

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): 2013-14 Outcome and Evaluation Study

Schools Involved

- Cordova High
- Craigmont High
- Fairley High
- Frayser High
- Highland Oaks Middle
- Hillcrest High
- Kingsbury High
- Kirby High
- Kirby Middle
- Manassas High
- Melrose High
- Northside High
- Raleigh-Egypt High
- Ridgeway High
- Southwind High
- Trezevant High
- Whitehaven High
- Wooddale High
- Wooddale Middle
- Woodstock Middle

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. In the 2010–2011 academic year, gambling was also added as a SHAPE-eligible offense. The current SHAPE eligibility criteria include:

- Students must have a pending juvenile charge for criminal trespassing, disorderly conduct, simple assault with no serious injuries, or gambling.
- 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 can refer eligible students to the program in lieu of transporting them to Juvenile Court. Law

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 Coor-

dinator 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 2013–14 academic year.

Data Analysis

The final data set for this analysis includes information collected from 271 students. Of these, 190 completed the program successfully. All of these analyses were done using the statistical package, SPSS 18.0™.

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 threat to him or herself or the community.

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

SHAPE Outcomes

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.

Participants

Shelby County Schools is Tennessee's largest school district and the 23rd largest public school system in the United States. Demographically, SCS comprises predominantly minority students. Of the more than 140,000 students who were enrolled in SCS during the 2013–14 academic year, 79.8% were identified as minority (TN Department of Education, 2013). Thus, it may not be surprising that minority 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 2013–14 academic year, African-American students accounted for 95.6% of the students referred to SHAPE, while only 3% were White, 1.5% were Hispanic and 0.4% were Asian.

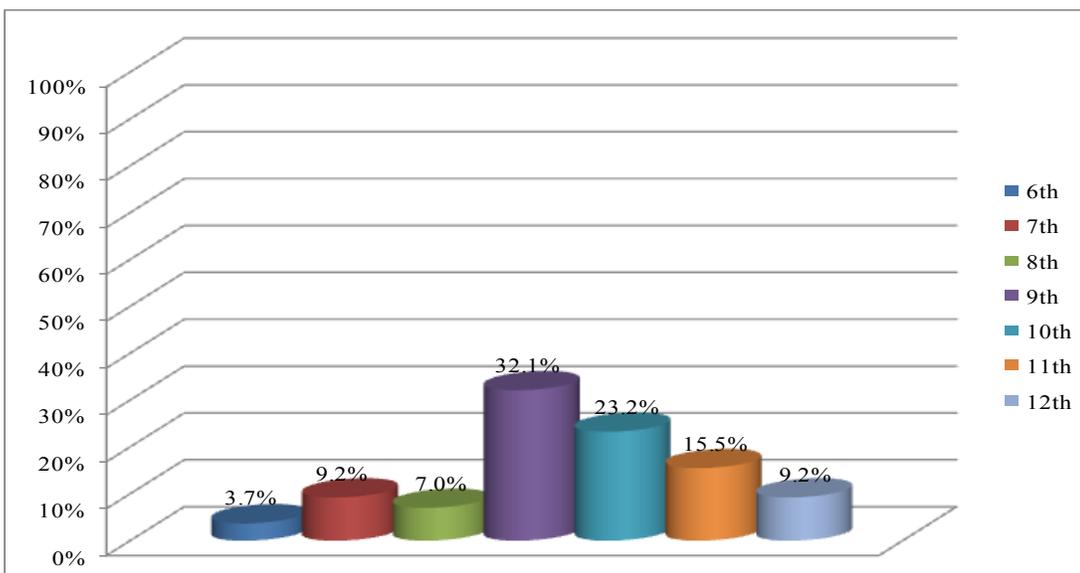
Gender. There were slightly more females than males in SHAPE during the 2013–14 academic year (51.3% vs. 48.7%, respectively). This reflects an elevated percentage of female referrals when compared to the total population in the SCS system (49.2% females vs. 50.8% males).

Age. The average age of students referred to SHAPE was 15 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 2013–14 referrals (80.1%) came from high schools, while 19.9% came from middle schools (see Figure 1 below for a graphic representation of the distribution of SHAPE referrals by grade in school). The majority of students referred were in the 9th grade.



