

"THE PARTNERSHIP"



CAYUGA COUNTY SAFE SCHOOLS/ HEALTHY STUDENTS PARTNERSHIP

Key Findings from the Independent Evaluation

December 2002

PUBLISHED BY  EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, INC.

Volume 3, Number 2

THE PARTNERSHIP HAS SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCED THE DELIVERY OF NEEDED PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND IMPROVED THE OUTCOMES OF TARGETED STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

Since the Fall of 2000, the Cayuga County Safe Schools/Healthy Students Partnership has been implementing innovative programs and services designed to enhance the multi-agency service delivery system for youth at-risk in targeted school districts in Cayuga County. To this end, key county-level and local agencies have worked collaboratively to roll-out, govern, and implement these initiatives. Indeed, one of the major outcomes sought by the authorizing legislation to fund these programs is the improved efficiency of local mental health, substance/alcohol abuse, violence prevention, and educational program delivery.

In this edition of *The Partnership*, we report on a number of findings that appear to be influenced by the coordination of selected prevention and intervention programs implemented by the Cayuga County Safe Schools/Healthy Students Partnership and their impact on targeted students. We also discuss the commitment of lead agencies in becoming involved in the oversight and sustainability of SS/HS programs.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

There is no one right way to govern and manage a multi-agency, collaborative venture, such as the Cayuga County Safe Schools/Healthy Students Partnership. Successful initiatives emerge from a process that builds consensus and shared ownership. It evolves from systematic, careful planning and forward movement. The sharper and more collaborative the planning and decision-making process, the more smooth and successful the implementation of programs and services will be. Among the critical governance and management variables that the independent evaluation focused on were: 1) the active participation of human service agency and educational leaders in project management, 2) the extent to which programs and services become integrated into the standard

ABOUT THE EVALUATION...

MAGI Educational Services, Inc. is conducting the external evaluation of the Cayuga County Safe Schools Healthy Students Partnership. The data used to report evaluation findings presented in this newsletter come from monthly program reports to the Partnership Executive Committee.

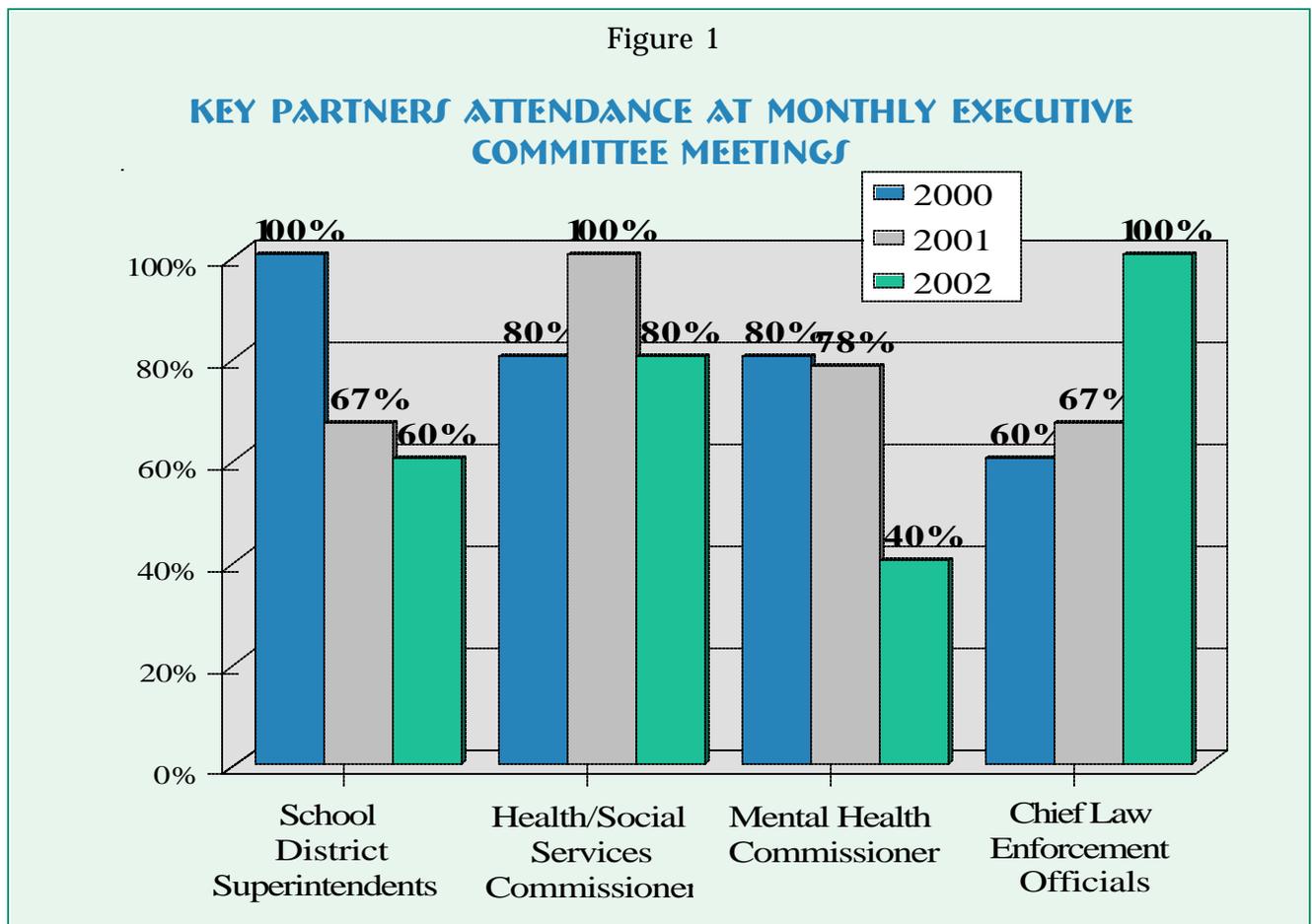
operations and funding cycles of the county and community, and 3) the types of formalized agreements made between agencies that commit to a coordinated approach to service delivery.



