and conversations, and document analysis allowed for triangulation. Triangulation was also achieved by looking at the interview responses within each middle school site and among different sources of data within each site. Triangulation was employed in two ways- using multiple methods to gather data, and



interviewing multiple participants at each site to ensure that the findings draw on corroborative evidence (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). Triangulation allows the data to be cross-checked for confirmation and consistency (Dabrowski et al., 2008). Additionally, including multiple forms of data collection enhances the Capstone by “overcoming the skepticism which greets singular methods” (Patton, 2002). Patton calls this methodology “ideal”, indicating that multiple methods of data collection strengthen one’s confidence in conclusions (Dabrowski et al., 2008).

Data Analysis

Following the completion of the interviews, narrative summaries and analytical memos of emergent themes and patterns were constructed (Patton, 2002). Data analysis was largely based on three areas: (1) the ways in which Youth Services Centers are meeting their stated goals; (2) the relationship between individual Youth Services Centers' program design and student participation; and (3) the variation, addition, and transference of roles and responsibilities of the site coordinator and other school faculty. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the interview transcripts were color-coded based on these concepts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Each separate color depicted an overarching theme that was present in the data.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is the size of the sample being interviewed. Sixteen individuals were interviewed and only three middle schools were visited out of a total of 23 traditional middle schools in the school district. This sample size may limit the generalizability of the inquiry (Patton, 2002), but it serves as a solid basis for this category of case study.

Steps were taken to ensure that the study is both reliable and valid. Interview protocols were created that focused on the concepts being studied. All interview participants were asked the same questions, in the same general manner, and in the same general setting. The faculty selected for the study represented a cross-section of the respective middle school’s community. Since school district officials and Youth Services Center site coordinators assisted in identifying the individuals who were interviewed, their views may not accurately represent those of the total population. However, these responses do embody the broad opinions of individuals with similar backgrounds, experiences, and personal histories.

APPENDIX B: YSC COORDINATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

- How long have you been employed with JCPS?
- How long have you served as the YSC for JCPS?
- How long have you been a YSC coordinator at this school?
- Please describe your career background.
- Please describe your educational background.
- What would you say your primary role/responsibilities are in this school? What is a typical day like for you?

Experiences inside and outside of school

- What types of activities do your students and their families participate in together?
- What types of extracurricular activities have your students participated in while at this school?
-

Family educational background

- What is the educational background of the parents whose families you serve in the program?
- Would you say that most of your students' parents completed high school?
- What types of jobs your students' parents have?
- Have you taught any older siblings from the same family? Did these siblings finish high school?

Parental involvement

- How have parents interacted with you throughout their child's education at this school?
- In what other ways are parents involved in your school?
- What types of conversations do you have with your parents about school?
- What do you think are parents' expectations of you as the coordinator of this site?
- What do you think are their expectations for their child's future?
- Do you talk with your students outside of class?
- Do you talk with your students about things other than class work? (i.e. plans for doing better in school, transitioning to high school)

- How would you describe your student's perception of your expectations concerning them? (high/low, do you know if they think you even care about them)
- If you had to choose a teacher or coach that a student considers his or her favorite, who would it be. Why is he/she a favorite? (How does he/she help students in school?)
- What safeguards are in place at your school to ensure that all students are successful?
- Who do students feel the most comfortable talking to or have the closest relationship with at this school?

Guidance counselors

- Do students meet with the guidance counselor to talk about their problems?
- Do you know if students feel they can speak to the guidance counselor about any situation?
- Please explain the relationship between the guidance counselor and students.
- Please explain your relationship with the guidance counselor. How often do you interact with him/her?
- What are some of the reasons for your interaction?
- How involved is the guidance counselor with YSC?

Teachers

- How often would you say you interact with the faculty and support staff at this school? What types of interactions do you have with them?
- How involved are the teachers with the YSC?
- Which members of the faculty/staff s would you say are more likely to be involved with the YSC? Why?

Youth Services Centers

Background Knowledge

- Please describe your job.
 - What is your understanding of the requirements for receiving help from YSC?
 - Who is eligible?
 - How hard is it for students to meet these requirements?
 - What are the components of YSC?