Figure 1: Frequency of SHAPE Referrals by Grade in School



SHAPE Outcomes cont'd

Table 1: SHAPE Referral Count by School

SHAPE School	Count	Percent
Cordova High	22	8.1
Craigmont High	22	8.1
Fairley High	13	4.8
Frayser High	1	0.4
Highland Oaks Middle	11	4.1
Hillcrest High	23	8.5
Kingsbury High	6	2.2
Kirby High	9	3.3
Kirby Middle	11	4.1
Manassas High	11	4.1
Melrose High	7	2.6
Northside High	26	9.6
Raleigh-Egypt High	29	10.7
Ridgeway High	12	4.4
Southwind High	13	4.8
Trezevant High	2	0.7
Whitehaven High	7	2.6
Wooddale High	13	4.8
Wooddale Middle	14	5.2
Woodstock Middle	19	7.0
Total	271	100.0

Referring school. Students attending Raleigh-Egypt, Hillcrest, Cordova and Craigmont high schools received the most referrals to SHAPE (see Table 1 for a count of referrals by school).



Referring agency. Referrals to SHAPE primarily came from school administrators (27.7%). 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 increased 6.3% from the previous year (from 255 to 271). Any of these referrals could have ultimately resulted in a juvenile summons to appear in Juvenile Court.

