

# Office of Violence Prevention

Annual Report to the Governor & Nebraska Legislature

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## **Introduction**

The Director of the Office of Violence Prevention of the Nebraska Commission of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice is responsible for generating an annual report on the Office of Violence Prevention programs in Nebraska by Nebraska Revised Statute § 81-1450. This 2016 report is fulfilling this statutory duty.

The primary responsibility of the State Office of Violence Prevention is to help develop, foster, promote, and assess statewide violence prevention programs in the State of Nebraska.

The Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) aids privately funded organizations, local government subdivisions, and other community groups in developing Prevention, Intervention, and Enforcement theories and techniques.

Through a competitive grants process administered by the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (Crime Commission), the Office of Violence Prevention awards \$350,000 annually to organizations in Nebraska that have shown a history of documented success or new programs which show promise in helping to reduce violent crime in Nebraska.

The grant recipients are required to develop goals, objectives and performance indicators in order to help evaluate the success of the financial distribution. Upon awarding of the funds, grantees are required to submit quarterly activity and cash reports to the Office of Violence Prevention/Crime Commission. Also, grantees are required to provide an evaluation report and a portion of the grant funds can be used for a professional evaluator. The report must provide a comprehensive review of the program's overall effort, and measurable results during the grant cycle. Those results are provided to the Office of Violence Prevention.

## **The Office of Violence Prevention Advisory Council**

In May of 2009, the Nebraska Legislature passed LB 63, establishing the Office of Violence Prevention within the Nebraska Crime Commission. A provision within LB 63 provided for the establishment of the Advisory Council to the Office of Violence Prevention. The Governor appointed Advisory Council is to meet quarterly and is directed to recommend – to the Crime Commission -- rules and regulation regarding fundraising, program evaluation, coordination of programs, and criteria used to assess and award funds to violence prevention programs.

## **Program Priority focus**

Priority for funding is given to communities and organizations seeking to implement violence prevention programs which appear to have the greatest benefit to the state and which have, as goals, the reduction of street and gang violence, and the reduction of homicides and injuries caused by firearms. In March of 2015, the Nebraska Legislature passed LB 167 which also included the creation of youth employment opportunities in high-crime areas as an additional priority focus.

## **2017 Grantees**

### **Boys Town of South Omaha's - In-Home Family Services (IHFS): \$17,254**

Boys Town works to empower youth and families in their community to reduce the impact of poverty and violence while achieving greater economic stability by focusing on teaching the skills necessary for children and families to achieve safety and success in their neighborhoods. Boys Town of South Omaha works to decrease crime, provide intervention and increase overall safety within the South Omaha community. By engaging families in preventive-based services to target critical skills that are lacking in a family's current lifestyle, it is more likely that the family will avoid involvement with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. It is through this process of prevention that high-risk families will be able to receive services in the convenience of their own home to work through crisis situations while increasing safety measures and staying together. Boys Town Family Consultants are prepared to respond to safety issues at all times of the day and night. They are on call, along with Boys Town supervisory staff, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays. Families are encouraged to call Consultants when safety issues arise or even when they are aware they may be nearing a crisis situation in order to develop a plan to immediately mitigate the crisis situation at hand prior to the situation becoming violent in nature. Boys Town's In-Home Family Services Model ensures the development of skills to meet various family needs such as appropriate disciplinary strategies, employment, housing, and increased knowledge of how and where to access community resources. The model includes the use of formal assessments and the development of a service plan. Assessments not only help in the development of a service plan, but also allow Consultants to determine if a family is in need of additional community supports and services that will help them achieve stability and success.

### **Center for Holistic Development - Urban Youth BOLT: \$23,662**

The Center for Holistic Development, Inc. would like to provide an enhanced program to address the mental and emotional concerns of African American youth who are at risk for involvement in the Juvenile Justice system. The B.O.L.T. (Building Our Leaders Today) uses gender specific, evidence based curriculum to build internal assets for successful adulthood. This program works in conjunction with our Building a Healthy family using a holistic approach to create connections to other community resources to provide support for families to create a healthy environment for the young person. Parental involvement is a critical element in successful completion of any prevention or early intervention program. The inclusion of a strategy to improve parental engagement and provide a valuable resource for parents is vital to the success of this program. Overall, parent involvement has been shown to be supportive in reducing recidivism. Effective communication, accountability and respect of self and others are a major part of the B.O.L.T. curriculum.

### **City of Omaha - Web-based Gang Database Project: \$57,000**

The Omaha Police Department (OPD) Web-based Gang Database Project will affect violent crime through the creation of a web-based gang database that will allow for intelligence gathering, cataloging, and dissemination with OPD Officers and regional law enforcement,

corrections, probation, and parole agencies. Data sharing is instrumental for successful crime investigation and prevention.

The intelligence gathered by OPD Gang Unit Officers and Intelligence Analyst assists in the investigation and prevention of gang related crime. Once the new web-based program is developed, OPD's Gang Unit, including their Gang Intelligence Squad, will more effectively analyze data and use the results to assist in the prevention and reduction of violent street and gang crime.

**Girls Inc. - Girls with Futures:** \$16,045

Girls Inc. goal is to inspire all girls to be strong, smart and bold. They provided developmental support, opportunities and experiences they need to become confident, contributing citizens of our community.

The Grant will subsidize the violence prevention programs and activities focused on healthy productive futures. It will also provide education materials.

**The Hope Center for Kids- Village Basketball Alliance:** \$28,000

The efforts of Omaha 360 through the past four years have prompted youth-serving community organizations to work together to find creative ways to provide impactful activities for young people, particularly in North Omaha. The desire is for young people to be connected to youth-serving organizations where positive, healthy life-style principles are shared. Village Basketball Alliance (VBA) was created in 2011 to support this vision. Village Basketball Alliance youth will have a safe place to interact without fear of violence and learn positive social skills. Up to 150 youth participate in each 10 week league. Along with the participants in the league, 50-100 peers and family members attend each week to watch the games. As many as 250 people have attended VBA on a weekly basis

**Lancaster County- Operation Tipping Point:** \$66,215

Operation Tipping Point (OTP) has a Steering Committee of partners and justice stakeholders to address the increasing violent crimes associated with gangs in Lincoln, Nebraska. A full-time Gang Outreach Specialist serves as a link between primary and secondary prevention/intervention efforts and engagement of community partners. The Gang Outreach Specialist is located within Lincoln Police Departments Gang Unit. This grant focuses on the Gang Specialist to continue to facilitate Operation Tipping Point meetings and coordinate with Lincoln Public Schools, parents, community partners to reduce gang membership, and increase gang intelligence.

**NorthStar Foundation- Athletic Engagement and Outreach Program:** \$76,424

NorthStar Foundation deploys a comprehensive sequence of athletic engagement and outreach programming for low-income, at-risk young men in North Omaha. The NorthStar Athletic Engagement and Outreach Project engages the youth in enriching out-of-school time

programming, as well as serves as a vehicle to identify, recruit, and retain beneficiaries targeted for participation in the full complement of after school services throughout the school year.

**Omaha Police Athletics Community Engagement- Youth Violence Prevention: \$38,400**

Police Athletics for Community Engagement (P.A.C.E. Omaha) is a Police Community Relations initiative based on a direct intervention and prevention design to help "at-risk" and disadvantaged youth avoid the negative influences of street gangs and crime by being involved in free safe organized athletics provided by police officers, who volunteer as their coaches and role models. P.A.C.E. Omaha uses the universal language of sports to build much needed bridges between youth and citizens living in disadvantaged neighborhoods and the police officers that work those areas. Most of the staff and volunteers are police officers and business professionals in the Omaha area. P.A.C.E. Omaha was designed to approach the youth in our community that have joined gangs, are at risk of joining gangs or disadvantaged kids ages 8 to 18 that would never have the finances to join organized sports in their neighborhoods. The P.A.C.E. model places police officers and youth on teams playing during times where idle youth have statistically gotten into trouble with crime, delinquency or have been victimized by the criminal element. The organization strives to build the much needed bridge in the community between police and the citizens of the neighborhoods they protect.

**YouTurn – Case Management/Advocacy Services: \$12,500**

YouTurn is committed to using evidence-based strategies of suppression, intervention and prevention to deter gangs and violence. YouTurn prevention strategies target youth at risk of gang involvement with the goal of reducing the number of youth who join gangs. Intervention strategies provide services for adolescents who are actively involved in gangs to push them away from gangs. Suppression strategies target older, criminally active gang members. YouTurn promotes a collaborative approach that involves adolescents/young adults, parents/guardians, schools, community-based service providers, law enforcement and other key community stakeholders. YouTurn creates opportunities to "break the cycle" of violence by helping adolescents and young adults, seek positive alternatives to gangs and violence, thus reducing the costly impact of gangs and violence in our neighborhoods and schools. To accomplish this, YouTurn staff utilizes evidence-based strategies and program materials to effectively engage adolescents and young adults.

**Completed Evaluations**

## **Grant # 16-VP-5009**

### **Lancaster County** **Operation Tipping Point** **Initial Program Evaluation**

Lincoln Police Department (LPD) has provided the University of Nebraska - Lincoln Center on Children, Families, and the Law (CCFL) with data for 25 participants who have been referred to Operation Tipping Point (OTP). Although not every participant has a complete set of information, the data received includes: demographic information, Gang-At-Risk Assessment, Program Proposals for OTP youth, 30 day review, 60 day review, 90 day review, and 30 day follow up.

Using the information provided, CCFL has conducted a basic assessment of the youth who have been referred to OTP (OTP Participants). CCFL has also done a content analysis of the reviews the officer conducted (30 days, 60 days, 90 days, and the 30 day follow up) to identify participant success. The results are very broad at this point in time; however they do provide an overall picture of the program. CCFL also proposes future steps and changes which would allow for a better determination of how the program is working.

### **OTP Participants**

Between November 15, 2015 and April 7, 2016, 25 participants have been referred to OTP. Of these, 15 have completed the initial assessment and 10 have not (either because they refused or OTP has not been able to get in contact with them). All 15 participants who have completed the assessment had scores in the “high risk” category, with raw scores on the 14-item measure ranging from 5 to 10 (M=7.2).

Of the 25 referrals, 10 youth are currently in Phase 1 of OTP, 2 youth have entered Phase 2 (the exit phase), 3 removed themselves from the program after starting, 6 have refused to participate at all, and 4 have not returned phone calls.

Referred youth range in age from 12-17 years (M=14.48 years) and are in 7<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> grade (M=8.96). The youth are primarily male (92%) and are all minorities (36% African American, 4% Asian, 56% Latino, 4% Native American). The youth who have participated in OTP primarily come from single-parent families (86.7%; 80% are single mothers). The youth come from a variety of schools (33% Park; 20% Southeast; 13% Lincoln Northstar; 6.7% Irving; 6.7% Northeast; 6.7% Southwest; 6.7% Homeschool; 6.7% Expelled).

### **OTP Outcome**

Currently, there have been 15 participants who have completed the initial assessment. Two participants have entered Phase 2 and appear to have been successful with OTP. Three participants removed themselves from the process and OTP did not appear to work for them. The

remaining 10 youth who are currently participating in Phase 1 of OTP programming has had mixed results. Based on the comments of the OTP officers, 2 youth are doing extremely well, while the other 8 are having ups and downs.

### **Proposed Future Directions**

CCFL's first recommendation is the development and implementation of a more uniform data entry system for the follow up surveys, as LPD has proposed in the draft version of the "Operation Tipping Pont Phase 1 Review" ("proposed evaluation"). This proposed evaluation tracks school attendance, police contacts, and program participation/engagement. Each of these topics has a numerical response system (with numbers representing different values) and a space for comment. It also appears that there might be questions for the youth about what they've learned, what has changed in their life, and how they are progressing.

Currently, the data from each follow up is presented in a narrative form by the officer doing the evaluation. Although there is a lot of helpful information, it would be better for data analysis purposes if there were a numerical way of assessing success. The proposed evaluation that includes numbers for unexcused absences and tardiness, police contacts, and program attendance would be extremely helpful in determining the success of the program. There should be a different section for each program the youth is involved in.

Although the proposed evaluation provided to us looks good, we propose a few additional sections. First, include a section to comment on home life (in addition to school, police, and OTP programming), potentially with scores for the amount of fighting with parents or misbehaving. Second, a scale measurement for both the youth and the officer (and potentially the teacher) to indicate how successful the youth has been over the past month (e.g., "On a scale from 1 (not at all) to 10 (completely), how successful has the past month been").

Although it appears that this review will be used at the 30 day, 60 day, and 90 day follow ups, we would recommend that it also be used at the initial meeting (in combination with the Gang At-Risk Assessment and the scheduling). Having the same format throughout will better allow for the assessment of changes over time, which is one key measure of success.

Collecting additional standardized information on the Gang At-Risk Assessment would also be helpful. For example, if there were a spot for the officer to indicate whether there is a current gang affiliation (yes, no, unknown) and if so which gang, it would help for data analysis. There might be differences between youth who are already known gang members and those who are not. Additionally, there might be differences among the various gangs. Although this information often ends up in the comment section, having a separate, standardized section for this would be useful for evaluation. It would also be beneficial to have an indication of who made the referral (e.g., school, police, parents, self, other) in order to determine if referral source has an impact on the process or outcomes.

CCFL would also recommend collecting responses on the At-Risk Gang Assessment on a sample of students who have not been identified as At-Risk. Currently, the sample of OTP participants is quite small and the scores range significantly. Furthermore, all participants have been

categorized as “High Risk.” Collecting the same data from a comparison group would allow the evaluation to determine how helpful the Assessment is at identifying gang risk. For example, maybe one or two of the questions are the primary difference between the at-risk and the not at-risk students, in which case the assessment could be reduced. Or, perhaps all students are scoring similarly, which might indicate that the assessment is not so helpful for identifying at-risk students.

LPD has indicated that they are working on a webshell to track schooling and police contact. CCFL recognizes that there are limitations and developing these systems might take a while, however when that data is available the evaluation would benefit from having access to it. More specific tracking, as this would provide, can provide better outcome measures and measures of success in the program. CCFL would also propose a web-based data entry system, if possible. Completing the surveys and collecting data electronically through a server such as Qualtrics or SurveyMonkey would provide much easier data analysis in the future.

Finally, CCFL would like to emphasize that the sample size here is very small. This means that statistically the evaluation will not be able to comment or say with any degree of certainty the impact of the program. CCFL realizes that there are many limitations (particularly because even referred youth can refuse to participate), however the more data available the better for the evaluation and CCFL’s ability to say with confidence how the program is working. Even if a youth is unwilling to participate in OTP overall, getting scores from that youth on the Gang At-Risk Assessment, if possible, would provide valuable information and another comparison group for successful participants.



# **National Level Youth Gang Membership Risk Factors in Lincoln Public Schools**

By: Katherine P. Hazen



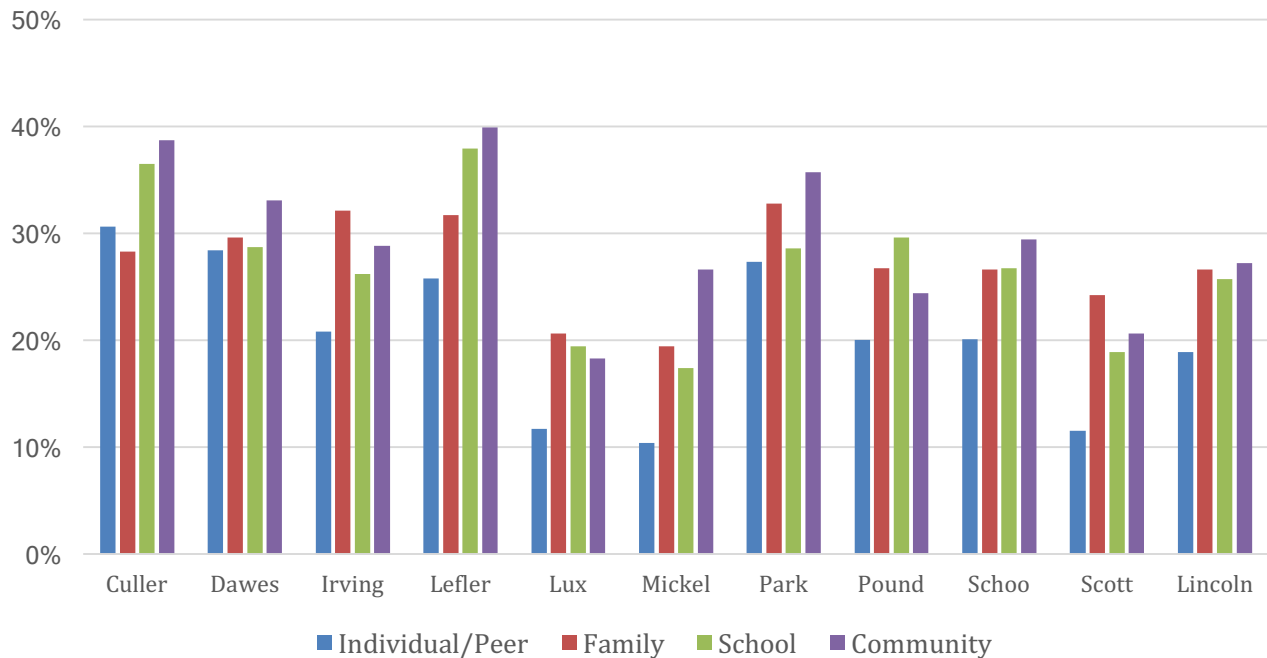
**CENTER ON CHILDREN,  
FAMILIES, AND THE LAW**

## National Level Youth Gang Membership Risk Factors: An Overview

### Gang membership risk factors across 5 developmental domains:

- 1. Individual**
  - a. Antisocial behavior
  - b. Alcohol and drug use
  - c. Victimization
  - d. Negative life events
- 2. Family**
  - a. Structural
  - b. Process
- 3. School**
  - a. Academic success
  - b. School climate and connectedness
  - c. School commitment and involvement
  - d. Security
- 4. Peer Group**
  - a. Association with peers who engage in delinquency
  - b. Aggressive peers
  - c. Rejection by peers
- 5. Community**
  - a. High crime and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods
  - b. Community supports fail
  - c. Lack of collective efficacy

All Middle Schools Across Risk Factor Domains



## **National Level Youth Gang Membership Risk Factors**

A large-scale evaluation in Seattle found that of 808 youths, 124 (15.3%) joined a gang between the ages of 13 and 18. Of those who joined a gang, 26.2% were African American, 19.7% were another ethnicity, 12.4% were Asian American, and 10.2% were European American. Youth were at risk of joining a gang each year, but that risk spiked at the age of 15 years, when youths are transitioning into high school. Most (69%) of those who joined a gang remained for 1 year or less (Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001).

In general, gangs fulfill many social needs for their members, including protection, relationships, inclusion, and money. Between 28% and 57% of self-identified gang members indicated that they joined the gang for protection (Peterson, Taylor, & Esbensen, 2004). For young girls, it is well established they often join to escape violent home lives. However, it is unclear whether young boys are seeking protection from victimization at home, their peers, or the community (Taylor, 2008). Youth report they join gangs for three reasons: to be around friends and family (such as siblings and cousins), for protection or perceived protection, and for instrumental reasons, such as making money (Howell & Eagley, 2005).

