

Ohio Registry of Effective Practices

Butler County Success Program

School: Butler County Educational Service Center

School Districts: Edgewood, Fairfield, Lakota, Madison, Monroe, New Miami, Middletown, Ross, Talawanda

Partnering Agencies: County Educational Service Center and above school districts

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General Program Overview:

The Butler County Success Program (BCSP) has developed and implemented programs and service strategies that reflect a multi-faceted, collaborative model to help children and families in poverty. The BCSP is designed to assist families and students in grades K – 6 who qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Following a holistic case management approach, the BCSP employs the work of school liaisons to assess and empower families. The Program provides 15 Community Liaisons in 9 school districts and 38 elementary buildings to address non-cognitive barriers to learning. The liaisons receive referrals from staff regarding children/family needs. The liaison then links with community resources to fill needs of the child/family and supports them to address any barriers to services. The liaison also builds a relationship with the families and supports the family to become more involved in school and self-sufficient.

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Evidence of Effectiveness:

The evaluation is currently in the fourth year using a multi-informant mixed methods approach with qualitative focus groups and a quantitative pre- and post-test design each year. Data from the most recent year completed (third year evaluation) indicate positive changes in targeted outcomes from pre- to post-test using standard inferential statistics including ANCOVA, T-Tests, and descriptive

statistics. Targeted outcomes include: 1) access to basic needs (e.g., medical care, transportation, healthy food); 2) childcare; 3) parent-school relations; 4) family cohesion 5) parenting practices; 6) and academic competence (e.g., school reported grades and student performance on the Mini Battery of Achievement). In addition, liaisons' face-to-face and non-face-to-face contact hours were compiled and examined in relation to other outcome variables. The second major aspect of the evaluation, the qualitative component, looked to establish convergent validity with the quantitative results and provide greater depth of understanding about the meaning of program results and support services offered by the BCSP. Community agency representatives, school personnel (e.g. teachers, school administrators, principals, and school counselors), BCSP liaisons, and parents involved in BCSP participated in multiple focus groups. Focus group participants provided rich detail on the utility and viable function of the program in meeting the non-cognitive needs of its consumers. As such, members of the community represented an integral part of the BCSP by offering greater insight into programmatic development as well as program implementation.

Results from the series of paired t-tests across three sources of data (*parent* report, *teacher* report, and school-based data) indicated that several targeted measures changed significantly for participants in the BCSP. Parents reported significant increases from pretest to post-test in: (a) access/use of childcare allowing regular work attendance; (b) access to medical care; (c) access to healthy food; (d) parental school involvement/communication (e) positive parenting behavior;(f) access to transportation; (g) children's academic competence; and (h) children's behavioral competence. Children's teachers reported significant increases from pretest to posttest in: (a) parental school involvement/communications; (b) children's access to healthy food; (c) children's academic competence; (d) children's cognitive competence; and (e) children's social competence. Teachers reported that over 53% of children improved in both classroom behavior and attendance; 63% improved in acceptance by peers; and over 73% improved in both academic skills and reading abilities. Descriptive statistics conducted on teachers' responses to the eight retrospective questions on the post-test surveys suggest positive changes for BCSP children and parents. Teachers' responses to retrospective questions about children's improvement during the time of the BCSP indicated that between 53% and 74% of BCSP children improved. More specifically, 53.3% improved in classroom behavior; 54.3% improved in classroom attendance; 73% improved in academic skills; 74.5% improved in reading ability; and 62.9% improved in social acceptance by peers. Similarly, teachers' responses to retrospective questions about parents' improvement during the time of the BCSP indicated that between 20% and 27% of BCSP parents improved in parental school involvement.

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Capacity and Resources:

The Butler County Success Program provides 15 Community Liaisons in 9 school districts and 38 elementary buildings to remove non-cognitive barriers to learning. The program serves children kindergarten to sixth grade living at or below 200% of federal poverty guidelines. Children are referred to the Community School Liaison assigned to their school building by school staff, community, or parents who request assistance. In the 2007-2008 school-year, 1,416 students were served. Each year the program is asked to expand and serve children in Junior High, however funding is not available at this point to expand to older children (although there is a group currently working to secure resources to expand the program).

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Family Partnerships:

Following a holistic case management approach, the BCSP employs the work of 15 Community School Liaisons to assess and empower families, and to link them with community resources to fill needs. School teachers and personnel first recognize the needs of a child and family, and then refer them into the Success program. Community liaisons link the families to appropriate community resources that include people and programs that are either contracted or volunteer services. The liaisons support the families in this process and help them to negotiate any barriers to service. The liaisons, teachers, and community people and programs all combine to help make children and families successful. Teachers and community personnel indicate the overall utility of the BCSP in establishing strong family-school-community partnerships for participants served in the program.

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Community Partnerships:

BCSP was started in 2003 by the Lakota Local School District, FCFC, Butler County United Way, BCESC, Butler County Job & Family Services along with the participation of many other social services. In 2005 the program expanded to include Fairfield, Hamilton, and New Miami. In the 2007, the program expanded to include Middletown. In 2008, the program no longer served Hamilton, but added Edgewood, Madison, Monroe, Ross and Talawanda for a total of 9 out of 10 school districts in Butler County. BCSP also partners with churches who provide help with basic needs and after school services; Big Brothers and Big Sisters who provide mentoring experiences; Shared Harvest who provides the backpack weekend food given to every child in BCSP; local mental health agencies who provide onsite mental health treatment in 25 elementary buildings; and many more food pantries and agencies who help meet basic needs of families.

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Sustainability Plan:

BCSP started in 2003 with GRF funding through a line item in the state budget. In January 2006, the program was expanded with \$847,000 in local TANF money. Since that time, the budget for the program has diversified to include three funding sources: local TANF dollars (31%), TANF money from Ohio Department of Education (44%), and funding from local school districts (25%). The sustainability of the program is not only the responsibility of the Butler County Educational Service Center but also the Butler County Success Advisory. The Advisory consists of members from each district, Director of FCFC, Director of Job and Family Services, Director of Middletown Area and Butler County United Way, and Assistant Superintendent of BCESC. Each member helps to secure funding for the program. The program's strong evaluation through Miami University helps to maintain funding each year from the various entities.

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