- Where is the center located in the building? In your opinion, is this the appropriate location for the center? Why? Why not

Are YSC meeting their goal (as measured by behavior and academic support?)

- Has YSC programs influenced student behavior/suspensions? If so, which programs have had the greatest impact and which have had the least? Please be specific in your description.
- Has YSC programs provided academic support for students? If so, which programs have had the greatest impact and which have had the least Please be specific in your description.
- Would you say that YSC is meeting the behavior/suspension and academic goals as outlined by JCPS?
- What services would you say the students and their families use most? Why?
- Does YSC affect student's desire to come to school? If so, in what ways?
- Are there any noticeable differences between the students who participate in YSC and those who do not participate in the YSC? Please explain.
- How has this school changed because of the program? How have the students who participate in YSC changed because of the program?

YSC impact on student-school relations (as measured by behavior and academic support)

- What role do you play in the YSC? Why?
- What role do guidance counselors play in the YSC? Why?
- Please explain the relationship between the guidance counselor and the YSC coordinator.
- Please explain the relationship between you and the YSC coordinator.
- How often would you say you interact with the YSC coordinator? What types of interactions do you have with him/her?
- Would you say that the YSC coordinator is visible in the school? What do you know about the role and responsibilities of the YSC coordinator?
- How has this school changed because of the program? How have the students who participate in the YSC changed because of the program?
- How do other educational priorities (NCLB) influence YSC role and function?
- What is the major challenge/concern that students bring to you? What are their primary needs?

Individual Program design and Student Participation



- Based on your own experience, what would you say are the strengths of this program? What about weaknesses?
- What about dislikes? What are some things you do not like so much about the program?
- In your opinion, what would make the YSC at your school better?
- Name one element of the YSC program at your school that if taken away would hurt the program most?
- What if anything do you think makes this particular program at your school different from some of the other sites?
- Do you think that the program design at this school allows for more student participation? If so, why?
- How many students participate in the program? How many students do you serve daily?

Close

- In your opinion, is the YSC in your school effective? Why or why not?
- What would you say is the most important prerequisite for obtaining this job? In your opinion, what is the most important trait a YSC coordinator should have?
- Your duties are so varied and require a lot of time and dedication, why do you continue to work here even though it requires such a commitment?
- Is there any thing else you would like to share with me about the YSC?



APPENDIX C: GUIDANCE COUNSELOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH (possibilities, no particular order)

- How long have you been employed with JCPS?
- How long have you been a counselor at this school?
- What would you say your primary role/responsibilities are in this school? What is a typical day like for you?

Experiences inside and outside of school

- What types of activities do your students and their families participate in together?
- What types of extracurricular activities do your students participate in while at this school?

Family educational background

- Would you say that most of your students' parents completed high school?
- What types of occupations/jobs do parents at this school hold?
- Have you taught any older siblings from the same family? If so, have they finished high school?

Parental involvement

- How have parents interacted with you throughout their child's education at this school?
- In what other ways are parents involved in your school?
- What types of conversations do you have with your parents about school?
- What do you think are parents' expectations of you as their child's principal?
- What do you think are their expectations for their child's future?

- Do you talk with your students outside of class?
- Do you talk with your students about things other than class work? (i.e. plans for doing better in school, transitioning to high school)
- How would you describe your student's perception of your expectations concerning them? (high/low, do you know if they think you even care about them)



- If you had to choose a teacher or coach that a student considers his or her favorite, who would it be. Why is he/she a favorite? (How does he/she help students in school?)
- What safeguards are in place at your school to ensure that all students are successful?
- Who do students feel the most comfortable talking to or have the closest relationship with at this school?

Guidance counselors

- Do students meet with you to talk about their problems?
- Do you know if students feel they can speak to you about any situation?
- Please explain the relationship between you and students.
- Please explain your relationship with the faculty and staff. What are some of the reasons for your interaction?

YSC Coordinators

- How often do you meet or communicate with the coordinator?
- Is the coordinator helpful in providing you with information?
- What are some things you like about the programs offered at the YSC?
- What are some things you do not like about the programs offered at the YSC?
- What do you consider the most significant role the YSC coordinator plays?
- Please describe your involvement with the YSC.
- In your opinion, what are the key challenges facing the YSC?
- Is the YSC coordinator able to meet the varying needs of the students?