Groups that are culturally distinct and economically disadvantaged, experience multiple marginality (Vigil, 2002) or street socialization to peer deviance (Freng & Esbensen, 2007), which results in the formation of street subcultures, or gangs. They provide the group with social structures and bonds when traditional social institutions fail. Social network theory posits that social networks, or the social structures surrounding an individual, constrain the behavior of the

participants by setting behavioral expectations (Thornberry, Lizotte, et al., 2003). Interactional theory posits that the basic cause of delinquency is a weakening of social controls caused by an attenuation of the person's bonds to conventional society. For adolescents particularly, weakened bonds to family and school can increase risk of delinquent behavior (Thornberry, Lizzotte, et al., 2003). Instead of the conventional societal bonds, adolescents develop associations with delinquent peer groups, who model delinquent behaviors and beliefs. Interactional theory of delinquency focuses on the cause, weakened relationships with conventional societal supports, and the process, engagement with delinquent peers and groups.

This report seeks to understand which Lincoln, Nebraska middle schools are most at risk for gang activity by examining the trends of the national level risk factors in Lincoln middle schools. Those risk factors are presented through the lens of Five Developmental Domains: Individual, Family, Peer, School, and Community. Data on individual, family, peer, school and community level risk factors was collected from three sources: Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey Result for 2014 for the Lincoln Public Schools District and each middle school, ersi Executive Summary Reports for each neighborhood in and the entire city of Lincoln, and basic statistical information about each middle school and the Lincoln Public Schools from the Annual Statistical Handbook: Student Section.

The Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey (NRPFS) is conducted across the state during even numbered years. The most recent data available is from 2014, as 2016 data has not yet been released. Students in 8th, 10th, and 12th grades are recruited to complete a survey about their substance use,

delinquency, and other risk and protective factors. This report focuses on the eighth-grade data. The proportion of students at each school at risk according to each risk factor was taken from the report (Arthur, Briney, Hawkins, Abbott, Brooke-Weiss, & Catalano, 2007). Schools with a higher proportion of students at risk than the proportion of students in Lincoln Public Schools are noted as at risk.

Ersi Executive Summaries compile data from the 2010 Census Profile door-to-door surveys, the American Community Survey Housing and Population Summaries data collected between 2005 and 2009, and community profile and housing profile statistics from the 2010 Census. Data on neighborhood demographics (including age, gender, race, income level), employment and education statistics, and household make-up from 2010 were taken from these reports. Neighborhoods were then aggregated to create a profile of the school districts within LPS.

Lincoln Public Schools report enrollment and demographic statistics from each school and each grade annually. Enrollment number, demographics, and participation in free lunch programs were taken from this report.

In order to determine which schools are most at risk for youth gang initiation, school level information is compared to the city of Lincoln. See Table 1 for the basic demographic information for each school.

### **Risk Factors Across 5 Developmental Domains:**

#### ***1. Individual***

Early initiation of individual problem behaviors is a significant predictor of delinquency and gang membership (Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001). For the highest risk

youth, conduct problems begin to emerge as early as age 3, with school failure and ongoing, escalating externalized behaviors through age 12, delinquency beginning at age 12, and joining a gang at age 13 (Howell & Eagley, 2005; Loeber & Farrington, 1998). These children are often described as aggressive, inattentive, and sensation seeking (Loeber & Farrington, 2001). Among black teenagers, high baseline conduct disorder and increasing levels of conduct disorder throughout adolescents were prospectively predictive of gang entry (Lahey, Gordon, Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber, & Farrington, 1998).

Involvement in the criminal justice system, and becoming officially labeled as delinquent, predicts involvement in serious delinquency through deviant social groups, such as gangs (Bernburg, Krohn, & Rivera, 2006). Being unable to control one's impulsive behaviors, to take responsibility for one's actions, and to adopt others' perspective, together known as low psych-social maturity, predicted being a low-level gang member (Dmitrieva, Gibson, Steinberg, Piquero, & Fagan, 2014). Participating in sexual activity at a young age is predictive of gang membership for males, but not females (Thornberry, Krohn, et al., 2003).

Early marijuana and alcohol use and poor refusal skills strongly predict gang membership (Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001). Researchers have consistently replicated a strong, positive association between delinquency and substance use and gang involvement (Walker-Barnes & Mason, 2005).

Gangs members join to escape violently abusive home environments, especially young girls (Taylor, 2008). Girls who have joined gangs are significantly more likely to have witnessed or personally experienced physical and sexual

violence at home. Girls reported joining the gangs after spending time with them while escaping violence at home. It is well established that gang members are more likely to be victimized and to victimize, however, gang membership has been found to have an enhancing effect on both victimization and offending (Peterson, Taylor, & Esbensen, 2004). Gang members are more likely to have suffered from violent victimization before entering the gang, and that victimization increased during and after their involvement with the gang (Peterson, Taylor, & Esbensen, 2004). Experiencing any negative life events, such as personal victimization or violence, is predicative of gang membership (Peterson, Taylor, & Esbensen, 2004; Eitle, Gunkel, & Gundy, 2004).

The individual risk factors calculated with the NRPFSS include early drug use, early antisocial behavior, attitudes favoring antisocial behavior, attitudes favoring drug use, perceived risk of drug use, and gang involvement. Individual protective factors calculated include belief in moral order and peer-individual prosocial involvement. See Figure 1 for graphical representation of the proportion of students at risk for at each middle school and for the entire Lincoln public school system. Thirteen-point three percent of Lincoln Public School eighth grade students are at risk for future delinquency based on early drug use. Eighth grade students at Culler (25.8%), Dawes (22.4%), Lefler (22.3%), and Park (17.7%) are at higher risk for future delinquent behavior due on early drug use. A higher proportion of students at Culler (44.3%), Dawes (42.8%), Lefler (30.1%), and Park (32.3%) are at risk for youth gang involvement due to early antisocial behaviors than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (22.4%). Eight grade students at Culler (31.1%), Lefler

(27.7%), Park (26.0%), and Pound (27.2%) were at higher risk for future delinquency due to attitudes favoring antisocial behavior than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (21.2%). More eighth grade students at Culler (29.5%), Dawes (28.0%), Irving (22.0%), Lefler (23.4%), Park (25.0%), Pound (23.3%), and Schoo (23.8%) were at risk for future delinquency due to attitudes favoring drug use than Lincoln Public Schools (19.0%). More eighth grade students at Culler (46.0%), Dawes (48.0%), Lefler (41.5%), Park (60.3%), and Schoo (38.9%) are at risk of future delinquency due to perceived risk of drug use than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (34.1%). More eighth graders at Culler (7.0%), Dawes (6.3%), and Lefler (9.8%) were at risk for future delinquency due to gang involvement than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (3.4%).

Fewer eighth grade students at Lefler (69.9%), Park (74.8%), and Pound (76.5%) were protected from future delinquency due to belief in moral order than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (82.0%). Fewer eighth grade students at Culler (45.2%), Lefler (51.6%), Park (57.6%), and Schoo (54.1%) were protected by peer-individual prosocial involvement than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (64.5%). See Figure 2 for attitudes toward substance use and Figure 3 for use and access to controlled substances from NRPFS that were used to calculate the proportion of students at risk for future delinquency.

See Figure 4 for delinquency reports from the NRPFS. More eighth grade students from Culler (6.5%) and Pound (3.3%) were suspended for substance use or possession at school than eighth grades in the Lincoln Public Schools (1.2%). More eighth grade students from Culler (14.5%), Dawes (20.0%), Lefler (9.0%), and Park



(7.2%) were suspended for other reasons than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (6.8%). More eighth graders from Culler (4.8%), Lefler (5.4%), and Pound (7.8%) carried a handgun than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (4.1%). More eighth graders from Lefler (3.2%) stole a car than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (0.8%). More eighth grade students from Park (4.0%) have been arrested than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (1.1%). More eighth graders from Culler (9.7%), Dawes (8.0%), Lefler (7.5%), Park (11.2%), and Pound (7.2%) attacked someone with the idea of causing serious harm than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (5.6%). Eighth grade students from Culler (1.6%) carried a gun to school more than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (0.2%). More eighth grade students from Culler (16.1%), Irving (20.1%), Lefler (16.1%), and Park (17.6%) have stolen more than \$5.00 than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (13.0%). More eighth graders from Irving (0.7%) and Lux (1.0%) had driven a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (0.4%).

Based on the individual risk factors, including specific drug use, attitudes toward substances, and history of delinquency, **Culler, Dawes, Lefler, and Park Middle School students are the most at risk for gang involvement middle schools in Lincoln.**

## ***2. Family***

Important family level factors include: low parent education, a “broken” home, parental criminality, poor family and child management, abuse and neglect, serious marital discord, and young motherhood (Howell & Eagley, 2005; Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001). Family factors are generally considered on two levels: structure

and process. Structural factors, including the number of parents living in the home, transition, and income, influence the ability of parents to manage the family and connection to the family unit. Process factors, including family management style, stress, attitudes, and violence, also influence commitment to the family unit (Howell & Eagley, 2005). Antisocial tendencies within families predict gang involvement. Specifically, parental attitudes favoring violence, low parental bonding, and sibling antisocial behavior are predictive of gang membership (Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001).

However, Lahey and colleagues (1998) found that for black males, higher family income protected youths from gang entry during late adolescents, but not during early adolescents. The opposite was found for parental supervision, low parental supervision was protective in late adolescents but predictive in early adolescents (Lahey, et al., 1998). High levels of conflict between adolescents and their mothers predict greater delinquency and high psychological control by parents predicts more substance use. However, high levels of behavior control predicted lower levels of delinquency and substance use (Barnes-Walker & Mason, 2005). The extent to which parents were involved in the decision-making of their adolescent children weakened the impact of gang involvement on their behaviors (Walker-Barnes & Mason, 2005).

The family risk factors calculated with the NRPFSS include poor family management and parental attitudes that favor drug use. Family protective factors calculated include family attachment and family opportunities for prosocial involvement. See Figure 5 for family risk and protective factors prevalence from the NRPFSS. More eighth grade students at Dawes (38.8%), Irving (42.0%), Lefler

(36.6%), and Park (40.8%) are at risk due to poor family management than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (31.1%). More eighth graders at Culler (25.0%), Lefler (26.9%), and Park (24.8%) are at risk due to parental attitudes favoring drug use than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (22.1%). Fewer eighth graders from Culler (47.6%), Dawes (42.9%), and Park (59.2%) are protected by family attachment than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (65.1%). Fewer eighth graders from Dawes (65.3%), Irving (68.0%), Mickel (68.3%), Pound (68.5%), and Schoo (69.9%) are protected by family opportunities for prosocial involvement than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (72.0%).

See Figure 6 for student access to controlled substances through family. More eighth graders from Irving (5.3%), Park (6.7%), and Scott (9.1%) received cigarettes from their parents than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (4.2%). More eighth graders from Irving (10.0%) and Schoo (10.0%) received cigarettes from other family than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (9.3%). More eighth graders from Irving (23.1%), Schoo (12.5%), and Scott (13.3%) had alcohol bought for them by their parents than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (7.6%). More eighth graders from Culler (10.0%), Irving (15.4%), and Lux (11.8%) had alcohol given to them by other family than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (8.6%). More eighth graders from Lux (29.4%) and Schoo (18.8%) took alcohol from home without parental permission than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (16.9%). More eighth graders from Lux (33.3%) drank alcohol at home without parental permission than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (19.1%). More eighth graders from Irving (14.3%) and

Schoo (11.8%) drank alcohol at home with parental permission than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (8.6%).

See Figure 7 for family structure data in each school district. Fewer people in the districts of Culler (89.8%), Dawes (90.8%), Lefler (89.8%), Mickel (91.9%), and Park (85.4%) graduated from high school than across the city of Lincoln (93.0%). The employment rate in the districts of Culler (92.7%) and Park (92.0%) is lower than across the city of Lincoln (94.0%). More people living in the districts of Culler (13.7%), Dawes (13.3%), Irving (12.9%), and Mickel (12.5%) are divorced than across the city of Lincoln (11.0%). More of the married households in the districts of Park (49.8%), Schoo (58.5%), and Scott (49.5%) have children than across the city of Lincoln (43.2%). This is consistent with the proportion of household with children in districts across the city of Lincoln.

Based on the family level risk and protective factors, including poor family management, parental attitudes and actions in favor of drug use, family attachment, and family structure, students at **Culler, Dawes, Lefler, and Park Middle Schools are at greater risk for youth gang involvement.**

### ***3. School***

Low school attachment, commitment, and low academic aspirations are predictive of gang membership (Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001; Howell & Eagley, 2005). Failure to perform in school, especially for those with learning disabilities, predicts gang involvement (Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001). Poor school performance can result in social rejection by peers and family problems, weakening ties with family, friends, and the school, three important social structures for adolescents (Thronberry &

Krohn, 2001). Gang membership has a strong, positive association with school-based risk behaviors and attitudes, such as truancy, school substance use, and risky peer approval. Additionally, a moderate, negative association with school protective behaviors and attitudes, such as feeling connected to school and feeling safe and supported in school (Estrada, Gilreath, Astor, & Benbenishty, 2014).

Zero-tolerance policies, resulting in high numbers of drop-out, suspensions, and expulsions, can weaken school connections and commitment, opening students to the influence of deviant peers (Vigil, 2002). Schools in which students perceive greater fairness and clarity in the rules had less delinquent behavior and less student, but not teacher, victimization. Schools with more positive psychosocial climate had less teacher victimization, but not less student victimization and delinquency (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, & Gottfredson, 2005). Further, teachers and peers describe gang members as aggressive, hyperactive, and inattentive (Craig, Vitaro, Gagnon, & Tremblay, 2002).

Students who feel vulnerable in school may seek out protection from gangs (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2001). Youth learn survival skills on the street from their peers, which soon enhances insecurity in school because the youths learn who their “enemies” are – other peers or teachers. The socialization on the street teaches the students to stand up for other members of their gang/group, which further increases social bonds. Street social ties and socialization transcends the schoolhouse and bring the conflicts and protections of the street into the school (Conchas & Vigil, 2010).

The school risk factors calculated with the NRPFSS include academic failure and low school commitment. School protective factors calculated include opportunities for prosocial involvement and rewards for prosocial involvement. See Figure 7 for school risk and protective factors prevalence from the NRPFSS. More eighth graders at Culler (46.7%), Lefler (30.1%), Park (23.4%), and Schoo (21.3%) are at risk for future delinquency due to academic failure than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (19.2%). More eighth graders at Lefler (45.7%), Park (33.9%), and Pound (39.0%) are at risk due to low school commitment than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (32.3%). Fewer eighth graders from Dawes (72.0%), Irving (69.1%), Lefler (70.2%), and Park (71.4%) are protected by opportunities for prosocial involvement than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (75.3%). Fewer eighth graders from Irving (52.7%), Lefler (52.1%), Mickel (57.4%), and Pound (56.1%) are protected by rewards for prosocial involvement than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (58.6%).

See Figure 4 for delinquency in schools. As reported under the individual risk and protective factors, more eighth grade students from Culler (14.5%), Dawes (20.0%), Lefler (9.7%), and Park (8.7%) have been suspended for reasons other than substance use than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (6.8%). Across types of delinquency, Culler, Dawes, Lefler, Park, and Pound Middle Schools have more delinquency in school than Lincoln Public Schools.

See Figure 8 for the racial and ethnic breakdown for each Lincoln middle school. The Culler, Goodrich, Lefler, and Pound student bodies are more racially

diverse than Lincoln Public Schools. These schools have more heterogeneous than the others.

Based on the school level risk and protective factors, including academic failure, school commitment, opportunity and reward for prosocial involvement, in school delinquency, and racial disparities, **Culler, Lefler, Park, and Pound Middle Schools are at risk for youth gang involvement.**

#### ***4. Peer group***

Having peers in early adolescents prior to gang entry who engaged in aggressive delinquency increased the risk of gang entry (Lahey, et al., 1998). Associations with friends who engage in problem behaviors are 2 times more likely to join gang (Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001). Associations with peers who approve of risky behaviors are also predictive of gang membership (Estrada, et al., 2014).

Aggressive and disruptive behaviors can result in rejection by peers, leaving a space to be filled by antisocial and deviant peers. Additionally, early rejection by peers is predictive of being easily influenced by peers during later adolescence and developing antisocial attitudes (Howell & Eagley, 2005). According to the interaction theory, the interaction between weakened social bonds with community and family and association with deviant peers strongly predicts increased deviance and gang membership (Thornberry & Krohn, 2001).

See Figure 10 for rates of peer-on-peer aggression. Dawes (50.0%), Irving (45.5%), Lux (44.3%), and Pound (46.4%) eighth graders reported more bullying than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (42.0%). Bullying happens in school at Dawes (42.0%), Irving (37.3%), and Mickel (36.1%) more than Lincoln Public

Schools (33.5%). Bullying happens away from school at Dawes (28.0%), Irving (29.4%), Lux (27.8%), and Pound (26.7%) more than in Lincoln Public Schools (25.3%). More students reported experiencing cyberbullying at Dawes (28.0%), Irving (25.5%), Mickel (26.2%), and Pound (24.4%) than in Lincoln Public Schools (21.2%). More students are at risk to experience peer aggression at **Dawes, Irving, Lux, and Pound than across Lincoln Public Schools.**

### ***5. Community***

Antisocial tendencies in neighborhoods, peers, and families predict gang involvement (Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001). Pratt and Cullen (2005) found economic disadvantage to be one of the strongest and most consistent macro-level predictors. Growing up in an impoverished, distressed, and crime-ridden community leaves a hole where community supports would be, resulting in a lack of social capital (Howell & Eagley, 2005). Neighbors that lack the social cohesion and informal behavioral controls are less able to address the negative effects of disadvantage, thereby weakening commitment and bonding to the neighborhood (Howell & Eagley, 2005). Some neighborhood level factors that predict gang membership include the availability or perceived availability of drugs and guns, feeling unsafe in the neighborhood, and low neighborhood attachment (Howell & Eagley, 2005).

Street socialization fills the gaps in disconnected and poor neighborhoods, especially for racial minorities (Conchas & Vigil, 2010). Where communities fail to provide supports, in the form of parenting, informal adult supervision, and policing, youth find their own street-controlling influences. Youths learn the acceptable and even encouraged behaviors from the existing networks, including gangs. They



receive the social structure, support, and acceptance they do not receive from other sources (Conchas & Vigil, 2010). Gangs fulfill the social needs by satisfying the desire to be liked among similar others and providing for emotional stability during times of change (Conchas & Vigil, 2010).

Whether cities had high population density and specialized gang units were significantly predictive of gang membership. Economic disadvantage also significantly predicted gang membership, however, to a lesser extent than population density and gang units. The heterogeneity of the city, the extent to which the city population represents multiple racial and ethnic groups, is a strong predictor of gang membership. Heterogeneity and economic disadvantage work together and predict gang membership, when controlling for the presence of a gang unit, the young male population, population density, and police representativeness. When there is high economic disadvantage, gang membership is significantly more prevalent in areas with more racial and ethnic heterogeneity, or diversity. These findings demonstrate that economic disadvantage and population heterogeneity work together to predict gang membership (Pyrooz, Fox, & Decker, 2010). Pyrooz, Fox, and Decker (2010) recommend partnering with a representative group of agencies, especially those intended to foster economic opportunity and reduce racial and ethnic isolation.

High levels of heterogeneity create caste systems with schools that exclude minority groups and breed distrust and suspicion of the dominant institutions. Consider a multiple marginality framework that begins with how immigrants enter the country and working low-income jobs – often forcing the family into poverty.

Poverty influences every facet of the family and combines with segregation to result in low community, family, and school commitment (Conchas & Vigil, 2010). Finally, changes in the ethnic and economic structures of a city predict the development of youth gangs (Adamson, 2000).

