Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency

School Success Program

Evaluation Report: 2009-2011 School Years

School of Social Work
Curtis Center Program Evaluation Group

Program Evaluation Team

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Purpose of the Report

The report was written to provide program staff and external stakeholders with results from an analysis of pre-existing School Success program data derived the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years. This report includes an overview of the School Success program, the service area/participating schools, student demographics, reasons for referral to the program, agencies contacted or involved with students, and academic improvement and parental involvement status at program end.

Program Overview

The School Success Program began to form in 1991 in response to discussions between Local Agency Executives who noted their mutual involvement with families. Discussions were held among these Executives at local Community Collaborative meetings and it was determined that if success was to be seen with these families, all would have to cooperate and contribute financially. This executive Collaboration provided the idea and the funding commitment to the local Prevention Council and in doing so, tasked them to build this prevention program. The council found that chronic poverty, unemployment, juvenile delinquency, domestic violence, teen pregnancy, abuse/neglect of children as well as lack of parent education were not only interrelated, but also shared a common factor, a link to SCHOOL FAILURE. In 1993, NEMCSA became the program fiduciary to implement the School Success Program.

The School Success Program serves school-aged children and youth in all grade levels, from Pre-kindergarten through 12th Grade. The program is currently active in nineteen (19) public school locations within seven (7) school districts in the following northeastern Michigan counties: Alpena, Cheboygan, Montmorency, and Otsego.

The program is designed to serve students who are at-risk for academic failure. The students are referred to School Success by teachers, school counselors, community-based providers, parents, and school administrators. Presenting issues include crisis, withdrawn, aggressive, untended, having academic need, or school attendance issues.

Students served by the program experience issues that can affect school performance and create barriers to academic success: family issues (divorce, unemployment, death), attitude issues about attending school, behavioral issues, transitional issues, unmet mental health needs, and unmet medical needs. School failure has been linked to chronic poverty, unemployment, juvenile delinquency, domestic violence, teen pregnancy, child abuse and neglect, and a lack of parent education. The program focuses on managing and ameliorating issues that can alter a student's trajectory toward high school graduation and college access.

Program funding sources currently include: Youth and Recreation Grant, Catholic Human services, Juvenile Court, Community Service Block Grant, Title One, School General Fund, Blended Fund, Community Foundation, and carryover funds from Strong Family Safe Children.

The School Success Liaisons are trained and experienced resource navigators, with BSWs, MSWs, or another relevant human service degree. They provide direct and ongoing assistance to students, parents, and teachers by remedying and managing a student's problems and issues by setting specific short and long-term goals and case coordination.

The School Success program includes these major services: initial planning meeting with parents/guardians, case planning, home visits, weekly student meeting, contact with parents/guardians every two weeks, referrals to other service providers, case closure, case follow-up, and community presentations.

At the end of School Success Program services, students are expected to meet school attendance policy (as evidenced by an increase in attendance), comply with school behavior policy (as evidenced by a decrease in behavioral incidents and suspensions), meet education gain expectations and graduate on time. Parents are expected to increase their involvement in their child's education as evidenced by participation in parent teacher meetings, providing homework help, attending school-related functions, and fully communicating with the school.

Data Collection Process

Data for this report was collected by School Success Workers on paper as services were delivered. Intake data and closing data were including in this program review. Contact data was not a part of this study. The data was entered and analyzed by University of Michigan program evaluation staff, using statistical analysis software SPSS V19.

The data was analyzed to better understand reasons for referral, other agencies involved with students, and to begin to understand changes in academic status and parental involvement upon program completion.

