

Project Navigate Constructive Change

*Final Evaluation Report
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PREPARED BY

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We also would like to extend our gratitude to the team who oversaw the PNCC database during the course of the project. This includes Ralph Womack, Katie Leonard, and Alejandro Vasquez.

INTRODUCTION

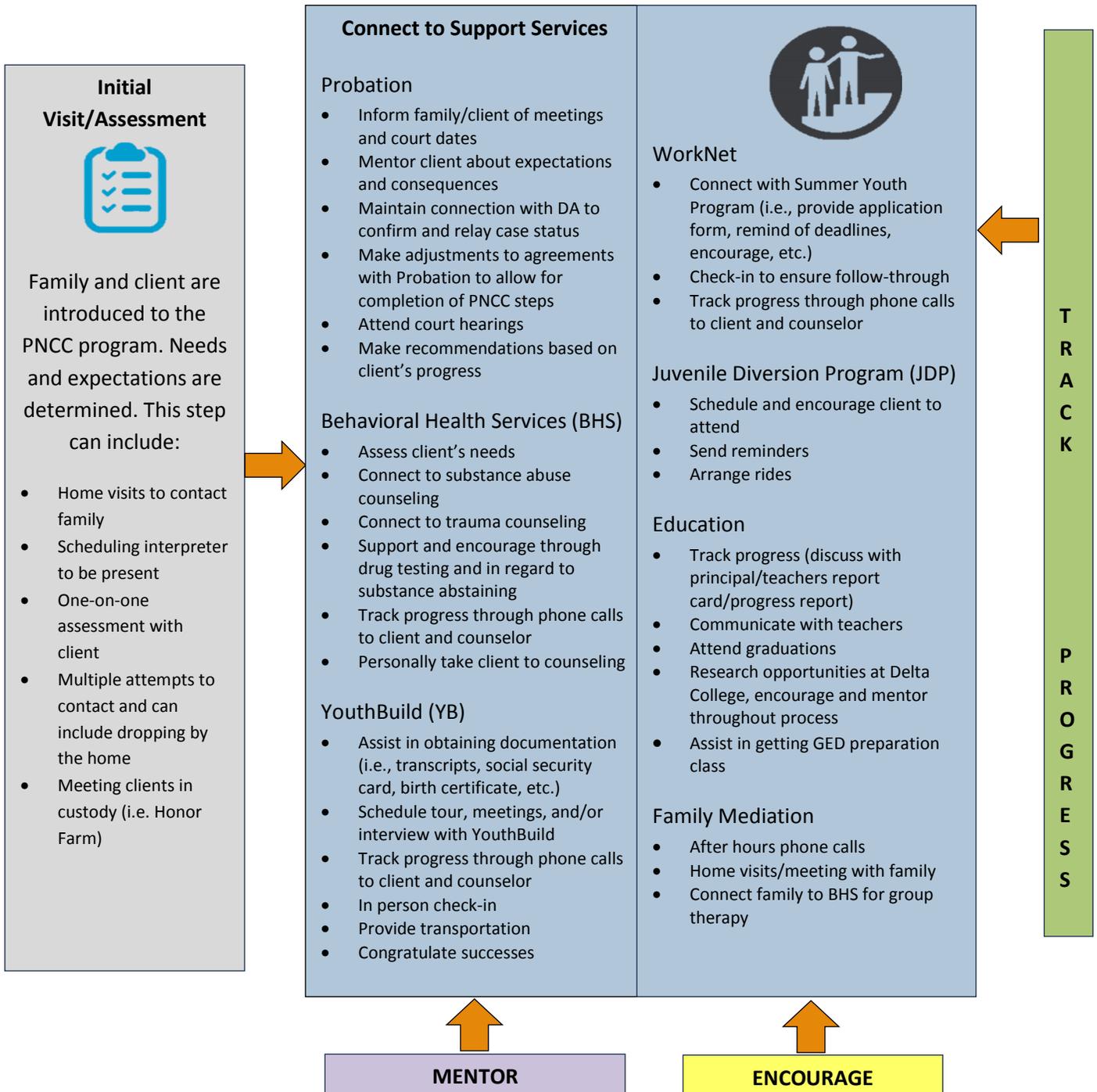
Project Navigate Constructive Change (PNCC), is a program which was envisioned by the District Attorney of San Joaquin County. A grant was obtained for a youth diversion program to be established including a partnership among the San Joaquin County's District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Department, Probation Department, Office of Education, and Behavioral Health Services. Once referred to the program, youth and their families are screened and, when appropriate, enrolled into the program. An individualized case plan is then created, and once all goals are met, youth graduate from the program and upon graduation, some of the youth are able to have their criminal charges dismissed. Stakeholders meet each month to collectively discuss the progress of each participant (please see programmatic flow chart on the following page).

Youth participants have had the opportunity to visit Mule Creek State Prison and hear from the men who are part of the Juvenile Diversion Program there. Specific training and a clean behavioral record is required of the men who serve as mentors to the youth who visit the prison.

Participants also have other opportunities such as the ability to join YouthBuild, which is a program that offers training in construction, or the Discovery Challenge Academy, a quasi-military school where youth live for five and a half months. These programs offer job training skills, as well as discipline, an opportunity to catch up on school credits and graduate high school, and assist youth with planning for their future.



PNCC NAVIGATOR CLIENT SERVICE PROCESS



MENTOR

ENCOURAGE

Note: Information for this diagram was taken from the Navigator's client contact updates on clients who successfully completed the PNCC program.

KEY FINDINGS

Project Purpose

The goal of the Project Navigate Constructive Change program centered on offering a multi-faceted approach to addressing the prevalent gang, drugs, and violence problems in San Joaquin County. This was accomplished by the coordinated efforts of a multi-disciplinary team that utilized community engagement and focused on prevention, intervention, and enforcement activities. The goal of the project centered on the prevention of youth from being arrested and coming into the juvenile justice system. Moreover, the project team's goal was to work towards navigating each client towards success.

Project Impact

The main process evaluation question connected to this grant was whether the program team successfully established a multi-faceted approach (via the alternative to incarceration model) to address the issues that connect with gangs, drugs, and violence in San Joaquin County. Due to this grant opportunity, the PNCC team was able to successfully put such an approach in place. In addition, the grant team was able to establish new and proactive ways of working with clients. In doing so, collaborative partners were able to create an innovative and systems-based approach in San Joaquin County. As an example of this collective work, the program team met monthly to discuss the grant process and to have team discussions about ways to assist each of the youth on the project caseload.

outcomes of the grant. More specifically, in working to navigate youth towards success, the program was able to prevent numerous clients from being re-arrested and in doing so divert them from incarceration. As part of this grant effort, the program team successfully placed school resource officers in two high schools in the county. In having officers on campus the aim was to increase campus safety. In addition, as part of the grant, the drug interdiction team was successful in implementing efforts that aimed to curb drug trafficking in San Joaquin County.

The overall goals of the grant were realized. These centered on establishing a successful diversion program for youth as an alternative to incarceration, improving security and safety at schools, reducing narcotics in the community, and increasing in educational attainment and training amongst project participants.

It is critical to add that this report includes an array of qualitative data from clients and staff. This data demonstrates that Project Navigate Constructive Change had a profound impact on the lives of participants. As such, the program team positively impacted the lives of youth while they simultaneously established a highly innovative diversion program in San Joaquin County, one that centered on systems change.

PNCC DATA ANALYSIS

Overall, 118 youth participated in the PNCC program from June 2015 to December 2018. Sixty-two (62) of the youth who were initially referred to the program were not accepted due to extensive criminal histories, the Navigator's determination that the youth was not ready for this program, they were living out of the county, or the youth (or their parent/guardian) refused services. The largest percentage of referrals came from the Public Defenders Office (48.7%).

Demographics (N=118)

Participants ranged in age from 13 to 24. The majority of participants were male (83.9%). Six in ten participants (61.7%) were Hispanic or Latino/Latina, 15.7% were Black or African American, 11.3% White or Caucasian, 5.2% were Asian or Asian American, 1.7% were multi-ethnic, 0.9% were Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 0.9% were American Indian or Alaska Native (n=115).

Most PNCC participants were from San Joaquin County and resided in Stockton during their time in the program (78.4%). Other participants were living in Acampo (0.9%), Lathrop (0.9%), Linden (0.9%), Ripon (0.9%), Manteca (1.7%), Lockeford (2.5%), Lodi (4.3%), and Tracy (5.2%). Approximately 1.8% of the youth were from out of county (n=116).

School Data (N=96)

Half (50%) of the PNCC youth were attending school, while also working with the PNCC Navigator.

