

Department of Research, Planning and Improvement

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Angelica James-Garner, Ph.D.

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School House Adjustment Program Enterprise (SHAPE): 2015-16 Summary

Schools Involved

- Bolton High
- Cordova High
- Craigmont High
- Craigmont Middle
- Germantown High
- Hamilton High
- Hamilton Middle
- Highland Oaks Middle
- Hillcrest High
- Kingsbury High
- Kirby Middle
- Kirby High
- Manassas High
- Melrose High
- Northside High
- Raleigh-Egypt High
- Ridgeway High
- Southwind High
- Trezevant High
- Westwood High
- Whitehaven High
- Wooddale High

SHAPE Background*

The School House Adjustment Program Enterprise (SHAPE) is a diversion program that works to reduce the number of minority youth who are transported and booked into juvenile detention for minor offenses. SHAPE began in July 2007 when Memphis City Schools (MCS) received the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth's (TCCY) Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Pilot Project grant. The program was a collaborative effort between MCS, Shelby County Juvenile Court, the Memphis Police Department (MPD), the Shelby County Mayor's Office, the Memphis City Mayor's Office, the Public Defender's Office, and the District Attorney's Office.

In the proposal, Juvenile Court counted and prioritized the number of transports from each MCS middle and high school. Using these data, and with consideration of the amount of funding available from TCCY, MCS' Department of School Security (DSS) originally selected one middle school and seventeen high schools to participate in the program. In subsequent years, DSS added new schools while dropping others from the program. DSS' decision regarding which offenses and schools to include in SHAPE were based on local staffing issues and emerging transport trends. DSS always targeted schools with the highest transport number to include in the program.

Originally, DSS limited the SHAPE-eligible charges to three types of delinquent offenses: criminal trespassing, disorderly conduct, and simple assault. Since then, the Office of Safety and Security (formerly DSS) has added other offenses. The current SHAPE eligibility criteria include:

- Students can have a pending juvenile charge for criminal trespassing, disorderly conduct, simple assault with no serious injuries, gambling, theft of property, simple possession of marijuana, vandalism under \$500, theft of property under \$500, or unlawful possession of alcohol.
- Additionally, administrators can refer students for potentially delinquent behaviors.
- Simple assault charges involving school personnel are not considered SHAPE-eligible.
- A student must have no felony adjudications, convictions, or pending charges.
- Participants cannot have any violent misdemeanor adjudications, convictions, or pending charges.
- Any other misdemeanor charges that have occurred within the past twelve months make a student ineligible.
- The student must agree to participate voluntarily in the program, and the parent or guardian must give permission.

SHAPE continues to operate under Shelby County Schools (SCS). DSS is now titled the Office of Safety and Security. SHAPE now includes an Advisory Committee which helps make programmatic decisions. The committee is comprised of SCS and its partners.

SHAPE Diversion*

A basic premise of SHAPE is that minority youth experience disproportionate levels of contact at all levels of the criminal justice system and that this situation is unjust. However, any student charged with a SHAPE-eligible offense is eligible to participate in the program, irrespective of their ethnicity. Additionally, School Resource Officers (SROs) can refer eligible students to the program in lieu of transporting them to Juvenile Court.

Evaluation Methodology

Data Collection Procedures*

Admission into the program begins with completion of the intake forms, designed by the original Evaluator and approved by SCS officials. These forms include the SHAPE agreement, background check, and pre-assessment. Site Coordinators collect and track the number of Mendez classes completed, as well as students' attendance, conduct, and grades. These data are needed for evaluation through the use of quantitative and qualitative structured interviews conducted on site at the participating schools throughout the school year. At the conclusion of the program, students complete a post-assessment, parents complete a

satisfaction survey, and the SHAPE Coordinator completes exit forms for each student.

Extreme emphasis was placed on preserving student confidentiality, and all methods discussed here were conducted in accordance with the written protocols approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects at The University of Memphis. Site Coordinators were instructed to utilize a three-digit code assigned to each school. This three-digit number corresponded with the three-digit identification number assigned to the students upon receipt of their information. This was done in order to protect the students' identities. In addition to the individual school code, an evaluation ID

code comprising the students' initials, year of birth, and last four digits of the social security number, was used to mask confidential data. The SHAPE Coordinator collected the interview protocols from the Site Coordinators assigned to the participating schools, while Juvenile Court provided information on the arrests and transports. SCS' Department of Research, Planning and Accountability provided data regarding students' grades, behavioral infractions, attendance, and promotion rates for the 2015–16 academic year.