The community risk factors calculated with the NRPFS include community disorganization, law and norms favor drug use, perceived availability of drugs and gun, neighborhood heterogeneity, and poverty. Community protective factors calculated include opportunities for prosocial involvement. See Figure 11 for community risk and protective factors prevalence from the NRPFS. More eighth graders from Culler (52.5%), Dawes (46.9%), Irving (35.9%), Park (51.2%), and Schoo (33.9%) are at risk due to community disorganization than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (30.7%). More eighth grade students from Culler (47.5%), Dawes (42.9%), Lefler (47.3%), Mickel (35.0%), Park (41.7%), and Schoo (37.1%) are at risk due to laws and norms that favor drug use than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (33.5%). More eighth graders from Culler (27.4%), Dawes (22.4%), Lefler (33.3%), Park (26.2%), and Schoo (20.9%) are at risk due to perceived availability of drugs in the community than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (18.9%). More eighth graders from Culler (27.4%), Lefler (35.5%), Mickel (28.3%), and Scott (29.1%) are at risk due to perceived availability of guns in the community than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (26.2%). Fewer eighth grade students from Culler (72.6%), Dawes (77.6%), and Lefler (80.6%) are protected due to opportunities for prosocial involvement in the community than Lincoln Public School eighth graders (87.7%).

See Figure 12 for racial and ethnic information about the communities that make up the middle school districts. Students from Culler, Lefler, and Park live in more heterogeneous neighborhoods than students in other school districts. See Table 2 for the median income, home values, and home ownership. The median household income in Lincoln, Nebraska is \$54,522. The median household income is lower in the districts of Culler (\$39,386), Dawes (\$43,640), Lefler (\$51,279), and Park (\$41,105). More middle school students receive free lunch at from Culler (68.5%), Dawes (51.4%), Goodrich (68.6%), Lefler (48.5%), and Park (58.9%) than Lincoln Public School middle schoolers (38.5%). Fewer households in the districts of Culler (44.7%), Dawes (50.2%), Lefler (48.7%), Park (46.3%) and Schoo (51.1%) are owner occupied than in Lincoln (58.7%).

Based on community level risk factors, including community disorganization, laws and norms, perceived access to drugs and guns, heterogeneity in the community, and poverty, students at **Culler, Dawes, Lefler, and Park Middle Schools are at greater risk for youth gang involvement.**

### **Conclusion**

No single overriding factor predicts gang membership. Rather it is a cumulative effect, the more factors present the more risk for gang membership. (Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001). From the literature, Howell and Eagley (2005) drew 3 conclusions: risk factors span across all 5 domains, are cumulative, and are enhancing, meaning the presence of a risk factor in multiple domains increased the likelihood of gang membership. The interactional theory (Thornberry, Krohn, et al., 2003) posits that gang membership begins when the peripheral structures, such as

neighborhood, community, and family, fail to provide traditional social supports and bonds that control behavior and allow to anti-social behavior. In turn, adolescents begin to internalize anti-social norms and begin to act out through delinquency. Anti-social influences, delinquency, and negative life events foster the perception of gangs as exciting, protecting, and socially beneficial.

The risk factors must be considered in the aggregate to determine which Lincoln Public Middle School has the greatest risk of youth gang involvement. See Figure 13 for aggregated risk factors. The schools that are most at risk will have more students that engage in antisocial activities at an early age, have friends who engage in delinquency and substance use, are not attached to their families or school, experience peer aggression at school, and are from communities where drugs and guns are accessible. Further, these schools will be heterogeneous, both racially and economically.

At **Culler Middle School**, 30.6% of eighth graders are at risk due to individual and peer factors, 28.6% of eighth graders are at risk due to family factors, 36.5% of eighth graders are at risk due to school factors, and 38.7% of eighth graders are at risk due to community factors. Culler more heterogeneous than other Lincoln Middle Schools with 49% of students being white/European American, 14% Black/African American, 2.8% Asian, and 23.2% Hispanic/Latino. Additionally, 68.5% of the student body receives free lunch. Students at Culler are more likely to have engaged in early antisocial behavior, feel disconnected from school, family, and community, and to associate with others who have engaged in delinquency and have

attitudes in favor of delinquency and drugs. They are more likely to seek alternative social structures and supports at school with like others.

At **Dawes Middle School**, 28.4% of eighth graders are at risk due to individual and peer factors, 29.6% of eighth graders are at risk due to family factors, 28.7% of eighth graders are at risk due to school factors, and 33.1% of eighth graders are at risk due to community factors. Dawes is more heterogeneous than other Lincoln Middle Schools with 63.5% of students being white/European American, 7.3% Black/African American, and 13.7% Hispanic/Latino. Additionally, 51.4% of the student body receives free lunch. Students at Dawes are more likely to have engaged in early antisocial behavior, feel disconnected from their community, and to associate with others who have engaged in delinquency and have attitudes in favor of delinquency and drugs. They are more likely to seek alternative social structures and supports at school with like others than other Lincoln Public School middle schoolers.

At **Lefler Middle School**, 25.8% of eighth graders are at risk due to individual and peer factors, 31.7% of eighth graders are at risk due to family factors, 37.9% of eighth graders are at risk due to school factors, and 39.9% of eighth graders are at risk due to community factors. Lefler is more heterogeneous than other Lincoln Middle Schools with 62.2% of students being White/European American, 7.3% Black/African American, and 14.0% Hispanic/Latino. Additionally, 48.5% of the student body receives free lunch. Students at Lefler are more likely to have feel disconnected from their family, school, and community, and to associate with others who have engaged in delinquency and have attitudes in favor of

delinquency and drugs. They are more likely to seek alternative social structures and supports at school with like others due to the disconnection and heterogeneous population.

At **Park Middle School**, 27.3% of eighth graders are at risk due to individual and peer factors, 32.8% of eighth graders are at risk due to family factors, 28.6% of eighth graders are at risk due to school factors, and 37.5% of eighth graders are at risk due to community factors. Park is more heterogeneous than other Lincoln Middle Schools with 42.9% of students being white/European American, 12.4% Black/African American, and 24.4% Hispanic/Latino. Additionally, 58.9% of the student body receives free lunch. Students at Park are more likely to have engaged in early antisocial behavior, feel disconnected from their family and community, and to associate with others who have engaged in delinquency and have attitudes in favor of delinquency and drugs. They are more likely to seek alternative social structures and supports at school with like others because of the community failings.

**When all the risk factors are considered together, Culler, Dawes, Lefler, and Park Middle Schools are most at risk for youth gang involvement and need the most prevention attention.**

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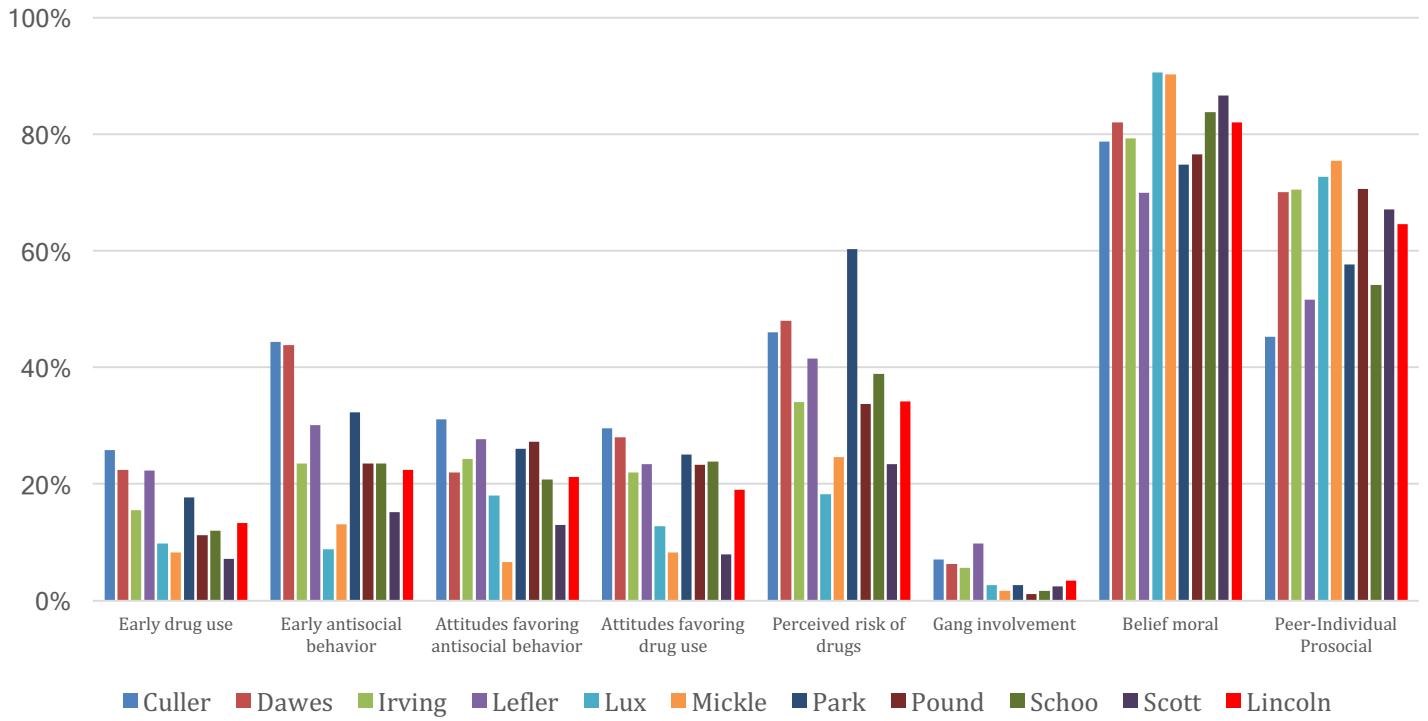
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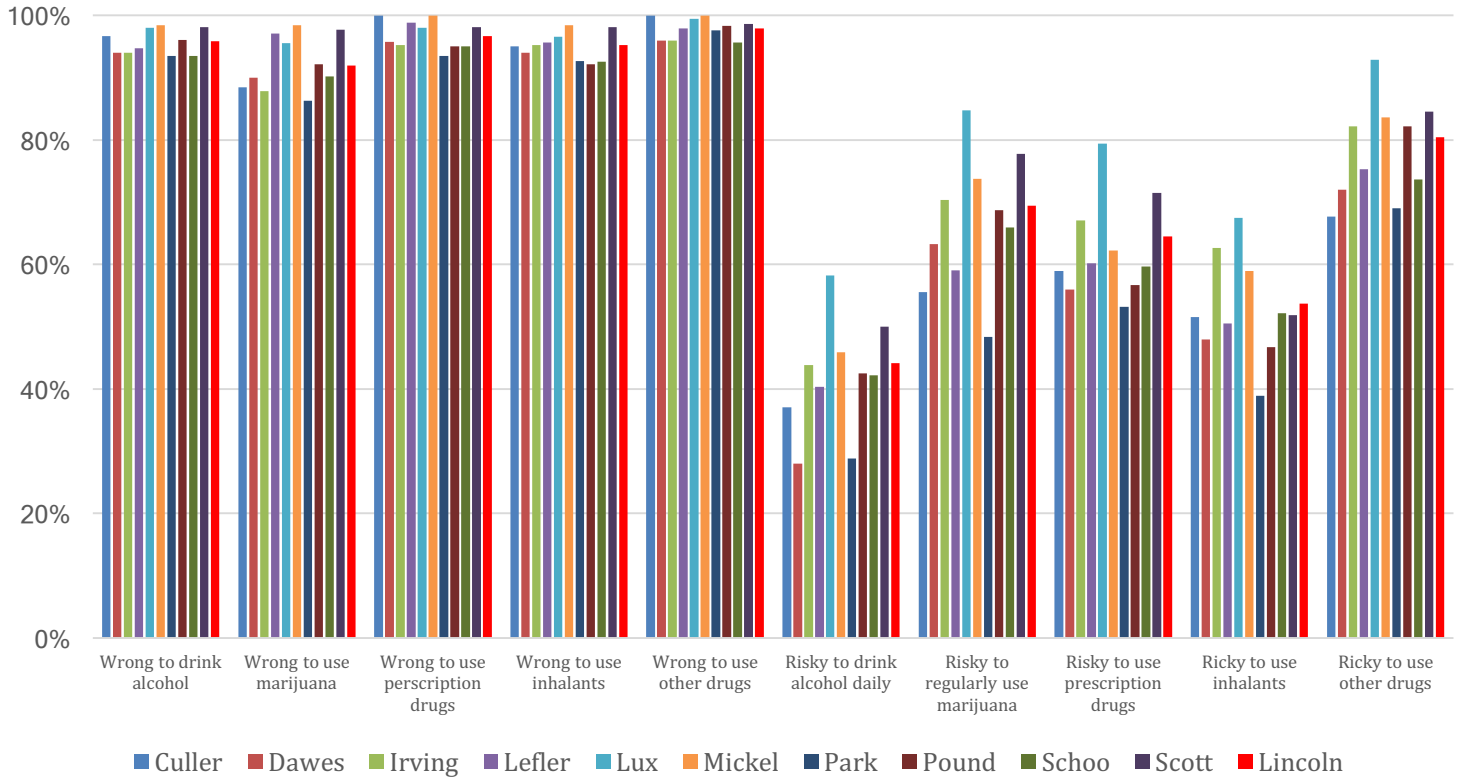
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## Individual Risk and Protective Factors



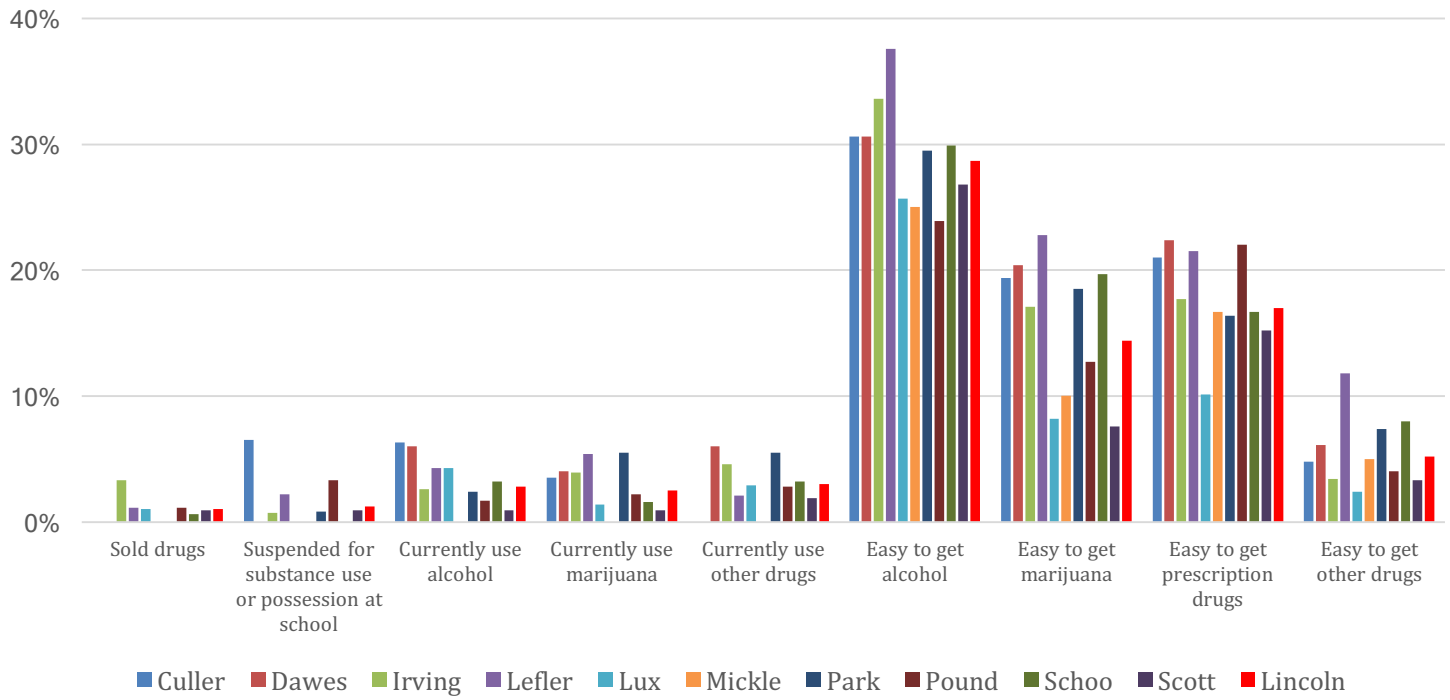
*Figure 1.* Individual Risk and Protective Factor prevalence from NRPFSS.

## Substance Use Attitudes



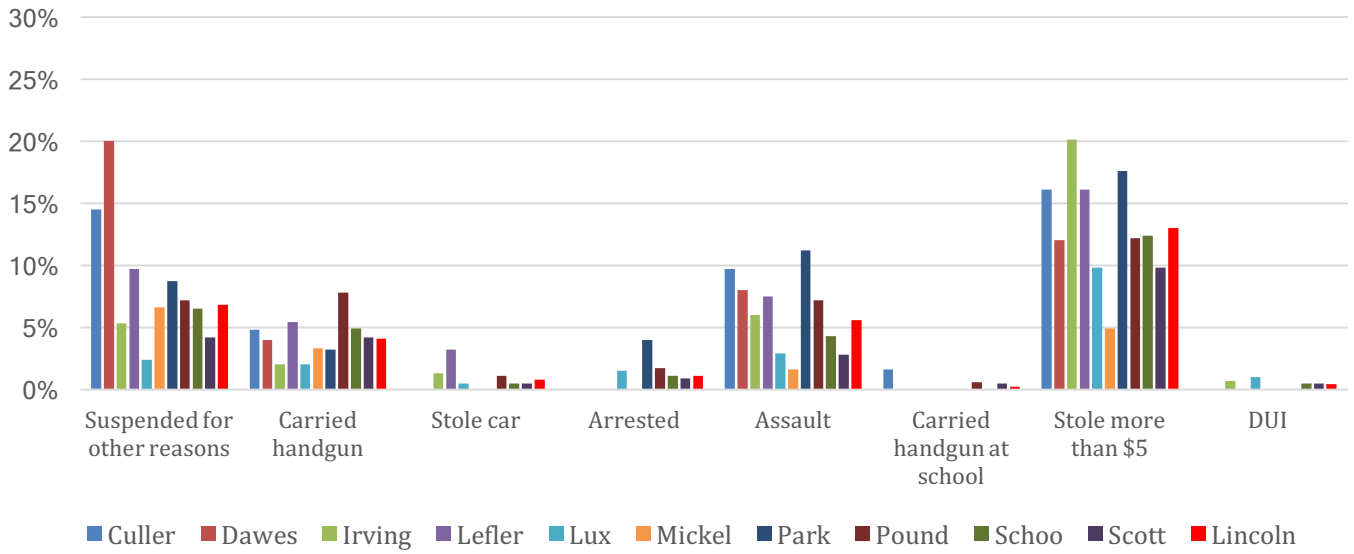
*Figure 2. Attitudes of eighth grade students about substance use from NRPFS.*

## Substance Use and Access



*Figure 3. Use and access to controlled substances of eighth graders from NRPFS.*

