The School Connection Program originally began as a WMU-initiated, community engaged effort to develop and implement an off-site alternative to school suspension for high-need Middle School students in southwestern Michigan county. The original purpose of the program was (a) to provide an off-site location for academic, social, and emotional supports to students separated from their K-12 school setting due to suspension and (b) to ensure that when the student returns to school, they are returning with tools that will help them stay better connected to school and less likely to be suspended again while addressing academic deficits in the areas of Math and English Language Arts. Pilot data on program effectiveness shows an average overall decrease in in-school suspensions, absences, rates of office referral, and an increase in academic performances for School Connection Scholars. The slight increase in suspension was rectified and a new behavior plan implemented in the school for affected students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-School Suspension</td>
<td>10% ↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-School Suspension</td>
<td>1% ↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absences</td>
<td>20% ↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rates of Office Referral</td>
<td>25% ↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Performance</td>
<td>50% ↑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the Fall 2016 semester, the partner school district and Western Michigan University piloted the WMU-based program to fit the specific needs of the school district and incorporated the specific WMU and local community entities that would be involved in the initial pilot including WMU McGinnis Reading Clinic, Prevention Works, the Target Program, WMU Departments of Occupational Therapy, Psychology, Special Education and Literacy Studies, and Teaching Learning and Education Studies. Students were eligible for inclusion in the pilot if they had 10 or more out-of-school suspensions, office referrals, and absences in the previous academic year; exhibited aggressive or challenging behavior in the school environment; short of violence toward staff or teachers; were not making adequate academic progress (scoring in the bottom 30% of students in Math or ELA) in the current school environment; were not deemed a flight risk; and had written consent from parents and assent from students to participate in the pilot. The participating students needed more supports and resources than the partner middle school had available at the time and saw this as an excellent opportunity to partner. In this case, students still reported to school daily and were transported to the WMU campus by district school buses, akin to the manner in which Academically Gifted and Talented students are transported to the WMU campus for enrichment courses during the academic year.

For more information, please contact:
Luchara Wallace, PhD
Luchara.wallace@wmich.edu
School Connection Program Summary Report

Referral process:
1. Principal determines alternative academic placement would be appropriate
   • History of chronic suspensions, absenteeism, and referrals; however, behaviors are non-violent in nature and not a flight risk
2. Student and family agree to participate in programming provided
   Including: Principal, family member, student, SCP Director and Coordinator, ABA Lab representative

Academic Support
Math and ELA: ABA Lab
Social Studies: Secondary Ed major
Science: SCP staff

TARGET Program
DRIVE Program (Prevention Works)
Gryphon Place (Restorative Justice)
InFocus Curriculum

Follow-up process:
1. Completed plan, assignments, and summary of participation in emotional/social supports shared with home school
2. Student progress evaluated quarterly to determine effectiveness of supports and rates of recidivism

Visits: Week of 12/12 & 19 + 30, 60, 90 day & Pre-interns

Revised Model for Implementation

Figure 4. Program Flow Chart

Activities Short-term Outcomes Intermediate Outcomes Long-term Outcomes

Intake meeting

Academic Support
Scholars develop academic skills.

Scholars learn goals setting, coping strategies, decision making skills, and develop self-esteem.

Former and new scholars will learn math strategies in a comprehensive classroom.

Increased in scholar participation in their classroom.

Teachers learn trauma-specific treatment interventions and ABA intervention.

New scholars obtain academic, behavioral, and social skills.

Scholars apply their skills in a new setting.

Teachers application of learned PD content.

Improve teacher relationships across districts.

Former and new scholars increase positive attitude toward schools.

Increase in graduation rates and success

Increase parent involvement/support in goal setting by their children

Improved attendance

Reduced suspension

Decrease instances of office referrals

Increase in academic success

Increase support for frequently under-resourced students

Improved school climate

Increase college and career readiness

For more information, please contact:
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Current Updates
In response to the goal to provide summer bridge or enrichment programming, the School Connection Program is partnering with The Lewis Walker Institute for Race and Ethnic Relations Summer WIRE program to provide eligible scholars with an opportunity to attend the WIRE Summer STEM camp for 4-weeks on the campus of Western Michigan University.

Additionally, SCP will partner with the Youth Summer Employment Initiative to provide meaningful summer programming for at-risk or adjudicated youth between the ages of 12-18, still enrolled in school, and who fit the SCP participant criteria. One of the goals of the project is to develop the knowledge and dispositions of participating youth to prepare them to learning how to develop and run their own business enterprise. Additionally, this vision is consistent with the vision established as a part of Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo where every adult and child may thrive and prosper not only by growing financial assets, but by developing all assets that will promote healthy growth, development and learning. This summer employment initiative seeks to develop youth capacity and build a foundation to support improved access to adequate employment (or self-employment) in the future.

Currently, the project has acquired an in-kind donation of space along the Washington Square corridor on Portage Road to house the pop up shop for 6 weeks. The first week will include training and preparation of the space. Weeks two through five will include training and execution of the pop-up business. And week six will include the breakdown of the pop up shop and analysis of the community and youth impact.