Figure 1. Youth Demographics

Demographics	
Total Number of Referrals	180
Enrolled In Services	118
Not Enrolled	62
Age Range	13-24
Gender	
Female	16.1%
Male	83.9%
Race/Ethnicity	
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.9%
Asian or Asian American	5.2%
Black or African American	15.7%
Hispanic or Latino/Latina	61.7%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.9%
White or Caucasian	11.3%
Multi-Ethnic	1.7%
Unknown	2.6%
Youth's Place of Residence	
San Joaquin County	98.2%
Acampo	0.9%
Lathrop	0.9%
Ripon	0.9%
Linden	0.9%
Manteca	1.7%
Lockeford	2.5%
Mountain House	2.5%
Lodi	4.3%
Tracy	5.2%
Stockton	78.4%
Out of County	1.8%

Gang Affiliation (N=106)

Youth who were part of the program were typically not documented gang-members. In fact, 95.3% of participants were not gang members. However, 17.9% were gang-affiliated, 5.7% were living in a home with a gang-affiliate, and 1.8% were living in a home with a gang-member.

Prior Arrest, Drug Use, And Probation Status (N=106)

Over half (59.4%) of participants had no prior arrest history, while 39.7% did.

Seven in ten (72.6%) PNCC clients were using substances upon entering the program, 18.9% were not, and substance use information was not known for 8.5% of participants. Six in ten (59.4%) of participants had a family member who uses drugs, while 24.5% do not, and for 16.0% of participants this was unknown.

Additionally, 62.9% of participants were not on probation during their time in the program, while another 34.3% of clients were on probation. Probation status was unknown for 2.8% of participants (n=105).

History of Victimization (N=106)

Most participants did not have a history of having been a victim of a violent crime (78.3%), while 17.9% did. It is unknown whether the other 3.8% had been victims of a violent crime. In addition, 19.8% of PNCC clients reported having been witness to violence in the family, while 67.0% had not, and for 13.2% this was unknown. Furthermore, 12.4% of these youth indicated they had been victims of bullying, while 80.9% had not; for the other 6.7% of youth this was unknown (n=105).

Figure 2. Prior Arrest, Drug Use, and Probation Status

Prior Arrest History	
Yes	39.7%
No	59.4%
Unknown	0.9%
Drug Use	
Using	72.6%
Not Using	18.9%
Unknown	8.5%
Probation Status	
On Probation	34.3%
Not on Probation	62.9%
Unknown	2.8%

Behavioral Health Service Involvement & Medication (N=106)

One quarter (25.5%) of participants had mental health related issues and 4.8% were taking prescription medication (n=105).

Home (N=106)

Nearly three in ten (29.2%) of participants live in a home with both their parents, while 68.9% do not. Furthermore, 27.4% live in a home with a step-parent.

Reason for Case Closure (N=80)

Six out of every ten clients (61.3%) successfully completed the program. In addition, 17.5% were dropped for lack of engagement or follow-through with case plan goals, 12.5% picked up new charges, 3.8% were closed for unknown reasons, 2.5% of the clients were living out of



the county, and another 2.5% were closed at assessment for not meeting requirements for enrollment in the program.

Plan for Services

In terms of goal setting, the following were themes found within the case plan notes for participants:

- Anger management classes
- Addressing substance use issues
- Building credit
- Counseling
- Employment
- Engaging in pro-social activities
- Enrolling in YouthBuild
- Finishing high school, obtaining GED or enrolling in college
- Maintaining positive peer relationships
- Mentor services
- Obtaining a driver's license
- Parenting classes
- Taking the ASVAB for enlistment in the military
- Visiting Mule Creek's Juvenile Diversion Program
- Volunteering/completing community service hours

SCHOOL BASED DATA



Mountain House High School

Data findings specific to school safety incidents for Mountain House High School indicate that from the 2015/2016 school year to 2017/2018 (a three year comparison), there were decreases in the number of violent incidents and campus disturbances. Over the three year period, the number of citations, suspensions, and the number of truants on campus increased. It is reasonable to suggest that such increases could be due the presence of school resource officer who is focused on making the campus safer. There was also an increase in the number of home visits in terms of a comparison with the 2015/2016 school year.

Figure 3. Mountain House High School: School Safety by Program Year

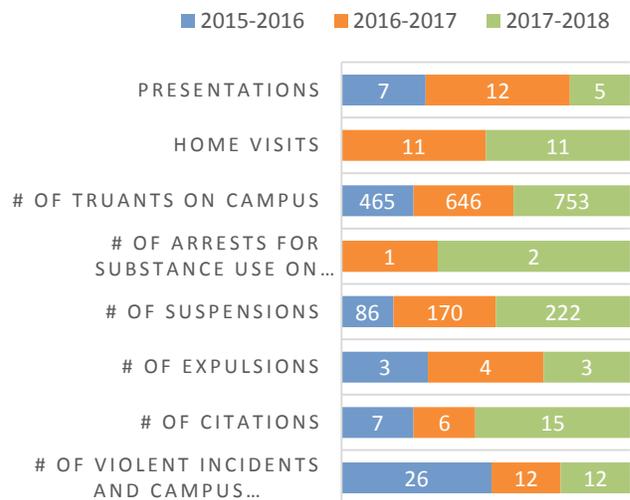
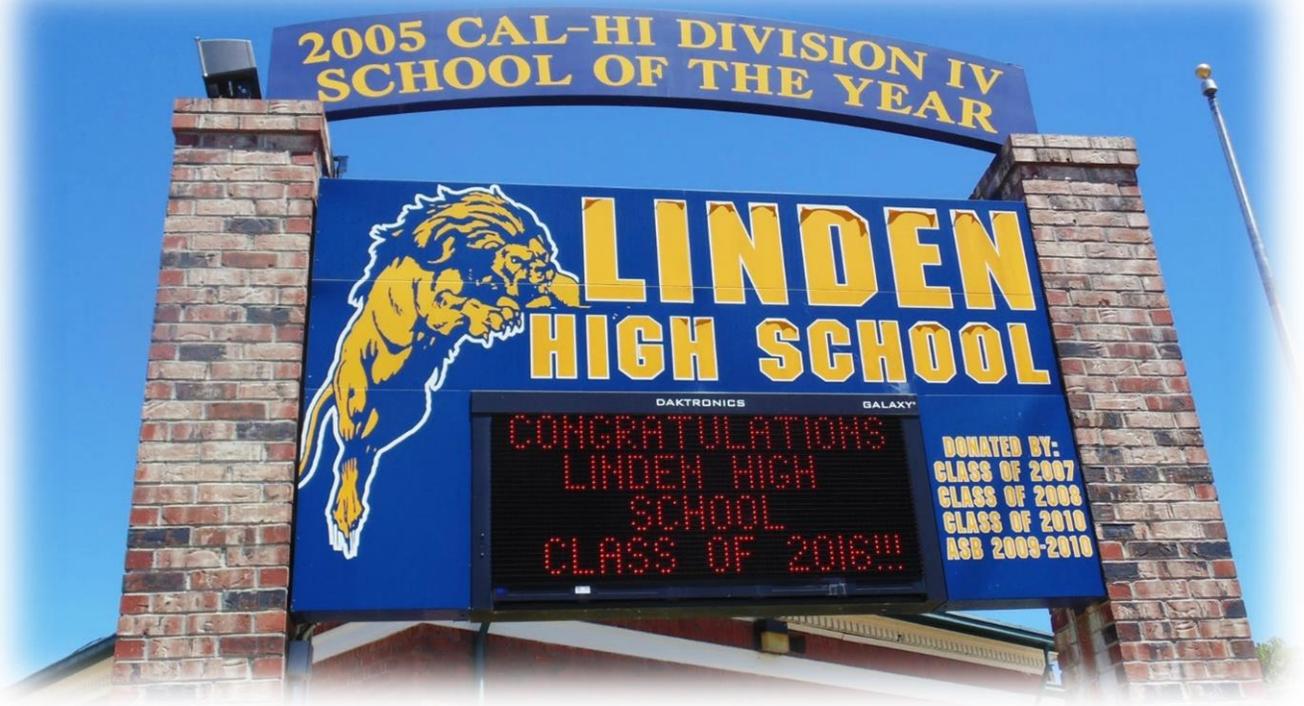


