Collaboration Redefined

The Federal Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

Safe Schools
Healthy Students

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A Brief History

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Preface

Responding to a series of lethal school shootings by teenagers in the late 1990s, three U.S. departments—Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services—embarked on an unprecedented federal collaboration to prevent youth violence and promote the healthy development of youth.

This publication highlights the development and first-year federal management of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, and presents some lessons learned from the collaboration. The author interviewed almost two dozen individuals who were intimately involved with the development, implementation, and then management of Safe Schools/Healthy Students. This is the story of their collaboration—their vision and their determination to make it work.

Since the first 54 communities across America received $106 million in grants in September 1999 through FY 2005, the federal government has awarded almost $800 million in the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative.

Chapter 1: Setting the Stage

School Shootings Across America

In quick succession during the 1997-98 school year, five boys killed 12 people and wounded 47 others in shooting rampages at four schools, in Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Pearl, Mississippi; and Springfield, Oregon. The acts stunned the nation.

"Any form of violence is troubling, but people were observing that this wasn't what they normally saw with violence and kids," remembered Shay Bilchik, Administrator of the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) at the time of the shootings and one of the architects of the federal youth violence prevention program. Bilchik pointed out that this violence wasn't perpetrated just in gang-infested neighborhoods. The shootings and killings were widespread—in rural, in suburban, and in urban areas. Also, the profile of the young shooters wasn't the norm. They had no history of gang involvement or any other criminality that enabled folks to say, "Oh! Well! We understand where *this* came from!"[1]

The federal government's top school safety expert held the same view. "People began to recognize that problems that at one time had manifested themselves on the streets now were beginning to manifest themselves in the schools." William Modzeleski, Deputy Assistant Under Secretary of the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools at the Department of Education—another key leader who has guided the federal youth violence prevention effort since its inception—recognized the need to take action to "ensure that teaching and learning could continue in an atmosphere that was conducive to teachers teaching and kids learning."[2]

Even though violence in schools was rare—the chance of becoming a victim in a school-associated violent death was (and is) less than one in a million—these school shootings sharply impacted on the public perceptions of school danger and on school policies.[3]

This rash of spree shootings had struck a frightening chord. "We need to do something," people were saying. "What's wrong? What's happening in our society?" *All* America's young people seemed at risk.

A typical response might have been to pour more money into Justice Department–types of programs, suggested Dr. Bernard Arons, then Director of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).[4] But some people questioned whether that was the most effective way to deal with this issue.

One who questioned that approach, to the surprise of most, was Attorney General Janet Reno, "as hard-nosed a prosecutor as there comes," remarked Reno's close advisor Ricki Seidman, herself a moving force in the youth violence prevention initiative.[5] Most attorneys general might have supported increases in protection and pushed more punitive reactions to crime, but, Bernie Arons pointed out, Janet Reno recognized that "improving young people's ability to attain their developmental stages in a healthy and productive way not only could reduce the eventual crime that society faces, but also might be a better way to address school safety issues. In an interview, the former Attorney General explained how she came to her perspective on prevention (see Reno on Preventing Youth Violence).[6]

Understanding the challenging behaviors common among teenagers had taken on uncomfortable and unaccustomed urgency, and the conversation changed. More and more people were asking now, "What can we do to head off youth violence?" "When is a teenager 'just being a teenager'—and when is a teenager troubled and potentially violent?" "How can we intervene early to prevent problems?"

Seeds of Collaboration

In response to the shootings, school and community activists and government officials at all levels intensified their attention to school safety. In fact, the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education had worked both independently and together on school violence issues for a long time. In 1999 the two departments published jointly the first *Annual Report on School Safety.*[8]

Justice and Education also had supported publication of *Early Warning/Timely Response,* a guide to safe schools written by Kevin Dwyer, then president-elect of the National Association of School Psychologists, and colleagues.[9] With its introduction signed by Education Secretary Richard W. Riley and Attorney General Janet Reno, the guide reflected the partnership between their two departments on this issue.[10] In addition, Ricki Seidman remembered a roundtable with experts convened by the White House to shed light on the problem of school violence.[11]

Justice and Education together brought to the White House policy people the idea for a large-scale, joint grant initiative on school safety, Seidman recalled, in the context of developing President Clinton's budget. The Attorney General had pushed the idea initially, and when Seidman discussed with Bill Modzeleski at Education the possibility of working together, Modzeleski then raised the question with Education Secretary Riley.[12] In a confluence of innovative ideas occurring at virtually the same time to multiple people, Shay Bilchik and Bill Modzeleski also had turned to each other at a meeting on school safety and said, "Let's do something."[13]

"We were no strangers to one another," Shay Bilchik recalled. He and Modzeleski, and others, had worked with each other on a number of school and juvenile justice projects over the years.[14]

Reno on Preventing Youth Violence

I served as the state attorney in Miami/Dade County prior to the time I became Attorney General. Prior to that, back in the early 1970s, my first assignment had been as an assistant state attorney assigned to the Juvenile Division. You could see the change taking place in the people coming through the Juvenile Division. I worked a great deal on interdisciplinary approaches to kids who obviously had problems. They needed attention, but they needed something more.

The crack epidemic hit Miami and New York in 1984, prior to most of the rest of the nation. We didn't know what it involved, but we saw an increasing amount of youth violence—very harsh violence at that.

I tried to figure out what to do about crack-involved infants and their mothers. The doctors at Jackson Memorial Hospital, our public hospital, invited me to see their neonatal unit, where crack babies were being kept, unable to be sent home because their mothers were in treatment. The babies were not held or talked to, except when changed or fed. The child development experts impressed on me that afternoon that 50 percent of all learned human response is learned in the first year of life, and that the concept of reward and punishment and a conscience were developed in the first three years of life.

I remember going home that afternoon, thinking, "What good are the prisons going to be 20 years from now, if the child doesn't understand what punishment means? And what good are schools going to be if the kids don't have the basis for education?"

We tried to develop neighborhood intervention programs with a counselor, a public health nurse, and a community police officer. They worked in a large public housing project with a great number of single parents—single women and children.

When I went to Washington, I remember testifying at my confirmation hearing that one of the single greatest crime problems we faced in America was the problem of youth violence. It was not just violence—it was also that our health care institutions would be brought to their knees if we didn't do something to develop preventive medical care for *all* of our children and health care for *all* our children, that we wouldn't have people with the skills necessary to fill the jobs unless we developed an educational system that could provide them with those skills, and that to provide an educational system beginning with kindergarten when you haven't laid the foundation is not cost-effective.

Every time I talk about this subject, people look at me slightly bemused. But slowly they come around to it, even some of the more conservative people. From the time I got to Washington, in my testimony before my confirmation committee and ever after that, every time I talk about the facts that I learned that afternoon at Jackson Memorial Hospital, no one has ever, ever questioned it.[7]

But it was necessary to spread the net wider.

Since she had moved to Washington in the early 1990s, Ricki Seidman had known Bernie Arons. Arons worked on mental health issues related to federal health care reform, and Seidman was President Clinton's first appointments scheduler. Years later, when Seidman began her involvement at Justice on youth violence activities, she called her friend, by then CMHS Director. "We'd like to come see you to talk about this idea that we have." Arons convened a meeting with other officials at HHS.[15]

Mental Health Connection

It seemed to Arons, his colleagues at CMHS, and others that a mental health perspective could contribute greatly to prevention of school violence. Researchers had begun some important work on bullying, particularly on the impact on a young person of having been the victim of aggression and then becoming the perpetrator. In addition, for example, other researchers had been investigating the impact on kids of violence in the media and video games.[16]

Besides contacting Arons, Seidman also sought to engage HHS from the Secretary level down. In the department's policy shop worked Sonia Chessen, whose job was to track pots of money for youth.[17] Chessen would become another important force in moving the initiative forward, but her first experience was to attend a meeting on school safety at the White House.

Shay Bilchik and Bill Modzeleski both understood that kids involved in perpetrating school violence typically deal with multiple issues in their lives. They might be educational concerns, but they might just as easily be family based, such as abuse at home or emotional neglect. Issues were likely to cross-cut the justice community, the education community, the health community. Both men—and, of course, the Attorney General—agreed that the best way to build capacity in schools to work on these issues was to give them the tools they needed to partner across disciplines and form more comprehensive preventive approaches.[18]

White House: Response to School Shootings

On September 1, 1998, community leaders from Paducah/McCracken County, Jonesboro, Pearl, and Springfield met at the White House.* At the long mahogany conference table in the stately Roosevelt Room, local government and school officials from the grieving towns sat with President Clinton and officials from the Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services to share their views.[19] The members of the delegations offered suggestions for how the federal government should respond to—and help prevent—similar incidents in the future. An important objective of the meeting was to elicit participants' ideas for a school violence prevention initiative for the President to announce at a conference on school safety planned for the following month.

Sonia Chessen, now Special Assistant to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, considered it interesting that "no one at that meeting said, 'we need metal detectors,' 'we need crisis prevention plans.' They were just saying, 'mental health services'."[20]

*Just eight months later, in April 1999, two teenage boys would shoot and kill a teacher and 12 of their classmates, plus wound 23 others, before turning the guns on themselves at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado.

A New Initiative

Planning for a White House conference typically centers on developing a "deliverable"—government-speak for a program or initiative—for the President to announce to the public. The President's Domestic Policy Council had drawn together a small cadre of staff from the White House and the Departments of Education, Justice, Health and Human Services, many of whom had participated in the September White House meeting. Their charge was to put together a program that would establish the federal government in a leadership position on the issue of school violence and safety.[21] Strong emphasis was placed on identifying the best and the brightest in the field who were working on school violence and safety issues.[22]

At this point Michael J. English, then Director of the Division of Knowledge Development and Systems Change at CMHS, attended his first school violence planning meeting at the Old Executive Office Building. Although CMHS's primary mandate at that time was to provide services to its priority populations—adults with severe mental illness and children with severe emotional disturbance—and although his agency engaged in little prevention work, Mike English believed strongly that he had a contribution to make. His boss, Bernie Arons, supported him in the effort.[23]

As members of the planning group discussed the more simplistic things that could be done, they repeatedly came back to the understanding that the real challenge would be to do what would have the most impact—and what also would get rave reviews at the upcoming conference.[24] During the course of that planning, with some encouragement from the White House, the group decided that, beyond the bully pulpit leadership of focusing national attention on the true nature of the problem and best practices to address it, they also would launch a new initiative that would help address the core problem.[25] "We began to look at the creation of programs that were much broader, much more comprehensive, much more in depth, than we traditionally did, if in fact we were going to have some impact on school safety," Bill Modzeleski recalled.[26]

Shay Bilchik observed that the federal government long had been criticized for operating within silos—government-speak for narrow, isolated areas of interest.[27] The silos reflected funding streams dictated by bureaucratic restrictions, not the real world of interconnections and fuzzy boundaries. But the program the planning group would work toward would try to address the interconnectedness of problems in communities—a new way for the government to do business.

The team all saw the advantages of creating a program that used the strengths and resources of all three agencies. It was clear to Modzeleski and his colleagues that to create safe schools:

"We couldn't do this merely with what we at the Department of Education were doing or what the Department of Justice was doing. We didn't have authority or funds. Furthermore, we all came to agree that this couldn't be just another categorical program, into which you put a few hundred thousand dollars and you do it for three or four years, and you walk away. We had to do something that would bring about structural change within a school system, within a community. The program must force school systems to collaborate and coordinate with others who had a responsibility for working with kids—namely the mental health system and the juvenile justice system."[28]

Attorney General's Multidepartmental Approach

> Early in 1993, my first year in Washington, I met Congressman Hamilton Fish and his wife. Mrs. Fish had been a mid-level political appointee at the Department of Commerce. I was telling them about my dream to see various agencies working together. She said that was going to be one of the most difficult things that I could undertake to do, because so many people were so involved in their specific structure in their department that it was hard to effect change. But we kept at it. Secretary Riley was very supportive. Secretary Shalala was very supportive. But it was a difficult thing to try to effect.[29]

Modzeleski at Education, English at HHS, and Seidman and Bilchik at Justice were on the same wave length as the Attorney General.

The group worked intensively on the framework for a comprehensive, coordinated, multidepartmental, community-based grant initiative to respond to and to prevent youth violence. Meeting at least weekly in person and more often on the phone, drawing agencies and staff into the process, and exchanging e-mailed flurries of draft concept papers, the group pulled together the outlines of a deliverable. But the feasibility of their ambitious plan initially faced skepticism at the White House. White House staff raised such prickly questions as, "Can you really do this? You can't announce something that you then can't pull off."[30]

The working group convinced the skeptics to let them continue to develop the concept and to try to pull some funds together. Shay Bilchik at OJJDP, for one, could offer from his shop some discretionary funds—funds not earmarked by Congress for specific purposes—for the violence prevention effort, a minimum of $3 million.[31] Major funding from Education would depend on Congressional appropriations, but the department could find a minimum of $11 million in its current program portfolio.[32] Mike English put $1 million of CMHS funds on the table. He told the group, "This is really important. CMHS wants to be involved." This offer gave him and CMHS "instant credibility," English recalled. He felt that committing the funds was a smart move, and Bernie Arons backed him.[33]

To be sure, Shay Bilchik explained, the multidisciplinary nature of the initiative they all envisioned presented significant barriers—resistance to the dramatic change required in the way the three agencies did business and the substantial hurdle of finding funds to support the initiative, to name just two. But the motivator to proceed with their plans was their understanding, drawn from long and specific experience, that the only successful approaches would be multisystemic approaches.[34] Sonia Chessen investigated which agencies would be most appropriate to involve in the planning and then worked to pull them—and their funding—together.

Another HHS agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), played a role in early planning for the youth violence initiative.[35] One of CDC's units is the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, whose mission includes prevention of death and disability due to violence,[36] and it seemed a perfect fit.

As it turned out, the issues of youth violence prevention and systems change were just too complex, and time was too short, to enable the planners to finalize the details of the initiative before the President announced it.[37]

White House Conference on School Safety

In the East Room on October 15, 1998, President Bill Clinton convened a day-long White House Conference on School Safety. The meeting focused on the causes of youth violence, prevention strategies that address youth violence, and specific programs demonstrated to reduce youth violence. Approximately two dozen speakers addressed the assembly, including the President, Vice President, First Lady, Mrs. Gore, the Attorney General and the Secretary of Education, members of Congress, educators and school administrators, local government and law enforcement officials, mental health services providers, students, and parents of victims of youth violence.[38]

In addition to the speakers and dignitaries, approximately one hundred participants attended the conference. This diverse group included students, parents, teachers, principals, school superintendents, members of law enforcement, experts from the medical and psychological fields, clergy and religious leaders, and other community representatives.[39] It was obvious that the planners had invited representatives of all the "stakeholder" groups they could imagine—anyone who might have an interest in addressing the issue of youth violence prevention.

Stressing that schools generally were safer than they had been just a few years earlier—and, in fact, safer than the community at large—the conference offered an opportunity, in the wake of the school shootings, for Americans to learn more about how they could make their own schools and communities safer.[40]

President Clinton announced several new initiatives. He proposed a new FEMA-like emergency program to help schools and local communities respond to school-related violent deaths, targeted resources for schools with serious crime problems, reforms to the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, a partnership with MTV to engage youth in solutions to violence, and a comprehensive, community-wide response to school safety and youth violence.[41]

This last initiative would help communities promote a coordinated, comprehensive response to school safety—a "Safe Schools/Safe Communities" initiative designed to help ten cities develop and implement community-wide school safety plans. At least $25 million in discretionary grants from the Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services was to be made available for this initiative.[42] This was the embryonic plan that the school safety team had labored to develop.

Post-Conference Collaboration

The hard work of pulling together this unprecedented multidepartmental collaboration resumed when the interagency team reconvened the week after the conference. At their previous meeting, they had agreed to initiate their respective constituencies early in the process and to share ideas as to how best to develop this joint effort. Each agency was to develop a list of constituents from the emergency, education, justice, and mental health areas for the October 22 interagency group meeting.[43]

The team's charge was to complete negotiations on the details of the comprehensive program to prevent youth violence, and they felt urgency to work fast and work smart. In order for grant funds to be distributed before the end of that fiscal year, September 30, 1999, many traps had to be run.

Beyond the pressure from the calendar, high-profile cases of school violence continued to fuel that sense of urgency. Charles Simon, who had worked with Ricki Seidman on a number of

projects, pointed out, that if "you have the urgency and you have the inspiration and vision from the leadership, that's when you have the opportunity to create something that breaks the mold and does something special."[44]

"We were all partners at the table to figure out how to create this initiative, how to fund this initiative, how to identify the barriers that would be present, either at the federal level or the consumer level," remembered Shay Bilchik.[45] From Justice, Education, and Health and Human Services, folks had signed on to do what they could.

Congress Acts

Executive Branch agencies were not alone in addressing the urgent issue of school safety. Knowing that their constituents demanded action, Congress funded a major youth violence prevention initiative on October 21, 1998, barely a week after the White House Conference. In an omnibus appropriations bill for fiscal 1999, legislators appropriated $165 million to the Department of Education for new efforts aimed at drug and violence prevention in the schools. In addition, Congress earmarked $40 million in extra funds for CMHS, working together with the Department of Education, to create a violence prevention initiative.[46]

Sponsored by Senator Arlen Specter (R-Penn.), who chaired Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, the provisions of the new law surprised many people. After all, the Center for Mental Health Services was not the most obvious agency to be given responsibility for a *school-based* initiative to *prevent violence*.

Brian Flynn understood the importance of having congressional champions, and on this project "Specter was one of them." Flynn, then Director of CMHS's Division of Special Populations and Projects and a close colleague of Mike English, joined the leadership group soon after Congress passed the budget appropriations bill.[48]

Congressional Appropriations

From SAMHSA's budget allocation language: "The conference agreement includes $40,000,000 within the Center for Mental Health Services...to improve mental health services for children with emotional and behavioral disorders who are at risk of violent behavior. There are concerns about the recent outbreaks of violence in our Nation's schools and it is believed that one important tool to address this problem is to improve children's mental health services. This additional funding will assist schools in identifying and addressing the mental health needs of children and preventing aggressive behaviors. Schools are an ideal location for children's mental health activities because they facilitate peer-based programs, comprehensive approaches, and access to professionals in a familiar environment where many of the problem behaviors occur. It is intended that SAMHSA will collaborate with the Department of Education to develop a coordinated approach."

From Education's budget allocation language: "The conference agreement also includes $40,000,000 to improve children's mental health services under SAMHSA for a total of $165,000,000 for new efforts aimed at drug and violence prevention in the schools."[47]

CMHS: Full Partnership

CMHS had hit the appropriations jackpot with their $40 million Congressional windfall. But, Sonia Chessen recalled, CMHS was "not at all sure how much of it they wanted to contribute.[49] Knowing there was a new pot of money, Ricki Seidman and Bill Modzeleski traveled the thirty miles from downtown Washington to Rockville, Maryland, to enlist Bernie Arons in the coalition. Mike English and others attended the meeting, at which Modzeleski and Seidman urged, "Let's cooperate and do something different."[50]

Seidman remembered Arons as being open to the idea.[51] Seidman and Modzeleski wanted CMHS to ante up its whole pot. But, Chessen remembered, Arons and SAMHSA Administrator Nelba Chavez "didn't want to do that, and in fact they ended up not doing it."[52]

Instead SAMHSA and CMHS decided to establish their own small initiative and to divide the money between the interagency safe schools program and its own initiative, the School Action Grant Program, now known as the Youth Violence Prevention Program. CMHS was concerned about its traditional constituency—mental health consumers and providers and their advocates—who would expect the money to remain in the mental health field.[53]

Sonia Chessen initially thought CMHS would put just a token amount into the interagency program. "But Mike English pushed hard. It made a huge difference, because it made CMHS a real, full partner." The significant funds—CMHS contributed $25 million—"totally changed the flavor of the whole initiative. Justice and Ed knew that. They could fund everything but mental health treatment. They knew they needed CMHS to fund treatment." Besides anteing up the major part of its appropriation, CMHS demonstrated the depth of its commitment to serve youth by agreeing that the money would go through schools, and not the community mental health entity, to pay for mental health services for students.[54]

Pooling Funds: A Major Innovation

In the end, a single interagency pot of funds was established. The Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program infused $60 million into the initiative; Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention put in $15 million for prevention activities; and SAMHSA contributed $25 million to support mental health treatment services for students and their families, and early childhood development programs.[55] In addition Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) contributed $7 million to fund the hiring of police or school resource officers in successful grantees' schools.[56]

The transfer of funds by two departments into one pot of money at a third, with *joint* management of the funds, was a feature unique to the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative. To be sure, successful interdepartmental programs had been set in place in the past, but the team's research revealed that they had never involved more than two departments, joint management, or such a high level of resources. "We spent a lot of time in figuring out how to make it work," Ricki Seidman observed, "which we wouldn't have done if it had been done before."[57]

The stumbling block was that each department's statutory restrictions limited what its funds could be used for. A special working group of representatives from each of the agencies tackled

Politics and Pooling

Before the advent of Safe Schools/Healthy Students, a typical federal government response to an epidemic of school shootings might have been for Justice to fund more metal detectors in schools, community policing, and other security responses. Education would work on some school issues. CMHS would offer some mental health programs. But, former CMHS Director Bernie Arons explained, it was evident that "given the number of schools across the country and the size of the program, it could very well have happened that no one school would actually have all those aspects covered in any way."[61]

It was imperative to devise a way to work together on a comprehensive plan for communities.