Data Analysis

The final data set for this analysis includes information collected from 372 students. All of these analyses were done using the statistical package, SPSS 20™.

Law enforcement officers have substantial levels of discretion in the decision to transport. SHAPE has reinforced transporting students charged with minor offenses. Discretionary use of summonses in lieu of transports to detention is in agreement with juvenile statutes according to Tennessee Code Annotated. This encourages detention only in cases where the juvenile poses a serious threat to him or herself or the community. Finally, Administrators can refer eligible students directly to the Site Coordinators, avoiding contact with SROs altogether.

SHAPE Program Structure*

SHAPE is more than an adjustment in the juvenile justice processes; SHAPE is also an early intervention program that includes substantial emphasis on student and parental accountability. Once a parent or guardian has received a Pending Document Form for a SHAPE-eligible charge and the student has met all of the other eligibility requirements, the student is referred to the program. Participation is voluntary, but if the student and his or her parent/guardian agree to the program's guidelines, the youth can avoid a juvenile summons and arrest.

In SHAPE, the Pending Document Form precedes an actual juvenile summons; however, the potential summons remains active for six months and can be filed at any time during this period. Each month, a school-based Site Coordinator tracks the student's attendance, any incidences of misbehavior while at school (i.e., office referrals, suspensions and expulsions), and academic performance in each class. If a student is non-compliant with the conditions of the program, the Site Coordinator can request that juvenile court upgrade the Pending Document Form to a juvenile summons. Conversely, if the student successfully completes the program, the Pending Document Form is destroyed and no record of any involvement is ever recorded with the court. In addition to reducing the number of minority youth transported on minor charges, SHAPE seeks to reduce substantially the number

of minority youth who make any contact with Juvenile Court. A true diversion occurs when there is no record of any contact with Juvenile Court.

SHAPE Curriculum*

The students and parents who agree to the SHAPE intervention must complete the SHAPE curriculum. The current curriculum is based on best practice models developed by the Mendez Foundation (see <http://www.mendezfoundation.org/>). The curriculum, known as "Too Good for Drugs and Violence," is a six-week program that meets twice weekly focusing on the latest research related to resiliency, risk and protective factors. Each session, which lasts two hours, is designed to equip students with the knowledge and behavioral skills they need to remain drug free, improve decision-making, and achieve positive outcomes. The curriculum is delivered after school; however, SHAPE makes accommodations for students with special circumstances, allowing them to participate during times when school is not in session. SCS staff who work with SHAPE are trained to administer the curriculum.

SHAPE Administration*

A Site Coordinator at each school staffs SHAPE. In addition to specific training to deliver the Mendez curriculum, Site Coordinators have training in dealing with at-risk youth. The SHAPE Coordinator is responsible for the overall administration of the project, including hiring and supervising Site Coordinators, ensuring compliance, monitoring evaluation activities, and serving as a spokesperson for the initiative.

Additionally, the SHAPE Coordinator's extensive experience with minority and at-risk youth contributes to the successful implementation of the program. To further sustain the program, he continues his work with the DMC Taskforce as the local and

statewide chairman. These efforts are integral to remaining informed of issues and strategies related to DMC, which leads to the success and sustainability of SHAPE.

SHAPE Outcomes

Participants

Shelby County Schools is Tennessee’s largest school district and the 22nd largest public school system in the United States. Demographically, SCS comprises predominantly minority students. Of the more than 113,000 students who were enrolled in SCS during the 2015–16 academic year, 97.2% identified as non-White. Thus, it may not be surprising that these students account for the largest share of juveniles transported to Juvenile Court from SCS. However, according to statistical data from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), the fact remains that minority youth encounter the juvenile and criminal justice systems at a disproportionate rate to non-minorities (National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2009).