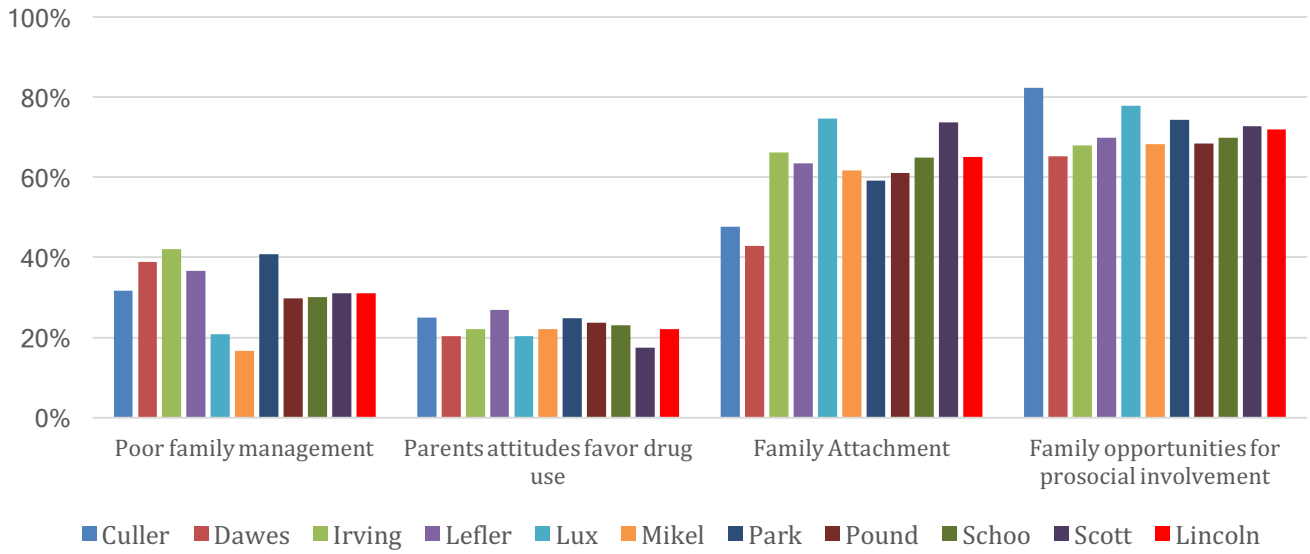
## Delinquency at School



*Figure 4. Delinquency reports in school from NRPFS.*



## Family Risk and Protective Factors



*Figure 5. Family Risk and Protective Factor prevalence from NRPFS.*

### Family Access to Controlled Substance

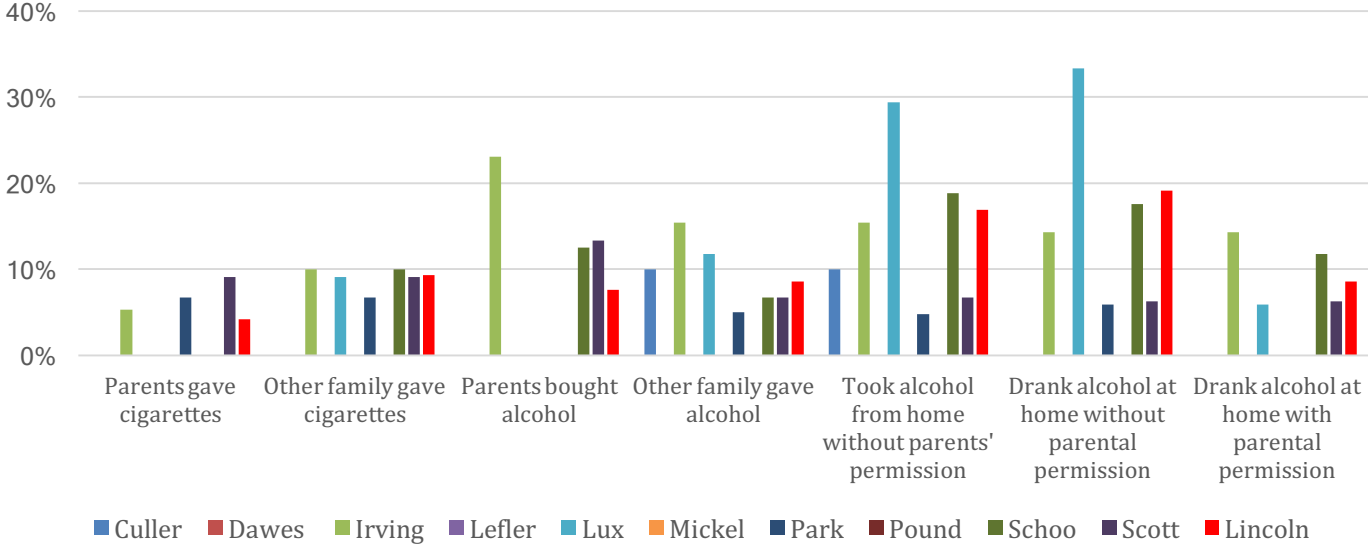
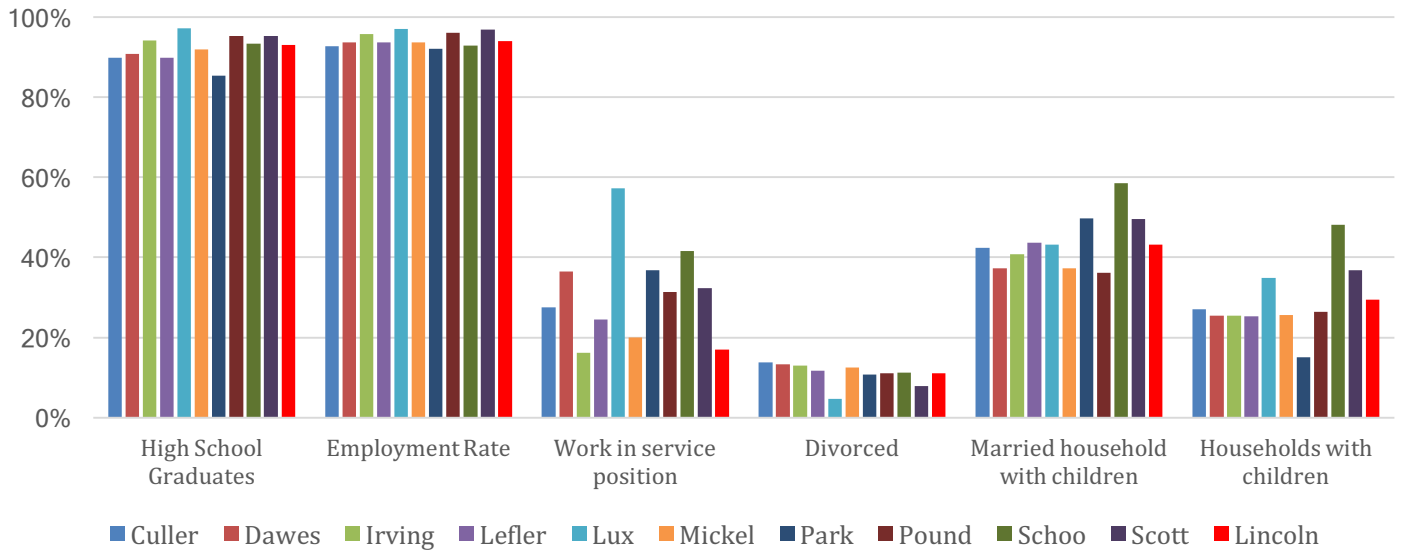


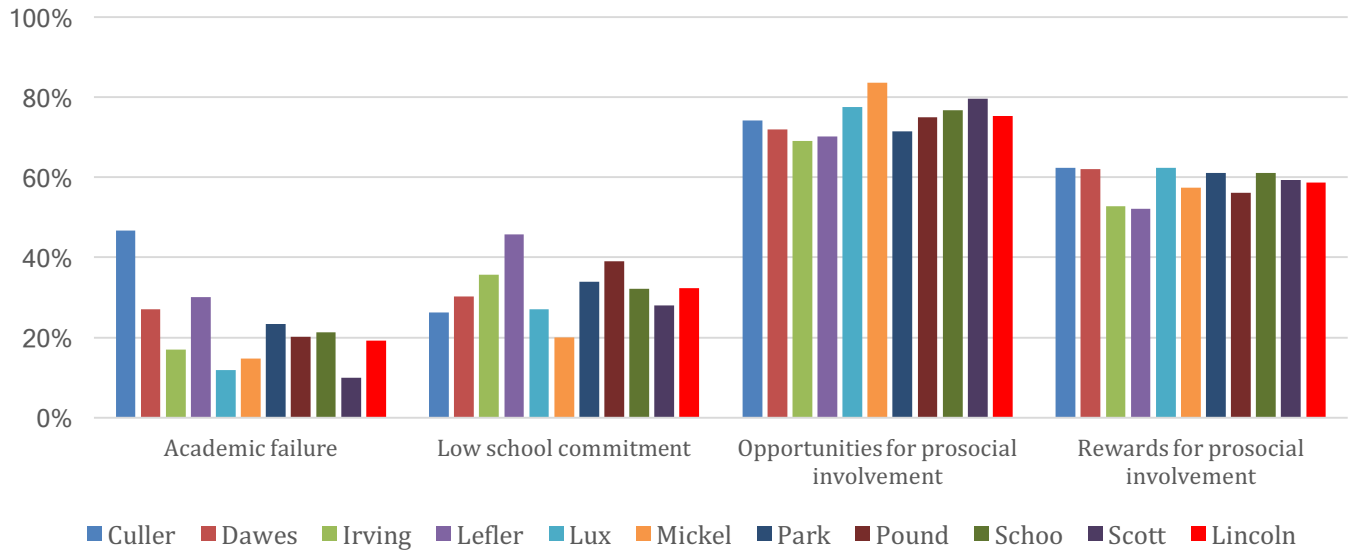
Figure 6. Family access to controlled substances.

## Family Structure



*Figure 7. Family structures in each school district.*

## School Risk and Protective Factors



*Figure 7. School level risk and protective factors from the NRPFSS.*

## Race and Ethnicity

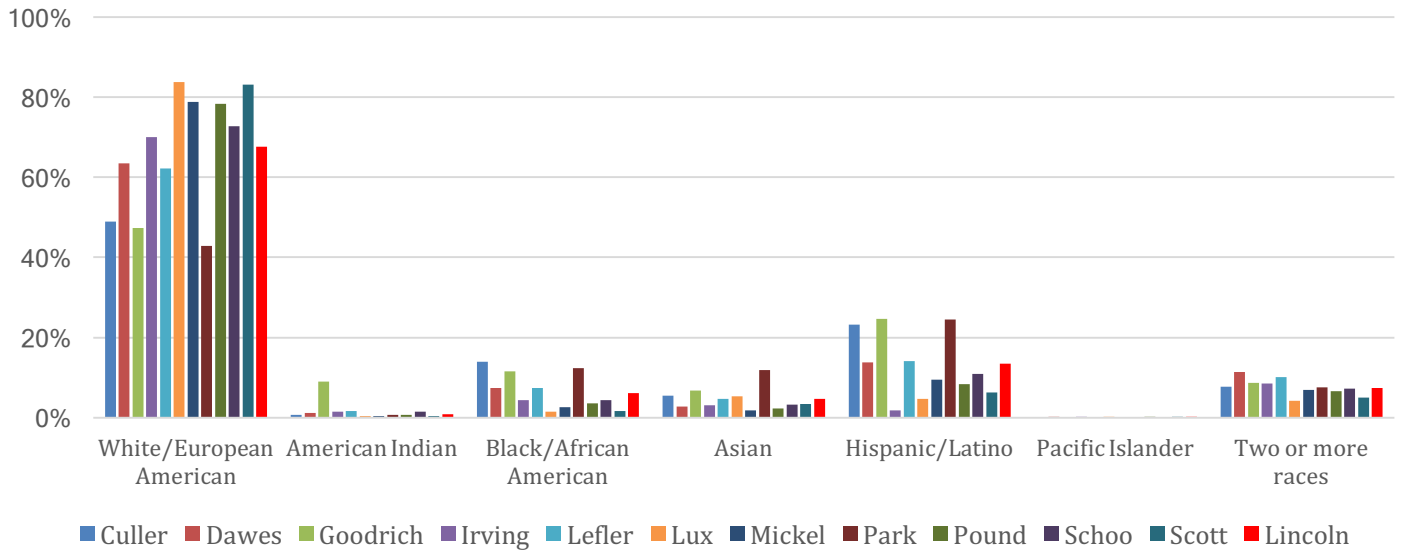
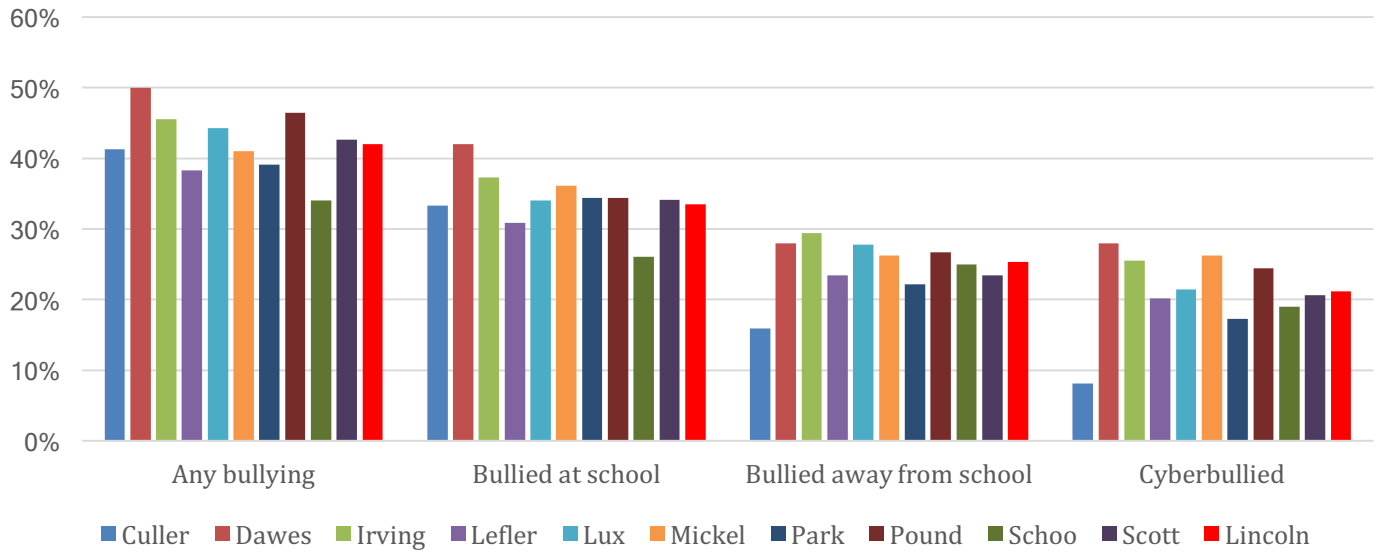


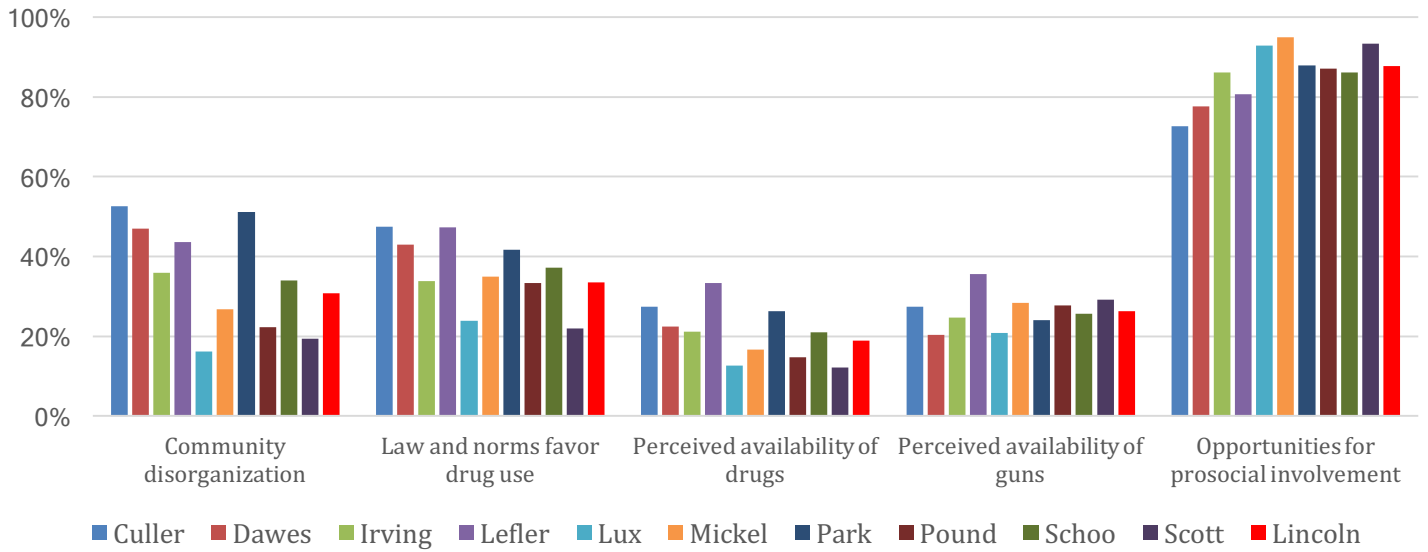
Figure 8. Race and ethnicity in schools.

## Bullying



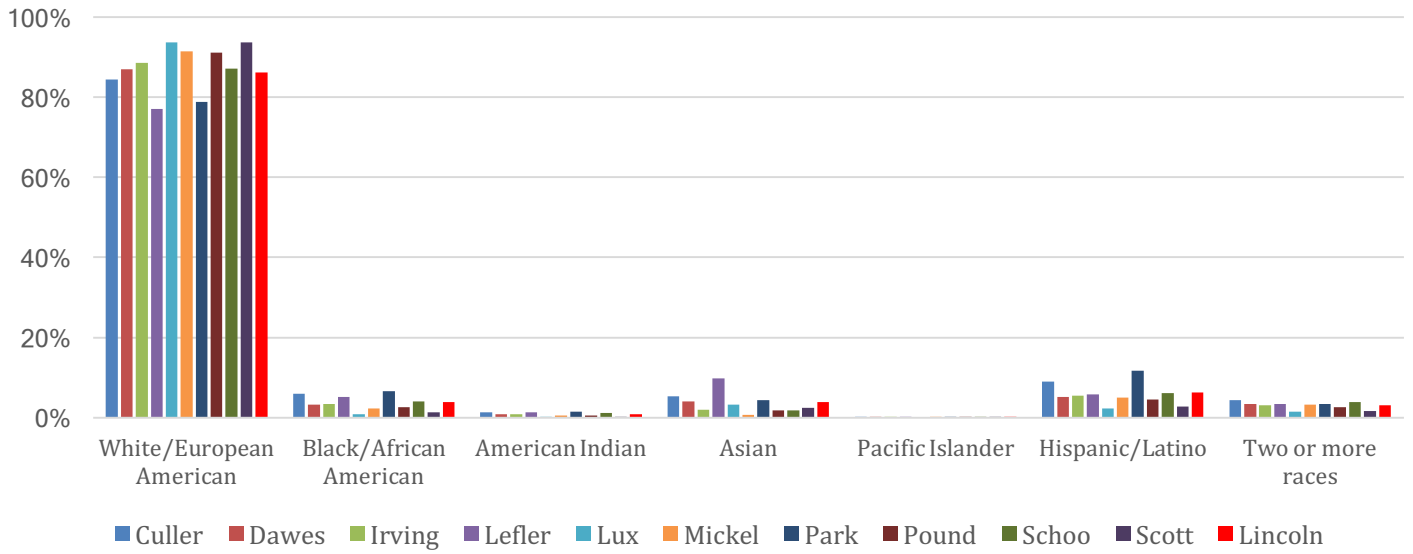
*Figure 10. Bullying in middle schools across Lincoln.*

## Community Risk and Protective Factors



*Figure 11. Community risk and protective factors from the NRPFSS.*

## Neighborhood Race and Ethnicity



*Figure 12.* Race and ethnicity in the middle school districts.