Indeed, Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala had a strong interest in how to make government more broadly responsive to community needs,[62] and she ultimately supported Safe Schools/Healthy Students. But during the negotiation period, HHS's upper echelons communicated limited enthusiasm for commingling CMHS's funds. In a typical pooling arrangement, after all, when one department's money migrates to another, it can easily become that *other* department's money. "And everybody has constituencies," Sonia Chessen observed.[63]

But the tide eventually changed, Anne Mathews-Younes recalled, and folks began to think, "'All the money belongs to the American people, it's not SAMHSA's money. If you collaborate with a partner, you're going to get value added.' But that's a process. People have to grow into seeing that as value added."[64]

At several points, though, it seemed that procedurally the departments would not be able to pool the funds. Certain of CMHS's auditing and money management requirements were different from those of Education, and it looked like those technical kinds of things were not going to work. But the stakes were high and the motivation strong, and they did work out the technical details. Brian Flynn cited one of the motivating factors, "Nobody wanted the specter of our inability to solve problems being raised."[65]

It was a daunting, time-consuming task to work through those difficult obstacles. Bernie Arons expressed a unique perspective on merging departments' funds. One department can give money to other departments for particular purposes under limited circumstances, and for that, he argued, "there are probably good reasons in law and public policy." After all, he continued:

"Why have Congress appropriate money to HHS just to have it be sent over to Justice or the Defense Department? It would lose the whole concept of the separation of powers. If Congress appropriated money and the President could then just move it and put it all into whatever [he wanted], that would destroy that whole structure. There's good reason why there's a firewall. But at the same time, that results in certain restrictions that, in some cases, communities find difficult to use federal funding most productively."[66]

In the end, Brian Flynn saw merging the funds as powerful symbolism of the value and innovativeness of this program. "We gave ours to Education, and Education made the grants. You just don't do that in the federal government! You don't fight for money—and then give it to another agency!"[67]

(But Safe Schools/Healthy Students has become precedent. When at least two leaders of the initiative moved on to other professional opportunities, they took with them the concepts and structures of Safe Schools/Healthy Students. See the Chapter 5 section on Emulations and Knowledge Transfer.)

the issue of pooling the money, including Charlotte Gillespie and then Debbie Rudy from Education, Cynthia Schwimer from OJJDP, and Mike English from HHS.[58] Would two agencies transfer their funds to the third? Or would everyone keep their money and a method devised to manage it centrally? The leaders ultimately decided that the Department of Education would serve as fiscal agent, with the other agencies transferring funds through an interagency agreement.[59] Teams of lawyers came together to resolve the issues. Legislative counsel from each department worked together to make sure that no department ended up giving away parts of its mission.[60]

SAMHSA/HHS funded the national evaluation and CMHS funded the technical assistance and communications components of the initiative (see Chapter 7, Critical Support Components).

The law that assigned responsibility to CMHS to work with the Department of Education in addressing issues of school violence offered little guidance for the collaboration. Bernie Arons told his division directors, "Let's get together and think about what we might do as a center and where this might be housed." English did not attend that meeting, but the others discussed some possibilities. Arons asked them to come back to him with a proposal.

Flynn suggested to English, "This is an excellent opportunity for collaboration between our two divisions. It crosses over both of our mandates and priorities. Why don't we come up with a proposal that talks about shared responsibility?"

The two men developed a proposal that would house the program in both their divisions, with leadership shared by both. Arons signed off on their plan.[68]

Justice's Funds

Even when ample funding had become available, the difficulties in devising a workable multidepartmental collaboration remained. In no small part the challenges arose because two separate Congressional appropriations and oversight committees had jurisdiction over the initiative. CMHS and Education had been given extra money to work in the area of school safety—but Justice had not. Justice had to fund its portion differently, and did so out of its discretionary portfolio.[69]

Shay Bilchik pointed out that Justice had vetted with its own congressional appropriators the plan to pool funds. The appropriators wanted Justice to continue to be accountable to its appropriators and to make sure that the initiative was doing something beneficial to support communities. And Bilchik understood the necessity to interact with Congress to try to ensure that the out-year money would keep flowing, that Congress would not treat this as the Year of School Violence and the next year, the Year of Environmental Clean-Up.[70]

As it turned out, Justice appropriators never earmarked any safe schools monies for Justice, and each year after the first, it has been a challenge to find funds for the initiative in OJJDP's discretionary portfolio.[71] The first year OJJDP had contributed $15 million. Several years later, they had put in just $200,000.[72]

"So one would think, 'Oh, this is a crisis'," Anne Mathews-Younes commented. "Or, 'OJJDP can't be a partner because they can't pay any more.' But we really treated it as, 'Okay, so Dad lost his job. What are you going to do? Throw him out of the family?' No. It was like a family. We were always modeling how we would like everybody to treat each other."[73]

Bill Modzeleski agreed. "It was a natural" for OJJDP and its administrator, Shay Bilchik, to be part of the team anyway. "Despite the obvious difficulties with Congressional appropriations, the financial ramifications were less important than the fact of collaboration."[74]

Modeling Collaboration: The Consolidated Application

For years, federal staff had heard community leaders and program directors describe their difficulties in finding and coordinating funding to provide needed services. "You have to go to mental health to get mental health dollars and justice to get justice dollars," they complained. "Why can't the feds pool their monies? The feds are always asking us to collaborate at the community level. Why don't you guys do it?"[75]

So they did it.

And virtually everyone who played a part in developing the initiative acknowledged the importance of modeling for the field what they had expected the field to do for years—work in collaboration. Mike English repeatedly said, "If we can't collaborate within the government, how can we expect localities to collaborate?"[76]

In the past, individual agencies may have said, "Want to partner with me? I could use $200,000. Can you hand over $200,000?" That's minor stuff, usually between two agencies at best, Shay Bilchik explained. In fact, many of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students collaborators had gotten to know each other through that kind of partnership. But partnering at this new level of magnitude and saying to local communities, "You're going to have to do only one application. We're going to streamline the reporting requirements," was a welcome change at the federal level.[78]

The pooled funds from the three departments would go to school districts in local communities. Applicants—local educational agencies—would be the grantees, but only in partnership with local justice officials and the local mental health authority.[79] The Attorney General was the architect for the idea that in order for a school district to be eligible, the local police chief and director of community mental health services had to be part of the project as well.[80] The belief was that if those partners—and they were not necessarily schools' traditional partners—worked together at the local level, they would have a profound impact on safety in schools and also in the communities where those schools were located.[81]

The single application forced coordination in local communities. Previously, even if grants from separate agencies were conditioned on local interagency collaboration, that mandate was not "nearly as compelling as a single application that requires that up-front commitment and that weaves together the various strands," Charles Simon explained.[82]

Single Application

Shay Bilchik explained that it was a barrier to say to a community, "Look, we've got multiple funding streams here." It was far better to say, "Here's an opportunity for you to apply for this initiative and bring us all together and, in one application, do what we would have done in our own individual silos. Form your multisystems team. Plan for this grant."

All the money came together as a package. The highest levels of success required this kind of collaboration.[77]

To Brian Flynn, the unique interagency collaboration in this program is the aspect from which one can learn the most. Shay Bilchik pointed out that George W. Bush's administration has continued the conversation about partnerships across federal agencies. Safe Schools/Healthy Students was the initiative that proved it could be done.[83]

Cultural Competence in Collaboration

The principal players described the early—and recurring—challenges of trying to reconcile language differences, particularly in designing the approach for the initiative. The same word often meant different things to different people, depending on their discipline. A key task was for the players to learn each other's language and departmental culture.[84] But any of several intense conversations, had misunderstandings not been resolved, might have sunk a less seaworthy initiative.

For example, as the discussion began on youth violence as a "public health" issue,[85] Education's Bill Modzeleski responded, "These are education programs. These aren't health programs." It was clear to Brian Flynn that they were dealing with a professional culture issue.[86]

The public health model is a model of interaction that involves monitoring an environment, implementing a wide variety of interventions by a range of service providers, assessing the impact of those interventions, and observing how pathology moves through systems. Finally, as Modzeleski "talked about the approach that he wanted, it was the public health approach. When we said 'public health', he heard 'health'." We were just dealing with different labels, coming from our different professional and organizational cultures."[87]

Justice also subscribed to the public health approach. In fact, Shay Bilchik recalled, as early as 1993 the Attorney General was called the "second secretary of HHS, because she saw youth violence as a public health issue."[88] Even so, discussions also worked through the criminal justice connotation of "surveillance"—not watching out for crime in this case, but a concept inherent in the public health context of determining the prevalence of violence.[89]

And, depending on the issue it dealt with, each department had its own definition of early intervention on the continuum of youth violence. For OJJDP early intervention meant interventions with 10 and 11 year olds before they became delinquent. For SAMHSA it meant early childhood. Everybody said, "We totally believe in early intervention. It's really important." But the age continuum was a huge issue, Sonia Chessen recalled.[90]

In the end the initiative adopted the concept of a continuum of interventions. After all, the initiative was built on a public health model. CDC contributed to the initiative guidance in framing the issue of youth violence in terms of a public health decision-making model—how to attack a problem as a public health problem and move forward.[91]

How-to guides for collaboratives often emphasize understanding the unique cultures of its partners, and cultural differences in addition to language interpretations had become apparent. Nevertheless, Shay Bilchik explained, the importance of cultural differences among the several agencies was muted by the familiarity of the agency's representatives with each other. With trust already at the table, it was easier to say, "Okay, our culture is normally one where we are slow moving; we normally don't transfer money. We'd be loathe to think about what would happen if we had to go back to our appropriators and they said, 'We finally gave you this money. Now you gave it away'."[92]

The key leaders used that element of trust. Modzeleski and English had had a long-standing relationship, and Seidman and Modzeleski developed the type of relationship over time that Bilchik already had had with Modzeleski for four years. Although trust worked at the negotiation table, Bilchik recalled, it was still necessary on occasion to put on a great presentation for a superior who might reflect a turf-bound agency culture, who didn't have the relationships, and who needed to be convinced.[93]

Chapter 2: Program Design

Negotiating the Nuts and Bolts

Members of the team had meshed their views early on the importance of mental health in school violence prevention and developed a common image of the elements they wanted to see in the program. Mike English had seen it as a challenge to convince his colleagues that psychologically healthy children were likely to be less violent, while at the same time reassuring them that the mental health folks respected their safety issues, Bill Modzeleski observed. They all came to agree that youth violence prevention was not merely a matter of arresting kids or of zero tolerance policies for guns in schools. Instead it had to do with a combination of early childhood and prevention and mental health assessments and referrals and mental health services, and they went forward in developing a comprehensive, unified strategy for both school safety and healthy child development.[94]

But "once we had a program, we had to figure out what do we do with it," Bill Modzeleski explained.[95]

During late 1998 and into early 1999, the team worked on the initiative's nuts and bolts, the hundreds of programmatic and administrative details that arose as they went through the process. Issues on the agenda for the school safety working group meeting of November 16, 1998, are illustrative:

Comprehensive Grant Process

1. Determination of money going into the pot and accompanying requirements for use
2. Administrative options
3. Number of communities/grants to be distributed; funding levels

4. Timeline

Other (Updates)
FEMA-like response (Project SERV)
Confidentiality/Information Sharing Working Group

The group addressed such questions as: Whose forms would be used? Which statutory restraints would guide spending the funds? How would they develop review processes? How would grant size be determined? Important milestones for the grant program would include publication of a notice of availability of funds in the *Federal Register*.

Mike English's informal notes from the November 16th meeting, which was held in the Justice Department's Command Center, reveal the possibility that Justice could contribute funds from its Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services (COPS) to hire school-based police officers. (The COPS program would join the coalition and make funds available to successful applicants, but as an add-on program, not as part of the pooled funding.)

Perhaps most important, English's notes indicate that the team had agreed that a single application would be solicited from applicants for the pooled funds—an innovative idea. A small group would articulate the budgetary issues for three categories—general (Education and OJJDP), COPS, and mental health.

The unified strategy for school safety and mental health would combine six elements:

1. School safety. Possible activities would include building partnerships with local law enforcement, redesigning the school facility to improve safety, and developing and implementing security measures.
2. Alcohol and other drug and violence prevention and early intervention programs. Prevention and intervention practice should seek to involve families and communities in the adoption of programs that coordinate strategies aimed at reshaping norms and attitudes about drug use and violence.
3. School and community mental health preventive and treatment intervention services. Services might include screening and assessment, appropriate school-based mental health prevention and intervention services, training for school personnel, and supportive services to parents.
4. Early childhood psychosocial and emotional development services. Activities under this element help make services more accessible and available to high-risk families with young children and to high-risk mothers prior to the birth of a child.
5. Educational reform. Schools that function well emphasize academic achievement for all students, safety, and socially appropriate behavior. Activities related to school reform would address high standards for all children, class-size reduction, technology in the classroom, teacher preparation and training, after-school activities, and disciplinary alternatives.
6. Safe school policies. School-wide safety policies are most effective when they systematically address the needs of all students in the school. Effective school safety policies are those that clearly state the standards of behavior expected and provide for penalties that are fairly and equitably imposed, stipulate zero tolerance policies for drugs and weapons,

address truancy, and have in place information systems for reporting and analyzing violent and noncriminal incidents on school property.[96]

These elements were "central to the initiative," Mike English explained. "Three of the elements related to safety and three related to healthy students."[97]

By mid-November 1998, thinking also had begun on technical assistance for applicants and for sustainability of the grant program. In his notes English marked the need to "identify how we will help communities prepare great apps" and the possibility of a requirement for matching state funds to replace a declining federal contribution in the out-years of the initiative. Administrative issues to be addressed included the nature and structure of the peer review process, including budget reviews (separate and/or joint decisions among agencies) and the degree of comprehensiveness to be required of a successful applicant. With emphasis he noted, *"school districts are applicants."*[98]

English noted the dichotomy of needs between urban and rural school districts and a potential need to offer planning grants to facilitate program implementation in the communities. Early in the process, then, the players had considered the difficulties that communities would face in operationalizing their programs.

English's notes from the November 23, 1998, meeting confirmed that the interagency working group wanted a "single plan." Funds would be distributed to grantees after joint decisions were made based on a unified application. The planners adopted the strategy that applicants must address all the elements of the program, or they would be ineligible for funds. From the applicants' perspective, it would be a "seamless application" with a single award, funded by activity. Applicants must present plans to adopt evidence-based programs and demonstrate evidence of the prior existence of a community partnership. The working group also discussed the need for a five-year program, versus a one- or a three-year program.

Over the course of the program development process, the interagency group focused considerable attention on evidence-based practices. At their November 30 meeting, they discussed their agencies' views of effective/best/promising practices (see also the section on Evidence Base below).

English's notes for the November 30 meeting indicate that a small group was to flesh out the proposal to present to the DPC and OMB to "obtain buy-in before Christmas." After the holiday, the team would draft the application package. In addition, work had begun to focus on the review criteria and to establish core components that each applicant must address.

Progress on the initiative was documented by a growing list of questions and answers. This working memorandum of understanding was Bill Modzeleski's construct, but, he acknowledged, "We were all involved." His view was that Q&As are easy to deal with. "If you come to an agreement on the question that we all raised," he observed, "then the answer is relatively simple."[99]

In December 1998, two months after Congress passed its youth violence prevention appropriation, Bernie Arons rounded up CMHS staff to participate in activities to create the interdepartmental grant and the technical assistance contract that would support the grantees.[100] SAMHSA/CMHS also developed a working list of desirable program components of an interagency grant program on school violence prevention.[101]

New Year's Day 1999 rang in with the sixth draft of the Q&As under consideration. After a series of stabs, the initiative finally had a title, the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, and the structure and function of the initiative had begun to take shape.

Mike English observed that this initiative was about not only safe schools, but also healthy kids.[102] Shay Bilchik recalled that it had been a fun challenge to create a short title that would make it clear what the program was about—and to draw people's interest enough for them to read and respond to a grant program's request for proposals.[103]

Justice's Charles Simon observed that it "almost didn't matter in which order you put the words. Instead of saying Safe Schools/Healthy Students, you could talk about safe students and healthy schools. You could mix and match the words however you want, and still capture the same comprehensive theme.[104]

Evolution of a Name

The name of the program evolved over several iterations, ultimately to become Safe Schools/Healthy Students. Other suggestions had included:

- Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Environments for Learning
- Comprehensive School/Community Safety Plan
- Safe Learning Environments: The Community-Wide, Comprehensive Approach
- Safe Schools/Safe Communities
- Safe Communities/Safe Schools
- TODAY's Children (Toward Opportunities Directed At Youth & Children)
- STAR Children (Secure, Thriving, And Resilient Children)
- Interagency STAR Students Initiative
- Mentally Healthy School Communities: Secure-Thriving-Adept-Resilient Children
- Safe Schools/Healthy Kids

Essential Staff

From the start, principal players had included Shay Bilchik, Bill Modzeleski, Ricki Seidman, Sonia Chessen, Mike English, and Brian Flynn. Flynn, whose early participation had been interrupted by an extended USAID mission to Africa following the August 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, returned to the table to represent CMHS jointly with English.[105]

After just a few early meeting of the key leaders, the complement of personnel on the initiative had begun to grow quickly. A second-in-command group joined the deliberations, including Betty Chemers and Charles Simon from Justice. (Upon the eventual departure of Shay Bilchik, Betty Chemers took over the OJJDP reins on the initiative; when Ricki Seidman left Justice, Charles Simon, who had worked on initial planning prior to the White House Conference, assumed her title.)[106] From the Department of Education came Charlotte Gillespie, a supervisor in the Department of Education familiar with the discretionary grant process, and Bryan Williams, who had had several years of experience in working on interdepartmental grant program collaborations.[107] Ben Tucker and Megan Murphy from the COPS Office also joined the project.[108]

The staff or "worker-bee" level, as the group was known affectionately, was led by Kellie Dressler of OJJDP. One member was an evaluator on detail to the Department of Education from CDC, Meg Small.[109] Anne Mathews-Younes at CMHS became involved at the staff level, and the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH), the federal government's mental health research agency, lent Eve Moscicki to the working group.[110] Moscicki provided guidance on the research on violence prevention activities and program evaluation, and later participated in other aspects of the initiative, including peer review and grantee selection.[111] CMHS's Gail Ritchie, who served as government project officer for the technical assistance component, joined as well.[112]

1999—A New Year of Collaboration

The team melded their perspectives as they designed Safe Schools/Healthy Students. The common denominator was for grantees to create a healthier school environment conducive to learning and a healthier neighborhood environment to facilitate positive, healthy development for kids. Each community would plan a comprehensive program based on its own needs and priorities.[113] The theory was that, in the communities, police would focus *not* just on enforcement, and educators would focus *not* just on education, and mental health providers would focus *not* just on mental health. Each would work together with the others, understanding that the elements were closely woven together, to attack the problem in a meaningful way with a comprehensive, collaborative approach to the problem.[114]

But the process of hammering out the initiative's features took enormous amounts of time, as the team of busy officials deliberated everything from major public policy to program design to tiny little details. They came to realize that they could not continue at that level of effort, and they set up a management group, the Interagency Policy Team (IPT), which tried to confine its deliberations to policy-oriented issues. If the IPT had not made that shift, Brian Flynn asserted, the initiative might have "collapsed of its own weight."[115]

On January 7, 1999, the IPT circulated the first draft of a comprehensive work plan for the Safe Schools/Healthy Students program. The plan identified three overarching categories of activities—program development, research and evaluation, and training and technical assistance. The plan set out two full pages of tasks that addressed solely program development, together with ambitious target dates for completion.[116]

The expanding staff broke into interrelated subcommittees to take on the issues, with participation based on individuals' expertise and interests. The first order of business was to identify a team to write the program announcement and grant application. OJJDP's Kellie Dressler was enlisted to write the documents and to coordinate the process.

Another group developed the text for announcements of the initiative in the *Federal Register.* By the end of January 1999, a draft pre-announcement was circulated for comment.[117] On February 5, 1999, a notice of intent to make funds available for the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative appeared in the *Federal Register.*[118]

Still other tasks included developing regional meetings to promote the program, identifying and addressing administrative impediments to implementation, and developing an interagency process to review the applications.

An initial issue was deciding how to divide responsibility among the departmental partners. From the start, each agency was to take on a role and a responsibility. Because Education would provide the majority of program dollars, that department took on stewardship of the money. HHS took the lead on the technical assistance and communications components and OJJDP on the evaluation. The leadership team selected individuals to head up each of those functions.

