

Historic Stop 6 Initiative

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Key words: Community based program addressing drop our prevention.

Funding Sources:

Funding for the Historic Stop 6 Initiative (HSSI) is provided by Title 1 federal funds and Fort Worth ISD general funds

Project Cost and Budget Narrative:

The normal operating budget given to the HSSI is \$15,000/year. This year, the program is moving to a new location to better serve the community. They are receiving a budget of \$70,000 to assist with the relocation.

Project Description:

The scope of the initiative is in line with the mission of FWISD, which is to prepare all students for college, career, and community leadership by working to meet the needs of families in the Stop Six Community. This initiative provides wrap around services within the community with Community Action Partners. They collaborate with the Family Resource Center to assist with housing, food, utility bills, education, legal aid, etc.

Staffing Pattern:

The HSSI is led by Director, Carlos Walker. The Coordinator is Nakia Cole. Recently added to the initiative is Social Worker, Suzanna Ordonez.

Population Served:

Stop Six was the sixth stop on the old inter-urban train line that ran between Fort Worth and Dallas. It was operated by the Northern Texas Traction Company. The neighborhood is approximately 4.4 square miles with approximately 18,000 residents. It is located on the Southeast side of Fort Worth, TX. Stop Six is faced with a 21.6% unemployment rate, which is two and a half times higher than the city's average. The poverty rate is 40.4%. The graduation rate is 51.5%. and 95.6% of the children in this community receive free or reduced lunch. The HSSI is designed to assist the entire population of the Stop Six Community. The high school located with this community is only one of 13 in FWISD that is still predominantly African American, with a population of 72%. There are 8 schools within Stop Six serving children from Pre-K through 12th grade. There are five elementary schools, one middle school, one high school and one all boys school serving students grades 6-12. The HSSI also works with the local daycare centers to ensure children are Pre-K and Kinder ready.

Project Origination:

The HSSI originated from The Morningside Children's Partnership (MCP) on the Southside of Fort Worth. When Mr. Walker became Principal on the Eastside of Fort Worth, he began to create a program modeling that of the MCP. The initial step was to hold a Visioning Workshop at Dunbar HS and invite the community and all stakeholders. These ideas were recorded and addressed by the HSSI almost immediately.

Issues Addressed:

The first "quick win" for the HSSI was an effort to help citizens get their records expunged. This mainly addressed citizens who were unable to find work due to being charged with a crime but never convicted. In collaboration with the L. Clifford Davis Legal Foundation, the District Attorney's Office and the Commissioners Court, the clinics enabled many citizens to get their fees waived or reduced and, in some instances, records completely expunged. Another amazing

result was the passing of HB 557, which notifies persons that have been charged with a crime, but never convicted, how they can clear their record. Another issue addressed at the visioning workshop was the relationship between the community and police.

Desired Outcomes and Measurable Objectives:

The desired outcomes of the project are for residents to feel safe, schools to thrive and the graduation rate to increase. A measurable outcome shows that schools in the Dunbar Pyramid are making progress in terms of student achievement. The number of schools not meeting stated standard has decreased from 7 to 3 over the last five years.

Strategies and/or Interventions of the Project:

The strategies of the project include moving the HSSI closer to the JPS Stop 6 Clinic in order be closer to citizens and allow referrals to move quickly. When referrals are early, the handoff to JPS happens more efficiently. The HSSI has created a committee led by people in the community with a District co-chair to provide assistance. Community Action Teams were created to include members of the community and address immediate concerns.

Results (Outcomes and Achievements):

Although the outcomes and achievements are ongoing, there are several accomplishments to date. The District received a grant to collaborate with 5 childcare centers and elementary schools to ensure every child in the Stop Six Community is fully prepared for Pre-K and Kindergarten. Part of the grant purchases “Ready for Kindergarten” books for all early childhood centers to read to the children. Another result of the HSSI is the reopening of the Adult Education Classes at Dunbar High School. The Read to Win partnership with FWPD and FWFD has been implemented as well. For health and wellness, the HSSI hosted the Stop Six Shape Up Health Expo and 5K Walk/Run and created a neighborhood wellness garden.

Project Timeline:

The HSSI “unofficially” began in the 2014-2015 school year. Funding was approved in July 2015. There is currently no set end date for the program. It has recently moved under the umbrella of the Division of Equity and Excellence in the FWISD.

Outcomes Related to School Completion, Dropout Prevention, and/or Graduation Rates:

Although the HSSI just began in 2015 and we are unable to measure the effect on the graduation rates, we can see a direct correlation between the program itself and dropout prevention. Once the basic needs of a community have been met, they are more apt to direct their attention to education and success. Through various community outreach programs, there has been an increase in the parent participation on the campus level. Those in the community who were able to get their records expunged or fines reduced have been able to seek reliable employment.

Special Conditions, Expertise, and/or Skills Required to Carry Out Project:

In order for this project to be successful, it requires people that are willing to immerse themselves in the community. A pro-active approach is needed to anticipate the needs of a community that otherwise may not be aware of the resources provided to them. The ability to research and utilize resources requires one to be organized and somewhat assertive.

Current Status of Project:

The HSSI is an ongoing program that continues to grow and becomes more successful each year. As they prepare to move into a larger space, closer to major community resources, they will be able to better assist the community. The HSSI continues to implement all programs and create new ones as well.

Role in Project as a NDPS Certification Program Participant:

As a program participant, my involvement consisted of assisting and corroborating with the HSSI at many of my campuses. This includes participating in community activities, making necessary referrals and ensuring any questions or issues regarding attendance or dropout prevention are resolved.

Lessons Learned:

There is a great need in the Stop Six Community for better relationships with law enforcement. Families are in need of a stable income and housing. Referrals made to outside agencies have provided assistance as well. An investment in early childcare centers will ensure the success of students entering Pre-K and Kindergarten. Again, once basic family needs are met, education can become a focus.

Advice for Dropout Prevention Practitioners about the Project:

My advice would be to get involved as much as possible. The more we address the needs of our community, the more successful our children will be in school.