### All Middle Schools Across Risk Factor Domains

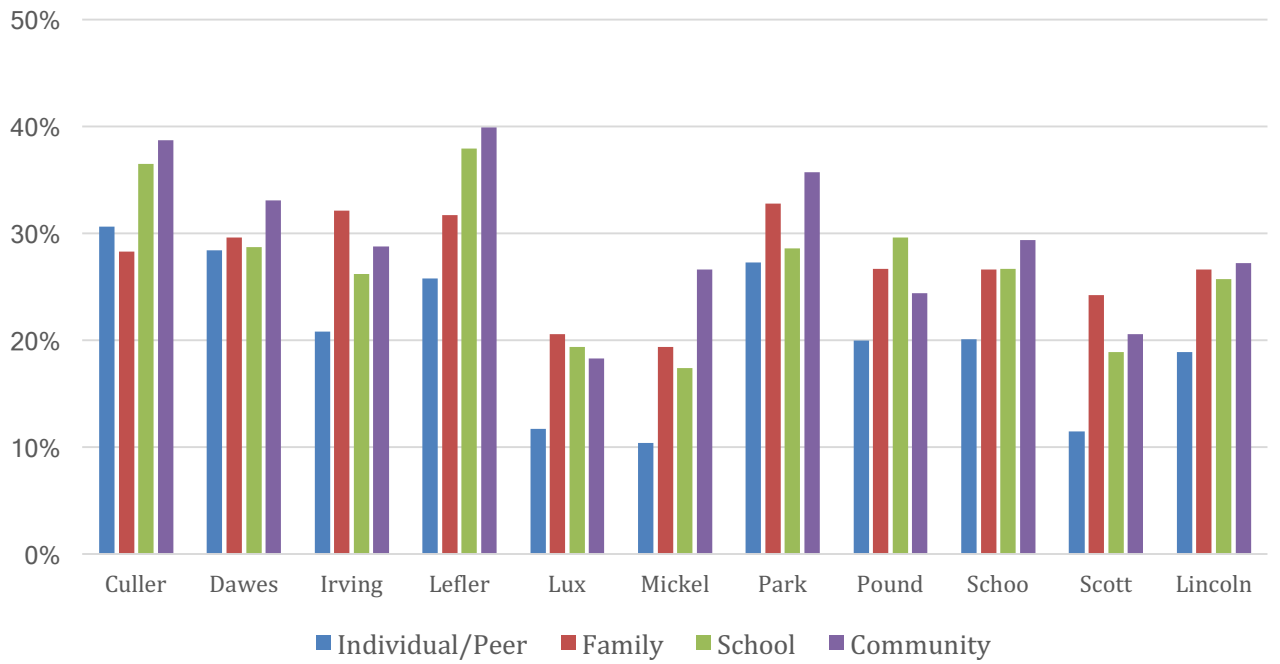


Figure 13. Average risk factor prevalence across the Middle Schools.

Table 1. Enrollment and demographics for each Lincoln Middle School.

Middle School	Enrollment	Gender	Free Lunch
Culler Middle School	N = 730	Male n = 369 (50.5%) Female n = 361 (49.5%)	n = 500 (68.5%)
Dawes Middle School	N = 496	Male n = 269 (54.2%) Female n = 227 (45.8%)	n = 255 (51.4%)
Goodrich Middle School	N = 841	Male n = 438 (52.1%) Female n = 403 (47.9%)	N = 577 (68.6%)
Irving Middle School	N = 844	Male n = 437 (51.8%) Female n = 407 (48.2%)	n = 321 (38.0%)
Lefler Middle School	N = 633	Male n = 326 (51.5%) Female n = 307 (48.5%)	n = 307 (48.5%)
Lux Middle School	N = 1,053	Male n = 540 (51.3%) Female n = 513 (48.7%)	n = 128 (12.2%)
Mickle Middle School	N = 726	Male n = 378 (52.1%) Female n = 348 (47.9%)	n = 267 (36.8%)
Park Middle School	N = 892	Male n = 483 (54.1%) Female n = 409 (45.9%)	n = 525 (58.9%)

Pound Middle School	N = 877	Male n = 426 (48.6%) Female n = 451 (51.4%)	n = 204 (23.3%)
Schoo Middle School	N = 835	Male n = 414 (49.6%) Female n = 421 (50.4%)	n = 27 (32.3%)
Scott Middle School	N = 1,124	Male n = 576 (51.2%) Female n = 548 (48.8%)	n = 128 (11.4%)
Lincoln Middle Schools	N = 9,051	Male n = 4,656 (51.4%) Female n = 4,395 (48.6%)	n = 3,482 (38.5%)

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Table 2. Median income and home values for middle school districts.

Middle School District	Median Income	Median Home Value	Percent households occupied by owner
Culler Middle School	\$39,386*	\$104,379*	44.70%*
Dawes Middle School	\$43,640*	\$99,327*	50.23%*
Goodrich Middle School	\$57,635	\$101,882*	58.50%
Irving Middle School	\$55,545	\$118,608*	61.52%
Lefler Middle School	\$51,279*	\$111,857*	48.86%*
Lux Middle School	\$96,500	\$232,250	84.90%
Mickel Middle School	\$48,919	\$101,765*	59.40%
Park Middle School	\$41,105*	\$80,833	46.25%*
Pound Middle School	\$51,102	\$124,498*	67.84%
Schoo Middle School	\$65,701	\$118,680*	51.10%*
Scott Middle School	\$73,521	\$179,406	73.84%
Lincoln Public Schools	\$54,522	\$129,995	58.70%

\*Value less than Lincoln Public Schools.

# Evaluation of the Omaha Police Department Gang Intelligence Analyst

By

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**Evaluation of Grant #:** 11-VP-5002, provided by the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

# OPD Gang Intelligence Analyst Evaluation

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## **Overview of Evaluation.**

Omaha's history of gang violence is, unfortunately, long and somewhat complex. While the Omaha Police department, like law enforcement agencies across the country, have documented especially violent and gun crime whose impetus seems to be gang-related, this has not been well organized or documented until the use of a gang database and specification of a gang intelligence officer, in 2012. The purpose of an electronic gang database, as well as an officer dedicated to identifying and utilizing data surrounding gang intelligence, was to better identify, document and potentially predict both gang membership as well as crimes attributed to gang members, and/or due to gang activity. Research suggests that the use of both systematic data system and a clear and well-documented process for obtaining, recognizing and disseminating intelligence, can result in both a disruption of criminal gang activity and maintain fairness and justice for communities suffering from gang crime and violence (Brown, 2009). The position of the gang intelligence officer is somewhat unique to gang units, and, in our estimation, has the potential to better facilitate the intelligence within the gang database, while providing safeguards to limit the risk that the gang database could violate the rights of those individuals within it. Evaluating such a position is complex, however, and the following evaluation tries to take into consideration a number of issues, including the cost/benefit of this position to the gang intelligence unit and to the Omaha police department, an analysis of the specific activities of the analyst in relation to known previous research and best practices, and the specific qualifications of the gang intelligence analyst (currently, Mike Halbleib). Finally, we offer some recommendations that may increase the positive outcomes of this position.

It is important to note that this evaluation does NOT consider the validity or efficacy of the gang database system used by the OPD gang intelligence analyst, as this is beyond the scope

of our charge. However, it would be difficult to avoid some discussion of the gang database system, as this is the primary tool and charge of the gang intelligence analyst. In addition, national recommendations surrounding the use of gang *databases* dovetail with the unique role of the gang intelligence analyst at OPD. Finally, there are specific components of the gang intelligence analysts' activities that necessitate some comments about the gang database more specifically.

### **History of the Gang Intelligence Analyst.**

The gang intelligence unit began in 1988 with five officers, and has grown substantially to nearly 30 officers, with a complex charge using increasingly sophisticated methods. Gang intelligence units across the country began utilizing information from a variety of sources and creating databases that would help to systematize this very diverse data (Barrows & Huff, 2009). As a result, the workload of the gang unit has changed a great deal over the past three decades, and has prompted the need for human resources that provide oversight and maintenance of this data. While the Omaha police department reported an increase of gang activity and gang-related crime in periods between 2008-2015, it is also the case that the types and varieties of gang-related information has grown as well. This increase in both crime and data contextualizes the need for the gang intelligence analyst position. Although originally funded as a full-time position in 2012, a variety of unforeseen circumstances meant that Mr. Halbleib began the position of gang intelligence analyst working 28 hours a week in January of 2016.

At the time of his hire, this position was to directly work with the gang database, but we have understood that the specifics of what this role completes for the Unit has become much more nuanced. This position has been supported through funding from the Nebraska Commission on Criminal Justice, and remains a part time position, answering to the leader of the



Omaha Police Department Gang Unit, who, at the time of this evaluation, was Lt. Ken Kanger. We are operating under the assumption that this position is intended to be a permanent position within the Gang Unit.

### **Cost/Benefit of Gang Intelligence Analyst.**

One of the most straightforward ways to evaluate a position is to determine whether that position is cost-effective (and here, we mean “cost” and “benefit” in both monetary and time units). In other words, if it can be determined that the benefit of the position outweighs the resources put into creating and supporting the position, the position is cost effective - this is also known as an “Efficiency Evaluation” (Murray, 2016). While the cost of employing a gang intelligence analyst is straightforward in terms of the money required to fund the 28-hour a week (which works out to about 116 hours per month) position, the benefits of the particular position may be more nuanced. Typically, a position that can provide enough support to an organization to equal the number of hours or money they cost the organization is “cost neutral.” Positions that provide enough support to an organization that it is clear they can save more hours (money) than they are paid are considered “cost effective” to an organization. Parsing out the hours saved through the gang intelligence analyst is not clear-cut, although there are some estimates that help us to identify how this particular position may benefit the gang intelligence unit.

#### *Existing Resources Saved.*

Through personal interviews and email communication, the following were noted as ways in which the existence of the gang intelligence analyst saved existing resources. As the director of the Gang Unit, Lt. Ken Kanger reported that, prior to the position of gang intelligence analyst being filled, he would have to pull a day officer off their shift in order to upload and track information in the gang database (Kanger, personal communication, May 26, 2017). Beyond

this, the following activities are noted with regard to how this position has served to spare existing resources of the gang unit:

- Tracking forms. The Gang Intelligence Analyst reports that he averages roughly 100 tracking forms per month from the Uniform Patrol and Gang Suppression Officers. This job had been the responsibility of Detectives in the intelligence unit, and took approximately 9-10 minutes per form. This saves approximately 16 hours per month that Detectives would have spent on this activity.
- Creation of files. When new gang members are identified, it is the responsibility of the gang intelligence analyst to create and make new files. He estimates that this activity also saves Detectives about 10-20 hours per month.
- Purging/Updating files. By handling all of the purging/updating duties, the gang intelligence analyst estimates that this saves Intelligence Detectives 20+ hours per month. Because this activity is nuanced, he notes that his individual streamlining of this activity means that he is likely able to do it in a more efficient way than others. It may take as little as 10-20 minutes, or as long as several hours per person, so it is difficult to estimate the complete time commitment. On average the Gang Intelligence Analyst purges 28 gang members from the database per quarter, and updates 43 per quarter.
- Bulletin creation. This activity requires developing intelligence through information, and can be nuanced. The gang intelligence analyst estimates that each bulletin takes 1-2 hours, and has thus far created just over one per month, resulting in a savings of about 1.5 hours per month from the Intel officers.
- Documentation from the Suppression unit. This task saves time from the Suppression unit, as the Gang Intelligence Analyst researches names or reports that the Suppression

officers give him. This can take a great deal of time away from this unit, as the GIA engages in researching not only the names given, but any connections to other parties, as well as doing any necessary forms and database maintenance that may result from this intelligence. The number of hours devoted to this / saved by the Suppression unit are again, difficult to estimate since they vary from case to case, and some of this work overlaps with work for other units, although it may be estimated to save the Suppression unit about 10 hours a month in investigation.

- Phone monitoring. Although not a large part of his typical workload, the GIA reports that he fields phone calls from concerned citizens and other law enforcement agencies. This activity keeps others from both taking and acting on these calls.

In all, it appears that the GIA position has transferred just over half of the hours that he works per month from other units. In essence, this suggests that other officers or personnel from the gang unit would be shorting their typical workload to engage in the above activities, which are necessary for the successful continuance of the unit.

#### *Potential Resources Saved.*

While the specific activities noted above indicate the resources that the gang intelligence analyst has relieved other areas of the gang unit from having to do, there are additional activities that may not have been completed by others in the unit, or may have been completed sporadically, that are now systematized under his workload. And so while they are not hours or resources that are transferred to this position, it is likely that they have an impact on future resources. For example, while the existence of the GIA means that officers may save 16 hours a month doing forms, there is likely an additional cost-saving benefit. Pulling officers in to do forms, for instance, was not only disruptive to the workflow of gang unit officers, but it also

meant that there was the likelihood that the forms would not be created in a uniform way, raising the possibility of forms that need to be re-created or that were not helpful. The following activities of the GIA are ones where potential resources are saved through this position.

- Adding, updating and purging the database. Prior to the existence of the GIA, OPD's gang database did not have a single individual who had primary responsibility for its content. Research indicates that increasing the number of individuals who can enter information into the database can increase gang database error (Behrman, 2015; Aba-Onu, Pounds, Salmen & Tyner, 2010; Jacobs, 2009). So, while this activity does take workload from other individuals, it likely has an additive effect of making the database cleaner and more useable.
- Community event attendance. The GIA reports that he works with a number of organizations, including Partnerships 4 Kids, worked special events around the city such as SeptemberFest, Cinco De Mayo and the Black Lives Matter protests, and has given community presentations on gangs in Omaha. Research also indicates that engagement with the community can help increase both the likelihood and the speed of crime clearances (Johnson, 2017), and can have an increased effect on longer-term community-police relations (Tyler, 2017). The GIA estimates between 2-4 hours per month on community event attendance.
- Social media monitoring. The GIA estimates that a substantial portion of his time (appx 55 hours per month) monitoring social media. Evidence indicates that social media monitoring has the potential both to effectively build cases against gang members during an investigation phase (Goggins, 2012) and to pro-actively interrupt potential gang recruitment (Behrman, 2015). Thus, this activity can save

resources both for suppression and in prevention of future gang activity.

- Meeting attendance. While this is also a fairly small part of workload (appx 4-6 meetings per month, ranging from 30-60 minutes), it is important to note that his unique perspective in attending these meetings (particularly related to the upcoming revised Gang Database) may result in some saved resources, as he may be able to identify both potential assets and snags in other units, as he has a “bird’s eye view” of these through his position.

While it is difficult to assess the number of potential resources saved through this position, there is ample evidence in previous research that the specific activities that the GIA engages in should help the Gang Unit in particular, and the Omaha Police department more generally, be more efficient with the use of the gang database as well as better achieve enforcement, investigation and perhaps suppression and prevention.

### **Assessment of Gang Intelligence Analyst Activities.**

Given the information from previous research regarding how gang databases are best managed and the types of activities that are most likely to result in efficiencies and positive results, we consider the activities that the Gang Intelligence Analyst self-describes as his approximate Hours breakdown (hours can fluctuate based on unit needs). They, along with his estimation of time devoted to these activities, are noted below.

- Roughly 2-4 hours on average monthly doing community activities, although this may vary based on the time of year and specific activity (he notes one where he spent upwards of 14 hours in a month).
- Approximately 55 hours a month monitoring social media, which can include researching an individual for another detective’s investigation. This is the largest activity noted for this

position.

- Approximately 40 hours a month in the gang database entering tracking forms, adding new members, and purging to stay in compliance with 28 CFR part 23.
- Finally, the GIA reports that he attends 4-6 meetings a month (30-60 minutes per meeting) regarding gang activity/felony assaults, or for database (updating to web based) activities.

Because we were unable to find any evaluations of gang intelligence analysts, it is difficult to identify whether the time devoted to these activities is in line with best practices for this particular position. However, using the BJA's "Guidelines for Establishing and Operating Gang Intelligence Units and Task Forces" (Gang Intelligence Strategy Committee, 2008) we use some established guidelines to comment on the GIA's primary activities.

While all of the guidelines identified may have some impact on the Gang Intelligence Analyst's activities, it seems most likely that Guideline 7 (Personnel), Guideline 8 (Data Collection) and Guideline 9 (The Intelligence Process) fit most closely with the GIA position. We will note more specifically the guidelines on Guideline 7 (Personnel) in the next section where we discuss Mr. Halbleib's unique qualifications to the position. Quite clearly, one of the most important guidelines given in this document is establishing a systematic data collection that is in compliance with 28 CFR Part 23, which is a primary component of a successful gang intelligence process. In addition, both BJA and others note the importance of both data collection and data reclassification. This is due to the ongoing nature of knowledge about gang members (i.e., information from an initial report is likely to change as more data comes to light), as well as making sure that errors or misinformation is identified and removed. The issue of making sure that the database has both accurate and current information is critical both for the work of officers in suppression efforts but also to minimize risk of violations of citizens.

Research indicates that the validity of police- reported gang measures is higher in cities that had specialized policing units directed toward gang problems, and likely even higher when an individual is dedicated to maintaining the database (Papachristos, Hureau & Braga, 2013).

“Database maintenance is particularly important for juveniles to ensure that they are given opportunities to succeed and overcome prior gang affiliation” (Brown, 2009, p.333). Given that working with the database is one of the two major time commitments for the Gang Intelligence Analyst, and that Mr. Halbleib notes that he has a specific methodology he follows consistently “every time I research someone” (Halbleib, personal communication, October 4, 2017). This seems in line with the expectation that the gang database be of utmost importance for the GIA.

In addition, the BJA notes on Guideline 9 (The Gang Intelligence Process) also seems to fit well specifically with the GIA’s reported activity of social media monitoring. While Guideline 9 is perhaps much broader than social media, the description provided that this process “takes different pieces of information and turns them into actionable intelligence” (Gang Intelligence Strategy Committee, 2008, p. 23) is exactly what Mr. Halbleib describes is done through his work with social media, when he notes that he looks for specific items such as “officer safety threats, threats of violence, gang activity, intel on previous crimes, and person-to-person association... I then take that information and create bulletins when necessary, document and track new/already known gang members when necessary, update gang ties/associations, and enter into the gang database when information fits the criteria.” (Halbleib, personal communication, August 1, 2017). What’s more, research indicates that gangs are increasingly using social media to recruit new members, challenge rival gangs and to engage in criminal activities (Behrman, 2015; O’Connor, 2013). Indeed, as gang members become more savvy to

social media monitoring by law enforcement, it may be important for the GIA to engage in more sophisticated monitoring techniques, which could impact the amount of time devoted to this activity. However, the reality that this activity is the largest proportion of the GIA's time seems to fit well with what is known about how best to gather and create intelligence.

The activities that are reported to utilize the least amount of the GIA's time – community events and attendance at meetings – have also been found to be important components of generally taking on gang violence. More specifically, meetings that may signify open communication among unit members as well as community events, where communication by and with individuals in neighborhoods may be encouraged, have been shown to be critical to a larger gang reduction strategy (Tyler, 2017). Given the part-time nature of this position, it is not likely that the amount of time devoted to these activities can be increased. What's more, because other officers in the gang unit may be more likely to engage in these activities, the entirety of completing them may not just fall on the Gang Intelligence Analyst. It may be helpful, however, to incorporate community events regularly into the GIA's schedule, and/or to systematically engage with officers who have community engagement on their regular workload.

We are somewhat unclear what is driving the part-time nature of this position – whether this is due to funding constraints, whether this amount of time is sufficient to attend to the various tasks of the position (although this seems unlikely) or whether this was done to appropriately accommodate the preferences of Mr. Halbleib. Given the increasingly intricate nature of the position, however, we believe that there will be enough work to fill a full-time (40 hour a week) schedule, but note that the work that can be completed in 28 hours a week is still extremely valuable.