The data was de-identified; an evaluation number was assigned to each student to follow human subject protections. The evaluation was reviewed by the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board as a non-regulated status continuous quality improvement program evaluation study.
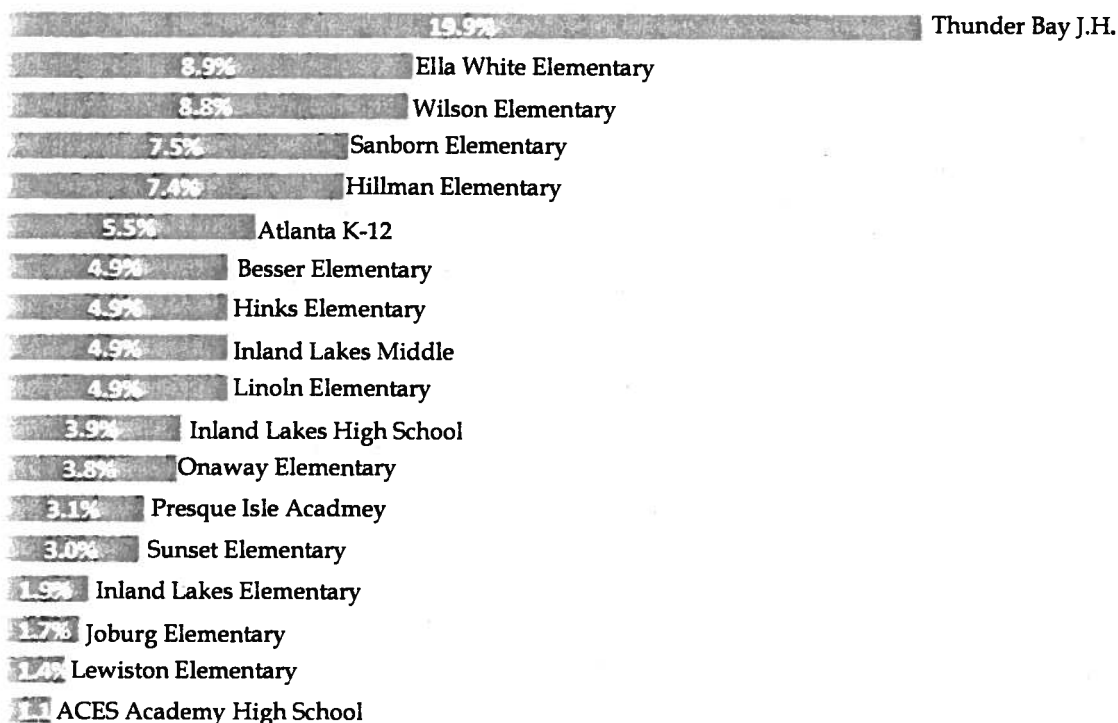
Numbers Served

Six hundred and thirty seven (637) case files were analyzed, representing five-hundred and eighty (580) students who were served during two school years: 2009-2010 and 2010-2011.

Host Schools

The School Success program currently provides services in nineteen (19) different schools located in the counties of Alpena, Cheboygan, Montmorency, Otsego and Presque Isle. Close to 20% of the School Success case load is represented by students enrolled at Thunder Bay Junior High (19.9%).

Figure 1. School Success is serving students in 19 public schools across northeast Michigan

School	Percentage
Thunder Bay J.H.	19.9%
Ella White Elementary	8.9%
Wilson Elementary	8.8%
Sanborn Elementary	7.5%
Hillman Elementary	7.4%
Atlanta K-12	5.5%
Besser Elementary	4.9%
Hinks Elementary	4.9%
Inland Lakes Middle	4.9%
Linoln Elementary	4.9%
Inland Lakes High School	3.9%
Onaway Elementary	3.8%
Presque Isle Acadmey	3.1%
Sunset Elementary	3.0%
Inland Lakes Elementary	1.9%
Joburg Elementary	1.7%
Lewiston Elementary	1.4%
ACES Academy High School	

STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR REDUCED PRICED LUNCH 2012

