

ABSTRACT:
RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ABOUT
THE YOUTH FOR POSITIVE CHANGE PROGRAM

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Program Evaluation and Research Branch
Planning, Assessment, and Research Division Publication No. 208

June 23, 2004

Purpose: Provide data on issues surrounding the Youth for Positive Change (YPC) program raised by Board Member Korenstein in her April 27, 2004 memo to Ted Bartelli and Hector Madrigal. PERB was asked to determine whether on-campus intervention provided by YPC program recaptures Average Daily Attendance (ADA) by providing in-school, on-campus intervention rather than out-of school, off-campus suspensions, and stems recidivism, as students actively participate in the disciplinary process. We focused on the following data sources: 1) number of suspensions, 2) attendance rates, and 3) crimes per thousand students, enrolled.

The YPC program is being used in three high school in LAUSD. Verdugo Hills High School is the model school site, with Venice High School and Belmont High School being project demonstration sites.

The program is described as:

A 501 (c) 3 non-profit association that promotes healthier living, promotes living physically, mentally, and socially. The organization services youth ages 12-25 in the secondary campuses. The organization achieves this goal by implementing Student-to-Student Assistance Programs: Peer Mediation – Conflict Resolution, Peer Counseling/Peer Mentoring, Preventative Health Programs and Community Youth Health and Leadership Initiative Symposiums that empower youth.

- Basic tenet of the program is to address disciplinary issues through a progressive model of discipline.
- Students are taught to acknowledge problematic behavior, given tools to modify behavior and take ownership of consequences.
- The goal is met by primarily using peer mentoring and counseling, in school intervention and Saturday school instead of out of school suspension.

Verdugo Hills High School began using the program in the 1998-99 school year, and the program is now operating full-time (32 hours per week).

In order to assess whether the YPC Program at Verdugo Hills High School is having an impact on suspensions, attendance, and/or crime rates, we gathered data from LAUSD's Decision Support System (DSS), the School Information Branch, and the Los Angeles School Police Department. We used the School Characteristics Index (SCI) to identify comparison schools similar to those using the YPC Program. The characteristics used to calculate the SCI include student mobility, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, as well as a school's percentage of emergency and fully credentialed teachers, percentage of English language learners, average class size, and multi-track year round educational program participation. The index can be interpreted as representing that part of performance attributable to background variables. Thus, schools with indexes close in numerical value are described as facing similar overall educational challenges and opportunities. Table 2 shows the

Question 1: Does participation in the YPC Program lead to fewer suspensions and stem recidivism?

- Verdugo Hills High School suspension rate has the lowest rate among its comparison schools from 1998-2003.
 - Cleveland, Kennedy, Grant and Van Nuys
- Verdugo Hills also has the lowest recidivism among its comparison schools from 2001-2003.

Question 2: Does participation in the YPC program lead to higher attendance rates and subsequently, higher ADA?

- Verdugo Hills had the highest attendance rate among its comparison schools from 2001-2003.

Conclusion

The YPC program has been implemented at Verdugo Hills High School since 1998. To date, the school has seen a reduction in out of school suspensions and number of crimes per thousand students, as well as an increase in attendance since the program's inception. The model put forth by YPC, where on campus intervention and suspension are used to address disciplinary and behavior, appears to be effective at this school.