Teachers

- How often would you say you interact with the faculty and support staff at this school? What types of interactions do you have with them?
- How involved are the teachers with the YSC?
- Which members of the faculty/staff s would you say are more likely to be involved with the YSC? Why?

Youth Services Centers

Background Knowledge

- Please describe what you know about the YSC.

- What is your understanding of the requirements for receiving help from YSC?
 - Who is eligible?
 - How hard is it for students to meet these requirements?
- What are the components of YSC?
- Where is the center located in the building? In your opinion, is this the appropriate location for the center? Why? Why not
- Where did you get your information about YSC?

Are YSC meeting their goal (as measured by behavior and academic support?)

- Has YSC programs influenced student behavior/suspensions? If so, which programs have had the greatest impact and which have had the least? Please be specific in your description.
- Has YSC programs provided academic support for students? If so, which programs have had the greatest impact and which have had the least Please be specific in your description.
- Would you say that YSC is meeting the behavior/suspension and academic goals as outlined by JCPS?
- What services would you say the students and their families use most? Why?
- Does YSC affect student's desire to come to school? If so, in what ways?
- Are there any noticeable differences between the students who participate in YSC and those who do not participate in the YSC? Please explain.
- How has this school changed because of the program? How have the students who participate in YSC changed because of the program?

YSC impact on student-school relations (as measured by behavior and academic support)

- What role do you play in the YSC? Why?
- What role do guidance counselors play in the YSC? Why?
- Please explain the relationship between the guidance counselor and the YSC coordinator.
- Please explain the relationship between you and the YSC coordinator.
- How often would you say you interact with the YSC coordinator? What types of interactions do you have with him/her?
- Would you say that the YSC coordinator is visible in the school? What do you know about the role and responsibilities of the YSC coordinator?
- How has this school changed because of the program? How have the students who participate in the YSC changed because of the program?
- How do other educational priorities (NCLB) influence YSC role and function?



- What is the major challenge/concern that students bring to you? What are their primary needs?

Individual Program design and Student Participation

- Based on your own experience, what would you say are the strengths of this program? What about weaknesses?
- What about dislikes? What are some things you do not like so much about the program?
- In your opinion, what would make the YSC at your school better?
- Name one element of the YSC program at your school that if taken away would hurt the program most?
- What if anything do you think makes this particular program at your school different from some of the other sites?
- Do you think that the program design at this school allows for more student participation? If so, why?
- How many students participate in the program? How many students do you serve daily?

Close

- In your opinion, is the YSC in your school effective? Why or why not?
- What would you say is the most important prerequisite for obtaining this job? In your opinion, what is the most important trait a YSC coordinator should have?
- Is there any thing else you would like to share with me about the YSC?

APPENDIX D: TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH (possibilities, no particular order)

- What is your current position at this school? (teacher/coach/exploratory –music, art, etc)How long have you worked at this school?
- What would you say your primary role/responsibilities are in this school? What is a typical day like for you?

Experiences inside and outside of school

- What types of activities do your students participate in with their families?
- What types of extracurricular activities do your students participate in while at this school?

Family educational background

- What is the educational background of the parents whose families you serve in the program?
- What types of occupations/jobs do your students' parents hold?
- Have you taught any older siblings from the same family? Do you know if these siblings finished high school?

Parental involvement

- How have parents interacted with you throughout their child's education at this school?
- In what other ways are parents involved in your school?
- What types of conversations do you have with your parents about school?
- What do you think are parents' expectations of you as their child's teacher?
- What do you think are their expectations for their child's future?

- What types of conversations do you have with students outside of the school day? (i.e. plans for doing better in school, transitioning to high school)
- How would you describe your student's perception of your expectations concerning them? (high/low, do you know if they think you even care about them)



- If you had to choose a teacher or coach that a student considers his or her favorite, who would it be. Why is he/she a favorite? (How does he/she help students in school?)
- What safeguards are in place at your school to ensure that all students are successful?
- Who do students feel the most comfortable talking to or have the closest relationship with at this school?