Figure 4. Mountain House High School: School Safety by Program Year and Month

NAVIGATE CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGE: MOUNTAIN HOUSE HIGH SCHOOL								
Month	# of Violent Incidents and Campus Disturbances	# of Citations	# of Expulsions	# of Suspensions	# of Arrests for Substance Use on Campus	# of Truants on Campus	Home Visits	Presentations
2015 August	4	1	0	4	0	28	0	0
2015 September	7	0	0	19	0	69	0	0
2015 October	1	0	0	6	0	39	0	2
2015 November	1	2	0	4	0	37	0	1
2015 December	1	0	0	3	0	40	0	0
2016 January	2	2	2	8	0	57	0	0
2016 February	4	1	1	17	0	82	0	0
2016 March	2	0	0	6	0	69	0	2
2016 April	2	1	0	8	0	23	0	1
2016 May	2	0	0	11	0	21	0	1
Total	26	7	3	86	0	465	0	7
2016 August	2	1	0	5	0	33	2	0
2016 September	3	0	1	19	0	30	1	2
2016 October	1	0	0	12	0	46	1	2
2016 November	1	2	2	15	1	37	2	1
2016 December	0	0	0	9	0	25	0	2
2017 January	1	0	0	9	0	87	1	2
2017 February	2	0	0	22	0	70	1	2
2017 March	1	2	0	30	0	70	2	1
2017 April	0	0	1	31	0	54	1	0
2017 May	1	1	0	18	0	194	0	0
Total	12	6	4	170	1	646	11	12
2017 August	1	1	0	10	0	52	0	0
2017 September	1	1	0	13	0	66	2	0
2017 October	2	1	0	15	0	72	1	2
2017 November	0	2	0	12	0	57	1	0
2017 December	2	3	0	22	0	52	1	1
2018 January	2	0	0	55	0	60	0	0
2018 February	1	3	0	32	2	73	2	0
2018 March	0	2	0	27	0	83	2	1
2018 April	2	2	3	12	0	58	1	1
2018 May	1	0	0	24	0	180	1	0
Total	12	15	3	222	2	753	11	5



Linden High School

Data findings specific to school safety incidents Linden High School indicate that from the 2015/2016 school year to 2017/2018, there were decreases in the number of violent incidents and campus disturbances as well as decreases in the number of truants on campus. In addition, there were many home visits each year; these increased from 72 in 2015/2016, to 76 in 2016/2017, and then to 77 in 2017/2018. Lastly, the number of citations, expulsions, and suspensions fluctuated from year to year.

Figure 5. Linden High School: School Safety by Program Year

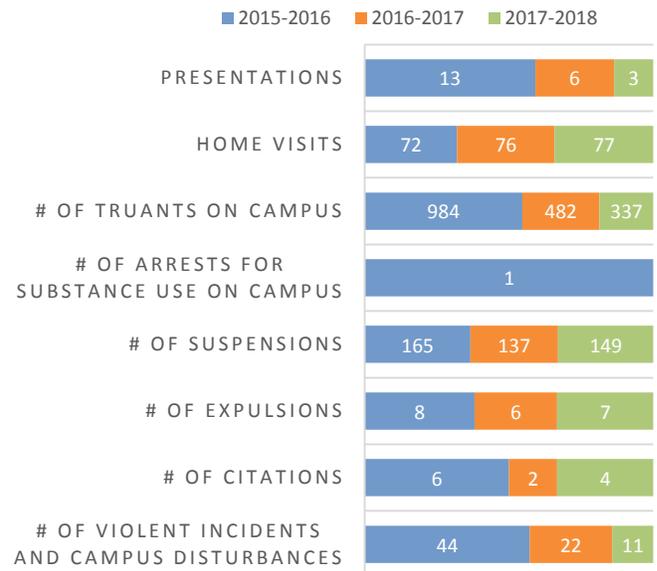


Figure 6. Linden High School: School Safety by Program Year and Month

NAVIGATE CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGE: LINDEN HIGH SCHOOL								
Month	# of Violent Incidents and Campus Disturbances	# of Citations	# of Expulsions	# of Suspensions	# of Arrests for Substance Use on Campus	# of Truants on Campus	Home Visits	Presentations
2015 August	1	0	0	4	0	1	15	4
2015 September	2	1	1	9	0	2	3	6
2015 October	4	0	0	19	0	9	13	1
2015 November	4	4	3	16	0	175	10	0
2015 December	4	0	0	15	0	62	7	0
2016 January	5	1	1	15	0	143	6	0
2016 February	5	0	0	19	0	128	7	0
2016 March	4	0	1	28	0	131	4	1
2016 April	6	0	1	12	0	144	5	1
2016 May	9	0	1	28	1	189	2	0
Total	44	6	8	165	1	984	72	13
2016 August	4	1	0	6	0	8	2	0
2016 September	5	0	3	15	0	23	6	0
2016 October	1	1	1	16	0	56	18	3
2016 November	0	0	1	9	0	23	6	0
2016 December	2	0	0	15	0	45	5	0
2017 January	2	0	0	8	0	49	10	0
2017 February	1	0	0	16	0	30	4	0
2017 March	0	0	0	8	0	54	9	1
2017 April	7	0	1	32	0	56	4	0
2017 May	0	0	0	12	0	138	12	2
Total	22	2	6	137	0	482	76	6
2017 August	0	3	0	8	0	0	18	0
2017 September	2	0	0	12	0	11	12	0
2017 October	0	0	1	16	0	31	8	1
2017 November	2	0	0	14	0	31	5	0
2017 December	0	1	0	18	0	48	6	1
2018 January	0	0	1	9	0	63	6	0
2018 February	5	0	0	26	0	23	4	0
2018 March	1	0	1	6	0	21	1	0
2018 April	1	0	2	17	0	49	4	0
2018 May	0	0	2	23	0	60	13	1
Total	11	4	7	149	0	337	77	3

PNCC SCHOOL SAFETY SURVEY

2017 and 2018 Comparisons

Preface

Students and staff at Linden and Mountain House High School were asked to complete a voluntary survey that included a series of questions regarding school safety. This survey was first administered in 2017 and then again in 2018. It is important to note that the surveys that were administered in 2017 and 2018 were conducted at different times of the year. It is also important to note that there was a change in SRO officers at Linden High School from 2017 to 2018. In addition, the school survey in 2018 was administered after the school shooting at Marjorie Stone Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. While this shooting happened in February of 2018 and the Linden High School Survey was administered in the spring of 2018 and the survey at Mountain House was completed in the fall of 2018 this tragedy may have impacted how students and staff responded to PNCC School Safety Survey.

Linden High School (Students)

At Linden High School, while the data changed from one year to the next, the majority of students:

- Felt safe on campus in both years
- Saw safety procedures posted in school classrooms
- Were comfortable speaking to the school resource/police officer
- Saw a drug dog on campus

Linden High School (Staff)

As was the case for students, the sample of teachers and staff that filled out the survey from

one year to the next fluctuated. Irrespective of the year, the high majority of teachers and staff indicated that they:

- Had spoken to the school resource/police officer
- Felt that the school resource/police officer is there to protect those on campus
- Felt that the school resource/police officer is there to help those at school
- Felt safer knowing that there is a school campus resource/police officer on campus
- Felt that their school has a plan in place if something was to go wrong at
- Felt safe in their school

As noted, samples and respondents were different from year to year, however, there are some differences in data that might connect with a heightened concern regarding school safety. One such finding was that teachers and staff at Linden High School who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement 'a stranger could easily come onto my school campus and no one would know' increased from 47.6% 2017 to 69.6% 2018.



Mountain House (Students)

At Mountain House High School, while the data changed from one year to the next, the majority of students:

- Felt safe at school
- Felt that the school resource/police officer was there to help them
- Felt that adults in their school show that they care about their safety
- Indicated that their school conducts regular safety drills

In addition to the general findings above, there were some important changes with respect to the data findings from one year to the next. These include the following:

- Students who strongly disagreed' or disagreed with the statement 'I am bullied, teased, or picked on at school' increased from 68.1% in 2017 to 81.3% in 2018.
- Participants who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement 'I feel safer now that there is a school campus resource/police officer on campus' increased from 44.0% to 53.1%.
- Students who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement 'there are gang members who go to my school' decreased from 22.8% to 11.8%.
- Students who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement 'prescription drug abuse is a problem on campus' decreased from 20.6% to 7.7%.
- Students who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement 'cyber bullying is a concern amongst students at my school' decreased from 40.4% to 23.8%.
- Students who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement 'drugs are a concern on campus' decreased from 49.4% to 33.3%.



Mountain House (Staff)

At Mountain House High School, regardless of the survey year, the high majority of teachers and staff indicated they felt:

- Safe on campus
- That adults in their school show they care about safety
- That the school resource/police officer is there to help those at school
- That the school resource/police officer was approachable
- Their school conducts regular safety drills

Some additional important and positive year to year changes in data findings for teachers and staff at Mountain House include the following:

- Teachers and staff who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement 'students are bullied, teased, or picked on at school' decreased from 66.7% to 41.2%.