KEY FINDING
Cayuga County human services and educational leaders are “at the table” – consistently participating in monthly Safe Schools/Healthy Students Executive Committee meetings (see Figure 1).

One of the oft-cited findings of evaluation and research into the effectiveness of multi-systemic initiatives is the diminution over time of key leaders’ involvement in the decision-making process; over time designating a lesser agency staff member to this task. As a result, this staff member typically stalls and delays the decision-making process until they receive their “marching orders” from a superior.

This is not the case in the Cayuga SS/HS Partnership. Evidence indicates that all of the key agency leaders consistently attend the monthly Executive Committee meetings, and are actively involved in the policy and decision-making process. As seen in **Figure 1**, the majority of meetings across all three-years of Partnership operation, has been attended by the core leaders.





KEY FINDING

Over time, key Partnership programs and services have moved from a *partnership-only* supervision and funding scenario to one where both supervision and funding are seen as a shared responsibility (see Figure 2).

A second indication of effective inter-agency governance and management noted by the research is the extent to which inter-agency partnerships can transform from *grant-sponsored* supervision and funding of programs and services to core *agency-sponsored* support. Thus, a partnership that integrates the oversight and fiscal responsibilities of its key programs and services into the operational processes of current community agencies has effectively governed and managed the growth and efficiencies of these services. As Shown in **Figure 2**, the Cayuga County SS/HS has, over time, successfully integrated the supervision and funding of three of its critical intervention initiatives into the operations of county agencies and local organizations.

Figure 2

INTERAGENCY FUNDING AND STAFFING PATTERNS FOR 3 KEY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS OF THE CAYUGA COUNTY SAFE SCHOOLS/HEALTHY STUDENTS PARTNERSHIP

Program Staff	Year 1 (2000)		Year 3 (2002)	
	Funding	Supervision	Funding	Supervision
School-based Mental Health Team	♦ Partnership (4 Clinicians)	♦ County MH ♦ Partnership	♦ Cayuga Home for Children ♦ County MH ♦ Partnership (6 Clinicians)	♦ Partnership ♦ County MH ♦ Cayuga Home for Children
Therapeutic Day Care	♦ Partnership	♦ Partnership	♦ County MH ♦ Partnership	♦ County MH ♦ Partnership
Functional Family Therapy	♦ Partnership ♦ County MH	♦ CBO	♦ County H/HS ♦ Partnership ♦ CBO	♦ CBO