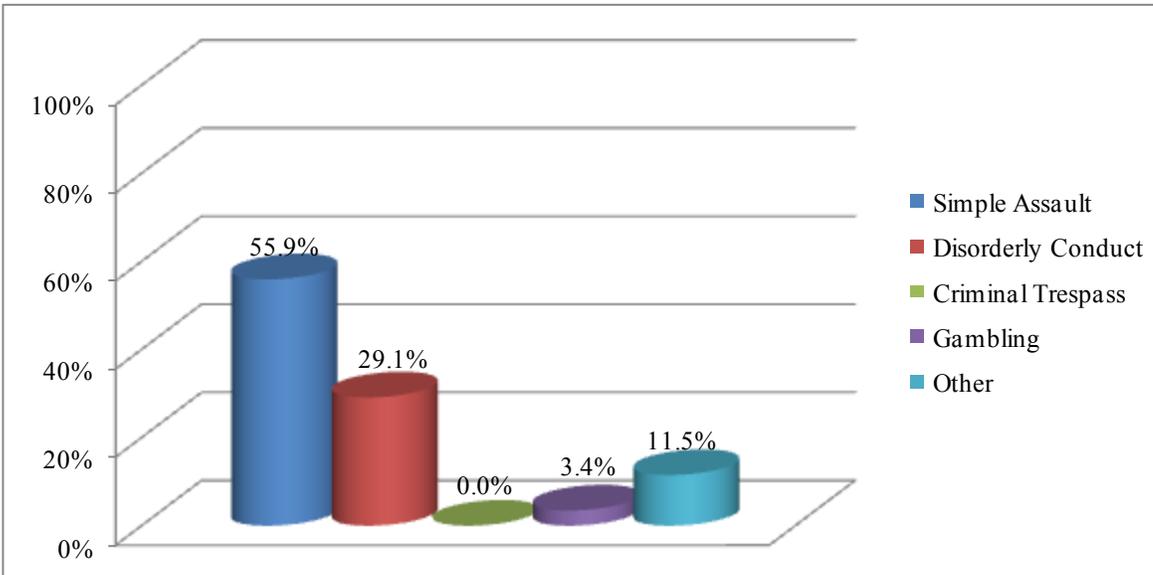


SHAPE Outcomes cont'd

Referring Offense

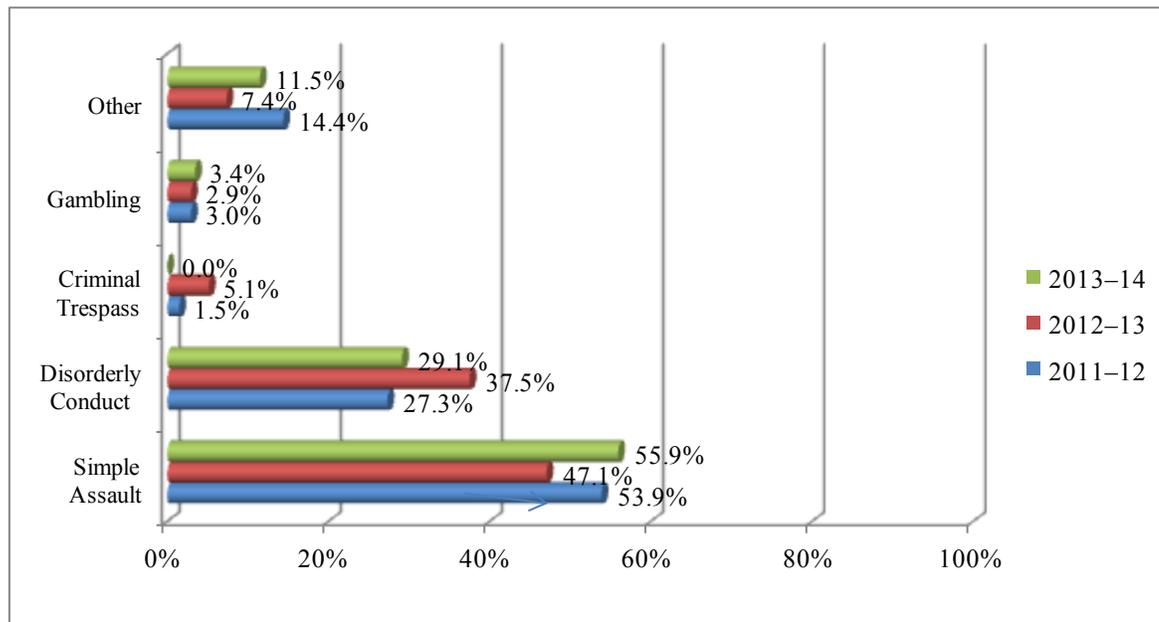
The most common offense for which students were referred to SHAPE was Simple Assault with No Serious Injury (55.9%), followed by Disorderly Conduct (29.1%) (see Figure 2 for a graphic representation of the distribution of SHAPE referrals by offense).

Figure 2: SHAPE Referrals by Offense



As shown in Figure 3, referrals for Simple Assault with No Serious Injury were up from the previous two years. Referrals for Disorderly Conduct and Criminal Trespassing were down from 2012–13, but up from 2011–12. There were no referrals for Criminal Trespass in 2013–14.

Figure 3: SHAPE Referrals by Offense per Year



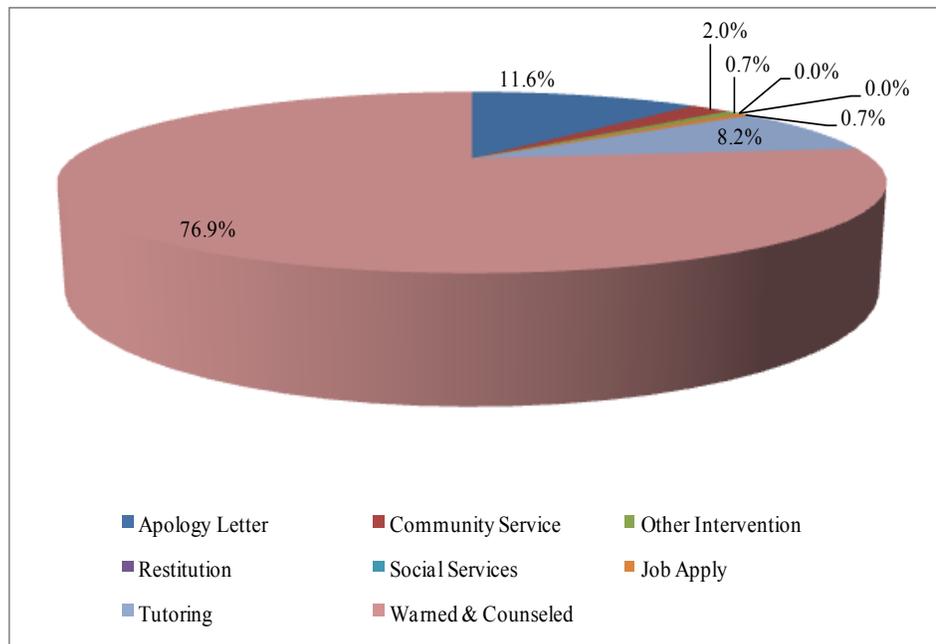
SHAPE Outcomes cont'd

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 4 below for a graphic representation of the distribution of SHAPE interventions). The most common among these is a face-to-face meeting with the Site Coordinator, listed as Warned & Counseled (76.9%). 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 extracurricular time is another major area of concern for the Site Coordinators. Writing an apology letter (11.6%), tutoring (8.2%) and community service (2.0%) are just some of positive activities in which SHAPE participants are involved.