Guidance counselors

- How visible is the guidance counselor? How often do students meet with the guidance counselor to talk about their problems/concerns?
- Please explain the relationship between the guidance counselor and students at this school.
- Please explain your relationship with the guidance counselor. How often do you interact with him/her
- What are some of the reasons for your interaction?
- How involved is the guidance counselor with YSC?

YSC Coordinators

- How often do you meet communicate with the coordinator?
- What impact has the YSC coordinator's leadership had on this school?
- What are some things you like or do not like about the programs offered at the YSC?
- What do you consider the most significant role the YSC coordinator plays?
- Please describe your involvement with the YSC.
- In your opinion, what are the key challenges facing the YSC?
- Is the YSC coordinator able to meet the varying needs of the students? How?

Youth Services Centers

Background Knowledge

- Please describe what you know about the YSC.
 - What is your understanding of the requirements for receiving help from YSC?
 - Who is eligible?
 - How hard is it for students to meet these requirements?
 - What are the components of YSC?



- Where is the center located in the building? In your opinion, is this the appropriate location for the center? Why? Why not
- Where did you get your information about YSC?

Are YSC meeting their goal (as measured by behavior and academic support?)

- Has YSC programs influenced student behavior/suspensions? If so, which programs have had the greatest impact and which have had the least? Please be specific in your description.
- Has YSC programs provided academic support for students? If so, which programs have had the greatest impact and which have had the least? Please be specific in your description.
- Would you say that YSC is meeting the behavior/suspension and academic goals as outlined by JCPS?
- What services would you say the students and their families use most? Why?
- Does YSC affect student's desire to come to school? If so, in what ways?
- Are there any noticeable differences between the students who participate in YSC and those who do not participate in the YSC? Please explain.

YSC impact on student-school relations (as measured by behavior and academic support)

- What role do you play in the YSC? Why?
- What role do guidance counselors play in the YSC? Why?
- Please explain the relationship between the guidance counselor and the YSC coordinator.
- Please explain the relationship between you and the YSC coordinator.
- How often would you say you interact with the YSC coordinator? What types of interactions do you have with him/her?
- Would you say that the YSC coordinator is visible in the school? What do you know about the role and responsibilities of the YSC coordinator?
- How has this school changed because of the program? How have the students who participate in the YSC changed because of the program?
- How do other educational priorities (NCLB) influence YSC role and function?

Individual Program design and Student Participation

- Based on your own experience, what would you say are the strengths of this program? What about weaknesses?

- What about dislikes? What are some things you do not like so much about the program?
- In your opinion, what would make the YSC at your school better?
- Name one element of the YSC program at your school that if taken away would hurt the program most?
- What makes the YSC at this school different from others?
- Do you think that the program design at this school allows for more student participation? If so, why?

Close

- In your opinion, is the YSC in your school effective? Why or why not?
- Is there any thing else you would like to share with me about the YSC?

APPENDIX E: SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH (possibilities, no particular order)

- How long have you been employed with JCPS?
- How long have you served as principal for JCPS?
- How long have you been principal of this school?
- What would you say your primary role/responsibilities are in this school? What is a typical day like for you?

Experiences inside and outside of school

- What types of activities do your students and their families participate in together?
- What types of extracurricular activities do your students participate in while at this school?

Family educational background

- What is the educational background of the parents whose families you serve in the program?
- Would you say that most of your students' parents completed high school?
- What types of jobs do your students' parents have?
- Have any older siblings from the same family attended your school? Did these siblings finish high school?

Parental involvement

- How have parents interacted with you throughout their child's education at this school?
- In what other ways are parents involved in your school?
- What types of conversations do you have with your parents about school?
- What do you think are parents' expectations of you as their child's principal?
- What do you think are their expectations for their child's future?
- Do you talk with your students outside of class?
- Do you talk with your students about things other than class work? (i.e. plans for doing better in school, transitioning to high school)
- How would you describe your student's perception of your expectations concerning them? (high/low, do you know if they think you even care about them)

- If you had to choose a teacher or coach that a student considers his or her favorite, who would it be. Why is he/she a favorite? (How does he/she help students in school?)
- What safeguards are in place at your school to ensure that all students are successful?
- Who do students feel the most comfortable talking to or have the closest relationship with at this school?