Grant-Writing Team

Led by Kellie Dressler, the grant-writing team consisted of two or three staff people each from OJJDP, SAMHSA, and Safe and Drug-Free Schools.[119] The group met generally twice a week for about four weeks and also contacted each other frequently by telephone and e-mail. Much of the responsibility for writing and compiling the application package eventually fell to Dressler and Bryan Williams at Education.[120]

The grant-writing team developed an outline and a time line that everyone discussed, modified, and agreed to. "And then we divvied up who was going to do what, and went from there." The grant writers set out to describe the program and to incorporate the concepts formulated by the larger working group and the models they proposed. Because the goal was to put together a single application package, the grant-writing team had to get to know and understand the grant requirements from three different agencies and to figure out where grant requirements were the same. Where they differed, the team had to determine whether or not, or how, to require this or find their way around that requirement.[121] The leadership "put a lot of faith in their staffs in order to allow us the room to make those decisions," Bryan Williams remembered.[122]

Consensus: A Practical Application

"When the grant-writing team sat together in a room to tackle a task, the consensus-building process was easy," Kellie Dressler remarked. It was "just a matter of figuring out who could best write this section, who could best write that section." But consensus building with the senior-level folks was more challenging, because they had the vision for the initiative. "They all agreed on the desired outcome for the initiative, but everybody had a little twist on it, so we had to figure out how to merge this all together to make sense."[124]

Dressler's greatest challenge as coordinator was working out how to take all the different pieces from the three different agencies and meld them into that single application. Some necessary pieces reflected an agency's requirements or mission or perspective on a particular issue around violence prevention or youth development, but she found she needed to make judgment calls at times. "Part of my consensus building was looking at the provisions that people from the various agencies said had to be in the application and to query them" hard on whether it truly needed to be included. She recalled doing "a lot of that pushing-the-envelope kind of work."[125]

The grant writers—and ultimately Kellie Dressler—were the keepers of the document, and the application package developed interactively. The grant-writing team drafted a piece, shared it with the IPT, received feedback, and then proceeded with the next iteration. Kellie Dressler viewed this process as an important reason why the collaboration worked as well as it did. The grant-writing team developed consensus around what they incorporated into the application package at each iteration and then took the package to their bosses. Staff and the IPT convened to work through the package *together*. Dressler prepared agendas to keep the discussions targeted; the group discussed the issues on the table and came to consensus. "You never had one agency saying, 'I like it', or 'I'm not budging on this'. There was a dynamic process between the agencies, at both the project staff level and the managers'."[123]

Both before and during the application development process, tricky issues occasionally stalled the process. The issues demanded the concentrated attention of the various committees, and the IPT, to resolve them. Bill Modzeleski recalled that the problems in developing the solicitation typically were not substantive, but rather just process and definitional issues. The IPT strove to maintain balance to assure that folks from no one agency felt that they were being short-changed—and then wouldn't cooperate. The leaders looked at the initiative as a long-term effort, not just something to dabble in for just one year, "so it was important that whatever we did, we maintained the support of an agency over a period of time."[126]

Evidence-Based Practices

An example of an overarching issue was how to incorporate the evidence base on youth violence prevention into the initiative. The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative itself is based on evidence that a comprehensive, integrated, community-wide approach promotes healthy childhood development and addresses the problems of school violence and drug use.[127] Embedded in the program's design is the expectation that grantees would tailor their proposed strategies to their local dynamics and to implement practices and programs based on *evidence that they work* to prevent violence and a broad range of other negative outcomes, and that they promote healthy development for young people.[128]

Before these principles were set forth, however, the IPT encountered a significant logjam in their discussions on evidence-based prevention programs and determination of appropriate evidence.[129] The concept of implementing evidence-based programs and practices had gained some momentum in the field as the knowledge base about effective prevention programs began to grow. "We all agreed that we needed to attach science to the initiative to avoid schools frittering away funds on programs that don't work," remembered Bill Modzeleski. But in back-and-forth debate, the conversations were difficult: "Whose science-based programs were we talking about—education, justice, mental health? How much rigor should we require? How much innovation and adaptation can we permit?"[130]

A Growing Evidence Base

Over the last decade or so, the federal government has measured systematically the success of the programs it funds. Anne Mathews-Younes noted that "the prevention science base is growing by leaps and bounds, and the results are good. We see what can be done when we implement effective early intervention programs. We know now that mental health is critical to everything we do. If you're not mentally healthy, you're not healthy."[131]

The leaders also took pains not to put the federal government in the position of endorsing one particular program over another. To avoid this possibility, they decided to provide applicants with the tools by which they themselves could recognize a high-quality program versus one that was not as rigorous. As Eve Moscicki explained, "This one was tested by randomized controlled trials, and we see that these are very strong effects, and the effects have been sustained for over a year. Okay, we'll take this program."[132]

The team worked the issues through to consensus. To reflect the IPT's decisions, the grant-writing team drafted a complex system to address the levels of evidence that applicants were to identify for their proposed programs. The application package provided definitions, but it was a "tricky business to apply the levels," Kellie Dressler recalled.[133] This aspect of the program proved also to complicate the peer review process, in which reviewers scored the applications based on the levels of evidence. (In subsequent Safe Schools/Healthy Students solicitations, the requirement to define levels of evidence was dropped, although applicants still must select and implement evidence-based programs.[134])

Youth Violence Prevention Presentation

In mid-December 1999, Mike English and Brian Flynn presented a slide show to the Center for Mental Health Services' National Advisory Council. Set against a backdrop of current youth violence statistics, the two men described the public health model upon which the initiative was based:

- Community-based approach
- Health-event surveillance
- Epidemiological analysis
- Intervention design and evaluation
- Outreach/education/information dissemination

And they summarized the initiative's philosophical foundations:

- Interagency collaboration
- Evidence-based practices
- Community engagement
- Technological advancement
- Equal participation of the agencies

Chapter 3: Grant Program Specifics

The grant writers and the program pioneers eventually put all the puzzle pieces together. Highlights of the program and the process are described in this section.

Three Partners

The Safe Schools/Healthy Students program announcement explained that applicants were to show evidence of a community partnership composed, at a minimum, of the local education authority, local public mental health authority, local law enforcement agency, family members, students, and juvenile justice officials. Their application was to include a written agreement that described the goals and objectives of the partnership and a delineation of the roles and responsibilities of the partners.[135]

It was clear to the planners, as they designed the initiative, that school districts would be involved. After all, that was where most of the target population was to be found. And it was clear to the planners that the local public mental health authority would be involved in referral, treatment, and follow-up by the specialty mental health system for adolescents with serious mental health problems.

But, remembered Bill Modzeleski, the group discussed at some length the role and responsibility of the justice system.[136] After all, most of the funding that OJJDP would contribute was slotted for prevention. No monies were earmarked for community justice organizations within communities, Sonia Chessen observed, such as family courts or probation officers.[137] "The balance we struck was that applications required three original signatures, including the school administrator, the police chief, and the public mental health organization," Modzeleski stated.[138]

Target Population

The idea behind the initiative was to develop the knowledge of what works to prevent youth violence. A comprehensive approach to the multifaceted target population was important in this regard. Safe Schools/Healthy Students set in place certain guidelines to ensure meaningful results.

Parts of a School District. Safe Schools/Healthy Students permitted targeting a limited number of schools within a school district. Part of that decision was recognition of limited resources and great need. "The whole pot of money could go to New York City," Anne Mathews-Younes explained, for example, but the funds could not be stretched to reach every school.[139] Shay Bilchik pointed out that how grantees selected its school district or feeder pattern would tell a lot about the strength of their thinking, whether or not they would "cream off the top." In other instances, smaller communities might partner together and apply jointly for the funds.[140]

Beyond the Schools. The grant program focuses on school systems and also on their broader communities. Remarked Charles Simon, if you had a "phenomenal school that exists as an island, there's value to that. It's better than having a terrible school that's *not* an island in a very difficult setting. But you want to focus on making that school a wonderful place—and then, in order to shore that up, to make sure that the context in which that school exists is supportive as well."[141]

Safe Schools/Healthy Students leaders knew about high drop-out rates in many schools. In some of the instances where there had been school shootings, the students had been suspended. But why would you limit the reach of your program, Shay Bilchik questioned, when you're trying to create safe schools and healthy students? "Those students need to be in schools. Safe schools are impacted or created by healthy communities around them. If gang violence is raging a block away from my school, driven by school drop-outs, then I've failed in the expansiveness of my thinking about how to create a healthy environment."[142]

Neither justice nor mental health funds were tied specifically into schools, and the initiative took a community-wide approach. "The best thing we could do was to bring kids back into the mainstream, back into a form of prosocial behavior, as well as to keep kids from falling out," Bilchik added.[143]

Early Childhood. One might think that CMHS's Mike English would have been the prime mover in promoting a focus on early childhood in the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative. In fact, that was only partially true. English asserted that "SAMHSA believes in early childhood. We need to have an early childhood component."[144] Of course Ricki Seidman and Shay Bilchik were well aware of the Attorney General's deep interest in intervening extremely early in the cycle of violence and in promoting healthy development.[145] Bill Modzeleski ultimately embraced the concept, but at the Department of Education, his world was the school-age world, as Sonia Chessen put it,[146] and age "zero to three" was beyond his daily experience.

The early childhood component would permit school districts to include programming for children before they entered school. It was possible to implement home visits by nurses with this program, and if a mother with a five-year-old has another baby and suffers from depression,

Safe Schools could provide support services for them.[147] Eve Moscicki concurred that including children in families, particularly in early childhood, was important to prepare young children for success in school.[148]

Three-Year Grants

The Safe Schools/Healthy Students team set a three-year grant cycle, despite the risk of funding cuts in the out-years. As is customary, Congress had appropriated funds for only one fiscal year. It was a leap of faith that the program would not be ended prematurely.

In fact many local groups were advocating for a program that would last five years or even more, but the team decided on a length of time that would tell communities, "This isn't about a one- or two-year shot," the norm in the past for many grant programs. With three years, grantees had a chance to "do the developmental work, get your start-up going, and then let this program take full bloom," Shay Bilchik explained. The IPT anticipated that grantees would have enough time to demonstrate outcomes that reflected the goals of the project.[149]

At the start of the program, Bilchik related, some "congressional folks questioned the multiyear commitments." But he felt that members of Congress should learn from its constituents about what they expected in terms of fiscal responsibility. These constituents had developed lessons learned from prior collaborations; for example, the best people will not accept a job to participate in a one-year grant.[150]

Even with a three-year grant, though, grantees have required more time to make a difference (see Chapter 6 on Planning Time for New Grantees).

Eligible Activities. Eligible activities for grantees pertained to the specific authorizations of the three departments. The range of activities included (1) what the authorization limited you to do with that particular type of funding, and (2) how that element cross-cut into what the initiative expected from grantees, which was to develop multisystems thinking. So Justice money could be used for juvenile justice interventions and prevention and child victimization. Education puts certain restrictions on its funds, and so does HHS for mental health.[158] As they defined the eligible activities, the planners kept at the forefront of their minds the necessity to track spending by category and agency.[159]

Evaluation. Each site's development and implementation of a comprehensive, integrated program that addresses the six elements of the initiative was to be evaluated at the national and local levels. (See Chapter 7, Critical Support Components, for a discussion of this component.)

Diversity and Special Populations

It was important to reach multiple populations around the country. "The shootings certainly were rural and suburban and urban; grants should go to communities that reflected that," Shay Bilchik pointed out. Although the initiative was designed to provide services in communities, and not to conduct research, a comprehensive evaluation called for a diversity of settings to see what worked

where.[151] No one region had a monopoly on youth violence, and grants would be awarded to sites nationwide.

To reflect the diversity across the country, the team decided to target urban and suburban sites, and also rural and tribal communities. Special education, juvenile justice, early childhood, older adolescents—all were important aspects of the youth spectrum for whom to target local programming.[152]

The team allocated the funds to sites according to categories of "urbanicity." Bryan Williams researched the Department of Education's definitions of the terms "rural," "suburban," and "urban," which were based on the numbers of students served. Safe Schools/Healthy Students applied these definitions in its work.[153] The team allocated $9 million over three years for an urban school system, $6 million for a suburban system, and $3 million for a rural or tribal school system. This formula reflected the many years of experience on the leadership team in dealing with programming.[154]

Expensive Rural Populations

Looking retrospectively at the initiative from the vantage point of her own many years of experience with rural populations, Michele Edwards explains a different perspective. She asserts that it costs more, not less, to serve rural populations. Rural populations pose "particular challenges for recruiting, training, and retaining appropriate staff in rural areas." Several years earlier, she related, only one child psychiatrist served the whole state of Montana, and he was moving back to Vermont. How does one serve the mental health needs of young people with severe problems? For rural and remote areas, "you have to think a bit differently."[155]

Eve Moscicki concurred with Edwards' analysis. In some frontier or tribal sites, "tens of thousands of square miles may constitute one school district." Because of the distances involved in trying to provide all the students and families with services, you need more money.[156]

Denise Middlebrook, the GPO with primary responsibility for Safe Schools/Healthy Students' tribal grantees and a lifetime of experience in tribal communities, explained the special difficulties in working in communities with few resources. "The solutions that everybody thinks are always so wonderful here are often not well thought out when you map them over the kinds of conditions and experiences that Indian people face on reservation communities." Middlebrook sees it as her mission to have come east to Washington to remind people that in *many* communities "there isn't running water, there isn't electricity, there isn't access to Internet—so don't suggest that people log on to a website for mental health services, because they probably don't even have electricity, let alone access to computers and Internet." And, "everything costs more in these rural places."[157]

Challenges

Systemic Changes. The work of putting together the Safe Schools/Healthy Students program was especially challenging because the multidepartmental program required major systems change. People had to do things differently, and they had to be convinced to do so. Three major transformations were taking place, for example, to make it possible to provide funds to school districts. The Department of Education had to change its system of collecting money from HHS and from OJJDP. At the same time, OJJDP would be sending funds to HHS, and HHS would be sending some money to OJJDP.

The process was possible because of the "trust that was developed between the key actors and players," Modzeleski observed, and the fact that the decision makers were at the table. "Shay would say, 'Mike, could you do this for $2 million?' And Mike would say, 'Okay.' Mike was working with the understanding that he would go back and talk to [CMHS Director] Bernie [Arons], and Bernie would concur.[160] Another important factor was that, for the most part, attendance by all IPT members at the Thursday meetings became routine, which enabled decisions to be made quickly.

In addition to the systemic changes, members of the Safe Schools team worked around the issues of time and a number of other potential barriers.

Time. Time always posed a challenge. The first stage of the initiative, the developmental process leading to the White House Conference, required a huge rush and the need to have confidence that this initiative could fly—once the President announced it—no matter how general his announcement. In the second stage, it was important not to let a whole year go by after the President's announcement before the initiative would get to the field.

Time constraints led the planning group to meet several times a week or more. The IPT created the urgency around mobilizing the initiative because they believed they had a rare opportunity to do something special. They had learned that collaboration was the way to accomplish systems change, and they were committed to do it.[161]

Bureaucratic Impediments. The team discussed government policies that might impede collaboration, in particular on confidentiality and sharing of records between local agencies. Typically schools, juvenile justice, and mental health service providers do not share individuals' records outside their own walls. In the end, pre-application technical assistance provided research material to potential applicants on information-sharing issues and how to surmount problems.[162] Information sharing is an important corollary to the comprehensive nature of the preventive interventions.

HHS Officially Signs On

As the initiative progressed into the departmental clearance phase, Mike English recalled, another challenge emerged. "The agreements we had reached on the review process, for instance, were new and different, and the team was very proud of them. But, particularly at HHS, where tepid

buy-in at the top was a recurring issue, the team presented the plan to bureaucrats who had not been engaged in the process. We were not going to let it fail."[163]

As the IPT worked through the remaining issues in early February 1999, CMHS mobilized to secure buy-in from SAMHSA leadership.[164] Staff compiled a page of talking points to advocate for allocating $25 million to Safe Schools/Healthy Students. Bernie Arons presented the case to SAMHSA Administrator Nelba Chavez, and she ultimately agreed that the initiative should go forward. The Department of Health and Human Services signed off on the initiative several days after the Notice of Intent to Make Funds Available was published in the *Federal Register*.[165] Everyone was officially on board.

Attorney General's Influence

Almost without exception, members of the leadership team acknowledged that an underlying reluctance to disappoint the Attorney General helped to motivate their work on Safe Schools/Healthy Students. Every time the Attorney General saw Ricki Seidman, she asked Seidman how it was going.[166] And when the team met, Ricki Seidman made no secret of her boss's keen interest.

"When [Ricki] came in and told me that it was going to be a reality, it was a wonderful day!", the Attorney General recalled.[167]

Final Hurdle

A final hurdle involved approval by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) of the terms of the initiative and the text of the application package. The team found OMB people to be helpful in expediting their review, Ricki Seidman explained. This was a good thing, because the initiative was so innovative—and time was so short—and OMB could have "scotched it" in many ways. The requirements regarding grant applications usually take months and months to process through the bureaucracy, but OMB staff "did everything on an expedited basis and took a can-do approach." What motivated their cooperation? Seidman believed that it was "such a good idea that it was propelled forward on its own weight. But also the President had made clear that he wanted it to happen, and that helped a lot."[168]

Chapter 4: The Initiative Goes Live

Program Announced

The grant application package was announced in the *Federal Register* on April 1, 1999.[169] Attorney General Janet Reno, Secretary of Education Richard Riley, and Surgeon General David Satcher launched the Safe Schools/Healthy Students program at the Department of Justice the following day.[170]

"Wow! Schools, mental health, justice—people in the field loved it! They loved the idea of one application, the link between healthy development and safety, simpler reporting requirements, and mandatory collaboration in communities," Mike English explained.[171]

The response to the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative was massive. Fully 447 applicants submitted their application packages by the deadline, June 1, 1999, in competition for approximately 50 grants.[172] *The application review and selection process lay ahead.*

Peer Review

Throughout the design and implementation of the peer review and the selection process, multiagency collaboration prevailed.

Shay Bilchik recalled that CMHS had presented the most rigorous process for the peer review of applications,[173] but that HHS decided not to conduct the review, citing insufficient staff to take on the task.[174] Bilchik insisted that the eventual peer-reviewed evaluation of the peer-reviewed selection process needed to validate the credibility of the grant program's design, and the group ultimately adopted OJJDP's peer review process. Bilchik made available its experienced contractor, Aspen Associates, to assist in the process.[175]

A gargantuan two-tiered review ensued.[176] In the review's first tier, contractor personnel conducted a triage to weed out the few applications that inevitably do not conform to submission

requirements, and federal staff reviewed all contractor decisions to ensure their validity. Then federal staff examined substantively the remaining applications to ensure that all agreements were attached and that applicants had addressed all the requirements for comprehensive program planning. Only after passing these two hurdles could applications then proceed to the second stage, the peer review itself.[177]

Bryan Williams, who wore a series of different hats as the initiative developed, served as a panel manager during the review process. He explained that panels of four independent field reviewers were selected to score the applications. Each panel included one reviewer with expertise in the justice arena, one with expertise in education, another with expertise in mental health, and then a fourth reviewer, a community representative.[178]

SAMHSA customarily includes a consumer representative on its peer review panels, and this feature had been incorporated into the review process. For the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative, the idea was for community reviewers, perhaps a PTA president, to weigh in on a program's anticipated impact on the average student or average family in the community.[179] Sometimes, though, community reviewers also weighed in on other factors, including level of evidence on which an applicant's interventions were based.[180] All reviewers were selected from a pool of qualified consultants approved by the administrators of the participating federal agencies.[181]

Rather than convening in Washington for face-to-face meetings—a strategy that would have been prohibitively expensive because "we were bringing in a cast of thousands," noted Anne Mathews-Younes—the reviewers conducted their deliberations by conference call.[182] Each panel of four reviewed approximately ten applications. A federal staff person facilitated and monitored every call,[183] some of which extended for hours into the night.[184]

Each panel assigned scores to the applications they reviewed and, in discussions, reconciled differences among their perceptions. The highest scores assigned reflected the panels' assessment of greatest merit.

Selection Process

The grantee selection process "brought the key leaders together onto the scene again," Sonia Chessen recalled, and "the discussions re-invoked all the issues of concessions the group had experienced earlier."[185] Everyone on the team agreed on the need for a credible selection process,[186] and the four principals "negotiated like crazy"[187] about how the process would work. Discussion centered particularly on the relative weight of merit and then of demographics[188] to "ensure diversity, both geographical and by urbanicity."[189] The leaders wanted to minimize the possibility for grant failures, and they worked hard to reach a series of compromises.[190]

Shay Bilchik, Mike English, Bill Modzeleski, and Ricki Seidman agreed to decide together which applicants would receive the initial awards,[191], [192] and they also agreed not to include surrogate decision makers. "If you didn't come, you couldn't send anyone for you. It was a crucial time," Seidman stated.[193]

Each agency had a different way of scoring and ranking the applications in the selection process. Virtually every member of the IPT recalled the critical time in their collaboration when they

struggled to decide on the criteria by which they would select the first round of applicants for funding. Each of the three agencies had its own particular way to use the scores, and each dearly wanted *its* statistical methodology put in place. Some agencies used the raw scores assigned by the review panels, and some used percentile scores—like grading on a curve. Feelings ran high on what should be the definitive criteria for selection, based on historical practice. "We spent *days*—not hours, but *days*—in a room with the applications, making a list of which would be awarded the first set of grants. We sat in the room until we figured it out."[194] (But later no one could remember which agency favored which methodology.)

