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Abstract

The Wheaton Joint Unified School District (WJUSD) Elementary Counseling Program will serve 2,760 students in six district elementary (K-6) schools. The target schools were selected because they serve significant populations of students living in poverty (from 55% to 100%) and all are either Title I Program Improvement schools or are in jeopardy of being designated as Program Improvement schools in the coming year.

An Elementary Counseling Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from each school site (principals, teachers, parents), WJUSD counselors, and representatives from several community agencies analyzed the needs of our students and developed a program including overall schoolwide strategies (class meetings, conflict management programs, staff development, and counselor leadership activities), direct counselor services (individual and group counseling, parenting classes, etc.), and case management services. The project will add 5 full-time counselors to serve the students at our target sites – Boone, Doonsbury, Firebaugh, Gregornio, Prefontaine, and Whittle elementary schools, expanding the existing program that only partially serves four sites with 2 counselors.

Our objectives target improving student achievement of state content standards in English language arts and mathematics (all students and case managed students), decreasing the number of disciplinary referrals and suspensions at each target site (all students and case managed students), increasing student problem-solving and conflict management skills, and ensuring parent, student, and teacher satisfaction with the program.

The program is based on a body of research documenting the effectiveness of elementary school counseling on improving student achievement and positively influencing student behavior. The key elements of the project (conflict management, class meetings, case management services, etc.) are also supported by research cited in the application narrative. The theoretical basis of the project focuses on the importance of developing problem-solving skills for all students in a schoolwide preventive approach, and providing graduated levels of more intensive services for students with multiple identified needs for whom the schoolwide strategies are insufficient.

Narrative

1) NEED FOR PROJECT

A) Magnitude of the need for services to be provided.

The City of Wheaton, an agricultural community located 20 miles north of Stockton, California, is home to approximately 50,000 residents. In recent years, Wheaton has experienced some profound changes, including a dramatic increase in population (20% increase in the last 5 years) that have brought challenges more representative of a growing urban community than the more familiar challenges typical of rural communities. Higher rates of poverty, alcohol and drug use, and youth violence in the community, coupled with a changing population, including many with limited English proficiency and different cultural backgrounds and experiences, have strained the school and community services to address local needs.

Wheaton Demographic Data

Population: **50,614**

Families below poverty level:
1,135 (9.2%)

Individuals below poverty level:
5,787 (11.9%)

Incidences of major crime (homicide, rape, assault, burglary, auto theft, arson, robbery, and larceny/theft) in 2002: **1,831**

Overall, incidences of major crime increased from 2001 to 2002 – most notably auto theft (**up 32%**) and burglary (**up 22%**)

Wheaton Joint Unified School District (WJUSD) serves 10,445 students in its 12 elementary schools, two middle schools, and three high schools (including one continuation high school). The changing conditions of the community have led to a need for counseling services at *all* of our schools, but six schools have been selected for participation in this project because they meet the following criteria: (a) all are elementary schools and, as such, meet the absolute priority for the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program for FY2004; (b) all of these schools serve significant percentages of students living in poverty (as measured by qualification for the federal free/reduced priced meal program); and (c) all of these schools are Title I schools that have either been identified as Title I Program Improvement schools or are currently in jeopardy of being identified as Program Improvement schools for the upcoming 2004-05 school year. These identified sites are: Boone Elementary School, Doonsbury Elementary School, Firebaugh Elementary School, Gregornio Elementary School, Prefontaine Elementary School, and Whittle Elementary School. The table below provides

information regarding the enrollment and demographic makeup of the students at these schools.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FOR SELECTED SCHOOL SITES, 2002-03

| | Enrollment | English Learners | Economically Disadvantaged ¹ | Ethnicity | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------------|---|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| | | | | Hispanic/Latino | White/Caucasian | Other |
| Boone | 509 | 46.2% | 65.4% | 74.5% | 19.6% | 5.9% |
| Doonsbury | 390 | 42.6% | 55.5% | 55.4% | 40.5% | 4.1% |
| Firebaugh ² | 422 | 30.6% | 62.6% | 61.6% | 32.5% | 5.9% |
| Gregornio ² | 141 | 66.7% | 100.0% | 82.3% | 11.3% | 6.4% |
| Prefontaine ² | 807 | 51.4% | 63.2% | 69.5% | 22.6% | 7.9% |
| Whittle | 491 | 34.2% | 61.2% | 50.1% | 42.6% | 7.3% |
| DISTRICT | 10,445 | 27.9% | 37.6% | 51.1% | 41.3% | 7.6% |

¹As determined by free and reduced price meals enrollment.

²Firebaugh, Gregornio, and Prefontaine are year-round schools. Firebaugh and Gregornio operate on a single-track year-round calendar and Prefontaine operates on a multi-track year-round calendar.

The presence of many English Learners (students not fully proficient in English) at the sites indicates a need for services to be provided in both English and Spanish (the native language of most of our English Learners).

These schools also serve high percentages of students who are performing below state content standards in English language arts and mathematics.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, CALIFORNIA STANDARDS TEST SCORES FOR ALL STUDENTS, 2003
(reported as percent of students scoring **below Proficient**, i.e. **below** state content standards, by grade)

| | 2 nd | 3 rd | 4 th | 5 th | 6 th |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Boone | 73 | 84 | 72 | 87 | 80 |
| Doonsbury | 62 | 71 | 74 | 81 | 60 |
| Firebaugh | 70 | 89 | 74 | 84 | 64 |
| Gregornio | 92 | 96 | 100 | 90 | 77 |
| Prefontaine | 85 | 77 | 75 | 77 | 76 |
| Whittle | 79 | 76 | 69 | 71 | 67 |

MATHEMATICS, CALIFORNIA STANDARDS TEST SCORES FOR ALL STUDENTS, 2003
(reported as percent of students scoring **below Proficient**, i.e. **below** state content standards, by grade)

| | 2 nd | 3 rd | 4 th | 5 th | 6 th |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Boone | 40 | 66 | 82 | 85 | 76 |
| Doonsbury | 38 | 64 | 61 | 89 | 65 |
| Firebaugh | 45 | 58 | 55 | 80 | 70 |
| Gregornio | 78 | 92 | 100 | 80 | 67 |
| Prefontaine | 76 | 74 | 62 | 79 | 81 |
| Whittle | 77 | 61 | 63 | 81 | 65 |

All of these sites have demonstrated improvements in academic achievement in recent years as

the result of consistent and coordinated school improvement and reform efforts. Five of these sites have participated in California’s Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program, two have participated in the federal Comprehensive School Reform program, and all six provide after school tutorial and enrichment services to students through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program administered by the California Department of Education. All implement State Board of Education-adopted materials in English language arts and mathematics focused on state content standards, and teachers at all of the sites have undergone extensive training in state content standards, standards-aligned instructional materials, and effective instructional strategies for at-risk students. The results of these efforts have been seen in recent improvements in student achievement; however, lackluster student achievement in spite of these intensive efforts points to conditions outside the classroom faced by our students that affect their achievement, such as family problems (divorce, alcohol/drug use, etc.), domestic and neighborhood violence, and so on.