Guidance counselors

- Do students meet with the guidance counselor to talk about their problems?
- Do students feel they can speak to the guidance counselor about any situation?
- Please explain the relationship between the guidance counselor and students.
- Please explain your relationship with the guidance counselor. How often do you interact with him/her?
- What are some of the reasons for your interaction?
- How involved is the guidance counselor with YSC?

YSC Coordinators

- How well do you know the YSC coordinator?
- How often do you meet or communicate with the coordinator?
- Is the coordinator helpful in providing you with information?
- What kind of impact has the YSC and his/her strategies had on your school?
- What are some things you like or do not like about the programs offered at the YSC?
- What do you consider the most significant role the YSC coordinator plays?
- Please describe your involvement with the YSC.
- In your opinion, what are the key challenges facing the YSC?
- Is the YSC coordinator able to meet the varying needs of the students?

Teachers

- How often would you say you interact with the faculty and support staff at this school? What types of interactions do you have with them?
- How involved are the teachers with the YSC?
- Which members of the faculty/staff s would you say are more likely to be involved with the YSC? Why?



Youth Services Centers

Background Knowledge

- Please describe what you know about the YSC.
 - What is your understanding of the requirements for receiving help from YSC?
 - Who is eligible?
 - How hard is it for students to meet these requirements?
 - What are the components of YSC?
 - Where is the center located in the building? In your opinion, is this the appropriate location for the center? Why? Why not?
 - Where did you get your information about YSC?

Are YSC meeting their goal (as measured by behavior and academic support?)

- Has YSC programs influenced student behavior/suspensions? If so, which programs have had the greatest impact and which have had the least? Please be specific in your description.
- Has YSC programs provided academic support for students? If so, which programs have had the greatest impact and which have had the least? Please be specific in your description.
- Would you say that YSC is meeting the behavior/suspension and academic goals as outlined by JCPS?
- What services would you say the students and their families use most? Why?
- Does YSC affect student's desire to come to school? If so, in what ways?
- Are there any noticeable differences between the students who participate in YSC and those who do not participate in the YSC? Please explain.
- How has this school changed because of the program? How have the students who participate in YSC changed because of the program?

YSC impact on student-school relations (as measured by behavior and academic support)

- What role do you play in the YSC? Why?
- What role do guidance counselors play in the YSC? Why?
- Please explain the relationship between the guidance counselor and the YSC coordinator.
- Please explain the relationship between you and the YSC coordinator.
- How often would you say you interact with the YSC coordinator? What types of interactions do you have with him/her?



- Would you say that the YSC coordinator is visible in the school? What do you know about the role and responsibilities of the YSC coordinator?
- How has this school changed because of the program? How have the students who participate in the YSC changed because of the program?
- How do other educational priorities (NCLB) influence YSC role and function?
- What is the major challenge/concern that students bring to you? What are their primary needs?

Individual Program design and Student Participation

- Based on your own experience, what would you say are the strengths of this program? What about weaknesses?
- What about dislikes? What are some things you do not like so much about the program?
- In your opinion, what would make the YSC at your school better?
- Name one element of the YSC program at your school that if taken away would hurt the program most?
- What if anything do you think makes this particular program at your school different from some of the other sites?
- Do you think that the program design at this school allows for more student participation? If so, why?
- How many students participate in the program? How many students do you serve daily?

Close

- In your opinion, is the YSC in your school effective? Why or why not?
- What would you say is the most important prerequisite for obtaining this job? In your opinion, what is the most important trait a YSC coordinator should have?
- Is there any thing else you would like to share with me about the YSC?

APPENDIX F: DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF FRYSC INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

- How long have you been employed with JCPS?
- How long have you served as the FRYSC director?
- What was your previous role with JCPS?
- What would you say your primary role/responsibilities are in your current professional role? What is a typical day like for you?

Guidance counselors

- What do you see the role of the guidance counselor with the YSC?
- Please explain the relationship between the YSC coordinator and the guidance counselor. How often do think they interact?
- What are some of the reasons for their interaction?
- In your opinion, should the guidance counselor be involved with the YSC? Please explain.