#### **Assessment of Halbleib's Qualifications.**



Currently, the position of Gang Intelligence Analyst in the Omaha Police gang unit is held by Mike Halbleib. As noted earlier, because this position does not exist in many gang units, we were unable to find specific recommendations regarding the personal qualifications or experiences for this position. However, we believe there are some particular areas that one could draw from to identify expected qualifications and experiences. The first is the BJA's Guideline 7 (Personnel) that identifies specific strengths for task force leaders. Although the Gang Intelligence Analyst is not technically a task force leader, because his role is a unique one that works across all members of the Gang Unit, we note that it would be beneficial for him to be considered as a leader in the unit. Some of the personal characteristics that BJA notes should be present in such a leader are as follows: 1. *Communication skills at all levels* (participating agencies, other law enforcement entities, community, and media). 2. *Ability to operate in a multi-jurisdictional environment*. 3. *Commitment to the concept that everyone in the task force is "equal."* 4. *Demonstrated ability to work in a politically sensitive environment*. 5. *Strong interpersonal skills*. 6. *Strong diplomatic and negotiation skills, and a commitment to positive resolution of conflicts*, and 7. *An appreciation for and understanding of the roles and challenges of task force representatives*.

Many of these characteristics are noted in Mr. Halbleib's resume, which was received by the evaluators on October 16, 2017. He notes his experience communicating in both oral and written form, with briefings and reports. He also notes his ability to take data from a variety of different sources and analyze it effectively. In addition, his experience as a former police officer and as such, his experience in law enforcement intelligence techniques and operations is important in engaging and understanding others he works with. The evaluators are not familiar with his ability to work in a politically sensitive environment, his ability to treat everyone as an "equal"

or his diplomatic and negotiation skills – it is also important to note that, while these characteristics may be critical to a gang unit leader, they may not be as critical to a gang intelligence analyst.

Because of the nature of the GIA's position, there are additional qualifications that seem quite important for the individual holding this position. More specifically, the ability of the GIA to engage in the technical aspects of intelligence gathering, particularly when it comes to social media monitoring, seem to be of utmost importance. Mr. Halbleib does note that he has experience with some unique technical activities. These include: knowledge of automated systems to determine the need for and the design of intelligence databases, experience monitoring and extrapolating social media intelligence data, analyzing open source information to include time-stamped location tagged social media, and using methods such as link analyses, visual investigative analyses, and crime mapping. While the evaluators were not able to interview others in the gang unit specifically to discuss their perception of Mr. Halbleib's technical expertise, Lt. Kanger notes that Mr. Halbleib's technical knowledge, combined with his experience as a law enforcement officer who is very aware of the distinctive ways in which tactical operations run. This experience is especially important, as research indicates that many analysts who do not have a good sense of how the individuals they are working *for* (that is, other officers) would most benefit from their work, such as how best to compile a useful brief or report (Murray, 2012).

In short, while it is impossible to determine whether other individuals would be more qualified for this position, given Mr. Halbleib's experience as an officer in the Omaha Police Department, as well as his technical and communication expertise and knowledge, it appears that he is uniquely suited to the position as Gang Intelligence Analyst. Nevertheless, given the ever-

changing nature of the data he works with daily, particularly the forms and complexities of social media, as well as the anticipated updating of the gang database, the evaluators would recommend investing in training opportunities that would build in Mr. Halbleib's current strengths.

### **Recommendations**

The Omaha Police Department Gang Unit is fortunate to have the position of a Gang Intelligence Analyst, and to have Mr. Halbleib within that position. As noted in the above evaluation, the benefits of the position lie especially in the areas of existing and potential future resources saved for the unit, as well as a single point of contact for the gang database. Mr. Halbleib's experience with law enforcement as well as his technical proficiency is also a unique and strong benefit of the current position for the Omaha Police Department Gang Unit. The evaluators do believe that the benefits of the position can be strengthened, however, and offer the following recommendations for improvement of the position, as well as some additional recommendations for further evaluation.

*Recommendation 1: Ongoing technical training.* As noted above, the constantly changing nature of social media, one of the more important components to gang intelligence, it is recommended that an ongoing commitment to training in this area. In addition, we recommend opportunities for the GIA to learn additional skills that may aid in both intelligence gathering and analysis, such as social network analysis, that is at the forefront of research on gangs (Radil, Flint & Tita, 2010).

*Recommendation 2: Increased Community Interaction.* As we discussed previously, research indicates that police departments generally, and gang units specifically, highly depend on information from the community in which they operate. On the other hand, we also understand the sensitive nature of both receiving and utilizing gang intelligence, both for the

integrity of cases and also for the safety of the officers and community itself, as well as the difficulty of the time commitment. Nevertheless, we believe that there may be some room to increase the community interaction with the Gang Intelligence Analyst and the community in some specific contexts, and in limited ways. This may be as small as a “meet and greet” with community leaders (such as the 360 meeting) where the GIA generally discusses his position and work, or a small article describing the work of the office. We believe that this could increase potential intelligence, as well as help to ameliorate potential fears regarding the office (especially given the increasing media coverage of problems with gang databases). Making the community aware first of the need for and use of the gang database and the safeguards that having a gang intelligence officer provide may be helpful, and could also be useful for obtaining additional intelligence.

*Recommendation 3: In-depth evaluation of the gang database.* Perhaps not surprisingly, one of our biggest recommendations is a larger, in-depth evaluation of the gang database itself. From the small amount of information that we have gleaned, this database would benefit from a significant upgrade, which we understand is being rolled out soon. Unlike this particular position, there are some important and potentially helpful evaluations of other gang databases that may be used as a guide in such an evaluation. Most notably, evaluations of gang databases in Minnesota and California may be of assistance. This is even more critical given the increased perception of problems with gang databases – the risk of putting in individuals who do not belong, and/or failing to remove individuals from it. The more information is known about this important tool, the better it can be used in a way that provides critical information to law enforcement while maintaining or even strengthening the ties between law enforcement officers in the gang unit and the community they serve.

*Recommendation 4: Ongoing, interactive assessment.* While it is critical to have a comprehensive evaluation of the gang database, we also believe it is important to maintain a commitment to ongoing, and interactive assessment, of the gang intelligence analyst. We hope that this evaluation serves as a “starting point” rather than an “ending point” to an ongoing dialogue. We strongly believe that, as the GIA position evolves and changes, that continued assessment will lead to a position that is stronger and proves even more critical to the gang unit and the Omaha police department generally. This does not have to be done annually, but rather can be done less often, or even when the GIA’s typical activities change significantly.

Overall, the evaluators both believe that the position of the Gang Intelligence Officer is an extremely positive addition to the OPD’s gang unit. In addition, we believe that the unit is quite fortunate to have been able to recruit Mr. Halbleib into this position, given his background and skill set. While there is no clear “best practices” model for this particular position, there are some clear indications that this position and the activities completed through this position are in line with best practices regarding gang intelligence use more generally. We strongly encourage that the City of Omaha make a clear and ongoing commitment to maintain this position well into the future.

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UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA  
**SUPPORT AND TRAINING FOR  
THE EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS**

College of Public Affairs and Community  
Service  
The Grace Abbott School of Social Work

**The Hope Center for Kids:  
Junior Village Basketball Alliance Evaluation Report**

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(with Jeanette Harder, PhD)

May 30, 2017



## Purpose of Evaluation

The STEPs evaluation team collaborated with Hope Center for Kids to complete a process and outcome evaluation of the Junior Village Basketball Alliance (Jr. VBA) program. We examined program implementation of Jr. VBA season 2. To accomplish the evaluation, we performed program observations; conducted focus groups with players; developed and analyzed data from the Jr. VBA pre-post outcome evaluation survey; and developed and analyzed data from the player satisfaction survey.

## Evaluation Methods

### *Observational data*

To capture process evaluation data, the STEPs team conducted three program observations on Tuesday evenings from 5-7pm. We observed a regularly scheduled game, playoffs, the championship game, and the outcome evaluation data collection processes. At each observation, we paid attention to the program activities and interactions between players, coaches, staff, and attendees.

### *Qualitative data*

The STEPs team completed two focus groups with new and returning players (N=12). The focus groups were 60-90 minutes in length, and were completed the same week as the league tournament, on the evening of March 9, 2017, at Metro Area Youth Services (MAYS). The lead program evaluator facilitated the groups and another STEPs team member was present to take notes. The focus groups were audio recorded; we compared the audio recordings to our notes to check for accuracy. All names were removed to protect anonymity of players and individuals mentioned in the groups. Audio recordings were deleted immediately after completion of the comparison.

### *Quantitative data*

The outcome evaluation pre-post survey was developed in partnership between STEPs and Hope Center for Kids. We considered the program outcomes and utilized validated measurement tools to assess the following outcomes for players:

- Increased positive relationships.
- Increased positive social skills.
- Improved attitudes and beliefs about gang involvement.

Hope Center staff administered the player outcome evaluation survey at the beginning and end of the Jr. VBA program. Out of 61 players, 61 (100%) completed the pre-evaluation survey and 36 out of 61 (59%) completed the post-evaluation survey. After surveys were completed, players were given sports beverages and pizza as a token of appreciation.

We developed the player satisfaction survey in partnership with Hope Center for Kids. The satisfaction survey was completed by 39 out of 61 (64%) players at the end of the VBA program. All data from the surveys were entered into a database by Hope Center staff and analyzed by the STEPs team to determine program satisfaction.

## Qualitative Findings

Below we present the program observations and qualitative findings to inform recommendations to strengthen program implementation. We also highlight the strongest areas of program implementation.

### **Perceived Goals of Jr. VBA**

The players did not know all the goals of Jr. VBA. A couple of players knew one of the four goals was to have a safe environment to play basketball. Even though they did not know what the goals were, they believed they were being met.

*“It gives us a place to play to stay out of trouble.” – Jr. VBA Player*

### **Player Safety**

Most of the players felt safe. Some mentioned they were fine with the current security (Sheriff’s Department). However, some expressed concern that the number of players outweighed the single security guard. It should be noted that the female player was more observant of the altercations that occurred on the court.

*“Should be more security. Sheriff could get jumped... there’s a whole bunch of us.” – Jr. VBA Player*

### **Community Resources**

Overall, players were not aware of the community resources available. When asked, many of the players mentioned improvements to the league rather than types of community resources they would be interested in receiving. Some players noted that they noticed the table with information on it, but had never stopped to learn more or obtain any of the resources. A couple of players suggested that someone be present at the table to engage players and attendees to disseminate the resources. It should be noted that no players had taken or reviewed any of the resources.

*“When we walked in it was like a little table, and it had like some pamphlets, I never read it.” – Jr. VBA Player*

### **Suggested Improvements by Players**

The majority of players stated that some improvements needed to be made to Jr. VBA. Players identified a variety of improvements they would like to see in the next season. Some of the most common improvements mentioned were:

- *Maintenance of basketball courts and gyms (specifically sweeping courts).* Many of the maintenance concerns involved the small gym.

- *Provide halftime entertainment.* Players expressed concerns about unsupervised children playing on the courts during halftime and during time outs. They desired more structured halftime activities. For example, cheerleaders performing or a dunk competition.
- *More teams to play against during the session and more games during the week.* Some players wanted to play three games per week instead of two.
- *Team bonding opportunities.* Some players wanted the opportunity to bond with each other and other teams, therefore, they suggested teams going out to eat or bowling as a way to bond and recognize participation.
- *Referees give praise and show good sportsmanship during and at the end of each game.* Many of the players expressed frustration with the referees. One player stated that consistency of the referees might help players understand the calls. Several players also stated that the referees were unprofessional.

Players expressed concerns about the lack of enforcement of the age restriction. Many believed that players above 18 years were playing in the league.

*“This year it wasn’t a lot of teams.” – Jr. VBA Player*

*“I feel like JVBA should be for kids because it be like grown ups that be playin’.” – Jr. VBA Player*

### **Interactions with Coaches Outside Jr. VBA**

Overall, players identified having positive relationships with coaches. Coaches were interacting with students both on and off the court. Some players stated they engaged in the following activities with their coaches outside of Jr. VBA:

- Attend Creighton games
- Have lunch together
- Perform community service
- Reward players for good behavior (take player to the mall for good grades)
- Help with homework

One issue a couple players identified was not having a coach.

### **Police Presence**

Overall, the players were uncomfortable and untrusting of the police presence at the games. Many players were unsure about why police were present at the games. Some believed police were there to make arrests, serve warrants, or check-in on gang members.

Some players felt safe with the police being present at the games, however, they did not differentiate between security (Sheriff’s Department) and the Omaha Police Department gang unit.

*“They do be up there to see like how many gang members is participating in this community activities and festivities.” – Jr. VBA Player*

*“I feel like they come up there to watch people they got their eyes on.” – Jr. VBA Player*

**Quantitative Findings**

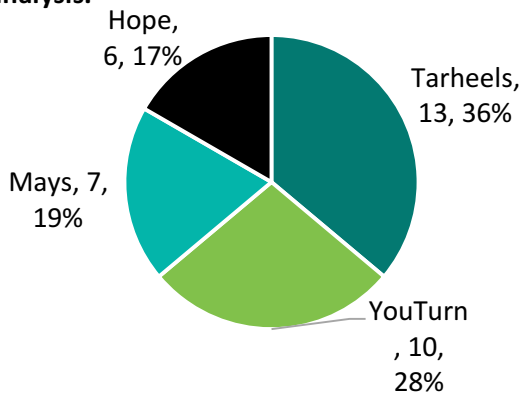
Below we present the quantitative findings to inform recommendations to strengthen program implementation. Quantitative data was collected using three standardized scales in a pre/posttest design. The tool measured the change players experienced on the following three outcomes:

1. Increased positive relationships
2. Increased positive social skills
3. Improved attitudes and belief about gang involvement

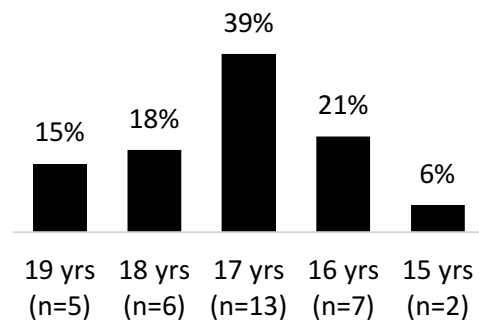
**Description of Players**

Of the 61 players who completed a pretest, only 36 (56%) also completed a posttest, and could therefore be included in the quantitative analysis. Players in the analysis represented all four teams: Hope, Tarheels, YouTurn, and Mays. Over one-third of the players were 17 years-old, over half were in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and over three in four players were Black/African American (see Figures 1-4).

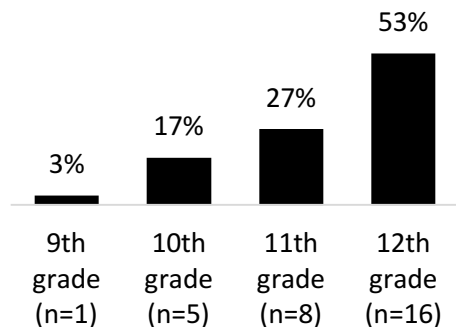
**Figure 1. All teams were represented in the analysis.**



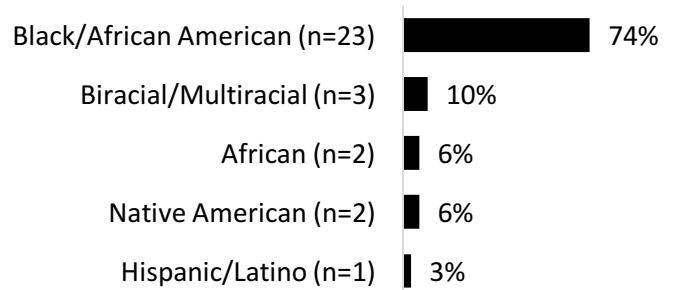
**Figure 2. More players were 17 years old than any other age.**



**Figure 3. Half of the players were in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.**



**Figure 4. The majority of players were Black/African American.**



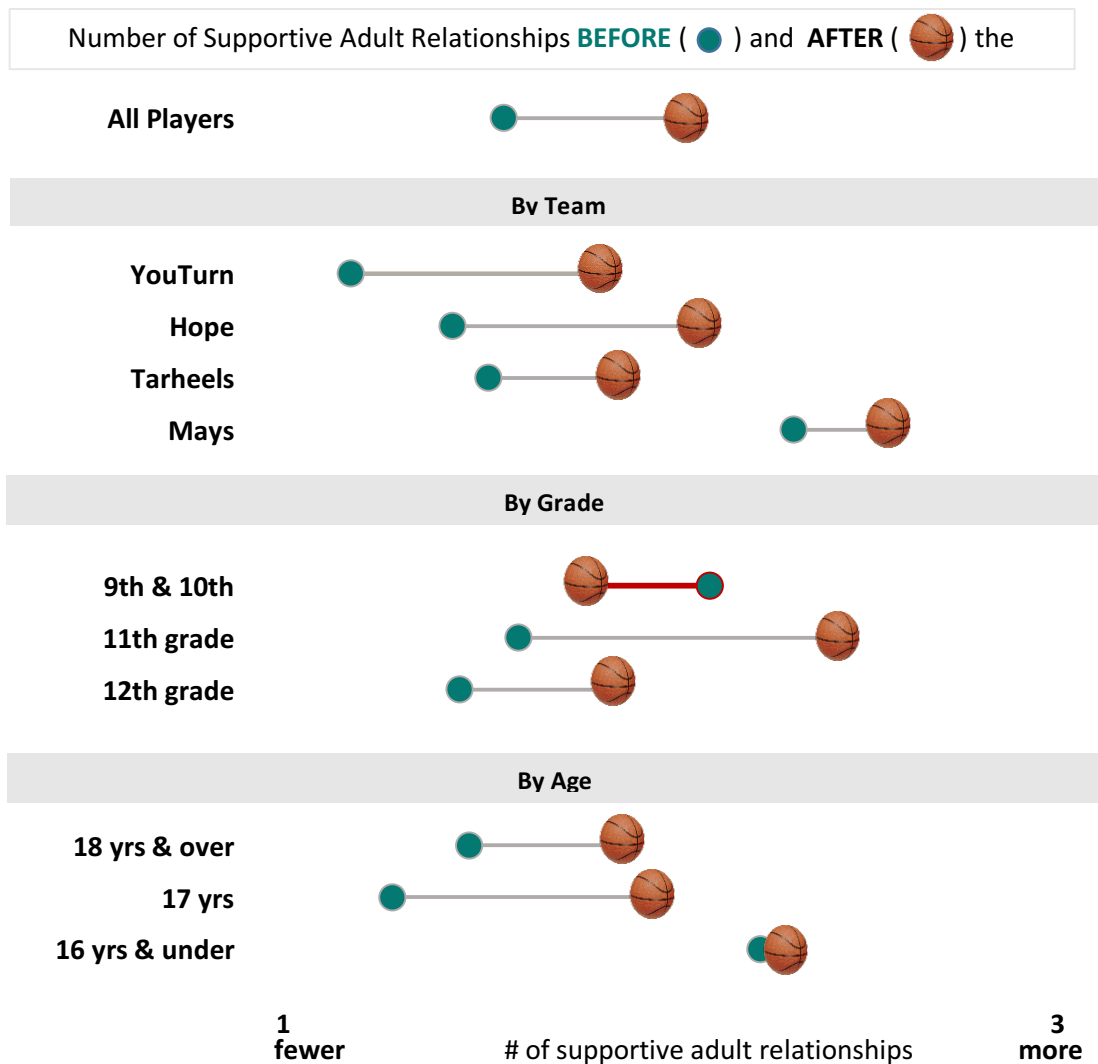
**Outcome 1: Increase Positive Relationships**

Change in positive relationships was measured using a subsection of the URCAP Youth Survey Interpersonal Support Subscale (Connell, Baldwin Grossman, & Resch, 1995) which asks

respondents to indicate the number of supportive adults they have met through Jr VBA that display nine dimensions of support. An increase in scores indicates the respondents had more supportive adult relationships.