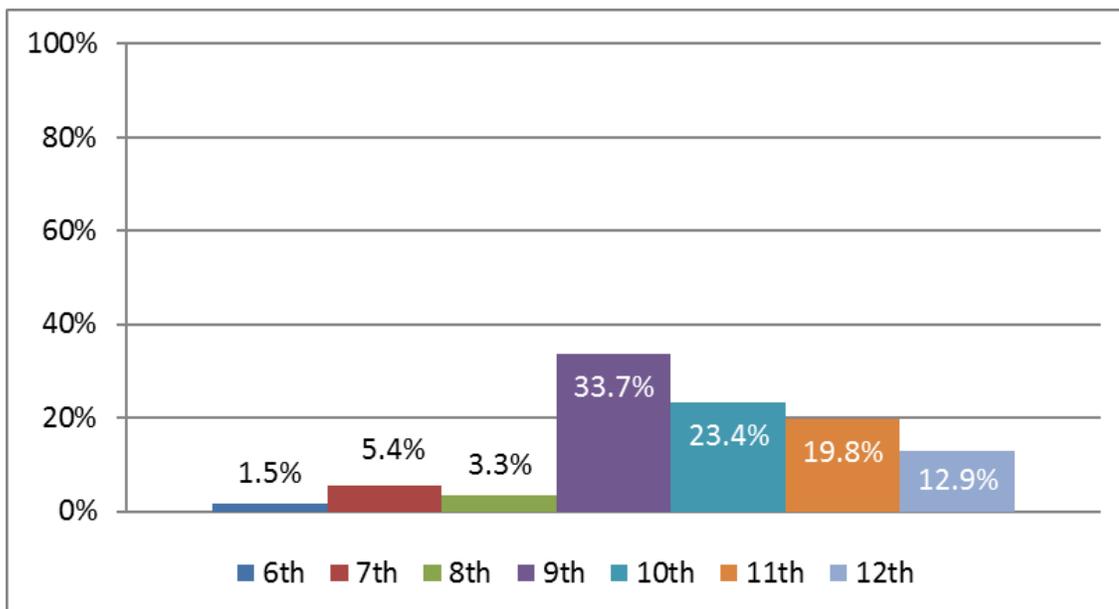
Ethnicity. During the 2015–16 academic year, African-American students accounted for 93.1% of the SHAPE students, while only 1.3% were White, 2.8% were Hispanic and 2.8% identified as multi-ethnic.

Gender. In 2015–16, there were more females than males in SHAPE (53.2% vs. 46.8%, respectively). This reflects a slightly elevated percentage of female referrals when compared to the total population in the SCS system (49.6% females vs. 50.4% males).

Age. The average age of students in the SHAPE program was 15.3 years old, with a range in age from 11–18 years old.

Grade in school. SHAPE receives referrals for students from the 6th through 12th grades. The majority of the 2015–16 SHAPE students were in high schools (89.7%), while 10.3% were in middle school (see Figure 1 below for a graphic representation of the distribution of SHAPE students by grade in school). Most students in the program were in the 9th grade (33.7%).

Figure 1: SHAPE Students by Grade in School



SHAPE Outcomes cont'd

Referring school. Students attending Manassas and Northside high schools received the most referrals to SHAPE (see Table 1 for a count of referrals by school).

Table 1: SHAPE Referral Count by School

| SHAPE School | Count | Percent |
|----------------------|-------|---------|
| Bolton High | 20 | 1.3 |
| Cordova High | 13 | 0.6 |
| Craigmont High | 37 | 3.8 |
| Craigmont Middle | 12 | 1.9 |
| Germantown High | 8 | 0.4 |
| Hamilton High | 5 | 0.7 |
| Hamilton Middle | 14 | 3.6 |
| Highland Oaks Middle | 14 | 1.9 |
| Hillcrest High | 8 | 1.4 |
| Kingsbury High | 14 | 1.1 |
| Kirby Middle | | |
| Kirby High | 24 | 2.2 |
| Manassas High | 41 | 9.5 |
| Melrose High | 11 | 1.7 |
| Northside High | 15 | 5.3 |
| Raleigh-Egypt High | 29 | 3.8 |
| Ridgeway High | 11 | 0.9 |
| Southwind High | 17 | 1.1 |
| Trezevant High | 14 | 1.9 |
| Westwood High | 12 | 2.9 |
| Whitehaven High | 13 | 0.7 |
| Wooddale High | 25 | 2.2 |



Referring agency. Of the known referrals to SHAPE, the majority came from SCSO (51.3%), followed by administrators (34.2%). Administrators do not refer students for criminal offenses; instead, they have the opportunity to refer students with excessive behavior problems to SHAPE in lieu of suspension or expulsion. Overall, referrals to SHAPE have decreased 12.2% from the previous year (from 443 to 389). Any of these referrals could have ultimately resulted in a juvenile summons to appear in Juvenile Court.



SHAPE Outcomes cont'd

Referring Offense

The most common offense SHAPE students committed was Simple Assault with No Serious Injury (56.3%), followed by Discipline Referrals (26.1%) (see Figure 2 for a graphic representation of the distribution of SHAPE referrals by offense).

