



Memorandum

TO: ALL CHILDREN ACHIEVE
COMMITTEE

FROM: Sara L. Hensley

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: 11-23-05

Approved

Date

SUBJECT: FOUR YEAR REPORT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND GAPS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BLUEPRINT FOR BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

PURPOSE

This report will provide a summary of the accomplishments and gaps of the *Blueprint for Bridging the Digital Divide*, the Youth Services Master Plan adopted by City Council in 2001.

BACKGROUND

The City originally organized its existing youth services under the 1995 Youth Services Master Plan (YSMP). The development of the YSMP coincided with the City's aggressive efforts to address the issues and impacts of gangs and gang violence on our youth and neighborhoods. From 1985 to 1991, the juvenile violence crime rate in Santa Clara County increased by over 300%. During this same period, the County's violent crime rate increased by over four times the national rate. Therefore, the 1995 YSMP was designed primarily using an "at-risk" model to address these trends. "At-risk" is a term used to identify children or adolescents that exhibit or may be in danger of exhibiting problem behaviors. As a method of service delivery, "at-risk" focuses on prevention, intervention and suppression strategies to reduce problem behaviors.

In 2001 Mayor Ron Gonzales proposed that the San José Youth Commission and City partners create a new citywide youth services master plan that works to develop the skills needed by San José youth to be successful in Silicon Valley. The new Youth Services Master Plan, Blueprint for Bridging the Digital Divide (Blueprint), encompassed a new pioneering approach of incorporating a broad continuum of individual, family and community service strategies that center on strengthening the individual and families. As such, the Blueprint uses the developmental theory model that focuses primarily on intentionally creating developmental changes in attitudes and behaviors by building the assets needed for youth to thrive. This concept allows focusing on all children, not only those deemed at-risk.

ANALYSIS

Over the past four years the Blueprint's framework has been accepted as a theoretically-sound and comprehensive approach for servicing youth and is closely aligned with other community wide initiatives such as the County's Juvenile Detention Reform efforts, First 5 Santa Clara County, the United Way's Community Impact programs, and the YMCA's Project Cornerstone (our County's local Developmental Asset initiative). The Blueprint's efforts alongside partners such as schools, law enforcement, community-based agencies, and private industry have all contributed toward making our community a safe place for children to grow up.

Over the past few years the following community indicators have shown we are on the right track:

- San José schools have improved their graduation rate by 4% since 2001, and a total of 10% since 1998.
- San José students completing the minimum requirements to attend University of California and the California State University systems have grown by 6% since 2001, and a total of 16% since 1998.
- Since 1998, the six-year total average Academic Performance Index (API) growth for all San José schools is 16%.
- Over the last two years, 77% of San José schools showed improvements in their API scores.
- The rate of violent juvenile crime has declined by 26% since 2001, and a total of 53% since 1994.
- Juvenile Hall admits have decreased by 23% since 2001.
- Referrals to the California Youth Authority have decreased by 77% since 1996.

These headline results also reflect the positive impact shown through the most recent Project Cornerstone Survey administered to over 14,000 4th – 12th graders at 95 schools across Santa Clara County. Their 2005 survey shows that 27 of the 41 developmental assets of children have increased since 2000. Project Cornerstone attributes this positive change to organizations such as the City of San José who has utilized the Blueprint to intentionally build systems that increase the developmental assets for children participating in our programs.

These efforts and the Blueprint document itself, were the reasons why the City of San José was recently named one of the "Best 100 Communities for Young People" by America's Promise, the national initiative created by Colin Powell. Not only was San José selected amongst 1,200 other communities that applied, it was one of only twenty-four communities selected to present at the 100 Best Communities Conference in Washington D.C. on November 2, 2005. San José was specifically asked to present on its experience in developing and implementing the Blueprint.

Throughout the City, key departments have continued to integrate the Blueprint's development framework into the delivery of many of their programs. Implementation has primarily been through the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, the Library, and the Office of Economic Development – Workforce Investment Network's Youth program.

Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS)

Over the past four years PRNS has been the lead in implementing the strategies of the Blueprint. The department has not only developed and modeled developmental programming, but has changed systems, expectations and received national recognition.