At Ricki Seidman's suggestion, the team went through the exercise of ranking the same few applications in all the representative ways, and it became clear that there was little differentiation among the results.[195] "Everyone could go back, having satisfied their own criteria."[196]

As it turned out, Shay Bilchik made the difficult decision, for the sake of compromise, to retreat from his own agency's accustomed methodology and accede to his colleagues' majority view. His colleagues understood well the magnitude of this step for Bilchik, and when he ultimately agreed, "everyone hugged him. This relationship made the initiative's connection to grantees and the leaders' commitment to the program stronger," Mike English commented.[197]

The group developed a culture of celebrating its compromises. Sonia Chessen explained that "the people who 'won' didn't feel like, 'Oh, we won! We won!'" Instead they felt as if "they had been through something together. It was a team-building process."[198]

Anne Mathews-Younes Mathews echoed Chessen's sentiments. "Nobody said, 'Thank God he caved,' or 'Whew! We're over that one!' It was, 'Oh, what a prince!' There was such sensitivity on the part of the group about what he was up against. It was just phenomenal!"[199] And Brian Flynn, too, acknowledged that Bilchik had made a decision about the primacy of the process of this group that outweighed the value of his agency's practice. "I respected him even more after this."[200]

Shay Bilchik considered grantee selection to be "a very competitive process," noting that the team "skipped over some well-qualified applicants in order to get the diversity we were looking for." But that process had "precedent with every one of us, in how we made selections," and no one played politics to "reach down and to grab a community, just because that community 'needed' to be in the process."[201] (Even as they followed the review and selection process fairly and meticulously, the players recognized the program's political value. It was important for members of Congress, governors, and others to appreciate and help support the program. The tacit concept was, the more states represented, the better.[202])

Would-Be Collaborators

Not everyone who came to the table to design the program that would become Safe Schools/Healthy Students remained a major player, and another U.S. department flirted seriously with the idea of joining the program.

CDC. As noted above, CDC had expressed great interest early in participating in Safe Schools/Healthy Students. But Congress appropriated the funds to SAMHSA, and CDC ended up

playing a number of supporting roles. CDC detailed a program evaluator to the incentive and, to this day, CDC epidemiologist Alex Crosby serves on the IEMT and informs decisions on the evaluation.[203]

Labor. Senator Arlen Specter's staff wanted the Labor Department to join Safe Schools/Healthy Students.[204] The departments' goals certainly appeared complementary. Perhaps it wasn't explicit at the time, but since Specter chaired the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, having Labor join the initiative would create for the senator a violence-prevention trifecta.

Safe School's leaders concurred that Labor had something important to contribute to the cause.[205] After all, the initiative was based on the premise that whole communities need to be involved in creating safe schools, and the IPT was saying and modeling the same thing at the federal level.[206]

Sonia Chessen remembers members of the IPT pitching the program to the Labor Department, but to her the exact connection was not clear cut. After all, the youth whom Labor programs addressed were age 16 and up, and mostly *out* of school. How exactly would Labor link up to Safe Schools/Healthy Students?[207]

Beyond that issue, Safe Schools/Healthy Students had created a single pot into which the three original departments had pooled their money for the six elements of the program. Would Labor want its own component for its funds? Would this strategy upset the delicate balance? Indeed, Labor did want its own component. But though Labor Department staff was reluctant to join a program that had been branded by the three other departments, and in which they would have no ownership, Specter's staff was persuasive, and appropriations were set in place.[208]

In February 2000, Labor Secretary Alexis Herman announced Labor's expectation to participate the following year in Safe Schools/Healthy Students. "Our new budget includes $40 million to enable us to join in supporting community-wide programs to prevent youth violence and drug abuse," she stated. "We'll be expanding the initiative to include work programs for out-of-school youth."[209]

But one day later that year, $40 million disappeared from Labor's Safe School's legislative language and reappeared in the same amount in Labor appropriations for the Re-entry Initiative, a Justice-led interagency effort to provide support services for youth coming out of detention and from prison into the community.[210]

Aside from politics, what dynamics might have underlain Labor's ultimate decision not to join Safe Schools/Healthy Students? Three agencies had been collaborating closely for several years, for one thing, and they pretty much knew each other. Another potentially major partner had appeared on the scene with a few million dollars to contribute. "How do you get them to really buy into it? How do you get them to be part of your group, to be your friend, to want to play?", Kellie Dressler pondered. "It's really hard, because the three original partners all started out and built this program together. And this other partner wasn't a part of building it."[211]

The timing wasn't right, and it probably would not have been a good fit, Bill Modzeleski assessed. "Labor was not part of the culture that thrust us all together, and probably was unwilling to make the sacrifices that were necessary to operate this program, which was not a priority for them."[212] Moreover, too many cooks could make it overly burdensome and difficult to do.

Anne Mathews-Younes and Betty Chemers observed independently that no one high enough in the agency was invested in the process.[213] They never got the sense that they were talking with the person who could make decisions.[214] Without committed buy-in, it wasn't going to happen.

Teamwork

To be sure, disagreements cropped up over the six months it took to develop the initiative, but the principals concurred later that the process went exceedingly well. They worked through their disagreements cordially—and quickly, all knowing that there was not much time to waste. "We were working against the clock and we needed to get a program out," Modzeleski recalled.[215]

Bill Modzeleski attributed the team's success in accomplishing the necessary steps to put together the complex program to a staff that was extremely dedicated to getting it done and who recognized that it wasn't about them or about their agency. "This was about something larger, a program that had the potential for helping kids."[216]

Anne Mathews-Younes echoed Modzeleski's perspective. "People simply put their money on the table and then sat back and said, "Now, what can we do to design a program that will really work for the American kids," not "Where's my money going to go?" They put safeguards in place for budget tracking, because, for example, mental health dollars could not pay for school security equipment, and education dollars could not pay for mental health services. But all agreed, "We're all in this together. Violence is a complicated problem. We need a comprehensive solution."[217]

In a unique feature of this collaboration, the principals made all their decisions by consensus. "We never took a vote. We wanted everything that came out of our planning and our work to represent a consensus of the three departments," Brian Flynn recalled.[218] The seemingly simple process by which the leadership team came to consensus on complex issues was "discussion of the issues," explained Bill Modzeleski. But "we knew we had to help kids. That was what we kept reminding ourselves. This is not about us, this is about kids."[219]

During the first two years, no one ever took a vote on a Safe Schools issue. "The IPT discussed it, and there was a very strong sentiment that if things ever came to a vote, then the collaboration wasn't working the way that it was intended to work." Mike English remembered that this position was noted in moments of clear disagreement around some issue or other. "They really didn't want to take a vote." As a result of this approach, people would meet each other halfway.[220]

Grant Awards

President Clinton announced the Safe Schools/Healthy Students grantees during his Saturday morning radio address on September 11, 1999.[221] Kellie Dressler, Brian Williams, and a SAMHSA representative sat in the Oval Office while the President taped his talk earlier that week. "That was definitely a celebration moment, a moment of feeling great accomplishment," Dressler remembered. "I felt like I was part of history in the making, with our nation coming together to really do something around school violence and school safety issues."[222]

The leadership team fought to get their people into the room, Ricki Seidman recalled. "That was part of valuing everyone's contribution."[223]

Grantee Demographics

The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative initially awarded $98.7 million to 54 communities, whose school districts were educating an estimated total of 1.7 million children. In addition, those districts received $7 million in COPS funds to hire school resource officers. The grantees included:

- 2 tribal areas
- 15 rural areas
- 8 suburban areas
- 15 mid-sized urban areas
- 14 large urban areas[224]
- 39 states[225]

In April 2000 the Center for Mental Health Services published a working paper that presented an overview of the needs of the 110 communities that had submitted top-ranked applications. Among the challenges the applicants proposed to address were poverty, rapid growth and increasing diversity, rural and urban isolation, violence, violence within schools, gangs, suicide, substance abuse, parenting, academic failure, and lack of services.[226]

Chapter 5: Safe Schools/Healthy Students Comes Together

What factors contributed to the birth of the amazing Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative? So many of the program's features were innovative, and its developmental path certainly was unprecedented. With considerable pride, the participants reflected on the confluence of essential ingredients, including good fortune, dedication, and hard work, that made it happen. More than a few of them used the same celestial metaphor.

Stars Aligned

The "stars aligned" to make the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative work: the people, the level of research, the evidence on successful approaches to fighting juvenile violence and promoting more positive youth development, the organizations, the money—and a topic that the public can get behind, noted Shay Bilchik and Brian Flynn.[227] The "stars need to be aligned" in order for this sort of joint interagency effort to work, whether at the national or local level, Charles Simon asserted, noting that another essential factor is leaders with vision.[228] Betty Chemers pointed to national attention, national interest, and heads of departments who got along—"all the stars were aligned."[229]

- ★ Right topic
- ★ Right people
- ★ Committed, visionary top leadership
- ★ Growing knowledge base on violence prevention
- ★ Growing knowledge base on promoting mental health
- ★ Organizational support
- ★ Substantial funding
- ★ National attention

Leadership Team Strengths

Aside from the intelligence, experience, and expertise that members of the leadership group brought to the Safe Schools effort, they identified a number of special qualities that contributed to the solidification of the initiative.

Values. Brian Flynn observed that "virtually every one of us who sat in that room came to public service as a noble calling, [reminiscent of] the Kennedy era," he observed. They were "driven by that value of public service and that the job of government is to serve the public."[230] Eve Moscicki echoed Flynn's sentiment. "Knowing that collaboration is difficult," the team kept in mind that "we were trying to something good, innovative, and hopefully something that would be of use to the country."[231]

Respect. The leaders saw increasingly that while they differed in how they viewed things, each individual in that group could make unique contributions.[232] Bryan Williams observed that most members of the team had known each other, so a level of familiarity and respect for one another enabled them to rise above any potential problems or issues or barriers to getting the job done.[233] Without exception, the participants recognized the talents and appreciated other personal qualities of the people they worked with. "During the three months of intensive negotiations, we got to know and respect each other. Respect was a critical thing," Mike English observed.[234]

Forward-Looking Collaboration. Ricki Seidman saw herself as a "coordinator and convener." She saw it as her role to keep things moving forward and, as problems arose, to make sure they were resolved. "Keeping people informed and understanding the process is a big step toward the success of the project. Less internal politics and less arguing over information takes place," Seidman pointed out. When inevitable tensions arose, she spent "whatever time it took to talk one on one with the parties involved, until the issue was resolved."[235]

Talking to people was just one element in Seidman's extensive toolkit. She expected a lot of people, and then recognized them for what they contributed. She guarded against progress stalling, doing whatever it took and bringing the needed resources to bear, in order to move forward. Her prior political experience, she explained, taught her to make sure that everyone knew what their piece was, that they worked and communicated with each other, and were directed to move forward.[236] In fact, Attorney General Janet Reno explicitly saw Seidman's experience at the highest levels of government as having helped build Safe Schools/Healthy Students.[237]

Her Safe Schools colleagues credit Seidman with taking a special leadership role in keeping the process moving toward consensus. "She brought a perspective of cooperation and collaboration, always finding the common ground," recalled Brian Flynn. And, Flynn added, "She came right from the Attorney General. I don't think it was lost on any of us that she had a close personal relationship there, and that she was probably going to go back and report on how well or how poorly we were doing in this. It kept us all on task."[238]

Seidman frequently brought delicious snacks to meetings, including her home-baked banana bread, and she encouraged celebrations for reaching consensus. "People *wanted* to come and tell

Ricki they had broken down a barrier. She was really enthusiastic," remembered Sonia Chessen. "Everybody! Big hand for [So-and-So]! He cut some red tape!"[239] Taking cues from the overarching committee, the grant-writing group, too, celebrated its accomplishments. "We instilled pride when we had a celebration," Dressler recalled.[240]

Of course *each* member of the team played a special role, according to Mike English. "Ricki's was to keep the process going, to not let people disagree." He, English, "expanded horizons and pushed the envelope. Modzeleski was the practical one, mostly regarding the money; everything had to be reasonable and feasible. Bilchik in many respects was the spiritual leader, while also representing specific Justice interests, mostly delinquency prevention. This arrangement reflected everyone's strengths."[241]

Staff Stability and Evolution

Throughout the conceptualization of Safe Schools/Healthy Students, development of the first solicitation, and the selection process, the core leadership remained essentially intact. Various other federal staff joined the team as their services were needed, and they learned quickly the dynamics of the group process. The leaders ensured that the initiative was not sidetracked by new people coming in and second guessing the decisions of those people who had served before them.[242]

Brian Flynn had returned to the leadership team after an absence, as had Sonia Chessen. Chessen stepped away from the table for three-months. During her last telephone conversation before she left on maternity leave, she was literally in labor, she recounted, as they worked on conceptualizing the composition of the application package. By the time she returned, applications were arriving.[243]

When plans for the initiative had matured, Bernie Arons transferred CMHS's authority from Mike English to Brian Flynn, whose division handled prevention-oriented programs. Flynn initially had attended most of the meetings with English, but by the time Flynn returned from Africa, English had become CMHS's primary spokesman.[244] Arons explained that English was "terrific at visionary conceptualization of programs and getting things done," but he had his own division with huge and important programs. Once Safe Schools/Healthy Students was "up and running, and it was time for the grants to come in, it seemed appropriate for Mike to return to his division."[245]

Although authority had passed to Brian Flynn, the team still valued English's input. "We kept saying, 'Mike has to be there'," Sonia Chessen explained.[246] And through the next spring, he continued to attend meetings when he could.[247]

The power of strong relationships extended to Chessen's participation as well. Chessen had believed that her role in drawing HHS players into the initiative no longer was relevant once she returned to work, but Ricki Seidman continued to invite her to IPT meetings.[248] Chessen remains on the team.

Shay Bilchik left Justice soon after Mike English's departure from the team, and then Ricki Seidman also left government service.

Anne Mathews-Younes's role began to evolve as Mike English relinquished SAMHSA's reins. She often sat in for Brian Flynn, but when Flynn retired in 2001, Mathews-Younes took on his management responsibility.[249]

As each new person transitioned in, the way in which people worked and negotiated together changed, Sonia Chessen observed. Early on, when people were making concessions, everybody remembered who gave up what and whose turn it was to give up something. When new people came in, they might not know that it might be their turn to accede. Chessen found herself in the role of ringmaster, "to go around and tell people whose turn it was."[250] Shay Bilchik noted the dynamic, recalling that when people came to the table with perspectives that differed from the rest of the group as a whole, the group always worked out the differences in a spirit of compromise.[251]

Ricki Seidman and Brian Flynn both placed value on multiple leaders and multiple components from a single agency.[252] The project benefits from the best combined thinking of more than one brain, and back-up and some depth help to work through issues that are complicated organizationally and programmatically.[253]

Emotional Connection

Safe Schools/Healthy Students was in *no* respect business as usual. Each person involved had a personal connection to the program. Here is just a sampling of some of their retrospective reflections.

- Charles Simon: "I loved it because I felt we were doing something important—and atypical. We were breaking new ground, and that's always exciting, and we've modeled at the national level was actually playing out at the local level." Safe Schools/Healthy Students "pulled together so many different strands of important issues to the American community. It was relevant to parents; it was relevant to kids; it was relevant to education; it was relevant to safety—ultimately relevant to jobs, to American preparedness, to be competitive with the world—all those things played in and played together."[254]
- Betty Chemers: "It was a very enriching experience for almost everyone involved and for me personally. It showed me that you can have a collaboration and you can really do a lot."[255]
- Bill Modzeleski: "He loves Safe Schools/Healthy Students. He's always willing to talk or devote his time. A large chunk of his heart is involved."[256] "He cares immensely about this program."[257]
- Bryan Williams: "When we made our first awards and they were announced, I felt great. It felt especially important to everyone when the President announced the awardees during his weekly radio address. There was pride in the fact that we created something that could really help school districts, could really help communities, could really help youth. I think that this initiative resonated with a lot of applicants, and they met a true need in the nation."[258]
- Shelly Hara: "I love working on this initiative. It's very stimulating intellectually, and when I make a site visit and meet actual consumers of services, it's very rewarding. I get all the positives, and I love working with my colleagues."[259]
- Debbie Rudy: "Safe Schools/Healthy Students is one of my very favorite things. It's really wonderful to have Safe Schools/Healthy Students and to hear about grantees who are doing wonderful work and doing things in innovative ways that involve the community."[260]
- Eve Moscicki: "I was working hard and making a difference. I know that sounds so trite, but it was true."[261]

National Mental Health Association

Sonia Chessen considers the creation of Safe Schools/Healthy Students to be a "perfect policy moment." Many people had been concerned with improving mental health services for kids, and the cataclysmic series of school shootings "became a rallying cry for them."[262]

The National Mental Health Association, among others, played an important role as an outside education/advocacy and lobbying group. "As I recall," remarked Bernie Arons, "they were pushing for mental health [providers] to receive some of these funds. There was some external pressure, as the Congress was trying to figure out where to appropriate certain funding...to get federal funding for youth violence prevention put in the context of mental health. The award to CMHS "was surprising," Arons added, "but also welcome and consistent with what was an

Flynn on Columbine and Safe Schools/Healthy Students

For somebody like me, who's a division director in an organization, there are a lot of different responsibilities in a wide variety of programs. Safe Schools/Healthy Students hooked me initially as an interesting professional task, to see if this could be done and to participate in it. But for me to really get hooked into a program is to see how it works on a personal level and to have a personal, emotional attachment to it.

The turning point for me was when I was asked to accompany Vice President and Mrs. Gore to Littleton after the shootings there. There were only a few guests on the flight. There were Vice President and Mrs. Gore, Secret Service, some staff, Bob Chase—the Director of the National Education Association—myself, and several others. Mrs. Gore came and asked Bob Chase and me to come up front to sit down at the table and talk about this issue.

I think the reason I was chosen, aside from my experience with response to major disasters and trauma, was because of my involvement in school violence. This was a school violence issue—but almost more, a trauma issue. The dignitaries knew that they were going to be meeting with the families, and they wanted somebody who had had some experience with large-scale, horrific stuff to be part of that.

Mrs. Gore was asking, "What are we going to do? What's the role of the federal government? What kinds of programs should be we starting to deal with something like this?" She had no idea that Safe Schools had just gotten off the ground.

It was really neat to be able to say, "For the first time, we're ahead of the curve on this! We've got this program."

She sat there and said, "Wow! You've got to brief me more about this. When have we ever been ahead on one of these issues?"

As we met with the grieving families, Safe Schools/Healthy Students became a personal issue for me. At that moment, in that hour, this became much more than an interesting professional and administrative challenge. It became a promise to some parents and some families that I had made. I got hooked into this in a much different kind of way.

emerging message and focus on positive mental health development as one of the major contributors to youth safety and security."[263]

NIMH's Eve Moscicki succinctly acknowledged NMHA's contributions. Without the "great good luck and involvement of a consumer and advocacy organization, we wouldn't have this" initiative.[264]

Emulations and Knowledge Transfer

A number of participants in the initiative have moved on to other opportunities. But certainly neither Shay Bilchik nor Charles Simon left behind the skills or the philosophy associated with their Safe Schools/Healthy Students experience. And Bryan Williams also observed the influence of Safe Schools/Healthy Students that punctuated the value of local collaborations.

Shay Bilchik had taken up the reins as Chief Executive Officer of the Child Welfare League of America, when then-Governor Parris Glendening enlisted him to chair Maryland's state advisory board on child welfare. The board's first undertaking was to combine eight separate state-level funding streams, including education, general state revenues, federal health and human services, and justice at the federal level, into a single grant application called the Consolidated Grant for Youth. That effort consolidated $15 million a year, and Maryland offered the funding opportunity to every local management board in each county in a competitive application process. The initiative used "the identical model" to Safe Schools/Healthy Students, and, as of 2004, the program was entering its third year.[265]

Charles Simon, as Deputy Director of Criminal Justice for New York State, has worked at the state level to shape the same sorts of collaborations as Safe Schools/Healthy Students. "The dynamic is the same." Working closely together in an evidence-based environment, the state's criminal justice arm and the Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services jointly promote drug treatment as an alternative to prison. The collaboration also includes case managers, the courts, and other nontraditional partners.[266]

Bryan Williams had presented technical assistance on administrative requirements in a web-cast presentation for potential applicants and grantees. To this day people recognize him. Even people who weren't funded derived "some benefit from meeting the people that they needed to meet in their communities in order to craft a plan. You would think that these people would be pretty disappointed that they didn't get money, but they said, 'It was a good process anyway, because I met the police chief' or 'I met the social services person in my community, and now we're talking about doing some other things'."[267]

Chapter 6: Implementation and Management

Long before President Clinton announced selection of the first group of Safe Schools/Healthy Students grantees in September 1999, the initiative's designers considered procedures and logistics necessary to implement and manage the program. In fact, recalled Kellie Dressler, it was the interagency grant-writing team that initially "zeroed in on the grant management piece" and "brought those kinds of issues to our bosses."[268]

Everyone was totally invested in the program, and when the time came, they set out to manage it as collaboratively as they had designed it. Once again Safe Schools/Healthy Students broke new ground in the way federal government conducted its business.