SHAPE Interventions*

SHAPE is a diversion and early intervention program. Once accepted, students complete the Mendez Foundation curriculum during the after-school program. Additionally, SHAPE may require students complete various interventions based on their referring behavior (see Figure 3 below for a graphic representation of the distribution of SHAPE interventions).

Figure 2: SHAPE Student Offenses

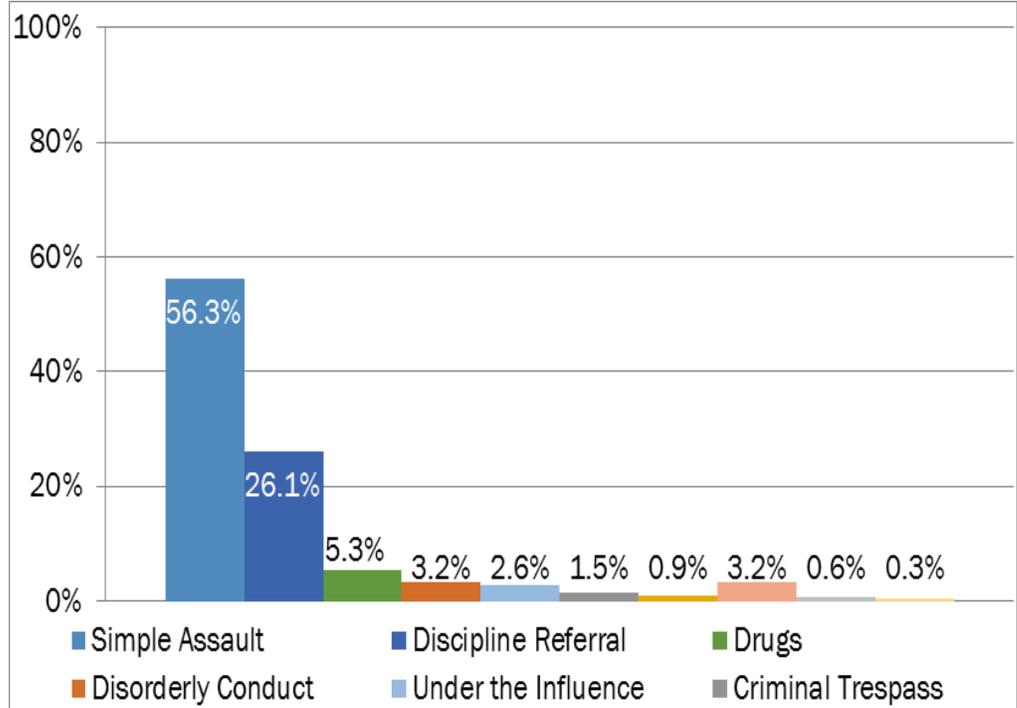
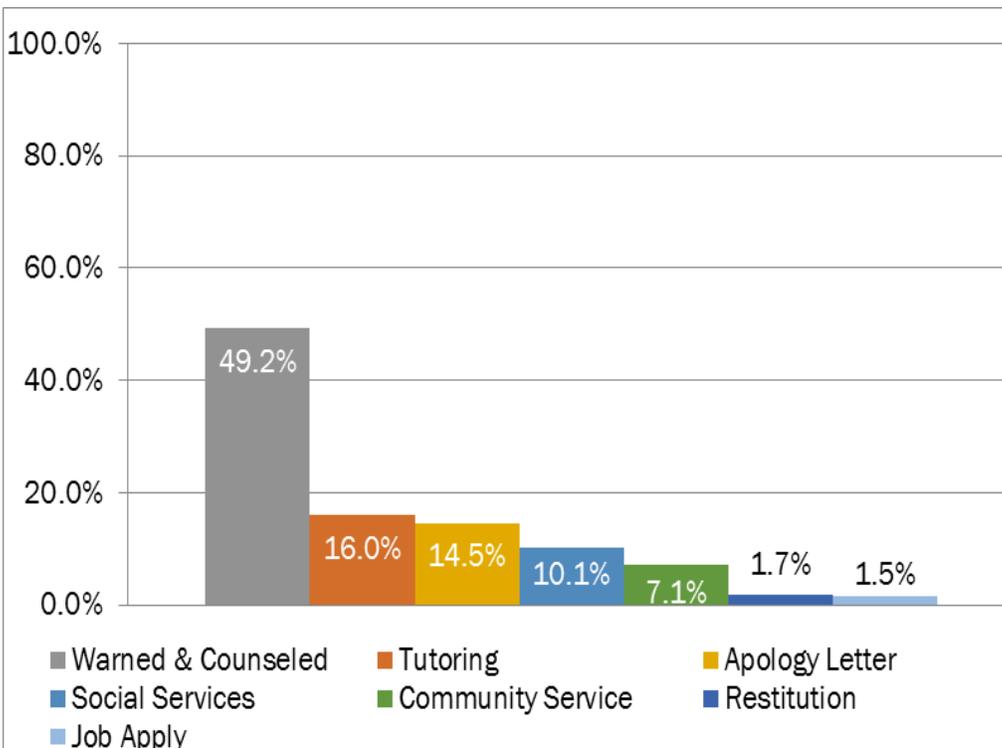