San José After School (SJAS)

The San José After School program has been a key implementation arm of the Blueprint by affecting the Blueprint's Strategic goal areas of "Safe Schools and Safe Neighborhoods," and "Education and Learning Opportunities." As such, San José After School continues to develop as a leading model for after school programming in the state. Over the past year the program has implemented the Level I, II, and III structure to better tailor programs based on individual school needs. All Level II and III staff have been trained in the Developmental Asset theories in order for programmatic staff to utilize the Blueprint strategies into their day to day programming. Currently all staff develop their monthly programs around standardized targeted assets. To further measure the success of this system, San José After School programs also target asset growth as one of their programmatic outcomes. In 2004 – 2005, 70% of children participating in the SJAS programs increased in their ability to communicate with adults.

PRNS Grants Unit

The Blueprint emphasized the need for all future funding of City contracted services allocated for youth and families to be aligned with the Blueprint goals. The PRNS grants unit has integrated these theories into their application process, which in turn encourage non-profit service providers to further the goals of the Blueprint. The Healthy Neighborhood Venture Fund's (HNVF) Education and Health category currently requires applicants to demonstrate their alignment to the Blueprint while the Community Development Block Grant's (CDBG) Contractual Community Services Request for Proposals requires alignment to any adopted Master Plan (such as the Blueprint).

HNVF also requires an applicant's program to address at least 1 of the 41 Developmental Assets, and has formally adopted the Blueprint's long-term outcomes as their own (children will enter kindergarten ready to succeed; elementary/middle school children will be educationally at or above grade level; and teenagers will have a sense of purpose with a plan for higher education or career preparation). Each contracted agency develops measurable intermediate goals targeting asset growth that is tracked and reported to staff twice a year.

The San José BEST Program has also incorporated the developmental framework in agencies' contracted goals and performance measures. Current grantees are evaluated on the amount of change they have produced in a young person's resiliency assets. The latest Cycle XIV report shows that 73.2% of youth participants had a positive growth in their Asset Development scores.

The Blueprint also piloted the "School Community Innovation and Cooperation Program" for three different strategies of school-based programs which focus on increasing the academic success of elementary school youth. Initial reviews have shown that all three pilot programs improved the reading level of the targeted students, by 1½ - 2 grade levels. A final evaluation for these programs is currently in progress.

Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF)

For the fourth consecutive year, the Kansas-based research and publishing company Morgan Quitno anointed San José, California the "Safest big city in the Nation." Much of this success is attributed to the work of the MGPTF, a city/community collaborative dedicated to supporting the Blueprints' Strategic Goal areas of "Parent and Family Services" and "Safe School and Neighborhoods." As an organization committed to continuous improvement, the MGPTF has further supported the Blueprint by adopting one of their Strategic Goals to "develop and implement an "asset-based" service delivery system aimed at connecting, coordinating, and leveraging intervention resources." The MGPTF strategic plan has targeted calendar year 2006 to formalize this effort in partnership with Project Cornerstone.

San José Public Library Department

The San José Public Library system has been instrumental in furthering the goals of the Blueprint by supporting Strategic Outcome Goal Areas "Parent and Family Services," "Early Childhood Development," and "Education and Learning Opportunities." As such, the Library system has incorporated developmental assets at all libraries through training and media displays, and continues their efforts in literacy, computer accessibility, and Smart Start centers. Recently the Library Department had staff from Project Cornerstone present at an all-staff library training session to give an overview of the Developmental Assets. Branch and unit managers are currently in the process of developing action plans showing how they and their staff plan to incorporate the assets into their programming and services for youth.

San José Public Libraries also have youth advisors and volunteers organized into groups under its "Teens Reach" umbrella. This is an avenue for young adults to build leadership, teamwork and community service skills in San José's neighborhoods. One inter-generational part of their volunteer activities is the annual Summer Reading Celebration, where they have an opportunity to represent the library and interact with hundreds of participants of all ages. The library uses Teens Reach to solicit both formal and informal suggestions and feedback on library collections, programs and services that focus on their age group. The Library's efforts were recognized when Project Cornerstone named Martin Luther King librarian Andrea Schacter as a 2005 Asset Champion award recipient for her work coordinating the Library's Teens Reach program.