YSC Coordinators

- How often do you meet or communicate with the coordinators?
- Is the coordinator helpful in providing you with information?
- What are some things you like about the programs offered at the YSC?
- What are some things you do not like about the programs offered at the YSC?
- What do you consider the most significant role the YSC coordinator plays?
- What are the requirements/qualifications of the YSC coordinators? What specific qualities are you looking for when hiring a coordinator?
- In your opinion, what are the key challenges facing the YSC?
- Is the YSC coordinator able to meet the varying needs of the students?

Teachers

- How often would you say you interact with the faculty and support staff at each school? What types of interactions do you have with them?
- How involved are the teachers with the YSC?
- Which members of the faculty/staff s would you say are more likely to be involved with the YSC? Why?

Youth Services Centers

Background Knowledge

- Please describe what you know about the YSC.
 - What is your understanding of the requirements for receiving help from YSC?
 - Who is eligible?
 - How hard is it for students to meet these requirements?
 - What are the components of YSC?
 - Where is the center located in the building? In your opinion, is this the appropriate location for the center? Why? Why not?
 - Where did you get your information about YSC?

Are YSC meeting their goal (as measured by behavior and academic support?)

- Has YSC programs influenced student behavior/suspensions? If so, which programs have had the greatest impact and which have had the least? Please be specific in your description.
- Has YSC programs provided academic support for students? If so, which programs have had the greatest impact and which have had the least? Please be specific in your description.
- Would you say that YSC is meeting the behavior/suspension and academic goals as outlined by JCPS?
- What services would you say the students and their families use most? Why?
- Does YSC affect student's desire to come to school? If so, in what ways?
- Are there any noticeable differences between the students who participate in YSC and those who do not participate in the YSC? Please explain.
- How has this school changed because of the program? How have the students who participate in YSC changed because of the program?

YSC impact on student-school relations (as measured by behavior and academic support)

- What role do you play in the YSC? Why?
- What role do guidance counselors play in the YSC? Why?
- Please explain the relationship between the guidance counselor and the YSC coordinator.
- Please explain the relationship between you and the YSC coordinator.
- How often would you say you interact with the YSC coordinator? What types of interactions do you have with him/her?



- Would you say that the YSC coordinator is visible in the school? What do you know about the role and responsibilities of the YSC coordinator?
- How has this school changed because of the program? How have the students who participate in the YSC changed because of the program?
- How do other educational priorities (NCLB) influence YSC role and function?
- What is the major challenge/concern that students bring to you? What are their primary needs?

Individual Program design and Student Participation

- Based on your own experience, what would you say are the strengths of this program? What about weaknesses?
- What about dislikes? What are some things you do not like so much about the program?
- In your opinion, what would make the YSC at your school better?
- Name one element of the YSC program at your school that if taken away would hurt the program most?
- What if anything do you think makes this particular program at your school different from some of the other sites?
- Do you think that the program design at this school allows for more student participation? If so, why?
- How many students participate in the program? How many students do you serve daily?

Close

- In your opinion, is the YSC in your school effective? Why or why not?
- What would you say is the most important prerequisite for obtaining this job? In your opinion, what is the most important trait a YSC coordinator should have?
- Is there any thing else you would like to share with me about the YSC?