KEY FINDING

Each of the key service delivery agencies – school districts, county mental health, alcohol and substance abuse services (via county health and human services), and local law enforcement services – have signed a formal inter-agency agreement specifying a range of collaborative interactions and resource sharing (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTAND BETWEEN AGENCIES PARTICIPATING IN THE CAYUGA COUNTY SAFE SCHOOLS/HEALTHY STUDENTS PARTNERSHIP

	School Districts	Health & Human Services	Mental Health	Law Enforcement
Secure, interagency partnership database	✓	✓	✓	✓
Access to program and financial records	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monthly reports regarding contracted program deliverables	✓	✓	✓	✓

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

Since its inception, the Partnership has utilized a two-pronged approach to distinguish the array of implemented programs and services: *prevention* and *intervention*. Both approaches provide participants with assistance via evidence-based programs in the areas of: academic improvement, mental health, substance abuse, or violence prevention. Those programs identified as *prevention* programs are designed to introduce protective factors—those influences that potentially inhibit or decrease the likelihood of academic failure or risk behavior. The *intervention* programs provide assistance to those children and families demonstrating risk factors—scientifically established factors that increase the likelihood of academic failure or risk behavior.

In this section of the newsletter we report on a number of findings concerning the impact of selected Partnership sponsored programs. Evidence from an analysis of program implementation data, Partnership records and school report card data indicates positive change for students enrolled in targeted Partnership sponsored programs as well as those students who attend schools actively engaged in implementing Partnership sponsored programs. This positive change is confirmed by an *increase* in protective factors and a *decrease* in risk behaviors. Specifically, students have shown improvement in academic achievement, clinicians are reporting individualized goal attainment, and schools are reporting a decline in risk-related incidents. The following findings appear to be influenced by the prevention and intervention programs implemented by the Partnership.



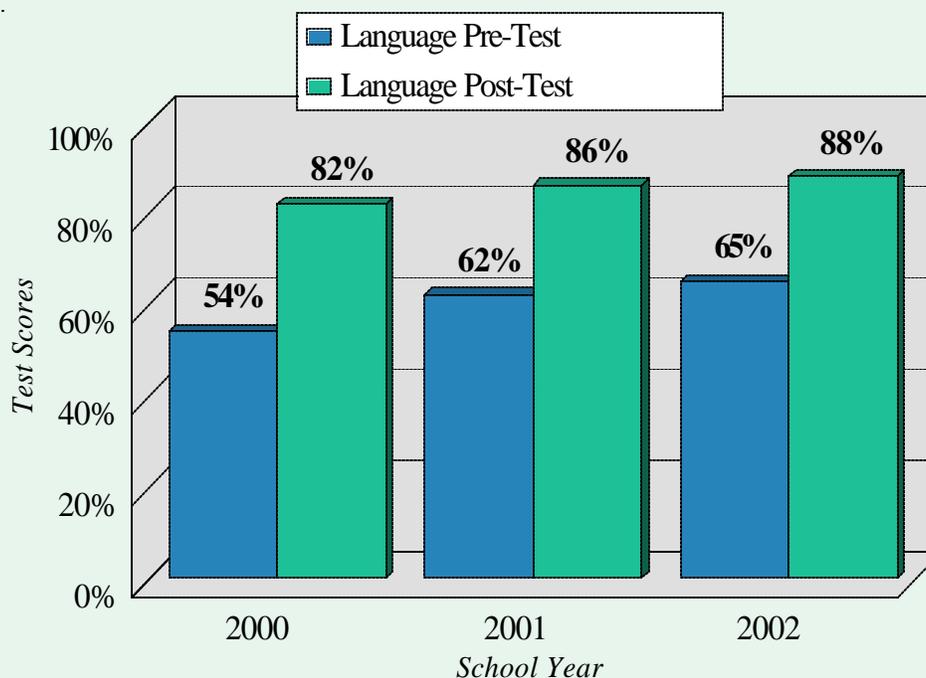
KEY FINDING

Targeted students participating in the OASIS academic intervention summer program made significant gains in both English language arts and mathematics (see Figures 4 & 5).

Opportunities for Academic Success in School (OASIS) is an early-intervention, summer program for students entering grades 1 through 4. Students enrolled in the program have been identified as those who are struggling academically. OASIS is an intensive program that focuses exclusively on language arts and math skill development needed at the next grade level. The following data represents language arts and math test scores for students enrolled in OASIS over the past three years. Evidence from test scores analyzed before and after program participation demonstrates the impact of this Partnership program.