These conditions also affect student behavior at school. A variety of behavioral issues, such as fighting and defiance, have resulted in the high numbers of discipline referrals (a total of 670 at the six school sites) and suspensions (a total of 343 at the six school sites) illustrated in the table below.

DISCIPLINE REFERRALS AND INDIVIDUAL INCIDENCES OF SUSPENSIONS, 2002-03
(reported as number per 100 students)

| | Boone | Doonsbury | Firebaugh | Gregornio | Prefontaine | Whittle |
|---|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|---------|
| Discipline Referrals (rate per 100 students) | 21.6 | 11.5 | 28.2 | 37.6 | 24.9 | 28.9 |
| Suspensions (rate per 100 students) | 9.6 | 7.4 | 17.8 | 14.2 | 7.7 | 22.0 |

The suspension rate for our target sites is almost 50% higher than for the other elementary schools in the district (12.4 per 100 students for our target sites compared to 8.4 per 100 students for the other elementary schools).

Poor student achievement and negative school behavior are only symptoms of the problems addressed by many of our students. At a recent meeting of the WJUSD Elementary Counseling Advisory Committee, teachers, parents, administrators, school counselors, and representatives of counseling agencies in the community identified some troubling counseling-related issues. Our two school

counselors reported that they are seeing more and more students with serious mental health issues, such as depression, psychosis, and bipolar disorder. Whereas in past years they may have seen 2-3 students per school, per year, with these issues, in recent years (2002-03 and 2003-04) they are identifying 2-3 students *per classroom* in need of treatment in these areas. Our community partners who provide counseling services outside of the school day report similar increases in these serious conditions. The committee identified that the causes of this shift include the increased use of alcohol and drugs among families, poverty, lack of parenting/coping skills, lack of support for parents, and the decreased availability of community services to help address these issues. In short, as poverty, crime, and alcohol and drug use grow in the community, and as the ability of families to access services decreases because of the decrease in the availability of community services due to state budget cuts and the inability of many families to communicate with existing services due to limited English proficiency, the intensive needs of children, particularly those at the elementary school level, proliferates and the pressure placed on schools to fill the gap grows.

Last year (2002-03) the *California Healthy Kids Survey* was administered to fifth grade students throughout the district. The survey asked questions regarding alcohol and drug use, perception of the harmfulness of alcohol and drug use, and the perception of safety at school. Fifteen percent (15%) of fifth grade students completing the survey (total sample size 540 students) reported that they had tried alcohol, 3% admitted they had tried inhalants, 3% of students reported that they had smoked a cigarette, but 8% of respondents (over 45 students) do not believe that smoking cigarettes is bad for a persons health. Similar percentages of students do not feel that alcohol (19%) or marijuana (8%) are bad for a persons health. Only 81% of respondents reported that they feel safe at school most or all of the time, leaving 19% who never feel safe and school or only feel safe some of the time. The issues that our students experience in the community are most clearly illustrated by the fact that a full 32% of respondents report that they never or only sometimes feel safe outside of school. Forty-eight percent (48%) of students report that they have been hit or pushed on school property and 45% report that they have had mean rumors spread about them. Forty-six percent (46%) of students admit to having hit or pushed other kids at school in the past year and

31% admit to having spread mean rumors about other kids. While on 3% admit to having brought a weapon to school in the past year, 19% say that they have seen another student with a weapon at school.

For each of the three environments in a youth's life (school, home, and peers) the *California Healthy Kids Survey* asks about the existence of the three principles that researchers have should to be essential to promoting resiliency and positive youth development. These resilience principles are caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for meaningful participation. These are supports and opportunities that meet the basic developmental needs of youth. 63% of our fifth grade students scored high in the presence of external assets in their school environment, 84% scored high for external assets in their home environment, and 58% scored high for external assets in their peer environment. These results indicate that very high percentages of students lack external assets and that because the greatest areas of need according to the survey were the development of external assets in the peer environment and school environment that a schoolwide approach like the one developed and described in this proposal is very much needed.

B) The extent to which specific gaps or weakness in services, infrastructure, and opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project.

Currently, WJUSD employs two qualified school counselors (district funds .60 FTE at Boone and .40 FTE at Gregornio; Firebaugh funds .60 FTE at its school site and Prefontaine funds .40 FTE at its school site using site-based categorical funds)¹. Both of these counselors have been employed in the district since 1990. While the employment of these counselors represents a commitment on the part of the district to provide counseling services to our most at-risk students, these counselors cannot come close to meeting the need that exists at our most heavily impacted elementary schools. The Elementary Counseling Advisory Committee identified the following needs and gaps in services to be addressed by this proposal:

Full-time counselor to respond to issues daily at schools serving high-poverty populations – One of the things we have learned from the provision of services part-time is that high-need schools must have

¹ These positions will be retained in the upcoming years, and project funds will be used for *new* positions.

a counselor on campus full-time in order to implement an effective, comprehensive, developmental, preventive counseling program. Counselors must be able to respond to crises as they happen, provide assistance to teachers in the classroom on a regular basis, be available to parents on an ongoing basis, and have sufficient time to provide direct services to students. Also, the mobility rates at these sites are high and students often move from site to site. A coordinated program at these sites would cut down on the lost service time as students move from school to school and ensure services are available at all of our most needy sites.

Staff development – The committee identified professional development as a critical link to ensuring system change and consistency for students. As teachers receive training in class meetings and conflict management they can begin to facilitate classroom activities and provide classroom learning environments that support a comprehensive approach and prevent problems before they happen. This comprehensive approach will be further supported by training of classified staff and administrators so that the strategies implemented with students in the program are reinforced throughout the school, and from site to site.

Schoolwide focus – What we have just described is actually a schoolwide focus on school climate and problem solving that must include everyone at the school and not just counseling staff. It requires the involvement of all members of the school community, including parents and students, as well as teachers, classified staff, and administrators. A schoolwide focus is also necessary to help develop external assets (resiliency factors) for our students' school and peer environments.²

Case management – Case management is required for the students with multiple intensive needs at these schools to link them with services available in the community and to follow-up with students and their families to ensure that the referrals actually result in access to services.