As noted above, as the initiative approached implementation, several original IPT members left—or would soon leave—government service. Brian Flynn led the CMHS delegation at this point, and Anne Mathews-Younes took on an increasingly stronger leadership role. Ricki Seidman and Shay Bilchik joined the private sector, and Charles Simon and Betty Chemers took on new leadership roles at Justice. Bill Modzeleski remains actively involved in Safe Schools, the senior statesman of the initiative. Sonia Chessen, even when she was selected to direct the new White House Council on Youth Violence Prevention, continued to sit on the IPT.

Seconds-in-command moved from the periphery up to the table. None of the new faces around the Safe Schools/Healthy Students policy table was *really* new, and the work proceeded. In a renewed round of almost weekly meetings, the IPT tackled the task of setting in place an innovative, customized infrastructure that would meet the fiscal and management requirements of the three departments. They considered how to staff the initiative—a major challenge in light of the fact that Congress had appropriated no funds to hire staff to monitor the grants or to manage the initiative on an ongoing basis. Where would the staff come from? And whose employees would they be?

The team determined that an interagency team of government project officers (GPOs) would be selected. The GPOs would monitor the grants to ensure that grantees made progress in achieving their programmatic goals and also to ensure accountability for the large amounts of government

funds to be awarded. In practice, securing sufficient staff for the initiative would prove an ongoing issue.

Other implementation issues emerged periodically, including, for example, whether or not to locate all initiative staff in one office and also providing technical assistance in a way that meshed with the work of the GPOs (see Chapter 7 section on Technical Assistance).[269]

Human Resources

Government Project Officers. A multiagency management staff began to assemble in preparation for the launch of the grant program. Importantly, Shay Bilchik at Justice "allowed the project to steal Kellie Dressler, who did a terrific job staffing the project," and OJJDP also provided office space.[270] Bryan Williams also moved from program design to program management. Bill Modzeleski hired Karen Dorsey to serve as a GPO, and HHS assigned David Clough, Michele Edwards, Louise Peloquin, Gail Ritchie, and several others to the GPO team. But staff already was stretched thin, and at HHS, most of the GPOs devoted only part of their days to the rigorous demands of the program. (To address that problem, as the second cohort of grantees was about to be announced, Michele Bechard and Denise Middleton from HHS and Jane Hodgton from Education came on board during 2000. Shelly Hara at HHS joined the group in 2001 and Shannon McDermott from Education in 2003.[271])

Shelly Hara explained that GPOs serve as the primary federal contact for the sites and hold monitoring, compliance, and oversight responsibilities. They review grantees' budgets and make sure that they implement their grant projects according to their original proposals. If necessary GPOs enforce government regulations in order to approve (or deny) program or budget changes that grantees request.[272]

Once Safe Schools/Healthy Students was up and running, the IPT diminished its own role in the day-to-day management of the initiative, and the GPO team assumed increasing responsibility. Eventually, their ongoing or recurring activities came to include revising the program solicitation, running the competitions for the grants, managing the peer review process, and managing the evaluation, technical assistance, and communications components. Because Safe Schools/Healthy Students is an interdepartmental effort, considerable negotiations take place to decide which department will take the lead on which part of the initiative. And when decisions are made, often a new logistical system must be put in place to reflect departmental requirements.[273]

Some GPOs brought with them experience in managing grant programs. But Karen Dorsey and Gail Ritchie, who, among several others, had never managed grants prior to Safe Schools/Healthy Students, remarked on the huge learning curves they encountered.[274] Dorsey had the special challenge of learning how to use the complex Grants Administration and Payment System (GAPS) with which the Department of Education tracked disbursement of funds to grantees. Only Education employees had access to that automated system.[275] Brian Flynn also recognized that necessity dictated that HHS staff tackle unaccustomed tasks and responsibilities for which they had not been trained formally.[276]

Despite an initial revolving door of GPOs from SAMHSA, the team worked together, Dorsey recalled, to "figure out how to effectively and efficiently be program managers for Safe Schools/

Healthy Students across the three different agencies, how we would stay in contact with one another and make sure that we acted in the same manner, making appropriate decisions and sharing the same information with all grantees."[277] This process has been an ongoing challenge.

Michelle Bechard came to work at SAMHSA as a GPO for Safe Schools/Healthy Students just as the second group of awards was made to grantees. She remarked that one problem was a lack of infrastructure. Project officers came from three agencies, but no guidelines had been set down on how to do the work. They each tried to do the best they could with what they thought they needed at that time.[278]

The GPO team considered appropriate portfolio composition and workloads for both full-time and part-time GPOs, taking into consideration the amounts of the monetary awards and the geography and urbanicity of the grantees. They acknowledged the desirability a GPO with expertise in working with rural areas and tribal sites taking on those grantees in Safe Schools/Healthy Students.[279]

But early on, unanticipated tensions cropped up between the GPOs and the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Action Center consultant/brokers. Consultant/brokers provided technical assistance to grantees on managing their local coalitions and implementing their evidence-based programs—and other issues, as well. Their initial mandate had been to serve their grantees proactively, to "get out there into the field and work with grantees," to help them anticipate their needs.[280] But by the time the GPOs mobilized to work with the grantees to approve their plans and their budgets, the stage was set for confusion and conflict. To explain it, Karen Dorsey used the analogy of moving into a new house, not knowing which light switch controls which outlets, or where you want to put the furniture:

> It took me a while to get comfortable with my grantees, with the program, with Safe and Drug-Free Schools and EDGARS and GAPS. I spent a great deal of time early on trying to move into my new house. On the other hand, a group of people that you were supposed to be working with were pretty much out in the field with your grantees, moving full steam ahead. There was a disconnect.[281]

No matter how few the personnel on the GPO team, they consistently work like a team. Michelle Bechard described a spirit of collaboration and cooperation among the GPOs. Relative stability among them, knowing each other's strengths and weaknesses, and a culture of informal helpful multitasking contribute to their cooperation.[282] Department of Education GPOs have a greater level of responsibility for reporting than the other GPOs. GAPS, central filing requirements, and clarification of regulations fall on Education personnel as well. But the GPOs do not leave it to Education to tackle those time-consuming tasks; everyone pitches in.[283]

Dorsey explained that the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative has implemented practices that reflect its lessons learned. GPOs present in-depth, in-person orientations for new grantees about grant management, contract issues, local evaluation issues, and others. They speak more frequently with the technical assistance consultant who is providing services to a particular grantee and they tend to be more active in the kinds of technical assistance grantees are provided.[284] In early 2004 the Safe Schools/Healthy Students GPOs were compiling a procedures manual.[285]

Debbie Rudy articulated a number of reasons for the GPOs' successful teamwork. For one thing they do something they like, instead of something they were forced to do. Many GPOs have joined government service relatively recently, and many of these personalities are more interested in innovation and not mired in their organization's culture. Echoing Brian Flynn's sentiment about values, Rudy recognized that GPOs tend to have strong personal commitments to the work that they do, to work with kids. The GPOs on the team contribute many perspectives, including having done work in the field that mirrors the initiative's objectives.

At the federal level, Denise Middlebrook explained, she has learned that separate agencies can work together and get it right. They have "a gestalt" among them. "We've reached a certain mass and ability to work together that's uncommon, a team of people who seem to be able to work together so well and anticipate each other's needs and be very quick to help each other."[286]

Middlebrook, a reluctant transplant from Colorado to bustling, bureaucratic Washington, has become the voice of tribal America in the Safe Schools program. Her background and experience permit her to understand the significant barriers the grantees who serve these special populations face, and enable her to help develop realistic and legitimate workarounds to accomplish the grantees' goals.[287]

Staff Co-Location. The staff of Safe Schools/Healthy Students has been a "virtual staff." Approximately a dozen people at any one time have worked on the initiative—in the early days, around two dozen. Getting together for meetings takes time—time to decide whose turn it is to meet where, and then time to get there. The headquarters of the three departments are located downtown, but SAMHSA's staff have worked in Rockville, Maryland, a good hour's ride on the Metro each way.

"When we talked about a virtual team early on, it didn't seem like it would be a huge issue," explained Karen Dorsey. But it was and is.[288] The practical inefficiencies associated with operating from three different locations are undeniable.

Well into its third year, the IPT looked into the possibility of program staff all moving to one location. But each department wanted staff to be housed in one place, within its own department. Co-locating staff in a given department was a risky move, some thought, which could spell doom for perceptions of Safe Schools as an interagency operation. The IPT met many times on this issue, at least once at the Office of Management and Budget, to negotiate who was willing to give what and who was willing to move whom where.[289]

Even that would not be a panacea, though, because many staff devoted just half time to this program, particularly at SAMHSA, and SAMHSA leadership did not want to give up whole staff people.[290] Besides that, among the downtown folks, remembered Betty Chemers, "We had at least three or four people who weren't interested in going out to Rockville, and the Rockville folks were not interested in coming to D.C."[291]

SAMHSA felt strongly that their senior people should supervise their project officers. By the same token, OJJDP felt strongly about making its extensive research/technical assistance infrastructure available.[292]

The pull was between the fact that co-location would make things so much easier, and the

strong sense that people needed to have supervisory control, Sonia Chessen explained. Despite ongoing unresolved issues, it fell to Sonia Chessen to engage a realtor from the General Services Administration, and together they looked for appropriate neutral quarters. In addition, the IPT began to look for secretarial staff and to figure out how they would support it, particularly because there was no program management infrastructure.[293]

At it turned out, the core leaders felt that the impending presidential and congressional election of 2000, and the possibility that the program could die, swung the scales against renting space and moving all the people. Eventually the group came to consensus on this issue, although people weren't happy and everyone had ongoing concerns about logistical support.[294]

Today, Chessen observed, the program is autonomous. "The day-to-day of this program absolutely lives in the staff. It is so tough on them, but they schlep back and forth. The way the program runs today, it would be so much easier for them if they were co-located." In fact, the IPT's concerns about the need for onsite staff supervision had not panned out.[295] Karen Dorsey considered staying put a missed opportunity.[296]

Evidence Base in Practice

As long as they use an evidence base, Safe Schools/Healthy Students grantees enjoy considerable latitude and flexibility in the programs they design and implement.[297] But sometimes problems interfere with implementation—and sometimes even local politics intervenes. Typically government project officers allow grantees to implement evidence-based programs that make sense for them. If the evidence is thin for a grassroots program that seems to make sense, GPOs work with the grantee to develop an evaluation or data-collection plan for that program and to determine whether the program is grounded in theory. If enough of a case cannot be made for an evidence base, grantees must find another program to implement.[298]

Politics and Science

In retrospect, Brian Flynn commented on the tacit role that politics plays in any government initiative—and on the necessity for collaborations to recognize that indeed politics plays a part even in what determines good science. He advised "having brains at the table that are not just the science brains, but people who know the political realities, so the group process bridges those two areas."[299]

Planning Time for New Grantees

Michele Bechard recalled that as the initial group of grantees prepared to request funding for the second year of their grants, GPOs found that most of them had large amounts of unexpended funds in their accounts. The GPOs learned that for that group—and for every group thereafter—though applicants had put forth significant effort in writing their application, communities were surprised when they actually received the award. They needed time to ensure that their

infrastructure was in place, that they hired the right people, and that all their pieces were ready before they moved forward with the grant.[300]

The standard approach is for GPOs to instruct the grantee, "You need to show us how you're going to be able, in the second year, to spend all of what you've got left over from your Year One award as well as your Year Two award." But the reality is, it's impossible to do, Bechard explained. Moreover, although Safe Schools/Healthy Students remains a three-year grant program, GPOs expect most grantees to go into a fourth-year no-cost extension. This strategy gives communities an opportunity to work on developing better plans for sustainability and to help them institutionalize many of the processes that they started throughout the grant.[301]

"Three years is just not sufficient time for a grant of this size to take off and really become integrated," Bechard asserted, noting that grantees, too, wish for more time. "You're asking us to take on a monumental task," they say, "but then you talk about sustainability and how we are going to keep this moving forward when federal funding ends."[302] The answer rests in Congress, which typically appropriates grant funding on a year-to-year basis.

"We'd much rather have them do it well than do it quickly," Debbie Rudy points out.[303]

Grant-Award Timing

A related issue is that the federal budget schedule, based on an October-to-September fiscal year, typically results in award of Safe Schools/Healthy Students grants in September. But the program's GPOs have learned that early autumn perhaps is the worst time of the year to award a large grant to a school district. Most districts' budgets are already set and schools already in session by the time they receive the funds. To begin to think about hiring new staff—stipulated in the grant application—is almost impossible to do after the school year has started.

Both the policy team and the GPOs addressed this issue. Because so many applicants submitted high-quality applications in 1999, it was possible the next year to "fund down the slate"—simply to make awards to the communities next on the ranked list of eligible applicants. Not only was the time and expense of a new competition avoided, but also the new grantees learned in June that they would have funds available for the following school year, and they had more time to organize.[304]

Unfunded Mandate

As noted above, Congress did not appropriate sufficient, if any, funds to manage the enormous Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative. Program management has depended on varying levels of support from the individual agencies for project staff, support staff, and even materials and supplies. Shelly Hara remarked that logistical and administrative matters need to be addressed, but "there's no allowance for it. So we all pitch in."[305]

Brian Flynn concurred, asserting that a major ongoing problem with the program has centered on human resources. He pointed out that although the federal government is sensitive not to create unfunded mandates for states and local government, that prohibition did not apply to its own agencies in the case of Safe Schools. "We got an exciting new program with significant money,

and we didn't get any new staff for it." To Flynn, the situation posed an ethical dilemma: how to maintain existing programs and at the same time mount a major, complicated initiative, and "do an appropriate job of stewardship of federal funds. We all wanted to do a great job at everything, but there are just so many hours in the day."[306]

In the second year of the initiative, Congress appropriated a percentage of the funds for program management for Safe Schools/Healthy Students. But, Flynn pointed out, it did not end up translating into adequate numbers of new, dedicated staff.[307]

Lessons Learned on Local Collaboration

Partnering in the community was certain to take time, Shay Bilchik explained. The Safe Schools/Healthy Students team knew that some communities were more ready and advanced. "We were asking for a lot of people to come to come to the table. Some communities had those local collaboratives already in place, and others didn't. We knew that everyone would address it at different levels."[308]

Whatever the level of collaboration, Sonia Chessen asserted that Safe Schools/Healthy Students has facilitated the relationship between mental health communities and the schools, and that this has been an important outcome in itself. "We made that connection, which otherwise wouldn't have been made." The educational system's mental health constituency always had been the school psychologist. "We broadened that."[309]

Charles Simon explained that the new approach, the federal modeling of the collaboration Safe Schools sought in communities, impacted profoundly on the way community organizations came together to apply for the grants. The requirement for the three segments to work together provided an incentive for *all* partners. In recent joint funding programs, for instance, a local law enforcement authority might have had to go hat-in-hand to its local school system with the plea, "for *us* to get this money, *you* have to sign this piece of paper." But that's a much less "powerful and compelling message than if the major local partners—say, law enforcement, schools, and mental health—are *all* hearing the same message by their counterparts at the federal level who are dangling the possibility to strengthen their communities."[310]

Modeling: Reprise

The GPOs view their ability to collaborate as a "model for what the grantees need to do, too. If we can't do it at the federal level, then it's pretty hard to expect them to do it."

The success of some Safe Schools/Healthy Students grantees in perpetuating their programs might well rise or fall on the local economic situation. The GPO at SAMHSA with primary responsibility for tribal sites, Denise Middlebrook pointed to the difficulty in finding partners in many rural and tribal communities to help sustain the programming that Safe Schools/Healthy Students supports. One grantee faces the situation where "there's one small hamburger joint and a gas station on the whole reservation. There's no work on the reservation, so how do people sustain these grant programs?"[312]

Under these circumstances, Middlebrook asserted, it's important not to place unrealistic expectations on these communities.[313] Not all sites are equally successful in bringing people together and sustaining coalitions and partnerships, she has observed. "Many times it's tough for people to do that, particularly in rural and tribal communities where the resources are so slim to begin with."[314]

But, Middlebrook added, in communities with greater resources and where the mayor's office and others have gotten on board, Safe Schools works well. "They're making really good efforts with communications to be sure that the community understands what's going on in the schools, and how really special Safe Schools/Healthy Students is." Those communities are the ones that will "do really well when the federal dollars go away, because the communities basically demand, 'Hey! Our community can't do without these kinds of services,' so they find a way."[315]

Beyond political buy-in, Middlebrook saw strong leadership at the project level to be a key indicator of success. Project directors must be good at "working with a wide range of people's politics and faiths and perspectives and ethnic communities." They must have that "special ability to bring in people from all different backgrounds in peace to accomplish this kind of thing" and to be "wise enough to know who needs to be a part of this effort." And they must know to "select competent people to handle the details."[316]

Expanding Knowledge About Collaboration

Several years into the grant, Kellie Dressler described a growing knowledge base on the notion of "collaboration," based on the Safe Schools/Healthy Students experience and informed in part by the national evaluation. Five developmental stages of successful collaborations have emerged—networking at the beginning, alliance formation, partnership, coalition, and true collaboration. Several Safe Schools/Healthy Students appear to be doing "true collaborative work, but most are at the partnership/coalition level." She anticipated that future cohorts of Safe Schools applicants would describe where they fall on the continuum, enumerate their characteristics along these lines, and develop strategies to move from their current level of interaction to true collaboration.[311]

Attorney General Janet Reno's Vision

I hoped that communities could come to Washington with plan in hand about how they were going to address the health care needs of children. I saw the children needed proper preventive medical care and other health care, early intervention through child care programs—"educare," more than "don't put your finger in the wall socket." It's somebody reading to them, them "no" in the right way, building their self-respect.

I thought it was important that parenting skills be taught in a way that could have impact. It does no good to wait, when a child at risk at birth is sent home, and then one year later something terrible happens to him because his mother didn't know how to cope. If you're going to do something, do it up front, when you can form those attachments that are so critical.

I hoped that communities would look both long range and short term, that someone might focus on the issue of schools and school violence, but with an effort to make it part of a more comprehensive whole.

My dream would be that every mother in America would have appropriate preventive prenatal care, and that every child would have proper inoculations, that every child would have early medical assessments to identify problems, and that services would be available up front to address those problems in a comprehensive way.

People ask, "How can you afford it?" But we spend so much money now for problems that did not receive the benefit of such services and that may not cost any less. It certainly can't cost us any more to do something about it up front.

I think it's imperative that every child have kindergarten classes small enough for teachers to identify children with learning disabilities and to do something about it at the time. We've got to customize our education to identify kids' aptitudes and interests, and involve them in school and make school exciting for them. And I think that's possible.

With respect to safety, the child who sees his father beat his mother comes to accept violence as a way of life. A focus on domestic violence, on child abuse is absolutely critical. With a good case worker, you can do so much to prevent it up front, rather than waiting until the crisis occurs.

And then, when you get into the teen years, the juvenile court needs to become a real player. One of the problems I see is that the juvenile court and the school systems are off by themselves so often, in terms of community needs. Schools are not set up to communicate with the outside world. We need to build cooperation among the juvenile courts, the school system, and the community that avoids labeling kids inappropriately.

One of my concerns is that there's got to be a coherency. The more we can develop comprehensive programs that provide basic services the better, like for the nine-year-old or the eleven-year-old who is alone at home after school. All the great investment up front can go for naught, if we don't have programs for that kid.[317]

Chapter 7: Critical Support Components

Program evaluation, technical assistance for the grantees, and a social marketing/communications component supported the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative. Much of the work in these aspects of the program took place beyond the first year of the grant, and the scope of this brief history is extended to include highlights.