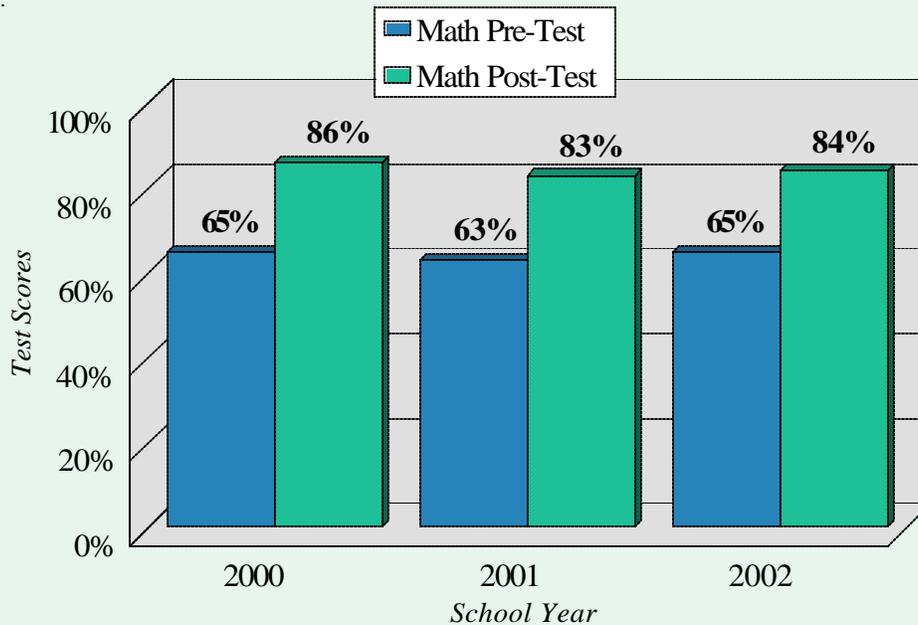
Figure 4

OASIS PARTICIPANTS LANGUAGE EXAMINATION SCORES



- ❖ For three consecutive years, post-test data reveals consistent improvement in Language Arts examination scores for OASIS participants.
- ❖ The percentage of OASIS participants Language Arts exam scores increased by 61% in 2000, 63 percent in 2001 and 66 percent in 2002. On average, OASIS participants improved their Language Arts scores by 25 points.
- ❖ OASIS participants are scoring higher each year on their pre-test Language Arts examination.
- ❖ The average post-test score for OASIS participants has increased consistently over the past three years.

Figure 5
OASIS PARTICIPANTS MATH EXAM SCORES



- ❖ For three consecutive years, post-test data reveals consistent improvement in Math examination scores for OASIS participants.
- ❖ On average, OASIS participants improved their Math scores by 56 percent.
- ❖ Math scores consistently improved for OASIS participants by 54 percent in 2001 and 2002.



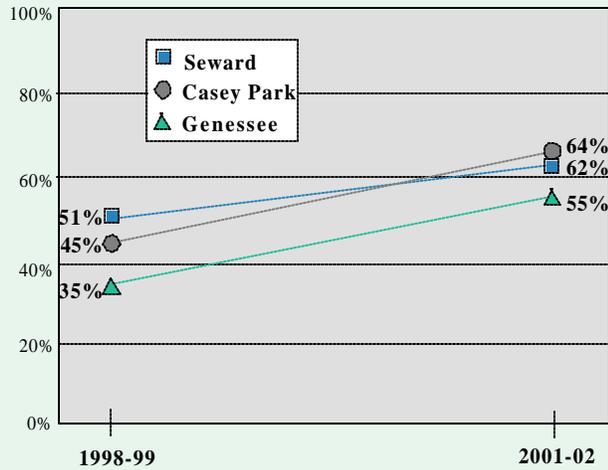
KEY FINDINGS

Students in schools with more extensive Safe Schools/Healthy Student Partnership involvement made significantly more academic progress as measured by the New York State Assessment program than schools with little or no involvement (see **Figures 6, 7, 8, & 9**).