Cheboygan

Presque Isle

Otsego   Montmorency   Alpena

Alcona

● School Success Locations

% Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch

50.2% - 50.6%
50.7% - 52.8%
52.9% - 60.5%
60.6% - 64.7%

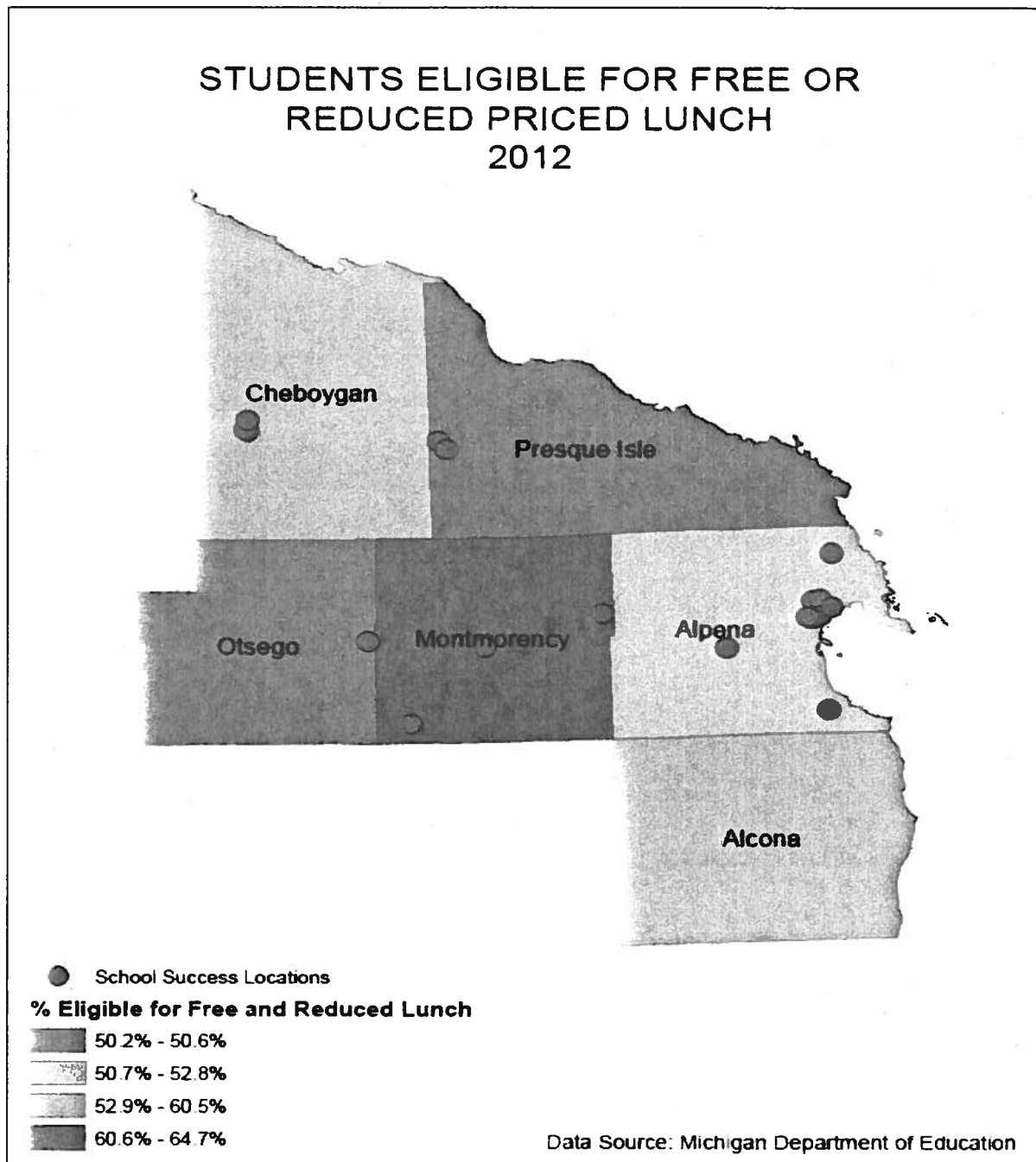Data Source: Michigan Department of Education

Figure 2. Proxy for poverty layered with School Success school locations

This ArcGIS map was developed to layer a proxy measure of poverty over the locations of the School Success program. A large percentage of Alcona County students are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program but do not have access to School Success. Students and families residing in this county could benefit from the School Success Program.

Student Demographics

School Success data collected for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years show that 58.2% of clients were male, with the remaining 41.8% female (Figure 3).

School Success Program students were served while enrolled in Pre-K to 12th grade. The majority of students were in the fourth (4th) and seventh (7th) grades at 11.3%.

The students least represented on the School Success Program case load were the high school students (9th to 12th grade).

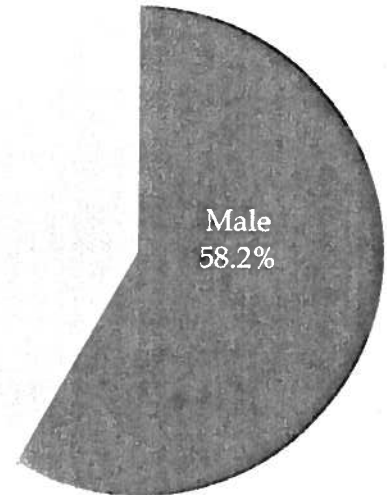Figure 3. A majority of School Success students are male

Male
58.2%

Figure 4: A majority of School Success students are in elementary and middle schools.