We mentioned above that two counselors currently provide 1.0 FTE of services at two sites funded by the district, as well as additional services at two other sites funded by school site categorical funds. Altogether, these two counselors see an average of 530 students in one week, make 20 phone calls,

² Please refer to the *California Healthy Kids Survey findings on pages 4-5*.

hold 7 meetings with parents, participate in 15 consultations, and see 46 students in group sessions. This should be contrasted with the need of 2,760 students at all of these sites, including 1,755 students living in poverty and 343 behavioral incidents serious enough for suspension. Clearly, the need for this project is extensive.

2) SIGNIFICANCE

A) The likelihood that the project will result in system change or improvement.

The project's focus on schoolwide change and staff development ensures improvement will result, not only in academic achievement and behavior for students but improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of our counseling programs as well. Four central activities promote systemic change. First, elementary counselors will provide consultation and leadership to promote a positive school climate. By working closely with the school principal and other site leaders in the development and implementation of schoolwide discipline and school climate plans, by helping teachers with classroom management techniques, and by providing staff development for teachers in classroom climate and the implementation of the other activities in our plan (see below), the counselors will play a central role in *institutionalizing* the changes facilitated by the program. Second, by implementing class meetings, students will learn the problem-solving, communication, and social skills necessary to resolve conflict, and teachers will learn how to facilitate this process, extending the reach of this project in both scope and time to many more students than any individual counselor can see personally (scope) and through the years, as long as each teacher is teaching, far beyond the funding period (time). Third, the implementation of the conflict management program extends focus of problem-solving skills from the classroom to the playground during recess, before school, and after school. Again, this trains students to serve as conflict managers, not only extending the program in scope and time as described above, but also channeling and building the leadership skills of students, preventing problems before they arise. Fourth, the program's intensive focus on staff development for teachers, administrators, and classified staff promotes a systemic approach that is likely to create systemic change. This can be contrasted with traditional counseling services that are only experienced by a few students and teachers and are wholly dependent on the availability of the

individual counselor for implementation. Our schoolwide approach includes all members of the school community, increasing the likelihood of success by providing roles for all adults working at the school.

B) The potential contribution of the project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field.

The WJUSD Elementary Counseling Program represents a significant shift from the focus of traditional counseling programs on individual and group counseling exclusively to a schoolwide focus. Not only does this new model allow the program to reach significantly more students (from approximately 50 students per school in a traditional program to literally hundreds of students in the schoolwide model), but it also represents a true focus on prevention rather than intervention. It also represents a shift in the role of elementary school counselors from providers of counseling services exclusively to leaders in the development of positive school climate and schoolwide services for all students that build self-esteem, problem-solving skills, conflict management skills, and positive attitudes toward self, peers, family, school, and the community. By demonstrating significant measurable outcomes at a schoolwide level for multiple schools, the project presents the potential of extending the benefits of traditional counseling programs (please see research cited below in Section 3C) to a much larger group of students, making it more cost effective and, thus, more attractive to schools and, as an ultimate result, more likely to be implemented at replication sites.

C) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

The program we have described was developed by the WJUSD elementary school counselors and the Elementary Counseling Advisory Committee, and is described in detail in the document *Why Elementary Counseling?: WJUSD's Counseling and Guidance Plan*. Elements of this plan have been implemented at the sites currently with school counselors (although the plan has not been fully implemented at any of the sites because of a lack of full-time counselors at each site). As the project is fully implemented and refined, and as outcome data are available, the *Counseling and Guidance Plan* will be updated and modified so the plan can be replicated at other WJUSD elementary school sites, as well as at other sites in the county, state, and nation. Our strategies are particularly easy to replicate in other

settings because they focus on things that teachers, administrators, classified staff, and counselors can do to improve school climate and address identified needs of students. As we achieve our outcomes, the project will provide a model for other schools serving high percentages of students living in poverty and diverse student populations.

3) QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN

A) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved specified and measurable.

The overall goal of the WJUSD counseling program is to provide a counseling program that (1) provides equal access to all students within our target sites regardless of each child's background or language, (2) impact the school as a whole, supporting teachers, principals, and staff so that the ultimate goals of keeping children in school, raising test scores, and promoting graduation can be achieved, and (3) directly impact students' social and emotional abilities, providing a positive foundation to help them achieve academically. To help us achieve our goal, we have targeted the following implementation and outcome objectives.

Implementation Objectives:

- ▶ **Objective 1:** Increase counseling services by 5.0 FTEs at the six target sites, providing a total of 7.0 FTEs of counseling services (closing the gap between the existing student/counselor ratio and the 250:1 ratio recommended by the American School Health Association). The average student to counselor ratio (based on 2002-03 enrollment) will be 425:1 (509:1 at Boone, 390:1 at Doonsbury, 422:1 at Firebaugh, 141:1 at Gregornio, 404:1 at Prefontaine, and 491:1 at Whittle).
- ▶ **Objective 2:** By June 2005, train all teachers at all six sites (150 teachers total) in conducting and facilitating class meetings, and class meetings will be implemented in all K-6 classrooms.
- ▶ **Objective 3:** Each year, provide case management services for at least 30 students at each site.
- ▶ **Objective 4:** Provide training for all teachers, classified staff, and administrative staff in conflict management programs and implement conflict management programs at each site.
- ▶ **Objective 5:** Conduct monthly Elementary Counseling Advisory Committee meetings to review

implementation and outcome data and provide a forum for parents, teachers, classified staff, administrators, school counselors, and community counseling providers to come together to provide implementation guidance for the program.

Outcome Objectives:

- ▶ **Objective 6:** By June 2005 and each year thereafter, the number of students at each of the target sites meeting or exceeding state content standards in English language arts and mathematics will increase by at least 10%.
- ▶ **Objective 7:** By June 2005 and each year thereafter, at least 50% of case managed students will demonstrate improvement in achieving State Content Standards in English language arts and mathematics by increasing at least one performance level (i.e. moving from *Far Below Basic* to *Below Basic*, from *Below Basic* to *Basic*, etc.) or by meeting or achieving proficiency on the California Standards Tests in English language arts and mathematics.
- ▶ **Objective 8:** Each year the number of discipline referrals and suspensions at each target site will decrease by at least 10%.
- ▶ **Objective 9:** Each year the number of discipline referrals and suspensions for case managed students will decrease by at least 20%.
- ▶ **Objective 10:** Each year student problem-solving and conflict management skills will increase, as measured by teacher, parent, and student surveys.
- ▶ **Objective 11:** Each year, parent, student, and teacher satisfaction with the program will remain at or above 90% (i.e. 90% of parents, students, and teachers reporting satisfaction with the program), as measured by parent, student, and teacher surveys.