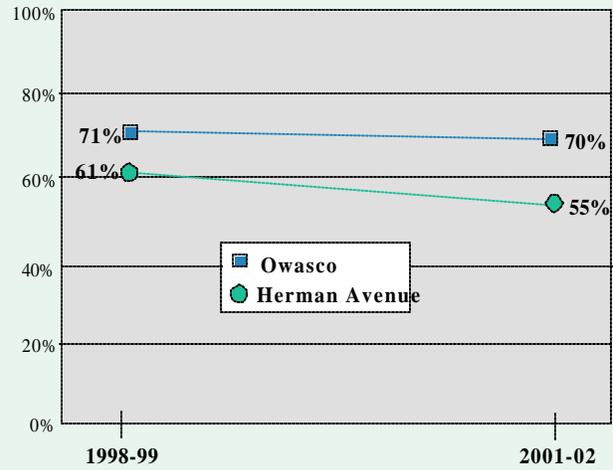
The most current New York State English Language Arts (ELA) and Math Assessment results at the 4th grade level were examined to determine the comparability of student achievement in schools with all or most of the Partnership programs and services (Seward, Casey Park, and Genesee) and schools with few or no programs and services (Owasco and Herman Avenue). As displayed in Figures 6 and 7, 4th graders enrolled in schools that had implemented a greater number of partnership-sponsored programs and services showed overall performance increases since the Partnership was implemented, while 4th graders in schools that had little or no implementation of these programs showed decreases. Figures 7 and 8 reflect similar patterns in math performance.

PATTERNS OF NET GAIN ON THE NEW YORK STATE 4TH GRADE ELA ASSESSMENT (1998-99—2001-02)

**FIGURE 6
SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN ALL OR MOST PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

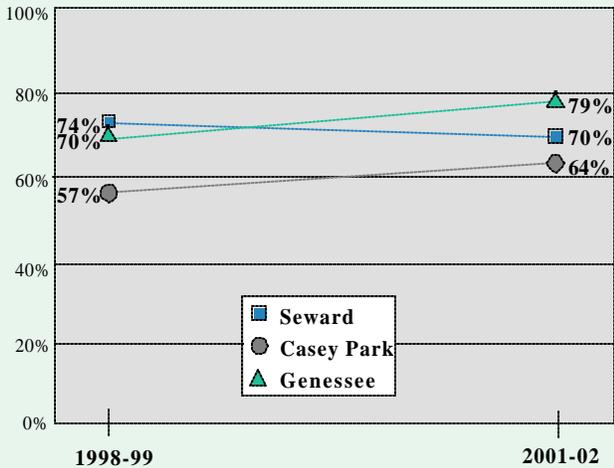


**FIGURE 7
SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN FEW OR NO PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

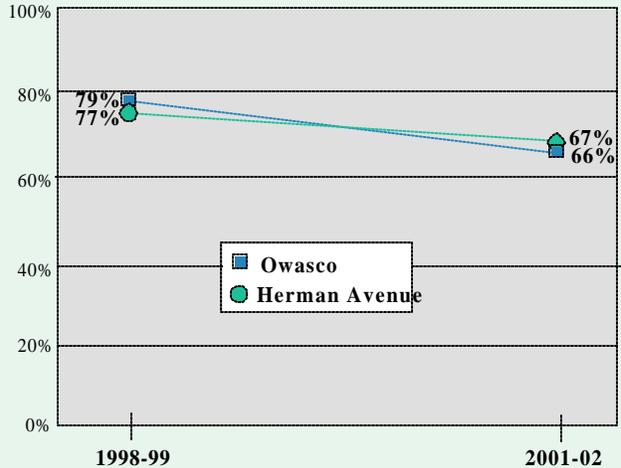


PATTERNS OF NET GAIN ON THE NEW YORK STATE 4TH GRADE MATH ASSESSMENT (1998-99—2001-02)

**FIGURE 8
SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN ALL OR MOST PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**



**FIGURE 9
SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN FEW OR NO PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**