Figure 3: SHAPE Interventions



The most common among these is Social Services. Second is a face-to-face meeting with the Site Coordinator, listed as Warned & Counseled (49.2%). During this one-on-one interview, the trained school staff member is able to warn the students about the seriousness of their behavior and counsel them directly about the presenting issues. For many students, this initial contact has a significant impact. Looking for positive ways to occupy a student's extra-curricular time is another major area of concern for the Site Coordinators. Tutoring (16.0%), writing an apology letter (14.5%), restitution (0.3%), and social services referrals (10.1%) are just some of positive activities in which SHAPE participants are involved.

SHAPE Outcomes cont'd

Completion of the Curriculum

A premise of SHAPE is that exposure to the intervention, especially the Mendez curriculum, will reduce future delinquency and criminal activity. Of the 389 students referred to the program in 2015–16, 69.2% successfully graduated by completing at least twelve of the Mendez curriculum sessions and meeting all other requirements of the program. Approximately 14% of the referred students refused to participate, and 13.2% were discharged for non-compliance. These students were usually issued a juvenile summons to appear in Juvenile Court for those charges. Finally, 3.8% transferred to a non-SHAPE school.

Transports

Since its inception in 2007, the primary goal of SHAPE has been to reduce the number of minority youth that are transported from and detained for minor offenses at Juvenile Court. As shown in Figure 5, there was a 29.8% decline in transports from 2014-15 to 2015-16. Overall, SHAPE has been effective in decreasing transports by 96% since inception. These reductions are not solely the results of the SHAPE initiative. Gang reduction programs, truancy interventions, and other juvenile programming likely also contributed. Still, the overall reduction in bookings from SHAPE schools does isolate the effects of the program well and illustrates the significant impact SHAPE has had on the number of minority youth transported.