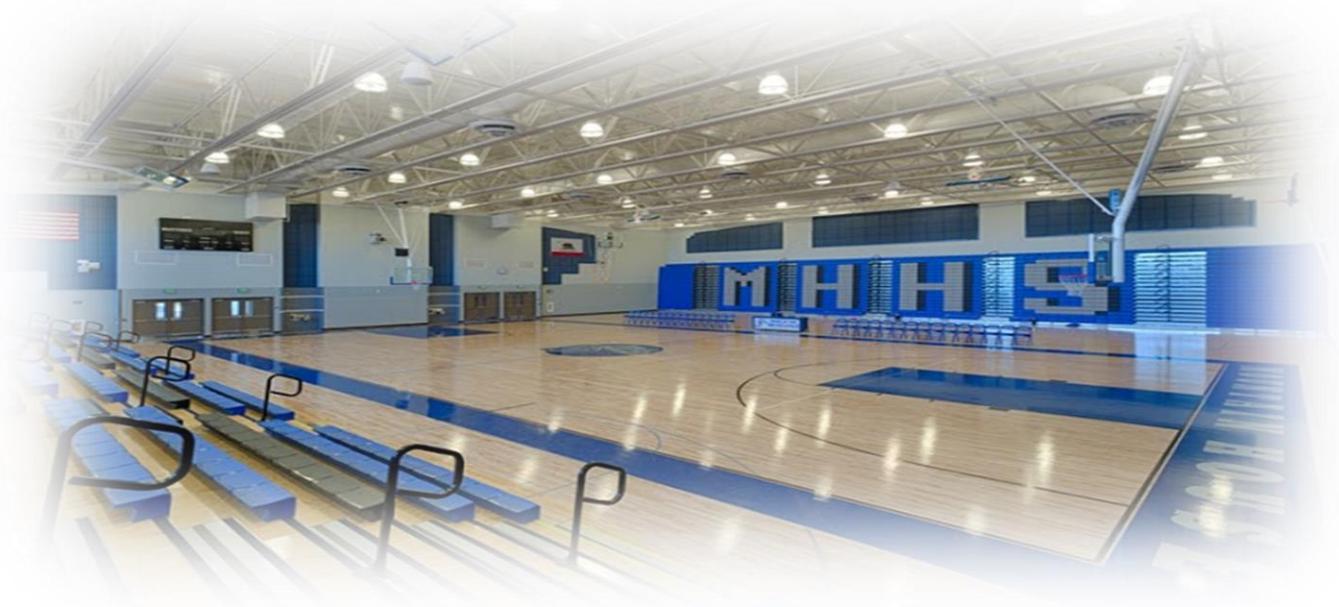
- Participants who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement 'drugs are a concern on campus' decreased from 44.4% to 38.2%.
- Teachers and staff who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement 'prescription drug abuse is a problem on campus' decreased from 22.2% to 14.4%.
- Teachers and staff who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement 'cyber bullying is a concern amongst students at my school' decreased from 77.8% in 2017 to 58.8% in 2018.

Some other data changes from 2017 to 2018 suggest an increased focus or concern about school safety:

- Teachers and staff who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement 'a stranger could easily come onto my school

campus and no one would know' increased from 0.0% to 26.5%.

- Participants who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement 'I feel safer knowing that there is a school campus resource/police officer on campus' decreased from 94.4% to 58.8%.
- Teachers and staff who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement 'students know what to do if there is a stranger on campus' decreased from 61.1% to 45.5%.
- Teachers and staff who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement 'my school has a plan in place if something was to go wrong at school' decreased from 100.0% to 64.7%.



INITIAL SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

The Project Navigate Constructive Change (PNCC), a collaboration including the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office, the San Joaquin County District Attorney's (DA) Office, the San Joaquin County Probation Department, San Joaquin County Behavioral Health Services (BHS), and the San Joaquin County Office of Education and Building Futures Academy at YouthBuild began in July of 2015.

The project team provided some initial feedback on successes and challenges earlier on during implementation. Collaborative partners identified several candidates for participation in the project: youth are typically referred to the Project Navigator by the District Attorney's Office and School Resource Officers (SROs). Since inception, partners have made contact with referred youth by visiting with them at their home and/or school and several youth have been referred to YouthBuild. Additionally, in the short amount of time the project has been accepting clients, several successes and challenges have been identified; while some of these overlap across agencies, others are more agency specific.

Overall, the Project Navigator and BHS reported very specifically on the initial successes with various participants, many of whom seemed ready to make a change and willing to accept help. In addition, partners have been able to work together to establish a streamlined and expedited way for youth participating in PNCC to take part in YouthBuild. YouthBuild is a vocational school, which compensates youth for their time once they complete specific programming. Typically there is an ongoing wait list looking to enroll in this program. According to staff at San Joaquin County

Probation, this is "an extremely important component of PNCC...the sooner they're able to get in the better because any extra idle time most often leads to digression to old bad habits of the population we're working with."

The Sheriff's Office component of the grant included Student Resource Officers (SROs) who work at various school sites for this grant along with the drug interdiction and K9 team via the METRO Narcotics Task Force. The hope was that the SROs would be able to identify individuals who may be struggling behaviorally, with their grades, and/or with their attendance in school; SROs offer guidance and services that may help keep them on a path towards success. The rapport that SROs have been able to build with students was mentioned as one of the major successes of this project. As an example, one of the SROs mentioned that he was approached by a parent at one of his school sites; the parent stated, "you must be [the SRO]. My daughter just loves you, you are such a positive influence for her." This particular deputy indicated that he has been able to create "a positive interaction with law enforcement for the students." Additionally, he has made "a difference in criminal cases at the school as well as the community." More specifically, after being contacted by patrol deputies asking for assistance in identifying individuals involved in criminal activity, a SRO was able to provide information which led to the closing of some cases. A SRO has also been able to identify drug issues and has helped reduce some of the drug usage on campus. An example of a successful intervention on campus follows:

A 14 year old high school freshman purchased marijuana-laced brownies from an older youth and then took them to school and sold them to

classmates; one of whom became ill. He was cited for drug sales on campus and was expelled. He was referred to PNCC and subsequently moved to a continuation school where he continued to attend regularly and maintained good grades. He successfully attended classes on substance abuse awareness and at the point in time that this feedback was provided gave all indications of having learned a hard lesson. He was on track to complete his PNCC plan at the six month mark.

As of December 2015, the SRO component of the program had become fully operational in the Linden and Lammersville Unified School Districts and had facilitated six presentations/trainings on the school campuses, confiscated one weapon, and seized two grams of marijuana. SROs also conducted 30 home visits, checking on the welfare of students. As of January 2016, SROs have intervened and put 5150 holds on three students who were considering suicide; services were also made available to the students and their families in these cases. In addition, SROs have reviewed school safety plans and made revision recommendations. The District Attorney's Office indicated that the program has allowed for many juvenile cases to be handled informally, rather than filing charges in juvenile court, adding that "this has enabled us to keep these youth out of the juvenile justice system."

Additionally, PNCC has provided an opportunity for "increased cooperation and coordination among agencies working with youth, including the DA, Public Defender, Behavioral Health, and YouthBuild. This should lead to better outcomes for youth in future PNCC cases," according to staff at the DA's Office.

With respect to initial challenges, BHS staff indicated that the major challenge has been "not having enough clients to work with...the problem is getting them in one vicinity for the group." This staff member noted that of the current group of clients, the majority of them "could benefit from some type of Seeking Safety, Matrix, or CBI group." A San Joaquin County Probation Officer indicated that a challenge for him/her is accessing participant information due to the fact that from his/her work station, he/she is not able to access the Probation's network. This makes it difficult for the officer to send thorough referrals to the Project Navigator, which would ideally include criminogenic needs, risk levels, and background information on the clients. In one particular case, it was also a challenge for this officer to obtain information he/she needed to send in a report to the court when a client was violated.

According to the DA's Office, "determining when a youth has failed or completed the program," was a challenge in this initial start-up phase. Since this time, the program team has met to discuss this in greater detail. It has also been challenging to determine whether or not to initiate prosecution when a youth failed the program. The aim is to divert these youth from the criminal justice system and typically participants are offered services and charges may be dropped or reduced in lieu of participation in the program. Therefore, in the event the youth does not complete the program, deciding what to do with the case presented a challenge early on.

For the SROs, the biggest initial challenge was "educating [school] staff...getting them to change their mindset and help[ing] them



prepare for possible emergency situations...this is a continuous effort, and I am slowly making progress,” one SRO explained. Another SRO indicated that being assigned to six school sites makes it difficult to have consistent presence at each school site.” Additionally, “parents can be very defensive about the actions of their children,” and it also “takes time to break down barriers and youth perceptions regarding law enforcement.”

MULE CREEK STATE PRISON VISIT

JUVENILE DIVERSION PROGRAM

As part of the PNCC grant, some youth clients were able to take part in a program at Mule Creek State Prison (MCSP). MCSP has a Juvenile Diversion Program (JDP), which trains incarcerated men as mentors for youth who have or are at risk of having criminal justice involvement. Men serving time behind bars for various offenses must be discipline-free and are trained to serve as mentors to youth who visit the in-prison program.