Figure 4: SHAPE Interventions

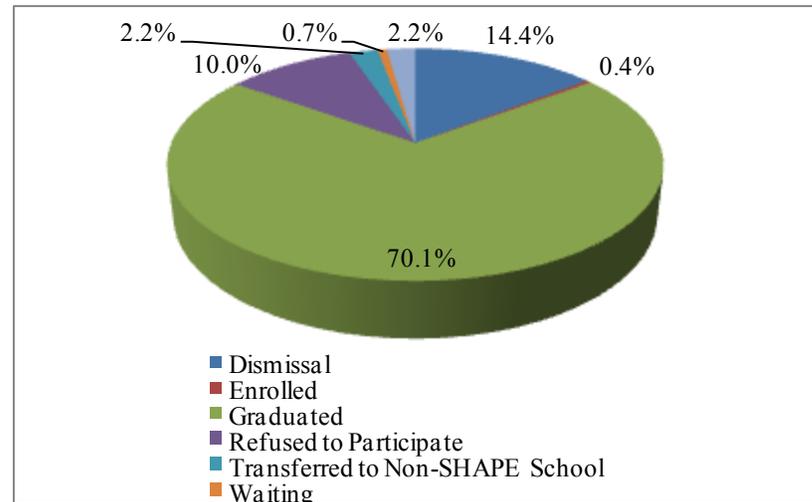


SHAPE Outcomes cont'd

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 271 students referred to the program in the 2013–14 academic year, 190 successfully graduated (70.1%) by completing at least twelve of the Mendez curriculum sessions and meeting all other requirements of the program. Twenty-seven (10.0%) of the referred students refused to participate, and 39 (14.4%) were discharged for non-compliance. These students were usually issued a juvenile summons to appear in Juvenile Court. Six of the students (2.2%) were dismissed from the program because they transferred to a school that did not participate in the program. Two students are currently on the waiting list (0.7%), and 1 student (0.4%) is still enrolled. Finally, six referrals (2.2%) were nullified because, in addition to the qualifying charge for which the student was referred, the student had a concurrent disqualifying charge.

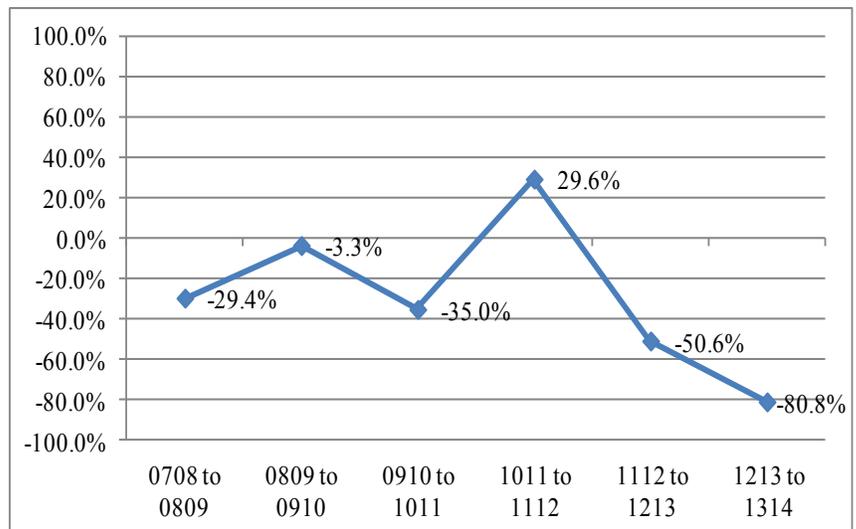
Figure 5: SHAPE Participant Outcomes



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 6, SHAPE has clearly been effective in this area. In the 2013–14 academic year, there was a 80.8% reduction in transports from the previous year, and a 94.5% reduction since the program was implemented in the 2007–08 academic year. The reductions shown here 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 6: Number of Transports to Juvenile Court from SHPE



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, 82.7% of SHAPE students had no future contact with Juvenile Court 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 are: 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). Conversely, the SHAPE Juvenile Court recidivism rate of 17.3% is significantly less than these reasonably analogous rates.