APPENDIX G: District Youth Services Center Referrals Data

Referral Type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Attendance	931	1062	2127	2313	2265	2179	2335	3251	2561	1968	320	8	22670
Basic Needs	1265	4500	3674	3574	3341	3509	2673	3107	2913	2273	1573	19	32336
Student Recognition	2	18	579	51	62	243	61	141	129	389	155	10	1830
Transportation	14	187	146	213	198	196	260	279	235	329	232	2	2341
Behavior Problems	25	433	747	345	309	635	770	11017	960	608	300	1	7200
After School Program	35	574	407	699	695	479	385	639	502	392	237	35	5096
Life Skills	111	71	143	229	233	270	281	291	232	221	88	1	2121
Peer Relations	5	233	397	446	447	385	317	433	540	367	1030	1	3321
Prevention Activity	1	55	83	126	75	115	57	204	267	142	113	0	1303
Acad Supplies/ Issues	435	11912	2180	2584	1935	11910	1827	3170	2117	1533	933	43	20636
Employment	3	35	30	87	90	43	40	43	65	36	33	1	514
Mentoring	7	91	129	277	315	362	390	459	336	259	67	1	2743
Parent/child Activity	13	0	1	4	13	0	0	9	10	3	1	0	54
Transition Program	73	342	35	73	92	174	23	37	63	36	32	0	820
Adult/child Protect	2	34	45	39	45	30	42	53	35	62	37	4	473
Crisis Intervention	25	197	284	317	235	229	230	242	251	211	94	0	2456
Drugs & Alcohol	2	53	27	46	31	20	14	19	34	20	7	0	275
Health Services	39	604	624	537	592	427	615	632	740	414	159	27	5530
Mental Health	25	325	658	789	625	447	537	639	641	434	257	23	5447
Adult Educ	0	3	7	6	3	4	9	4	8	4	0	0	43
Birth to 3 Families	0	1	8	36	14	6	10	139	35	12	3	7	231
Child Care	12	52	19	16	14	65	7	121	7	8	7	0	323
Free Lunch Assist	20	435	536	209	56	137	90	20	12	11	5	2	1533
Legal/ Criminal Issue	3	43	45	62	43	31	44	60	62	26	20	0	450
Parent Contact	1503	2410	2496	2332	2420	2650	1991	2769	2524	1582	995	52	26779
Parent Involvement	180	342	334	207	271	163	79	223	161	160	77	5	2255
Parent Teacher Conf	0	12	30	53	25	13	19	24	10	5	4	0	200
Parenting Skills	1	5	32	9	14	10	27	7	5	7	3	0	97
PIVA Support	81	74	43	13	12	6	14	11	16	1	0	6	282



APPENDIX H: Panther Creek Magnet Middle YSC Referral Data

Referral Type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Attendance	23	9	36	33	26	23	38	61	42	31	8	0	335
Basic Needs	5	177	175	240	193	185	200	351	190	120	77	0	1913
Student Recognition	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Transportation	0	2	0	3	1	1	2	6	5	7	4	0	31
Behavior Problems	3	23	35	29	14	19	35	24	21	14	7	0	229
After School Program	0	8	3	3	2	2	2	5	5	1	1	0	32
Life Skills	0	3	0	0	3	1	2	1	3	0	0	0	13
Peer Relations	1	16	19	8	8	5	12	10	25	8	5	0	117
Acad Status/Issues	1	15	10	18	15	12	13	16	13	5	8	0	126
Employment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Mentoring	0	0	1	5	0	1	0	0	3	2	0	0	12
Transition Program	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
Adult/Child Protect	0	1	2	1	2	0	0	5	1	5	0	0	17
Crisis Intervention	1	5	6	4	5	2	4	5	10	5	3	0	50
Drug & Alcohol	0	4	2	4	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	12
Health Services	3	23	22	29	13	16	18	16	11	11	4	0	174
Mental Health	2	23	27	17	3	5	16	17	7	9	2	0	133
Adult Education	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Child Care	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
After School Assist	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Legal/Criminal Issue	0	0	0	3	1	4	3	3	1	2	0	0	17
Parent Contact	25	54	75	76	35	39	59	73	51	23	19	0	529
Parent Involvement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Parent Teacher Conf	0	1	0	0	0	2	5	2	1	1	0	0	12
Parenting Skills	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

**APPENDIX I: North Ridge Middle YSC Referral Data**

Referral Type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Attendance	6	13	5	0	6	16	21	3	19	3	0	0	92
Basic Needs	28	83	64	26	34	28	35	58	78	41	13	0	488
Student Recognition	0	7	34	35	32	38	47	73	79	61	67	0	473
Transportation	0	0	3	17	3	3	2	11	7	6	6	0	58
Behavior Problems	1	10	31	19	17	20	30	22	37	15	6	0	208
After School Program	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Life Skills	0	0	0	1	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
Peer Relations	0	9	12	8	10	10	12	20	38	12	10	0	141
Acad Supp/Issues	0	1	78	53	5	4	7	45	7	6	0	0	206
Employment	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Mentoring	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Adult/Child Protect	0	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	1	0	8
Crisis Intervention	0	2	2	2	4	3	0	7	2	1	2	0	25
Health Services	4	12	6	10	5	29	6	5	6	14	8	0	105
Free Lunch Assist	0	0	11	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	16
Parent Contact	30	58	47	42	36	23	30	25	23	25	5	0	344