Youth are matched ahead of time to a mentor with a similar background. When youth arrive at the prison, they are shown what the process is for someone who has just arrived to prison, what the cell they live in looks like, and the rules they are made to follow. Youth see firsthand the lack of freedom prison offers those who end up there. The men who serve as mentors take time to hear the youths' stories and share some of their own, and they finish with a discussion about cognitive thinking and the importance of staying on the right track.

As part of the PNCC, stakeholders have partnered with the JDP program so that youth can take advantage of this opportunity to learn from the men serving time behind bars for crimes they committed, most of them when they were minors themselves. Youth met with PNCC stakeholders at 6:00 a.m. and traveled to the prison, where they were there until the afternoon. This consisted of a full day of learning what it is like to live as a prisoner and connecting with



men who have been in similar situations when they were younger and made decisions that affected the rest of their lives.

The feedback from youth was positive. In fact, some youth have been able to keep in touch with their mentor through letters which are monitored by staff.

One PNCC participant, who was hanging around with gang members prior to his/her involvement in PNCC, visited MCSP's Juvenile Diversion Program and his/her mentor told him/her that he/she would be asked to join the gang and would have to make a decision. The JDP mentor (an inmate at MCSP) told the youth how this would go and what would happen both if the youth said yes, and if he/she decided to say no. This participant did not believe his/her mentor at the time. However, a few days later, the events which the mentor had talked about began to unfold and he/she had to make a decision about whether or not to join the gang. The PNCC participant decided not to join the gang, and everything his/her mentor had said would happen, did. This youth was surprised and wrote to his/her mentor to tell them about it and let them know that he/she made the right decision.

LETTER TO YOUTH FROM JDP YOUTH MENTOR AT MULE CREEK STATE PRISON

[Participant Name],

What's up, bro!? How are you doing? I hope that you had an eye-opening experience here in this hellhole that we call prison.

It was really nice having you here for the day. I am glad that I was able to be your mentor. I hope that what I and my brothers had to tell you will stick with you. It seemed like the day went by super-fast, and by the time it was time to go, I didn't want to say goodbye. You are hella funny and had me laughing the entire time.

I hope that you learned something while you were here with us. If nothing else, I hope you understand that everything that you saw and heard was real. I was in the same situation you were in when I was your age: living with my older brother, and frustrated because I couldn't have the kind of relationship with my parents that I wanted. My mom and stepdad saw me as a bad influence on my little brother and sister because all I wanted to do was smoke weed and steel and kick it with my friends. If I could take back all of my stupid mistakes, I would.

You have a lot going for you. You're very smart. And you're a hard worker. Those two things will take you very far in life. But you have to focus. You might have to cut down or stop smoking weed if you want to achieve any of your goals, you know the saying "a little sacrifice for a big gain?" That's what's up. We've gotta sacrifice for ANYTHING that we want in life that's worth having.

Remember the commitment you made to go to the new school that Ralph has lined up for you. Write me back and let me know how you like it once you get in.

Well, take care of yourself. I want to hear from you again. I know that you'll succeed. Just stick with Ralph and never listen to people who will get you caught up. Every time you want to listen to them, just think about me, and what you saw and heard at Mule Creek.

Is this where you wanna be? (Ask yourself that question).

Much love, little bro.

[Signed by JDP youth mentor]

YOUTHBUILD

YouthBuild San Joaquin was one of the main grant partners. According to their website, provides “17 – 24 year olds who are in need of a high school diploma or GED with the job skills, leadership, and education necessary to succeed in this community. YouthBuild San Joaquin’s unique combination of on-the-job training, support towards obtaining a high school diploma or GED, and community service provides participants with a challenging and rewarding experience.



YouthBuild’s core values are:

- **RESPECT** for every individual’s intelligence and contribution.
- **COOPERATION** toward achieving common goals within a caring community.
- **LOVE** for each other, humanity as a whole, and all that is sacred.
- **COURAGE** to build bridges and go where we are not expected to be.
- **DIVERSITY** as a source of knowledge, creativity, and connection to the full human community
- **COMMITMENT** to work hard and overcome internal and external obstacles to success, change, and excellence.
- **INTEGRITY** to keep our actions and values consistent, to do the right thing even when nobody is watching.
- **RESPONSIBILITY** for the wellbeing of ourselves, our families, organizations, communities, society as a whole, and the Planet Earth.
- **COMMUNITY** as a source of strength and wisdom.



DISCOVERY CHALLENGE ACADEMY

Discovery Challenge Academy (DCA) is a community high school, quasi-military academy for at-risk youth. According to their website, the 5½ month long residential program is designed to “promote an academic environment where [cadets] will earn 62 high school credits, develop leadership, job skills, and academic skills while improving self-esteem, pride, and confidence”.

Youth who were part of the PNCC program were also cadets at DCA. DCA is a voluntary program, which youth apply to and go through an application and interview process prior to acceptance.



The mission of the Discovery Youth Academy National Guard Youth Challenge Program is to intervene in and reclaim the lives of 16-18 year old high school dropouts, producing program graduates with the values, life skills, education, and self-discipline necessary to succeed as productive citizens.

The 8 core components of training at DCA are:

- **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE** students are able to earn a high school diploma, GED, or CHSPE
- **LIFE COPING SKILLS** each cadet explores their value structure and gets a better idea of their own motivations, needs, attitudes, and desires
- **JOB SKILLS** learn to conduct job searches, goal planning, resume building, filling out applications, and how to conduct themselves during an interview
- **HEALTH AND HYGIENE** cadets learn about the connection between good health and hygiene habits for good mental, physical, and emotional well-being
- **RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP** learn what it takes to make a community strong, civic responsibilities such as voter registration and selective service registration
- **SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY** understand the benefits of community service and volunteerism
- **LEADERSHIP/FOLLOWERSHIP** learning leadership skills as well as how to be a good follower when necessary
- **PHYSICAL FITNESS** fitness program which aims to instill life-long habits and commitment to physical, mental, and emotional well-being

LETTERS FROM PNCC PARTICIPANT TO THE PNCC NAVIGATOR WHILE AT THE DISCOVERY CHALLENGE ACADEMY

What's up Ralph! Man am I glad to hear from you. Shark tank was hell but it's over and I'm moving on. I actually already kind of got used to the routine. I get along with pretty much everyone in my platoon but they mess around too much sometimes and we get Caped. I am on "profile" right now due to my surgeries coming up so I don't get to do much exercise no more. Hopefully that will change after the surgeries because I want to get in shape. The Cadre's are really nice if you do what your supposed to and mind your own business. I felt like quitting the 2nd and 3rd day not going to lie but I kept my mouth shut and I sucked it up. The only thing I'm struggling with sometimes is homesickness. I miss my mom and my little brothers, ima move forward for them and graduate. I'm actually in tears right now because of all the letters I receive and the support. I can't let anyone down including myself so I will move forward and graduate, write back. Thanks for the support and everything you've done for me you're the reason why I'm here!

What's up Ralph! Today we phased to Cadets, tomorrow we will board the US Hornet in our Uniform and have a bbq. It was tough standing in the heat for a long time but we made it! I'm a little worried for my surgery in October, but I'll be alright. [Our] platoon was the first to pass all tests and phase first try without having anyone stay in acclimation phase. Most of my peers and I get along – there was just one that I was about to sock in the throat but I cooled down when they separated us instead of holding a grudge, he quit the next week anyways so it won't be a problem. All of our Cadre's are really cool and funny but sadly are getting deployed in September. How's [two clients' names redacted] doing? It'd be nice if you can visit if it'd be possible (I doubt Chief Reece would mind). When I graduate you think it'd be possible to start getting my license? I want to get a job again but I'd prefer to be mobile and have my own [car]. Tell [name and text redacted] to write me a letter haha give him my address and show him how to write please. I start school Monday and ima strive for a 3.5 – 4.0 GPA. I'm in the 3rd platoon (titans). I like everything about DCA to be honest I hope I strive here. Thank you for all the support you've given me I couldn't of done it without you and Katie [PNCC BHS Clinician], visit if you can take care! Thanks again your a blessing more youth needs someone like you!

INTERVIEWS

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

On April 8th, 2016 an evaluator from San Joaquin Community Data Co-Op had the opportunity to interview a graduate of Project Navigate Constructive Change (PNCC). The purpose of this interview was to discuss the process this individual went through as a participant in the program; any successes and challenges he/she had throughout his/her time in the program and the relationship this graduate has developed with the Project Navigator.

The participant indicated he/she was “making bad decisions and getting in with the wrong crowd” prior to taking part in PNCC. When he/she was suspended from school, the Project Navigator came and talked to him/her and “made it clear [the Navigator] was not with probation” and was there to speak with the participant in an effort to move on and “look past the problem.” The participant stated, the “first day I met [the Project Navigator] I knew he was a good guy;” in fact, the graduate explained “[the Navigator] text me today, so he still connects with me. That has helped.”