Overall, players increased in the number of supportive adult relationships from the beginning to end of the season (see Figure 5). Players increased from an average of 1.6 positive relationships before the season to 2.04 after the season (average increase of 0.44). While nearly all players improved on this outcome, players in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade did not.

**Figure 5. Most players gained supportive adult relationships during the season. However, 9th and 10th graders reported fewer after the season.**



Jr. VBA demonstrated a positive impact on the number of positive adult relationships of most players. Players who were 17 years old, were in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and/or played for YouTurn reported the most improvement. Players who were 18 years old and/or in 12<sup>th</sup> grade experienced only moderate change. Younger players, however, had a different experience: 16 year olds reported



Change in this measure varied by age, grade, and team. Players who reported the greatest improvement (greatest decrease in acceptance of violence) were on the Hope team (-4.19), 18 or 19 years old (-2.75), and in 12<sup>th</sup> grade (-1.33), in order of size of positive change.

On the other hand, other subcategories of players were more accepting of violence after the season. Players who reported a negative or undesirable change (increase in acceptance of violence) were 17 years old (+1.54), from YouTurn (+0.77) and Tar heels (+0.57), and were in 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grades (+0.43), in order of size of negative change.

### **Outcome 3: Improve attitudes and beliefs about gang involvement.**

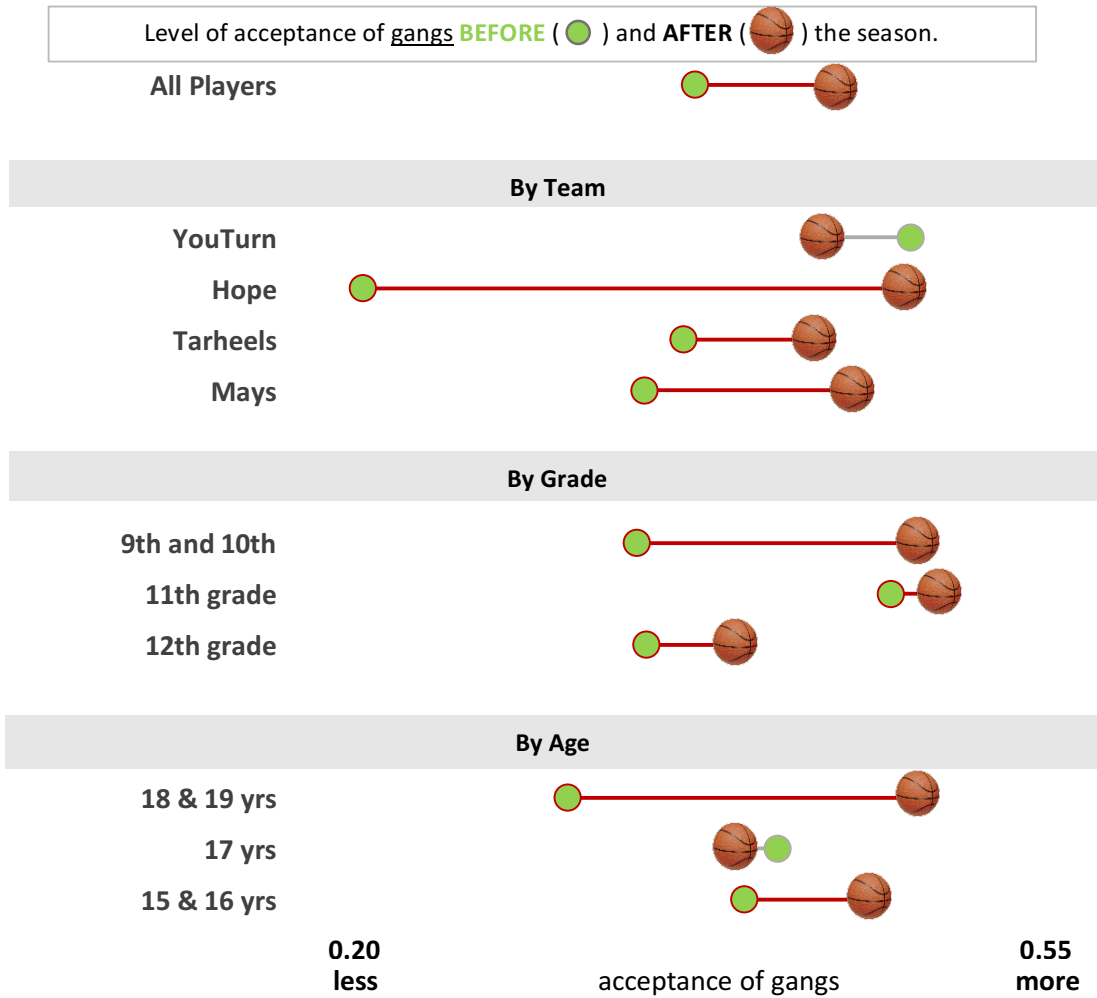
Change in attitudes and beliefs about gang involvement was measured using an altered version of the Attitude toward Gangs scale (Dahlberg et al., 2005). Respondents were asked to assess whether nine statements about gangs were true or not true for them. After reversing scores for items 5, 6, and 7, the totals were averaged, leaving a possible range of 0 to 1. Higher scores indicated a higher affinity for or acceptance of gangs. Therefore, a decrease in scores indicated a positive outcome.

Jr. VBA did not demonstrate a positive impact on players' acceptance of gangs. Overall, players were 7% more accepting of gangs at the end of the season than they were at the beginning (see Figure 7). Overall, players reported a moderate acceptance of gangs at the start of the season (0.38), experienced a slight increase in acceptance (+0.07), resulting in a still moderate acceptance at the close of the season (0.45).

While the increase was observed across demographic categories, only two subgroups improved on this measure, players from YouTurn (decreased in acceptance of gangs by 0.04) and players who were 17 years old (-0.02).

Players from all other subcategories increased in their acceptance of gangs. The teams that reported the largest negative change were Hope (increased acceptance by 0.26), and players who were 18 years and over (+0.16), and were in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade (+0.10), in order of size of change.

**Figure 7. On average, players were more accepting of gangs after the season.**  
 YouTurn players and 17 yo's were the only groups with decreased acceptance of gangs.

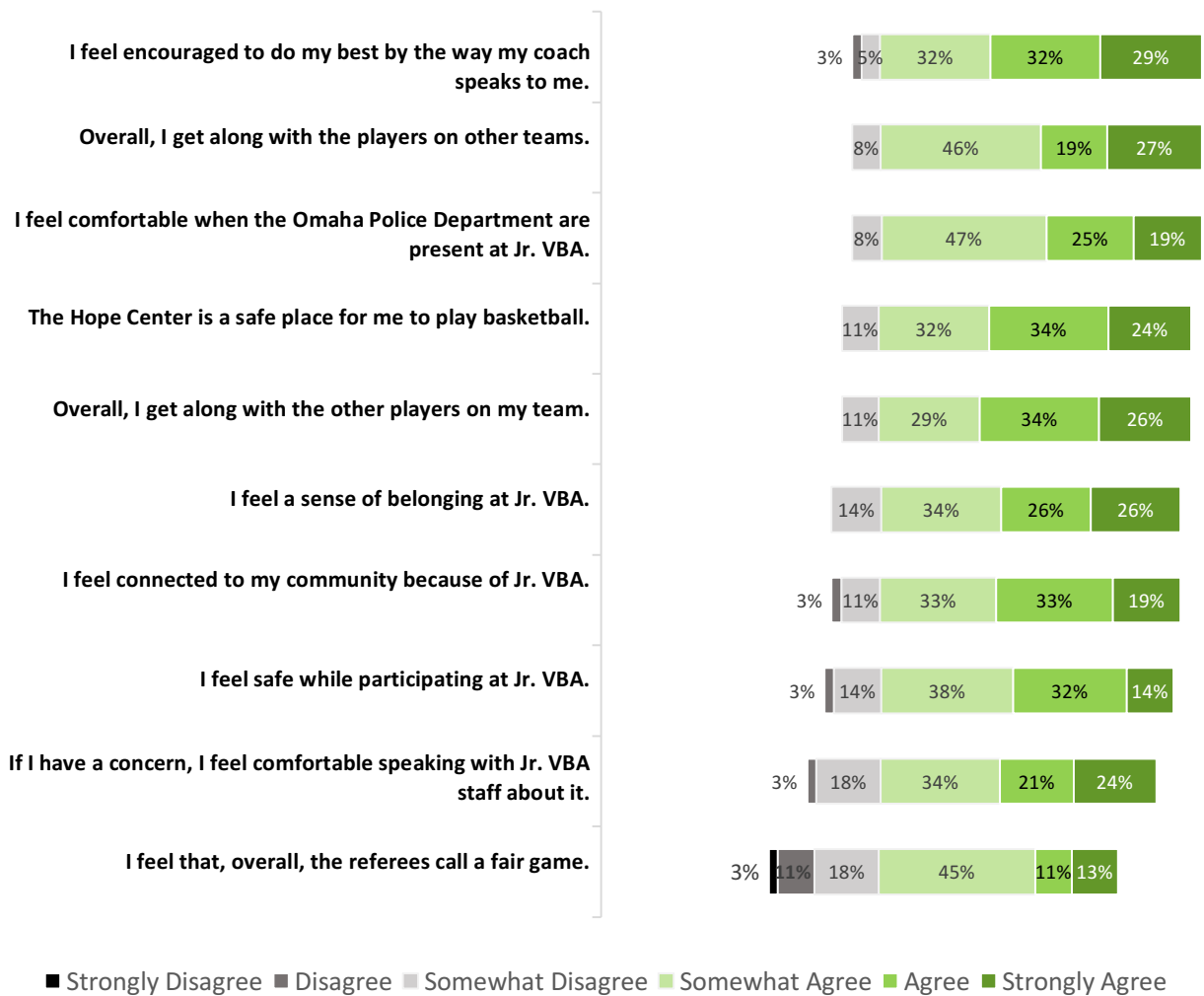




**Findings: Satisfaction Survey**

Players’ level of satisfaction was assessed through a survey administered at the end of the season consisting of scale item (6-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree) and open-ended questions. The questions assessed players’ satisfaction with safety/the environment, relationships, and overall experience with the program. Players reported a high degree of satisfaction across all questions; at least 75% of players reported some degree of satisfaction with all 11 scale-item questions (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Players were most satisfied with the encouragement they received from their coaches, and were least satisfied with the fairness of referees.**



Players reported the highest levels of satisfaction with:

- Encouragement felt from the way their coaches spoke to them (93% satisfied);
- Getting along with players on other teams (92% satisfied); and
- Comfortability when Omaha Police Department was present (91% satisfied).

Players reported the lowest levels of satisfaction with:

- Fairness of the referees in calling the game (32% dissatisfied);
- Comfortability speaking to Jr VBA staff if they had a concern (21% dissatisfied); and
- Feelings of safety while participating at Jr. VBA (17% dissatisfied).

### **Interactions and Relationships**

Players were generally very satisfied with the interpersonal interactions experienced at Jr. VBA. Among all items, they were most satisfied with the encouragement they received from their coaches (93%). They also reported they got along well with players on other teams (92%) and players on their own team (89%). However, some room for improvement presented in their interactions with Jr. VBA staff, as about 17% did not feel comfortable approaching Jr. VBA staff with a concern.

### **Environment and Safety**

Players had more varying degrees of satisfaction with the feelings of safety experienced at Jr. VBA. Players reported high levels of comfort with the presence of the Omaha Police Department (91% were agreed). Similarly, players generally felt the Hope Center is a safe place for them to play basketball (89% agreed). Despite these two elements, slightly fewer players felt safe while participating in Jr. VBA (84% agreed).

When asked through an open-ended question what would make Jr. VBA safe, nearly half of the players felt no changes were needed, though others offered some suggestions. Suggestions included having more staff, security, and/or police; keeping the kids engaged, and playing on a clean, wood floor.

*“More staff”*

*“Cops”*

*“More security”*

**-Jr. VBA players**

### **Overall Experience**

Players, overall, were very satisfied with their Jr. VBA experience, and 92% of the players would recommend Jr. VBA to a friend. The most dissatisfactory element of Jr. VBA was the referees; though levels of satisfaction were still high, almost a third of the players (32%) did not agree that the referees called fair game.

When asked what players liked the best about Jr. VBA, many players shared they appreciated getting to play basketball, having fun, being competitive, and the people they get to interact with, and a sense of community. For example, players stated:

*“The way the community gets together”*

*“Playing ball with all my friends”*

**-Jr. VBA players**

When asked what players would like to see changed in Jr. VBA next season, players primarily requested more opportunity to play. Players expressed they would like to have more games, have more teams play, and have a longer season. Some players shared they would like to have

different jerseys and to play on wood floors. Finally, several players requested that free food be provided. For example, players stated:

*“More games, more teams.”*

*“Free food.”*

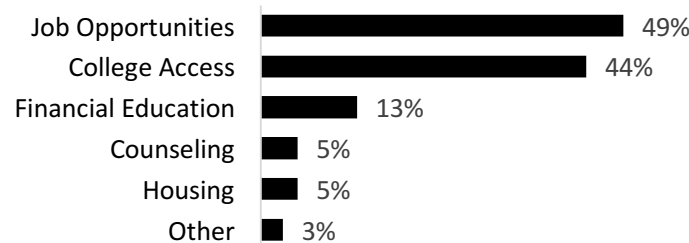
*“It’s nice, just better jerseys.”*

**-Jr. VBA players**

## Resources

Players were also asked to identify which type of community resources they would like to see available at the Jr. VBA games. Nearly half of all players shared they would like to see resources on job opportunities (49%) or college access (44%), followed next by financial education (13%).

**Almost half of the players would like resources on job opportunities.**



## Program Strengths

The strengths of program implementation are:

1. VBA facilitated players’ development of positive relationships.
2. VBA staff consistently enforced Hope Skate rules and VBA rules to help control the players and attendees.
3. VBA staff implemented highly effective safety measures such as security guards, metal detectors, and checking bags to maintain the positive environment.
4. VBA staff were very friendly, attentive, and accommodating to players’ and coaches’ needs.
5. Pre and post outcome evaluation and satisfaction surveys data collection methods were well organized.
6. Players enjoyed their experiences.

## Recommendations

Based on the program observations, focus group analyses, and outcome evaluation results, we make the following recommendations to strengthen implementation and improve outcomes:

1. Create posters of VBA goals and display in each gym so they are visible during league games to help players learn the goals. Also, mention the goals at the start of each game and at other appropriate times throughout the session.
2. Increase interactions within and between teams. Consider a team-building activity with all the teams at the end of the session. This will help to strengthen relationships between players on different teams.
3. Provide a brief training to coaches in an online asynchronous format, or at coaches' meetings prior to the session start date on how to change the beliefs and attitudes of players regarding gang involvement and conflict. The training can also assist with perpetuating positive male role models.
4. Infuse Jr. VBA activities with intentional interactions between adults and players to accomplish Jr. VBA outcomes:
  - Influence development of positive social skills such as managing conflict appropriately, especially with 17-year-old players.
  - Discourage acceptance of gangs with all players.
5. Enforce the player age limit by redefining the age requirements for players. The current guidelines for the age requirement is unclear.
6. Facilitate ongoing and additional interaction between coaches and players, particularly with players in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. Encourage coaches to engage with their players outside of the league. Consider providing a small stipend (when possible or necessary) to coaches to incentivize their outside engagement.
7. Build relationships between Omaha Police Department (OPD) and Jr. VBA:
  - a. Request OPD gang unit members attend the games in smaller numbers (in pairs) to minimize perceived intimidation.
  - b. Request OPD officers attend games in casual clothing, if possible.
  - c. Provide a brief training or guidelines to assist officers with successful community engagement without discomfort and tension from the players. For instance, guidelines could include interacting with the players and attendees during timeouts and halftime; introducing themselves to players, children, and attendees; and commending the young men on their basketball skills.
8. Increase visibility of community resources. Invite representatives of community organizations to each game and give them opportunity to share through announcements, posters, or exhibits. We recommend a minimum of three organizations represented at each game. Players were most interested in learning about resources for job opportunities and college access.

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# 2017-18 Evaluation

- ✓ Make the student survey shorter and user-friendly
- ✓ Continue to track attendance for all students by program in order to measure dosage, trends, and outcomes.
- ✓ **Continue to show our impact on NorthStar Students!**

# Evaluation Timeline

August

- Enrollment Form (Demographics)
- Permission to obtain school report cards
- Did student attend summer program?
- Enrollment program and attendance (Basketball only; full program) - CitySpan

September

- Parent Survey 1 (With jersey pick up)
- Student Survey 1 (by Oct. 30)

October

- LGL Reading Level & Math Level Assessment (all students)
- Quarter 1 Report Cards

Nov/Dec

- Quarter 2 / Semester Report Cards
- First semester attendance and program enrollment review

# Evaluation Process

Jan/Feb

- Second semester program enrollment
- LGL assessment for new attendees; LGL follow up if needed
- Optional: Student Survey 2 (By Feb. 15)

March /  
April

- Student Survey 2/3 (by April 30)
- Quarter 3 Report Cards
- Review second semester attendance and program enrollment
- ACT

May

- Quarter 4 Report Cards
- Parent Survey 2 (with jersey turn-in)
- Summer camp enrollment (track by student, program)
- Educator Survey



# Student Checklist

## Enrollment Information (Date / Term)

- Name
- Student ID Number
- School
- Grade
- Age
- Programs Enrolled:
  - Basketball (Yes / No, Date Started \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Outward Bound (Yes / No, Date Started \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Full (Yes / No, Date Started \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Homework (Yes / No, Date Started \_\_\_\_\_)
- Permission for grade cards
- Summer enrollment: Yes / No

## Assessment Information

### Academic:

- LGL Reading Level: Above / On / Below
  - Follow up LGL: Yes / No
- LGL Math Assessment: Above / On / Below
  - Follow up LGL: Yes / No
- Grade Card
  - Quarter 1
  - Quarter 2
  - Quarter 3
  - Quarter 4
- ACT

### Student Satisfaction & Character & Behavior:

- Student Survey 1: Date completed
- Student Survey 2: Date completed
- Student Survey 3: Date completed

### Parent Satisfaction:

- Parent Survey 1: Date Completed
- Parent Survey 2: Date Completed

Young men of color residing in low-income households in North Omaha share common, documented risk factors for disengagement from school, reduced employability, and diminished life expectancy. These students are impacted by barriers to life-long self-sufficiency:

### Entrenched in generational poverty –

- Males from North Omaha are **2x** as likely to be unemployed than their peers from Greater Omaha.
- An adult male from this neighborhood without a high school diploma is more likely to be found consigned within the walls of a prison than thriving in the labor force.

### Acute risk for educational failure –

- **Less than 50%** of North Omaha's male students attain a high school diploma on-time, representing the second-lowest rate for this subgroup nationally.
- School-aged boys from this neighborhood are more likely to have repeated one or more grade levels, or enter middle school performing below grade-level in math and reading.

### Lack of school engagement and connectivity –

- Male students from North Omaha are **4x** more likely to be expelled or suspended than their white counterparts.
- These young men are nearly three times less likely to be enrolled in school-based gifted or talented programs.

### High rates of lifetime exposure to chronic, traumatic stress –

- North Omaha's male youth are disproportionately likely to be victims or perpetrators of gang-related violent crime.
- These young men are more likely to experience low male guardian involvement.