Some of the accomplishments from the Library are:

- A total of 2,930 new childcare/Smart Start spaces have been created since 2002 (goal was set at 2,100 spaces by 2006).
- Partnered with IBM to provide Young Explorer computers at each Smart Start San José Center program.
- Received the Senator Barbara Boxer's Excellence in Education Award in 2002.
- The City of San José presented "How Cities Can Organize and Launch a Citywide Early Care and Education Initiative" at the National League of Cities Conference on Early Care and Education held in Washington D.C. in June 2003.
- Since FY 2001-2002, Families For Literacy programs have served a total of 1,292 children and 583 families.
- Increased the numbers of computers with Internet access offered specifically for the use of children or teens from 88 to 121 since 2001.

- San José Public Library has received ongoing funding from the California State Library to implement Live Homework Help. This program allows students from 4th grade through 2nd year college to access real-time on-line tutoring services from 1pm to 10pm every day. Between September 1st and mid-October, 2005 the service was used by approximately 2,500 people.

Office of Economic Development

In FY 2002-2003 the management of the Workforce Investment Act Youth Programs transitioned from PRNS to the Office of Economic Development who continue to implement the goals of the Blueprint by focusing on supporting the Strategic Goal area “Workforce Development” and the final stage of youth development, self-sufficiency. The Silicon Valley Workforce Investment Network’s Youth Program serves very challenged youth. Over 69% of the youth served have basic-skills deficiencies (below the 9th grade level in math/reading), and 81% have three or more barriers to obtaining employment. In FY 2004-2005, the Silicon Valley Workforce Investment Network has exceeded 100% performance in all seven of their State of California success measures for youth in their programs. Over the past five years, this network partnership has provided 1,800 youth with summer employment from over 70 employers, and 800 youth receiving unsubsidized jobs. The network has now embarked on further supporting the Blueprint’s philosophies by incorporating developmental assets within their service contracts.

GAPS AND CHALLENGES

Overall, the utilization and focus on the Blueprint has shown success in improving the quality of life for the families and children of San José. However, with any strategic effort there are always challenges to address and the ability to continuously improve.

One of the challenges continues to be moving the Blueprint strategies outside of PRNS to all youth serving programs/departments citywide. While the majority of services fall under PRNS, the Blueprint as a youth serving Master Plan, was developed to impact services across the City, and across departments. The effort to further establish the Blueprint as a Citywide strategic plan was supported by growth in inter-departmental City Service Area (CSA) work, and through programmatic re-organizations. By moving the Smart Start and WIA youth programs out of PRNS and into the Library and OED respectively, a greater connection across departments was established. Most recently a sub-committee within the Neighborhood Services CSA has been established to continue focusing on implementation of the Blueprint and youth strategies.

Another significant gap was identified by Project Cornerstone’s 2005 student survey. While the community as a whole has shown that we are doing a better job in helping our children thrive, we still have more work to do. The national Developmental Asset research shows that children need a minimum of 31 of the 41 assets to thrive. In Santa Clara County, only 38% of our 4th – 6th graders, and only 8% of our middle and high school youth are in this “thriving zone.” While this shows we need to increase our efforts across the board, we are significantly challenged in our efforts toward middle and high school youth. The average number of assets for 4th – 6th graders is 26.8, while the average number of assets for our middle and high school students drops to only 18.8.

Another challenge is our area's continued economic decline. While the majority of youth serving programs have been maintained, many staffing positions associated with the delivery of services have been reduced or frozen. In order to meet this challenge in a reduced resources environment, the City should focus its efforts on creating programmatic changes that continue supporting the Blueprint philosophy. Intentionally targeting asset development through internal program implementation will be the key to maintain long-term youth success. An example of this would be to continue rolling out the developmental philosophy to staff through the PRNS' Hub service delivery model, and in particular at its teen centers.

CONCLUSION

The Blueprint has served as a catalyst for the City of San José to intentionally focus on a proven model of developing and growing the assets of all our children. In developing and operating these programs, it has become clear that the Blueprint's developmental framework has allowed various City departments to be more intentional about operating programs that support Developmental Assets and thus creating greater community-wide results. This effort should continue without alteration to the core of the Blueprint, and allow further City-wide implementation.

COST IMPLICATIONS

There are no general fund cost implications associated with this memo.

COORDINATION

This report was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

SARA L. HENSLEY
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and Neighborhood Services

Attachment: Blueprint for Bridging the Digital Divide – Youth Services Master Plan Strategic Goal Areas