Evaluation

The initiative planners agreed that each Safe Schools/Healthy Students grantee would engage a partner to conduct local, site-specific evaluations. They also agreed to contribute funds to conduct a national cross-site evaluation. The hurdle, as Bill Modzeleski described it, was to decide exactly what should be evaluated and how to obtain that information. After all, grantees would undertake a monumental task; great amounts of federal funds would be at stake; and it would be important to take advantage of the opportunities to learn.[318]

In January 1999, planning for the evaluation began as part of the grant-writing process.[319] The expanded team, joined by evaluation experts Eve Moscicki and Meg Small on loan to the initiative, considered the types of outcomes that could be measured.[320]

Despite the high-profile school shootings that had inspired the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, Shay Bilchik explained, "there weren't that many more deaths in schools than a decade earlier." But there were "many ways to measure a healthier school environment. The negative outcomes we were ultimately trying to combat weren't just about school violence and deaths in schools. They were about how to get kids on this trajectory toward success."[321]

How to Measure Change. In the Safe Schools model of problem solving and strategic planning, grantees defined their communities' problems in a rigorous way, Charles Simon explained. They identified strategies that were logically connected to—and that were likely to address—the problems they enumerated. Grantees had to implement the chosen strategies in a disciplined

way, and then they needed to look at their results. "If you're not holding yourself accountable for change, then no matter how good your ideas are, it doesn't matter."[322]

Shay Bilchik enumerated a number of relevant measures to cover a range of behaviors that might gauge the success of Safe Schools/Healthy Students: Are there fewer incidents of school violence? Are there fewer reports of violence at any level? Are there fewer suspensions? Is there less truancy within the school? Is the graduation rate in the school higher?[323]

Simon asserted that outcomes are far more interesting measures than outputs. An output measure might be how many kids with weapons are stopped from coming into schools. "That's much less interesting than how many fewer fights there are in school or how students are performing in schools. Presumably, if you do a better job of creating a safer environment, students are going to be more comfortable studying and learning, and they're going to do better in school.[324]

The team knew from the outset that both the initiative and its evaluation would be extremely complicated. After all, the program focused on systemic change and on kids who were developing over time, Anne Mathews-Younes explained. In addition to learning about the initiative's effect on kids, it also was important to examine the coalition process. "We wanted to see how each site was able to implement the various elements and what kinds of results they got in enhancing mental health services in the school."[325]

In an interactive process with the initiative's core leaders, the evaluation group put forward plans for both a local evaluation and a national cross-site evaluation to be conducted under a cooperative agreement with an experienced private-sector evaluation organization. The Safe Schools/Healthy Students program announcement required sites to:

> participate in a national evaluation that will collect and analyze data on a common, cross-site set of core indicators. Each selected site's development and implementation of a comprehensive, integrated program that addresses the six elements of this initiative will be evaluated at the national and local levels. Each site will also perform the site-specific evaluations to document and assess program development and implementation at the local level, including how well the program(s) and/or services are implemented, how closely the implementation matches the comprehensive communitywide strategy's goals, and how much of the program(s) and/or services participants actually receive. In addition, a subset of sites will be selected to participate in intensive, detailed analyses that can be used to inform policy, science, and programs at both the local and national levels....[326]

Local Evaluation. The local evaluation was based on the dual premise that it is critical for sites to know how they are doing on a day-to-day basis and that a good evaluation process helps grantees know whether they are moving efficiently toward achieving their goals.[327]

For the local evaluation, grantees agreed to spend a minimum of 5 percent of their total budget on evaluation and to hire a local evaluator with whom to work closely throughout the life of the initiative. The program announcement encouraged joining with a local university, research organization, or other appropriate entity to assist with all evaluation activities, and also required applicants to:

> demonstrate a strong commitment to incorporating evaluation activities into their planning and implementation activities. The overall evaluation effort is intended to document

and assess how program activities were implemented and whether goals and objectives were met. Evaluation should be an integral component of the plan to provide timely information for strategic planning, measure progress, suggest adjustments, and keep the initiative outcome focused.[328]

A key lesson learned from earlier multisystems change initiatives, and repeated for grantees in Safe Schools/Healthy Students, is the value of a local collaborative securing evaluation consultation from the very start of program conceptualization.[329] Early in the initiative it was evident, from personal observations alone, that stronger sites brought their local evaluator to the table as a key player from the beginning. Moreover, those sites that already had established a track record of collaboration across agencies, partnerships across sectors, and a tradition of working together had greater potential to be successful with this particular initiative, because they already had processes in place. And they were able to use the funds to fill in gaps that they had already identified.[330]

Shay Bilchik articulated the value of an "interplay of evaluation, not just as the ultimate outcome of what you've done," and of the evaluation team as a continuing partner in "helping you craft your work."[331] Michele Edwards concurred, noting that ongoing evaluation that feeds back into grantees' decision loops is becoming standard practice in the field. No longer is evaluation "just something that happens at the end, but rather evaluators and evaluation are integral. It's not just about outcomes, but also the process of the partnership of change. It's following that change, and it's forming the change. Evaluation is a living, breathing entity all the way through." She asserted that in Safe Schools/Healthy Students, this feature is critical because there are so many stakeholders. Interactive evaluation is a key way, she pointed out, to keep them informed and to provide them with real information on which to base their decisions, which guide each program, which sometimes impact entire communities.[332]

Denise Middlebrook, CMHS's representative to the interagency evaluation management team (IEMT), asserted that the specific answers to whether or not Safe Schools/Healthy Students is working will be found in local evaluations. However, at the time this history was written, final reports for local evaluation of the 1999 cohort of Safe Schools/Healthy Students sites were just beginning to trickle in. The initiative's staff declined to comment on the evaluations until they had had an opportunity to examine them carefully.[333]

National Evaluation. The challenge in the national evaluation was how to evaluate a comprehensive, community-wide initiative implemented in different ways, using different programs, providing different services, and guided by different strategies, Kellie Dressler explained.[334] A good deal of intense discussion ensued on how to account for the fact that sites had considerable leeway in how to design a multiplicity of programs that they implemented.[335]

The planners envisioned that the national evaluation would include collection of a set of core information from each of the sites, plus in-depth analyses from selected "sentinel sites" that would conduct more intensive data collection.[336]

The Safe Schools/Healthy Students program announcement explained that core indicators and outcomes would relate to prosocial behavior, antisocial behavior, school climate, economic data, and standardized demographic data. These factors were expected to allow sites to track positive changes during and after the implementation of the program(s) and/or services(s).[337]

The initiative's evaluation planners wrote and announced a separate competitive solicitation for a professional evaluation group to help design and manage the national cross-site evaluation. An experienced team of peer reviewers selected Research Triangle Institute (RTI) in North Carolina, which signed the cooperative agreement to manage the evaluation component.[338] OJJDP took the lead in funding the evaluation, with monies channeled in also from CMHS. Although the Department of Education did not provide support for this aspect of Safe Schools/Healthy Students, Education staff contributed their expertise. Kellie Dressler has served as GPO.[339]

In practice, the national evaluation has been far more complicated than the planners thought it would be. Several serious, unanticipated problems beset the effort from the outset. In an ideal world, Eve Moscicki explained, the designated national evaluator would be up and running well before grants were awarded for the grant program and be able immediately to collect baseline data from the sites. In reality, however, because of the initiative's stringent deadline to award funds to grantees before the end of the fiscal year, the reverse happened. The grant program was awarded, sites were up and running, and local evaluators were in place—even before the solicitation was written for the national evaluation. As a result, RTI played catch-up. The bottom line was that the national evaluation was unable to collect baseline data from the sites.[341]

In addition, although it typically is difficult to gauge the effect of staff turnover, the staff person who had had major input into RTI's Safe Schools/Healthy Students application left the organization shortly after the award was made.[342]

Another major evaluation issue was the serious delay the initiative encountered in securing clearance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for the survey instruments, Kellie Dressler recalled. OMB posed a series of obstacles in the approval process, as they exercised their responsibility to minimize the burden and cost of paperwork to grantees, yet still try to assure that projects could collect a meaningful amount of information and feedback. The cascade effect was that data collection was delayed.[343]

Other problems have arisen, including two methodological limitations. Using archival demographic data has been a challenge, and the analysis of costs has been more difficult to develop than had been anticipated.[344]

Denise Middlebrook and Betty Chemers articulated another major issue—the disparity in programs' designs from site to site. Middlebrook noted the extreme difficulty in deriving a useful national cross-site evaluation for programs implemented in schools that are so different from each other.[345] It wasn't "a program" that was being evaluated, Betty Chemers remembered. "To gauge the impact of something, you have to be able to compare similar things."[346]

Middlebrook also observed that all schools across America are now presenting some kind of youth violence prevention programming, making it difficult to determine how much knowledge was gained specifically through Safe Schools/Healthy Students versus through other efforts. She noted that a longitudinal view must be taken to be able to identify clearly the effects of Safe Schools/Healthy Students per se as part of a community and a school system.[347] In terms of process, Eve Moscicki suggested that the location of the evaluation organization outside the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area hindered the collaborative work essential to a cooperative agreement.[348]

Despite its flaws, the national evaluation is expected provide important information in several areas. It will:

- Help explain how schools partnered with communities and how the collaboration component of Safe Schools/Healthy Students played out
- Reveal the magnitude of the difficulty in doing national evaluations on communitywide, multisystemic initiatives
- Illuminate lessons learned from this evaluation that other evaluations can apply. One such lesson would be how to develop survey instruments to capture the breadth and complexity of a comprehensive, community-wide initiative, and whom to survey.[349]

The cooperative agreement signed in 1999 expires in 2004. After several years of conducting the crosssite evaluation, the initiative changed its direction and established different approaches to process and outcome evaluation. The IEMT continues to learn from early lessons derived from the evaluation.

Technical Assistance

The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative posed unprecedented opportunities, but also challenges, to its grantees. The initiative mandated that grantees integrate six distinct elements (three each representing school safety and healthy child development) across three major systems (education, justice, and mental health) that typically did not communicate with each other. Millions of federal dollars were to be infused into community-based programs to provide services underpinned by a new paradigm of evidence-based practices. Community partners had worked together in local collaborations for varying lengths of time and effectiveness prior to submitting their joint applications.

To ensure that grantees would be successful at what they proposed to accomplish, and to ensure that the massive amounts of taxpayers' dollars would be spent well, the initiative's leaders knew that grantees would require a lot of help.[350]

CMHS took the lead on technical assistance, although leaders from the other two departments concurred with the notion of incorporating such a component into the initiative. "It was important for grantees that might struggle with implementation or other unforeseen issues to have access to a grant-specific technical assistance team with the skill sets to help them," Shay Bilchik noted.[351] The core leaders were well aware that applicants often get help in writing an excellent grant application, but when they get the money, they need assistance to get their great ideas operationalized. They anticipated finding projects at various stages of readiness.[352]

In consultation with Mike English, other CMHS staff, and the IPT membership, Anne Mathews-Younes and Gail Ritchie custom designed an innovative model to provide technical assistance to Safe Schools/Healthy Students grantees.[353] Key concepts incorporated into the consultant/broker model included:[354]

- Virtual team. Technical assistance providers, known as consultant/brokers, would work from their homes in geographically disparate locations across the country, theoretically within drivable distances from their grantees' sites.

- Proactive technical assistance. Consultant/brokers would contact grantees frequently to help them anticipate, identify, and then walk through their particular issues and challenges. They would follow up to reinforce information and guidance imparted.
- Consultant/broker model that would provide access, when needed, to experts and developers of the evidence-based programs grantees planned to implement. Experts would be brokered in on any needed topic, including, for example, partnership development, conflict resolution, and program development. This model was designed to ensure that evidence-based programs would be implemented as intended and that grantees would not drop what might be core components. Attention to cultural competence was important, and access to the developers was envisioned also to "make sure that a program that was designed for green people also works for pink people."[355]
- Relationship-based—not "drive-by"—technical assistance. A consultant/broker would work as a coach/advisor/consultant, with a limited number of sites, maintain regular contact, and make three site visits annually. Although the technical assistance provider would develop a website and listserv, the essence of the technical assistance would be person-to-person contact.
- Technical assistance to provided by community liaisons to coalitions in communities that were not awarded grants
- Repository of evidence-based interventions, reports, and documents, a clearinghouse and a website available for access by grantees and the public and also consultant/brokers, all of which provided information on subject matter experts and other relevant topics. Community liaisons were to run the clearinghouse using a relationship-based approach featuring customized attention and thorough follow-up.
- Steering committee to advise the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Action Center
- Research and evaluation work group constituted of experts on evaluation and on evidence-based practices in education, justice, and mental health, to keep the initiative on the scientific track
- An expert pool of organizations and individuals from education, justice, and mental health

Additional benefits, some learned later, included the usefulness of consultant/brokers as extra sets of eyes, ears, and hands to GPOs constrained by limited travel funds and time.[356]

Contracting Process. The cooperative agreement was announced in March 1999; SAMHSA subsequently conducted its traditional rigorous peer review of the several applications received; and the award was made to a partnership between the National Mental Health Association and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) in September.[359] These two organizations in turn had enlisted the support of and collaboration of many other organizations.[360] Headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, they called their operation the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Action Center. NASP's Larry Sullivan, Ph.D., took the helm as director, and CMHS's Gail Ritchie served as GPO.

Comprehensive Technical Assistance

Partnership building in communities is complicated, and more than one site had difficulty in getting its program off the ground. In some cases, technical assistance providers spent what one might consider inordinate amounts of time holding hands and guiding and counseling, in order to help a single project director succeed. In other cases, consultant/brokers brokered in organizational consultants, for example, to help grantees work through dissention in their communities and then to move the coalitions forward.[357]

One might think, explained Anne Mathews-Younes, "'Oh, man, this is incredibly expensive to have the consultant/broker spend so much time down there!' But we had $9 million on the line, so if he spent tons of hours down there, that was okay."

That intensive person-to-person contact was part of the design. In effect, for each site consultant/brokers protected a federal investment of $9 million (or $6 million or $3 million, depending on a site's urbanicity) over the three-year grant period.[358]

Lessons Learned: Initial Issues with Action Center. The technical assistance component got off to a rapid start, but it was not smooth, particularly from the standpoint of the GPOs.[361] A number of the early lessons learned are enumerated here.

- From the start, consultant/brokers were encouraged to establish relationships with grantees. Consultant/brokers were mandated to work proactively, and at the time they were making their initial contacts with their grant sites, selection of the GPOs had not yet begun. Congress had appropriated no funds for personnel to manage the initiative, and departments had to determine which staff members could be freed up, or hired eventually, to manage and monitor the grant sites. Especially among the CMHS staff, little early continuity among the GPOs was maintained. And once stable personnel selections were made, the GPOs needed time to study and understand what their grantees proposed to do and to make sure that their grantees' budgets were approved and allowable. By the time the GPOs were up to speed, consultant/brokers already had conducted needs assessments and other technical assistance activities.[362]
- Many consultant/brokers did not broker services. They focused on their grantees needs to attend to strengthening their coalitions.[363]
- Although many consultant/brokers provided technical assistance that helped grantees move forward and also worked closely with them to identify potential problems early, some specialists were not sufficiently skilled in the kinds of guidance the grantees needed.[364] Some consultant/brokers "took charge" of sites' programs, rather than helping grantees to build critical collaborative skills and relationships.[365]
- Early leadership by the technical assistance provider organization was not sufficiently responsive to GPO's concerns regarding boundary issues and paid insufficient attention to grassroots approaches within the organization.[366]

- The Action Center's development of Internet technology to provide GPOs with quarterly reports took more time than anticipated; the process did not include input from its GPO/clients; and GPOs were dissatisfied with the ultimate mode of communication.[367]

As the Safe Schools/Healthy Students technical assistance effort took off, Gail Ritchie often commented, "We're building our boat as we float." She explained, "We had to get out there and sail to all the islands where the grantees were, and we were still trying to build our boat, get our sail going—and we didn't even know who our crew was at some point, because we were bringing new people on."[368]

Like every other component of the complex Safe Schools initiative, from its conceptualization and development and management, to the functioning of the grantees' collaboratives and programs, the technical assistance effort experienced its own unique developmental challenges and growth as it worked in the field at the same time as it built its own infrastructure.

Collaboration Building

At one point, Anne Mathews-Younes and Gail Ritchie met in an informal session with all the consultant/brokers. When the federal staff raised the issue of the limited use of the brokering approach, the consultant/brokers responded that they were spending a great deal of time consulting with program directors on strengthening their collaborations. The sites were just not asking questions that required experts—there was much groundwork to do first. "We learned how monumental a task this was."[369]

New Action Center Leadership. A year into the initiative, the head of the technical assistance consortium resigned to pursue other opportunities. Karen Francis, an experienced technical assistance provider who had served as Assistant Director of the Action Center, took up the reins. Gail Ritchie credits her with taking steps to solve many of the growing pains and other issues that the Action Center had been experiencing. Under Francis's leadership, consultant/brokers began to work more in tandem with the GPOs, and a realigned staff structure fostered more interaction and sharing of information about their grantees.

Positive Lessons Learned. Over the course of its incumbency the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Action Center learned a great deal about providing technical assistance to grantees in an exceptionally complex and comprehensive program. They focused on identifying the necessary core competencies necessary for grantees to succeed—and therefore for technical assistance staff to help grantees achieve. These included, among others, improvement in governance structure, leadership development, capacity building, improved understanding of school and community resources, enhanced evaluation and accountability, social marketing/communications, and sustainability.[370]

When she came on board, new Action Center Director Karen Francis took steps to boost morale among Action Center staff and to create a sense of teamwork among consultant/brokers and between consultant/brokers and GPOs in their work with the grantees. In addition, the Action

Center and its GPO developed an increased understanding of the skill sets required for relationship-based technical assistance—far more important than just subject matter expertise was a consultative approach.[371]

The Action Center's final report noted that feedback from both an internal and an external evaluation process provided information and informed midcourse corrections, enhancements, and modifications. Among the most critical lessons learned were how difficult and how critical it is to understand and engage in systems change, the importance of using information provided by local evaluations in developing strategic plans, educating funders and the public using a social marketing approach, and making decisions.[373]

New Provider. Toward the end of the cooperative agreement, a new competition was held. The Education Development Center, in partnership with American Institutes for Research, formed the successful partnership. The National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention has provided technical assistance to Safe Schools/Healthy Students sites funded in 2002 through 2004 using a different model of delivering technical assistance.[374]

Essence of Technical Assistance

The Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant program is about coalition building, people coming together, mental health issues, group issues, political issues, safety issues, cultural issues. You cannot give penicillin for that. The way you help is through helping people come together and develop their social capital.[372]

—Gail Ritchie

Communications

A special aspect of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative focuses on sustainability of grantees' programs. It was (and often is) commonplace for government programs to fund community projects for a few years—and then have some projects fall by the wayside at the end of the grant period because continuation funding cannot be secured. The IPT instituted the communications component based on their knowledge that attention to the process of developing alternative sources of funds is essential to retain the needed services that communities establish.

Concept. CMHS brought to its partners the idea of incorporating a communications component into the initiative.[375] Louise Peloquin had been directing a successful communications/social marketing operation for a program in CMHS's Child, Adolescent, and Family Branch, and agency leadership believed the concept held promise for Safe Schools.[376]

The initial concept was to create an overarching national communications campaign on youth violence prevention and also to provide communications support to grantees in Safe Schools/Healthy Students. The communications component would entail such activities as social marketing, building partnerships with organizations, media outreach, grantee/community outreach, and evaluation.[377] Anne Mathews-Younes explained this grant program's potential to engage new

constituencies—for example, the business community—which could be motivated to invest in their potential workforce through their communities' Safe Schools/Healthy Students program. "But how would they know about it, if somebody doesn't message, market, package, and communicate that information?"[378]

CMHS agreed to contribute approximately $2.5 million annually for three years to this effort. The Gallup Organization bid successfully for the competitive contract, with Porter+Novelli as its subcontractor. Planning to draw on her considerable expertise with prevention, social marketing, training, and mental health, Louise Peloquin volunteered, and was appointed, to serve as GPO.[379]

By the end of January 2000, the communications campaign effort had entered the research and planning stage, which would culminate in a strategic communications plan. Its strategies would be implemented by aggressive media relations, corporate and foundation partnership programs, and development and production of both printed and Internet-based materials. Materials would be adaptable by grantees for local use.[380]

Porter+Novelli produced a number of foundation pieces for the communications campaign during the first year of the contract, including a logo and letterhead for Safe Schools/Healthy Students, and a number of pamphlets and brochures. Gallup had coordinated information-gathering sessions from which Porter+Novelli developed themes and products, approved by the multiagency IPT.[381]

Communications Themes

Among the themes around which communications products and programs revolved were "Violence prevention is everyone's business" and "Safe Schools/Healthy Students is a collaborative effort." Posters depict the community collaboration among education, justice, and mental health. "That's how you solve community problems—with the community, not for the community," Louise Peloquin asserts.[382]

But it soon became clear that the funds available to mount a national campaign would be insufficient to make an impact—this campaign wouldn't amount to even a tiny fish in the nationwide media pond.[383] Moreover, the Clinton White House had initiated a broader national campaign, and the IPT decided that a parallel and smaller effort would be redundant.[384]

A New Approach. The communications project switched gears. The updated concept focused more on providing training and technical assistance to Safe Schools grantees to enable them to communicate effectively about what they were doing in their programs. The key was to create strategies that mobilized communities to embrace Safe Schools/Healthy Students and the services that the initiative provided, Shay Bilchik explained. This approach would give the programs a better chance three years down the road to live on, when federal funding terminated.[385]

This new grassroots approach would teach grantees how to do their own communications/social marketing activities, such as putting out a newsletter, writing and submitting an article for a newspaper, and seeking publicity from TV and radio stations and the community at large.[386]

It would involve working with sites around social marketing strategies, such as how to develop a brochure or a website, how to pull together presentations for their mayor or state legislature, or how to write up their local evaluation results in a way that people might understand and use.[387] But the expertise required to do this work did not appear on Porter+Novelli's resume. It was necessary to find a new subcontractor.[388]

Social and Health Services (SHS) of Rockville, Maryland, came on board in December 2001, with its strong track record in providing technical assistance on communications to community- and state-based organizations.[389] As much experience as this group had in providing first-rate technical assistance to grantees, though, they were not trainers. Louise Peloquin explained, "There are training firms out there and there are technical assistance firms. Communications people do posters and pamphlets and videos," and not training—a lesson learned. As an experienced trainer, Peloquin taught the SHS staff to be trainers themselves, and SHS staff in turn trained Safe Schools grantees. It was a dual accomplishment in infrastructure development and capacity building, both within SHS and expanding on into the communities.[390]

Rationale for Communications Component

"Regardless of how good a program is and how wonderful the impact on the community, if the community isn't aware of what's going on, if the people who are trying to get into the programs don't know you're there, if the businesses and the foundations and the decision makers and policymakers don't know the impact that programs are having on the community, then at the end of that three years, you're still not going to have any funding to run them... Our goal is to help grantees understand that an essential requirement of meeting their programmatic objectives and fulfilling the requirements of their grant is to market and promote their existence and their accomplishments and their programs.[391]

—Renee McNamee, communications project director at Social and Health Services

Applied Social Marketing. In the Safe Schools/Healthy Students context, social marketing constitutes a planned three-part strategy to raise awareness, provide a call to action, and create an opportunity for behavior change. To begin, the communications team trains sites on how to put together a communications plan, for example, to raise awareness in the community about youth violence. But because knowing about youth violence is not enough to combat it, grantees are taught to take the next step, to provide a call to action. The team offers technical assistance on establishing a website or a toll-free telephone number.[392]

True social marketing aims to change behavior, but since it is difficult to quantify behavioral change in youth, the goal in Safe Schools/Healthy Students is to create *opportunities* for behavioral change to happen. One example is to help grantees learn how to present in their own communities an event or another activity that will draw the public into their work.[393]

Social marketing in Safe Schools/Healthy Students has two tracks. The first track consists of preparing and presenting messages to individuals—parents, caregivers, and students. For parents, one important message is to communicate with their kids. For students, a typical message is that bullying is not acceptable. This track is essential to gain buy-in from students and the people important in their lives. The other communications track primarily includes stakeholders, policymakers, and community partnerships—again to establish broader buy-in and to convey the positive progress of the program.