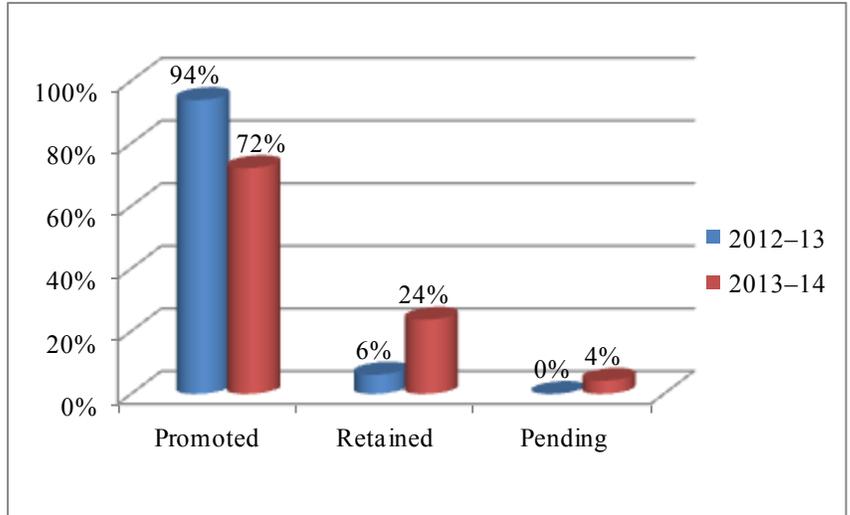
SHAPE Outcomes cont'd

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.

Promotion Rate

As shown in Figure 7, among the students who successfully graduated from the SHAPE program in the 2013–14 academic year, more than 20% fewer were promoted than in the previous year. Additionally, 18% more students were retained in 2013–14 than in 2012–13.

Figure 7: Promotion Rate



Attendance

As shown in Figure 8, 58% of the students who completed the SHAPE program in the 2012–13 academic year did not receive another unexcused absence after entering the program compared to 22% in the 2013–14 academic year. Among the students who were absent, a higher percentage had fewer absences in the 2012–13 academic year than in the 2013–14 academic year. Fifty-one percent of students had 1 to 5 unexcused absences in 2012–13, compared to 39% of students in 2013–14. Additionally, a higher percentage of students had 16 or more unexcused absences in 2013–14 than in 2012–13 (24% vs. 14%, respectively). The discrepancy in attendance likely affects differences in student promotion and attendance rates between the 2012–13 and 2013–14 academic years.

Figure 8: Percentage of Students without Unexcused Absences

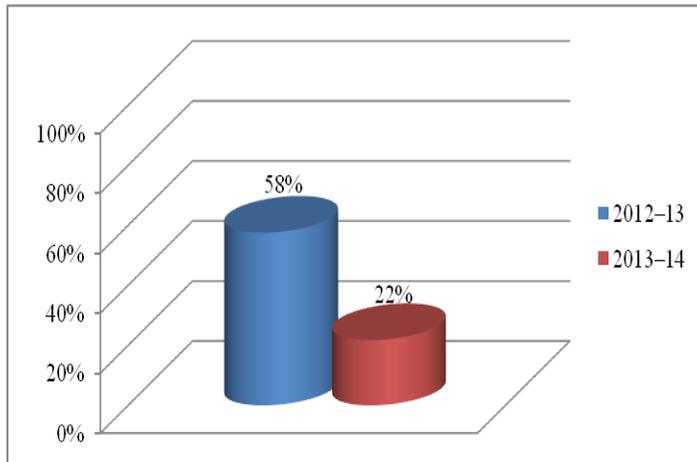
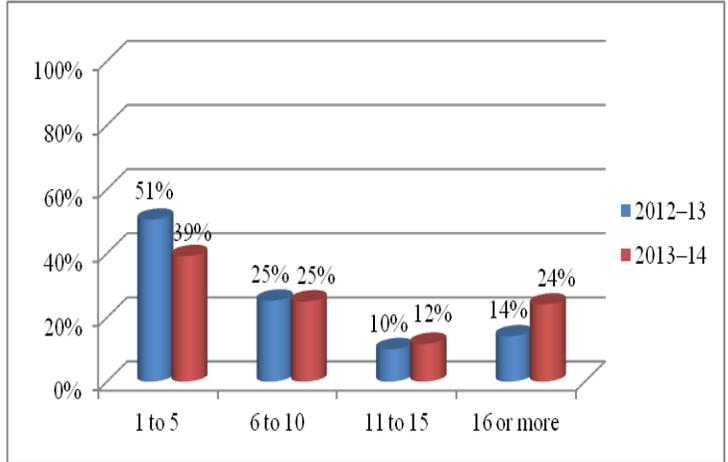


Figure 9: Percentage of Students with Unexcused Absences



SHAPE Outcomes cont'd

Conduct

As shown in Figures 10 and 11, a slightly higher percentage of students went on to commit another behavior infraction after entering the SHAPE program than in the previous year.

