

## 2. School-Community Partnerships

- a. *Alliance School Initiative*: This is a community-based constituency in Texas aimed at working to strengthen schools by restructuring relationships among school and community stakeholders. Partners include the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the Texas Interfaith Education Fund, the Texas Education Agency, school districts, school staff, parents, and community leaders. School-community teams have developed neighborhood efforts to counter gang violence and ease racial tensions; introduced tutorial and scholarship opportunities; developed after-school and extended-day programs; and made changes in the curriculum, scheduling, and assessment methods.

*For more information, see:*

Melaville, A. & Blank, M. (1998). *Learning together: The Developing Field of School-Community Initiatives*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership & National Center for Community Education.

- b. *Avance*: This community-based early childhood program simultaneously focuses on two generations in an effort to motivate young children from low-income families to attend school. It began in San Antonio in 1973 and spread to over 50 sites. "Through weekly home visits, parenting workshops, and family support centers with on-site nurseries and top-notch early childhood programs, parents who have felt overwhelmed, depressed, and powerless gain control of their lives and radically change their own and their children's prospects." The program strives to help parents complete their informal education, improve their English, and sometimes control their anger. It also helps train and place parents in jobs. Reports indicate that it not only is useful for passing literacy from parent to child, but also helps reduce child abuse, mental health problems, and juvenile crime. In a population that had dropout rates of 70, 80, and 90%, long-term follow-up studies indicate that 90% of participating children graduate from high school and half go on to college.

*For more information, see:*

Shames, S. (1997). *Pursuing the dream: What helps children and their families succeed*. Chicago: Coalition.

- c. *Be A Star*: This community-based after school program began in 1992 in an area of St. Louis where gang activity, child abuse and neglect were high, large numbers of families received AFDC, and the high school dropout was 52%. Evaluations of the 1994-95 program year indicate that compared to controls, those children (5 to 12-years old) who participated showed higher levels of family bonding, prosocial behavior, self-concept, self-control, decision-making, emotional awareness, assertiveness, confidence, cooperation, negative attitudes about drugs and alcohol, self-efficacy, African-American culture, and school bonding. (All effects were measured by the Revised Individual Protective Factors Index - RPIFI).

*For more information, see:*

Davis, N. (1999). *Resilience: Status of the research and research-based programs*. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration Center for Mental Health Services Division of Program Development, Special Populations & Projects Special Programs Development Branch. Phone: 301/443-2844.

- d. *The Jackson School*: This is a community-based, temporary placement behavior-modification alternative school serving 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades (ages 10-15 years). The school is designed to serve students whose disruptive behavior problems prevent them from functioning successfully in a regular classroom. As part of a larger state-wide evaluation of alternative schools, a case study was done including site visits, school tours, classroom observations, and interviews. Information was gathered from teachers, students, administrators, counselors, parents, and community members. Student and teacher perspectives of effectiveness were generally satisfactory. The site was seen as ensuring small classes, maintaining students' individual attention, supporting families in times of crisis, and helping students learn to negotiate their world by viewing them as part of a larger socio-economic system.

*For more information, see:*

Bauman, A. (1998). Finding experts in unexpected places: Learning from those who have failed. *High School Journal*, 81 (4), 258-267.

- e. *Merritt Elementary Extended School*: This school-based project was established to create a foundation for educational progress and student success. It is based on adult collaboration and on a nurturing and developmentally-oriented approach to student learning. The evolution of Merritt into a community of caring and involved people is believed to have enabled it to maximize the potential of both its students and staff. The school adopts the approach of developing the whole child as well as the stakeholders.

*For more information, see:*

Woodruff, D., Shannon, N. & Efimba, M. (1998). Collaborating for success: Merritt elementary extended school. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, (1), 11-22.

- f. *Beacon Schools (N.Y.)*: These schools exemplify the move toward full-service schools and community-building. They target neighborhoods in which the first step in community building is to transform schools into community centers available to adults 365 days of the year. The program has expanded to 37 sites in New York, and initiatives are underway pursuing similar models in Chicago, Little Rock, Oakland, and San Francisco. Evaluative data are just beginning to emerge. Schorr (1997) notes that at one site, P.S. 194, "Academic performance at the school has improved dramatically, rising from 580th out of 620 city elementary schools in reading achievement in 1991 to 319th three years later. Attendance also improved, and police report fewer felony arrests among neighborhood youth." These results are attributed to the combination of school reforms, the Beacon's project efforts, and other city-wide efforts to address problems.

*For more information, see:*

Cahill, M., Perry, J., Wright, M. & Rice, A. (1993). *A documentation report of the New York Beacons initiative*. New York: Youth Development Institute.

- g. *Young & Healthy*: This is a school-based health service program that is tightly linked to the community. It was developed by the Pasadena Unified School District (CA) and is comprised of volunteer doctors who are willing to provide services free of charge to uninsured children. During the first year, only 600 appointments were made. By the second year, 1200 appointments were made, and it was expanded to the entire school district. By its fifth year, there were 4800 appointments and over 400 doctors were on the referral list.

*For program information, contact:*

Pasadena Unified School District; Pasadena, CA.