Please refer to the evaluation section for our plan to measure the achievement of all of our objectives. The table below provides a timeline for implementing activities necessary to achieve our objectives.

IMPLEMENTATION MANAGEMENT PLAN TABLE

| Objective(s) | Activity | Person(s) Responsible | Timeline |
|--------------|--|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Finalize contracts with YFSA and Yellow County ADMHS | Director of School Improvement | July-Sept. 2004 |

Wheaton Joint Unified School District – Elementary Counseling Program

| | | | |
|------|--|-----------------|------------------|
| 1-11 | Convene WJUSD Elementary Counseling Advisory Committee | Lead Counselors | Monthly; ongoing |
|------|--|-----------------|------------------|

(continued)

| Objective(s) | Activity | Person(s) Responsible | Timeline |
|--------------|---|--|--|
| 1-11 | Hire and place 5 new counselors | YFSA, Yellow County ADMHS, Principals, Lead Counselors | By Oct. 2004 |
| 1-11 | Convene Elementary Counselor Advisory Committee Meetings for purposes of staff development and program coordination | Lead Counselors | Monthly, beginning in Oct. 2004 |
| 2, 6, 8, 10 | Provide teacher training in class meetings | Counselors | Oct. – Dec. 2004 |
| 2, 6, 8, 10 | Provide training for new teachers placed in mid-year (and long-term substitute teachers) in class meetings | Counselors | Substitute teachers – Jan. 2005; new teachers individually as needed |
| 2, 6, 8, 10 | Implement weekly class meetings | Teachers (with counselor assistance as needed) | Fall 2004 (after training); ongoing |
| 2, 6, 8, 10 | Monitor class meetings and implementation of class meeting schedule | Principals, Counselors | Ongoing; monthly administration walk throughs |
| 4, 6, 8, 10 | Train teachers in conflict management program | Counselors | Feb.-March 2005 |
| 3, 7, 9, 10 | Develop protocol for selection of case managed students at each site | Lead Counselors, Counselors | Fall 2004 |
| 3, 7, 9, 10 | Selection of case managed students; intake visits with parents | Counselors (with teacher input) | Fall 2004 |
| 1-4, 6-11 | Provide individual and group counseling services at each site | Counselors | Beginning Oct. 2004; ongoing |
| 4, 6, 8, 10 | Develop protocol for selection of student conflict managers | Counselors | February 2005 |
| 4, 6, 8, 10 | Select and train student conflict managers | Teachers, Counselors | April 2005 |
| 4, 6-10 | Implementation and monitor conflict management program* | Counselors, Principals, Teachers | April 2005; ongoing |
| 1-11 | Convene evaluation team meetings | Evaluator, Lead Counselors | Sept. 2004; ongoing monthly |
| 6-11 | Implement parenting classes | Counselors | Beginning Nov. 2004; ongoing |
| 4, 6-11 | WJUSD Elementary Counseling Advisory Committee to review evaluation data and provide input | Evaluator | Quarterly |
| 6-11 | School Site Councils and school staffs to review evaluation data and provide input | Principals | Quarterly |

| | | | |
|-------------|---|------------|---|
| 3, 7, 9, 10 | Provide case management services for approximately 30 students per site | Counselors | Ongoing after selection |
| 6-11 | Administer professional development needs survey | Evaluator | Oct.-Nov. 2004 (and each fall thereafter) |

(continued)

| Objective(s) | Activity | Person(s) Responsible | Timeline |
|--------------|--|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 6-11 | Provide professional development (individual and group) based on survey results | Counselors, Principals | Ongoing |
| 6-11 | Assist in development, review, and implementation of site discipline / school climate plans | Counselors, Principals | Fall, annually |
| 1-11 | Develop annual performance evaluation reports compliant with U.S. Department of Education guidelines | Evaluator, Evaluation Team | Spring, annually |
| 1-11 | Present evaluation results to WJUSD Board of Trustees | Lead Counselors, Evaluator | Annually after report is developed |

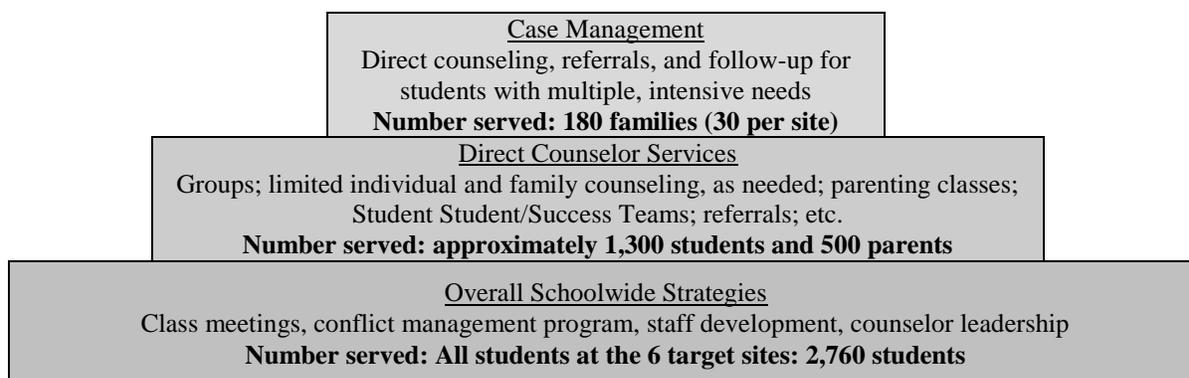
*Depending on the experience and prior training of the new counselors, full implementation of the conflict management program *may* not take place until year 2 *at some sites*.

B) The extent to which the design of the project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population.

The WJUSD elementary counseling program has been designed to address identified needs. Specifically, counseling services will be provided in both in English and Spanish to provide access for students and families with limited English abilities (please see attached job descriptions). Class meetings and the conflict management program are prevention strategies designed to improve children’s decision-making skills, their understanding of peer relationships, and to improve peer interactions. Staff development, class meetings, conflict management, and counselor leadership activities will extend the scope and reach of the project beyond what could be accomplished by a single counselor during the funding period, and the presence of a counselor to provide direct counseling services, including individual, group, and family counseling services, parenting classes, support on Student Study/Success Teams, and referrals to outside agencies will play a significant role in helping to mitigate the effects of poverty, violence, and alcohol and drug use in the family and community experienced by many of our students. Providing case management for a cohort of our most needy families will allow us to reach those students for whom traditional prevention measures would not be effective because of the intensive nature

of the multiple issues in those students' lives. Having the time to not only make referrals to outside services for these students and families, but also to *follow-up* to ensure that these services have actually been accessed, will make all the difference for these struggling families.