This individual explained that he feels the Project Navigator was able to assist him by “showing up to the house and talking to me and he would show up and pick me up from school and talk to me on the way home. That really helped me get things off my mind.” Together, he and the Project Navigator set goals, and worked on getting the participant back in school. The goals they set, specifically, were for the participant to work on making better choices, better friends and they also worked on social skills. This program “made me come out of a shy shell or something like that” the participant noted.

This graduate was also able to get back into his/her high school and found employment after completing PNCC and the Point Break program. Ultimately, this participant is unsure of what he/she wants to do for a career in the future but mentioned he/she is interested in attending San Joaquin Delta College and that family members have told him/her to keep his/her mind open while entering college. The Project Navigator also told this participant “to text [him/her] if [he/she] ever had something to talk about, like if something happened or [the participant] was bothered.”

When asked if there is anything he/she would like to see changed in the program, he/she stated “not really, because for me it wasn’t that bad, I really liked it.” The best part of PNCC, this graduate stated is “getting past the problem”. In this process, this graduate stated, his/her family has also “helped me realize what I was doing wasn’t okay and I realized my actions effect their lives, too.” Overall, he/she stated, “I’m grateful for the help of everybody, of everybody that’s involved in the program.”

PROJECT NAVIGATOR

An evaluator with San Joaquin Community Data Co-Op interviewed the Project Navigator for Project Navigate Constructive Change (PNCC). The goal of PNCC is to reach at-risk juveniles and divert them from getting involved in the adult criminal justice system. The purpose of the interview with the Project Navigator was to learn from him about his role and the process of this new project. In his role, he is tasked with making initial contact with youth and young adults who are referred to him from school

resource officers and the District Attorney's Office. In terms of the referral process, when individuals ask the Navigator how they know if someone should be referred, he says "you'll just know". While there is a process, the project aims to recruit particular individuals to connect with, offer services to, and mentor. Specifically, those young men and women who are "on a whirlpool in the criminal justice system...we are throwing them a lifeline" the Project Navigator explained. Referrals, when they come from a school resource officer, tend to be youth who are having challenges and may need some preventative resources so that they do not end up involved in the criminal justice system. Those youth who are referred by the District Attorney are individual's whose case has been reviewed and has been recommended for the PNCC. Those individuals who are "hard core, tatted up and deeply involved" in the criminal justice system "are not for this program," the Navigator explained.

The Navigator's role in this project is to first assess willingness and evaluate the needs of the individual. According to the Navigator, "there is almost always a substance issue involved" with those referred. In addition, many participants have not had positive role models. Knowing this, the Navigator focuses on "encouraging them" and giving them insight into what they "should maybe want to do." Often, he says "the first time they meet a wall, they give up," they are not used to working or having a set schedule in many cases. Once a participant has been assessed, a home visit is set up. "You can learn a lot by visiting their home," he noted. From there, if the client is not already in school, the first step is to try to get them enrolled. The Navigator also determines whether or not the participant would be a good

candidate to go on field trips (which are currently being planned), such as a visit to Mule Creek's Head's Up program.

As clients are referred, the Navigator has the choice to veto that referral if he does not feel the client is a good fit for the program. Once a participant, clients can also be put on a "time out." However, they have an option to return. "We are planting seeds," the Navigator said. At the time of this interview, there were 19 clients in PNCC; the oldest is 18 and the youngest, 14. Approximately 7 individuals are currently on a time out, while 12 others are in some stage of the process. An additional 3 who have been referred have not been contacted yet. Sometimes when individuals are referred it is difficult to contact them due to missing or inaccurate contact information.

Regarding the title "Navigator," he said, "it is a very good term, I don't know who came up with it, but it is like you're on a boat navigating [participants] through the waters of resources." The team for PNCC consists of School Resource Officers, a Substance Abuse Counselor with Behavioral Health Services, San Joaquin County Office of Education and YouthBuild, as well as one District Attorney from the juvenile division and another from adult. The team meets monthly for one hour to discuss their caseload. Also helpful, all PNCC clientele have the same Probation Officer, if they are on supervision, which makes it easier for the Navigator because he is one contact at Probation to discuss all of his supervised clients. Additionally, the Navigator added that he intentionally "maximizes resources by soliciting the help of others." For example, he explained that he has contacted the principals of the schools which some participants attend. While "I still go all over the county, I'm not above asking for some help" he stated.

So far, Behavioral Health Services has been the most heavily involved partner, offering substance abuse counseling and classes. San Joaquin County Office of Education has also been a big help in getting those individuals who are not functioning in school, into One Schools. In addition, the Women's Center has been instrumental in wrapping around one particular client who is currently in the program. Collaborations are "going well," the Navigator noted. "Most of them, if not all, were part of the discussion in the beginning."

When working with participants, the Navigator said, "a lot of them have had let downs. I only make one promise and that is 'I won't give you advice that will get you in trouble.'" He also tells clients that this is also good criteria to use when choosing friends. During the first meeting, he explains to individuals that what he needs from them is determination, commitment and consistency (DCC). The next time he sees the client he will ask them, "what is DCC?" He added, "I always try to come up with a few things I can send client's via text message as reminders." He keeps in contact with, encourages, and mentors them towards reaching their goals.

There are a lot of opportunities for clients who come through the PNCC program in terms of getting pending charges dropped, records sealed, and getting back into school. In addition, participants who are in YouthBuild, if they test negative on their urinary analysis, can participate in a program called "Building Futures Academy" where they are able to work for pay. The Navigator says he is very strategic about how he works with participants. For example, one client had been expelled from school, but the Navigator thought going to the Mule Creek Head's Up program would be a good learning experience for this youth.

Due to the fact that the principal of the school the youth had previously gone to said this participant was a good kid and after some negotiation, the youth was ultimately let out of detention and his probation status was changed from formal to informal; this allowed him to qualify for participation in Heads Up.

In terms of success stories, there were three clients who currently looked promising (at the time of this interview), although it is "too soon to tell" and they are each at different stages. However, the Navigator stated "it is day to day, I'll tell you". When asked if there are currently any participants who are struggling with the project, there was one that was mentioned: "a young girl, 17, who comes from a background of alcoholism, has a small child and a boyfriend in prison who she still thinks she is in love with." The Navigator added, "that's where it is so helpful to have BHS and the Women's Center, because I can't have some of those conversations with her."

One of the challenges of PNCC for the Navigator is "to assure the clients of what my role is. They're used to government people telling them what to do because they're already in trouble. It's just going to take a while to build trust. They're not used to trusting. I could just be someone who comes along and says things and they never see me again." In terms of changes, that he feels should be made, he mentioned that he wished the referrals were faster when the youth were cited; right now they can take weeks to get to him. "I would like to be able to reach youth sooner," he stated.

Overall, the Navigator stated, "I think [PNCC] provides some hope where there wasn't before", adding "this [project] is actually coming from the DA and Probation, where their job is to prosecute. They're recognizing that not

everyone or every case is the same. It's very innovative".

CASE STUDY: PNCC PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

One PNCC participant was asked to participate in a case study. This individual grew up with his/her mother and father; his/her father was an addict and in and out of prison his/her entire life. This participant grew up fast and learned negative behaviors early on. He/she sold and used drugs and was constantly trying to make money the fast way. In December of 2017 he/she was arrested. At this time he/she was referred to PNCC. During his/her initial assessment for the program, this participant was very remorseful for his/her actions and was motivated to do something different. His/her goals were to attend counseling, check-in weekly with the project navigator, attend a visit to Mule Creek, 40 hours of community service, and test clean and sober. He/she started off very strong and stayed motivated. He/she attended Mule Creek and always had a positive attitude, according to PNCC stakeholders. In addition to this, he/she began working out and learning more about living a healthier lifestyle. This participant tested clean multiple times throughout his/her time in the program. Currently, this participant is working full-time.

During an interview with this him/her, he/she stated they had been part of the PNCC program for approximately 9 months, and said he/she was referred to the program by the Public Defender's Office. He/she stated that prior to becoming involved with PNCC, he/she envisioned his/her future as "reckless, on a negative path" and "getting in trouble". Upon initially hearing about the PNCC program,

he/she stated they "thought it was just a community service thing" and "felt like it was a good thing if it would get rid of [his/her] charges," but he/she wasn't convinced his/her charges would be dropped.

At the time of this interview, when he/she was asked how he/she felt about this program now, this participant said he/she "feels very excited and thankful that [he/she] was able to complete the program and they're getting the charges dismissed."