Grade	Percent
4th Grade	11.5%
7th Grade	11.3%
1st Grade	10.7%
3rd Grade	10.4%
6th Grade	10.2%
5th Grade	9.9%
8th Grade	8.8%
Kindergarten	8.6%
2nd Grade	7.8%
10th Grade	3.9%
9th Grade	3.0%
12th Grade	1.6%
11 Grade	1.3%
Pre-K	0.9%
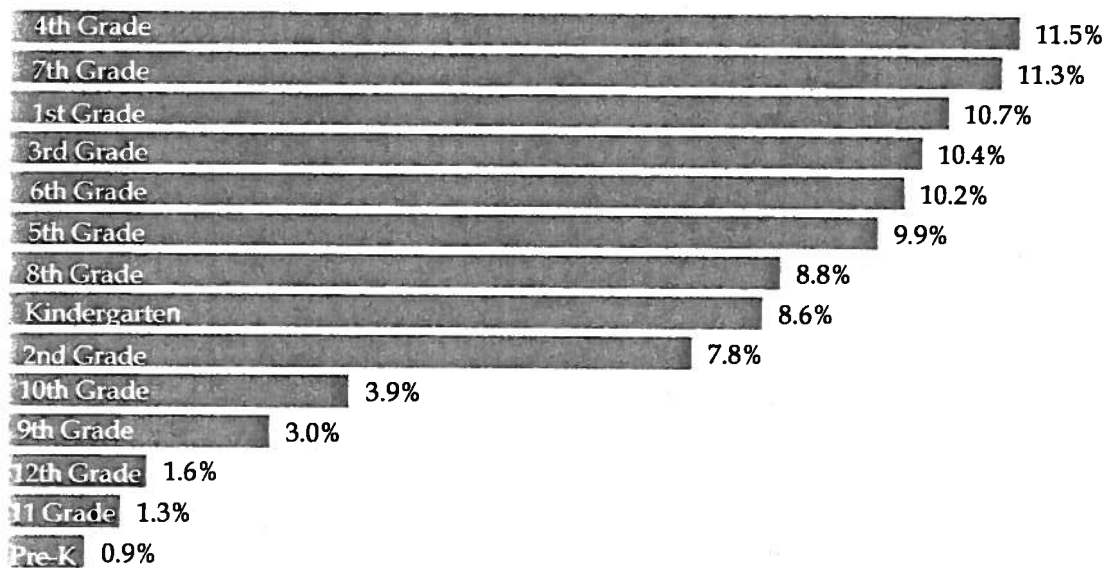
Figure 5. Number of students in School Success by grade level

Grade	Count
Pre-K	5
Kindergarten	55
1st Grade	68
2nd Grade	50
3rd Grade	66
4th Grade	73
5th Grade	63
6th Grade	65
7th Grade	72
8th Grade	56
9th Grade	19
10th Grade	25
11th Grade	8
12th Grade	10
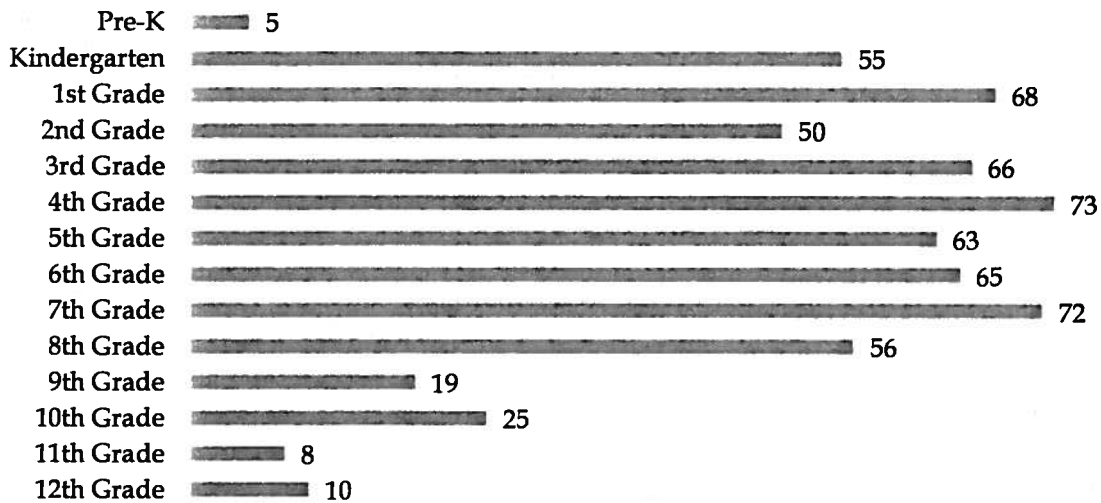
Reason for Referral

The main reason for a referral to the School Success program in the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years were for crisis concerns (28.1%). This was followed by aggression (23.2%), attendance concerns (18.5%), academic concerns (17.7%), and student withdrawal (9.1%). In addition, 6.8% of students were classified as untended, which includes students who may be in a various states of neglect. However, there were some discrepancies with this data due to inconsistencies in how the workers indicated the reasons for referral. Some School Success workers only indicated one reason for referral, while a small subset noted more than one issue. In addition many workers reported "other" as a reason for referral; this category included many different reasons including anger, issues with bullying, mental health issues, social issues, and issues with self-esteem.