The WJUSD elementary counseling program is based on the design of providing services of graduating intensity as needed, starting off with a base of services for the overall school population at each site (class meetings, conflict management, staff development, counselor leadership) for *all students* at each of the target sites, with the provision of a variety of direct counseling services (group, individual counseling, family services, parenting classes, etc.) for identified students with specific needs. Finally, case management services will be available for approximately 30 families at each site with multiple needs who would particularly benefit from assistance accessing outside services and long-term (12 months or more) follow-up. The graphic below illustrates our program design:



Overall Schoolwide Strategies – These strategies include class meetings, a conflict management program, staff development, and counselor leadership activities. **Class meetings** focus on teaching children to speak positively about each other, to understand what a problem is and how to express it, to take responsibility for their own actions, to learn how to solve problems, to understand what logical consequences/solutions are and to be able to apply them fairly and respectfully to all, to understand their reasons for misbehavior, to seek non-violent ways to solve a conflict, and to learn social and communications skills. The school counselors will provide training for teachers on the Adlerian theory and strategies for effective use of class meetings and model class meetings until teachers are prepared to

take over. The ultimate goal is for teachers to conduct class meetings effectively on their own, calling on counselor support only when necessary.

After class meetings have been implemented in all classrooms, the counselor will assist with the establishment of a **conflict management program** at each site. It follows the implementation of class meetings because students will need the skills developed through the class meeting process to most effectively participate in the conflict management program. The counselors will assess the needs of each school and create a conflict management program to fit the specific site needs, train teachers and staff on the conflict management program, organize a schoolwide assembly to introduce the program, train student conflict managers, provide ongoing training and weekly meetings of conflict managers and student boards, and provide presentations to classrooms to teach conflict resolution skills that relate to the work that is going on in class meetings.

Staff development for teachers will focus on training in class meetings and the conflict management program, as well as additional training provided for the staff as a group or individually based on a staff development needs survey. Additional training may include training in class management, dealing with bullies, helping new students fit into the school, logical consequences, positive reinforcement, character education, Mega Skills, etc. Training will also be provided for all classified staff and administrators in the school conflict management program and techniques for supporting a positive school climate.

Counselor leadership activities reflect the role of the school counselor as a leader in the implementation of the schoolwide counseling program. Leadership activities will include meeting with staff to lay out a plan that focuses on school climate through a schoolwide discipline plan, providing training (or arranging for outside training) for facilitation and support in creating and implementing the schoolwide discipline plan, becoming a part of the implementation of the plan, providing continued training in the areas of parenting, consistency, encouragement, consequences, etc., serving as a member of each school's Student Study/Success Team, and providing ongoing consultation with teachers and the school principal to assist them in dealing with individual students.

Direct Counseling Services – In addition to supporting overall schoolwide strategies that form the foundation of the program, the counselors will also provide direct services to identified students in the form of group, individual, and family crisis counseling services, and parenting classes. Students and families will be referred for counseling services by teachers or through self-referrals. Groups will be organized based on referrals and specific needs that arise at each school, and may include anger management, social skills, divorce, grief, bullying (both victim and perpetrator), as well as other groups. Groups will be flexible and offered in 5-12 week modules (depending on the group and the curriculum or strategy used by the counselor for each group), but family crisis counseling services will intentionally be limited to 1-3 sessions, and families needing lengthier counseling services will be referred to external counseling providers. Parenting classes will focus on single session or workshop topics that arise from the situations and issues experiences by the students at each school, and could be offered in conjunction with other parent nights. Suggestions for topics may also be provided by each school’s PTA or School Site Council. Referrals for parenting courses provided by organizations in the community (such as Hands Together, a local non-profit organization, or the Yellow County Department of Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services) will be made as needed.

Case Management – Finally, some of our students have multiple intensive needs, and while these students will certainly benefit from our schoolwide strategies (class meetings, conflict management program, etc.) and direct counseling services such as group and individual counseling, these students need ongoing and long-term assistance and follow-up if they are going to experience success. Case management services may include home visits, referrals to outside counseling services, referrals to external social service providers, multiple contacts with parents, classroom observations, and other forms of assistance that target a student’s individual needs. Because of the intensive nature of case management work, approximately 30 families per site will be selected for case management based on protocol developed by a team at each school site consisting of the school principal, counselor, and teacher and parent representatives, following guidelines provided by the Elementary Counseling Advisory Committee.

C) Design of the project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

A significant body of research supports the relationship between elementary counseling programs and improvements in student achievement in general, and the effectiveness of our implementation strategies specifically. Several studies document the positive effect that participation in elementary school counseling programs have on academic achievement (Hadley, 1998; Lee, 1993; Sink and Stroh, 2003; Mullis and Otwell, 1997; Watts and Thomas, 1997). Not only do counseling programs have a positive effect on academic achievement, but they also have a significant influence on discipline problems (Baker and Gerber, 2001; Omizo, Hershberger, and Omizo, 1988). These studies indicated that students who participated in school counseling programs had significantly fewer inappropriate behaviors and more positive attitudes towards school, and that participants in group counseling demonstrated fewer aggressive and hostile behaviors. Studies validate the effectiveness of counseling programs on teaching social skills (Verduyn, Lord, and Forrest, 1990), and in reducing victimization and bullying behaviors (Hanish and Guerra, 2000). Activities such as individual and small group counseling, classroom guidance, and consultation activities contribute directly to students' success in the classroom, as well as outside of the classroom (Borders and Drury, 1992; Boutwell and Myrick, 1992). Studies also support the effectiveness of peer mediation/conflict management programs, particularly for upper elementary grade students (i.e. 6th grade) (Tobias and Myrick, 1999; Myrick and Sorensen, 1992).

Our model for class meetings is based on that developed in Sacramento City Schools (Bubdico, Meder, and Platt, 1982) that draws heavily upon the work of Rudolph Dreikurs (Dreikurs, Grunwald, and Pepper, 1971; Dreikurs and Cassel, 1972). Regular class meetings in which students can participate in decision making allows for the development of a group ethic focused on values and promotes self-direction, self-control, and cooperation (Kohlberg, 1975).