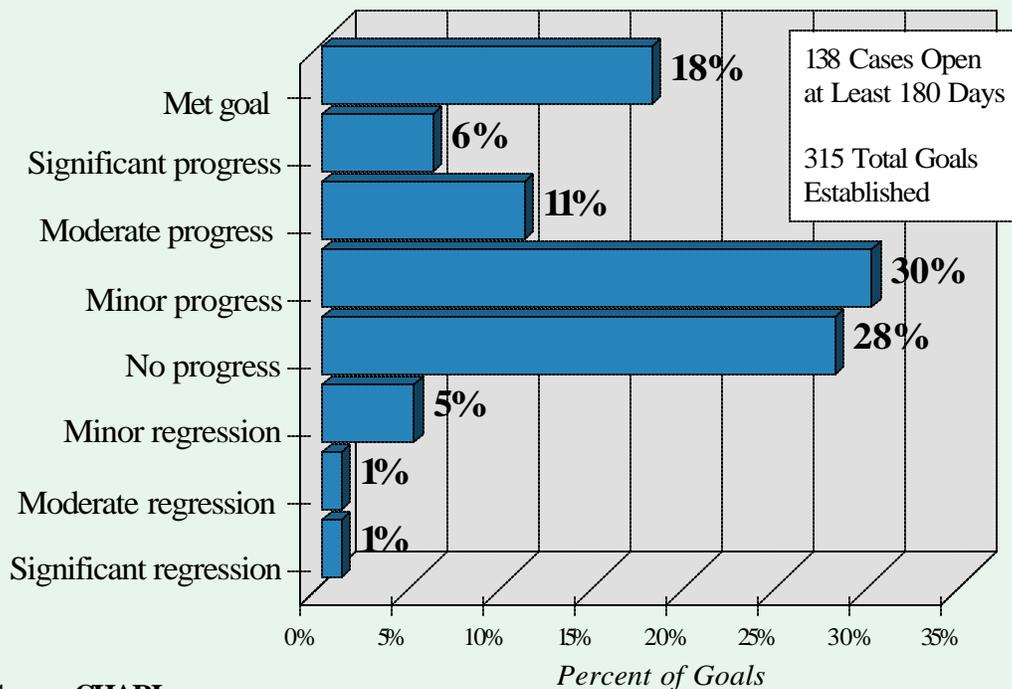
KEY FINDING

The large majority of the at risk students served by the Partnership's school-based mental health teams are making progress on achieving their specified treatment goals (see Figure 8).

The Mobile Outreach Services Team is comprised of clinicians trained to assess mental health and substance abuse problems and to provide school-based treatment, crisis intervention and follow-up services for students demonstrating early indications of these issues. Using a comprehensive approach to assessment, individual program design, and service delivery, clinicians evaluate students' progress in attaining treatment goals every 90 days. As presented in Figure 8, nearly two-thirds (65%) of treatment goals have been judged as making progress, with nearly 1 in 5 goals having been achieved.