APPENDIX J: Timber Drive Middle YSC Referral Data

Referral Type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Attendance	0	6	14	27	43	11	13	43	15	8	11	0	191
Basic Needs	25	63	49	44	63	76	49	50	79	56	43	0	597
Student Recognition	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
Transportation	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	6
Behavior Problems	0	7	24	30	43	23	31	34	25	27	13	0	259
After School Program	0	3	5	18	5	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	36
Life Skills	0	3	0	0	0	4	5	4	5	10	3	0	39
Peer Relations	0	12	19	2	15	22	16	33	34	23	11	0	197
Prevention Activity	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	1	0	3	0	9
Acad Supp/ Issues	0	11	21	44	54	11	27	44	35	13	15	0	280
Mentoring	0	3	14	15	13	3	12	9	8	6	2	0	85
Transition Program	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Adult/Child Protect	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	7
Crisis Intervention	0	1	6	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	2	0	20
Drug & Alcohol	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
Health Services	0	6	17	9	3	2	6	11	9	12	9	0	84
Mental Health	0	0	10	6	2	11	16	24	15	14	6	0	104
Free Lunch Assist	0	2	2	0	13	7	0	0	0	1	2	0	27
Legal/Criminal Issue	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	0	7
Parent Contact	25	43	31	31	69	45	24	45	23	8	13	0	362



Parent Involvement	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Parent Teacher Conf	0	1	0	5	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	11
Parenting Skills	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1



APPENDIX K: Programs and Services offered at Panther Creek Middle

- On site school-based counseling services
- Assistance with uniforms and school supplies
- Referrals to health and social services agencies for parents
- On site immunizations
- On site physicals (including sports physicals for participation on school teams)
- Referrals to after school programs, activities, and camps
- Free after school program
- Family crisis assistance
- Preparation for Employment programs
- Reality store (provided by the 4H)
- Family Fun activities
- Novemberfest
- Literacy Night
- Tiger Pride Night
- Adult Education/ GED assistance
- Referrals to community tutoring sites
- Attendance assistance
- On site conflict resolution for students
- Mentoring program
- Sons of Issachar (after school program for boys)
- Beta Club
- Girl Power
- PACS Now
- Dance Team
- Red Ribbon Week
- TARC tickets for students
- Drug and Alcohol counseling



APPENDIX L: Programs and Services offered at North Ridge Middle

- Attendance support
- Promoting Education, Achievement, Compassion and Encouragement (PEACE) Comprehensive Mental Wellness Program
- Eighth Grade College and Career Exploration Day
- Sports Physicals Clinic
- Character Education Groups
- Lending Library
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters (school-based mentoring)
- Youth Services Center Student Advisory Program
- Youth Services Center Lending Library
- Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)
- Dental, Immunization and Physicals clinics
- Caught Doing Good student recognition program
- Service learning opportunities
- Youth Services Center monthly newsletter
- Transitions (middle school transition program)
- Parent support and seminars
- Teen Youth Program of Encouragement (TYPE)
- Community resource information and referrals
- Boys to Men program activities
- Basic needs assistance
- Every 1 Reads Book Buddy Program
- Peer Mediation program
- 7th Grade Junior Achievement
- Men of Quality program
- Girl Power program
- Babysitting clinic
- Health Information and referrals



- 6th Grade Middle School Survival information workshops
- Tutoring program referrals
- Dare to Care food drive
- Dare to Share program
- Blue Apple Players drama club
- College Day Out program
- Young Ladies Like Us retreat

APPENDIX M: Programs and Services offered at Timber Drive Middle

- Health services and referrals
- Family crisis and mental health counseling and referrals
- Drug and alcohol counseling and referrals
- Educational support
- Character Education
- Basic needs (school supplies, food, etc.)
- Classes for parents
- Holiday assistance
- Reading programs and activities
- Tobacco prevention
- Family Fun Nights
- After school and/or summer program
- Peer mediation
- Conflict resolution
- Service learning
- Career information
- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Back to School event
- Newsletters