Figure 10: 2012–13 Incidents after Enrollment Date

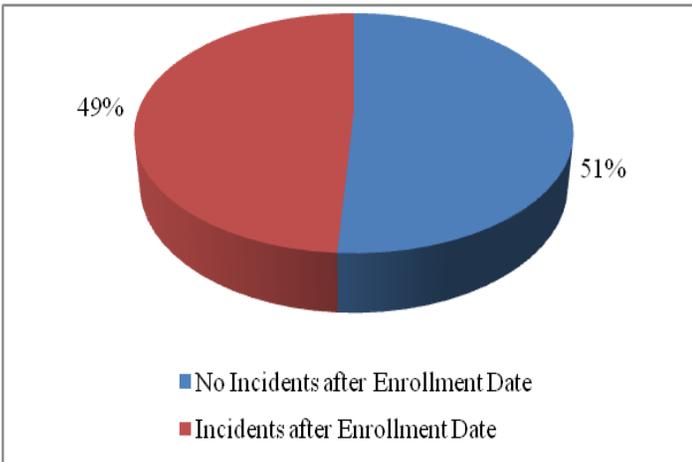
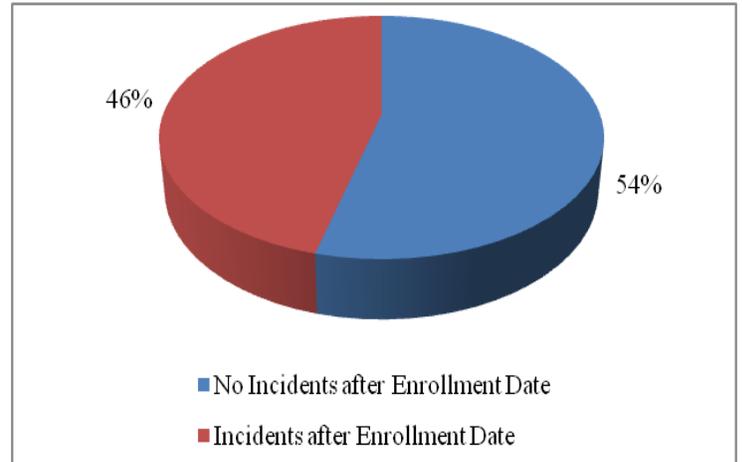
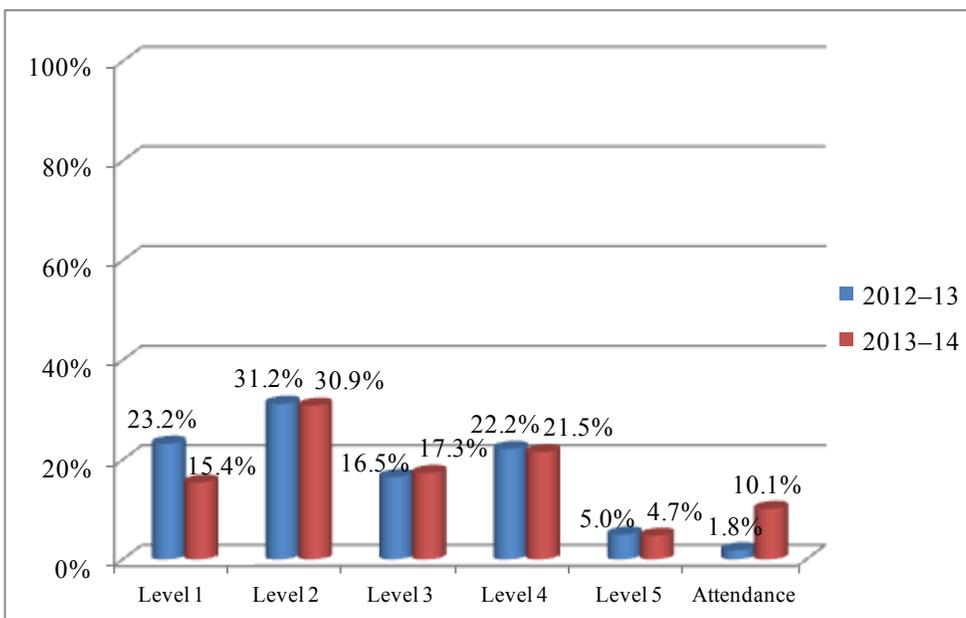