Figure 6: A majority of students referred to School Success are in crisis.

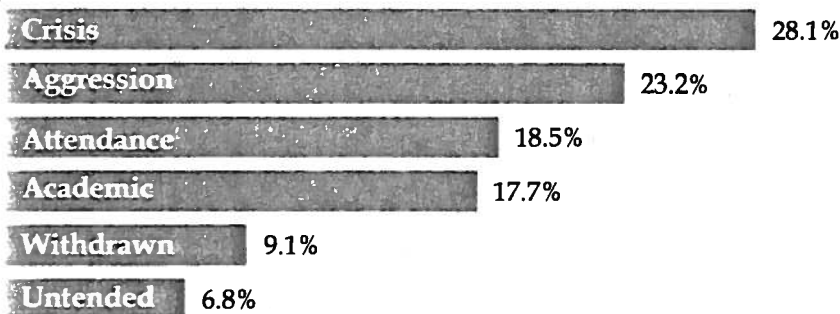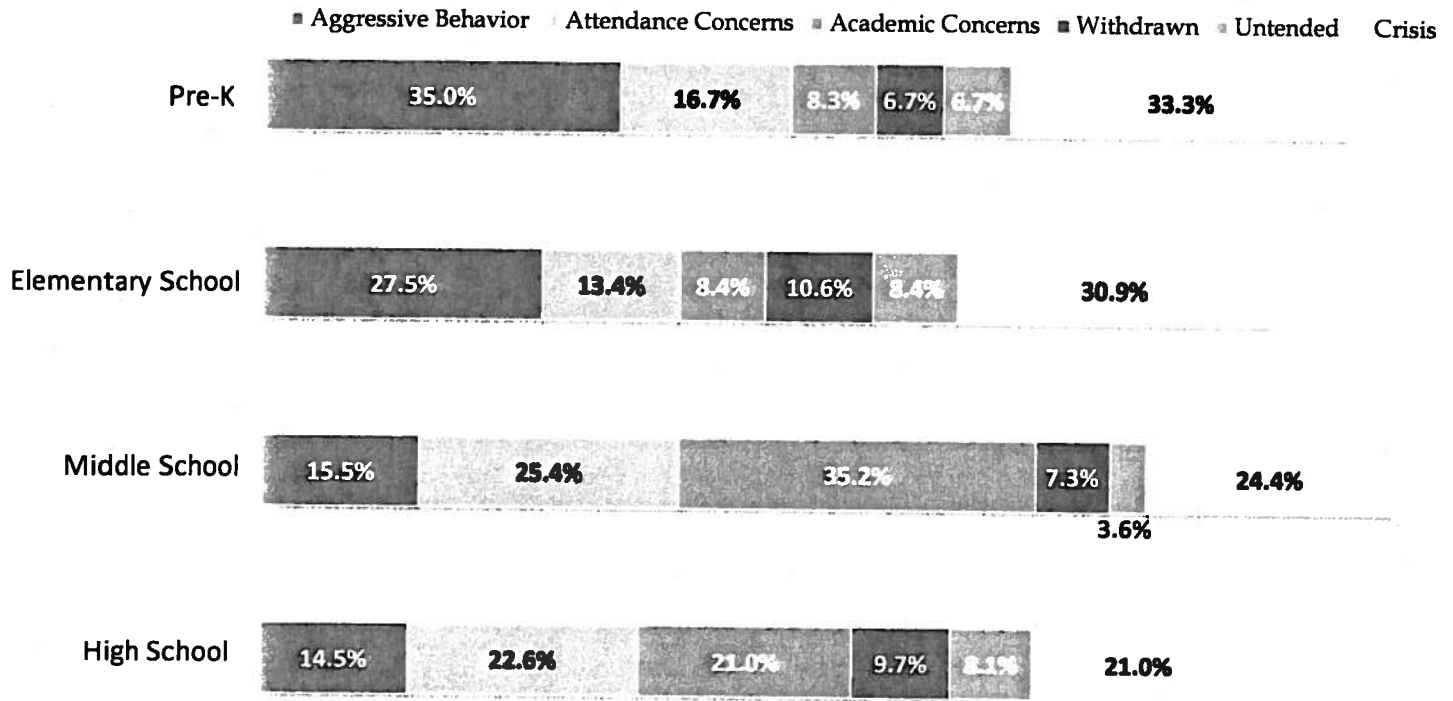| Reason	Percentage
Crisis	28.1%
Aggression	23.2%
Attendance	18.5%
Academic	17.7%
Withdrawn	9.1%
Untended	6.8%

Figure 7 displays the patterns for referral reason by school level. Younger children were largely referred because of concerns with aggressive behavior however this trend starts to decline by 11th Grade. Similarly, referral for academic concerns is low in the younger age groups and seems to increase as the students get older.