Figure 4: SHAPE Outcomes

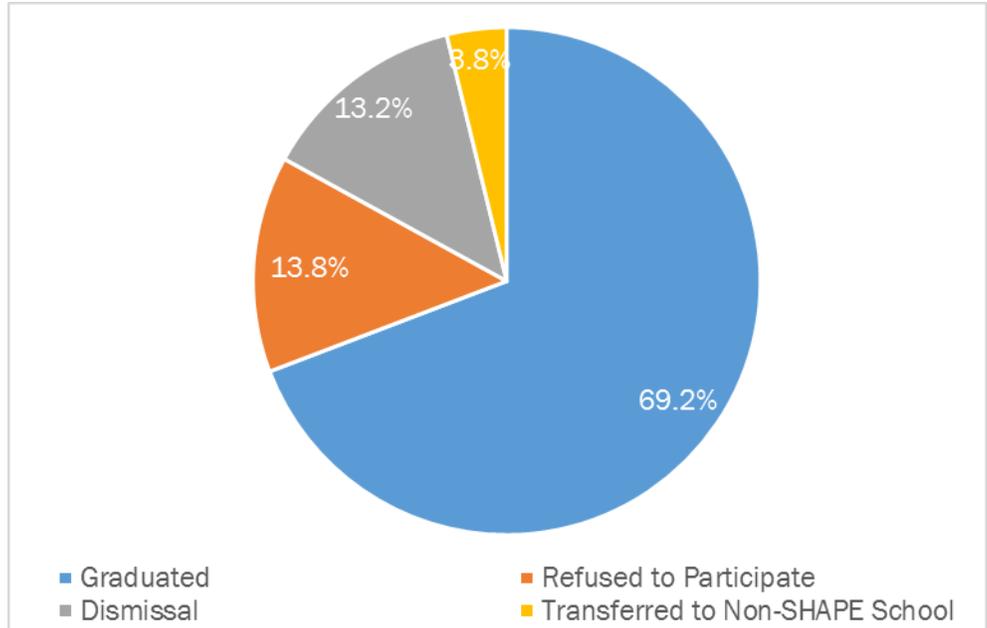
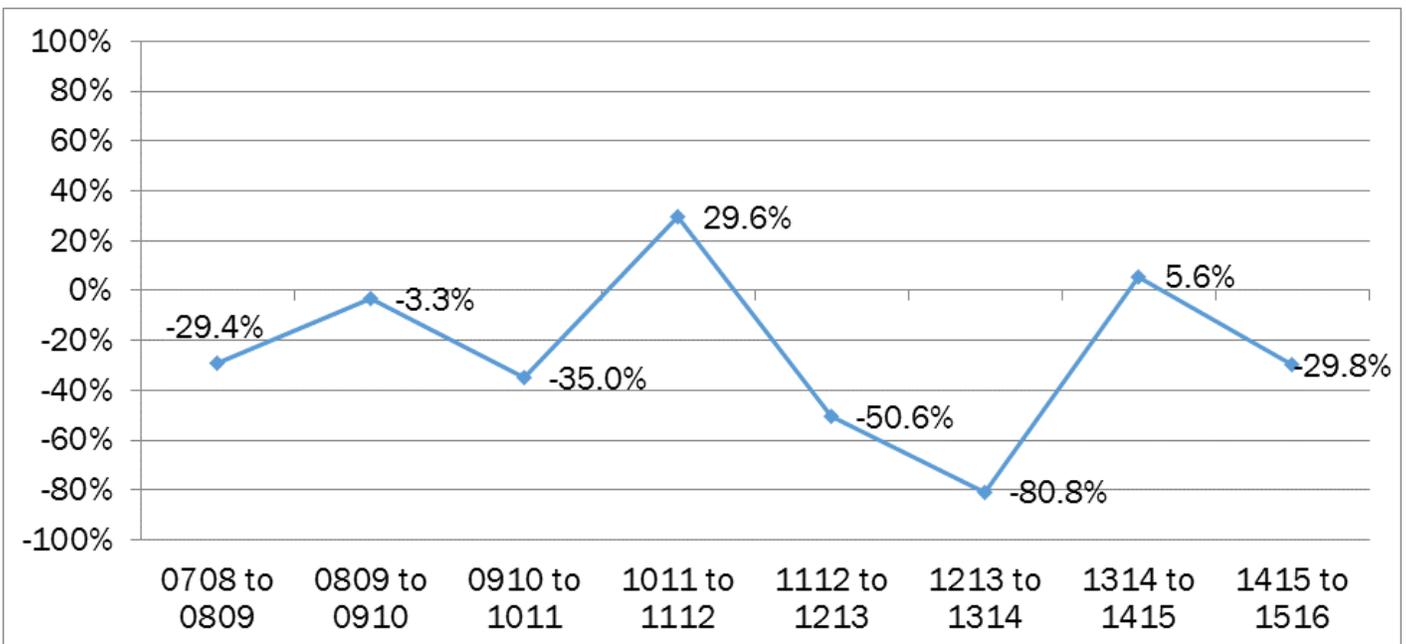


Figure 5: Number of Transports to Juvenile Court from SHAPE



SHAPE Outcomes cont'd

Future Contact with Juvenile Court

Perhaps the ultimate goal of SHAPE is to reduce recidivism. That is, students who participate in the program will avoid all future contact with Juvenile Court. According to the data, 19.8% of SHAPE students had no future contact with Juvenile Court 6 months after their initial referral to the program. The State of Tennessee does not systematically track juvenile recidivism for diversion or community corrections supervision programs. Moreover, there is no national recidivism rate for juveniles. Nevertheless, based on other states, the comparable average 12-month juvenile recidivism rates have been: 55% re-arrest for delinquent/criminal offenses in juvenile and adult systems (Florida, New York, Virginia); and 45% re-referral to court for delinquent/criminal offenses in the adult and juvenile systems (Colorado, Maryland). The SHAPE Juvenile Court recidivism rate is significantly less than these reasonably analogous rates.

In addition to reducing the number of minority youth transported from SCS to Juvenile Court and reducing the recidivism rate, SHAPE hopes that their interventions will have other positive effects on minority youth. These include increasing promotion rates, improving attendance, and decreasing the frequency and severity of behavior problems.

References

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