Figure 8

MOST CLINICIANS' REPORT OF STUDENT GOAL ATTAINMENT FOR CASES OPEN AT LEAST 180 DAYS



Source: CHARI



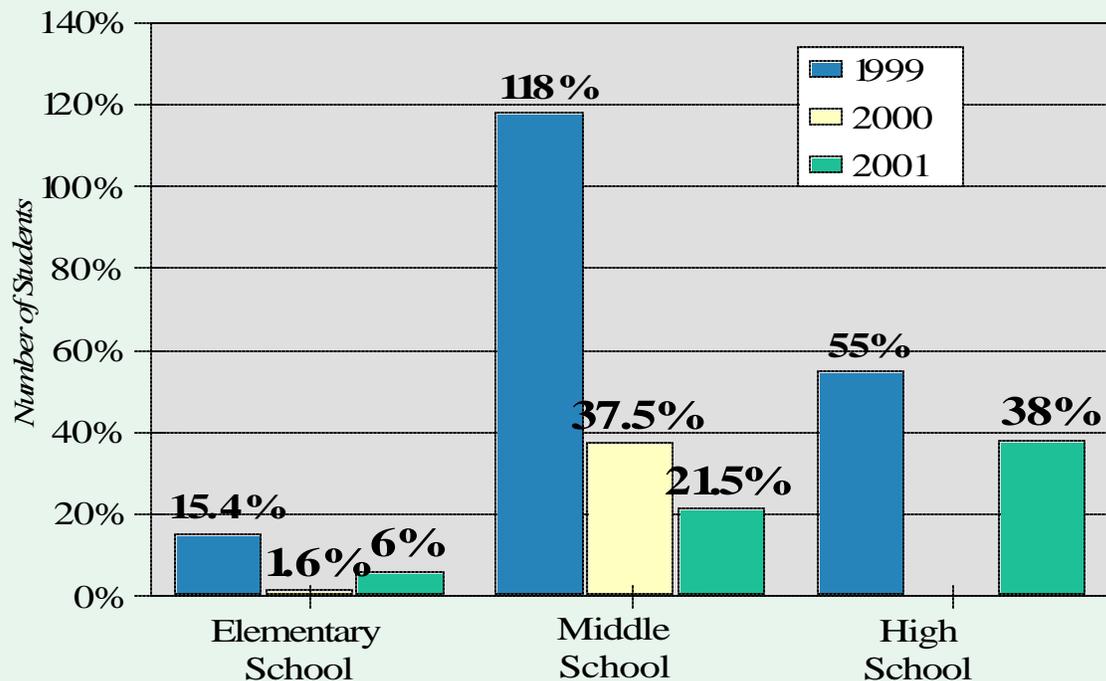
KEY FINDING

There are fewer students involved in violent and violence-related behavior enrolled in schools participating in the Cayuga County SS/HS Partnership (see Figure 9).

The “bottom line” for any grant funded systems-change initiative is the extent to which targeted groups have improved or enhanced their functioning. For the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative one of the key impact areas is violence and related problem behavior. A review of the New York State Education Department’s building-level data system (BEDS) reveals that over the preceding three-year period the average number of students involved in incidents of violence and other disruptive behaviors has decreased substantially at each of the three building levels in the Auburn City School District – schools that make up the large majority of the Safe Schools Partnership.

Figure 9

AUBURN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT TOTAL AVERAGE NUMBER STUDENTS INVOLVED IN INCIDENTS OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT*



Source: NYSED



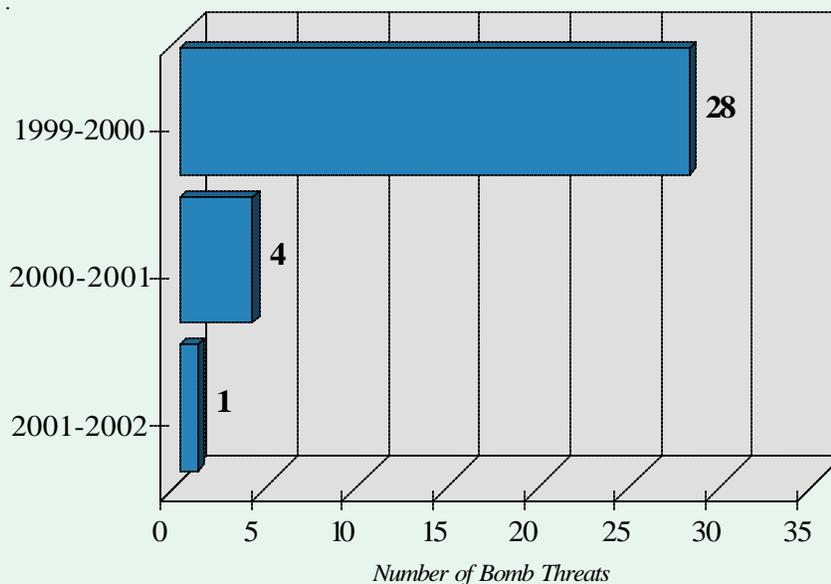
KEY FINDING

Bomb threats – once a horrific intrusion into the learning environment of participating Partnership schools – have significantly declined over the previous three years (see Figure 10).

During the fall and winter of 1999-2000, a rash of bomb threats substantially disrupted the school communities of the Auburn City School District. Field trips were cancelled, school events postponed, classes delayed, and countless students and faculty members concerned for their well-being. Three-years later, following the introduction of safe school programs and services, bomb threats in the Auburn school district are practically non-existent.

Figure 10

NUMBER OF REPORTED BOMB THREATS IN AUBURN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT: 1999-2000 THROUGH 2001-02



SUMMARY

This report highlights a number of the early impacts that the Cayuga County Safe Schools/Healthy Students Partnership has had on targeted, schools, students and the human services delivery system in the county. It shows that:

- ◆ greater collaboration and efficiency have been achieved in providing important education,
- ◆ violence and alcohol/substance abuse prevention services,
- ◆ at-risk youth are progressing in the attainment of therapeutic goals,
- ◆ students are achieving academically, and
- ◆ the school setting is safe and more conducive to learning.