**NorthStar makes a difference.**





## Short Term Goals

NorthStar enhances academic performance.

NorthStar prevents summer learning loss.

NorthStar promotes high dosage program participation.

NorthStar supports school engagement.

Students not only enjoy the physical activity, **73%** also participate in robotics and computer class.



Students reported that if they weren't at NorthStar, they would play games, watch television, or use the internet.



Active students attend **64%** of scheduled days.



**64%** of students also participate in extracurricular school activities.



**Impact:** Data demonstrate growth in grade-level literacy and mathematics competencies, improved school attendance and engagement, and increased performance in grades and standardized tests. Scalable impact underpinned by robust program evaluation.

**Influence:** NorthStar is a trusted name in the community. Constituents and donors understand the unique value of the NorthStar model, share in its successes, and perceive their indispensable role in making program achievements a reality.

**Leverage:** High touch engagement of students, schools, and families. Tutoring in schools. Targeted outreach through athletics. Summer programming focused on reinforcing classroom learning and core academic proficiency.

## We Build Educational Success by:

- Utilizing uniform math/reading measures to understand student aptitude
- Providing intensive one-on-one tutoring to address unique student needs
- Nurturing socio-emotional learning, health and wellness
- Providing linkages to specialized services to ensure holistic student growth

## We Partner with Schools by:

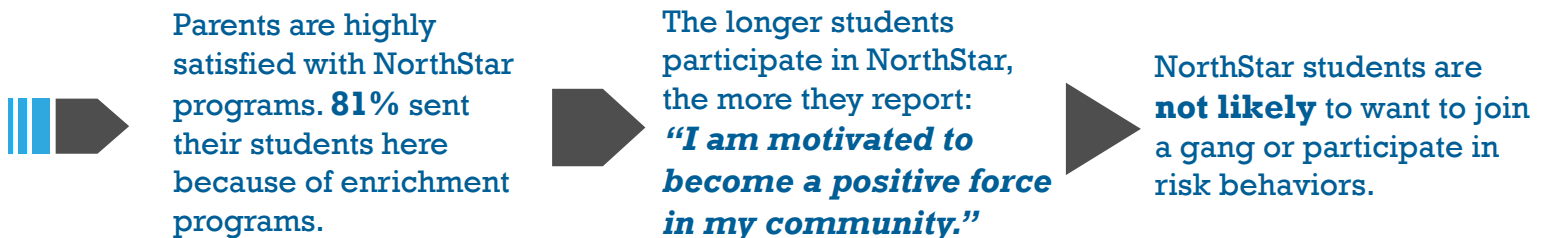
- Routinely communicating with teachers, administrators at schools served
- Offering tutoring in schools-served to accelerate learning of at-risk students.
- NorthStar offers diverse, academically enriching programming.

## We Engage Our Staff by:

- Building front-line staff that are highly experienced educators, supported by a trained volunteer base.
- Maintaining a 1:10 staff/student ratio to reinforce individualized learning and student engagement.
- Employing research-tested behavioral management and cultural competency strategy.
- Providing continual training and development opportunities for front-line educators to support staff retention.

## We Collaborate with Families by:

- Forging long-term and student-centered supports through high touch collaboration with families.
- Providing guidance to assist families in their advocacy and involvement with their son's development, in and out of the classroom.



NorthStar increases academic achievement.

NorthStar develops leadership & service.

NorthStar prepares students for 2 or 4 year college.

NorthStar readies students for the workforce.

## Long Term Outcomes

**Our goals:**

**For Students:** NorthStar students successfully complete 9th grade.

**For Growth:** As adults, NorthStar students form a vanguard of employed, educated contributors to the community.

**For Communities:** Schools, families and students validate the value-proposition of the NorthStar model, and identify NorthStar as an after-school program of choice for boys in North Omaha.

**For Infrastructure:** By utilizing rigorous evaluation of implementation and outcomes, building dynamic infrastructure for continuous quality improvement, and deploying sustainable and growth-oriented business practices, NorthStar advances promising and replicable models for transforming life outcomes of young men in need.

*“My son’s grades have improved and he’s doing his homework now.”*

*“My son comes home happy daily. He is more calm and focused.”*

# WE ARE

## #WeAreNorthStar





**Grant # 16-VP-5004**

**Urban Youth B.O.L.T. (Building Our Leaders Today)**

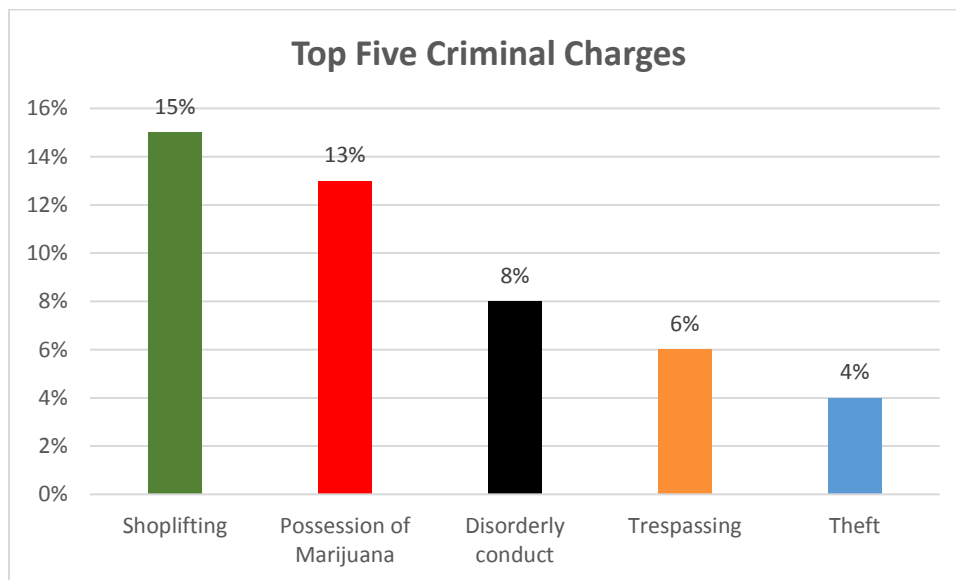
**Program Evaluation**

The Center for Holistic Development, Inc. worked in collaboration with the external evaluator.

**Program Description**

The Urban Youth BOLT program is a culturally specific, developmentally appropriate, 10-week program designed to increase the positive attitudes of African Americans via an affirmative reinforcement of the identity of the participants. The program works to address the unique needs of African American youth and to combat negative statistics surrounding social development and academic achievement. The program draws upon the eight Kwanzaa principles to improve cultural identity, enhance social development, and academic achievement. The youth who participate in the program receive the necessary tools for building internal assets that promote social and emotional competence.

The average age of program participants was 14.5 years old. All program participants were African American and most were referred to the program due to a shoplifting criminal charge (15%). It should be noted almost half (43%) of participants’ criminal charges were missing.



**Evaluation Findings**

The evaluation findings presented in this report are the outcome results from the African American Adolescent Respect Scale (AAARS), the evaluation tool used to measure respect in the youth who participated in the program. The principle of ‘respect’ was selected as a measure of program success because it was deemed a principle that was inherently evident in the eight Kwanzaa principles. In addition, results from previous implementations of the program that youth mostly struggled with this concept when interacting with their peers, parents, and other authoritative figures.

The AAARS is a 20-item scale that measures four domains: 1) family, 2) peer group, 3) society – institutions, and 4) society – culture (Leary, 2001). The four domains are defined as:

*Family:* to address the family sphere of influence in terms of esteem as it relates to membership within the family.

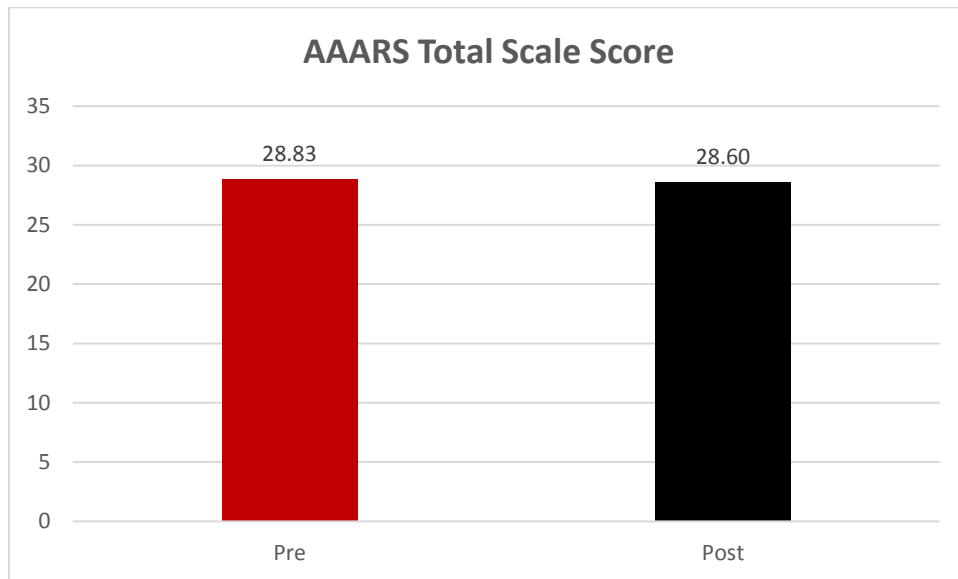
*Peer group:* the lack of perceived respect resulting in readiness to act aggressively towards peers in an effort to control their potential disrespectful behavior.

*Institution:* the degree to which the adolescent felt respected when integrating with institutions such as businesses and public and private agencies or organizations.

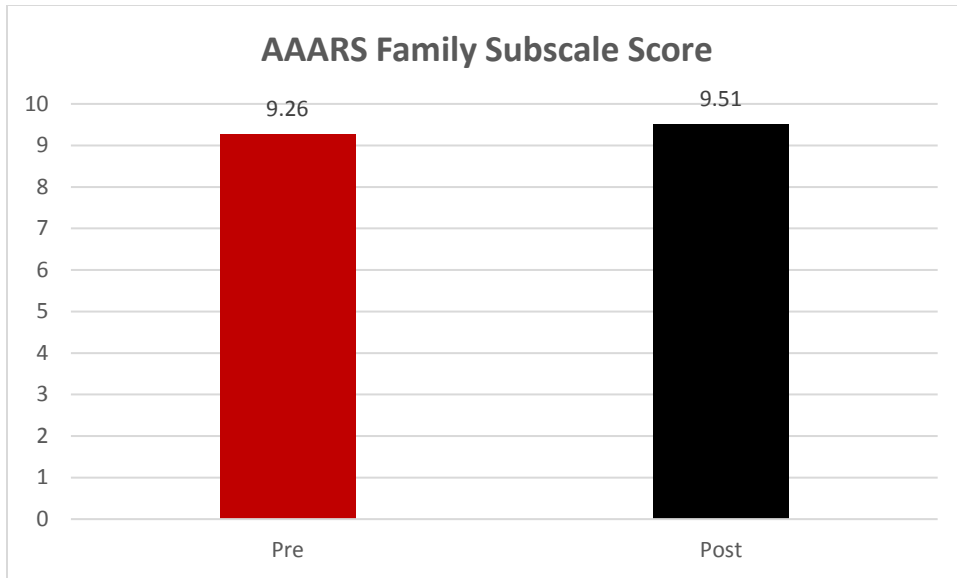
*Culture:* the degree to which the adolescent felt respected as an African American within the general culture.

The AAARS was administered at the beginning and end of the 10-week Urban Youth B.O.L.T. program. Below are the participant demographics and results from the AAARS. It should be noted the results in this report only reflect the males who participated in the Urban Youth B.O.L.T. program.

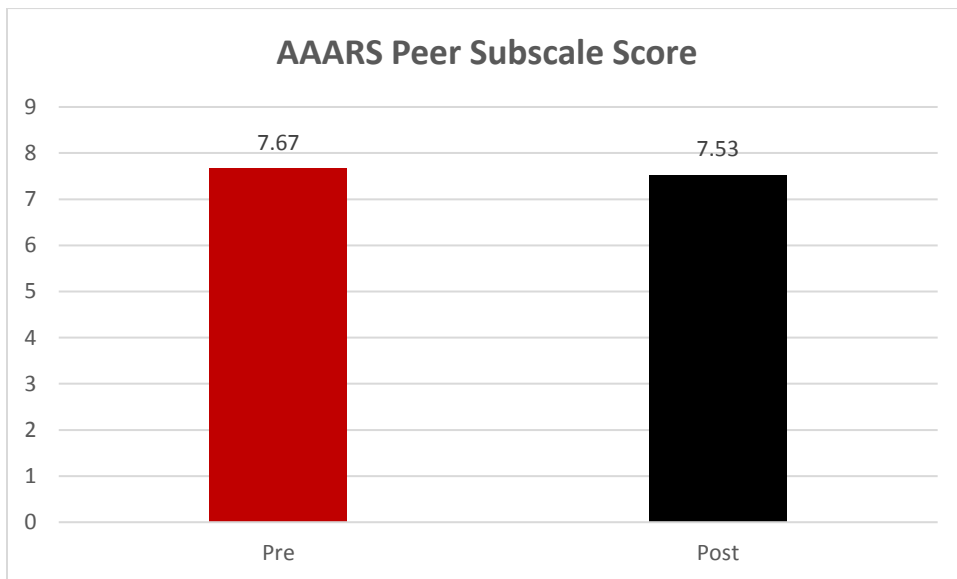
The four domains were evaluated at pre- and post-program. The AAARS is scored from zero to 60 with higher scores indicating more prosocial attitudes toward respect and less use of violence. The overall AAARS score slightly decreased from pre-survey (28.83) to post-survey (28.60). Essentially, the overall respect of African American youth in the program did not significantly change from beginning to the end of the program. In fact, their attitudes about respect slightly decreased.



For the family subscale, respect for the family increased from pre-survey (9.26) to post-survey (9.51). This implies that program participants had a more positive attitude about esteem regarding their family roles, which ultimately improved their respect for their family.

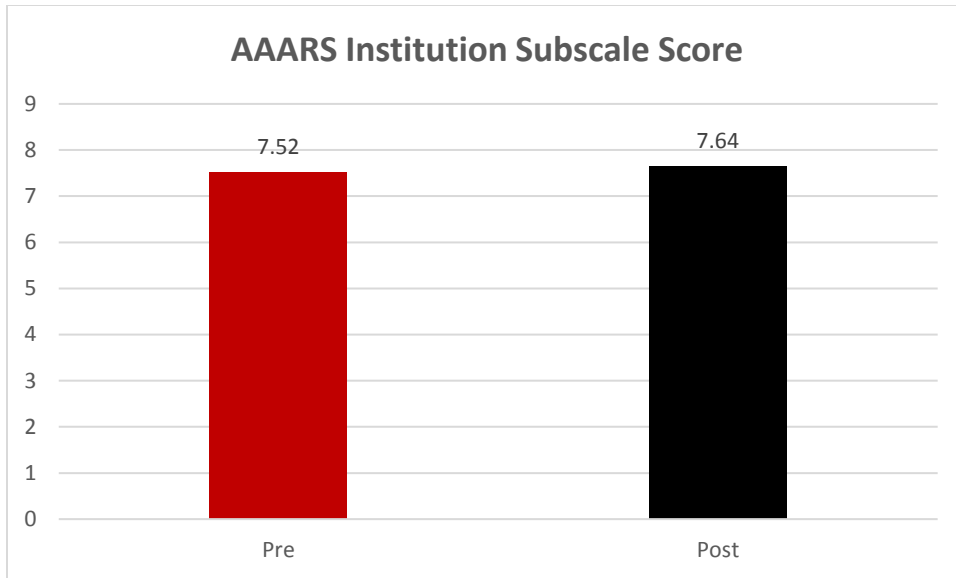


The peer subscale slightly decreased from pre-survey (7.67) to post-survey (7.53). These results indicate that, by the end of the program, participants increasingly believed they needed to act aggressively towards peers in an effort to control their potential disrespectful behavior. Ultimately, program participants continued using aggressive behaviors towards their peers to receive respect.

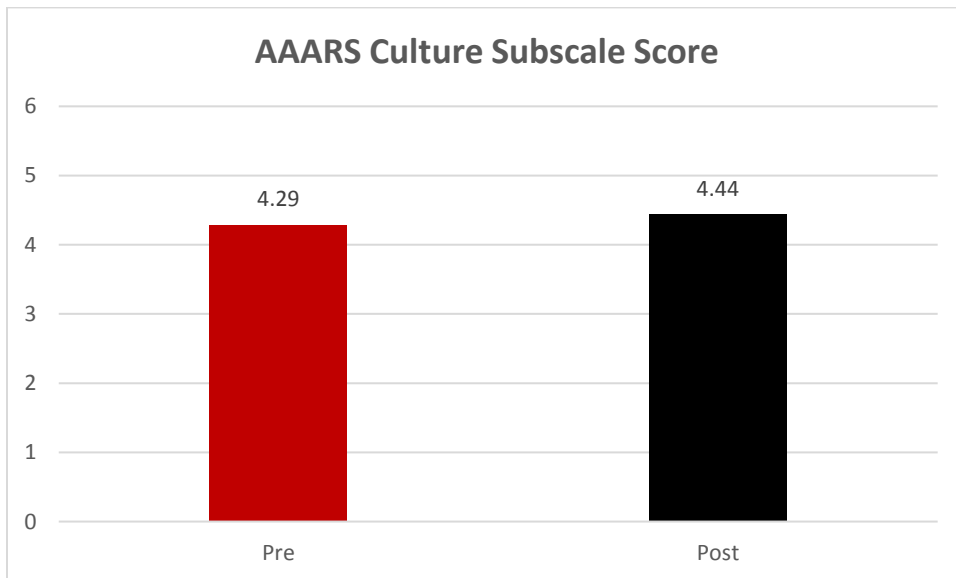


The institution subscale slightly increased from pre-survey (7.52) to post-survey (7.64). These results indicate that, by the end of the program, participants had an increase in positive attitude regarding respect when integrating with institutions (e.g., businesses, public and private agencies).





The culture subscale slightly increased from pre-survey (4.29) to post-survey (4.44). This indicates that program participants has a more positive attitude regarding the respect they receive as an African American.



**Conclusions**

Overall, the AAARS showed program participants had a more positive attitude about receiving (and giving) respect to family, from institutions, and as an African American. Program participants did not have a more positive attitude about receiving respect from their peers and believed they needed to exert aggressive behavior to gain respect from their peers.

The program staff were very passionate about delivering the program and helping the program participants improve in behavior and thought processes. The program facilitators were organized and used positive talk to communicate with the participants. They also showed understanding, compassion,

and respect for the participants. The participants were equally receptive to the program facilitators and engaged in the program from week to week.

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations below are based upon the evaluation findings and a limited consultation with an independent evaluator:

1. Develop a logic model to help track the programmatic changes. A logic model is a living document that helps funders and community members unfamiliar with the program understand the purpose, implementation, and outcomes of the program. The program has gained interest and need in the community leading to program growth. This growth will be documented over time with the development of the logic model. In addition, it will provide high fidelity to program implementation.
2. Complete a process evaluation to validate the fidelity of program implementation and program participants' satisfaction with the program. This program evaluation focused on the outcome evaluation.
3. Select a different outcome measurement tool(s) that measure the goals and objectives of the program and is inclusive of all program participants. The AAARS was useful in the initial implementations of the program. The program has expanded its target population to include young girls and the AAARS was not validated to be administered with females.
4. Match the pre- and post-surveys to determine individual and group differences in program participants. The surveys that were administered were missing data, or participants completed the pre-survey but did not complete the post-survey and vice versa.