D) The extent to which the project will establish linkages with other appropriate agencies and organizations providing services to the target population.

WJUSD has created partnerships with three organizations that serve as the primary providers of counseling and related services in Wheaton – the Yellow Family Service Agency (YFSA), the Yellow

Family Resource Center, and the Yellow County Department of Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services (ADMHS). In addition to the administrator, teacher, and parent representatives from each of the six school sites and the district elementary school counselors, each of these organizations is represented on the WJUSD Elementary Counseling Advisory Committee. In addition, each of these organizations played a role in the development of this proposal and will play important roles in the implementation of the program over the next three years.

Yellow Family Service Agency (YFSA) was founded in 1959 as a private non-profit organization dedicated to providing professional counseling to families and individuals in Yellow County. YFSA’s mission is “to alleviate stress and strengthen family life in Yellow County through counseling, psycho-educational, and support of services.” As part of the agency’s ongoing commitment to strengthening family life in Yellow County, YFSA has developed a wide variety of programs and services to meet the needs of families in our community. Individual, couple, family, and child counseling is available, as well as group therapy and educational programs addressing specific issues concerning family life. YFSA has developed a specific program that serves middle school and high school students in WJUSD at Lee Middle School and Cache Creek (Continuation) High School. This program, known as the Allied Services for Kids (ASK) program, is an outreach program for students that provides crisis intervention, prevention, and counseling services at schools. ASK counselors work with young people, guiding them to build the skills they need to cope with stressful situations. ASK provides family counseling where appropriate and also refers family members to community resources. YFSA also partners with Suicide Prevention of Yellow County to provide a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week crisis line that is staffed by trained volunteers. In collaboration with WJUSD, YSFA will provide 4 of the 5 additional counselors needed. YSFA counselors serving at our target school sites through this program will be bilingual and biliterate (English/Spanish) so they can provide services to families with limited English

YSFA CASES BY ETHNICITY, FY 2002-03

| | Yellow County | Wheaton |
|---------------|---------------|---------|
| Caucasian | 522 | 202 |
| Latino | 276 | 151 |
| Asian | 23 | 2 |
| Native Amer. | 10 | 5 |
| African Amer. | 28 | 7 |
| Multi-Ethnic | 1 | 0 |

ability. YSFA brings many strengths to our collaborative endeavor, including many years of

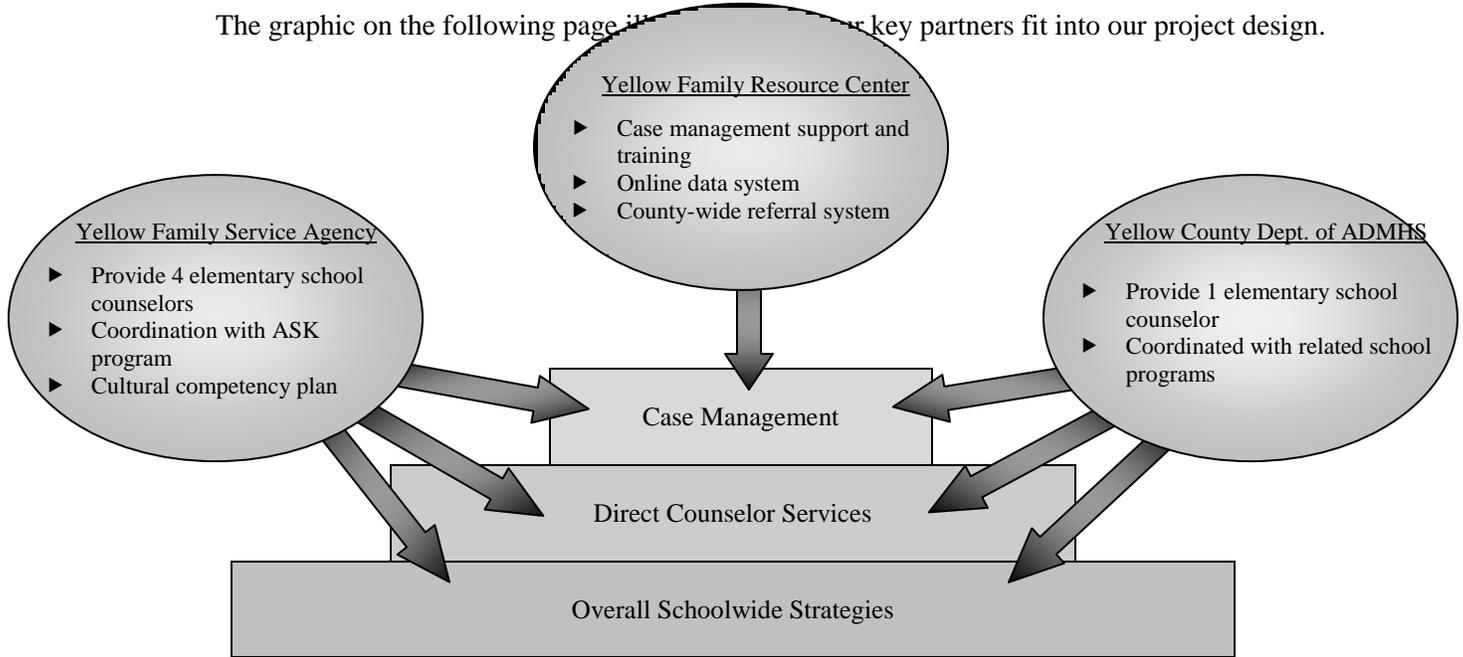
experience providing counseling services in the community, as well as their recent experience developing and implementing a cultural competency plan. Through this process, YSFA assessed the needs of families in our area, and developed plans for providing culturally responsive counseling services, including the implementation of an organizational cultural competency self-assessment. The table on the previous page illustrates the number of total cases served by YSFA in 2002-03 overall (throughout Yellow County) and in Wheaton. The majority of the families served in Wheaton are from the attendance areas of our six target school sites.

The Yellow Family Resource Center (Yellow FRC) is a non-profit agency that has several purposes. The first is to provide a safe, nurturing environment to encourage families to access resources they need to create a healthy environment for their children. The second is to promote the integration and connection of all the services that currently exist in the county and ensure families do not fall between the cracks. Finally, the Yellow FRC works to develop the capacity of families of Yellow County so they can sustain themselves in their communities after the services (or family eligibility for services) are gone. Rather than provide direct service, the Yellow FRC refers to other agencies. The Yellow FRC is partnering with WJUSD's Elementary Counseling Program by providing assistance with case management, including the use of an online, web-based case management referral tracking system. Yellow FRC also can provide training for our school counselors in services available throughout the community, including health care, social services, parenting, and emergency food, clothing, and housing services.