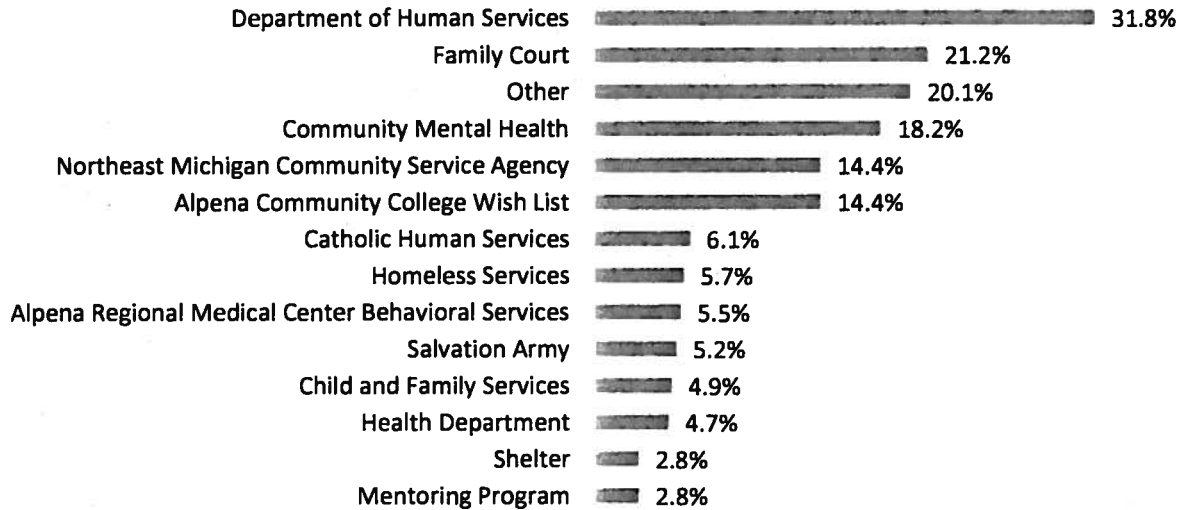**Figure 7: Aggressive Behavior referrals are higher among younger students.**
*Percent's may be greater than 100, due to students being referred with more than one area of concern.

Legend: Aggressive Behavior | Attendance Concerns | Academic Concerns | Withdrawn | Untended | Crisis

School Level	Aggressive Behavior	Attendance Concerns	Academic Concerns	Withdrawn	Untended	Crisis
Pre-K	35.0%	16.7%	8.3%	6.7%	6.7%	33.3%
Elementary School	27.5%	13.4%	8.4%	10.6%	8.4%	30.9%
Middle School	15.5%	25.4%	35.2%	7.3%	3.6%	24.4%
High School	14.5%	22.6%	21.0%	9.7%	8.1%	21.0%

Agencies Contacted or Involved with Child through School Success

The School Success Liaisons work closely with community-based public and private agencies to meet the needs of students and families. Figure 8 presents the percentage of students involved with these organizations.

Figure 8: Local organizations partner with School Success to meet student needs.

| Organization	Percentage
Department of Human Services	31.8%
Family Court	21.2%
Other	20.1%
Community Mental Health	18.2%
Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency	14.4%
Alpena Community College Wish List	14.4%
Catholic Human Services	6.1%
Homeless Services	5.7%
Alpena Regional Medical Center Behavioral Services	5.5%
Salvation Army	5.2%
Child and Family Services	4.9%
Health Department	4.7%
Shelter	2.8%
Mentoring Program	2.8%

Students referred because of **crisis circumstances** most frequently came into contact with the Department of Human Services, Community Mental Health, Family Court, and Private Practitioners/Counselors.

Figure 9: Agencies most frequently involved with students referred for crisis situations

| Agency	Percentage
Family Court	31.80%
Community Mental Health	25.10%
Department of Human Services	23.50%
Private Practitioner/Counselor	23.50%

Students referred for **aggressive behavior** were most frequently involved with the Alpena, Montmorency, Alcona Educational Service District, Community Mental Health, and Private Practitioners/Counselors.