Technical Assistance Approaches. Renee McNamee explained that the communications team works often with educators, school superintendents, school resource officers, and mental health providers. Those people are "not marketers. They are steeped in the day-to-day business of running their grant programs, so we try to help them understand the role that communications plays in accomplishing their goals and arm them with the tools to accomplish sustainability through communications."[394]

SHS's website, listserv, conference calls, regular publications, training institutes, and person-to-person phone calls and site visits alert grantees to new opportunities and new techniques. SHS produces materials and trainings generic enough to be widely useful and also tailors assistance to each site's particular needs. In addition, as sites produce their own materials, they share them with other grantees at joint meetings and trainings. In addition, if locally developed materials have particular promise, the national team might adapt them for broader applicability.

Examples of Communications Technical Assistance

- How to create a communications plan to promote the grant with one voice
- Spokesperson training
- Media relations plan development
- Training institutes on selected topics
- Presentation skills

The communications team has developed technical assistance/training modules and templates for materials development by grant sites. The templates and modules include, for example, information on how to talk to legislators and other policymakers in order to help sustain the programs. When warranted, the national technical assistance center collaborates with the communications team in helping grantees present special programs.

The communications team also has developed novelty items, which they distribute on a regular basis, is to help grantees look at different ways of getting information out to various audiences—keeping the sites' names and brand in the public eye.[395] Just as the leaders of Safe Schools/Healthy Students were anxious to model the collaboration they expected of grantees in the field, so the communication team models the way it hopes sites will take on the business of communications.

An especially important component of the communications training is development of a dissemination plan. Grantees have ideas what they want to create or do, but typically they have no plans for moving it into the community. In this program, they learn.[396]

Training Institutes. Held several times a year, communications training institutes have convened grantees from different funding years, geographical areas, and target audiences for cross-sharing about what has worked for them and what has not.[397] Workshops include such topics as spokesperson training, web development, materials development, focus group training, conducting needs assessments, developing communications plans, and evaluation of communications efforts. Grantees set aside funds from their budgets to send at least one staff member to the training institutes. Following the institutes, a systematic process of training reinforcement kicks in. Follow-up, hands-on technical assistance is available to reflect the learning at the institute. Louise Peloquin asserted that the training institutes effectively market Safe Schools/Healthy Students' communications technical assistance capabilities, resulting in broader use of the services.[398]

Sustainability. In the traditional grant funding cycle, programs get federal dollars, spend federal dollars, and, all too soon, have no more federal dollars to spend. Toward the end of the final funding year, site managers finally force themselves to deal with the reality of securing new funding sources for the services they have been providing. Typically, then, sustainability often is one of the last aspects of a program that grant directors consider.[399]

But Safe Schools/Healthy Students sites that have availed themselves of the wealth of training and technical assistance in communications are more than just a step ahead of the usual curve, explained Louis Peloquin. "They understand that it is critical for successful programs to market themselves to their own host school districts, for example, in order to institutionalize the programs in the school budgets. Because the groundwork has been set down, relationships built, and successes in the program evident to the community, it will be possible to initiate these critical conversations with school administrators." Moreover, grantees have the opportunity to educate state mental health agencies, state education agencies, state legislatures, so that as they allocate money, they can fund established effective programs in a sustained fashion.[400]

The success of the communications component has sparked conversations for the future about creating a technical assistance center that specializes in communications. Evaluation consultation and technical assistance have become commonplace in the behavioral health and justice fields, and they serve as key components of programs. As it becomes apparent to more decision makers that social marketing can serve a major role in a program's sustainability, it may become easier to spread the word about the value of such a technical assistance center.

15+ Campaign. The communications team also works on a limited national social marketing campaign developed initially by SAMHSA. The campaign, 15+: Make Time to Listen, Take Time to Talk, is based on the simple concept, supported by research on the Families and Schools Together (FAST) program, that if you spend 15 minutes or more at a time with your child a day, "remarkable things can happen."[401]

The campaign created four public service announcements (PSAs) for TV that were aired to raise awareness. For the call to action, viewers were urged to telephone an 800 number to receive a package of anti-drug materials, booklets and pamphlets, and a custom-developed conversation-

starter card game. Questions range from "What's your favorite animal?" to "What would you do if you saw someone with a gun or knife in school or work?" To evaluate this campaign, Peloquin remembered, all one could do was to evaluate dissemination of the packages—and they went like crazy. The main conduit for the 15+ campaign products has been the Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant sites. From the sites, the word gets out to the communities at large.[402]

In addition to the communications materials, in conjunction with a network television affiliate in Washington, D.C., the 15+ campaign produced a prime-time special (nominated for an Emmy® award) that examined how communication produced changes in three families. A panel of psychologists, psychiatrists, and family members answered callers' questions during a seven-hour call-in session, most of which centered on their need to validate their own parenting practices. Viewers also requested resources on a variety of subjects.[403]

The branding of the 15+ campaign makes it possible to change the focus from time to time. (The current campaign centers on bullying, and future themes might include drug abuse or suicide prevention. Branding permits re-use of the logos and a good deal of basic infrastructure for materials.)[404]

Interface with Technical Assistance Providers. SHS provides communications training and technical assistance solely. Their protocol is to share information about the sites, particularly their need or readiness for assistance, with both the programmatic technical assistance providers and the GPOs.[405]

Evolution of the Communications Component. The original program announcement for Safe Schools/Healthy Students did not mention communications. The concept was relatively new for a grant program, and the communications component initially focused on the national campaign. Recent Safe Schools/Healthy Students solicitations include communications as an allowable budget expense, resulting in more sites incorporating local communications professionals—and pro bono contributions—into their plans. A dedicated communications professional on the local collaboration team enables more resources and time to be devoted to the sustainability effort.[406]

Evaluation. Although the communications component of Safe Schools/Healthy Students was not set up to be evaluated, the basic demographics of website hits and communications materials ordered by sites inform the success of its efforts. In addition, SAMHSA recently commissioned compilation of case studies around communications. Two each case studies for urban, suburban, rural, and tribal sites will be subjected to cross-site analysis to develop lessons learned as well as communication evaluation issues.[407]

Renee McNamee reports that several new grantees have asked the communications team specifically to help them develop evaluation protocols to institute at the beginning. That task has been a challenge, however, because the grant requires neither communications efforts by grantees nor evaluation of their communications efforts. But McNamee asserts that building communications benchmarks and monitors into local evaluations would help grantees evaluate the success and the impact of their Safe Schools/Healthy Students grants, particularly the impact of their

communications activities. If, at the end of three years, their programs are sustained, how much of that is as a result of the outreach grantees extended to local businesses, to foundations? How much was a result of the messages they communicated to their parent groups? How much of that was the relationships they established with the media? McNamee asserts that "it would be helpful for us to tailor the kind of technical assistance we deliver, as well as for the grantees themselves to know how to move forward."[408]

Postscript

Safe Schools/Healthy Students grantees that have graduated from federal funding recognize that they have learned a great deal about communication and marketing, and they are leveraging their knowledge to other fields and to other areas of the community. Supporting transfer of knowledge into new realms is at least one good reason, Louise Peloquin asserts, why all grant programs should be able to access a communications technical assistance center. In conjunction with a national communications contractor, Peloquin also promotes instituting a requirement for a half-time communications person in every applicant's budget.[409] Among the lessons learned, Peloquin pointed out, are the necessity for a federal communications campaign to identify a printing budget, a separate line item in SAMHSA's budget process, and also the desirability of a contracting arrangement providing for a five-year contract, a three-year base with a two-year option.[410]

The communications component currently is conducting a new pilot project in ten states for journalism interns to work at grantee sites. A guidebook is in the works that will provide information for other sites to do this as well.[411]

Members of the IPT, past and present, are pleased with the communications work of Safe Schools/Healthy Students. "This has been an incredible success," Anne Mathews-Younes observed. "We took a social marketing approach, because we were really trying to get people to create behavior change in the way they and communities live. There is something engaging about kids and violence prevention, because it affects everyone."[412] And from Shay Bilchik, "We expected to see some media strategy about how to reach out to the community to make sure they know about this project, but *not* the concept developed to this level."[413]

Chapter 8: Successful Collaboration

The idea of Safe Schools/Healthy Students "resonated with each of the partners," and everyone at the table wanted to ensure its success, Bryan Williams explained.[414] Behind the process was the all-important principle that no one wanted "more bad things to happen to the children."[415]

The policy team understood that "collaboration and partnership meant that you brought power, you brought control, you brought turf, you brought money all to the table—and in some way, you compromised your level of power, control, funding, authority, to making the joint effort work," Shay Bilchik asserted.[416] Anne Mathews-Younes called Safe Schools/Healthy Students a *real* collaboration. "What some people *call* collaborations are just meetings where everybody sits on their hands *and* their money. Here, everything was put on the table." She added, "If you can trust that the group will come up with something better than you could have on your own, you're going to get someplace."[417]

Charles Simon concurred. He explained that "1 + 1 + 1 didn't equal 3." Potentially, he said, "it equaled much more than 3." By combining the resources of the Education Department and of Health and Human Services and of Justice—funding and staff and knowledge base—you could "craft something that was unique that couldn't have been crafted by any one of those agencies on its own."[418]

Safe Schools/Healthy Students leaders identified a number of unique features of the development and structure of the grant program. One of the most important reasons for its success was the involvement of the Attorney General's office, Kellie Dressler stated, adding that the Secretary of Education also saw the collaboration as important. That "high-level presence was definitely unique. A good deal of interagency government work occurs at the staff level, and at that level you can only take it so far."[419]

Moreover, high-level buy-in prompted agency directors and administrators to assign their best staff to the effort. The people who staffed this effort were "very committed and very visionary about doing this kind of work," Dressler added, but they also "had a pretty good understanding of the nuts and bolts, of what it means to put together and run a grant program."[420]

Keys to the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Federal Collaboration

The key leaders of Safe Schools/Healthy Students acknowledged the important role the following characteristics (in no particular order) played in the collaborative development of the initiative:

1. Collaborators were value-driven people with strong commitment to the cause(s) behind the initiative.
   a. They felt that the whole was bigger than any of its parts or its constituencies.
   b. They were willing to persevere to completion.
   c. They believed in the success of the initiative.
   d. Pressure to succeed was brought to bear (or at lease perceived) from the highest reaches of government.

2. Collaborators possessed high levels of expertise in multiple aspects of the project, and then they learned about other disciplines.

3. Collaborators had worked together in various combinations on other initiatives and projects.
   a. They understood the advantages and barriers inherent in multisystems approaches.
   b. They had strong communications skills.
   c. They embraced change in "the way we do business" and worked to surmount the barriers to change.
   d. They trusted that no one would sacrifice the initiative for personal or organizational gain.
   e. They were willing and able to come to agreement on processes.
   f. They met face to face as often as possible or necessary.
   g. They used informal motivation and mediation to resolve issues and move ahead.
   h. Multiple individuals from various components of some agencies were involved in the collaboration.
   i. Stability in the composition of collaborators was maintained throughout the developmental and into the implementation stages.
4. Top departmental/agency leadership vested decision-making authority in (most) collaborators.
   a. Broad buy-in and vision by leadership of all entities that might have a role in propelling or sinking the initiative are important elements.
   b. Collaborators were willing and able to take risks and compromise on the power, control, turf, money, and other resources they had brought to the table.
   c. Collaboration took place across agencies, vertically within agencies, and in matrix mode.
5. Collaborators worked creatively and flexibly around statutory, regulatory, and logistical barriers and stumbling blocks.
   a. They maintained the integrity of the system and satisfied bureaucratic requirements (e.g., reporting, integrity of funding streams).
   b. Collaborators achieved buy-in by (legislative) appropriators, top leadership, and oversight entities.

6. Driven by a sense of urgency, collaborators made adequate time and found adequate energy to focus on the issue.
7. Collaborators incorporated into the program design both the best science/art about youth violence prevention and lessons learned from prior systems work.
8. Consensus-based decision making at both the policy-making and "worker-bee" levels contributed to the success of the initiative.
9. Collaborators treated concessions as de facto team-building exercises and celebrated the members who made concessions.
10. Abundant tasty snacks were brought to meetings.

Mike English's Key Elements of the Interdepartmental Partnership and Program Development Process

What Safe Schools/Healthy Students Proved:

- Three departments can pool resources in a single grant program.
- The program can be managed jointly with Interdepartmental staffs.

Key Lessons for Creating the Relationships:

- Respect
- Play to strengths
- Agree to negotiate
- Identify the principals
- Take time to understand one another

Key Lessons for Crafting the Agreement:

- Value compromise
- Expect all to contribute: ideas, money, staff
- Create will to change current practice (versus mandates that cannot change)
- Seek win-win solutions
- Ensure equal standing, regardless of monetary investment

Building Blocks:

- Common vision and values
- Shared goals and accountability that accommodate each agency's mission and objectives
- Develop grant solicitation from applicant's perspective
- Single application
- Single, shared view
- Unanimous award decisions

Key Characteristics of Program:

- Complementary requirements
- Shared goal-oriented evaluation strategy
- Joint oversight, require unanimous decisions by management team
- Dollars stay in separate appropriations[421]

Biographies of Interviewees

Bernard Arons, M.D.
A psychiatrist, Bernard Arons has an interest in how systems function and how communities respond to their needs. Dr. Arons participated in the LEGIS Fellows Program on Capital Hill in 1989 and then served as Tipper Gore's mental health advisor and co-chair of the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Working Group of the President's National Health Care Reform Task Force around 1991-92. Dr. Arons served as the first Director of the Center for Mental Health Services from 1992 until 2002.

Michelle Bechard
Having worked at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C., and for a national provider of behavioral health care services, Michelle Bechard joined the Center for Mental Health Services in spring 2000. Since that time she has served as a Government Project Officer for Safe Schools/ Healthy Students.

Shay Bilchik, J.D.
Before working at the U.S. Justice Department, Shay Bilchik served as a prosecutor in Miami, Florida, from 1977 to 1993. During that time, he worked on children's issues as a line prosecutor within the juvenile delinquency and family court, and later as chief assistant state attorney. At the inception of planning for the White House Conference on School Safety in October 1998, Bilchik had served as administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for five years. He left government service in 2000 to become President and Chief Executive Officer of the Child Welfare League of America.

Betty M. Chemers, M.A.
Betty Chemers has worked for the Department of Justice on and off for 25 years. In 1994 she joined the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and subsequently was promoted to Director, Research and Program Development Division. From March 2000 until September 2001, Chemers served as Deputy Administrator of OJJDP, and now serves as Director and Chief of the Evaluation Division at the National Institute of Justice.

Sonia Chessen, M.S.W.
Having begun her career as Director of Social Services in a public housing project in Chicago, Sonia Chessen came to Washington and worked for several years in evaluation research. She subsequently joined the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) and later served as Director of the White House Council on Youth Violence. Chessen currently serves as Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation at the HHS.

Karen Dorsey, M.P.A.
Karen Dorsey first entered U.S. government service through the Presidential Management Intern program at the agency formerly known as the Health Care Financing Administration. She later worked at Head Start and joined Safe Schools/Healthy Students in September 1999. She has served the initiative since then as a Government Project Officer.

Kellie Dressler-Tetrick, M.S.
Kellie Dressler currently serves as Program Coordinator of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative at the Justice Department's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency.

Michele Edwards, M.A., A.C.S.W.
Michele Edwards currently serves as a public health advisor at CMHS and as Government Project Officer for Safe Schools/Healthy Students.

Michael J. English, J.D.
Michael English served as Director, CMHS Division of Knowledge Development and Systems Change, later known as the Division of Service and Systems Improvement until his retirement in 2003.

Brian W. Flynn, Ed.D.
At the time of the initiation of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students program, Brian Flynn served as Director of the Division of Program Development, Special Populations, and Projects at the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Flynn retired in January 2001 as a Rear Admiral/ Assistant Surgeon General after 31 years in the U.S. Public Health Service. He currently works as a consultant, writer, trainer, and speaker specializing in preparation for, response to, and recovery from the psychosocial aspects of large-scale emergencies and disasters. Following the shootings at Columbine High School, Dr. Flynn accompanied Vice President and Mrs. Gore on their trip to Littleton, Colorado, to advise on issues regarding violence and trauma, as well as to meet with the families of the dead and injured.

Shelly Hara, M.S.W.
As a social worker, Shelly Hara has worked as a clinician, development director for a community-based organization that served Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and staff director for Los Angeles County Commission for Women. She later worked for a nonprofit organization and then for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration on child and family policy systems reform at the state and local levels before joining the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Program as a government project officer.

Anne Mathews-Younes, Ed.D.
Anne Mathews-Younes has worked at the Center for Mental Health Services for a little more than 10 years. A psychologist by training and with a background in working in clinical programs, since 1986 Dr. Mathews-Younes has served as an administrator in state and now federal government. She serves as Director, Division of Prevention, Traumatic Stress, and Special Programs at CMHS.

Renee McNamee, M.B.A.
Having worked for Social and Health Services on the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information project as their RADAR Network manager and later on CSAP's Model Programs Initiative, Renee McNamee currently serves as Director of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Communications Team.

Denise Middlebrook, Ph.D.
A social psychologist by training, Denise Middlebrook participated in a post-doctoral program at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in the School of Medicine, Division of Psychiatry, American Indian/Native Alaskan Mental Health Research Division. She served as faculty and research associate there for a number of years, where she conducted an NIMH-funded epidemiological research project in three reservation communities. She joined CMHS in 2000 as a Government Project Officer for Safe Schools/Healthy Students.

William Modzeleski, M.P.A.
Currently Associate Deputy Under Secretary of the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, Bill Modzeleski has been at the Department of Education for approximately 12 years. Previously Modzeleski had spent approximately 12 years at the Department of Justice. He holds a master's degree in public administration with a focus on criminal justice-related issues. He has worked at the local level as a probation officer in family court. In the Departments of Education and Justice, he has worked primarily on issues related to youth related to delinquency, crime, violence, justice, and safe schools.

Eve Moscicki, Sc.D., M.P.H.
An epidemiologist, Eve Moscicki has worked at the National Institute of Mental Health for more than twenty years. Dr. Moscicki has served as Assistant Chief of the Epidemiology and Psychopathology Research Branch and later as Chief of the Prevention Research Branch. At the time she joined the Center for Mental Health Services on detail to work on Safe Schools/Healthy Students, she served as Associate Director for Prevention Research in NIMH's Division of Services and Intervention Research.

Louise Peloquin, Ph.D.
Louise Peloquin has enjoyed careers as a licensed clinical social worker, school counselor, trainer, and project director for a major social marketing campaign for the March of Dimes. Having joined the Center for Mental Health Services in 1996 and conducted a social marketing campaign for the Child, Adolescent, and Family Branch at CMHS, she served as Government Project Officer for the Safe Schools/Healthy Students communications contract since its inception in September 1999.

Janet Reno, J.D.
Janet Reno was the state attorney in Miami, Dade County, Florida, prior to the time she became U.S. Attorney General. Her first assignment prior to that, in the early 1970s, had been as an assistant state attorney assigned to the Juvenile Division. Currently Reno focuses her attention on the problem of how to prevent the conviction of innocent people, an area of study based on post-conviction DNA testing that has exonerated at least 140 people in the last 10 years. She is a visiting fellow at the University of Miami's Center for Ethics and Public Service.