Yellow County Department of Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services (Yellow County ADMHS) provides services targeting the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of mental health and substance abuse disorders and disabilities experienced by Yellow County residents. The Department has developed a continuum of care for which it has received national and international attention, and provides programs following state cultural competency guidelines. In collaboration with WJUSD's Elementary Counseling Program, Yellow County ADMHS will provide one highly qualified and bilingual (Spanish/English) counselor to serve as elementary school counselors through our program. In 2002-03

Yellow County ADMHS (Children’s Services Division) served 1302 elementary –aged children, including 977 from low-income families. Yellow County ADMHS staff are experienced in providing culturally relevant services and are particularly experience with providing case management services.

The graphic on the following page illustrates how key partners fit into our project design.



4) QUALITY OF THE PROJECT PERSONNEL

A) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented.

The district not only maintains a non-discrimination policy to preserve the integrity of the hiring process, but actively seeks and encourages applications from people who have the background and abilities necessary to meet the needs of district students. For example, the job description for elementary school counselor includes the requirement of bilingual (Spanish/English) proficiency (see job description in appendix). Many of those with such proficiency are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race or national origin. In the past, the district has recruited qualified applicants from conferences attended by members of traditionally underrepresented groups (i.e. California Association for Bilingual Education, etc.) and in local organizations that serve members of traditionally underrepresented groups (i.e. the local Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, etc.). The bottom line is finding staff who have the qualifications and life experience necessary to best meet the needs of our students.

B) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

The two existing counselors in WJUSD who have been providing services in the district since 1990 will serve as **lead counselors** for the project. They will be responsible for convening advisory committee meetings, training new counselors in the program and project expectations, working closely with the evaluator to gather data documenting our progress and achieving our objectives, serve as members of the evaluation team, convene monthly meetings of WJUSD elementary counselors, and serve as the liaison between the counseling staff and district administration. **Candace Naliboff** holds a Master's of Science Degree in Counseling from California State University Sacramento, a Pupil Personnel Services Credential, and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. Ms. Naliboff has served as an elementary school counselor since 1990, and has served at four school sites (Firebaugh, Willow Spring, Prefontaine, and Gregornio). In her role as counselor she has been in charge of developing schoolwide programs for discipline, teaching class management and class meetings, consulting with teachers, providing crisis intervention services for students and families, case managing students with behavioral issues, conducting home visits, making counseling referrals, supervising a conflict management program, serving as a member of the district crisis team, and serving as a member of various school sites' Student Study Teams (SSTs), Individual Education Plan (IEP) teams, and 504 teams. Ms. Naliboff is bilingual and biliterate in Spanish and English. **Diana Wilkinson** has also worked in WJUSD for fourteen years. She has served as a middle school counselor at Douglass Middle School, a high school counselor at Cache Creek High School, and an elementary school counselor since 1995 (at various times serving at Boone, Doonsbury, Prefontaine, Tafoya, and Whittle). She holds a Master's of Science Degree in Counseling from California State University Sacramento, a Pupil Personnel Services Credential, a MFT License, and a teaching credential. She has also provided counseling services in private practice in Wheaton since 1990. In her role as elementary school counselor she has provided the same services provided by Ms. Naliboff (see above) and in her counseling work she has particular experience working with children, adolescents, and families who have experienced depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, domestic violence, issues with drugs and alcohol, learning disabilities, grief, and divorce.

The qualifications of the **five counselors to will be hired** are also particularly important because of the central roles they will play in the project. These counselors will be provided through Yellow Family Service Agency (four counselors) and Yellow County Department of Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services (one counselor). Successful candidates must hold a Master’s Degree from an accredited institution in counseling and possess a Pupil Personnel Services Credential issued by the California Department of Education. They also must hold at least two years experience counseling elementary-aged children, and they must be fluent in written and spoken Spanish. It is also important that the counselors hired for this project demonstrate skillfulness and desire to serve in a leadership capacity, with requisite skills in group facilitation, effective writing and oral communication, and that they have the ability to plan, organize, and implement a quality program, and the ability to work cooperatively with staff, students, parents, and site and district administrators. Each of these counselors will be responsible for implementing the program at their school sites, providing training for teachers, modeling class meetings, training conflict managers, providing case management services to students, providing parenting classes, and providing individual and group counseling services to students onsite. Please refer to the job description in the appendix for more detail regarding duties and responsibilities.

The evaluation will be facilitated by **Veronica Robbins** of Creative School Resources and Research. Ms. Robbins holds a Master’s of Arts Degree in Education and has completed doctoral level training in qualitative and quantitative data analysis, and brings seven years of experience evaluating a wide variety of educational programs. Ms. Robbins evaluates several other programs in WJUSD, including the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, the Comprehensive School Reform program, and the High Priority Schools program. She also evaluates the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities program administered through Yellow County Department of Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services. Because she is involved with these other local evaluations, she will be able to coordinate the evaluations of these multiple projects, and assist us in streamlining data collection, providing an evaluation that is both effective and efficient. Ms. Robbins is bilingual and biliterate (English/Spanish) allowing her to communicate directly with parents for focus groups in both English and Spanish.

The lead counselors in WJUSD will continue to be supervised directly by the principals at the sites where they serve. Supervision of the new counselors will be a shared responsibility of the site principals and the YFSA and Yellow County ADMHS supervisors. Each site principal will meet at least quarterly with their assigned school counselor and the assigned supervisor from YFSA or Yellow County ADMHS to review counselor performance.

5) QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION

A) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, measurable, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the project.

The evaluation of the WJUSD Elementary Counseling Program is based on a continuous improvement model in which data regarding project effectiveness is collected throughout the life of the project and analyzed to inform project changes, leading to continuous improvement. Data collection activities will focus on the collection of data to measure both the effectiveness of implementation of the strategies and activities described in the project design and formal outcomes. Implementation and outcome objectives have been developed, along with a preliminary evaluation management plan to guide data collection efforts (please see the table below).