Figure 10: Agencies most frequently involved with students referred for aggressive behaviors

Alpena Montmorency Alcona Educational Service District	29.10%
Community Mental Health	25.70%
Private Practitioner/Counselor	23.60%
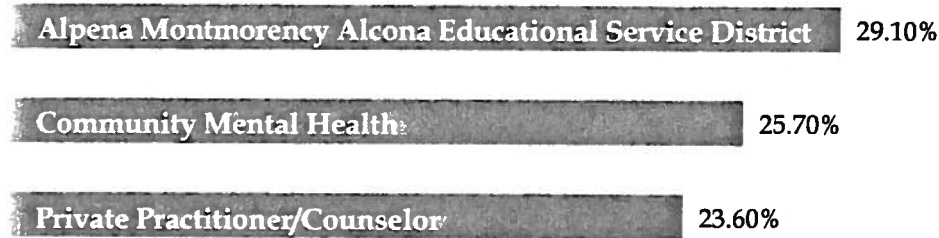
Students referred for **attendance concerns** were most likely to be involved the with AMA Educational Service District, Private Practitioners/Counselors, and "other services", which included organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters, law enforcement, Wrap Around, and WIC.

Figure 11: Agencies most frequently involved with students referred for attendance concerns

Private Practitioner/Counselor	29.70%
Non-Profit Organizations	28.80%
Alpena Montmorency Alcona Educational Service District	24.60%
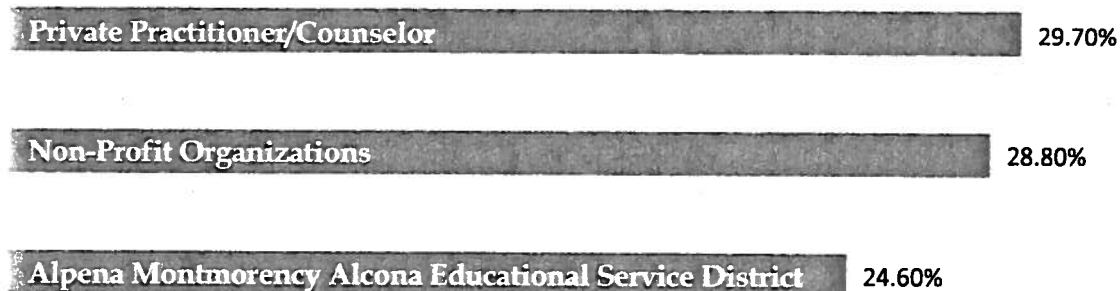
Academic Improvement (School Success Expected Outcome)

Overall, 64.8% of students improved academically while in the program. Academic improvement rates were similar across referral source areas. The highest percentage of students demonstrating academic improvement were students referred for issues of withdrawal (87.8%) and the lowest academic improvement was reported for students in crisis (76.8%). Over eighty percent (82.7%) of students referred to School Success for academic concerns improved academically by program completion.

Figure 14: Students referred for academic concerns that showed academic improvement upon program completion

Withdrawn	87.80%
Attendance	86.50%
Aggression	86.10%
Academic	82.70%
Untended	82.60%
Crisis	76.80%
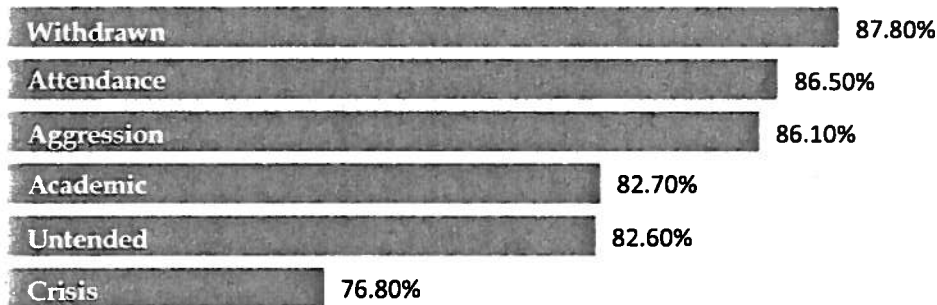
To better understand who was improving academically, bi-variate statistics were generated to explore associations between student gender, grade level, and preschool attendance. There were no statistically significant differences with academic improvement.