Gail Ritchie, M.Ed., M.S.W.
A licensed clinical social worker by profession, Gail Ritchie has worked as an administrator in higher education, a clinical social worker at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C., and a member of a research team at the National Institute of Mental Health. Having served as Government Project Officer for the technical assistance contract for Safe Schools/Healthy Students, she currently works on improving mental health services for children and their families at the Center for Mental Health Services/SAMHSA.

Deborah Rudy, C.P.A.
With a bachelor's degree in government and politics and after having worked on Capital Hill for almost fifteen years, Debbie Rudy joined the Department of Education in 1987. She currently serves as Director of the Policy and Cross-Cutting Initiatives staff in the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools.

Ricki Seidman, J.D.
Ricki Seidman earned her law degree from the University of Georgia. Ms. Seidman worked in the Clinton presidential campaign and then in the White House in 1993 and 1994. She returned in 1998 to the Justice Department, where she served as Deputy Associate Attorney General. As a close advisor to the Attorney General, Seidman engaged in liaison work on policy issues in the White House and Justice Department.

Charles A. Simon, J.D.
Charles Simon joined the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative as Deputy Director of the Justice Department's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, and eventually served as Deputy Associate Attorney General in the Office of the Associate Attorney General upon the departure from Justice of Ricki Seidman. He worked for two years as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York before taking on his current role as Deputy Director of Criminal Justice for New York State, where his responsibilities are in many ways a logical progression of what he did at the Department of Justice.

Bryan Williams
Bryan Williams has worked for the Department of Education since 1995. Mr. Williams has worked on a number of interagency collaborations, both before and after his involvement with Safe Schools/Healthy Students, which began at the beginning of 1999.

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Michele Edwards, M.A., A.C.S.W.
Michael J. English, J.D.
Brian W. Flynn, Ed.D.
Shelly Hara, M.S.W.
Anne Mathews-Younes, Ed.D.
Renee McNamee, M.B.A.
Denise Middlebrook, Ph.D.
William Modzeleski, M.P.A.
Eve Moscicki, M.P.H., Sc.D.
Louise Peloquin, Ph.D.
Janet Reno, J.D.
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Notes

[1] Shay Bilchik, interview, October 16, 2003, Washington, D.C. (*hereafter* Bilchik interview).
[2] William Modzeleski, interview, February 3, 2003, Washington, D.C. (*hereafter* Modzeleski interview).
[3] Kevin Dwyer, David Osher, and Cynthia Warger, *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1998) (*hereafter Early Warning*); U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Justice, *School Safety Annual Report 1998* (Washington, D.C., 1999), ERIC No. ED428464 (*hereafter Annual Report*); "White House Conference on School Safety," October 15, 1998, satellite broadcast participant packet.
[4] Bernard Arons, M.D., interview, January 14, 2004, Rockville, Maryland (*hereafter* Arons interview).
[5] Ricki Seidman, interview, November 17, 2003, Washington, D.C. (*hereafter* Seidman interview).
[6] Arons interview.
[7] Janet Reno, telephone interview, February 2, 2004.
[8] *Annual Report.*
[9] Dwyer et al., *Early Warning.*
[10] Sonia Chessen, interview, January 3, 2003, Washington, D.C. (*hereafter* Chessen interview 1).
[11] Seidman interview.
[12] Seidman interview.
[13] Bilchik interview.
[14] Bilchik interview.
[15] Seidman interview.
[16] Arons interview.
[17] Seidman interview.
[18] Bilchik interview.
[19] White House Meeting on School Violence, September 1, 1998, participant list (Mike English File #1).
[20] Chessen interview 1.
[21] Bilchik interview.
[22] Kellie Dressler, interview, May 12, 2003, Washington, D.C. (*hereafter* Dressler interview 1).
[23] Michael J. English, interview, December 6, 2002, Rockville, Maryland (*hereafter* English interview).

[24] At this point the major planners of the initiative included Ricki Seidman, Bill Modzeleski, Shay Bilchik, Sonia Chessen, and Mike English, among several others. Meeting minutes for October 3, 1998 (reported by Beth Nelson to Director, CMHS), noted that 30 members attended, including Domestic Policy Council (DPC) Chair Mike Cohen, Jose Cerda (DPC), Ricki Seidman, Shay Bilchik, Kathryn Turman (Justice), a representative from the Office of Management and Budget, Sonia Chessen, Bill Modzeleski, and, from CMHS, Lorinda Daniel, Roslynn Moore, and Beth Nelson.
[25] Bilchik interview.
[26] Modzeleski interview.
[27] Bilchik interview.
[28] Modzeleski interview.
[29] Reno interview.
[30] Bilchik interview.
[31] Seidman interview; Mike English meeting notes (*hereafter* English notes), September 18, 1998, Old Executive Office Building.
[32] Memo attachment, "Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Environments for Learning," Bill Modzeleski to Mike English, September 22, 1998.
[33] English interview.
[34] Bilchik interview.
[35] Chessen interview 1.
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[43] Beth Nelson to Director, CMHS, memo, "Meeting on School Violence—October 7, 1998."
[44] Charles Simon, interview, October 17, 2003, New York, New York (*hereafter* Simon interview).
[45] Bilchik interview.
[46] Public Law 105-277, October 21, 1998.
[47] Public Law 105-277, October 21, 1998.
[48] Brian W. Flynn, interview, January 16, 2004, Washington, D.C. (*hereafter* Flynn interview).
[49] Chessen interview 1.
[50] Modzeleski interview.
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[58] Rudy interview.
[59] Dressler interview 1.
[60] Moscicki interview.
[61] Arons interview.
[62] Arons interview.
[63] Chessen interview 1.
[64] Mathews-Younes interview.
[65] Flynn interview.
[66] Arons interview.
[67] Flynn interview.
[68] Flynn interview.
[69] Modzeleski interview.
[70] Bilchik interview.
[71] Chessen interview 1.
[72] Mathews-Younes interview.
[73] Mathews-Younes interview.
[74] Modzeleski interview.
[75] Mathews-Younes interview.
[76] Chessen interview 1.
[77] Bilchik interview.
[78] Bilchik interview.
[79] Local educational agencies were defined as (a) a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control of or direction of, or to perform service functions for, public elementary or secondary schools in (1) a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state; or (2) such combination of school districts or counties a state recognizes as an administrative agency for its public elementary or secondary schools; or (b) any other public institution or agency that has administrative control and direction of a public elementary or secondary school; or (3)...any other public institution or agency that has administrative control and direction of a vocational education program. 34 CFR 77.1 (page 180).
[80] Seidman interview.
[81] Simon interview.
[82] Simon interview.
[83] Flynn, Bilchik interviews.
[84] Flynn interview.
[85] Bilchik, Flynn interviews.
[86] Flynn interview.
[87] Flynn interview.
[88] Bilchik interview.
[89] Chessen interview 1.
[90] Chessen interview 1.
[91] Bilchik interview.

[92] Bilchik interview.
[93] Bilchik interview.
[94] Modzeleski interview.
[95] Modzeleski interview.
[96] Script, audio teleconferences regarding application process for Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, May 1999 (adapted) (*hereafter* Teleconference script, May 1999).
[97] English interview.
[98] English notes, November 16, 1998.
[99] Modzeleski interview.
[100] Bernard Arons to Mike English and Brian Flynn, e-mail, December 21, 1998.
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[103] Bilchik interview.
[104] Simon interview.
[105] Flynn interview.
[106] Simon interview.
[107] Bryan Williams, interview, December 3, 2003, Washington, D.C. (*hereafter* Williams interview); Deborah Rudy, interview, February 10, 2004, Washington, D.C. (*hereafter* Rudy interview).
[108] Meeting sign-up sheet.
[109] Eve Moscicki, interview, December 2, 2003, Rockville, Maryland (*hereafter* Moscicki interview).
[110] English interview.
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[112] Gail Ritchie, interview, November 25, 2003, Rockville, Maryland (*hereafter* Ritchie interview 1).
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[119] A sign-up sheet for the January 19, 1999, meeting of the grant writers working group included the following individuals: from the Department of Justice, Sharon (Sharie) Cantelon, Kellie Dressler and Eileen Garry (OJJDP), and Megan Murphy (COPS); Department of Education, Bryan Williams, Charlotte Gillespie; Department of Health and Human Services, Diane Sondheimer, Nancy Davis. Others also made contributions, including SAMHSA's Norma Hatot.
[120] Williams interview.
[121] Kellie Dressler, interview, July 23, 2003, Washington, D.C. (*hereafter* Dressler interview 2).
[122] Williams interview.
[123] Dressler interview 2.
[124] Dressler interview 2.
[125] Dressler interview 2.
[126] Modzeleski interview.
[127] Script, audio teleconferences regarding application process for Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, May 1999 (adapted) (*hereafter* Script, May 1999).
[128] Simon interview.

[129] Bilchik interview.
[130] Modzeleski interview.
[131] Mathews-Younes interview.
[132] Moscicki interview.
[133] Dressler interview 1.
[134] Dressler interview 1.
[135] Program announcement, 22.
[136] Modzeleski interview.
[137] Chessen interview 1.
[138] Modzeleski interview; English notes, January 11, 1999; program announcement, 22.
[139] Mathews-Younes interview.
[140] Bilchik interview.
[141] Simon interview.
[142] Bilchik interview.
[143] Bilchik interview.
[144] Chessen interview 1.
[145] Seidman, Bilchik interviews.
[146] Chessen interview 1.
[147] Mathews-Younes interview.
[148] Moscicki interview.
[149] Bilchik interview.
[150] Bilchik interview.
[151] Bilchik interview.
[152] Dressler interview 2.
[153] Williams interview.
[154] Modzeleski interview.
[155] Edwards interview.
[156] Moscicki interview.
[157] Middlebrook interview.
[158] Bilchik interview.
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[161] Bilchik interview.
[162] Bilchik interview.
[163] English interview.
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[166] Reno interview.
[167] Reno interview.
[168] Seidman interview.
[169] Department of Justice, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, "Notice of Final Priority and Selection Criteria for Fiscal Year 1999," *Federal Register* 64, *62* (April 1, 1999): 15905-9. http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=1999_register&docid=99-7943-filed. Accessed May 12, 2004.
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[173] Bilchik interview.
[174] ***citation to come***
[175] Bilchik, English, Mathews-Younes interviews.
[176] Chessen interview 1.
[177] Mathews-Younes interview.
[178] Williams interview.
[179] Mathews-Younes, Moscicki interviews.
[180] Moscicki interview.
[181] Program announcement, 13-14.
[182] Mathews-Younes interview.
[183] Williams interview.
[184] Chessen interview 1.
[185] Chessen interview 1.
[186] Bilchik interview.
[187] English interview.
[188] Bilchik, Chessen, English, Seidman interviews.
[189] Teleconference script, May 1999.
[190] English interview.
[191] Their decisions were approved by their respective departmental bureaucracies.
[192] English interview.
[193] Seidman interview.
[194] Seidman interview.
[195] Moscicki interview.
[196] Seidman interview.
[197] English interview.
[198] Chessen interview 2.
[199] Mathews-Younes interview.
[200] Flynn interview.
[201] Bilchik interview.
[202] Seidman, Williams interviews.
[203] Mathews-Younes, Chessen 1, Chessen 2 interviews.
[204] Chessen interview 2.
[205] Bilchik, Flynn, Modzeleski, Dressler interviews.
[206] Modzeleski interview.
[207] Chessen interview 2.
[208] Chessen interview 2.
[209] U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexis M. Herman, Department of Labor Fiscal Year 2001 Budget, remarks, February 7, 2000, www.dol.gov/asp/programs/history/herman/speeches/fy2001ah.htm Accessed April 15, 2004.
[210] Chessen interview 2; Reno interview.
[211] Dressler interview 2.
[212] Modzeleski interview.
[213] Mathews-Younes, Chemers interviews.
[214] Chemers interview.
[215] Modzeleski interview.

[216] Modzeleski interview.
[217] Anne Mathews-Younes, interview, September 26, 2003, Rockville, Maryland (*hereafter* Mathews-Younes interview).
[218] Flynn interview.
[219] Modzeleski interview.
[220] English interview.
[221] "President Clinton Announces More Than $100 Million in Community Grants to Prevent Violence Among Youth," September 11, 1999, press release.
[222] Dressler interview 2.
[223] Seidman interview.
[224] CMHS/SAMHSA, "Communities," 1.
[225] "Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative Project Sites." http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/09-1999/sstoc.html. Accessed May 14, 2004.
[226] CMHS/SAMHSA, "Communities," 1.
[227] Bilchik interview; Flynn interview.
[228] Simon interview.
[229] Chemers interview.
[230] Flynn interview.
[231] Moscicki interview.
[232] Flynn interview.
[233] Williams interview.
[234] English interview.
[235] Seidman interview.
[236] Seidman interview.
[237] Reno interview.
[238] Flynn interview.
[239] Chessen interview 1.
[240] Dressler interview 1.
[241] English interview.
[242] Modzeleski, Seidman, Dressler interviews.
[243] Chessen interview 1.
[244] Flynn interview.
[245] Arons interview.
[246] Chessen interview 1.
[247] English's files include his annotated agendas from IPT meetings through May 18, 2000.
[248] Chessen interview 1.
[249] Mathews-Younes interview.
[250] Chessen interview 1.
[251] Bilchik interview.
[252] Seidman, Flynn interviews.
[253] Flynn interview.
[254] Simon interview.
[255] Chemers interview.
[256] Rudy interview.
[257] Mathews-Younes interview.
[258] Williams interview.
[259] Shelly Hara, interview, December 10, 2003, Rockville, Maryland (*hereafter* Hara interview).
[260] Rudy interview.

[261] Moscicki interview.
[262] Chessen interview 2.
[263] Arons interview.
[264] Moscicki interview.
[265] Bilchik interview.
[266] Simon interview.
[267] Williams interview.
[268] Dressler interview 2; ISSHSP Workgroup agenda, January 19, 1999.
[269] Chemers interview.
[270] Seidman interview.
[271] Karen Dorsey, interview, January 8, 2004, Washington, D.C. (*hereafter* Dorsey interview); Michele Bechard, interview, December 4, 2003, Rockville, Maryland (*hereafter* Bechard interview).Williams, Edwards, Middlebrook, Peloquin, Ritchie 1, Rudy interviews; Louise Peloquin, M.S.W., Ph.D., interview, December 12, 2003, Rockville, Maryland (*hereafter* Peloquin interview); Hara interview.
[272] Hara interview.
[273] Hara interview.
[274] Dorsey interview; Gail Ritchie, M.S.W., interview, December 16, 2003, Rockville, Maryland (*hereafter* Ritchie interview 2).
[275] Dorsey interview.
[276] Flynn interview.
[277] Dorsey interview.
[278] Bechard interview.
[279] Dorsey interview.
[280] English interview.
[281] Dorsey interview.
[282] Bechard, Dorsey interviews.
[283] Bechard, Dorsey, Hara interviews.
[284] Dorsey interview.
[285] Bechard interview.
[286] Middlebrook interview.
[287] Middlebrook interview.
[288] Dorsey interview.
[289] Chessen interview 1.
[290] Chessen interview 1.
[291] Chemers interview.
[292] Chessen interview 1.
[293] Chessen interview 1.
[294] Chessen interview 1.
[295] Chessen interview 1.
[296] Dorsey interview.
[297] Hara interview.
[298] Dressler interview 1.
[299] Flynn interview.
[300] Bechard, Hara interviews.
[301] Bechard, Hara interviews.
[302] Bechard, Hara interviews.
[303] Rudy interview.
[304] Hara interview.

[305] Hara interview.
[306] Flynn interview.
[307] Flynn interview.
[308] Bilchik interview.
[309] Chessen interview 2.
[310] Simon interview.
[311] Dressler interview 2.
[312] Middlebrook interview.
[313] Middlebrook interview.
[314] Middlebrook interview.
[315] Middlebrook interview.
[316] Middlebrook interview.
[317] Reno interview.
[318] Modzeleski interview.
[319] English interview; English notes, December 30, 1998; Dressler e-mail, January 8, 1999, to English, Seidman, Bilchik, et al.; Moscicki interview; Modzeleski interview.
[320] The original evaluation group was let by Meg Small and Eve Moscicki. Small eventually left the government, and Moscicki became coordinator. Other members of the original evaluation planning team included Kellie Dressler, Joanne Wiggins from Education, and Devon Corneal from OJJDP. Later on at various points, others joined from the National Institute of Justice, Betty Chemers and Anne Bergen from OJJDP, Alex Crosby from CDC, Debbie Rudy from Education, and Denise Middlebrook from CMHS. When Sonia Chessen returned to the initiative from maternity leave, she also joined the deliberations.
[321] Bilchik interview.
[322] Simon interview.
[323] Bilchik interview.
[324] Simon interview.
[325] Mathews-Younes interview.
[326] U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Justice, "Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative: Program Announcement" (April 1999), 32. OMB # 1810-0621 (*hereafter* Program Announcement).
[327] Moscicki interview.
[328] Program Announcement, 33.
[329] Bilchik, Middlebrook interviews.
[330] Moscicki interview.
[331] Bilchik interview.
[332] Michele Edwards, interview, December 1, 2003, Rockville, Maryland (*hereafter* Edwards interview).
[333] Middlebrook interview.
[334] Dressler interview 2.
[335] Chemers interview.
[336] Moscicki interview.
[337] Program Announcement, 33.
[338] Moscicki interview.
[339] Moscicki, Dressler 2 interviews.
[340] www.sshsevaluation.org. Accessed May 17, 2004.
[341] Moscicki interview.
[342] Moscicki interview.
[343] Rudy interview.

[344] Rudy interview.
[345] Middlebrook interview.
[346] Chemers interview.
[347] Middlebrook interview.
[348] Moscicki interview.
[349] Dressler interview 2.
[350] Ritchie interview 1.
[351] Bilchik interview.
[352] Mathews-Younes interview.
[353] Ritchie interview 1.
[354] Mathews-Younes, Ritchie 1, Ritchie 2, Dressler 2, Arons interviews.
[355] Mathews-Younes interview.
[356] Dressler 2, Ritchie 1 interviews.
[357] Ritchie interview 2.
[358] Mathews-Younes interview.
[359] Ritchie interview 1.
[360] Chessen interview 2.
[361] Dressler 2, Bechard, Dorsey interviews.
[362] Dorsey, Ritchie 2 interviews.
[363] Dressler 2, Dorsey interviews.
[364] Bechard interview.
[365] Dorsey interview.
[366] Dressler 2, Bechard interviews.
[367] Dorsey interview.
[368] Ritchie interview 2.
[369] Ritchie interview 1.
[370] Safe Schools/Healthy Students Action Center, final report (draft), January 2004 (*hereafter* Action Center report); Ritchie interview 2.
[371] Ritchie interview 2.
[372] Ritchie interview 2.
[373] Action Center report.
[374] Dressler interview 2, www.preventpromote.org.
[375] Mathews-Younes interview.
[376] Peloquin interview.
[377] Melane Kinney Hoffman, Porter+Novelli, Project Director, Youth Violence Prevention Communications Project, as described in proceedings of SAMHSA/CMHS/CSAT "School and Community Action Grantees Kick-Off Meeting" (draft), January 24-25, 2000, Bethesda, Maryland (*hereafter* Grantee kick-off notes).
[378] Mathews-Younes interview.
[379] Peloquin interview.
[380] Grantee kick-off notes.
[381] Peloquin interview.
[382] Peloquin interview.
[383] Peloquin interview.
[384] Renee McNamee, Social and Health Services, Project Director, Safe Schools/Healthy Students Communications Team, interview, January 15, 2004, Rockville, Maryland (*hereafter* McNamee).
[385] Bilchik interview.
[386] Peloquin interview.

[387] Dressler interview 2.
[388] Peloquin interview.
[389] McNamee interview.
[390] Peloquin interview.
[391] McNamee interview. For the first year and a half of the contract, McNamee and Jill Herzog served as co-directors.
[392] Peloquin interview.
[393] Peloquin interview.
[394] McNamee interview.
[395] Peloquin interview.
[396] Peloquin interview.
[397] McNamee interview.
[398] Peloquin interview.
[399] Peloquin interview.
[400] Peloquin interview.
[401] Peloquin interview.
[402] Peloquin interview.
[403] Peloquin interview.
[404] Peloquin interview.
[405] McNamee interview.
[406] Peloquin interview.
[407] Peloquin interview.
[408] McNamee interview.
[409] Peloquin interview.
[410] Peloquin interview.
[411] Peloquin interview.
[412] Mathews-Younes interview.
[413] Bilchik interview.
[414] Williams interview.
[415] Mathews-Younes interview.
[416] Bilchik interview.
[417] Mathews-Younes interview.
[418] Simon interview.
[419] Dressler interview 2.
[420] Dressler interview 2.
[421] Mike English, "SS/HS: Key Elements of the Interdepartmental Partnership and Program Development Process," presentation notes (rev. August 2002).