The visit to Mule Creek State Prison "was a learning experience" for this client. He/she stated the experience makes you "understand that prison isn't where you want to be for the rest of your life." Visiting the Juvenile Diversion Program (JDP) he/she says "taught me gratitude, and taught me to be more appreciative;" he/she also indicated he/she had a "good connection" with his/her mentor at MCSP. "JDP was pretty cool," this client stated.

Working with Behavioral Health Services has been helpful according to this client, as the clinician "spoke to me, helped me work on my mental, my attitude. Helped me think positive, and helped me think better."

This client is working full-time, has changed his/her attitude towards his/her future, and has completed 40 hours of community service. Completing community service was one of the most challenging things according to this participant, "even though it was one of the best things, it was getting a little tired," he/she stated.

The best thing about the PNCC program for this client has been "serving the homeless, learning" and being with the BHS clinician because she "talked me through my negative thinking," he/she explained.

Now, instead of the “reckless” and negative future this youth saw for him/herself, this participant says he/she is looking forward to either joining the military or becoming a counselor.

GRADUATE FEEDBACK

Six clients of the Project Navigate Constructive Change (PNCC) program completed a Graduate Feedback Form. Clients were asked to reflect on what the program has meant to them and their plans after graduation. This activity was voluntary and anonymous.

“When I first heard about the program I thought it was gonna be hard, but it was easy because it was focused on me and I had a lot of support. When doing community service I got to meet a lot of people and realized I really liked helping the homeless. One thing I will never forget is the trip to Mule Creek they gave me the courage to talk about my dad and [our] relationship is getting better. I know my family will be happy and proud that I don’t have to go to court and I’m free. I’m looking forward to going to Delta for my [Diesel] mechanic certificate and Tia said she would help me sign-up. I want to thank Ralph for

“I would like to say if more young men were in this program they would make way better life choices that will benefit them forever”

“This program has helped me improve my life and life choices in many ways. I appreciate everything this program has done for me and how it’s made me think twice about the decisions I make!



“They are serious about helping you, so I was serious about showing improvement to show it was not a waste of time.”

“[PNCC] changed my [perspective on life] in a way that made me see life in a good way. This life is about giving and doing good.”

being there for me and helping me do better. I’m happy I got a second chance.”

“After completion of the program I came to various realizations. Primarily I came to the realization that the system is not entirely against me but rather an institution to help prevent further harm or damage. The harm and damage being [self-inflicted]. Abraham-Hicks said “use your imagination until your big dreams feels so familiar that manifestation is the next logical step” and that’s what I was able to do through this process with the opportunity for a second chance presented itself, my biggest dream after having what felt like my life crashing down. I took it and ran with it. Slowly I saw fake friends fall, family supporting me more than ever before, and most important I saw my life fall back onto the right path. I am thankful for everything and truly have no words that describe my infinite gratitude to continue to be a member of society without the negative implications my charges had coming towards me.”

“The PNCC program is a very helpful [program], they helped guide me to be the wonderful person I am today. When they say they will do

what it takes, you can actually believe it. They tell you the truth [whether] you're right or wrong. Having talks about my problems, showing up to my court dates, you name it. They are serious about helping you so I was serious about showing improvement to show it was not a waste of time."

"[The PNCC program] changed my life in a perspective way that made me see life in a good way. This life is about giving and doing good. I've participated in all activities including from going to field trips to going to Mule Creek. Then yet I made a saying with all these experiences and knowledge I got from the program and it goes like 'the devil pulls you, while the angels call you.' It's a blessing to having [an] opportunity and finishing this program and having more knowledge than ever."

PHONE INTERVIEWS WITH GRADUATES

In the month of October 2018, follow-up phone interviews were conducted in an attempt to reach former participants of PNCC and hear from them how their experience was as a participant, how they feel PNCC has contributed to where they are today, and their reflections pertaining to PNCC in general. An evaluator attempted to contact 38 former participants and was able to successfully contact 9 of these 38 (23.7%) who were available for an interview over the phone. All 9 participants answered all of the questions for the interview. All youth interviewed were male.

Coming into PNCC, youth were at different places in their lives; for example, one participant was already in college and working, while other participants were attending but had not graduated high school. However, all participants at the time of enrollment were

facing some sort of repercussions for criminal activity they were alleged to be involved in. When asked if they learned anything from having been involved in PNCC, all participants interviewed said they had. In fact, one participant stated, "I learned to be more responsible and that my choices have consequences." Another said, "yes, I think about everyone else around me now. I learned a lot from them to be honest," and "I learned more about making better decisions and there's more to life than making bad decisions. The program really helped me, it gave me a second chance." Another participant explained that he learned to have "more patience" with himself, and that he is "supposed to depend on [himself] but lean on and help others" as well. In addition, one participant noted what he was previously doing is "not what I want to do with my life. I have a whole new batch of friends and I am working construction now."

Participants talked about the change they have experienced since their participation in PNCC. One stated that he "changed [his] path and opened [his] mind," and he now knows "that what [he] does affects others," and this program has "helped [him] find the right way." Another said, "Since all that happened and the way [the Navigator] explained it to me, that everyone makes mistakes, I have been more open [with my family] and they've been more open with me." This program helped another participant "realize it's real life now, it's not a movie and I need to make better choices." Another mentioned that his mother has been going through her own struggles and after his participation in PNCC, she has been able to get into her own program. Additionally, one participant stated, "I changed a lot. I'm happy now."

When asked what the most challenging part of this experience was for them, one participant indicated that “the period of deferment was a little harrowing, not ideal. I put myself in that situation though, but definitely not a good experience.” One participant mentioned it was difficult to “explain why I was doing the things I was doing to my family because there was no reason. Other than that, it was easy.” For one interviewee, the “time management” was a challenge, with school “I would have to have time management to finish...community service, but I did finish [all the hours] all while in the program”. For another, “quitting marijuana” was the most difficult thing. “I was able to drop the cocaine use, but it was the weed that I had to do some soul-searching to quit,” he said. Finally, one client stated, “it wasn’t difficult, you just had to want to succeed.”

Had these young men not been a part of PNCC, they say their life would be different. One client stated “I probably would have had to plead out, no deferment.” This client’s charges were ultimately reduced from a felony to a misdemeanor. For him, the program “showed the justice system is willing to give a second chance to people. Most of the participants I met, really were making a positive change,” he stated. Another mentioned he “wouldn’t be as aware of how the justice system works” and that he was thankful for having “someone there constantly telling me to do good and keep on a good path.” One client stated he “probably would not have graduated high school.” He mentioned he is about to be 18, and had he not been caught at age 16, he “would have been bad, bad;” this client explained he is “glad [he] got caught early”. Additionally, a client stated the program “gave me a second chance to show I’m not that type of person. I’m responsible, and I am not that type of person,” if he did not participate, he said, “I would’ve went back to jail and that

would’ve set me back for school and messed up my career.” Overall, one client said “I wouldn’t be where I am, I wouldn’t be doing as good as I am” if it weren’t for PNCC.

Currently, these graduates of the program are doing well. All but one is working full-time, and the one participant not working is still in high school. Two participants are working and going to community college. Two others are planning to enroll in community college. Former participants have set goals to attain their Master’s in Business Administration and economics, agriculture, and two for engineering; while another wants to go to school for mechanics or welding.

When participants were asked if there was anything that could have prevented them from getting into trouble in the first place, many could not answer definitively. One participant said he was at the wrong place at the wrong time. Another stated he should not have been hanging around the friends he was hanging around at that time of his life. One participant stated, “I just made a bad decision for someone going to college for the first time. It was immaturity.”

Overall, program participants had very positive feelings toward stakeholders. One participant said, “[the Navigator] was very helpful. He cared. That was very good, and the program really revolved around his efforts;” similarly, another client said, “I’m glad [the Navigator] explained everything to me and made me understand a lot.” Another participant stated “[Father’s and Families of San Joaquin] is what really helped me get through it. There’s a lot of mentors on site that help me see that the stuff I’m doing can lead to bigger consequences if I don’t stay on the right path.” One client said, “I suggest people do the program. People think these programs are a setup, but they’re not.” Another client stated, “the people in the program, they’re



just really good people. They're not just on your butt, they really want to help and see you do good," and "the program was awesome. If I went there in a bad mood, I always came out better. Really awesome, like family really." Finally, one participant said, "[the Navigator] was most helpful because at the time I was in the program, I got injured and he never gave up on me."



SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER FEEDBACK

August 21st and 28th, 2015

Evaluators from the San Joaquin Community Data Co-Op interviewed two School Resource Officers (SRO). The purpose of the interviews was to gain insight into daily activities, perceived impact of the SRO position on school sites and successes and challenges they may have faced thus far. The two SRO's interviewed had only been in their current position for a short amount of time. One has a background in teaching and leadership development amongst students and the other was a community officer. Both officers had been assigned to six school sites, but spent the majority of their day at their particular high school site.