Figure 12 indicates that 81.5% of all students improved academically at the end of the program. Figure 13 indicates that the students referred for academic concerns performance was similar to the total group (referral for academic concerns was not associated with academic improvement).
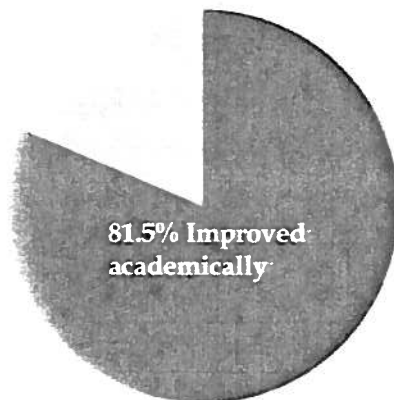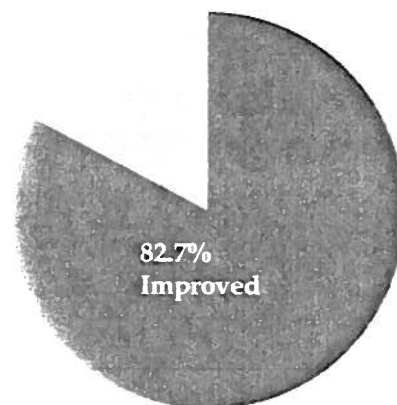
Figure 12: All Students

81.5% Improved academically

Figure 13: Student's referred for academic concerns

82.7% Improved

Change in Parental Involvement (School Success Expected Outcome)

Over 62% of the parents increased their involvement in their child's education. Parents, whose child was referred for academic concerns, showed the most involvement (75.9%), refer to Figure 16.

Figure 15: Over 62% of Parents Increased Parental Involvement at End of School Success Services
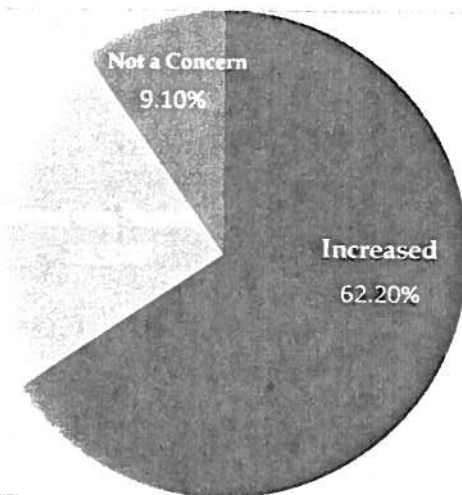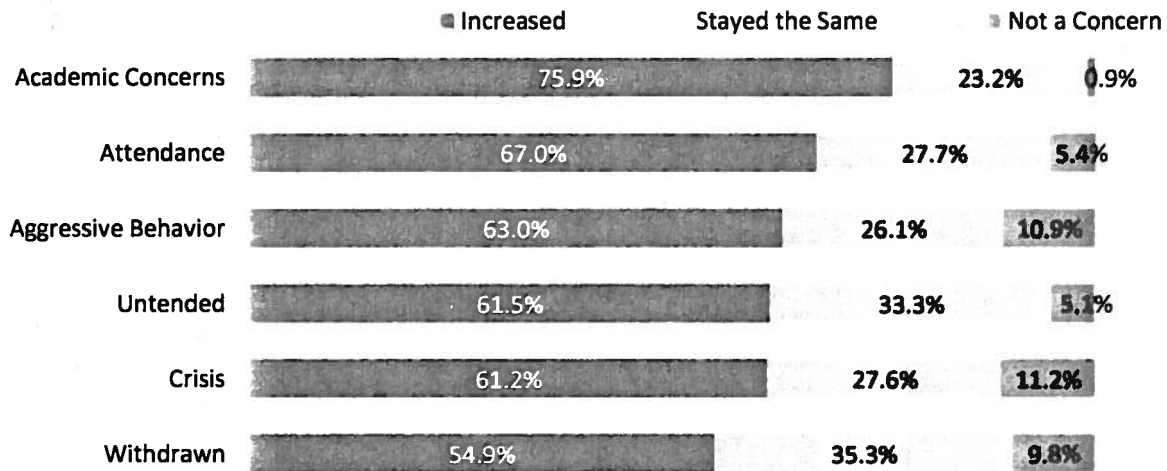
Figure 17: Parental Involvement Improvement Greatest for Students Referred for Academic Concerns

	Increased	Stayed the Same	Not a Concern
Academic Concerns	75.9%	23.2%	0.9%
Attendance	67.0%	27.7%	5.4%
Aggressive Behavior	63.0%	26.1%	10.9%
Untended	61.5%	33.3%	5.1%
Crisis	61.2%	27.6%	11.2%
Withdrawn	54.9%	35.3%	9.8%

Limitations, Next Steps

The analysis of pre-existing program data was informative as a first step in documenting the students, their reasons for referrals, involvement with community agencies, and two immediate outcomes. The program forms were completed by the School Success Liaisons.

Phase two of the evaluation will include a more in-depth review of School Success Liaison services provided, the addition of standardized scales to capture outcome attainment at program end and post-program. The voice of the students, parents and teachers need to be included as well.