Figure 11: 2013–14 Incidents after Enrollment Date



Among the 2013–14 SHAPE students who successfully completed the program, slightly more students received behavior infractions than did those in 2012–13 (1.6%). Figure 12 shows the difference between the severity of these behavior infractions. In 2013–14, students committed fewer level 1, level 2, level 4 and level 5 infractions than in 2012–13. Conversely, students committed slightly more level 3 infractions, and had significantly more issues with attendance.

Figure 12: Percentage of Students with Office Referrals



Summary and Recommendations*

Summary

In August 2011, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) recognized SHAPE as a national DMC Reduction Best Practice (OJJDP, 2011). This is an honor rarely bestowed upon a relatively newly established program. The SHAPE model is now being considered for statewide adoption in Tennessee as well as other states. Program officials have participated in national conferences with the Coalition on Juvenile Justice, and recently, they presented a paper to the OJJDP National Leadership Summit on School-Justice Partnerships sponsored by the New York State Permanent Judicial Division on Justice for Children. Additionally, the SHAPE model was featured in a book chapter on DMC current issues and policies (Parsons-Pollard, 2011). All of this work has been made possible because the SHAPE administrator made an early commitment to evaluation and measurement of outcomes. This investment allowed the program to self-correct as issues became apparent and contributed to overall model integrity and credibility.

While the effects of SHAPE have been demonstrated here, many other programs have also contributed to reducing the juvenile detention population. Perhaps the most important accomplishment of SHAPE has been to affect the culture of detention in this community. The partnership with the Memphis Police Department has been especially gratifying, and SHAPE awareness is now a component of the annual in-service training. SCS administrators are more readily taking advantage of intermediate interventions and diversions like SHAPE, and evaluating the appropriateness of every transport. This cultural shift has been a complex process and SHAPE has played an important role.

Recommendations

While the program has been successful, there are some lessons that administrators could learn from the six years of SHAPE's implementation. First, the curriculum needs to be administered uniformly. The program is necessarily decentralized; consequently, the actual delivery of the curriculum is heavily dependent on the available human resources. Variation in program delivery will affect student outcomes.

Second, administrators may need to modify the participant selection criteria. The program may be more successful if it focuses on proactively selecting students who have a history of behavior problems that may contribute to DMC with the Juvenile Court system. Addressing minor behavior problems that tend to be a function of lack of structure, motivation, and skills could better equip students to deal with the negative influences that make them more susceptible to illicit behaviors. Along those lines, starting the program in middle school may help further reduce DMC. Early intervention, skill building, and education would encourage students to focus on accountability and long-term consequences. This could mitigate future, possibly more serious, negative behaviors.

Third, the SHAPE Coordinator can explore the use of additional research-based or evidence-based strategies for addressing problem behaviors in at-risk youth. Additional interventions may improve outcomes for program participants.

SHAPE could provide additional support for the students the program serves by recruiting volunteers from the professional community who have experience working with youth. Additionally, ensuring the appropriate staff are assigned to each school, and that they continually receive training and support, could improve the program's success. This is especially important because of the close relationship and insight the staff have with the students they are assigned to help at each school.

Lastly, there is considerable pressure to make SHAPE accountable for matters that it was not designed to do. SHAPE is primarily a DMC reduction strategy. Communities that replicate this model should consider this matter, or the success of the program may be diffused. The initial years of funding from TCCY have ended. SCS has provided funding to allow the program to continue without interruption. Although steps have been taken to institutionalize SHAPE, it will be important to sustain and even increase the oversight. Perhaps input from the newly announced partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation can help to continue the progress already realized.

* The information in these sections was derived from research conducted by Wayne J. Pitts, Ph.D. Dr. Pitts was the External Evaluator for SHAPE until 2011.

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