One of the officers described his role as an SRO as one that is “constantly getting refined;” his main priority though, is “providing safety for school students.” Both of these officers have been addressing school safety in a number of ways. The first thing one SRO does is visit a few of the school sites he has been assigned to in order to check in. He then tends to be on campus at the high school from 11:00 a.m. until the end of the school day. However, during the prior week he was informed of a kindergartener who was afraid to go to school, so he went and sat with the child in class until the child felt better.

Both officers indicated that building a rapport with students was somewhat challenging at first. One officer noted students were not used to having him on campus and explained that for students in the kindergarten through eighth grade, he was accepted “with open arms” right away and those students “love having [him] around.” High school students, however, were “more surprised by having an officer on campus” and would say things like, “why do we have to have a cop on campus?” Some students told the officer “this school is not Pinole” Valley High School in Richmond, insinuating there is more of a need for an SRO there than the school they attend. However, more and more, he noted, students are coming to him asking questions about law enforcement. They are interested in learning more about the job and possibly working in law enforcement in the future. They ask questions regarding the pay for the job and what kinds of calls the officer has been to; “they’re curious for sure” he explained. Relationships are “developing...I’ve been well received and it’s building every day as far as relationships go,” this SRO stated.

One of the officers was able to begin building relationships with students, staff, and parents last year. He mentioned that during graduation last year, several of the students were coming and asking to take pictures with him. This year, he says, “it’s pretty neat because as soon as I come [on campus] I hear ‘Hey, Deputy’”; however, he explains, “at first [students] were super standoffish” and thought he was there because “someone was in trouble” or because “something was about to happen.” Now, some students will spend their entire lunch talking with him. During the time of this interview, the officer pointed out a sticky-note a student had left him which read “I am your favorite:” he had this displayed on his bulletin board in his office.



attend the weekly safety meetings. One officer was told that his presence at the schools has made a big difference.

An SRO noted that he has given a safety presentation for staff which addressed the need for staff to wear their safety badges at all times, active shooters, and how to set up their classrooms. Additionally, he gave a presentation for seniors last year addressing graduation sobriety. Staff and administration have “all seemed to be pretty receptive” to these trainings, he stated. Additionally, he mentioned he is sometimes called in for meetings with parents because he was told “parents act differently when you’re in here.” He explained that staff has told him his presence in specific meetings with parents has allowed for a more calm environment to discuss students with parents.

“I work with an amazing principal and vice principal. I’m so lucky to be here.”

As far as relationships with other staff at the schools go, one officer indicated that for the most part staff is excited to have an SRO on campus. The other officer described staff as “slower than the kids to warm up” and mentioned he feels some staff think of him as someone who thinks he is the boss, and says they think, “[but] it’s my classroom.” He further explained that there are some things he will not intervene with, such as when a student is simply getting an attitude with a teacher. He says “uh, you need to handle that,” speaking of the teacher. “I’m afraid if I am called in for every little thing, I will lose my effectiveness.” One of the officers interviewed explained he is still working on building solid relationships with staff and is “still figuring out where [he] fit[s] in and is helping [staff] understand [he] is just [there] for support.” He did point out there was a unanimous vote at the school board meeting to have an SRO.

Staff and administration, according to one SRO, have “all seemed to be pretty receptive.” Administration has “been amazing and accepted [him] with open arms” and have told him “thank you, glad to have you on campus.” This SRO noted, “I work with an amazing principal and vice principal. I’m so lucky to be here.” One officer mentioned that he meets with the superintendent once a week and says he/she is “very supportive.” The school district is also open to feedback from the SROs regarding safety approaches and wants them to

Overall, parents have welcomed the SROs as well. In fact, one SRO indicated that parents thank him frequently and on the first day of school, “I got like 10 thank yous,” he said. However, he explained that this also “depends on what issue” is at hand, adding “you’re talking about middle to upper class families” and “they certainly feel like they’re more empowered.” On the first day of school, while monitoring traffic, there were several parents honking at one another because some of them were parking in the fire lanes and such. Some parents were frustrated, he says. This SRO noted that he tries to give the parents options by telling them they are free to park a distance away from the school and walk over to avoid waiting in the traffic, explaining to them, “we all have to watch out for the safety of the kids.”

Recently, an officer has been working with the community to inform them of the limitations that law enforcement has when it comes to a situation the community was upset about. Some community members voiced their plans to have words with the principal regarding motorists speeding through the developing neighborhood around the school. This officer had to educate the community about the fact that the property under construction is private property, and law enforcement is not allowed to site for infractions in that area unless they reach the threshold of a misdemeanor offense. He has been trying to mitigate this by being present, because typically police presence is enough to slow down speeding motorists.

Another SRO has also developed relationships with local businesses and has been conducting home visits for the school to verify residency. He feels his ability to go out to the homes is a “good safety thing” because the school principal or other staff no longer have to do this.

Additionally, this position puts another officer in the community and “if something else were to happen nearby, [he] is right here” and “the community really likes this.” Such relationships have recently paid off due to an incident which took place off-campus. There was a theft at a nearby store and the owner called the SRO and allowed him to review the surveillance video so that he might be able to address the situation with the student prior to any further action being taken.

Neither officer feels gangs or drugs are a major area of concern for their school sites. However at one site, it was explained that in the event students are caught with drugs or drug paraphernalia, they are mandated to take part in a 30-day drug and alcohol program and are not permitted to participate in any extra-curricular activities until they have completed the program. When asked to describe the main concerns on campus, one SRO stated, “I think every school is concerned with people coming onto campus.” He explains that the school has been good about fencing off and ensuring that visitors have to go through the office to come into the school.

“Honestly,” one SRO stated, “kids here are really good, they’re college bound, everything is pretty good.” However, bullying, social media and theft were mentioned as being minor issues on one campus. While the SRO for this particular school has not noticed a big problem with bullying, he says “it is always a problem everywhere and cannot be taken lightly. The staff is very protective” in regards to bullying. On this particular campus, they are looking to address bullying with leadership programs. Bullying is often associated with social media, this SRO explains. Due to the fact that students are issued Chromebooks, which replace their textbooks, they sometimes will go onto sites

“Honestly, kids here are really good, they’re college bound, everything is pretty good”.

they should not be on. However, staff stops this as soon as they find out about it, he says. Theft has been an issue on campus as there have been several items that have come up missing such as an iPhone, money, and students have taken sodas without paying for them. The day of this interview, the SRO had just written his first report of the school year for the theft of a cellular phone. One of the main concerns one SRO has is the openness of the campus which he spends the majority of his time, “it’s so broad. There are three parking lots and an elementary and high school on the same lot. It is a logistical nightmare.” To address this, he and staff will be placing “newer, bigger signs” at every point of entry to direct individuals to sign-in if they are going to be on campus. In addition to this, he is pushing all staff to wear their badges at all times as this is important in case of an emergency.

It is important to note, while the evaluators were nearing the end of the interview, a staff member came in and asked for the SROs assistance with a student who was threatening a teacher. The SRO left and stated, “I’ll be right back.” After this situation was addressed, the SRO took the evaluators on a tour of the school. During the tour, the officer mentioned that the student involved in the situation which he was called away for may end up expelled from school and explained that he tried to have a conversation with the student about his priorities.

ABOUT THE EVALUATOR

The San Joaquin Community Data Co-Op is a privately incorporated non-profit research and evaluation organization located in Stockton, California. The services provided by the Data Co-Op include conducting program-level evaluations, constructing databases, conducting data analysis, monitoring community indicators, conducting needs assessments, providing training and technical assistance to service providers to manage process and outcome data, and providing grant writing and strategic planning services.

Since its inception, the Data Co-Op has been committed to improving the quality of life in San Joaquin County and the surrounding region. To this end, we work cooperatively with governmental agencies, schools and school districts, law enforcement organizations, health care providers, and a range of community based organizations, to identify, collect and analyze data required to assess the quality of life within the community, particularly with regard to key indicators of social and economic well-being. By being accessible to the community, one of the Data Co-Op's primary goals is to facilitate the community's ability to gather, share, and utilize information, which can be used to maximize planning and improve the delivery of services throughout the County. Project work at the Data Co-Op has included research and evaluation work for the San Joaquin County Probation Department, Stockton Unified School District, Lodi Unified School District, the San Joaquin County Office of Education, the San Joaquin Pride Center, and others. The scale of these projects has varied from single site short-term program evaluations to more complex, multi-site evaluations. The Data Co-Op has received grants from The California Wellness Foundation, the Sierra Health Foundation, and the Lucile Packard Foundation to train nonprofits in data and evaluation, to conduct needs assessment work, and to study children's health data indicators. Along with being the evaluator for the Project Navigate Constructive Change grant, the Data Co-Op is the local evaluator for Public Safety Realignment in San Joaquin County.