PRELIMINARY EVALUATION MANAGEMENT PLAN / DATA COLLECTION PLAN TABLE

| Objective | Measure | Person(s) Responsible | Timeline |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Obj. 1:</i> Increase counseling services by 5.0 FTEs at the six target sites. | Human Resources records, budget records | Principals, YFSA, Yellow County ADMHS | By October 2004 |
| <i>Obj. 2:</i> Train all teachers at all six sites (150 teachers total) in conducting and facilitating class meetings, and class meetings will be implemented in all K-6 classrooms. | Prof.development logs, counselor notes, class meeting schedules | Lead counselors, counselors | Training by December 2004; review of notes/schedules – monthly |
| <i>Obj. 3:</i> Provide case management services for at least 30 students at each site. | Case management records | Counselors | Monthly |
| <i>Obj. 4:</i> Provide training for all teachers, classified staff, and administrative staff in conflict management programs, and implement conflict management programs. | Training logs | Counselors | Monthly |
| <i>Obj. 5:</i> Conduct monthly Elementary Counseling Advisory Committee meetings. | Meeting minutes | Lead counselors (chair & convene) | Monthly |
| <i>Obj. 6:</i> The number of students at each of | California | District Director | Annually, |

| | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|---|
| the target sites meeting or exceeding state content standards will increase by at least 10%. | Standards Tests | of School Improvement, Evaluator | spring (when results are available) |
| Obj. 7: at least 50% of case managed students will demonstrate improvement in achieving state content standards in by increasing at least one performance level or by meeting or achieving proficiency. | California Standards Tests | District Director of School Improvement, Evaluator, Counselors | Annually, spring (when results are available) |

(continued)

| Objective | Measure | Person(s) Responsible | Timeline |
|--|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Obj. 8: Each year the number of discipline referrals and suspensions at each target site will decrease by at least 10%. | Site discipline referrals and suspension records | Principals | Monthly |
| Obj. 9: Each year the number of discipline referrals and suspensions for case managed students will decrease by at least 20%. | Site discipline referrals and suspension records | Principals, Counselors | Monthly |
| Obj. 10: Each year student problem-solving and conflict management skills will increase. | Teacher, parent, and student surveys | Counselors, Evaluator | Twice per year (fall & spring) |
| Obj. 11: Each year, parent, student, and teacher satisfaction with the program will remain at or above 90%. | Teacher, parent, and student surveys | Evaluator, Principals | Twice per year (fall & spring) |

In most cases, responsibility for data collection will be shared by the project counselors, under the direction of the lead counselors, and school site staff (principals and csupport staff). Appropriate qualitative and quantitative data analysis (please see the section below) will be completed by the project’s evaluator, and results will be reviewed by the WJUSD Elementary Counseling Advisory Committee.

In addition to gathering data to determine the degree to which our objectives have been achieved, the project will focus on answering several pertinent evaluation questions and data addressing our objectives, as well as additional qualitative data (i.e. focus groups, etc.) will be used to help answer those questions. Evaluation questions will be finalized by the advisory committee once funding is received and the project is under way; however, the following preliminary evaluation questions have been developed to serve as a starting point: 1) Has the program been implemented as planned?; 2) Have significant improvements in academic achievement and behavioral outcomes been demonstrated for all students at the school, as well as for case managed students?; 3) Have we made progress toward moving the Government Performance and Report Act (GPRA) indicators of success for the Elementary and

Secondary Counseling Program (decreased disciplinary referrals and suspensions, and closing the gap between pre-project student to counselor ratios and the 250:1 standard established by the American School Health Association)?; and 4)What evidence documents that the program is leading to systemic change at each of the target school sites?

B) Methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.

The preliminary evaluation management plan provided above includes measures to be used to help us determine the degree to which we have achieved our objectives, and most of the objectives include built-in performance benchmarks (i.e. the number of students scoring at the proficient level on the California Standards Test will increase by at least 10%; 50% of case managed students will demonstrate improvement in behavioral outcomes; etc.).

Quantitative data to be collected for the evaluation include the number of disciplinary referrals and suspensions, California Standards Test results for English language arts and mathematics, and records of professional development (including hours of training, etc.). Quantitative data will be analyzed using appropriate statistical analysis techniques, including analysis of descriptive statistics (i.e. frequency counts, means, etc.) and more advanced statistical techniques as appropriate (t-tests, etc.). Data for objectives targeting overall school changes will be analyzed using both general comparisons of pre- and post-data (comparing overall results from the baseline year with overall results from each follow-up year), as well as matched score analyses (comparing baseline and follow-up scores for exactly the same students from year-to-year). Objectives targeting changes for case managed students will be measured using matched score analyses of outcomes.

Qualitative data collected to document our effectiveness will include focus groups, surveys (open-ended questions), staff development logs, counselor program implementation notes, and minutes of monthly WJUSD Elementary Counseling Advisory Committee meetings. These data will be analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques, including trend analyses and other techniques as appropriate.

C) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

An evaluation team made up of the project evaluator, the two lead counselors, the district Director of School Improvement, and one school site principal will meet monthly to review available data and monitor data collection efforts. They will report quarterly to the WJUSD Elementary Counseling Advisory Committee, highlighting evidence regarding objective achievement and documentation relating to each of the project's evaluation questions. Site representatives on the advisory committee will take the information back to the school sites for a quarterly presentation to School Site Councils and school staff, giving teachers, classified staff, and parents at all of the target sites the opportunity to provide input which the site principals will bring back to the advisory committee at the following monthly meeting. Members of the advisory committee will also have the opportunity to provide input as data is presented, making recommendations for program improvement. Minutes of the advisory committee meetings will be taken and distributed to teachers and staff at all school sites. Teachers, classified staff, and parents may provide input regarding program activities at anytime (not just following quarterly evaluation sharing sessions) by communicating with their site's teacher, parent, or administrator representative to the advisory committee who can represent their views, or by submitting comments to the advisory committee in writing. All advisory committee meetings will be open to any parent, teacher, or classified staff member who wishes to attend, and meetings will be held at convenient times to promote attendance. Spanish translation services will be available at advisory committee meetings, as needed, to allow the participation of parents who are not fully proficient in English.

The evaluator, with the assistance of the evaluation team and the guidance of the advisory committee, will develop an annual report addressing the project evaluation questions, including documentation regarding the degree to which objectives have been achieved. This report will comply with all guidelines and requirements of the U.S. Department of Education Office, of State Safe and Drug Free Schools. A brief summary of the report will be developed in both English and Spanish for distribution to teachers, classified staff, and parents at each of the target school sites. The evaluation team will present the report of findings annually to the WJUSD Board of Trustees.

Using the annual report of findings, the advisory committee will review the district *Counseling and Guidance Plan* each year, updating it as necessary to maximize its use as a document to guide project replication for other sites in the district. The updated plan and the annual report of findings will also be made available to other schools throughout the county (and beyond).